

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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Sparkling Meaningful Interest in Learning Letters

By: Bev Laking, RECE

Children first learn through sight, touch, taste, and sound, and then add verbal communication to their repertoire of abilities. From here the next door opens into the world of written communication. This is a big next step for children and takes years to master. They first have to figure out that 26 different symbols made from lines and curves all have their own names. Then comes figuring out how to draw them. From here they become exposed to the fact that not only do these letters have names but now each letter has its own sound. Just to add to the complexity we throw in that vowels can have 2 different sounds. Quite overwhelming when we stop to consider the break down of letter learning and all this new information children's brains are opening up to. But wait, we're not done yet. Children then begin to discover that when certain letters are put together they make words that can be written, spoken and read. There



are many strategies and techniques developed to support children through this journey. In my own journey of becoming an intentional teacher, offering experiences that were meaningful to children I began reflecting on the ways and methods of letter learning and whether or not they were truly offering the meaningful connection I was hoping for. My observations and inquiries have led me to utilize the following strategies as young children enter into the world of letter learning. Ask yourself this, "What letter does each child want to learn first?" The response I often received from fellow colleagues was "A". This however is not the case. I often wondered if the response was based on our own personal past experiences. In reality the letter that children want to learn first, is the letter that their name starts with. This has personal meaning for them. From here the natural progression is to follow with each subsequent letter in their name. Children will often guide you in what has meaning to them, by wanting

JOIN the Network that is Right For you!

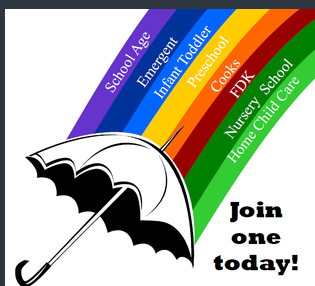
RTB Umbrella Networks

- Cooks Network
- Emergent Network
- Full-Day Kindergarten Network
- Home Child Care Network
- Infant & Toddler Network
- Nursery School Network
- Preschool Network
- School-Age Network

Upcoming Network Meetings

Visit www.eceprc.ca for more information on these networks and current events.

Upcoming network meeting will be posted under the community calendar.



Continued from last page....

to print other names/words that they have a personal connection with such as, Mom, Dad, sibling's names, and pet names. Learning last names as well is a step that can be added. Think of the variety and amount of letters from the alphabet that are incorporated into the words that have meaning for them. Children first learning about letters will be much more attentive and "store" their newfound discoveries when a strategy like this is used. As a teacher you can incorporate the sounds of the letters and how to print them within the above approach. How else can we expose children to the world of letter learning? Children learn visibly first. Another strategy that is helpful in supporting the name first approach is to take children's pictures (head shots) work well and make name cards with their picture first then their name following. We attached these to a wall with Velcro. Children then were able to freely come and access their own name, take it down and use it wherever they chose in the room. Offering this opened up to many other activities that children would use their names for. I want to point out that this is only a beginning step in learning letters and that there is

much more involved in this whole process but, I found with young preschoolers and kindergarten children this was a good first step in supporting a positive experience with letter learning that had meaning for them.

In finishing this column I didn't want to leave out the importance of tactile, hands-on experiences so I've included a few ideas that tie this together with letter learning.

- *Create letters out of fruit and toothpicks. (Grapes and melon work well).*
- *Have magnetic letters available at all times.*
- *Form letters using play dough. Roll out long narrow cylinders to help make the sticks and curves needed to form letters.*
- *Create letters from baked dough. If you seal them with a podge/clear coat they will last a long time. Use a recipe that you may have for making dough ornaments.*
- *Have children shape the letters with their hands.*
- *Pipe cleaners and wiki sticks are great for forming letters too.*

Registration NOW Open!

Don't miss out on this year's conference
Go to www.eceprc.ca for more information



**24th Annual
Early Learning &
Child Care Conference**

**Saturday, March 24, 2012
Conestoga College
Doon Campus**

Conference includes:

2 workshops, Networking, Health Fair, Vendors, Lunch & Snacks

** PRC Members receive a discount on the registration fee & 2 free workshop vouchers*

What's New at the PRC?

By: Melissa Bell, RECE, RT
Professional Resource Centre Staff

At the Professional Resource Centre, we are excited about all the *new* items we have to share with our members.

Come and check out all the great resources that are here for YOU!

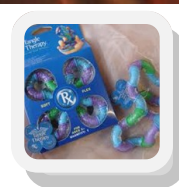
Just like CSIyou can discover the hidden germs on your hands before and after hand washing with our new *hand washing kits* that have been added to our

Health and Safety section of the lending library. You can borrow the kits and purchase the oil for your class experiments. Another new addition is an *Oral Hygiene Kit*, as well we have added a great stress relieving product called *Tangle Therapy* that could be used as both a fidget toy for children in your group or for yourself to explore, there is even a kit that is full of a variety of fidget toys that you can now borrow for your whole class to explore. We are pleased to have a copy of *Child Care Cooks* in the center, which is a cookbook put together by individuals in the Guelph and Wellington Region. This book has recipes based on the DNA requirements and we feel this is a great resource for any child care cook in our region. You can get your own copy of this great resource at this year's ELCC conference.



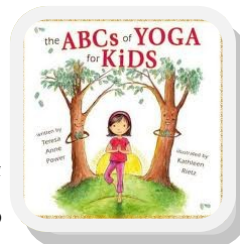
New in our language and literacy section we have a funky chicken puppet kit. This includes a great chicken puppet with two chicken related books titled *Chicken Cheeks* and *Interrupting Chicken*. Some literacy events to look forward to that will be hosted here at the PRC in April are a *Literacy Café* and a two part *Emergent Literacy Training*.

Are you looking for some fun ideas to bring to your next staff meeting?



in our Leadership section we have some great additions: *Ice Breaker Ball* and colourful *Answer Buzzers* would be perfect to use in some fun staff related games. Need an ice breaker? Ask us for some amazing ideas that you will love. A number of Kits have been added to the Science section which include a *Worm Village*, *Real Science Tools*, *Hydroponics Lab*, *Body Kit* and also some *Colourful Safety goggles* that can be explored on their own. Has your outside time in the afternoon been met with the darken sky of winter? Are the children in your group noticing how it is getting dark earlier? We have a *class kit of flashlights* that would encourage the exploration of the concept of shadows and add some fun to the darker days of winter

Are you interested in trying some yoga with the children you work with? Well if so, we have the perfect thing for you, *Yoga Kids Book and Cards* is a great resource to help bring these

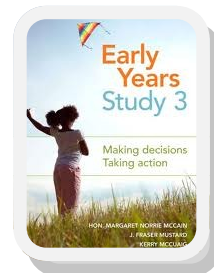


gross motor concepts into your class. Also, come check out the new *Hoppers* that are gross motor fun for both children and adults!



Looking for something different for your class to build with? We have some great *wooden toys* added to our Cognitive section that the children in your class will love to use in a variety of ways.

Our resource book collection is ever- expanding and we are excited about these new titles: *Authors in The Classroom*, *Flows Rhythms & Intensities*, *Welcoming Newcomer Children* and *Early Years 3 Study*. Check out this link for more information on the Early Years Study 3:



<http://earlyyearsstudy.ca>

As you can tell we are always expanding our lending library at the PRC, and we look forward to sharing all these great items with our members.

What's New in Childcare



Links to the News in Early Learning

This article about Dr. Gordon Nuefeld discusses his thoughts about early childhood education and kindergarten programs that are based on play.

<http://bit.ly/AllWorkNoPlay>

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and SCREEN TIME-
Source: Preschooler Focus (Child Health and Exercise Medicine Program, McMaster University), January 2012

This article talks about the importance of developing good habits with children that lead to good health. Looking at minimizing activities in children's lives that are spent in front of a screen. An interesting article to explore during a time that has children spending more time in activities that involve a screen on a daily basis.

<http://bit.ly/PhysicalActivityScreenTime>

ALL WORK and NO Play... IS NOT GOOD for the DEVELOPING BRAIN

Source: Ottawa Citizen, February 4, 2012

2012 ROBBIE CASE MEMORIAL LECTURE – TRUSTING WHAT YOU'RE TOLD: HOW CHILDREN LEARN FROM OTHERS

Speaker: Paul Harris, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

Date and time: Thursday March 8, 2012, 7 pm

Location: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Ground Floor, 252

Bloor Street West, Toronto

To reserve your seat for this free and public event, please call Rebecca Weir at:

416-934-4526,

email rebecca.weir@utoronto.ca

or access our online registration at

<http://bit.ly/2012RobbieCaseLecture>



A Message from your Local AECEO President, Cathy Barrie:

The AECEO is a proud sponsor for this year's *Early Learning & Child Care Conference*.

We look forward to seeing you at this year's conference, Healthy Teachers Healthy Children. Be sure to stop by our booth for information about all the current events for our branch and the provincial AECEO.

Check out the newest video from Lisa Murphy (Ooey Gooley INC)

titled "Process Oriented Art with Young Children" that was graciously donated by our local AECEO to the PRC Library.

If you would like to connect with your branch or have any questions please leave us a voice mail by calling:

519-748-5220 ext 8026



A Quality Initiative for Waterloo Region

For Further Information: Debbie Jones, Supervisor, Quality Initiatives
Phone: 519-883 2111 x. 5044—**Email:** djones@regionofwaterloo.ca



RTB Tuesdays at the PRC

Want help with your RTB Binder? Join Debbie Jones for RTB Tuesdays to help guide you through the RTB Process Debbie will be at the ECE Professional Resource Centre at Conestoga College ECE building on the third Tuesday of the month from 2-8 PM.

2-6 PM : Drop-in or book an appointment.

6-8 PM : Group time and we will work systematically through the binders.

Dates for Winter/Spring 2012

January 17, 2012 & Feb 21, 2012

March 20, 2012 & April 17, 2012



Beginning with Books

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

Toddler Time

We all know that toddlers learn by doing, by experiencing, by hearing, seeing, touching, tasting. So when it comes to laying the foundation for early literacy skills, it is all about getting the toddlers involved and trying things out for themselves. Here are a few tips and ideas to make it easy...

- **Play** with your child – you're never too old to get in on the fun, follow your child's lead and play, explore, and engage. From building towers out of blocks (check out this link for a great way to make cheap and simple paper blocks: www.scholastic.com/resources/article/tumbling-towers) to dressing up, play is a great way to get to know how your child thinks and interacts, and to have a wonderful bonding time.

- **Tell stories** – get your child in the habit of telling stories about her day. This is a great way to build narrative skills. Ask simple questions to get her started then let her weave the story of her day, over dinner, in the bath, or in the car on the way home. If you start this when she is a toddler, maybe she will still tell you about her day when she is a tween.

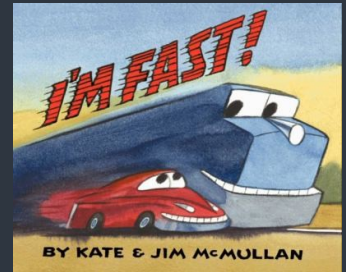
- The time to **rhyme** is now – rhyming is such an important early literacy skill, and fortunately it is also really fun. Play rhyming games, making up silly words. Chant or sing nursery rhymes and traditional songs, anywhere, anytime. Stop by the library for rhyming books and cds. A fun book like *Rah Rah Radishes: a vegetable chant* by April Pulley Sayre is a great way to make rhyming yummy; cheer for broccoli then have it for lunch.

- Feel the **groove** – get those toddlers moving and grooving. Put on your favourite cds - they don't have to be children's music, Lady GaGa will do – and dance, sing along, get your silly on. Listening to music is a great literacy builder, and moving is always good. It may even tire them out enough for a quiet storytime.

- Stretch and laugh with a little **yoga** – yes, even toddlers can get centred. Yoga is a fun activity for all ages, for toddlers it gives them a chance to use their bodies and imaginations. A downward facing dog can bark, and a cobra can hiss. Look for a good picture book, like *You are a Lion and Other Fun Yoga Poses* by Tae-eun Yoo, to get you started.

Finally, just talk and listen. What is more fun than a conversation with a toddler? Simply being attentive, can make a huge difference for a two year old. It shows them how important they are, and helps give them the confidence to grow and learn with enthusiasm and joy.

Children's Book - of - the Month



I'm Fast!

by Kate & Jim McMullen

Can a train pulling a line of heavy freight cars make it to Chicago before the speedy little red sports car? The race is on, and the two vehicles must go across the desert, over the mountains, and through a blizzard. The train is big, and the car is confident. The race is on. But who will win? A sure fire hit for fans of things that go.

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

Laura.Reed@kpl.org

Ldick@wpl.ca

Child Care Licensing Responsibility Change

This is a reminder that the responsibility for licensing of all child care programs located in the Region of Waterloo has transferred to the Ministry of Education, London Region. If you have any questions you can contact **Barb Schuler** at 1-800-265-4197 ext.3259 or by email:

barbara.schuler@ontario.ca.





PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Winter Hours of Operation
Monday—Wednesday
 9am—8pm
Thursday & Friday
 9am—5pm
 Closed Saturday and Sunday

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

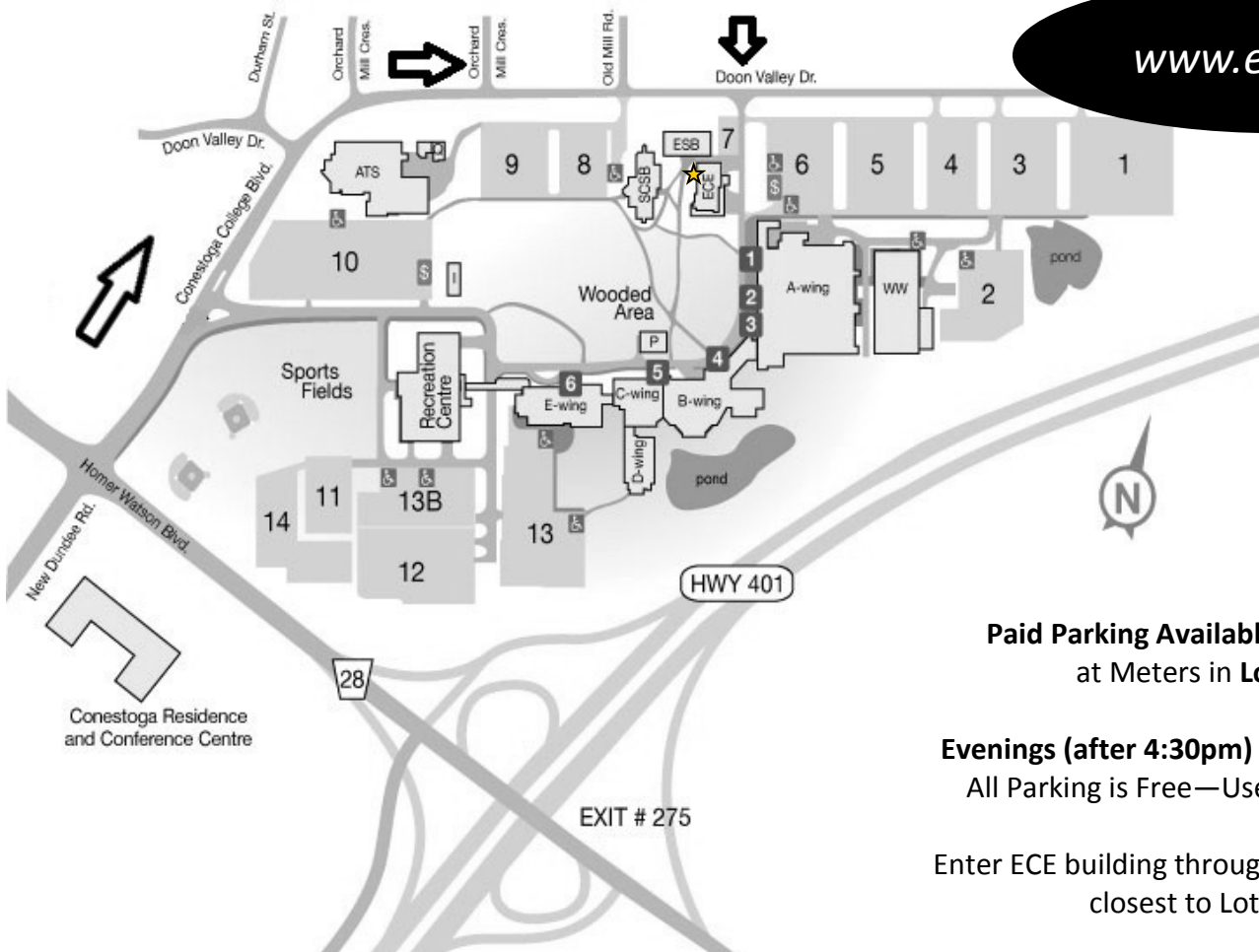
The Early Childhood Professional Resource Centre

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!



www.eceprc.ca

Paid Parking Available (Mon-Fri)
 at Meters in **Lot #6**

Evenings (after 4:30pm) and Weekends
 All Parking is Free—Use Lot #6 or #7

Enter ECE building through the side door,
 closest to Lot #7.