

Celebrating
30 Years

LEADING THE WAY TO QUALITY CARE FOR 30 YEARS



Capital District
Child Care
Council

Leader

WINTER
2010

Books, Baby Babbles and You!

Early Language and Literacy Skills in Infants and Toddlers

Early language and literacy skills begin at birth, not traditional reading and writing as with older children, but the emergent skills needed before children learn to read and write. These skills are the early puzzle pieces that form the bigger picture of literacy.

Infants are pre-wired at birth to communicate. During infancy, brain development is occurring at the fastest rate of a person's lifetime. Early caregivers play a critical role in the development of communication skills of infants and toddlers. Infants communicate their needs through cries, expressions, and movements. They quickly discover that parents and caregivers "translate" this communication and respond to their needs.

Emergent literacy refers to everything that children have learned about communication, verbal and non-verbal language during early development. It includes all the experiences that children have had with conversations, stories, books and print right from birth. It is a cognitive skill that develops simultaneously with social and emotional development. It is also dependent upon relationships.

Infants and toddlers build language by practicing simple songs and rhymes, doing finger plays, taking turns, and sharing conversations. Songs and stories

that contain rhyming, alliteration, rhythm and repetition will hold a child's attention and help them practice language.

Help a child build literacy skills by:

- Engaging children in conversa-

tion and literacy, develops through adult interactions-there is never a set curriculum. Caregivers must set the pace by following the child's lead and interests.

Strategies for fostering early language

and literacy including maintaining a loving and supportive environment for infants and toddlers that is print-rich and uses words and pictures to help communicate new ideas and language. Real life photos help children build knowledge of the world around them.

Allow children to explore books through their whole body, even if mouthing them will eventually ruin them. Never hesitate to read the same book over and over again,

as children enjoy all forms of rhyme and repetition. Babies will let you know when they are ready to choose another story.

Infants and toddlers work hard to explore and discover their new world. They depend upon special people in their lives to help them to understand as they observe daily events and learn simple stories. The majority of their learning occurs through everyday interactions and routines with caring adults. Babies use these experiences to make meaning of their life and their family culture. When babies bravely explore safe environments that were planned just for them, caregivers help children become their own storytellers.

Books for babies should meet certain criteria: they should be readily available, made of cloth and cardboard, and represent the diversity of the child.

Make these super cute, super easy cloth books out of old blue jeans.

Turn to page 7 for instructions



tion. Revisit the day's activities and allow them to interpret and tell their own version.

- Whenever possible, use the child's home language.
- Display photos to highlight daily events, family and friends, add to daily conversation and help children anticipate what comes next.
- Allow babies to physically explore books and look at and recognize familiar stories.
- Have conversations about books to encourage children to share their thoughts.
- Be sure that reading experiences are a part of the daily schedule.
- Allow toddlers to write and draw, make books, and share their own stories.

Language and literacy skills will develop within the context of a responsive, caring relationship with a parent or caregiver. The stronger the emotional bond, the stronger the child's motivation for learning. Since competency in communication, lan-

Inside this issue

page

Ask a Dietitian 2

Quality Stars NY 3

What Our Children Will Need... 4

Report to the Community 5

Helpful Tips 7



Visit www.cdccc.org to
sign up for e-news...we'll
share updates and information on the
October 2, 2010 Conference.

From the Executive Director

By Patricia Skinner, Executive Director



Did you know?

- approximately 30% of youth in the U.S. are estimated to be involved in bullying either as a target, a bully, or both. (JAMA, 2001)
- fifty-four percent of Americans are

concerned about the level of stress in their everyday lives. (APA Survey 2004)

- between 1 in 8 children in America suffer from depression

These are pretty scary statistics.

What is going on in today's society and what will our world look like for children in the years to come? In this first issue of the 2010 newsletter we have focused on issues children and families are coping with today and what they might face in the future. There are articles on everything from cyber-bullying, to family dining, to the effects of stress on children and families.

In addition, we have tips for families and teachers on how to de-stress childhood by developing strategies and involving families in the solutions.

Of course we know that it's not all bad news for our children and families. For example, a recent survey (sponsored by the Food Marketing Institute and The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University) shows that children who eat dinner with their families on a regular basis are at almost half the risk of substance abuse as children who eat dinner with their families only twice a week or less.

I hope you'll look inside this issue for other examples of activities that families and teachers can do to help our children move into this new decade with confidence!

P.S.

~Patty

2010 marks the 30th Anniversary of the Child Care Council. Incorporated in 1980, the Council has been "Leading the Way to Quality Care" ever since and is looking forward to serving the next generation of early childhood professionals.

Thank you for your support!

Ask a Dietitian...

"Eating together is important but it can be challenging. Does it really make a difference? And how can I make it pleasant for children?"

Family traditions, like mealtimes, in this era of fast food, TV, netbooks and iPods, are changing. In today's digital world, we tend to sit in front of the television or computer eating our dinner or grabbing fast food on the go. We have lost the social environment that we used to have with traditional family meals. Regularly sitting down together for meals has been shown to improve the nutritional quality of children's diet. Children who eat with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Other research has shown that families who eat together have children who are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, do drugs, get depressed, develop eating disorders and consider suicide, and are more likely to do well in school, delay having sex, and have healthier diets as adults.

Beyond health and nutrition, eating together can be an important bonding experience for children, providing a valuable opportunity to reconnect and offering opportunities to learn important social skills. The most probing study of family eating patterns was published last year by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University and reflects nearly a decade's worth of data gathering. The researchers found that family dinner gets better with practice; the less often a family eats together, the worse the experience is likely to be, the less healthy the food and the more meager the talk. Among those who eat together three or fewer times a week, 45% say the TV is on during meals (as opposed to 37% of all households), and nearly one-third say there isn't much conversation. Such kids are also more than twice as likely as those who have frequent family meals to say there is a great deal of tension among family members, and they are much less likely to think their parents are proud of them.

Creating a "family" mealtime environment at child care or school is a great way to encourage healthy eating and healthy social development

among children. Caregivers should consider the following:

- Serve meals in a relaxed environment.
- Encourage conversation with the kids.
- Ask children to serve their own portions of food as well as to decide how much to eat.
- Encourage children to take a small amount of a new food and to just look at it and smell it. When children serve themselves, they are more likely to try new foods.
- Offer new foods multiple times. Serve foods in various forms to provide more opportunities for children to try something new.
- Children respond negatively to pressure to eat, and will be more likely to try something if it is simply offered to them. You may need to offer a new food up to 15 times before a child will try it.
- Be a role model for healthy eating. If children see their parents or caregivers eating fruits and vegetables, they are more likely to eat them.
- Allow young children to leave the table when they are full. When children are full, they are no longer interested in food. It is difficult for a young child to sit still when there is nothing of interest for him or her to do. Have activities ready for children to do when they are finished eating and cleaning up.
- If a child spills, help him or her clean up to promote independence.

Keep the interactions positive and let the conversation flow. Ask your kids about their days and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk.

Need some conversation starters? Here are a few:

- ✓ If you could have a super power, what would it be? Why?
- ✓ What foods on the table are crunchy? Chewy? Spicy? Sweet?
- ✓ What made you smile (or laugh or giggle or cry or feel sad or feel happy) today? Why?
- ✓ What planet or star in the solar system would you like to visit? What do you imagine you would find there?

...continued on page 7

The Child Care Council's Registered Dietitian can answer your questions about menus, nutrition, and fitness. E-mail your questions to jjonally@cdccc.org.

Free menu planning assistance also available - call 426-7181 x316

QUALITYstarsNY is New York State's quality improvement and recognition system for early childhood programs of all kinds. It is designed to recognize programs that demonstrate quality above and beyond meeting New York's strong regulatory standards. QUALITYstarsNY is designed to help improve program quality by providing supports such as technical assistance and professional development. The quality of participating programs at five levels – One-Star to Five-Stars – will be communicated to the public to support families in their search for early childhood services. Participation in QUALITYstarsNY is voluntary; programs that do participate will gain access to support services and financial resources. Once QUALITYstarsNY is launched, any program that is regulated by the State of New York or the City of New York will be able to apply for a One-Star rating by completing a simple application. The field test of QUALITYstarsNY is currently underway. This field test will provide data to guide decisions necessary for statewide implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. The NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI), housed at the City University of New York is coordinating the field test.

Where Are We Now?

13 field test communities have been identified:

- Albany – Capital Region
- Binghamton
- Brooklyn NYC
- Buffalo
- Chemung County
- Clinton & Franklin Counties
- East Harlem NYC
- Long Island
- Rockland County
- Rochester
- Syracuse
- Queens NYC
- Westchester County

What's Next?

- * Local community orientation sessions will be held throughout January 2010
- * ERS Assessments and application process will begin January 2010
- * Quality improvement consultants will create Quality Improvement Plans with provider input

We can help the children
in your care go
FROM THIS TO THIS



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Sheri, Spotted Zebra Learning Center



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**Happy 30th Anniversary-
Child Care Council!**

Thirty years ago, they called them the ‘tea party ladies,’ a small group of directors coming together once a month, trying to change the state of child care. With few resources and limited manpower they advocated for more subsidy funding for child care centers serving low income families, they strived to improve the safety conditions of child care centers and they endeavored to improve the educational opportunities for staff. They were the original Board of Directors of the Child Care Council.

In 30 years, the Child Care Council has grown by leaps and bounds. With over 50 staff members and serving 17 counties in the region, the Council offers a multitude of services such as the Food Program, Eat Well Play Hard, Health, and Social Emotional services.

The Council is proud of it's long history of community services, and looks forward to continued growth and opportunities to improve child care in the years to come.

CompuChild[®]
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Keep Children Busy & Happy While Setting a Higher Standard of Education in your Center. Offer CompuChild Kids Computer Classes!

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2009 Report to the Community

Thank you very much to everyone who attended the Council's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, December 2. The meeting began with the presentation of the Council's 2009 Report to the Community, presented by Executive Director, Patricia Skinner. This report (posted at www.cdccc.org) highlighted the efforts made by the Council during 2009. This was followed by the business portion of the meeting, conducted by Board President, Liz Roberts-Laura. Participants were informed of the election of Jane Schwerd to the position of Vice-President of the Board of Directors. Council Members then elected Ann Day, of Fulton/Montgomery Community College, to a position as a member of the Board of Directors.

The highlight of the morning was the presentation of the Community Collaborator who Cares Award to Literacy NY of the Greater Capital Region. A special introduction

was given by Literacy Volunteer, Richie Woodzell, who worked tirelessly with Sheri Dushane, Council Early Education Coordinator, to assist Child Development Associate students to successfully complete their work. Richie's speech

conveyed the devotion of a person who truly loves what they do. Her introduction set the stage for the presentation of the award to Bob Stevens, Executive Director of Literacy NY of the Greater Capital Region. Mr. Stevens was accompanied by Jackie Orr, Literacy Task Force Coordinator and Elizabeth Allen, Program Director. The Child Care Council is proud to have such a dedicated partner in improving child care in the Capital Region.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of the Dianne Meckler Scholarship by Lynda Weismantel, Director of Operations, to Sara Gambino. Ms. Gambino was selected from many applications to receive the scholarship in recognition of her leadership in the early childhood field.

Welcome 2010 Board of Directors

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Vice-President

Kim Siciliano
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Capital District Child Care Council

91 Broadway, Menands, NY 12204

Mission

The Capital District Child Care Council is a resource and referral agency dedicated to promoting quality, accessible child care for all of the Capital Region's diverse communities. The Council assumes a leadership role in supporting children, parents, child care professionals, and employers through referral counseling, education, training, and advocacy.

Board of Directors

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Vice-President

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Susan Gorman

Peggy Grot
Nancy Johnson

Bernard Jones
Kelly Landrio

Susan Megna
Nancy Rad

Michael Ruzza
Robert Topolski



Pictured left to right:

Sheri Dushane, Patricia Skinner, Bob Stevens, Jackie Orr, Elizabeth Allen, Ritchie Woodsell

What Our Children Will Need to Know in The Future

by Sue Updike, Early Childhood Educator

How many times lately have you had a conversation about all the changes going on in the world today? Why bother to read the newspaper or listen to the news when you can check headlines on-line? Who needs a book if she has a Kindle? It's not just technology—we often comment on the lack of civility in ordinary exchanges between people, the erosion of privacy and the stresses of daily life. All of us who are parents or caregivers wonder what life will hold for the children in our lives. Which of our hopes, our beliefs, our values and traditions are strong enough to endure?

Business people, educators and those involved in technology are quick to predict what will be needed for success in the future. But it seems to me that teachers, parents, family members and caregivers need to think carefully about what we value and make sure that those values are emphasized in our classroom and family life. Perhaps you value relationships, friendships and connections; perhaps kindness and empathy are important. Others may place family, traditions and celebrations high on their list of important values. Or perhaps you think creativity and problem solving are important. Or courtesy and civility. The list is perhaps as individual as you are.

Some writers and critics believe that the era of reliance on gathering and putting together bits of information is coming to an end. Daniel Pink, in an interesting book called [A Whole New Mind: Moving From The Information Age To The Conceptual Age](#), envisions a time in the near future when things like story, design, empathy, play and meaning will be of more value than learning bits of information or assembling numbers and data. If these ways of learning and making sense of the world are important, how might we, as parents and caregivers, encourage children to develop these ways of knowing? In this article, we will consider story, design and empathy.

Story We all have stories and need to tell them. These can be the stories shared in families around the dinner table or at a special holiday meal with the relatives. They might be stories that arise out of life in a center or classroom documenting the experiences shared by a group of children and their caregivers and teachers, illustrated by photographs or drawings. Other stories are contained in books read aloud to a group of children or favorite stories read at bedtime. Stories are not just told or read. They are listened to and heard, emphasizing the relationship between teller and listener. To share a story is to share traditions, feelings, experiences and values.

Design Think about design in your life and how it influences how you dress, how you decorate your home or classroom, what you purchase, what you surround yourself with. Someone, somewhere made the things in our lives—chose colors, wood, granite, fabric. So what happens when children are given the opportunity to make things—to draw, sew, sculpt, and build? Are there opportunities for children to work with a variety of hands-on materials every single day? Do they get to work with color and line and form? To use chalk and paint and pencil and markers and blocks and clay and fabric and glue? How can we make sure that there is more time in the course of the day—whether at home or in school or child care—for kids to mess around with stuff? Do the kids we care for have a chance to look at objects and paintings and illustrations in books and talk about what they like and why. What is the difference that kids see between an illustration in a book by Eric Carle and one by Jan Brett? Trips to museums are another opportunity not only to look at things but to talk about them. Who do you think made that? How do you think it was used? How was it made? Drawings, paintings, and objects all provide opportunities to look and have conversations about choices and preferences—to talk about what you like and why you like one thing better than another. Such conversations are often richer if there have been many opportunities for the child to make things.

Empathy Nearly everyone has had the experience of having a friend or family member who really understands. We really value the person who listens and who tunes into feelings and ideas and reflects back to us, someone who responds, someone who is kind. Everyone who works with young children can recall child who begins to cry in sympathy with another or who gives a hug to someone who's having a rough time. Surely we can practice these ways of interacting with children and help them to interact with other children and adults in ways that may develop into friendships. In the youngest children, early awareness of another might be observed as a child intently watches or mimics the behavior of another child. Sometimes children surprise us by offering a toy to a sad friend or coming close and smiling. We can encourage children to have times each day when they can choose the friend they will work with or sit next to. With a little thought, we can plan activities inside and outdoors that take two to keep the game or activity going.

Adults who care for and work with children need to make time for conversations about what they value and how the experiences made available to children, whether infants or teenagers, reflect those values. We really don't know what experiences will be most valuable to children in 2010 and beyond. But we can think together about what it is we wish to preserve, and about how to reflect what we value in our homes and classrooms.



...continued from page 2 - Ask a Dietitian

Here are some tips to keep mealtime conversations fun and the communication flowing:

- Keep the talk age-appropriate. Or, if you're discussing something above your children's heads, give them a sense of what it's about.
- Listen respectfully. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Some families have a special object they hand around to show whose turn it is.
- Keep questions open-ended. Be encouraging, not judgmental. Still, for some kids, what did you do today is just too broad. For them, the term is scaffolding: offer a structure so they can build an answer. (Who did you play with at recess? What was a funny thing that happened? Did you get caught in that rainstorm?) Ask them about their friends, their activities, their interests.
- Give little kids a break if they need it. Let them help clear between courses (carrying something unbreakable) or ask them to bring something from the kitchen that you "forgot." Then, after they finish their job, thank them and let them know it's time to sit down again.
- Try simple games like Boiler Burst. One person starts a story. Then, when he's had enough, or after a set time limit, he says, "And then the boiler burst," and the next person continues the tale. Older kids like to discuss hypotheticals: take a story from the news and ask "what would you do"?

Try to continue or rekindle the tradition of family meals in your programs and homes. Enjoy the time together. Meals are a wonderful opportunity to learn more about each family member, to strengthen relationships and stay in touch during busy times. Gourmet dishes and linen napkins aren't necessary. All you need is some yummy food and good conversation.

Toy Library Announcement

As the Child Care Council has continued to grow and extend more and more services to the community, we have encountered a need for more office space to accommodate new staff. Therefore a very difficult decision had to be made. As of December 2, 2009, the Toy Lending Library will no longer be available. We'd like to thank our members who have used and supported the Toy Lending Library since 1990.

Helpful Tips Gentle Reminders

518
426-7181

www.
cdcccc.org

What's Hot & What's Not

OUT Baby Einstein

~In 2009, Disney offers a full refund to anyone who purchased a Baby Einstein DVD between June 5, 2004 and September 4, 2009 (the day the notice was put out).

IN Home-made Books

~Babies should have a generous supply of cloth books visible and available to choose from everyday.

Sippy Cups Filled With Juice

~Nearly 1/3 of toddlers with tooth decay problems used sippy cups, according to the *Journal of Dentistry for Children*.

Water & Regular Cups

~Water is the best thirst quencher and a great beverage. Serve water or milk in regular cups as soon as the child can seal their lower lip on the cup and can sit without support.

Fast Food

~51% of families reported eating fast food as a family meal one to two times a week, according to researchers at the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Family Mealtimes

~Eating dinner together every night keeps the doors of communication open and reduces the risk of substance abuse, according to Columbia University researchers.

Regs to Remember in the Cold Weather...

- ✓ Portable electric heaters or any other heating devices may not be used in rooms accessible to children. (417.5 (C)
- ✓ Make sure all exits and evacuation routes are clear of snow and ice throughout the winter months. This should include the top of bilco doors of a basement that is used for childcare.
- ✓ Make sure all play equipment and toys are sanitized on a daily basis. This will prevent the spread of viruses during cold and flu season. 417.11 (R) (1)
- ✓ Linens, blankets and bedding must be cleaned at least weekly and before use by another child. 417.11 (R) (8)
- ✓ Start 2010 safely by checking the batteries in all the smoke detectors in your home, as well as the charge level of your fire extinguishers. 417.4 (C) , 417.4 (D)

Simple to Make Baby Book

Supplies:

Old jeans (or pants), felt or fabric scraps (cut into shapes such as birds, cars, squares, circles), fabric glue, needle, thread, scissors.



Instructions:

1. Cut about 7 inches up from the cuffs of jeans, leaving about a half an inch to an inch seam allowance for the "book binding."
2. With the finished hem of the pant cuff to the right side, glue or sew fabric shapes to the center of the cut piece of denim.
3. Finish the book by stitching or gluing the cut side of the denim to form the book binding.
4. Embellish with buttons, scraps, etc. Be sure that all materials are safe for babies.

for no-sew instructions & more book ideas, call Wendy Sullivan at 426-7181 x352

Overscheduled and Stressed

by Arlene Schmidt, Family Child Care Educator

“Come on Suzy, it’s time for basketball.”
 “Come on “Suzy, it’s time for dance.”
 “Hurry up!”
 “Let’s go, we’ll be late!”
 “And remember, you have gymnastics on Saturday.”

Are you getting tired just listening to this? Did anyone ask Suzy if she wanted to go to dance, or basketball, or gymnastics? Some parents are not letting kids be kids. They are not giving children the time to play, to be creative, to spend time alone, or to relax and reflect on what they might want to do.

Are we enrolling our children in every extra curricular activity we can find just for the sake of getting them socialized with others, to keep them busy, or to make them ready for the next grade?

The stress children feel in their attempt to please parents and to try to be the best in all they do can be debilitating. Stress related issues such as headaches, stomachaches, and other health related symptoms, can lead to school absences, or poor grades because they are too tired, too stressed, and too busy.

Maybe we all ought to slow down and have a little down time with the family. Let’s go back to sitting down to a meal with everyone present or to having a “family game night.” Reconnecting with our children and having conversations about what is really happening in their lives can be liberating and relaxing.

In a recent article by family psychiatrist Dr. Janet Taylor, a TODAYShow.com contributor, entitled, “Are you enriching or over scheduling your child? Having family time fulfills a child’s needs more than building a resume,” gives the following tips for parents:

1. Learn to have high expectations with low criticism. It is important to have a bar. We want our children to aim high. In return, we need to be supportive not destructive regarding their efforts.
2. Eliminate 10 percent of your child’s activities now! Overscheduled children bear the burden of stressed-out families. After five hours of extracurricular activities, the benefit for children is lessened. Add in downtime.
3. Listen to your child. When they communicate feeling tired, overwhelmed or report having fun and being satisfied, notice what’s going on. Monitor their sleep and dietary patterns.
4. Avoid ‘emotional isolation’ by overdoing activities and under doing family time. The most important relationship is not with your child’s coach or tutor, it is with you.
5. Build character, not a resume. Expose your kids to coaches and people that teach supportive relationships, organizational skills, time management and leadership.
6. Discuss wants with your child. The process can help them think about what they like and provide an opportunity to discuss commitments, demands and expectations.

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New Compass~ \$10 Workshops!

New for 2010 - The Council is happy to present the new, improved training catalog, the Compass. This catalog will be published and mailed every 3 months in order to give you more variety, flexibility, and options when selecting training. We are also very excited to offer our new workshop pricing. We’ve reduced the registration fee for many workshops to \$10 for members of the Council & \$15 for non-members in order to help you save money on the training you need.

Log on to www.cdcccc.org and click on Education Services.

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