

The Professional

A newsletter for the early learning and care professional, creating a bridge between research and practice in the field.

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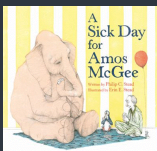
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The Benefits of Parent Involvement

Connections that Matter in the Early Years

Jennifer Saunders, ECE Student, Conestoga College

The outcomes created when families and teachers are able to work effectively together are immense. As educators and families are discovering the importance of trusting and respectful atmospheres, better opportunities for families to provide input and exchange ideas are being created.

When a positive partnership with families is created, Early Childhood Educators are able to provide accessible information and resources to build the knowledge of families. "Family members may network with other programs, sharing information and resources, and building relationships and connections in the community" (Wilson, 2010). Relationships are built that go beyond the walls of the home and childcare centre.

As Early Childhood Educators we support the growth and development of the children in our care. Involving parents is essential in this process. With the opportunity to engage in their child's play and observe the social, emotional, and cognitive skills developed through daily interaction, parents are enabled to identify learning and work together with educators. Once the family is involved in the education of their children, self-esteem increases for both parents and children. "Children

who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures" (Sheslow, 2008). Research shows that parents who have a positive self-image on parenting have a deeper understanding of their children as well as a more positive attitude towards teachers and their educational practices (Wilson, 2010). The layers of self-esteem support bonds between child, parents and centre staff.

Though creating a partnership with parents may appear daunting at first, once the positive relationship is made, mutual problem solving and sharing concerns becomes easier. As the relationship between educators and parents increase, so do the partnerships involving the children. Children are more willing to discuss their school environment at home with parents if they view a positive interest for their education in their parents. "It demonstrates to your child that he/she can trust his teacher, because you do. This positive relationship makes a child feel like the important people in his/her life are working together" (PBS, 2011). A triangular relationship of mutual respect is built among child, parents and early childhood educators. Parents

and children are able to inform educators of their individual needs and interests providing educators with the needed support to respond in the best way towards their children.

The rationales for engaging families in the early education of children are endless. There is no "one way" solution or strategy to getting parents involved. Each strategy used by individual centres is intended to promote healthy learning and strengthen relationships that lead to better environments that support each and every child, and their families.

References:

PBS (2001-2011). *PBS Parents Going to School; The Tough Stuff*. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/parents/goingtoschool/tough_stuff.html

Sheslow, D. (2008). Kids Health from Nemours *Developing your Child's Self-Esteem*. Retrieved from http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self_esteem.html#

Wilson, L. (2010). *Partnerships; Families and Communities in Early Childhood* (86-89). Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd.



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

Conestoga College ECE Apprenticeship Program

Are you currently working with young children in an ECE setting?
Do you hold an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent?
Is your employer willing to sponsor your training and professional development?
Interested in earning a College diploma in Early Childhood Education?
Conestoga College and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities may have the solution for you!
Explore this unique ECE Apprenticeship program—offering you the option of learning while continuing to work!

Part-time evening classes
College level credit courses offered at a nominal fee.
Receive an Early Childhood Education Certificate of Apprenticeship from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
Explore this alternative pathway to a Conestoga College ECE diploma!

Ready to Register?
Ministry of Training
Colleges and Universities,
Apprenticeship Branch
519-653-5758
or drop in at MTCU
4275 King St. East, Suite200
Kitchener, ON
N2P 2E9



For more information contact
Cathy O'Toole
Coordinator, Early Childhood
Educator Apprenticeship
519-748-5220 ext 3603
cotoole@conestogac.on.ca



The Building Blocks of Play

Where can you create hands on experiences that are full of learning opportunities? Bring out the blocks! It's time to get stacking!

Samantha Burns, RECE
Professional Resource Centre

“Stacking Blocks, and mixing sand and water, encourages logical-mathematical thinking, scientific reasoning and cognitive problem-solving... the learning that occurs is a by-product of play.”

- *Cappon (2006), Canadian Council on Learning*

It begins with infants stacking a few blocks, then toddlers building small towers to knock over and build again. By preschool and kindergarten, children begin to build more elaborate structures. This is where play supports the foundation of learning, right here in your classrooms, right here among the building blocks. What do you see when you look closer at block play? Let us explore the importance of block play using the ELECT document!

When children engage socially in activities with other children many opportunities for peer work, problem-solving, cooperation and interactions occur. When children seek peers for play, invite others to join in, offer toys, take turns and exchange ideas they are forming relationships and negotiating play situations. In the block centre this would be expressed through collaborative ideas and buildings where co-creators share materials and take turns. You can support these skills by providing large building spaces and plenty of blocks for group participation. Large periods of uninterrupted play also effect the levels of engagement for young children. The longer the play, the deeper they can dive into it.

At first glance emotional —connections to blocks may seem far fetched, but providing opportunities to build self-concept and regulate behaviours and emotions are part of this very important play. Making decisions and carrying out decisions about how to manipulate blocks supports

competence and initiative. Documentation of children's creations and structures posted around the block centre can help children to connect to past experiences of success. This helps in developing an image of being competent. Making sure that materials are at levels where children can independently reach and manipulate will also strengthen the image of being competent, and capable.

It's not uncommon to hear blocks tumbling down and crashing when children engage in building. Children will be presented with opportunities to face challenges and cope with disappointments. Finding effective ways to deal with these emotions and challenges can be identified as regulating emotions and behaviours. They gain control over starting and stopping their own actions. Having opportunities to extend play over more than one day involves waiting for satisfaction of completion. You can support the development of these skills by offering a safe environment where children can come back to activities and revisit them or continue the activity over several days.

Communication, language and literacy amongst the block area can be seen in a verity of ways. It's both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication that children develop such as body gestures that indicate, “I'm ready for the next block” when two children sit shoulder to shoulder building a tower. One stacking the blocks ever so carefully while the other child passes them block after block. It's linking the use of new words to already known and used words, building on their vocabulary such as “a skyscraper tower”, “long to elongated” or “assemble to put together”. To support communication, language and literacy try adding pencils and clip-



boards around your building areas. Encourage children to sketch ideas, map or graph the buildings like an architect might design “blue prints”. Add street signs and other environmental print that children might be familiar with. You can add labels using pictures, words or symbols to this area to support identification and letter recognition.

Beneath the towers of blocks and cityscapes created by the engineers in your classroom, a foundation of knowledge is growing through play. When children match blocks, sort them according to size or shape they are classifying them. When children build towers that fall over due to lack of support; not only are they introduced to the concept of gravity, but they begin to interpret this information and construct their own knowledge and understanding about it. They begin to identify patterns in their architecture, seek cemetery, and compare outcomes. Blocks take on new dimensions as children build in different ways. Encourage the children to look at their work from other perspectives; look down from above, or from the bottom up. Try adding a mirror as a building surface to change the perspectives of their building. This also supports spatial awareness, relations and directions of the objects the children are manipulating.

As children work with blocks they begin to understand the relationships among shapes. You will see this when children run out of one type of block and compensate for it using combinations

of others. Two triangles become a square, several square blocks become a cube, two short rectangles become longer. Shapes begin to take on new forms, from two dimensional to three dimensional; square to cube. The possibilities are endless and the learning continues each time a child picks up a block.

The physical aspect of building with blocks goes beyond the lifting and the placement of each piece. Blocks present opportunities for balance and control, increasing coordination. Large blocks provide children with the ability to create obstacles and levels that they can climb, explore and jump from. Create safe environments where children can explore and take risks (in a controlled environment) by planning for large open spaces with some safety mats.

No matter your age; from infants to school age, the learning opportunities through block play reach every domain and provide a strong foundation for learning through play. So the next time you enter the classroom and see young children at play, take a second look and see all the possibilities around them. Each day takes on a new understanding as they make sense of their world through play.



References:

Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Settings in Ontario*. Toronto: ON.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *The Full Day Learning Kindergarten Program Draft version*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten_english_apr13.pdf

What's New in the PRC

The Professional Resource Centre is always growing and expanding our resources.

New to the PRC are two class sets of twenty flashlights that you can use with the children in your care today! Bring the fun of shadow play and light and dark contrast into your imaginative play. These flashlights wind up to work, so you don't need to worry about batteries! Children will love the whirring mechanics as they pump and store energy that transfers into light.

For those science explorers in your classroom—a real microscope with slides is available. Introducing a second measurement kit that holds weights, a primary scale, and pulleys! Also included are some weighted numbers, these numbers actually add up! Children will be able to feel the math in their hands and see it with their eyes as they add and subtract on the scale.

For the active class during those freezing cold days of Winter, another parachute is waiting in the PRC. This second parachute is smaller for tight spaces, or for smaller hands.

If you have completed your ECERS training, we now have the ITERS and SACERS training materials ready for your Raising the Bar professional developmental needs.



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

Early Childhood Education Resource Teacher Post-Graduate Program Now Accepting Applications

Obtain a graduate diploma in as little as four months and increase your salary prospects and job opportunities!

Strengthen your knowledge of supporting children with special needs and build on your previous experience in working with children and families!

Work in any agency that supports children with special needs and their families. Participate in helping children reach their potential. Create a supportive learning environment for children and families. Strengthen families' abilities to access appropriate resources. Advocate for children with special needs and their families!

Admission Requirements:
ECE diploma or Equivalent, plus work experience with children.

Admission Procedure:
Through OCAS system at www.ontariocolleges.ca



Contact: Brenda Van Beers
(519) 748—5220 ext 3765
bvanbeers@conestogac.on.ca

Registration Deadline March 31, 2011

What If Today Was Their Only Day?

New DVD Release by:
Lisa Murphy (The Ooey
Goey Lady ®)

The AECEO has graciously donated a series of DVD's to the Professional Resource centre. The DVD's will be released to the library after the AECEO popcorn series event over the next several months.

The first video to be released is Lisa Murphy's Keynote address, *What If Today Was Their Only Day?* This video presentation highlights the importance of belonging on your first day of school. Lisa shares the powerful story of her first day of school, and how, and why, that one day solidified her decision to become an educator. This inspiring message will get viewers excited and motivated, and will encourage them to think, "How was it possible for one day to be this powerful?". This video really speaks to the importance of lasting impressions—both good and bad, and how our reactions and interactions with young children effect these moments in time.

What's New in Childcare

Links to the news in
Early Learning and
Care



In the February 2, 2011 release from the Government of Ontario: "Ontario is seeking input on the best way to improve family supports." For more information please visit <http://www.news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2011/02/helping-kids-get-a-stronger-start.html>

Baby well-being and future success enhanced through community focus on emergent literacy. On Friday, January 28, 2011 a strategy to enhance literacy development in the first year of a child's life was announced at the YMCA Early Years Centre. [http://www.strongstart.ca/pdf/PressReleaseBabyConnec-](http://www.strongstart.ca/pdf/PressReleaseBabyConnec-tions_2011JAN28.pdf)

[tions_2011JAN28.pdf](#)

The importance of Mentoring has been in the spot light and growing research supports the benefits of mentoring programs. A new report from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education claims that "Ontario needs to provide transformative mentoring opportunities for new teachers as part of its teacher induction program". For more details of this report visit http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/oise/About_OISE/news_article_110124.html

The College of Early Childhood Educators has released the Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics. These documents will come into effect as of February 28, 2011. For full details visit http://www.collegeofece.on.ca/main.php?page_id=52&main_page=1



A Message from your Local AECEO President, Cathy Barrie:



On Jan. 19 /11 we held a Waterloo/Wellington AECEO Branch Meeting at the Professional Resource Centre. After some social time and a short meeting we settled down with our popcorn and a drink to view the DVD "What If Today Was Their Only Day" by Lisa Murphy (aka "The Ooey Goey Lady"). Lisa gives an interesting and hilarious presentation of her first day at preschool and shares her thoughts on providing positive experiences for the children we care for. Following the presentation with we engaged in small group discussions about the powerful impact we have on young children, and the underlying reasons we have chosen this profession. This deeply moving address (DVD) inspired a room full of likeminded professionals and we look forward to running another popcorn series in March. If you would like to connect with our branch or have any questions please leave us a voice mail by calling 519-748-5220 ext 8026



Raising the Bar
Early Childhood Education
An ASCY Community Initiative



Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services

**A Quality Initiative
for Waterloo Region**



**Child Care
Network**
of Waterloo Region

February Update 2011

SACERS and ITERS-R Training Kits are now available in the Professional Resource Centre. Want more? Pick up a copy of the All about ITERS -R and All about ECERS-R books. Lots of visual ideas to help you create meaningful environments for the children in your care.

The Preschool Network has new leaders! We would like to welcome Jen and Christine to the team! The Preschool Network will meet for the first time on March 28, 2011 at the Professional Resource Centre. No need to register for this event—everyone is welcome!

This group will focus on issues and topics relevant to Preschool Children (age 2.5—5yrs).

**For further information...Debbie Jones, Supervisor,
Quality Initiatives Phone: at 519-883 2111 Ext. 5044
Email: djones@regionofwaterloo.ca**



Beginning with Books

Laura Dick, Literacy Librarian and Laura Reed, Coordinator of Children's and Teen Services, Kitchener Public Library.

re-read excellent quality children's books with children.

Early Literacy Skill of the Month - Vocabulary!

Humongous. Meteoric. Laggard. Ponderous. Lackadaisical. Ravenous. Slumberous. Viscous.

What do all these words have in common? Besides being fun to read and say, they are all found in a vocabulary rich picture book called *Big, Bigger, Biggest* by Nancy Coffelt.

Picture books are full of exciting new words. Vocabulary is one of the 6 early literacy skills that children need to develop to become good readers. Children's books contain 50 percent more rare words than prime-time television or the conversations of college graduates. How many exposures to a new word do children need to be able to use it effectively?

Research shows they need approximately 12 exposures to a word to add it to their vocabulary bank – a good reason to

Vocabulary is built not only by exposing children to new words through books but also through everyday conversation. Knowing the names of things helps children understand the words they see on the page. It is much easier for children to decode a word when they are already familiar with it from conversation. Take advantage of every opportunity to introduce children to new words and new contexts for the words they already know.

Sharing song and rhymes is another great way to expose children to new words. Songs like *The Eensy Weensy Spider* introduce many unusual words, as do nursery rhymes like *Jack be Nimble*.

When reading with children take the opportunity to introduce them to any unusual or unknown words in the story before you begin. Encourage children to talk about the picture, add information and use descriptive words to describe the pictures while you are enjoying the story together.

Phonological awareness or, as we call it at the Kitchener Public Library, *I Know Words!* is all about hearing the individual sounds in words. Beginning readers gradually learn that words are made of small sounds that are put together.

A few books that are full of words that are fun to read...

Monkey Business
by Wallace Edwards

Fancy Nancy
by Jane O'Connor

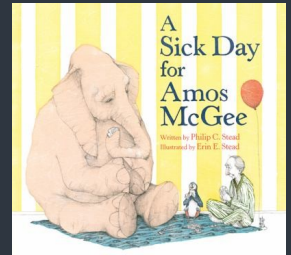
Where the Wild Things Are
by Maurice Sendak

The Napping House
by Audrey Wood

Teeth, Tails & Tentacles
by Chris Wormell



Children's Book - of - the Month



A Sick Day for Amos McGee
by Philip C. Stead;
illustrated by Erin E. Stead

It is always nice when a book you love is loved by others. This week we were very excited to learn that this book, which is one of our favourites from 2010, received the prestigious Caldecott Medal which is awarded for excellence in children's illustration. This is the story of a kindly zookeeper who takes care of all of his friends at the zoo, until one day when he is not feeling well. With his red nose he stays in bed, and much to his surprise the animals of the zoo come to take care of him for a change. The illustrations are delicate and beautiful, and once you open the book you want to pour over each page, this is not a book to be rushed. A lovely read for all of us who are sniffing and sneezing and looking for a little nurturing.

If you have any questions about books or early literacy, please send us an email .

Laura.Dick@kpl.org
Laura.Reed@kpl.org

EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

To register for this event please visit the KidsLink Website at:
http://kidslinkcares.com/elcc_conference

23rd Annual EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

Saturday April 2, 2011
Conestoga College
Doon Campus

Hours for Feb/March 2011



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Monday 1-9pm
Tuesday 10-6pm
Wednesday 1-9pm
Thursday 10-6 pm
Friday 10-4pm
Saturday 10-2pm

Closed Saturday, February 19
and Monday, February 21, 2011
for Family Day.

Conestoga College
ECE Building
299 Doon Valley Drive
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4M4
519-748-5220 ext 3388

The Early Childhood Professional Resource Centre

Tell a friend today!

Did you know that being a member of the Professional Resource Centre is recognized as belonging to a professional organization? Our evidence based resources combine current research and quality materials to enhance your programs, and understanding of learning. Our members receive a monthly newsletter, discounts on in-house workshops, lending privileges for our library and access to our data bank of research and early learning and care articles. Members also receive updates on current information in the ELC community and have access to our work stations and equipment (laminator, computer, binding machine etc). Join today and discover the value of belonging to a professional organization that is invested in your professional growth, our community, and the future!



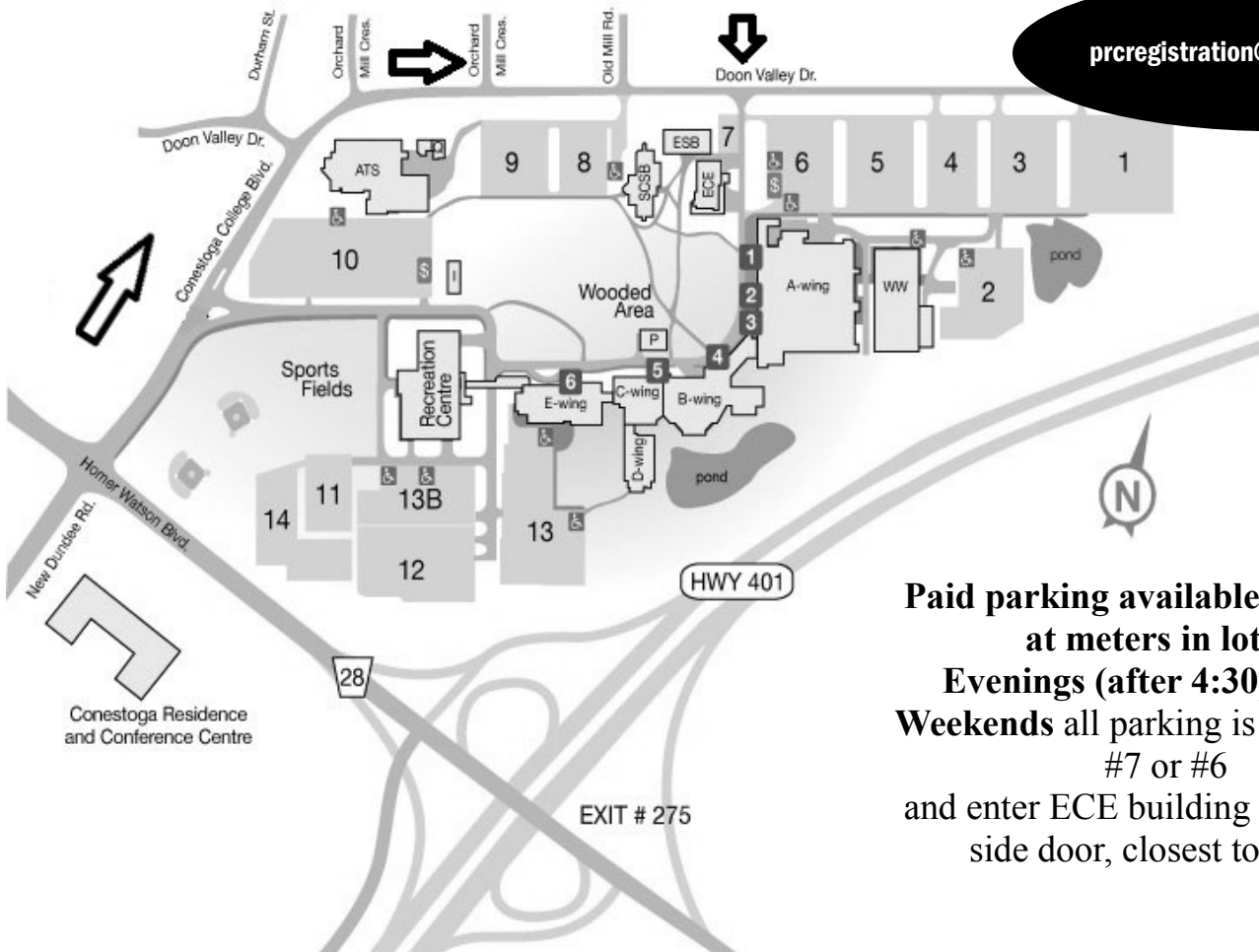
Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services



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LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION



pcregistration@conestogac.on.ca

**Paid parking available (Mon-Fri)
at meters in lot #6
Evenings (after 4:30pm) and
Weekends all parking is free, use lot
#7 or #6
and enter ECE building through the
side door, closest to lot #7.**