



CCCC E-Newsletter October, 2006 Issue

Greetings from Community Connection for Child Care! A strong connection between families and child care providers is essential for building a positive environment for young children. But too often, parents and program staff do not effectively communicate with each other, thereby limiting opportunities for developing open, respectful, and

trusting relationships. Miscommunication, or limited communication between adults, can lead to situations that adversely affect all of the parties involved.

The Family's Role

- Help your caregiver get to know your child. Make a one page diagram of your child - place a picture of your child in the middle of the page with your child's name and age underneath (see example on next page). Draw lines from the outer edges of the picture and form small boxes around the picture with different categories, such as: Favorite Foods (apples, pizza), and Favorite Activities (painting, building). This is a fun and creative way to let a provider know about your child.
- Talk with the people who care for your child on a daily basis about eating habits, behavior, activities, learning of new skills, friends, or other "happenings" in your child's day.
- Develop good two-way communication about your goals for your child, your childrearing practices, and family preferences in order to minimize conflicts and confusion for children.
- Families of young children should view themselves as promoters of quality child care. If you feel the quality has changed, or is being compromised, talk with the provider or center director.
- If possible, actively participate in your child's program. For example, you can volunteer to make toys, games or food; attend parents' meetings; visit for lunch; go along on field trips; help in the classroom; or serve on the Board of Directors or Parents Advisory Committee.
- Let your child care provider know you appreciate his/her efforts.

The Child Care Professional's Role

- Learn as much as possible about the children in their program and get to know their families as well. Learn about good-bye rituals, or what do the parents do to comfort their child? The younger the child, the more necessary it is for professionals to acquire this knowledge through relationships with her family.
- Encourage open communication with parents. Be a good listener and avoid making judgments.
- Be sensitive to cultural and family experience differences. Reflect cultural diversity in the program with a variety of materials, toys, books, and activities.
- Encourage and find ways to include parents in program activities and program decisions. Invite them to participate in classroom activities. Ask their opinions about program improvements.
- Host a family cookout and have the children's families bring a dish to share with everyone. Encourage the adults who are important in the children's lives to come as well and so on.
- Make sure each child has a special area in your program and invite families to come and decorate that area with artwork, photographs, drawings, or other items that are reflective of that child's family and home life.
- Create and give out a newsletter to families on a regular basis letting them know about upcoming events at the program, resources in the community, and specific accomplishments and trainings that involve program staff. Some other examples of communication include: regular emails or notes sent between parents and providers, regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the child's progress and development in the program and a daily notebook goes back and forth from home to the program-providers and parents write notes to each other about the child or any other issues or concerns.

Sources: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998 and The Daily Parent, prepared by NACCRRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2005

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

The staff of Community Connection for Child Care

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

CCCC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

You're Invited!: CCCC Trick-or-Treating Event

On Friday October 27, CCCC will be hosting its annual Trick-or-Treat at the Bakersfield 24th Street office from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Child care providers and the children in their care are invited to dress up and participate. The office will be decorated with costumed staff handing out candy and goodies to the trick-or-treaters. This event is a great way for providers to learn more about CCCC services and resources and staff to connect with the providers and children we serve. Please RSVP by calling 861.5201 or 861.5202 by October 24 so we can have enough treats on hand for our visitors! Hope to see you!

UPCOMING TRAINING

Save the date! The 10th Annual Kern County Child Development Conference will be held on Saturday, November 4, 2006. 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. 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 gift certificates and vendors of books, toys and many other items for sale. Bakersfield College students can earn a half credit for attending. This year's event is sponsored by Kern First 5. For more information and to register, visit <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/cccc/1106KCCDCRegistrationProgram.pdf>

TV Training

CCCC along with KCSOS broadcasts training programs and videos for viewing every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (English) and 2:00 p.m. (Spanish). The broadcast can be viewed on the KETN Network.

October : The Whole Child Series

#1 It's the Little Things: The importance of a well-ordered and predictable environment.

#2 By Leaps & Bounds: Physical development and appropriate developmental activities, good health practices and environmental safety.

November 2006: The Whole Child Series

#1 Babies Are Children Too: The special concerns when caring for infants in groups and the importance of nurturing care.

#2 Dealing with Feelings: Activities that promote emotional health in family relations, self-expression and dealing with frustration and stress.

FEATURED QUESTION

"The kids I watch do a lot of art projects. How can I talk about them in such a way that it is an educational experience?" Dorothy-Family Friend Caregiver

Young children need to learn through their senses and art is an excellent way of doing this. Not only does art develop hand-eye coordination and awareness of physical environment, but also enhances a child's self esteem. Art stimulates both sides of the brain and studies show that children who do art read better and do better in math and science. Here are some discussion points to help children reflect on their world and themselves as well as engage them in creative problem solving.

Demonstrate your interest

Do you want to tell me about it or just show me?

What did you do first?

Stand away from your artwork, does it look different?

What is your favorite part?

Let's turn your work around so we can look at all the different sides

Talk about the art elements: line, shape, color, texture and space

I see big shapes and small shapes in your picture.

Can you count how many colors you used?

How did you make all those textures?

Look at the spaces you created in between these two forms.

Just describe what you see

I see some purple, orange and green. It looks like you mixed some "secondary" colors.

Wow you used so many different brush strokes.

You take your time and make careful decisions.

Steer away from value judgements: good/bad, like/dislike

I enjoy the way...

I appreciate how you...

I am proud of you for...

I admire...

I notice...

Look at the attention you paid to...

Source: Museum of Children's Art (MOCHA) 2005

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

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking activities are a fun and effective method of teaching nutrition to young children. Studies indicate that children who help prepare their own snacks or meals are more likely to try new foods.

"I Made It Myself" French Toast

6 slices of firm-textured wheat, white or French bread; day-old bread is fine

2 large eggs

½ cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/8 teaspoon salt (optional)

Vegetable oil cooking spray

Assorted toppings, such as jam or jelly, cinnamon sugar, powdered sugar, maple or berry syrup, margarine or butter, applesauce, sliced bananas. Fresh or frozen berries, canned or fresh sliced fruit

Set up a station so each child can dip and cook his/her own bread. In a cake pan or pie tin, whisk together eggs, milk, vanilla and salt until well blended. Dip bread slices in egg mixture, saturating both sides. Warm skillet over medium heat and coat inside with vegetable oil cooking spray. Adult cooks bread slices, turning once, until lightly browned on both sides, about 3 minutes total. Have each child select various toppings for his/her french toast and discuss their favorite flavor combinations. Makes 6 servings. 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'

Infant

Getting a Kick

Gently guide baby's feet in a cycling motion. Soon he/she will be doing it on his/her own, joyfully! It's a natural exercise in gaining muscle strength and control.

Toddler

Blowin' in the Wind

Send a feather or two along a breeze or blow bubbles. Children will love the thrill of the chase and capture!

Preschooler

Jump Bump

The child tries to bump a hanging object, such as a beach or foam ball, suspended from a low ceiling. Ask the child to bump the object with a different body part each time.

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

The structure of a classroom or playroom, its seating arrangements, and its rules, won't stop AD/HD, but may help children to feel more comfortable and be more successful!

1. Seating arrangement: Children with AD/HD should always know where the teacher is. In classrooms, easily distracted children may do better sitting up front and away from doors and windows
2. Individual instruction: After a class assignment is given, children with AD/HD may need specific instructions as to what they should be doing.
3. Clear expectations: Posting class rules and a daily schedule can help children know what to expect and what is expected of them. It might also be helpful to give cues about what will happen next, such as a five-minute warning before a class change.
4. Consistency: Whatever plan you have for working with children with AD/HD, it should be carried out consistently. Mixed messages can harm your relationship with them and confusion makes it hard for them to be successful.

Source: Children's Advocate news magazine, published by Action Alliance for Children, July-August 2000

For more activities and resources for working with children with special needs check out the 2006 Literacy Calendar at <http://www.everydaylearning.net/literacycalendar>

SCHOOL READINESS

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

"Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" Literacy Station

Read "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" to children. Introduce the title, author and illustrator of Chicka Chicka Boom Boom; Ask students to look closely at the cover. What might this book be about? Have they seen a tree like this before? What is growing in the tree?; You may wish to share real photos of a coconut tree and locate on a map where these types of trees can be found; Explain to students that in this story, the very first letter of the alphabet challenges the other letters to join her in climbing this tree; Read aloud for enjoyment and to see what happens to the letters (and the tree)!

Materials: "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" book, sandpaper letters, beach pail, clean sand, plastic alphabet letters, trays and cornmeal

Sandpaper Letters: Purchase sheets of sandpaper and visit the CCCC Resource Lending Library to make sandpaper letters with ellision dies . Paste the letters onto sturdy cardboard. Children can trace the sandpaper letters, training their hands to move in ways that make letters.

Cornmeal Trays: Fill trays with cornmeal to help children practice writing. Using the same movements that they used to trace the sandpaper letters, thy can write the letters in the cornmeal. They can also make shapes, numbers, etc. This is a predecessor to writing with crayon or pencil.

Bucket of Letters: Fill a beach pail with sand and mix in some plastic alphabet letters. Have students sit in a circle, placing the pail on a beach towel in the middle of the circle. Let each child take a turn pulling out a letter from the sand. Ask them to hand the letter to you. Then, see if the class knows the name of the letter. Once all of the letters are pulled from the sand, have students help count how many letters there are altogether. Stress that there are 26 letters in the alphabet.

WORKING WITH SCHOOL AGE

Bookmarks

Suggest that children make pretty bookmarks to enclose in a gift book or to mark the place in your own book where you left off during read-aloud time.

MATERIALS: Sturdy paper or thin cardboard, materials for decorating (see suggestions), clear contact paper

To decorate a set of bookmarks, kids can choose their favorite medium from among these:

- * Tiny pressed flowers
- * Marbling (floating oil paint on water)
- * Crayons or marking pens
- * Picture cutouts from book clubs or book reviews
- * A handwritten poem
- * Rubber stamps or stickers

If you have clear contact paper, let the children laminate their bookmarks between sheets of the contact paper after they finish decorating. Smooth out the contact on both sides, then cut out around each bookmark. If they like, the children can insert a tassel or piece of ribbon between the contact to hang down from the bookmark.

Source: The RIF Guide to Encouraging Young Readers

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Using Email as a Marketing Tool

As a family child care provider, you may find some marketing tools too expensive. While you are not likely to take out an ad in a local magazine any time soon, there is an equally accessible marketing venue available to you, and it's completely free of charge: the Internet. The easiest tool on the Internet is the email system and here are some suggestions on how to use this free marketing tool.

When you open your email account, you will be asked to chose an email address. Choose this address wisely. It is your tag line. This is what clients and prospective clients will identify you as. Have fun with it, and remember that this is a free way to express your identity as a family child care provider. Do you want the world to know you as just another name in the crowd? suesmith@yahoo.com is nice enough, but are you truly using your address as a marketing tool with it? llovekids@msn.com says as much to the world as a half page spread in a magazine can, and it's free!

Make use of the signature feature. When you end your email messages, you can simply end it with "With love, Sue," or you can take this opportunity to tell everyone you interact with about your business. Different accounts will vary, but there is a way in which you can save your signature so that you don't have to retype this sentence every time. You can change your signature as often as you like, add fun messages for holidays, special occasions, or to let parents know about an upcoming event or field trip. For example:

With love, Sue

Tell your friends and family about Cuddles Child Care and receive 10% off for one week when one of them signs up their child!

The marketing and communications possibilities are endless! Take quick photos of each child during their nap or during finger-painting time and send it off to their parents at their work email address in minutes. What parent would not be overjoyed to get a photo of their little angel in the middle of the work day? (Make sure to get permission from the parents to use photos in this way.)

Use email for reliable and quick communications with parents. Most email systems have a tool that lets you know when the receiver got your message, so you can be sure your important email got through. And email messages can be saved so you can always go back into your files and find a note from, or to, a parent.

Source: Redleaf National Institute

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. CCC is a program operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Office of Larry E. Reider. <http://www.kern.org>