

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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Bizarro

A look at Men in the world of Early Learning and Care

Marc Battle, Faculty Red River College

"Far off in outer space exists the strangest, whackiest planet in the universe...it is the square Bizarro World!"

- Jerry Seigel, Superman: Tales of the Bizarro World



My wife came into the garage and asked me what I was doing.

"I'm writing an article on environments for men in child care."

"Oh... and what do men need in child care environments?" She replied with her hand on her hips, "Do they need leather couches, bookshelves, beer fridges, and walnut paneling?"

Wow, I thought. That would be nice.

As Patty left giggling, I thought about how this article is really about the need to ensure that our child care environments welcome and accept men. I know it may seem ridiculous that men have special needs in child care or maybe some of you already knew that. But I have found in my travels, many men in

our field saying that day care environments can feel like a foreign place. So the question becomes how do we help men connect to the child care environment?

For myself, I think the answer lies in the kinds of places that we men favour. If our child care environments had some of the elements of what we like in a place, then we will feel more accepted and included.

When I think about one of my favourite places, it is right here in my garage, sitting on a worn-out, baby-blue vinyl couch, looking at a wall of old motorcycles. It is here that I feel free and can do endless, different things. I can be very messy with oil, tools, paint, and gasoline or sit back and read a book or write an article. I can try to fix a problem here such as trying to get a 1973 Suzuki two-stroke running and purring like a kitten. And feeling frustrated when it sputtered only once, six long years ago. So this is a place where one has ongoing projects.

It is also in this place where I can dress up in coveralls and pretend to be a mechanic or just hang around with some friends. It is where I am free to be myself

within the confines of the law ... of course.

Maybe that is why I have always felt more comfortable in those child care environments that had a lot of space and time spent on messy activities, big constructive projects, quiet times + exploration with little consideration for schedule or routine – there is no clock or silly rules in my garage.

Maybe another way to look at environments for men in child care would be to imagine what child care would look like if the gender make-up was reversed.

I remember coming across a Superman comic once where Superman ended up on the planet Bizarro, where everything was the complete opposite to the way things were on earth. Therefore, on Bizarro World men would make up over 90% of the child care workforce. What would child care look like on that planet?

Well first of all, the space would be a whole lot bigger as I couldn't even imagine working in the same room with two other men in what goes for day care space

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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.
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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

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today. It would look like the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain.

And I think that the environment would allow for a play that looks a bit different from what we see today. There would be large enough spaces to build and create tall and big instead of being dwarfed by plastic kitchen tables, sinks, fridges, and stoves with the plastic food + dresses. I don't ever seem to remember playing house in my history of play nor do I remember many girls doing that either. As I recall, they were usually right alongside us, building forts, chasing us, and sometimes punching us in the eye.

I believe that on Bizarro, the playgrounds are huge with lots of things to climb on, dig in, poke and move, run around and build in. And the inside would be a large open space with a few quiet spaces where art + literature, sand + water, dress up and loose parts ebb and flow seemingly without rhyme or reason.

And it wouldn't feel like school. This is because

for many of us males, school is just not the kind of place we want to relive. No in Bizarro, playing with interesting things with friends would be the order of the day – punctuated with robust meal times, calming rest times, times to be alone, times to have say and make decisions and to change the rules when they stop making any real sense.

But that is Bizarro World and I am sitting here in my northend, Winnipeg garage contemplating the needs of a segment that comprises anywhere from 4-6% of the child care workforce. It is only natural that it feels like a strange and awkward place for men. I have been lucky to work with female colleagues who always welcomed and accepted my Y chromosome ideas and values and maybe that is what men need the most from the child care environment - acceptance and inclusion of our vibrant play history and our unique understanding of the nature of childhood.

Marc Battle teaches at Red River College in Winnipeg and has many friends who are feminists. For more from Marc—visit the Professional Resource Centre for the Science of ECD on-line resource.

Stop Pretending When it Comes to Pretend Play

How Imitation and Role Playing Create a "Whole" Child.

Vanessa Malison, B.A.
Early Childhood Education Student



Recent research in the field of early learning and care has done much to shed light on our current teaching methodologies, and new findings regarding optimal learning in the early years. Classrooms are changing and teaching is shifting. The view of the child is moving towards an image of a competent, curious individual. Many classrooms are morphing into multi-dimensional spaces where children have the freedom to explore topics of their own interests using a variety of different mediums. Educators are moving away from being teachers who project information at the children, towards being “facilitators” who inspire and provoke learning *alongside* the children. The presumption here is that learning is occurring *all the time*.

This movement towards child-centered learning focuses a lot on Pretend Play as a tool for learning. Children construct knowledge about their world through exploration; through physical activity and interactions with others. *Story-telling, imitation, role-playing, imaginative and dramatic*

play are all means to explore at any age. These types of activities play a big part in literacy acquisition (as they provide opportunities to use more advanced language), and tests memory recall through narrative story-telling and planning (ie. setting and meeting goals.) By assuming different roles and creating unique scenarios children learn to take perspectives; this sets the stage for more advanced, abstract thought. Thus, this type of play, as you can imagine, create a rich social environment for children to explore and grow across many domains.

INFANTS (BIRTH TO 24 MONTHS)

The explorative play that comes naturally to infants sets the stage for the symbolic thought that is required of pretend play. Imitation activities – such as “copy-cat” games or simple activities like caring for dolls or washing dishes together –



are a great way to jumpstart this type of learning!

Peek-a-boo games are a great way for infants to practice turn-taking, which is important in both the Social and Communicative domains. Imitating the infant's babbles and encouraging them to repeat your words are also great ways to improve an infant's initial language and vocabulary skills.

TODDLERS (14 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS)

What a better time to incorporate imitation and pretend play than when a child's interest in others is at its peak?! Toddlers are naturally interested in the goings-on of their peers; sing-a-longs and "follow the leader" games are great ways to capitalize on their burgeoning interest. Pretend play allows toddlers to express feelings, promotes self-regulation, fosters the beginnings of empathy and allows for autonomy. Be a great play partner for toddlers so you can elaborate on their play. Also, playing side-by-side ("parallel play") is an important aspect of a toddler's social domain, encourage this by placing duplicate items around the room for children to play together; they will most likely naturally imitate one another.



PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTENERS (2.5 TO 6 YEARS)

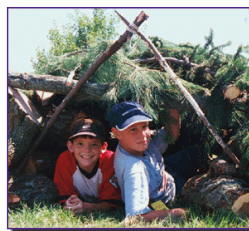
Pretend play and imitation can cultivate so much learning in this age group! Dramatic play allows opportunities for children to make friends, problem solve, resolve conflicts, help others, and interact positively and respectfully. Pose questions and problems (ie. "How can you make your building taller?") to inspire critical thinking and problem solving. Encourage communication by appropriately labelling items and materials in each space; words are more likely to become a part of



a child's vocabulary when they are used frequently in play. Include literacy-related props, like menus, notepads and scraps of paper (for a restaurant server), so children can pretend to read and write. Provide opportunities to express themselves in creative ways – like with music and props – so children have the opportunity to imitate and learn new ways of moving, from both the educator and their peers.

SCHOOL-AGERS (5 TO 8 YEARS)

By the time children reach school-age, you will typically see them participating in more complex socio-dramatic play. They will be using advanced language, creating more complex and intricate scenarios, and their ability to recall details from their experience will be heightened. Encourage children to retell their stories using a variety of different mediums; using photos, writing a story, creating a piece of art, etc. You will see learning occurring across all domains – language, literacy, mathematics, science, and geography – naturally integrated into their dramatic and imaginative play.



Children who play, learn! Through the many types of dramatic, imitative and imaginative play, children learn important concepts required for advanced thinking. At any point during their play, they could be learning across the cognitive, emotional, social, language and physical domains; all of which are pieces of "the whole child" pie!

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.

What's New in the PRC

- Portable Light Table
- Overhead Pattern Blocks and Rock Slices (compatible for the light table or overhead)
 - Rainbow Blocks
- Three Tier Wooden Sieve Set
- Infant Wooden Musical Set
 - Alligator Puppet
 - Chameleon Puppet
 - Bull Frog Puppet
 - Parrot Puppet
 - Elephant Puppet
 - 8 New BIG Books
- French Collection of Children's Books (over 20 titles)

Introducing the Professional Resource Centre Website! That's right, we're on line! Visit us at www.eceprc.ca and see our community calendar that highlights all the major professional events in our community!

Introduction to Family Literacy

15 hour course

Saturday, May 14, 2011
8:30—4:30pm
Wednesday May 18, 2011
6:30pm—9pm
Wednesday May 25, 2011
6:30pm—9pm
Wednesday June 1, 2011
6:30pm—9pm

Calling all early childhood educators, teachers, home child care providers, librarians, adult literacy practitioners or any other community member working with families...

Are you passionate about literacy and the role it plays in supporting children, families and society? Then join us for this introduction to the Family Literacy Program. This 15 hour course will introduce you to the basics of supporting family literacy and can be used as a spring board in engaging participants in the soon to be launched "Family Literacy Certificate Program" coming this Fall.

- Learn more about adult and family literacy programs, goals and projects in our community.
- Discover the connections we make in our daily practice as we build foundations for early literacy learning.
- Investigate the role you play in supporting families and how you can make meaningful differences in the outcomes of the families you currently work with.

Update your resume by adding a course that's value is universal—register today!

General Public \$70.00
PRC Member \$50.00

Call 519-748-5220 ext 3388
prcregistration@conestogac.on.ca
www.eceprc.ca

Many Kinds of Smart

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 events over the next several months.

Introducing the newest DVD to our collection, "Many Kinds of Smart". Operating in her own unique and energetic way, Lisa presents the nine kinds of "smart" and explains how parents, teachers and providers can incorporate their understanding of multiple intelligences in the child's environment. The integration of the multiple intelligence theory (based on Howard Gardner's theory of intelligence) will highlight each child's individual intelligences and allow them to show off just how "smart" they truly are.

This DVD is available for a one week loan.

What's New in Childcare

Links to the news in Early Learning and Care



An interesting result last week at the polls have left many people wondering what it means for full day kindergarten and child care itself? For a look at the different parties and their platforms on the election [click here](#).

For many years Sweden has been a leader in childcare, both providing a universal model and education system that most countries pine for. However Swedish journalist Jonas Himmelstrand shares the other side to the story. To read the article please [click here](#).

Child Care report card and how the Harper government scored are now available. The outcome

is 'unsatisfactory'. For more information or for the full report please [click here](#).

[Bill 173](#) and the Ontario Budget regarding the amendment to the Education Act... what it all means, [click here](#).

Excerpt: "As the cost of raising children climbs, some argue parents need more help to cope, or it may be the Canadian economy that pays the price....As the cost has climbed, the number of babies born in Canada has dropped. The current birth rate is 1.5 children per woman. That's 40 per cent below the 2.1 needed to replace the population. Demographers argue that immigration won't completely make up the difference, because according to a Senate committee report, Canada is becoming a less attractive destination for immigrants." For more information [click here](#).

Everyone Loves Babies!

Universal message of love at the Infant Toddler Network

On May 4th the Infant and Toddler Network met to view the documentary "Babies", sharing a universal message of love for the four infants from different corners of the Earth. This video travels the



globe, following four infants through their first year of life. Although our homes and lifestyles are all so vastly different, there is a common thread binding these four babies together. Viewing this

documentary from a developmental standpoint it is rich, capturing moments and milestones for each child; the challenges and the triumphs of crawling and learning to walk to communicating with others. I found it personally satisfying to know that biting is an issue no matter where you are, from your current toddler room to the plains of Namibia. Struggles, laughter, tears and joy are all a part of life, regardless of location, culture or gender. Pick up this video and experience the innocence of babies in this captivating documentary today. Available at the PRC for loan.



A Quality Initiative
for Waterloo Region



May Update 2011

The School—Age Network is back together and meeting on May 16, 2011 at 6:30pm in the ECE Building at Conestoga College. Come and join us for an evening of conversation around curriculum and finding balance in the work that you do. Register through the PRC.

RTB Binder drop off is May 12 and 13th. Please book your appointment with Leah Clark for drop off by calling 519-575-4528 or email Lclarke@regionofwaterloo.ca

RTB Peer Review will take place May 25, and 26th.

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.

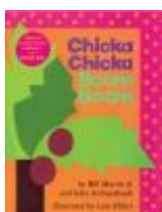


Early Literacy Skill of the Month: Narrative Skills: I Can Tell Stories!

Narrative Skills encompass the ability to understand and tell stories and to describe things. Developing good narrative skills help children to understand what they are learning to read.

Help children develop solid narrative skills by:

- Choosing books which include lots of repetition, and repetitive phrases .



- Reading books that tell a cumulative tale like *There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly* or *The House that Jack Built*.

- Using wordless books. Wordless books allow children to make up their own stories to share

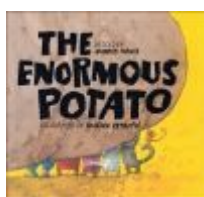


- Rereading books so that your child becomes familiar with the story, reread favourites titles again and again

- Encouraging children to draw pictures about the story

- Asking children what happened in the story or asking them what they think might happen next

- Re-telling the story with props – puppets, magnet boards, felt boards. Have children participate as much as possible in the re-telling



- Creating an art activity out of the book by asking the children to draw a picture of their favourite part of the book. This forces them to think about the book and retell the story

- Using prediction. Before you start the story have a look at the cover together and ask them to predict what the book might be about or what might happen in the book

- Encouraging children to retell the story using words like “Next, then, next and finally”

We all know that children can be excellent story tellers. Helping them to develop narrative skills will only improve their technique and allow them to communicate more clearly and effectively.



Children's Book - of - the Month



Red Wagon by Renata Liwska

Lucy has a nice, new red wagon. All she wants to do is play with her red wagon. Unfortunately, her mother has a job for Lucy to do before she can play. Lucy must take her wagon to the market and buy vegetables for dinner. Lucy reluctantly heads off to the market, but along the way she has a high seas expedition, travels to outer space, and spends some time at the circus. The red wagon and a great imagination lead to much fun and adventure. This simple picture book with its purposeful incongruous text and illustrations is a quiet treasure. Just what you need to spark young imaginations.

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

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

Literacy Café Wednesday May 18, 2011

Wednesday May 18, 2011 from 6:30—8:30pm
ECE building, Conestoga College
Focus: Family Math

To register please contact: Laura Dick, Kitchener Public Library

Email: Laura.Dick@kpl.org



Hours for May 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 May 21—May 23, 2011 for Victoria Long weekend.

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!



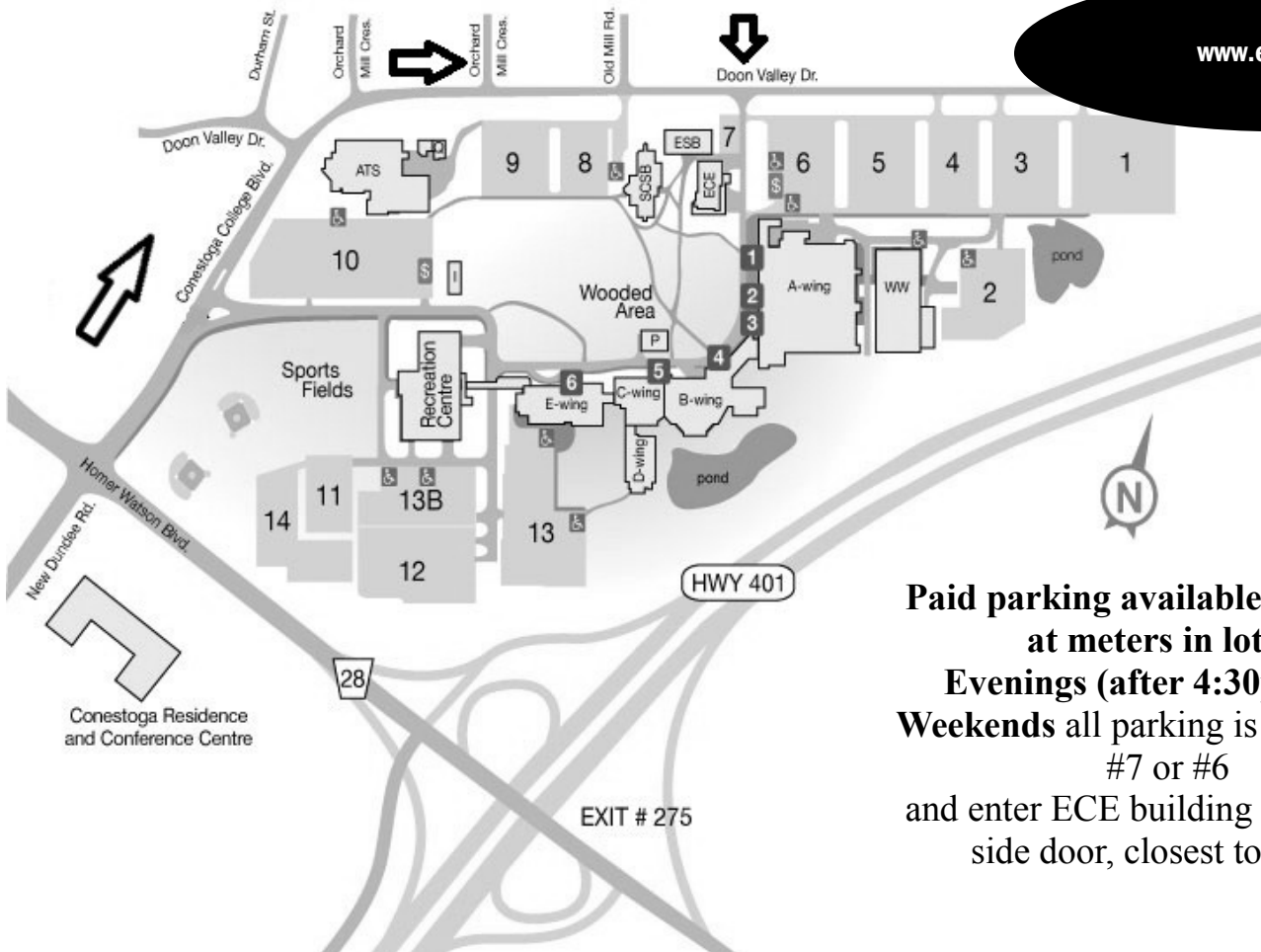
Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services



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FOUNDATION



www.eceprc.ca

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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.**