



CCCC E-Newsletter September, 2005 Issue

Greetings from Community Connection for Child Care! The first week of October is National Divorced Parents for Children Week. Divorce is not an uncommon event in families and can be a very stressful event for children. In

any child care setting, it is likely that some of the children will come from divorced families and, sometimes, a divorce will take place while a child is enrolled in your program. When caring for children of divorce, child care professionals often ask "How can I help them?," "Is this normal behavior,?" and "What signs of distress should I look for?"

It can be confusing for children to deal with divorce and caregivers may notice either subtle or extreme changes in the behavior of children during the process of family divorce. Child care providers can help parents notice children's feelings. Behaviors depend on age, temperament, and resources, but children are especially vulnerable to the following feelings:

1. Sadness-Overwhelming sadness may manifest itself as whining, crying or withdrawal.
2. Guilt-"I must have done something wrong for my parents to get a divorce."
3. Fear-"What if my parent divorces me, too?" "What if I have to give up my room, my things, my friends, my other parent?"
4. Embarrassment-"Nobody else has parents who live in two different houses."
5. Anger-"I hate anyone who hurts me and I don't trust anyone or anything I don't understand."
6. Depression-Headaches, stomach aches, and low morale, extreme feelings of sadness, low self-worth, and continued emotional or physical isolation.
7. Denial-"Leave me alone! My Mom and Dad will get back together."
8. Maturity-Becoming the little adult.
9. Regression-"Babyisms" in speech and behavior.

Changes during divorce can feel very uncomfortable and children may be caught in the middle of parental conflicts. A sensitive care provider can establish a safe, secure and familiar place for the child to rest and give the child extra understanding and patience. Researchers have found that it is best for the child to be close to at least one parent during a divorce. That is not always possible, though. At that time, the bond with a child care provider may be the most stable relationship for the child during a divorce and may be the only secure place for the child. You may be the familiar, comforting figure in the child's world-a world that is now confusing. The time spent in your child care setting may be very important. You can provide some of the help that the parent cannot provide.

Divorce can also cause major changes in the parents' schedules and child care arrangements to help the parents in their new situation and you may have to work with both parents. You will need to know which parent will pick up the child, and who will drop him off on what days. What if a parent has a crisis on the job while the child is in his or her custody? Will you offer flexible or extended times of childcare? Should you let the child go home with the other parent? You need to know who pays for childcare, when the child will be in which home, and whom to contact during an emergency. All of these issues are important.

Divorce might also be an issue in child care long after it has occurred. You might need to help a child deal with a new parent when a divorced parent remarries. In all of these situations, you may wonder how to help the child. You also might wonder how to support the parents during this time of major change in the family. *Sources: Nithyakala Karuppaswamy with Judith A. Myers-Walls, Provider-Parent Partnerships Web site and Cindy Strasheim, Extension Educator, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension*

Below are web sites with additional information on how divorce affects children of various ages, tips on helping children through this time, ideas about how to talk to parents, and some background on a few legal issues.

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/providerparent/Family-Child%20Relationships/Divorce.htm>

<http://ianrpubs.unl.edu/family/nf549.htm>

<http://www.nccc.org/Parent/visitdo.html>

Until next time, our best to you and yours --

The staff of Community Connection for Child Care

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

KCSOS PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

The Child Care Food Program

The Child Care Food Program is a nationwide program funded by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and provides cash reimbursement for meals served to children in licensed family day care homes. You are reimbursed for meals and snacks served to children ages 12 years and younger. The food must meet USDA guidelines for good nutrition. The amount (rate) you receive for each meal or snack, may change annually and your Community Connection for Child Care Food Representative will tell you the current rate.

The great thing is that you receive a check for each month that you send us an approved set of menus - meeting USDA guidelines. Your check amount will vary, based on the number of meals and children served. The first month is a learning experience, and may require extra time for planning and record keeping. Once you are familiar with forms, a few minutes each day is all that is needed!

It's a Great Program because:

- *You receive money to help you purchase food for children in your care
- *You will learn more about good nutrition
- *You will get new "kid friendly" recipe ideas
- *You will be able to serve nutritious meals and snacks in spite of food costs
- *You will receive a CCCC newsletter
- *You will have the chance to meet and share ideas with other Family Child Care providers

- *The children get delicious, nutritious meals and snacks
- *The children will develop good eating habits
- *The children will have the chance to try and enjoy new food
- *The children will develop strong bodies, good teeth and alert minds

For more information about the program and enrolling, check out the CCCC Food Program website at <http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/food>

FEATURED QUESTION

How can I help my kids go from one activity to another smoothly, like from lunch to nap?

Teresa-Child Care Center Teacher

Transitional activities can be positive and exciting ways of moving children from one activity to another. They can make finishing one activity and moving on to another activity a learning experience and an adventure. Transitional songs, games, finger-plays and conversations can

make the day flow more smoothly, occupying hands and minds while children wait to finish clean-up, or gather for a group activity or wait for lunch to be served.

Examine Your Daily Schedule

- Determine the number of transitions in your schedule each day
- Determine how many minutes are spent in each transition (Begin timing at the end of one activity, and continue until a new activity begins.)
- By simple observation, determine which transition times are the most difficult for individual children; for the group; for child care staff
- Talk about why these transitions are more challenging than other transitions

Begin to Make Changes

- Consolidate activities so there are fewer transitions
- Try to reduce the amount of time children have to wait - plan activities to do while waiting
- Write out lesson plans for difficult transition activities - Plan ahead - Anticipate
- When children become bored with one transition activity, switch to another
- Establish a daily routine
- Plan a consistent schedule for transitions (A pictorial schedule, hung from a ribbon around a child's neck, may help to remind the child of when to transition to each activity)
- Alert child, in advance, of any transitions
- Set limits and enforce them consistently
- Give clear, concise, simple directions; state them slowly and clearly
- Give auditory and visual reminders
- Use props and cues to assist children with special needs
- Team children of varying abilities up in a buddy system
- Move along with the children to model appropriate actions
- Develop a "bag of tricks" to be used specifically during wait times
- Provide "fidget toys" to children, as needed, during wait times that stimulate the senses (smell, vision, hearing, touch,). You may want to keep a bag of age-appropriate fidget toys with you for children to use during transition and waiting times. Possible fidget toys could include: Play Dough/Silly Putty, Hologram Stickers/Rulers, Koosh Critters/Koosh Balls, Bendable Figures, Balloon Balls (Fill with one part flour to one part sugar), Rubber Cars, Wikki Stix, Clay, Large Elastic Bands

Ideas from Other Providers

- As each child arrives, bend down and say "Hi" or "Hello" along with his or her first name. (If any of your children speak a language other than English, greet each one in their own language. You might also use English.) Try your best to help each child feel welcome and safe. You could also make a comment such as, "I'm so glad to see you today" or "We've got so many plans for today. I'm glad you're here to do them with us." Or say, "(Child's name), you knew just where to put your tote bag and sweater! Thank you for remembering."
- Sing this song to the tune of "Do You Know the Muffin Man?" to help children wait:
- *Do you know my Shannon, my Shannon, my Shannon?*
- *Do you know my Shannon? She goes to Ronna's daycare.*
- *Yes! I know my Chad, my Chad, my Chad.*
- *Yes! I know my Chad. He goes to the child care center.*
- To get everyone's attention when we need to make a transition, we turn the lights off for one to two seconds. We have large windows so the room is never very dark. They know when the lights go out they need to stop, be quiet, and listen for the teacher's directions. It's a

great safety feature too. If the power ever goes out for any reason, we know they will not panic but will look to the teacher for directions.

- Give children a five minute warning before clean-up time to make the transition easier.
- Stamp children's hands when they participate in clean-up.
- Tell children that if they clean-up they will get to pick out a special activity from a box. Fill the box with slips of paper with several fun (short) activities. Have a child pull a slip when clean-up is finished or before if another incentive is needed.
- A parent gave us a copy of the "Bob the Builder" theme song. We use it for our cleanup song with these words, "Can we clean up? Yes we can!" It's very upbeat and the children love it. The song talks about working together, etc.
- Sing the following to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot"
*I'm a little helper
See me clean
I can pick-up and not be mean
When we're finished
You will see
A nice clean room for you and me*
- Use a wooden train set to transition to nap time. One by one, each child gets to be the conductor. As they finish their circle, the conductor lays down on his or her mat until they are all down for a nap.
- Have a picture board available to the children where you velcro picture clues. As you finish one activity, take the picture down and hang a picture for the next activity for the children to see what's coming next. For example - use pictures of toys for free time; pictures of food for meals or snacks; crayon pictures for art; musical notes for singing or dancing, etc.
- As each child is ready to leave, say, "So long" or "Good-bye" along with her or his first name. Help the child know how much you enjoyed your day and hope that he or she did too. For example, "See you tomorrow two days - next Tuesday" or "Remember to tell your family about all the games we played outside today." Or say, "Be sure to tell your mom how much you enjoyed painting at the easel." Help make the "comings and goings" of the children in your care positive times for everyone.

Sources: *The Better Kid Care Program and WCCIP, March 1998 with funding from the WI Dept. of WFD, Office of Child Care, and DHFS*

MONTHLY PLANNER FOR OCTOBER

*October is Family History Month. Related group time activities and songs are listed at <http://www.123child.com/selfconcept/family.html>

*Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15. Explore a variety of fire prevention activities with children and share them with their families http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson026.shtml#activities

*October is National Child Health Month. Check out these related themes for more great ideas that fit into the health theme <http://www.123child.com/selfconcept/health.html>

*October is also National Apple Month. Celebrate the month with these math, science and reading activities <http://www.123child.com/fall/apple.html>

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

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Hearty Vegetable Soup

2 cans of pinto beans or cooked dry pinto beans

1-1/2 cups water

1 qt. chicken soup broth

1/4 cup dry lentils
1/4 cup barley
1/4 cup onion, diced
1/2 cup fresh carrots, diced
1/4 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup white potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 Tbsp tomato paste
1/2 tsp white pepper
1/2 cup frozen corn
1/2 cup frozen cut green beans
1/2 cup fresh cabbage, shredded

In large saucepan, bring 1 1/2 cups water and chicken broth to a boil. Add pinto beans, lentils, barley, onions, carrots, celery, potatoes, tomato paste, and white pepper, let simmer for 20 minutes. Add corn, green beans, and cabbage and simmer, covered for 15 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Serve with Tuna Melts (tuna and cheese melted on English muffin), applesauce and milk. Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable. For more meal and snack ideas:

[http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader\\$36](http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader$36)

KEEPING KIDS BUSY

Singing as a Teaching Tool

It doesn't take an experienced musician to sing with young children. Anyone can sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and make the motions of rowing a boat. Parents and teachers can lead many singing and musical games, even if they consider themselves nonmusical.

Music is a great way to engage young children because it is a natural and enjoyable part of their everyday lives. Children hear music or sing while watching television, riding in the car, at school, and as part of bedtime rituals. We often hear children creating their own songs and incorporating music in their play. Music is a socially engaging way to learn, and especially appropriate for the developmental levels of young children.

The concept of using music to teach is not new. Many young children learn to recite the alphabet by singing the ABCs, and educational television programs for young children, such as Sesame Street, use a lot of music in their programming. Researchers have found that music can help children learn multiplication tables and improve early literacy skills. Many adults still remember lessons connected to music from their childhood.

Music helps many children break information down into easily remembered pieces or associate it with previously known information, such as a familiar song. One study found that using familiar melodies helped five-year-olds learn phone numbers at a faster rate than using no music or unfamiliar melodies.

Singing with children can be an especially fun and valuable experience. When you sing with young children, you can adjust the speed and volume to fit their abilities. You don't need to sound like a professional singer. As long as you are enthusiastic, young children will enjoy it, and want to sing along.

You can also pair singing with movement or visual aids that stimulate the senses. This allows children to not only hear the music, but also feel and move to the rhythms, and see, touch, and play the instruments.

Singing also gives you lots of opportunities to teach new words to young children. By taking familiar songs (such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Frere Jacques/Are You Sleeping?" "Three Blind Mice" or other songs from your childhood) and changing or adding words, you can introduce new vocabulary in a way that makes it easy for children to follow along.

You can create individualized songs that will engage children and boost their memories. Fill your songs with people (for example, family members, teachers or friends), objects (clothing, furniture, cars or bikes), daily rituals (brushing teeth, bedtime), and special events (holidays, going on a field trip) that are an important part of children's lives.

While music is a great way to introduce new words, it can also contribute to children's progress and learning in many different areas. Music supports self-expression, cooperative play, creativity, emotional well being, and development of social, cognitive, communication, and motor skills. Music and singing are a fun and effective way to help young children learn.
Excerpted from "Music as a Teaching Tool: Creating Story Songs" by Shelly Ringgenberg - an article in the NAEYC journal, Young Children. Early Years Are Learning Years™ is a regular series from NAEYC (www.naeyc.org) with tips for parents on giving young children a great start on learning.

For more activity ideas, visit our CCCC Activity of the Month:

[http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader\\$764](http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader$764)

SCHOOL READINESS

Parents and Caregivers Working Together for Kindergarten (ages 4 & 5)

Marvelous Messes

Here are some recipes guaranteed to encourage children to Experiment, Explore, Examine and Experience. Help children vocalize what they think of the different mixtures - cold, soft, squishy, liquid, powder, etc. This improves a child's vocabulary and strengthens reading and comprehension skills.

Activity #1

Feelie Bags

Karo syrup or hair gel, zip lock sandwich bags, small plastic toys, glitter, sequins, etc.

What to do: Pour syrup or gel into bag, add sequins, glitter, plastic toys, etc. Close and seal bag with clear shipping tape.

Variations:

Use jello instead of syrup or hair gel. Prepare jello as instructed on package. Store in refrigerator. When set, spoon into bags (as above) and allow the kids to squish to their heart's content. Re-set jello by storing bag back in the refrigerator.

Use cornstarch, sugar and water. You'll need 4 cups of cornstarch, 1 cup sugar, and 12 cups water. Mix together the water and sugar in a saucepan, add the cornstarch while stirring over med/high heat. It takes about 20 minutes. Mixture will look creamy and white. Divide into

separate ziploc bags and add food coloring while still warm. Let cool after you color it. Keep stored in ziploc bags.

Caution: adults should do the cooking.

Activity #2 (refer to parent to do with child/ren at home)

Birdseed

Pour birdseed into a large open container (a sweater storage box works great). Give the kids things from the kitchen to scoop, pour, mix and sift the birdseed.

Variation: Fill a sweater box with cotton balls. Give the children tongs, chopsticks or small plastic spoons and let them practice with these unfamiliar tools.

Check out CCCC's Learning Tools for Kindergarten Readiness handbook for more ideas:
<http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/cccc/KindergartenReadinessActivit.pdf>

BUSINESS RESOURCES FROM REDLEAF NATIONAL INSTITUTE

<http://www.redleafinstitute.org>

How will rising gas prices influence how you will claim car expenses on your 2005 taxes?

The Impact of High Gas Prices

<http://www.redleafinstitute.org/index.cfm?page=elibrary&category=newslink#article1>

Tax Tip

House Cleaning

The approach of fall is the time to do yard work to prepare for the upcoming cold weather or to conduct major house cleaning. Any expense associated with the cleaning, repairing, or maintaining of your home is partly a business deduction. This can include: lawn mower, gas for lawn mower, garden rake, hoe, shovel, garbage bags, mulch, window cleaner, paper towels, floor polish, replacing storm windows, new glass, etc.

More from Redleaf National Institute <http://www.redleafpress.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=153>

Community Connection for Child Care is a child development and family services agency dedicated to providing options, education and support to children, families, child development professionals and the community. CCCC is a program operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Office of Larry E. Reider. <http://www.kern.org>