



KEEPING IN TOUCH

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

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, Home Childcare

Toronto Children's Services, Special Services Unit

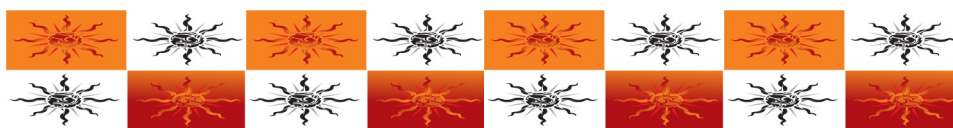
Toronto Foundation for Student Success

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Enjoy the Spring/Summer 2012 edition of Keeping In Touch all about

Outdoor Fun in the Sun!!!



HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME!

Summer can be one of the most difficult times to program for children with special needs. Here are a few points to keep in mind when planning for inclusion within the group.

- Many children with special needs require the consistent structure a childcare program offers, even in the summer. So remember that the daily routines need to be consistent.
- When there are special events help the children to adjust by planning with the children and rehearsing the skills necessary for them to be successful. The chance to practice will give the anxious child a sense of familiarity when the actual event happens.
- Try to build up to large events or trips rather than starting off with them in July. This may allow the child with special needs to build their skills throughout the summer.
- Staff should visualize field trips beforehand in order to anticipate and plan responses for potential "problem times". This preparation will give the staff a sense of calm and create a consistent response to potential behaviours.
- When preparing for trips consider the children in your groups that are challenged by transitions. Plan ahead of time how this will be handled so all the staff are consistent.
- When pairing up small groups of children with a staff for trips remember to consider the dynamics of these small groups. Will they compliment one another or feed off each other?
- Summer is often a time staff take their holidays. Remember that this change in staffing may effect children's behaviour. Prepare the children for these changes.
- When extending outdoor play staff also need to consider the interests and developmental levels of all the children; have you provided many learning areas outside besides just sand and tricycles? Are there books, puzzles and colouring stations available or options to play indoors?
- Although it is tempting to stay outside all day in the terrific summer weather remember that there are sun safety precautions to take, for the children and yourself! Toronto Public Health can provide you with all this information.

Robin Lister, Special Needs Consultant ~ Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough

Take Your Classroom's Summer Outdoor Program to the Next Level



The arrival of the warm summer months provides teachers with so many wonderful opportunities to incorporate the natural elements of the outdoors, into their program development. It's time to move outside and enjoy the sun, sand and water! It's a new season, embrace the blooming possibilities by expanding on the familiar water and sand play activities we have all become accustomed to and love.

Toddlers love to explore their environment through taste, touch, sight and, smell. Freeze up some H₂O in ice cube tray shapes or containers. Set out onto a safe and clean base and allow the toddlers to spray different colours of water out of small spray bottles onto the cubes. Watch as their eyes explode in wonder from the sensory surprise as they run their tiny fingers through the now colourful, melting cubes.

Create a mini ecosystem in your sandbox by adding long blades of grass, shrubs, rocks, flowers, and toy insects and animals and anything else you might find in the environment.

Line up the riding toys for a super sudsy car wash. Water bottles, bubble bins, brushes, wet and dry cloths can be used to ensure the toys are sparkling clean by the end of the day.

Preschoolers and kindergarten children are adventurous masters of wet and dirty play. Have the group collect as many natural resources as possible; leaves, flowers, sticks, flat rocks, grass, pine cones. Arrange and mactack the articles to a large wall space. Cover with a large role of mural paper or white gift wrapping paper. Using chalk or coloured water rub or paint over the whole paper to create a print of unique designs and textures.

Plant a herb, vegetable or flower garden and nurture it all summer long. Empower the children to become responsible for watering, weeding and learning about the different components they created. Celebrate through photo and story documentation of the process.

Fill up a plastic shopping bag with water and hang from a tree branch just like a piñata. Carefully poke small pinholes to allow for some of the water to slowly drain and spray out. The children can cool off running underneath the gentle mist.

Schoolagers are always up for a scientific project and creating an exploding volcano is the perfect summer experience. Place a large plastic pop bottle on a flat piece of cardboard. Run masking tape from the neck of the bottle to the cardboard. Paper mache strips of newspaper to make the base of the volcano. Make sure the group finds a flat open space to set the experiment on and add 3-5 tablespoons of baking soda. Pour in 2-3 cups of red coloured vinegar and watch out!!!

Competition is the name of the game with this age group. Fill up two bins or wading pools with sand, water and marbles. Divide the group into teams, blow the whistle and listen to the screams as they attempt to locate and remove the marbles using only their feet. The first team to empty their pool of all the marbles wins.



Whatever you choose to do, get wet and wild, have fun and stay cool!!!!

*Denise Palermo, Special Needs Resource Consultant & Sheri Robb, Special Needs Resource Consultant
The Etobicoke Children's Centre*

Education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society . . .

But for me, education means making creators . . .

You have to make inventors, innovators, not conformists.

~Jean Piaget~

CLIMBERS AREN'T JUST FOR CLIMBING ~ EXPAND YOUR PLAYGROUND POSSIBILITIES!!!

Your permanent climbing structure is one of your best assets on the playground. Consider these fun ideas to dress up or use the climber or play structure and expand your playground possibilities. Close supervision is needed for all these activities, but with a bit of imagination most can be adapted to fit the needs of your children/group.

- ✓ Line the slide with paper and explore creative ways to paint the paper using toys such as balls or toy cars.
- ✓ If you are having a special theme day, such as pirate fun or parade day, include the climber when you and the children decorate.
- ✓ Windmills, flags and streamers make fun décor that look great when the wind blows.
- ✓ Include the climber in your dramatic play (bake shop, kitchen, restaurant, ice cream shop, etc.).
- ✓ Use the climber as a “Cooling Station” with spray bottles.
- ✓ During water play days, turn the slide into a water-slide if there is a safe landing area.
- ✓ Turn the slide into a science activity and determine which items roll down the easiest.
- ✓ Use the sides of the climber to set up vertical art activities.
- ✓ If your climber includes a covered space, turn it into a cozy area with books, a music centre, or puzzles.
- ✓ Make a staging area for songs, speeches, stories, etc.
- ✓ Play “I Spy” with a view.



- ✓ Play “Follow the Leader”.
- ✓ Measure different parts of the climber using rulers and measuring tape.
- ✓ Create an “orchestra” on the climber by hanging items that make noise or just explore the different sounds of the climber’s structure.

*Ruth Montgomery, Resource Consultant
Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital*

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

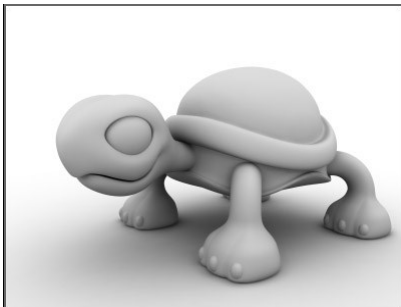
SUN CLAY

Ingredients: 2 cups salt, 1 cup cornstarch, water

Mix the salt and 2/3 cup of water in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring until the salt is dissolved. Remove from heat. In a separate bowl, slowly add 1/2 cup water to the cornstarch. Stir until smooth, and then add to the salt mixture. Return to low heat and cook until smooth, stirring frequently. Store in a sealed plastic bag.

Place the clay on a tray or paper plate and have children work outdoors or in a sunny area indoors. Give children a lump of clay to model. Children may decorate their sun sculptures with small stones, leaves, etc.

Place the finished items in the sun to dry. Challenge children to predict how long it will take for the sculptures to dry. When this clay hardens in the sun, it won't crumble.



MUD DOUGH

Ingredients: 1/2 cup cold water, 1 tbsp. cooking oil, 2 tbsp. brown tempera paint, 1/2 cup of salt, 1 tbsp. cornstarch, 1 1/2 cups of white flour

It is best to do this at a large work table so that all the children can watch and help to stir the dough. They will also get a chance to knead the dough - always a hit with children.

You can decide how much of the measuring and pouring can be done by your kids depending on their abilities. Put all of the ingredients in a large bowl to stir together and then turn it out onto the table to knead until it is totally mixed.

This really resembles mud and the children enjoy using their Mud Dough to make shapes. It always helps to have cookie cutters and other utensils available to inspire the children's creativity!

*Lisa Iozzo, Resource Educator
Toronto Children's Services*

SNAKE IN THE GUTTER

This game should be played with 6 or more children.

How to Play the Game: Depending on the number of kids, make at least three kids the snakes. Have the snakes form the gutter by standing in a line with wide spaces between them, facing the rest of the kids, who should be at a distance. The adult in charge (or a child) yells, "Snake in the gutter!" The children attempt to run through the gutter without being tagged by a snake. Those who get tagged are now snakes and stay in the gutter. Those who make it through can make another run through the gutter. But anyone who was tagged must join the snakes. Continue the game until everyone has been caught.

*Nicole Livingstone, Child Care Consultant
Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre*



SUMMER PLANNING FOR HOME CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Summertime is an exciting time for children with all the bright sunshine and lots of outdoor play time! Home Child Care Providers need to implement activities for a variety of ages in a small group setting. This can be a very difficult task to ensure that children of all ages can actively participate at the same time. Here are ideas that can help:

- ♦ **Bike parade** - Decorate bikes, scooters, wagons with ribbons, material, bows and create a parade.
- ♦ **Box/recycling art** - Collect a variety of boxes, egg cartons, juice containers and add masking tape, paint, markers, tin foil and see how creative the children can be!
- ♦ **Sheet painting/decorating** - Use an old white sheet and have children create using paint, glue, sparkles, material scraps and nature materials. The sheet can be hung for all to see!
- ♦ **Sponge relay** - 2 teams of children, 4 buckets (2 with water and 2 empty), 4 large sponges. Have children take turns using the sponge to fill up the empty bucket. The first team to fill their bucket, gets to pick the next activity!
- ♦ **Grocery store scavenger hunt** - Keep cool by going on a scavenger hunt in an air conditioned grocery store. Give the children a list of different food items; try listing foods from a variety of cultures that children would not normally have tasted or seen before. Work together to find all the items on the list. When returning home, children can sample their new foods!

Providers should always use their community for daily activities as a way to keep the program fresh and the children engaged. Check out a few of these places in your community:



- ♦ Community centres
- ♦ Libraries
- ♦ Pet stores
- ♦ Grocery stores
- ♦ Movie theatres
- ♦ Ontario Early Years Centres
- ♦ Outdoor wading pools/splash pads with lifeguards

Providers should always visit a site before planning the outing to ensure that all safety requirements are available and the outing is a learning experience for all ages! Also, park equipment should be examined to ensure that it is age appropriate with no broken equipment or safety hazards. A Provider should also remember when planning outdoor activities, there must be plenty of shade, washrooms, and lots of drinking water or fluids. Before setting out, be sure to check for weather and smog alerts at Environment Canada, www.weatheroffice.gc.ca or 416-661-0123.

Parent consent must be completed before the outing and providers may ask parents to attend the outing for an extra pair of hands if needed. This is a wonderful way to include parents in your program! Always remember to take emergency cards and first aid kits on the outing. Be prepared before you leave to ensure all medical materials are available and parent emergency numbers are updated.

Although summer is a very busy time, it can also be very rewarding if providers are organized and keep children busy with activities. Before you know it, children are back to school!

*Lorie DeFarias, Home Child Care Consultant
Toronto Children's Services*



AN EXCITING CHILD CARE COLLABORATION PROJECT!



Workshop Speaking Team (left to right): Iffat Ali, Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre, Danielle Matthew, Sunshine Simcoe Child Care Centre, Shykara Beals, Orchard Grove Child Care Centre, Janine Markowiak, Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre, Lindsey Linton, Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre

Also a part of the team, but not pictured, Karen Allen, Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre.

Many thanks to the staff of Apple Daycare Centre and Guildwood Child Care Centre for all the behind the scenes coordination!

On May 30th Apple Daycare Centre, Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre, Guildwood Child Care Centre, Orchard Grove Child Care Centre, and Sunshine Simcoe Child Care Centre jointly presented a parent evening event. The staff collaborated to organize, develop, and implement a workshop covering four separate topics for presentation at the parent night; Age Appropriate Expectations and Activities, Child Guidance, The Benefits of Inclusion for All, and The Parent Child Care Partnership.

As you all know understanding what is developmentally appropriate can be tricky and that's when you have a background in Early Childhood Education. With the incorporation of ELECT into our programs it is becoming increasingly important that we help parents match their expectations of, and activities with, their child to their development. Danielle Matthew of Sunshine Simcoe Child Care Centre spoke about the main developmental norms for young children. She then matched these milestones to quick and fun activity ideas for parents to use with their children:

Infants

- ◆ Tummy Time; playing on the floor with your baby
- ◆ Copy Cat; imitation of your baby's sounds and actions

Toddlers

- ◆ Push the Basket; using the laundry basket (full or empty) as a push toy
- ◆ Picture Books; read the pictures

Preschoolers

- ◆ How was your day?; have your child draw a picture of their day and talk about it
- ◆ Wardrobe Selection; have your child plan their outfit for the next day

Kindergartens

- ◆ Obstacle Course; create simple obstacle courses with household objects i.e. sofa cushions
- ◆ Phone Call; use your cell phone to call your kindergartener on your house phone and then chat

Schoolagers

- ◆ Date Night; have your schoolager plan and budget for a "date night" with you
- ◆ Cooking; work with your schoolager in the kitchen to prepare dinner - a great time for casual chatting

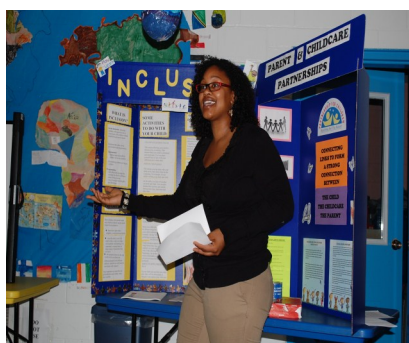
Iffat Ali of Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre focused on positive guidance strategies to support parents. The concepts of setting clear and consistent limits were highlighted as a mechanism for building trust, predictability, and ultimately compliance.

Also stressed was the need to promote self-esteem and independence so children can begin to self-regulate. Positive guidance is respectful of children's developmental stages and needs and models appropriate coping skills. Children who have well developed social and emotional skills make better decisions and are more likely to ultimately do well in school!

Some specific suggestions with regards to positive guidance and reinforcement included:

- ◆ Be an active observer and listener to better understand your child's strengths, interests, and needs
- ◆ Make your directions positive and clear
- ◆ State what you want the child to do so they can adjust their behaviour
- ◆ Be firm and follow through with expectations
- ◆ Utilize consequences that fit the situation and the child's developmental level
- ◆ When appropriate offer choices for your child that help them learn to make decisions
- ◆ Support your child in solving problems on their own instead of always doing the solving
- ◆ Remember that you are a role model for your child; they are always watching and listening!

Shykara Beals, of Orchard Grove Child Care Centre, and Karen Allen, of Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre, developed an opportunity for parents to explore the meaning and benefits of



inclusion in their child's childcare program. The audience was asked to contribute their definitions of inclusion. The contributions were interesting and included ideas such as;

"insuring everyone has a chance to participate", "making all children a part of every activity", and "equal opportunities for equal outcomes".

When the question of the benefits of inclusion for all children was introduced the following ideas were explored:

- ◆ Children learn from each other and each can inspire skill development in other children
- ◆ Inclusion can inspire the development of empathy and social-emotional skills
- ◆ Exposure to a wide range of people prepares children for the world they live in

Teaching children prosocial behaviour early is helpful to their success with all children:

- ◆ Follow Your Child's Lead - Help your child understand social interaction by modeling it. Be face to face with them and play with them.

- ◆ Imitate Your Child - Imitate your child in play. They will learn to mirror peers in interactions.
- ◆ Teach Your Child Turn Taking - Help your child anticipate turns by using the same basic phrases and gestures.
- ◆ Develop Waiting/Patience Skills - Promote the development of waiting or patience by starting out with short turns in play. Gradually waiting for a turn can be lengthened.
- ◆ Model Playful Pretend Play - Children will learn the value of playfulness, which in turn promotes patience and emotional regulation, when you model it yourself while interacting with them.

Parents were encouraged to consider strengthening their partnerships with their child care providers so that they can work together to support inclusive practice. Every child has a special need of some sort or another. Some are visible, others are not. Some are permanent, some are temporary. But the one thing all of the children have in common is they are always children first!

The evening concluded with an examination of the need for Parent/Child Care Partnerships to support the success and well-being of all the children. Lindsey Linton and Janine Markowiak, of Children's Village #3 Day Care Centre, spoke of the critical link between parents and child care staff.

Ongoing, open communication was noted as an ideal method for insuring that each of the partners has important information about the child. Information that is key to supporting a child's overall positive development. Child care providers and parents can both share their observations about the child. The parent's expertise on their own child, and the child care provider's expertise on general child development and developmentally appropriate curriculum work in a complimentary way to create warm, loving, and supportive environments for the child. This opens a clear path for the child to move forward in their successful development!

This evening was a terrific collaboration with the goal of bringing important information to families. All involved should be congratulated!



WEBSITES

The following websites have lots of interesting ideas:

www.funology.com

www.familyfun.go.com

www.equitas.org

www.kidzworld.com

www.tvokids.com

www.ytv.com



The KIT Newsletter Committee members include:

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RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Here are a few suggested books to assist you with your outdoor programming ideas; they are all available in the Special Needs Resource Library.

Active for Life: Developmentally Appropriate Movement Programs for Young Children

Active Learning for Fours

Active Learning for Ones

Active Learning for Threes

Active Learning for Twos

Brain Gym: Teacher's Edition Revised

Building Structures with Young Children

Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments that Works

Healthy Eating Tool Kit for Children's Gardens

Supporting Young Learners: The Complete Learning Spaces Book for Infants and Toddlers

The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning

Worms, Shadows, and Whirlpools

Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years



THE SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE LIBRARY IS AVAILABLE TO ALL

The Special Needs Resource Library at the Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough has a variety of books, videos, children's literature, and journals on such topics as programming/curriculum, separation and divorce, grief and loss, child guidance, social/emotional development, and parenting issues.

A complete listing of the Special Needs Resource Library can be found on the Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough website, www.esbgc.org, under Special Needs Services.

To book an appointment to visit the library in person simply call one of our Special Needs Consultants at 416-281-0262 ext. 203/204.