



KEEPING IN TOUCH

SUMMER 2015

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre, Child Care Consultation

Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough, Special Needs Services

The Etobicoke Children's Centre, Special Needs Consultation

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Community Outreach Service

Humber College, Child Care Consultation Services

Toronto Children's Services, Special Services Unit

WoodGreen Community Services

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PROGRAMMING FOR THE PLAYGROUND

Welcome to another edition of Keeping in Touch. The focus of this edition is to ensure as Registered Early Childhood Educators we are continuously programming for all areas of development among children of all ages. How we program for the playground is just as important as our indoor programming in facilitating children's development, health, and well-being.

Shondel Shaw, Special Needs Consultant ~ Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough

LET ME BE A CHILD

Let me know when I make you proud.
 And help me to have pride in my own accomplishments.
 Let me earn your trust. Then trust me.
 I won't let you down. Let me try my wings.
 If I fail, let me know it's OK. And encourage me to try again.
 Let me know you love me with a hug or a pat on the back.
 Or when I need it, with a firm but gentle "no."
 Let me be. Let me change. Let me grow.
 Let me tell you when I'm feeling bad . . . or angry . . . even at you.
 And let me know that even on my worst days, you still like me.
 Let me dream. Share my joy when my dreams come true.
 Share my tears when they don't.
 Let me feel secure in my home.
 Help me realize that love is always there . . .
 that I can depend on you no matter what.
 Let me run . . . let me laugh . . . let me play.
 And most of all, let me be a child!

~ Anonymous ~



*Contributed by Lisa Iozzo, Resource Educator
 ~ South District Special Services Unit Children's Services*

WHY IS PROGRAMMING IMPORTANT FOR THE REGISTERED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR?

Many times, when we as Registered Early Childhood Educators think of programming, we think of what it could and would do for the children in our care. We believe it would:

- ✓ Keep the children involved and engaged in safe and appropriate activities.
- ✓ Encourage children to learn new things.
- ✓ Help children to grow in confidence, build team spirit and encourage cooperation.
- ✓ Allow them to interact with one another; and
- ✓ Definitely minimize negative behaviours.



What about if we look at how programming benefits the Registered Early Childhood Educator? As we consider this question, we will look at the definition of a teacher and a facilitator. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a teacher is “a person or thing that teaches something, especially a person whose job is to teach students about certain subjects” and a facilitator is “one that helps to bring about an outcome, learning, by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance or supervision”.

As Registered Early Childhood Educators, we could think of ourselves as teachers/facilitators. For us to be most effective in this role, we need to deliver quality programming.

In order to achieve quality programming, we will need to:

- ✓ listen to and observe the children in our care
- ✓ include the children’s cues, suggestions/requests into the program
- ✓ solicit the opinions/suggestions of our colleagues
- ✓ invite family/relatives and the community to be part of our programs
- ✓ be organized
- ✓ keep track of past areas of interest for the children and possible future areas for exploration
- ✓ be the best team-players we possibly can



As I conclude, I am reminded that quality programming is a collective effort of staff, children, family/relatives and community. It helps us to be most effective in our role as teacher/facilitator. And I quote: “Registered Early Childhood Educators need to be aware of the complex interrelationships of all participants when considering quality.” (Gestwicki, C. & Bertrand, J. 2012. Essentials of Early Childhood Education 4th Canadian Edition, Nelson Education Ltd.)

BUILDING CHILDREN'S CAPACITY THROUGH EXPERIENCES WITH NATURE

Extreme cold weather, snow and ice during the winter months means children in childcare programs may have limited access to outdoor experiences at times. Warmer weather is a perfect time for Registered Early Childhood Educators to remind themselves of how important the outdoors is to our children's overall health and wellness.

Outdoor playtime is often thought of as a less structured routine than indoor program, circle and other organized activities. If the playground is solely viewed as an opportunity for children to develop their motor skills, its incredible potential to offer so much more is overlooked. In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv describes how the natural environment supports brain development, higher sensory awareness, cooperative play, and can be a therapeutic and stress reducing experience. In her comprehensive thesis, *Young Children and Nature*, Ashley Parsons reviews the work of a group of child development experts who determine these opportunities not only develop children's environmental consciousness but also support them in building what she refers to as an environmental identity, a way of organizing information about themselves in relation to the world they live in.

So while planning for your programs over the warmer months, take a moment to consider how you could incorporate nature into the curriculum. Have natural materials available such as plants, tree branches, sand, rocks, pebbles, logs, grass, straw, and water.

Include activities that promote experiences with nature:

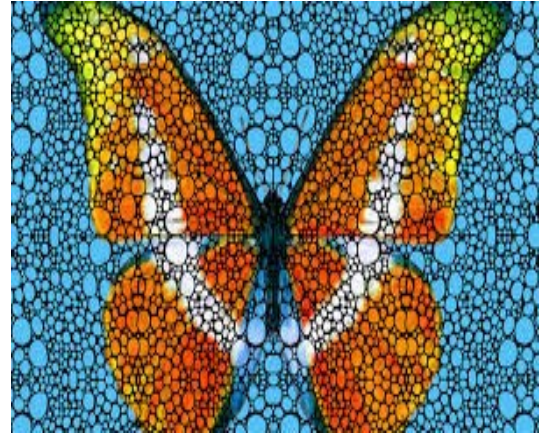
- build a mini-vegetable garden
- plant and grow tomatoes in a barrel
- build a mini-water oasis
- build a bird house
- have children incorporate natural ingredients into games and activities
- paint small pebbles with a variety of colours or designs and use outside to play tic tac toe, checkers, hop scotch
- hang items like empty tins and paper plates from large branches using twine and throw bean bags or swishy balls at targets



Although we see schoolage children outside of school hours, they still require a program that offers organized activities which are challenging and engaging. Projects can be a great way to boost social relationships and skills. They offer the opportunity for everyone to be involved in some capacity if they wish. Ideas for projects can be generated by the children and guided by the interest of the group. They can be responsible for gathering and organizing the material, establishing a time frame for completion and determining project leads and roles for those interested in participating. Projects can be completed both indoors and outdoors. The Registered Early Childhood Educator's role should be to support the brainstorming phase, ensure a realistic plan is established, monitor and document the progress, and assist in challenges that arise.

Creating Stone Artwork

- Collect a large assortment of different size, shape and textured pebbles
- Paint the pebbles
- Purchase a canvas backing in whatever size you prefer
- Determine a design or image
- Using a permanent sharpie transfer the design onto the canvas
- Paint the pebbles
- Using a hot glue gun or fabric glue, glue pebbles onto the design (this should be supervised by a staff)
- Hang in classroom



Create a Model of your Childcare Centre

- Locate and collect a very large cardboard box
- Cut to use as the platform
- Collect recyclables; paper towel rolls, plastic food containers, cardboard boxes, etc.
- Create a drawing of what you want to build and everything you want to include
- Think of any specific items you will need and determine how you can access them
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Use carpenter's glue to secure model
- Paint and decorate when complete

Making a Jersey/ Cotton Rag Rug for the Quiet Area

- Collect old jersey shirts or sheets in a variety of colours
- Purchase a carpet grip from your local hardware store
- Design the pattern you want and a template of the finished product
- Cut jersey/sheets into long strips
- Slip through carpet grip
- Tie a knot
- Use as wall or floor decoration
- An average size area rug will take at least one to two weeks to complete



References:

Parsons, A. (2011, April 11). *Young Children and Nature: Outdoor Play and Developmental Experiences*. Retrieved April 25, 2015 from http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-05062011-114155/unrestricted/Parsons_AE_T_2011.pdf

Louv, Richard. (2005). *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books

Denise Palermo, Special Needs Resource Consultant ~ The Etobicoke Children's Centre

INDOOR SENSORY ACTIVITIES FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS, & PRESCHOOLERS

The warmer weather is great for getting children outdoors to enjoy some fun in the sun! But what about those rainy days, or heat alerts, that keep us from enjoying our outside programming? How can you bring some of those activities inside? How do you create an indoor environment that will keep children busy and having fun? The following are some ideas that may be new to you or a twist on some old favourites that may be suitable for infants, toddlers and/or preschoolers.



Infant Sensory Ideas

- Sensory bottles (plastic water bottles filled with colourful pom poms, water and glitter, water and beads, water and marbles, or frozen coloured water)
- Sensory bags (freezer bags with goop, playdough, or ice; try putting a few things in the bags as well i.e. small plastic insects, and duct tape to tightly seal)
- Sensory boxes (boxes with various lengths of ribbon, strips of felt and/or pipe cleaners threaded through holes in the sides)

**Always make sure sensory bottles and bags are well sealed for safety. And never use toxic items!*

Toddler & Preschool Sensory Ideas

- Shredded paper
- Coloured sand
- Rocks, pebbles, stones (be aware of mouthing/choking hazards)
- Bring nature indoors with soil and grass clippings
- Artificial grass (e.g. Easter basket filling)
- Cotton balls
- Beads in a variety of sizes (be aware of mouthing/choking hazards)
- Ice (with items frozen in it, try colouring the water before freezing)
- Goop
- Clean Mud *see page 6
- Dirt Dough *see page 6
- Soapy Slime



"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning.
But for children, play is serious learning."

~ Mr. Rogers ~

CLEAN MUD RECIPE

3 cups of baking soda
up to 1 cup of water

To make clean mud all you need is baking soda and water. In a bowl slowly add water to the baking soda until you have a mud-like texture. Be sure to add the water slowly, as it is easy to add too much. The key is to add a little at a time and mix, slowly adding more water until you have the desired mud-texture. If you do add too much water just add more baking soda and mix it well. The mud is squishy, yet moldable and super soft.

DIRT DOUGH RECIPE

baking soda
brown or black food coloring
water

Similar in preparation to Clean Mud. Add the desired amount of baking soda to a sensory bin or container. Add several drops of black watercolour or food colouring, and then slowly add water and mix. Continue to slowly add more water until the desired consistency is reached. If you accidentally add too much water, just add more baking soda.



Music & Dance

Dancing is a great gross motor activity for children to shake those sillies out, get exercise, and it is also a great stress relief for both children and adults. And music inspires creativity whether in movement or on paper.

- Use ribbons and scarves as part of active movement.
- Let the children create their own musical instruments (i.e. shakers from water bottles) to use while dancing.
- Encourage children to create some art while listening to music. Tape bubble wrap to feet (be mindful to attach the tape to the bubble wrap, not the skin) and stomp with paint on paper.
- Try finger painting to different types of music e.g. jazz, classical, zydeco.

Beautiful Junk

Gather beautiful and safe junk from your recycling bins. Let the children's creativity take off as they build objects to play with and create art. This activity not only encourages children's imagination, it also develops problem-solving skills. Items may include:

- paper towel and wrapping paper rolls
- plastic containers and lids (e.g. yogurt containers)
- cardboard boxes, shoe boxes in a variety of sizes
- bubble wrap
- water bottles
- aluminum pie plates
- used envelopes



*Contributed by Diana Sansalone,
Resource Consultant
~ Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital*

PLAY IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS!



Play, whether indoors or outdoors, is one of the most important things you can do with a child. The time spent playing gives a child a lot of different opportunities to interact and to learn. Play also helps a child:

- ◆ Build confidence and self esteem
- ◆ Feel, happy and safe
- ◆ Develop social skills, language, and communication
- ◆ Learn about caring for others and the environment
- ◆ Develop physical skills
- ◆ Burn off energy
- ◆ Learn to follow rules and to work with others

Different Types of Play

Unstructured play is a very beneficial type of play for young children. This is play that just happens, depending on what grabs a child's attention/interest at the time. Free play isn't planned and lets each child use their imagination and move at their own pace.

Examples of unstructured play might be:

- ◆ creative play alone or with others, including artistic or musical games
- ◆ imaginative games; i.e. making tents with boxes or blankets
- ◆ dressing up
- ◆ playing make-believe
- ◆ exploring new or favourite play spaces in the community such as parks, pathways, or playgrounds

Structured play is more organized and happens at a fixed time or in a set space and is often led by an adult; there are set rules with objectives.

Examples of structured play include:

- ◆ card games
- ◆ board games
- ◆ puzzles
- ◆ following directions to assemble a toy, model airplane or Lego theme set
- ◆ organized sports - soccer, hockey, tennis, etc.

Thoughtful planning can make outdoor play fun for children of all ages and capabilities. There are great outdoor games and activities for children whether you have limited play space, a small or large group, or if financial limitations are an issue. Classic no cost games such as:

- ◆ Hide and Seek,
- ◆ What Time is it Mr. Wolf,
- ◆ Red Light Green Light, and
- ◆ Simon Says

are all favourites that can be modified based on the groups' skills and abilities.

Outdoor Play Ideas for Infants

Infants might enjoy:

- ◆ items that encourage palmar grasp, pincer grasp; easel, paper, crayons, paint, small objects, buckets
 - ◆ items that encourage crawling; pillows of different sizes, textures, and consistencies, pillow mazes (also encourages problem solving)
- *Be sure to closely monitor any activities with infants and pillows!***
- ◆ items that encourage rolling, pushing, stacking, climbing; balls of different sizes and textures, sensory bottles, boxes of different sizes and shapes, small tubs/pools (not filled)
 - ◆ items that encourage pushing and riding; riding toys, strollers, shopping carts



Outdoor Play Ideas for Toddlers

Toddlers might enjoy:

- ◆ items that encourage pushing, dragging, or building; cardboard boxes, buckets, laundry baskets
- ◆ items that encourage stepping, jumping, kicking, stomping, and running; large wooden blocks, balls, bubble wrap, yarn (be mindful of choking hazards), music
- ◆ items that encourage climbing, balancing, twisting, and swaying; large rocks, tree stumps, large boxes, hula hoops
- ◆ items that encourage crawling and exploring; hills, tunnels, nooks
- ◆ items that encourage shaking and throwing; shaker bottles, shaker boxes, pillows, balls, bean bags

If you put on some favourite music while the toddlers play, they can also experiment with different sounds and rhythms.



Outdoor Play Ideas for Preschoolers

Preschoolers might enjoy:

- ◆ items that encourage building; old milk containers, cereal boxes, yogurt containers, sticks
- ◆ items that encourage music and movement; pots, pans, wooden spoons
- ◆ items that encourage interaction with nature; empty pot plants, soil, seeds, shovels, watering cans
- ◆ items that encourage imaginative play; dishes, dress up clothes, large boxes
- ◆ items that encourage throwing, bouncing, kicking; balls of different sizes and textures, bean bags, Frisbees, hula hoops

When encouraging preschoolers to kick or throw, try to get them to use one side of their body, then the other.

Outdoor Play Ideas for Schoolagers

Schoolagers might enjoy:

- ◆ items that encourage cooperative play; making tents, boxes, group murals
- ◆ items that encourage imaginative play; capes, costumes, large boxes, large wooden blocks (build a stage!)
- ◆ items that encourage industrious play; buckets, water, sponges, boxes, tape
- ◆ items that encourage large muscle movement; bikes, hoops, balls, obstacle courses, music, relay races, sports
- ◆ items that encourage sensory exploration; waterplay, sandplay, painting rocks, making musical instruments

References:

Kidspot. (2014). *Outdoor Activities*.

Retrieved August 21, 2015 from

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/kids-activities-and-games/fun-outdoor-activities-for-kids+9.htm>

*Contributed by Nicole Livingstone, Intensive Resource Worker ~
Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre*



**"The most effective kind
of education is that a child
should play amongst
lovely things."**

~ Plato ~

THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

I recently received my annual Membership Renewal Form from the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) and was gently encouraged as well as graphically reminded of the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program. Further information guiding my attention to the CPL program was highlighted by mention in the June 2014 booklet *“Striving for Practice Excellence”* ([https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Striving for Practice Excellence.pdf](https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Striving%20for%20Practice%20Excellence.pdf)), a publication put out by the College of ECE to help guide educators through the CPL process and answer any questions they may have. It is my hope that we will all continue to learn, grow and change as we explore, the What, Why and How of Continuous Professional Learning.



“Life is a continued learning process. Each day presents an opportunity for learning.”
Lailah Gifty Akita ~ Think Great: Be Great: Beautiful Quotes

This quote definitely speaks to the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). It is essential to note that the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 is one of the motivating factors for the mandate of the CPL program. For, besides the College’s primary duty to serve and protect the public interest, the ECE Act has also empowered the College to initiate a program that will promote expectations for ongoing professional development of its members.

Since September 2014 members have been invited to participate in the CPL program either on their renewal date or as newly Registered Early Childhood Educators. If you are interested in starting before your renewal date you can do so by contacting the CECE directly. They will provide you with the link to the Expectations for Practice Module. Participation in the College’s CPL program is voluntary and up to individuals as professionals. However, the profession of early childhood education is one in which ongoing learning is critically important. In addition, the Child Care Modernization Act, 2014 (Bill 10) was passed in December, 2014 and received Royal Assent, meaning that the CPL program will be regulated in the near future and will become a mandatory part of the professional practice of the RECE. Therefore, it is to each professional’s advantage to be proactive in demonstrating their commitment as advocates of lifelong learning.

Consequently, the College has designed a self-reflective and self-directed framework for continuous professional learning to support RECEs in their ongoing learning. The framework is comprised of a Self-Assessment Tool to identify professional learning needs, a Professional Learning Plan to develop a set of professional development activities to meet identified needs, and a Record of Professional Learning to document completed professional development activities and reflect on learning achieved and meaningful application of that learning. The College of Early Childhood Educators has identified a wide range of activities that would be considered professional learning, so be creative!

http://college-ece.ca/en/Members/Documents/Learning%20Web_EN.pdf

To learn more about your College of Early Childhood Educators go to www.college-ece.ca.

To read more about how you can get started on your own Continuous Professional Learning go to <https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Members/Pages/CPL-Program.aspx>.

Contributed by Faye Dundas, Early Childhood Consultant ~ Humber Child Care Consultation Services

"Learning without thought is labor lost.
Thought without learning is intellectual death."
~ Confucius ~

WEBSITES

The following websites have lots of interesting ideas and resources:

City Wide Training Calendar ~
www.citywidetraining.ca

Connectability ~
www.connectability.ca

College of ECE ~
www.college-ece.ca

Earlychildhood News ~
www.earlychildhoodnews.com

How Does Learning Happen? ~
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

Gerrard Resource Centre -
 Ryerson University ~
www.ryerson.ca/ecs/grc/

Special Needs Resource Library ~
<http://www.esbgc.org/special-needs-services/>



The KIT Newsletter Committee members include:

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Lisa Iozzo
 Resource Educator
 Toronto Children's Services

Janet Scott
 Resource Consultant
 WoodGreen Community Services



RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Here are a few suggested books that will assist you when programming for outdoor play.

Chalufour & Worth. (2004). *Building Structures with Young Children*. Redleaf Press.

Greenman, Jim. (1998). *Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work*. Exchange Press.

Hass- Foletta, Cogley & Ottolini Geno. (2005). *School-Age Ideas for After School Programs*. School-Age NOTES.

Isbell, R. & Isbell, C. (2003). *The Complete Learning Spaces Books for Infants and Toddlers*. Gryphon House.

Koralek, D. ed. (2004). *Spotlight on Your Young Children and Play*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

McNairn & Shiolen. (1994). *Quick Tech: Readable, Repeatable Stories and Activities*. Mayer-Johnson.

Scofield, Rich, ed. (2001). *Summer Program Tips, Strategies & Activities for School-Agers 5-14 Years-Old*. School-Age NOTES.

Sander, Stephen. (2002). *Active for Life: Developmentally Appropriate Movement Programs for Young Children*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Toronto Public Health. (2004). *Healthy Eating Tool Kit for Children's Gardens*. Toronto Public Health.

All the suggested Resources for Educators in this edition of Keeping In Touch are available in the Special Needs Resource Library at the Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough.

Check out the library online;
<http://www.esbgc.org/special-needs-services/>

Want to visit the library?
 Make an appointment at
 416-281-0262 x 203/204

