



CCCC E-Newsletter July, 2007 Issue

Greetings from Community Connection for Child Care! Field trips give children an opportunity to learn in the way they learn best - first-hand experience. They open children's eyes to their community and widen their horizons. They expose children to careers and how things work. Best of all, field trips are exciting and fun. A traditional field trip for many preschool programs and family child care providers is the Kern County Fair, which kicks off Wednesday, September 19 with the "Rock Around The Clock" theme. The Fair runs three "Kid's Days" where child admission is free from 9 a.m. to 12 noon! A little advanced planning your field trip to the Fair can be a successful occasion that the children (and adults) will remember with pleasure! Here are some suggestions:

- Use the field trip as part of a long-term topic or theme activity (for example, farm animal theme, down on the farm, growing food).
- Plan trips based on the ages of the children. Consider the developmental level of your children. Children enjoy hands-on and interactive activities rather than watching or listening to someone else.
- Establish a safe and direct route to and from the Fairgrounds.
- Maintain adult to child ratios needed to insure the safety and well being of the children. Plan to add either extra staff or parent volunteers since safety is a special concern (crowded area, limited visibility, etc.).
- Post trip information by the telephone in the office area or other pre-established location. Include route, destination, departure and return times, a list of the children and adults involved, field trip permission slips, and a cell phone number if available.
- Provide tags for each child with the name and phone number of your child care facility. Never put name tags on the children. This makes it easier for strangers to approach, familiarizing themselves by using the child's name.
- If you need to visually identify the children, have them wear the same color shirts on the day of the trip. (If your program has the funds to print T-shirts, they are also a great marketing tool!) You can make tee shirts for your group by purchasing basic white t-shirts and tie-dying them with the children or decorating them with colorful paint hand prints from the children. Either way you will have a distinctive shirt that is easy to spot in a crowd. Double check fabric/craft paints to be sure they are non toxic. You can also use CCCC's Resource Lending Library to create buttons with your facility/program name and phone number that each child can wear and then reuse each year.
- Make sure that any parent volunteers are all familiar to each child.
- Carry a first aid kit, health consent forms and emergency information for each child with you in a binder along with a picture of each child.
- Remember that use of sunscreen requires parental permission.
- Plan to keep food/lunches cold and safe. Make arrangements for handwashing if running water is not available.
- Plan for frequent rest and water breaks between activities.

Until next time, our best to you and yours --
The staff of Community Connection for Child Care

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^THIS MONTH'S FEATURES^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

CCCC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Save the date! The 2007 Kern County Child Development Conference will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2007. This all-day conference for early childhood professionals, child care providers and anyone who works with children will celebrate 10 years of creative learning to promote the growth and development of young children to reach their potential. This year's event is sponsored by Kern First 5 .

The conference will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with registration beginning at 7:00 a.m. at Holiday Inn Select and Rabobank Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Avenue in Bakersfield. The conference will bring together state and local experts in early childhood development as well as Kern County early childhood educators in three English and Spanish workshop sessions. The conference will

have a number of extras you will want to check out that day such as educational information to pick up, a raffle of Lakeshore Learning Materials gift certificates and vendors of books, toys and many other items for sale. Attendees can also receive one-half credit for attending.

This year's keynote speaker is Constant Hine M.A., Educational Trainer, Keynote Speaker, Consultant and Coach who will help us explore how we can and do make a difference - by being ALL of who we are. She will remind us how we are always making a difference with intention and awareness or unintentionally with lack of awareness. She'll help us reflect and become more aware how to make a difference in a way that is a contribution, from our hearts, in love and care for others. It's not always in what we do, but so often in our attitudes and who we are with one another. Let's be the true gem we each are shining from within.

Don't wait! Register today by accessing the English/Spanish 2007 KCCD Program and Registration at <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/cccc/ConferenceProgram.pdf> and <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/cccc/ProgramInsert.pdf>

UPCOMING TRAINING

As of July 23, 2007, CCCC those interested in registering for training workshops will need to call 861.5330 and leave your name, address and phone number. CCCC will then mail each person a postcard that states whether or not he/she is registered for the training.

Visit the website to send an on-line request at [http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader\\$1279](http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader$1279)

FEATURED QUESTION

"My daycare has babies, preschoolers and school age kids. Any tips on managing mixed-age groups?" - Virginia, Family Child Care Home Provider

Having children of various ages and stages of development is very common in family child care home programs and provides a unique set of challenges and benefits for the caregiver. Daily challenges include difficulty finding snack items that are appropriate for all age groups, planning structured activities when there are children with various ability levels and interests and having daily routines such as nap or meal times that are flexible enough to accommodate different aged children. The provider must also take extra safety precautions when there are infants or toddlers in care and older children may prefer same age peers and resent the younger child in a play group.

Despite these challenges, mixed-age group care is more like a home setting and often a more comfortable and secure setting for young children. By design, mixed-age group care is geared more to the needs of individuals. Children in such groups have greater freedom to develop at their own rate. Multi-age groups offer children opportunities to develop and practice social skills because younger children are challenged by older children and often engage in more complex activities than when they play with same age peers.

Tips for caring for mixed-age groups

1. Provide a wide range of choices. Most caregivers find that most of the day is comprised of unstructured "free play" where they provide a wide range of materials and activities that are appropriate for various children.
2. Provide some materials that are used specifically for an age group. Not all toys or areas need to be "one size fits all." It is fine to have some toys that are of specific interest for only one age group.
3. Consider ages of children when you set up the childcare space. Safety is paramount. Scissors that are used by school-aged children may need to be stored out of the reach of toddlers. Materials that are safe and appropriate for younger children can be arranged in easy to reach bins or containers. You may want to provide smaller sized furniture and step stools for younger children too.

4. Select toys and materials that are open ended and can be used in many ways. Balls, art materials, blocks can be used by children with various abilities, they will use the material in increasingly complex ways.
5. Focus on individual or small group activities. Asking a group of children of differing ages to participate together may bore older children or frustrate younger children.
6. Use the opportunities to promote cooperation and team work. Encourage children to help each other and solve problems together.
7. Accept the fact you may need to be flexible when scheduling daily routines. Meeting the needs of individual children may mean you need to veer from routine. You may find a need to prepare an extra snack for an afterschool child or set up a quiet area for the youngster who still needs a nap.

Source: Joni Levine, Child Care Lounge, <http://www.childcarelounge.com/articles/mixedage.htm>

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^CHECK THIS OUT^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Chinese Vegetable Stir-Fry

- 4 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup carrots, sliced
- 1 cup cauliflower florets
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 cup red bell pepper, cut in chunks
- 1 cup sugar peas, stems removed

Sauce

- 3/4 cup pineapple juice
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. light soy sauce

Combine all ingredients for the sauce in a mixing bowl. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and celery, cook for 2 minutes. Add bell pepper and sugar peas, cook for 2 more minutes. Add sauce, bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute, covered. Serve vegetables hot over rice. Yield: 2 1/2 cups. For more recipe ideas, check out our Get Ready, Get Set, Get Fit 4 Life website at [http://www.everydaylearning.net/stories/storyReader\\$95](http://www.everydaylearning.net/stories/storyReader$95)

MOVIN' & GROOVIN'

Activity 1

Catching the Dragon's Tail

Gather 10 or more children in a line. Each person places hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. The first in line is the "head" of the dragon; the last is the "tail." The head tries to catch the tail by maneuvering the line around so he can tag the tail player. When the tail is tagged, the tail player moves to the front of the dragon to become the new head. The old head is now in second.

Activity 2 (Share with families)

Mirror Movements

The child and you decide who will be the mover and another one is the follower. Play music and mover will make different movements that the follower will copy. When the music stops, freeze. Then trade places and move to the new music. Play a variety of music, inviting children to adjust their movements to different tempos and sounds. For more fun physical activity ideas, visit our Get Ready, Get Set, Get Fit 4 Life website at [http://kcsos.kern.org/everydaylearning/stories/storyReader\\$40](http://kcsos.kern.org/everydaylearning/stories/storyReader$40)

INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

Communicating with parents of a child who has special needs is the most important key to a successful experience.

- * Help parents match their needs, expectations and priorities with the strengths of the child care program
- * Acquire information and training from parents of children with disabilities
- * Maintain confidentiality
- * Use the parents as volunteers within the program
- * Communicate regularly with parents about their child: Child's strengths, Child's weaknesses, Child's needs and Child's development
- * Don't be afraid to share fears and concerns
- * Let parents know the policies and day to day routines of the child care program and encourage their input as to how to make as many of these as possible accessible to their child
- * Find out what the child is good at, and particularly likes or has difficulty with
- * Find out how the child communicates his needs and desires:
 - *Pleasure
 - *Hunger
 - *Toileting needs
 - *Anger
 - *Frustration
- * Have staff document each day what is working well, and what areas within the daily routine have difficulties. Ask parents for suggestions and brainstorm on how to improve difficult situations and come up with solutions.

Source: Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project

For more activities and resources for working with children with special needs check out the 2007 Literacy Calendar at <http://www.everydaylearning.net/literacycalendar>

SCHOOL READINESS

Pasta Math - Teach numbers with noodles!

By Ellen Booth Church (Scholastic.Com)

Pasta is always a big hit with little kids. Various shaped dried pastas can be counted, compared, sorted, patterned, weighed and measured. And preparing a pasta recipe can open the door for kids to learn fractions, sequence, measurement, and more. What follow are ideas for both learning and eating - mangia!

Weigh it! Encourage your child to make a mathematical estimation by asking: Which weighs more, dry or wet pasta? Before actually weighing it to see, ask your child to hold about ten wet pieces of pasta in one hand and ten dry pieces in the other. Which feels heavier? Then get out a balance scale and check out his estimation. What makes one piece of pasta heavier than the other?

Sort and classify: Put a wide assortment of different sizes, shapes, and colors of pasta in a bowl. Invite your child to examine and explore the sizes and shapes, encouraging her to tell you about what she notices. Use the important math vocabulary words of big, medium, small, and even tiny. You can explore the seriation of sizes by creating a sequence or line of pastas from small to smaller to smallest. You will be teaching important skills that help your child understand how numbers increase and decrease in value in a number line.

Next try asking your child how many different ways can you group the shapes and colors together. Provide a muffin tin or egg carton so she can sort the pastas by category. Encourage her to try many different ways to sort, based on color, shape and size.

Pasta pattern necklaces: Making a pasta pattern necklace invites your child to use mathematical patterning skills as he strings the different shapes in a repeating pattern (such as long, long, short; long, long, short) onto yarn. When he begins to understand the predictability of patterns, he can then relate this understanding to the beginning recognition of how numbers follow a pattern of tens. This activity is

great small muscle practice, too! He is using the same small muscle skills that will help him learn how to hold a pencil and write her numbers.

Read and eat: While you enjoy one of the delicious pasta dishes below, or one of your own creation, try reading a noodle-themed storybook such as *Strega Nona*, by Tomie De Paola; *Alice in Pasta Land (A Math Adventure)*, by Alexandra Wright; or *More Spaghetti, I Say!* by Rita Golden Gelman.

WORKING WITH SCHOOL AGE

Tie-dyed Socks

What you need: Plastic bowl or pan, nontoxic fabric dye, white socks, rubber bands, pennies, rubber gloves and plastic spoon

Begin by covering the work area with newspaper. In a plastic bowl or pan, dissolve a packet of nontoxic fabric dye in hot water, according to the package directions. Add more hot water until there is enough to cover a couple of pairs of socks. Dampen the white socks with clear warm water, then bundle them up in rubber bands. To make stripes, wrap three or four rubber bands around the foot and top of the sock. To make circles (great for the heels), pinch a section of the sock and tie, about an inch down, with a rubber band. For a pattern of tiny rings, slip pennies or buttons into the socks and wrap bands around them. Wearing rubber gloves, submerge the bound socks in the warm dye and stir occasionally with a plastic spoon. After 20 minutes or so (the color will lighten after the fabric is rinsed and dried), run them under cool water, squeezing until the water runs clear. Remove the bands (and any pennies), smooth out the socks, and rest them flat on newspaper. Let them dry overnight. Pre-wash the socks separately from the rest of the laundry the first few times to prevent damage from bleeding dye.

Source: DisneyFamily.Com

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

How to Write a Newsletter for Your Daycare

Here is how to create a newsletter that will inform and involve parents.

- * Keep you newsletter brief, under 3 pages is best.
- * Include a calendar of important events, closings or celebrations.
- * If you serve lunch or snacks, include a menu.
- * Use the front page for policy reminders or important announcements.
- * Encourage input from both staff and families.
- * Include children's artwork.
- * Highlight milestones and accomplishments of children and staff.
- * Be sure to welcome any newcomers to your program.

Tips:

- * By inviting parents to write a feature, or post a newsworthy item, you are promoting interest and involvement.
- * Newsletters can be a great marketing tool. Share them with prospective families, local agencies and businesses
- * View some newsletter samples at <http://www.childcarelounge.com/printform/newssamples.htm>

Source: Child Care Lounge