



The Child Care Professional

Fall 2010

We hope everyone had an opportunity to take some time off this summer to relax and unwind. September usually marks the beginning of a very busy season for child care providers. For many programs, fall is accompanied by an influx of new children and families. The articles in this month's newsletter focus on the importance of relationship building with children and families.

Traditionally early fall sees an increase in requests from parents looking for child care. An important component of our service is providing accurate referral information to families. For that, we rely upon child care providers to keep us informed of their status. A number of weeks ago we sent a "member profile" to every child care provider reflecting the current information in our referral database. Please ensure that you review it and inform us of any changes.

We would also like to remind you to consider the YMCA CCRR resources as you are busy planning for the children in your program. The resource libraries at both of our locations consist of a variety of toys, puppets, felt stories, activity boxes, and resource books. **Effective immediately, child care providers wishing to access our resource lending libraries may borrow resources from either location and return to whichever location is most convenient.** If you are a regular borrower at one of the libraries, expect to see an influx of "new" items as materials are integrated between the offices.

Our training schedule is also back in full swing. Please note, our workshop fees have increased slightly this year as we do our best to meet the ongoing demand and continue to provide our members with quality workshop/training opportunities. As always we invite you to contact us with your suggestions in regards to educational opportunities that would be useful to your program and the families you work with.

We have chosen to highlight the networking opportunities we offer this month in the enclosed brochure. Networking offers opportunities for child care providers to meet, share ideas and challenges with other providers. We have a variety of opportunities available and hopefully you will find one that is of interest to you.

We have returned to our regular Saturday hours of operation for the fall in order to accommodate your busy schedules and we look forward to seeing many of you as you access our services.

~ Diane



Program Evaluation

Every year the CCRR asks child care providers to participate in a Program Evaluation. The survey results provide us with crucial information which we use to evaluate our current activities and helps us to plan for future activities.

Our survey is accessible on-line at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YMCAccrr> and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

If you would prefer a printed copy of the survey, please contact our office and we will gladly forward one to you.

We thank you in advance for your participation.

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and lots more!

Inserts in this issue:

✓ Networking Brochure

✓ Fall Calendar

✓ Fall Workshop/Training Schedule

YMCA Child Care Resource & Referral

www.vanymca.org

Tri-Cities

1130 C Austin Avenue
Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 3P5

Ph: 604-931-3400 Fax: 604-931-3440

Email: tricrr@vanymca.org

Monday to Friday

9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Open till 8:00 p.m. the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. (except for November 10th)

Burnaby/New Westminster

Burlington Square
Unit 161 5172 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 2E8

Ph: 604-294-1109 Fax: 604-294-6278

Email: bnwccrr@vanymca.org

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
1st & 3rd Thursday each month: 1:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

2nd Saturday each month: 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Please note: Both offices will be closed Saturdays, September 4th & October 9th, Mondays, September 6th & October 11th and Thursday, November 11th.

The YMCA CCRR will be closed Statutory Holidays and Long Weekends. Please call our office or check the current calendar for upcoming closures.

“Circle of Friends”

Family Resource Program

James Park Elementary

1730 Coquitlam Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Ph: 604-931-3400

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Central Elementary

2260 Central Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Ph: 604-931-3400

Monday, Wednesday & Fridays

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Please note: Circle of Friends Family Resource program operates on the School Calendar. Reopens September 7th at James Park Elementary.

For Sale

Toys, supplies, tables, mats, chairs etc.

Saturday, September 18, 2010

9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

215 East 6th Avenue,
New Westminister

Contact Sheila Hallam at 604-540-9422

Furniture, bookshelves, highchair, change table, toys, Runabout stroller (seats 5 children) and much more.

View items day or night by appointment.

Contact Silvia at 604-941-9331

City of New Westminister Child Care Grant Program

The Child Care Grant Program is to assist licensed, non-profit child care operators to develop, expand and/or enhance the delivery of child care services to families in New Westminister.

Operators are eligible to apply if:

- The project is located in New Westminister;
- The project promotes quality, accessible and affordable child care for families;
- The project is completed with the year of funding being approved;
- The project acknowledges the financial support of the City of New Westminister.

For information on this new Child Care Grant Program visit www.newwestcity.ca/business/grants/community_grants.php



Early Childhood Development Committees

Welcome to the Burnaby Early Childhood Development Community Table

Who are we? The Burnaby ECD Community Table is a coalition of approximately 30 community and government partners offering programs, services, and resources to young children and their families in Burnaby. Our goal is to ensure that all children in Burnaby are supported by their community to reach their full potential.

Who is involved? The Table is made up of representatives from the school district, Fraser Health, MCFD, Parks & Recreation, the Library, the City of Burnaby Social Planning Department, and an array of community agencies that provide direct services to children and families. We also have members from Burnaby's many multicultural service agencies.

Website: Check out www.kidsinburnaby.ca We are happy to add new information of interest to Burnaby's families with young children. Please feel free to send us information you would like to share.

Invitation: The Burnaby ECD Community Table has a number of very active Action Teams, including a Child Care Action Team. New members are always welcome. We also have an active Parent Advisory Committee – again, new volunteers are most welcome.

Contact: Email Kamala - kamalasproule@yahoo.com

Hello from the New Westminister Early Childhood Development Committee!

What are we? We are a group of community people who have come together with a common purpose of wanting to increase the health and well-being of young children and their families. We find ways to make the public aware of the strengths, needs and the gifts of young children & their families, and we advocate for accessible services for all children and their families.

Who are we? The Committee is made up of people who work indirectly with families and children from the City, Fraser Health, the School District, MCFD, United Way of the Lower Mainland, CCRR and those who develop and provide programming through non-profit organizations, faith groups, the Public Library, child care facilities, Parks & Recreation, plus parents and interested community people.

Website: Check out our new website – www.kidsnewwest.ca We are continuing to improve and add interesting information for New Westminister.

Invitation: We would love to have more voices from the child care sector, and we invite you to contact us for meeting times or to be put on the ECD contact list. We have a child care 'action team' dealing specifically with child care issues and we would love your input! We also have an active parent advisory committee that welcomes new members.

Contact: Email Karen - karen.corcione@gov.bc.ca or call 604-660-0310.

Greetings from the Tri-Cities Early Childhood Development Committee!

Who are we? The Tri-Cities ECD Committee supports the community's capacity to ensure the availability and accessibility of Early Childhood Development services for children (prenatal to age 6) and their families in the Tri-Cities area.

Who Sits on the Committee? The committee includes a cross-section of individuals, service providers, and representatives from all levels of government, from the Tri-Cities' communities with an interest in Early Childhood Development, community partnerships and the vision of the committee. Members include the following, but are not limited to, representatives from: Ministry of Children and Family Development, Fraser Health Authority, School District #43, Coquitlam, Municipalities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody and the Villages of Anmore and Belcarra, Community Service agencies, Child Care providers, Libraries, and Ministry of Housing and Social Development.

Website: Check out – www.tricitysecd.citysoup.ca.

Invitation: We welcome members of the child care community to attend our general monthly ECD meetings. We also have a Child Care Working group that meets in the evenings and specifically addresses issues of concern to the child care community. New members are always welcome. Please feel free to contact us for meeting times or to be put on the ECD contact list.

Contact: Susan – susan.foster@fraserhealth.ca or call 604-777-8706.



We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.

~ Stacia Tauscher

Building Informed Relationships

What parents can teach us about their children

By Karen Stephens



We know it is *our job* to be responsive and emotionally intelligent as we welcome children and families into our midst. We know it’s imperative to help children and parents experience a smooth transition as children venture into the world beyond home. So we work hard at reaching out to families.

Well-trained staff will immediately begin building relationships with families and children, *precisely* so we don’t remain strangers for long and because we want everyone to adapt successfully. We know we are nurturing children during their first, critical lessons in relationship building with non-family members. And we know we are among the first adults outside their family to make an impact on the child’s and family’s lives. It’s an auspicious time of childhood—and of childrearing—that deserves respect and special attention.

Helping relationships bloom authentically between staff, parents, and children is a core mission for early childhood professionals. It’s who we are. It’s what we do. In fact, when citing sources of job satisfaction, program staff often comment on the intrinsic rewards of forging meaningful relationships with children and families.

Because we accept responsibility for creating bonds with families, program staff establish a variety of ‘family-friendly’ outreach strategies. For instance, we plan gradual warm-

up visits, hold family orientations, distribute parent newsletters, conduct parenting workshops, sponsor support groups, hold family socials, schedule parent-teacher conferences, orchestrate family fieldtrips, organize home visits, and ensure parent input via evaluations and board participation.

All these strategies are great for sparking staff and family engagement. They set the stage for communication and discussion. And they provide opportunities for information-sharing. But from what I’ve seen and experienced, we still haven’t fully reaped the relationship building opportunities afforded by those interactions.

Of course early childhood staff have a wide range of knowledge to offer about childhood and *general* principles and stages of child growth and development. But for true teamwork and collaboration with families, systems should be designed so families also regularly share insight, tips, and advice to staff about their *particular* child’s personality, development, and experiences.

To serve children and families best, encourage early childhood staff to ask for parents’ wisdom about their child. Train staff in good listening habits and tactful information-seeking; it’s as important as helping them develop good speaking skills. What staff learn during the conversations will promote richer family relationships, as well as more informed developmental assessment, guidance, and teaching practices.

Below I list some questions that parents can respond to regarding their child’s unique characteristics. Keep in mind that topics will vary according to age and development of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-agers. Getting a parent’s perspective on these topics can help staff better understand a family’s childrearing choices, as well as children’s classroom behaviour.

Please don’t treat these questions as another checklist to complete. (Who needs another one of those?) I don’t even suggest they be asked on a written ‘intake’ form parents complete when enrolling their child. I simply offer them as possible talking points to spur discussion of substance among parents and staff.

Initial enrollment warm-up visits provide good opportunities for information sharing. As time goes on, some topics can be explored during informal arrival of departure chats. Others are better asked when a parent joins in during a meal service or attends a parent support meeting. I’m sure you’ll think of other questions to casually explore with the families you serve.

Continued...

As staff engage with parents, remind them to talk *with* parents, rather than just *at* or *to* them. They'll find open-ended questions encourage parents to open up and elaborate with more details. And of course, professional use of information for documentation and ethical codes for confidentiality should be addressed as well.

What parents can teach us...

About a child's spirit:

- How did you choose your child's name?
- Is there a special meaning to your child's name?
- How did your child earn his or her nickname?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
- What is sure to capture your child's attention?
- What especially delights your child? What brings on the giggles?
- How did your child respond when he first succeeded at something challenging, for instance, walking, learning a new word, or singing?
- What do you think is unique about your child?
- When do you first remember being head over heels in love with your child? What brings on those moments for you?
- When was the first time your child's behaviour made you want to pull your hair out? How did you cope?
- What do you think would surprise us most about your child?

About a child's temperament:

- How would you describe your child's personality?
- In what type of setting is your child most likely to be quieter? More outgoing? What situations overwhelm?
- How does your child express contentment or happiness?
- What behaviours do you notice when your child is frustrated or confused?
- What helps your child warm up to new situations?
- How does he or she respond to disappointment? How long does it take to recover from disappointment?
- What are good ways to help soothe your child?

- What are good ways to get and maintain your child's attention?
- How would you describe your child's activity level?
- How do you know when your child has had enough play-time?
- How do you keep your child calm during a storm or hectic times?
- When faced with a new challenge, how long does your child usually persist? How does he or she go about problem solving?
- How does your child respond to changes in normal routine? What are good ways to help your child cope with a change?

About a child's family culture:



- Are there siblings in the family? How do they get along? What types of things do they enjoy? What issues do they struggle over?
- Are there special activities that family especially enjoys together, such as gardening, singing in a choir, going to a water park, or volunteering for non-profit projects?
- What extra activities are children enrolled in outside of child care, such as tap dance lessons or swimming?
- Do extended family members live with you or nearby?
- What are the names your child uses for his grandparents, aunts, or uncles?
- What about your culture or beliefs is most important for your child right now?
- Are there traditional family games or songs your child enjoys? Are there some you are willing to share in the classroom?
- What does your family consider 'good behaviour' for your child's age?
- What are some family routines your child really likes?

Continued...

- At what ages do you encourage self-help skills to develop, such as self-feeding, self-dressing, or picking up toys?
- In what ways will you expect your child to contribute to family life during childhood?
- If there is a pet in the home, how does the child play with it and help take care of it?

About Children’s social/emotional health:

- How does your child like to start the day?
- What makes your child feel cozy and relaxed?
- What does your child do when he wants attention at home?
- What motivates your child to cooperate?
- What kinds of things is your child stubborn about?
- How does your child behave around those she is most fond of?
- Are there ways to tell that your child has had enough cuddling or wants to play on his own?
- What can trigger a temper tantrum or aggression such as biting? How do you de-escalate a tantrum? How have you responded when your child has hit or bitten someone?
- What situations or events scare or startle your child?
- Are there special objects your child is especially attached to, such as a keepsake or favourite item for naptime?
- What coping strategies does your child use?
- What does your child think she is really good at?
- How can you tell you child feels good about his successes?
- What are ways your child goes about making a friend?

About a child’s physical and nutritional health:

- What are typical signs of illness? Do fevers come on slowly or spike quickly? Are there signs of illness you want to know about immediately?
- Are there allergies present or that run in the family? What symptoms should we watch for? How should symptoms be treated?

- What are your child’s sleeping routines?
- What are good ways to ease your child to sleep? Good ways to help her wake up from a nap?
- What are sure signs your child is hungry? Tired?
- What are his food preferences and how are they prepared?
- What are some ways you introduce new foods?
- How does your infant like to be held during feeding?
- Are there games or songs your child enjoys during diapering time?
- How would you like us to go about working with your child on toilet training?
- Are there safety dangers your child seems drawn to?
- What self-help skills is your child especially proud of?

About a child’s learning style and interests:

- When playing alone, what does your child enjoy doing? With adults? With peers?
- How does your family feel about playing outside? How does your child respond to ‘messy’ play? Does your child have a preference for indoor or outdoor play?
- What does your child like pretending to be? What make-believe situations does she act out?
- At what times is your child most likely to be talkative?
- What kinds of movement does your child enjoy?



- Does your child enjoy imaginary friends? In what ways?
- How does your child show his/her creative side?
- What kinds of books or stories does your child enjoy?
- What are sure signs your child is overwhelmed by something?

- Have you noticed play choices your child favors, such as block building, working puzzles, drawing/painting, or educational computer games?

About a child's special needs:

- How would you like us to comment on your child's special needs when children or parents ask about them?
- Are there resources that would help us understand and respond to your child's special needs?
- How have you arranged your family life and home environment to adjust to your child's special needs?
- What have you learned from raising a child with special needs?
- Are there times your child's special needs become overwhelming? If so, what are ways you and your child cope?
- Are there chronic conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, that we should be aware of? What are ways you'd like them addressed in our program?

In conclusion

Parents have a lot to teach us. As parents provide their 'insider' perspective on their children, staff will be better able to respond to individual temperaments, overall development, and specific personal needs. This information will also provide staff with relevant 'discussion starters' as they engage daily with children. That responsiveness will provide a nourishing, informed foundation from which rich relationships will blossom.

When two-way communication becomes a program norm, staff are bound to discover valuable, downright delightful and charming information about children and families. And through that process, they'll be strangers no longer.

About the Author

In 1980, Karen Stephens became director of Illinois State University Child Care Center and instructor in child development for ISU Family and Consumer Sciences. She is author of the electronic parent newsletter, "Parenting Exchange" located at www.ChildCareExchange.com.

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Sponsored by the Burnaby Early Childhood Education Program

REFLECTIVE TEACHING - Implementing Responsive Curriculum a Second Level Course for Practitioners



Roni Cahen and Bev Superle are offering a NEW course on Responsive Curriculum which allows participants to learn more about implementing projects and digging deeper into children's meaning making. A **prerequisite** for this course is the series of Responsive Curriculum workshops which we have offered to people in the ECE field OR the course on Responsive Curriculum taken by former Burnaby ECE students.

Learn more about;

- Having discussion with children
- Using pedagogical narration as advocacy
- Developing a project
- Helping children represent their ideas

When: Sessions will be held six Tuesdays, October 5 through November 9 (7:00 - 9:30 p.m.) and Saturday, October 30 (9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.) Cost: \$130.

Where: Byrne Creek High School, 7777 - 18th Street, Bby.

Phone: 604-664-8888 to register (course #4049)

For more information email Roni at rcahen@shaw.ca

Caring About Food Safety: A New Self-Guided Online Course

The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has launched a new self-guided online course that teaches people how to safely handle and prepare food so that they can reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses caused by contamination.

The initiative was spearheaded by the Health Protection Branch from the Population and Public Health Division. *Caring About Food Safety*, an interactive tutorial available online at no cost for all British Columbians, includes six sections that show step by step how to safely buy and store food, to prepare and cook food, as well as to clean up afterwards.

We encourage you to check out the course at the link below to test your knowledge and see how you measure up!

www.foodsafety.gov.bc.ca

When Parents Have a Hard Time Separating

By Heather Wenig



I have discovered a non-threatening way to help a parent who is having trouble separating from his/her child.

You begin by explaining to all the parents that you would like to capitalize on toddlers’ ritualistic behaviour for the purpose of relieving separation stress. We’ve all experienced this ritualism, whether it’s a toddler refusing to drink from a red cup when he usually uses a green one or gobbling up a sandwich cut in quarters but refusing one cut diagonally. With so many things in a toddler’s life being out of his/her control and unpredictable, it’s no wonder many of them cling to what is familiar and secure!

By working to develop a comfortable separation ritual, you can add predictability to a stressful situation. Some parents will want to come up with—or may have already unwittingly established—a separation ritual, for example, waving at the window until mom is in her car, or using funny words for hugs and kisses. Others may want to use one of the rituals listed below that you can suggest. Ask the parent to come up with a specific routine and communicate it to you so you can support it.

At Home/At School. Make a poster board display with a picture of a house on one side and a picture of your centre or home on the other. Use Velcro or hooks to hang photos of the children on each side. As the parents bring children in, they can help their children find their photo and move it from “At Home” or “At School.”

Traveling Photos. Take a photo of each child and cover it with clear contact paper. Use a clothespin or Velcro at attach each child’s photo to his/her cubby (or just keep the photo inside the cubby). As parents bring their chil-

dren, the child can find his or her photo and give it to mom or dad to take to work with them. Parents then return the photo to the child’s cubby when they come pick their child up at the end of the day.

Story Time. Make a collection of books for this ritual and store them in a box or basket you and the children have decorated. These books should be short because chances are mom and dad will be rushed at the end of the day. Each morning, parents can let their child choose a book that the parent can read to them when they pick them up—a promise of some special time together. After the child has chosen a book, the parents will put it in a “special waiting place” (also a decorated box or basket) until they come to take their child home. (Books are not taken home but read to the child in the classroom, creating another pleasant association with being there.)

Printed with permission of Child Care Information Exchange
www.ChildCareExchange.com

Hello and Goodbye

Remember to smile hello and goodbye each day. This elicits a smile in return. Greet the baby with a word, and as day ends, sing a goodbye song that helps the baby connect to their response. Sing:

*“Now it’s time to say good-bye,
Say good-bye, say goodbye,
Now it’s time to say good-bye,
I’ll see you in the morning.”*

Helping Families with Transitions

Autumn is the season of first good-byes for many families. Have you often wondered how to help parents say goodbye to their babies in the morning? Parents need support to make a quick departure and still be clear with the baby about their love and their intention to return. Use this four point poster on the wall to help family members remember the routine.

*Put my things in my cubby
Tell me you love me.
Give me a hug.
Tell me you’ll be back soon.*

Saying Goodbye:

Tell me you’ll be back soon. Consistency helps infants learn how to say goodbye, and builds confidence that parents will always return!

ECE Learning Circles

presented by Tom Kertes

Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. –3:00 p.m.

Vancouver location TBD

Math–September 25

Reading–October 23

Science–November 13

ECE Learning Circles are workshops for Early Childhood Educators about teaching and learning math, reading and science with children ages 3–5. The workshops focus on practical strategies and skills for using games, stories, projects and other activities to help support children’s learning. Cost \$20.00.

For workshop descriptions call 604-600-4926 or visit www.focusonthelearning.com

Vancouver Child Care Resource & Referral presents

Introduction to Family Child Care

Saturdays, beginning

Oct. 16, to Dec. 4, 2010 (no class on Oct. 23)

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$295.00

This 35 hour course teaches participants how to open and run their own Family Child Care facility. Through interactive sessions participants will learn about: Child Growth and Development, Guiding and Caring (positive discipline strategies), Health and Nutrition, Learning through Play, Safety & emergency Procedures, Family Child Care Business Management, the Child Care Subsidy process and Family Child Care registration and licensing procedures.

To register contact Nora at 604-709-5661 ext 245

BC’s Representative for Children and Youth Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond Presents

Champions for Children and Youth The 2010 BC Summit

October 18–19, 2010

Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre

Early Bird Registration \$300.00

Hear from and have discussion with national and international experts, rooted in the finding of a newly released report by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond and Dr. Perry Kendall, Provincial Health Officer, called “Growing Up in BC”. Find out what’s working, what’s not working and what we can be striving for. You will hear from children and youth, ensuring that their sometime soft voices play a meaningful role.

For a complete list of speakers, or to register please visit www.rcybc.ca

Learning Disabilities Association of Vancouver in partnership with the Vancouver School Board Invites you to:

Speaking of Kids Conference 2010

Back by popular demand the Special Guest is Henry Winkler!

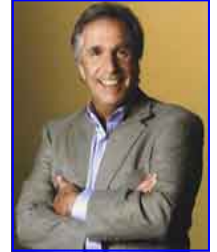
Increase your understanding of learning disabilities and the important role this knowledge can play in enhancing the lives of children and their families.

Fee \$65.00

When: Friday, October 22

Time: 8:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Location: Killarney Secondary School
6454 Killarney Street, Vancouver



For more information call 604-873-8139 or visit www.ldav.ca

Save the date for conference 2011!

The 14th Annual Children the Heart of the Matter Conference

February 4–5, 2011

**The Bell Performing Arts Centre
Surrey, BC**

Fridays Keynote Speaker is Mary Gordon, founder of the Roots of Empathy program, recognized internationally as an educator, best-selling author, child advocate and parenting expert.

Keynote on Saturday will be about the power of communication and teamwork that will lift your spirits and motivate you to achieve your goals.

**Registration package available Fall 2010
If you have any questions call 604-572-8032**



Infant Activities (6-12 months)

Autumn is the season of spider webs, rainy days and golden leaves. Play games that inspire you and your toddlers. Enjoy this wonderful time of year! Notice the sounds of weather and shapes of things in the world around you. See the world through the toddler's curious eyes.

When the rain is falling outside, notice the way rain hits the window and rolls down. Listen to the raindrops. Chant a rhyme and use words that sound like the rain. Here is an action rhyme to describe rain. You can use a small hand drum or large coffee can with a plastic lid to make the tapping sound of the rain.

Caution: Be certain to seal the sharp edges with duct tape and keep the lid on the can.

Rain is falling,
(Wiggle your fingers in the air, and float them down like raindrops)
Splash! (Clap hands together lightly)
(Repeat hand motions)
Drip, Drop, Drip Drop
(Tap your fingers on the drum to make the sound of raindrops.)



Tumbling Towers

Make three paper bag blocks. Use small paper bags and fill them with crumpled newspaper. Fold down and tape the top of the bag.

Place a small tower of two or three of these soft and scrunchy paper bag blocks in front of the baby or young toddler. Invite her to knock it down! She experiences the cause and effect of her own hand causing the blocks to fall. Let her explore the blocks and discover the effect she has on the world around her.

"The first cognitive construct that is wired into the brain is the relationship between cause and effect."

"By the middle of the second year of life, an infant's cognitive focus will change from cause and effect to problem solving."

~Pam Schiller, *The Complete Resource Book for Infants*

Toddler Activities (12-36 months)

Make Paper Rain *This game supports fine motor skills, and is a great bonding game, too.*

Toddlers love the feeling of control they get when tearing paper. Give the toddler some soft paper (e.g. wrapping paper) to tear up. Show her how, but allow her to tear it herself. Encourage your toddler to place the torn pieces of paper into a light weight container such as a large paper cup. Turn the container over and watch the paper fall out. Toddlers will also enjoy putting the pieces of paper back into the cup. This activity can be repeated many times. Add vocabulary such as "the paper is falling to the floor". You can further extend this activity by adding a song or poem about rain (or leaves!) falling to the ground.

Note: *Toddlers really like to put things in their mouth, so close supervision is necessary.*

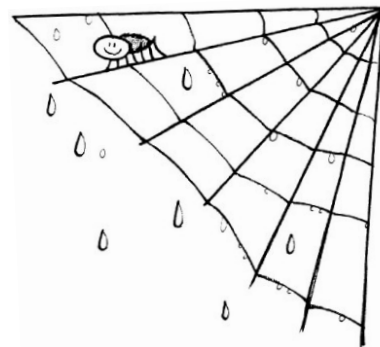
Rain Painting *Children learn from interacting with nature.*

Paint large sheets of shiny finger paint paper with thick powdered tempera. Lay the paintings outside in a light rain. Allow the colours to streak and drip. Talk about how the water is changing the paint. The children may finger paint on the damp paper. Let them explore the changes caused by the rain.

Continued...

[See the Little Spider](#) Here is a fun finger-play to share with your toddlers! Observe the spiders building their webs. Toddlers are delighted by a busy spider waving her sticky home. This song is most fun when you have just discovered a busy spider in the leaves or walking up a wall.

See the little spider climbing up the wall.
(Walk your fingers slowly up the child's arm)
See the little spider stumble and fall.
(Walk your fingers quickly down the child's arm)
See the little spider tumble down the street.
(Walk your fingers down the child's leg)
See the little spider stop at your feet.
(Stop at your child's feet)



Leaf Preservation Activity

Arrange several leaves between two 12" squares of clear contact paper. Encourage the toddlers to choose their leaves, and to lay them on the sticky pages. Let them help to lay the sticky page on top and flatten their leaf art.

Ask them if they want to hang it on the wall, attach a string or just take it home to share? Maybe hang a few of them on a branch that has been brought from outdoors, and make a special tree in the playroom. Compare their tree to the trees you see outside the window, especially as the season passes by.

Some of these ideas are adapted from the book *Games to Play with Toddlers*, by Jackie Silberg. You can find this book in both of our resource lending libraries.

Preschool Activities (3-5 years)

Summer is beginning to fade and soon there will be a crispness in the air. Living on the west coast we have ample opportunity to experience the changing seasons. A significant change as we move into fall is how early it gets dark. Depending on the interest of the children, this might be a great time to explore the concept of light and dark.

[Experimenting with Light](#) Allow the children to explore materials available to them. What are their thoughts?

Supplies:

- Flashlights or light table
- Large paper in which to create a chart for graphing.
- A variety of materials that are transparent, translucent (Semi Transparent) and opaque (Solid)

Some questions to ask:

"Which items can you see through? Which ones can't you see through?" If the children are interested have them place the materials on the graph depending on whether they are transparent, translucent, or opaque.

"Why do you think you can see through some items and not the others?"

Document the children's words and find out what interests them most about the activity and then do more experiments based on their interest. Was it the flashlights? The shadows? The transparency? The charting? Have fun learning and exploring with them!

Silhouettes

The sun has a powerful influence on our bodies and our planet. Use the experiment below to demonstrate to children the bleaching effect of the sun. Conduct the experiment twice, a few months apart, to show them how the sun's rays weaken as the year progresses.

Continued...

Supplies:

- Dark and bold coloured construction paper
- Household objects to use as silhouettes (Heavy or dark coloured objects are preferred)
- A nice sunny spot

Instructions:

Place construction paper in a sunny location. Put a few objects on top of the paper and leave them for a few days. Remove the objects and observe the silhouettes left behind. The exposed paper will have grown lighter in colour, the result of the sun's bleaching powers. Conducting this experiment first in the summer and then later in the fall or winter will demonstrate how the sun's strength varies, growing stronger during certain seasons and weaker in others.

School-Age Activities (6-12 years)

Making a Sundial

In the past, people relied on sundials to mark the passage of hours and minutes. Sundials measure time by the position of the sun. They can be quite accurate, and are surprisingly simple to make. The instructions here are for a basic sundial similar to the stone versions once used.

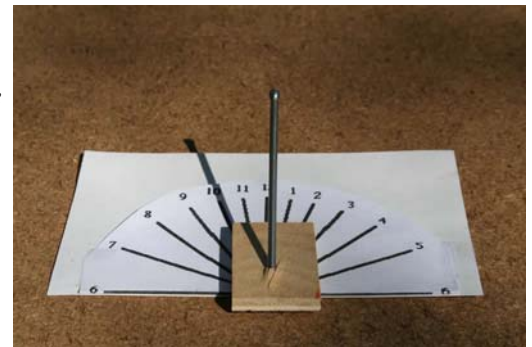
Supplies:

- Stick or pole
- Rocks or other markers
- Playdough or clay
- Watch or clock (one with a timer preferably)

Find a sunny flat outdoor location

Put the stick/pole in the ground. If the surface is hard, put the stick in the playdough/clay and use that to hold the stick upright.

Each hour, place a rock or marker for each hour indicating where the shadow falls at that time. Setting an alarm on the clock or watch could alert you when it is time to place another marker. Depending on your group and timing, you may have to place the rocks over a couple of days before your sundial is complete. Now your sundial is ready to use. When you want to tell the time, just look for the shadow.



Rec Room Theatre *An Old Favourite!*

Provide children with the resources to set-up, practice, and perform a story. For younger children, suggest a simple folk tale that the children know very well. Some examples include: The Three Little Pigs; Goldilocks and the Three Bears; Little Red Riding Hood, etc. Older children may wish to create their own story. The story should be short, and have a definitive ending. Allow the children to choose their own characters, helping them to problem solve. If two children want to be Goldilocks, determine how the story can be adapted to support this.

Once the play and the roles are set, simply provide the resources. Children will need a box of dress-up clothes and lots of art supplies for creating their own costumes and props. Useful art supplies include construction paper, glue, pipe cleaners, cardboard boxes, sparkles, and markers. Dress-up clothes can include old adult clothing and footwear, pieces of fabric, and old Halloween costumes. . Allow them to create their own costumes, props and set. When the children are ready for an audience, sit back and enjoy the show!