



Early Childhood Center Newsletter

MARCH 2011



From the Desk of Jane Ryan . . . Early Childhood Programs Coordinator

As we continue to learn through play here at the Early Childhood Center, this article reminds us all about the importance of play and self-regulation:

An excerpt from the article "Old-Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills" by Alix Spiegel

Change in Play, Change in Kids

Clearly the way that children spend their time has changed. Here's the issue: A growing number of psychologists believe that these changes in what children do has also changed kids' cognitive and emotional development.

It turns out that all that time spent playing make-believe (during the first half of the 20th century) actually helped children develop a critical cognitive skill called executive function. Executive function has a number of different elements, but a central one is the ability to **self-regulate**. Kids with good self-regulation are able to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and exert self-control and discipline.

We know that children's capacity for self-regulation has diminished. A recent study replicated a study of self-regulation first done in the late 1940s, in which psychological researchers asked kids ages 3, 5 and 7 to do a number of exercises. One of those exercises included standing perfectly still without moving. The 3-year-olds couldn't stand still at all, the 5-year-olds could do it for about three minutes, and the 7-year-olds could stand pretty much as long as the researchers asked. In 2001, researchers repeated this experiment. But, psychologist Elena Bodrova at Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning says, the results were very different.

"Today's 5-year-olds were acting at the level of 3-year-olds 60 years ago, and today's 7-year-olds were barely approaching the level of a 5-year-old 60 years ago," Bodrova explains. "So the results were very sad."

Sad because self-regulation is incredibly important. Poor executive function is associated with high dropout rates, drug use and crime. In fact, good executive function is a better predictor of success in school than a child's IQ. Children who are able to manage their feelings and pay attention are better able to learn. As executive function researcher Laura Berk explains, "Self-regulation predicts effective development in virtually every domain."

If you have any questions or concerns please call or stop in.
Jane Ryan
286-4100 ext. 1024 or Jane.Ryan@dc.k12.mn.us

2011-2012

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Preschool registration for 2011-2012 will begin on March 8 and will be open until April 7. You can pick up a registration form at the Early Childhood Center or download one from www.dc.k12.mn.us/ecfe.

All children must be 3 1/2 to 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2011. That means that your child's birthday must fall on or before March 1, 2008.

The registration form must be completed and returned with a \$25 registration fee by April 7 to be considered for preschool. If needed, a lottery will be drawn after the deadline. Families will be notified of their preschool placement for next fall by April 14.

Note: Monthly tuition reduced based on income. Reference sliding fee scale on the registration form.

2011 - 2012 Preschool Sections

Section	Days	Time	Age	Monthly Tuition
A	M	12:30-3:00 pm	4 - 5	\$52
B	T/Th	9:00-11:30 am	4 - 5	\$88
C	T/Th	12:30-3:00 pm	4 - 5	\$88
D	W	9:00-11:30 am	3½ - 5	\$55
E	W/F	12:30-3:00 pm	4 - 5	\$88
F	F	9:00-11:30 am	3½ - 5	\$52
D/F	W/F	9:00-11:30 am	3½ - 5	\$88



Early Childhood Center Calendar March into April

- March 7 No School - Staff Dev / Teacher Planning
- March 8 Session 3 ECFE Begins
- March 8 Preschool Registration Begins
- March 19 Early Childhood Garage Sale
- March 22 Kindergarten Round-Up
- Mar 28 - Apr 3 No School - Spring Break
- April 7 Preschool Registration 2011-2012 Closes

D-C Early Childhood



Saturday, March 19

8:00-12:00

Middle School Commons/Gym

The ECFE Garage Sale is a perfect place to look for deals on clothes, toys, and equipment for children ages birth to 2nd grade! Come shop on Saturday, March 19th!

If you have items to sell for children ages birth to 2nd grade and would like to rent a table(s) for the sale, call ASAP as there are only 7 tables left to rent. Your table fee includes space and advertising. \$15/1st table and \$5/each additional table. Set-up is Fri., March 18, 6:00 pm -9:00 pm or Sat., March 19 6:00am - 8:00am.

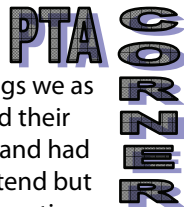
Healthy Kids, Healthy Families

FREE WEBINAR - March 9 12:00-1:00 pm

(recorded webinar is available one week later)

Are you tired of fighting with your kids about what to eat and getting them to move more? Are you unsure of what your kids really need for a healthy diet and exercise? In this seminar you will learn what kids need for healthy growth and development. You will have a better understanding if your child may have issues of concerns and we will discuss tips on getting even picky eaters to eat right at home and away. For more information on this or other webinars in the Early Learning Counts series visit <http://workingfamilyresourcecenter.org/WFRC/en/MDE05.asp>

At the February meeting we had Mr. Brian Stoll from Wright County Probation Services give a presentation about some of the things we as parents should be aware of with our children and their cell phone use. The presentation was insightful and had important information. If you were unable to attend but are interested in receiving the presentation information, please contact Melissa at 275-3394.



Our next regular meeting will be held Thursday, April, 7th. We will be discussing high school courses, Advanced Placement classes, Post Secondary classes, and scheduling at the high school in general. Mr. Jennissen, high school Principal, and Mr. Tool, high school Guidance Counselor, will join us to talk about these important years of our children's education. We will meet at 6:30 in the high school media center. All community members are always welcome! We hope to see you there!



To become a PTA member or for more information about the PTA, please contact Tonia Olsen at 275-3275 or email chargerpta@yahoo.com

Early Years Are Learning Years

We are celebrating The Week of the Young Child ,
April 10-16, with our annual

Book Exchange!



There will be a table out in the hallway where you can bring your books from home and exchange them for "new" books from others.

Dassel and Cokato Emergency Food Shelves



LOCATIONS

Cokato Area Residents

Meeker Co. Residents

Cokato Area Food Shelf

Dassel Area Food Shelf

395 Broadway Ave S

531 Atlantic Ave W

Please Call: 286-2662 by

Hours:

Noon on Thurs. for

Tuesday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Friday pickup at 9:30 am

Thursday 3:00 - 7:00 pm

Or Call 275-0124

Help Wanted:

Volunteer Position:

Early Childhood Council Members

The DC Early Childhood Programs is looking for individuals who are passionate about quality programming for families with young children.

No previous experience required!

Benefits include:

- Appreciation from the early childhood
- Monthly meeting with FREE childcare
- A chance to get to know other dynamic, enthusiastic individuals who are earnest in their efforts to keep DC's Early Childhood Programs the best they can be!

For more information stop by or call the Early Childhood Office at 286-4120.



D-C Early Childhood Programs Play 'N' Learn Preschool & Early Childhood Family Education

March 2011

Vol. 28 No. 3

Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Toys

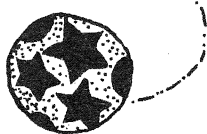
Many toys are good for all ages

All children, regardless of age, need playthings to build physical, mental, language, emotional and social skills.

Some toys will appeal to children of all ages. These include music-related items, plush toys and books.

For children two years old and up, a well-rounded toy selection should also include playthings from the following groups:

- Pretend/dress-up play
- Arts and crafts
- Blocks
- Science and nature play
- Outdoor toys for active play
- Puzzles, games, and construction toys. □



Academics

Learning about time

Time is something that cannot be seen or felt. Its passing is measured artificially by clocks and calendars.

Early mankind measured time only in the natural cycles of day and night and the rhythmic occurrence of the seasons.

A journey was three days walk; an event took place during the last full moon.

Time during the day was measured by the passage of the sun. Longer periods were measured from new moon to new moon, from season to season.

Now when many families live in cities, the cycle of seasons is less apparent.

We use calendars instead of moon phases to measure off the months, and clocks to measure off the days.

Children measure their time by the events of their days that begin at waking-up time and end with bedtime.

Their day does not include twenty-four hours but only the hours between waking and sleeping.

To expand a child's concept of time, begin with answers to the ques-

tion: "How long until _____?"

To answer questions like this, use a large calendar. Circle the date of the holiday, visit or special event that is anticipated. Mark off all days of the month that have already passed.

Hang the calendar within easy reach so that each night before she goes to bed, the child can X out the days remaining.

As you do this, you are teaching duration of time over periods longer than one day and the child can begin to learn the concept of how time progresses in steady, measured segments. □



It Wasn't My Fault

By Helen Lester,
Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger
Houghton Mifflin, 1985

You and your children will laugh your way through this story about Murdley Gurdson.

When things don't go well for him, it's usually his fault, but he won't admit it.

Not until the day a bird laid an egg on his head, but said it wasn't her fault. The reason was that a horrible aardvark had screamed and scared her.

When they found the aardvark, he said it wasn't his fault either, as the nasty hippo had stepped on his tail and a scream just popped out.

Tracing back through the animals' excuses, we come full circle to Murdley, who finishes by repeating that it is not his fault, although he clearly caused the whole chain of events.

Learning to take responsibility for their actions is a difficult task for little children.

Perhaps the first evidence that they understand right and wrong comes as children vehemently deny that they have in fact done anything that had a negative result.

But being accountable for actions and making amends is an important part of developing self-control.

Parents do well when they help children accept responsibility by using consequences as part of their guidance methods.

There are two kinds of consequences: natural and logical.

With natural consequences, things just happen as a result of the child's actions. When Murdley stuffed things in the closet, they were naturally going to fall out on his head.

Parents don't have to do much about this, other than perhaps verbalize cause and effect: "Hmmm—guess things fall down when they're not put away in the right place. Better get that fixed."

There is more of a role for parents in devising the logical consequences that provide the needed experience to help a child correct an error or make amends for actions.

It's important to understand that we are talking not about finding an appropriate punishment, but rather structuring a learning situation for the child that links behavior and the necessary resulting action.

A matter-of-fact attitude helps children understand that fixing mistakes is just one of the things that people have to do.

So it is: "I know you didn't mean to spill the milk, Emma, but it needs to be cleaned up. Here's the sponge."

Or: "When you grabbed the book away from the baby, you made her fall and bump her hand. What can you do to make her feel better?"

Logical consequences avoid the temptation for us to devise an appropriate lecture or sermon, and also prevent our increasing children's guilt feelings.

As we concentrate on helping children follow through on accepting responsibility, we all avoid the blame game, with us pointing fingers and children feeling the need to deny culpability.

There's one other way to minimize the "it wasn't my fault's." That is to keep away from asking children direct questions to which we already know (or suspect) the answers.

"Who made the mess on the kitchen table?" is bound to elicit nothing but "Not me!"

Rather, let's go with no-fault policies that don't focus on pointing fingers, but on finding solutions.

Not a bad lesson for both parents and kids. □



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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

www.growingchild.com

Putting feelings into words

Faulty patterns of communication begin in childhood. You can begin now to help your child learn to communicate her thoughts and feelings clearly and accurately.

Without thinking, adults often forget to treat children like human beings with valid opinions to offer.

Children are often left out of decisions that affect them. It's not fair to you, the rest of the family, or to your child to allow her to rule situations as can happen when parents are hesitant to set limits.

But it is fair to all concerned to allow each family member to have a say in matters that concern them, when appropriate.

For example, if your child is very shy and quiet, something as simple as encouraging her to tell you some foods she'd enjoy having for meals and snacks can be an important step in helping her begin to express herself.

If she's more verbal, asking her a question such as what she thinks and feels about adults who talk to you about her as if she weren't there ("What a pretty little girl!") can further open the lines of communication between you.

Encourage her to share positive feelings about herself — joys and accomplishments as well as worries, fears, and anxieties.

If she isn't used to putting her thoughts and feelings into words, be patient.

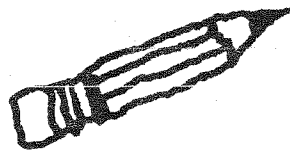
You will help her learn to share more of her needs, desires, feelings and opinions by showing her that you really are interested in them. □

Will it float?

Children are natural scavengers, so why not make them collectors for a purpose?

Suggest that children look around for things that are expendable — twigs, leaves, stones, egg shells, pencils, straws, popsicle sticks, aluminum plates, ping pong ball, napkin, comb, and so on.

The objective is to predict whether or not these objects will float. To test the prediction, use a large container with water and check floating vs. sinking.



In addition to the actual experience, kids will learn about the words that describe water. For example, you can discuss the different sounds made by water—splashing, bubbling, dropping, roaring, and trickling.

How about the way water feels? Hot, cold, lukewarm, icy, fast running, slow running.

What are the various uses of water? To drink, play in, wash clothes, cook with, water gardens, clean windows and take a bath.

And finally, how many places can you name where water is found? Lakes, oceans, streams, inside plumbing, puddles, dams, ditches, ponds, fountains, and so on. □

Pizza party!

There's no denying it: kids love pizza.

For a grand pizza party, make these mini-pizzas together. Serve with peeled fruit, such as apple slices and easy-to-eat grapes or melon balls. (Grapes or melon balls not for children under three.)

While you're eating, read the lively story, **Curious George and the Pizza** by H. L. Rey.

Afterwards, settle the children down for naptime with a quiet activity like drawing pictures of the little monkey on his big pizza adventure.

Here's how to make the pizza:

Preschooler mini-pizzas

Toast whole wheat English muffin or pita bread.

Spread with spaghetti sauce (from a jar).

Sprinkle with pre-shredded mozzarella cheese.

Broil until the cheese bubbles.

Be very, very careful with little ones — the cheese needs to cool before they dig in! (Also be sure to keep hot plates and serving utensils out of reach — they're very, very hot too!) □

Something New!

"Grandma Says" is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children's book reviews. To receive your free issues, go to:

www.GrowingChild.com/

FreeGrandmaSays

and enter your e-mail address.


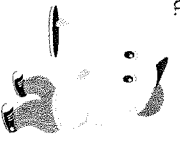
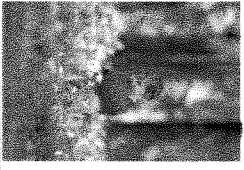


Student's Name _____

March 2011

Get Moving Today Activity Calendar

Complete and initial ATLEAST 10 of the activities & return the calendar at the end of the month and your child can pick out a free book!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Duplicated with permission from Head Start Body Start (HSBS). For more information about quality K-12 physical education visit www.haspe.org. For more information about lifelong and inclusive physical activity visit www.aapaf.org</p>						
<p>6 Find a ball and a place where you can practice bouncing it. Can you make the ball bounce really high? Really low? Can you bounce it more than one time in a row? This is called dribbling.</p>	<p>7 Loud and soft – first walk on your tip toes trying to be really quiet, then stomp using your whole foot trying to be really loud.</p>	<p>8 Using a scarf or handkerchief practice your self toss and catch skills. Watch the scarf with your eyes and move your body so the scarf can land in your hands.</p>	<p>9 Leaping! Put pillows on the floor and practice your leaping skills. Push off of your back leg and reach with your front leg.</p>	<p>10 Put a t-shirt on the ground, put your hands on the shirt, and run as you push the shirt around the room.</p>	<p>11 Using the t-shirt from yesterday put rolled up socks on the shirt as two people hold the shirt and try to fling the socks into the air.</p>	<p>12 Work on your ball rolling skills today. Roll a ball back and forth with someone or set up some targets and try to knock them down.</p>
<p>13 Ask someone to go for a walk with you and as your walk make up a little song about moving and having fun together.</p> 	<p>14 Make a tunnel with a blanket and some chairs. Crawl through it, run around it, crab walk to it!</p>	<p>15 Where is your ____? When your parent/caregiver says the name of a body part it is your job to put that body part on the floor. Or change it so that body part has to be up high.</p>	<p>16 Work on your jumping today. How high can you jump? How far can you jump? How many times can you jump in a row?</p>	<p>17 Movement Memory – One person does three movements as the other person watches. Now it is this person's turn to repeat those movements.</p>	<p>18 Work on your locomotor skills – go outside and practice walking, running, galloping, skipping, jumping and hopping.</p>	<p>19 Get outside and pick up trash in your yard.</p> 
<p>20 Take a few minutes today to lie on the floor and really stretch your body from head to toe. Take some deep breaths and relax as you reach and then relax, reach and then relax.</p>	<p>21 Pretend to have a beach party! Turn on some beach music and dance. Pretend to surf and swim as your work your body.</p>	<p>22 Be a superhero! Think about all of your favorite superhero's and then spend some time moving just like they would.</p>	<p>23 Work on your tossing and catching skills with someone. Toss it right to their hands.</p>	<p>24 Using rolled up socks and a basket work on throwing to a target. Try it close and then far away.</p>	<p>25 Pickup marbles with your fingers and toes. Lie on the floor and blow the marbles across the floor.</p>	<p>26 Go outside and look for signs of spring. Move like the things you see.</p> 
<p>27 Pull a wagon around outside as you pick up sticks and trash. Create an obstacle course with the things you find.</p>	<p>28 Twins – for 2-5 minutes pretend as if you are connected to someone else and the two of you have to move exactly the same way. Be ready to laugh!</p>	<p>29 Make it backwards day. Move from room to room backwards, try it high and low, fast and slow.</p>	<p>30 Using your favorite stuffed animals make a throwing obstacle course. Use rolled up socks and try to knock down all the animals.</p>	<p>31 Repeat your favorite activity this month!</p>	