

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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An Ode to Play

by Eva May, RECE, ECE.C
From Emmanuel at Brighton

Let us start with a few quotes that demonstrate the importance of play in the work of artists, philosophers, writers and educators throughout the past few millennia.

“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.”

Plato, Greek philosopher 427–347 BC

“Children at play are not playing about. Their games should be seen as their most serious minded activity.”

Michel de Montaign, French essayist 1533–1592

“Creative people are curious, flexible, persistent, and independent with a tremendous spirit of adventure and a love of play.”

Henri Matisse, French painter 1869–1954

“Pausing to listen to an airplane in the sky, stooping to watch a ladybug on a plant, sitting on a rock to watch the

waves crash over the quayside—children have their own agendas and timescales. As they find out more about their world and their place in it; they work hard not to let adults hurry them. We need to hear their voices.”

Cathy Nutbrown,
Contemporary British
educational theorist



Contemporary research concludes, that play nourishes every aspect of children’s development. Play provides self-directed experiences as the foundation of intellectual, physical, social and emotional skills necessary for success in school and life. Play provides a stage for learning. In the classroom we promote learning

by providing open ended, natural materials and activities that encourage creative exploration through play. We value play and practice paying with enthusiasm. Through observing the children’s play we research the subjects of their interests and learn as a team.

Pretend play creates a relationship between symbolic, socio-dramatic play and literacy development. Increasing opportunities, providing open-ended materials for rich symbolic play can have a positive influence on literacy development. Pretend play engages children in the art of creating narratives. Young children expand their world through dramatic play; they learn the give and take of communication; they develop language skills, learn turn taking, they begin to understand the perspective of others. Important skills such as co-operation, compromising, and persuasion emerge.

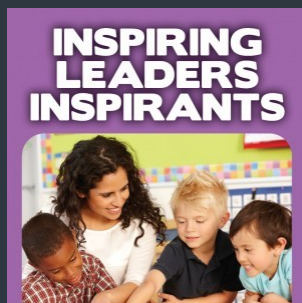
In play situations that are flexible and relaxed, there is no

**CHILD CARE WORKER
AND EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR
APPRECIATION DAY**

**Wednesday,
October 26, 2011**

This October marks the 11th anniversary of the Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educators Appreciation Day.

Established by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), this awareness day recognizes the commitment and dedication of Early Childhood Educators and Child Care staff. Support us in our resolution to declare October 26th the official Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Let's celebrate the role child care workers play in the lives of children, families and communities!



There are many ways to celebrate this day, for a list of suggestions, please [click here](#)

For more information contact:

Ontario Coalition for
Better Child Care

416-538-0628 x 2

Toll free: 1-800-594-7514

Or email:

katie@childcareontario.org

for more information



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stress created by expectations, there is no "right or wrong". In play children experiment, combine ideas, share previous knowledge, they express their impressions, intuitions and opinions in a situation created by their collective imagination.

From sensory experiences and building with blocks children construct logical, mathematical thinking. While exploring textures, mixing, measuring, observing a variety of properties of materials, scientific reasoning and problem solving is practiced. Skills practiced in a safe, fun environment develop a sense of competence and self-reliance in young children. Using reflective surfaces, light tables and shadows we enhance the dimensions of exploration.

Outdoor play contributes to physical and gross motor development, however children learn not only external skills but are strengthened emotionally by gaining competence through testing their limits, overcoming obstacles and enjoying successes. Nature has a positive impact on children's physical and mental wellbeing, therefore we are committed to creating and designing outdoor play environments with the same care and attention as indoor environments.

Outdoor playgrounds with the magical world of Nature, provide opportunities for noisy, boisterous, vigorous, physically active play. Opportunities for physical challenge and risk-taking in a safe environment encourage resilience. Natural



landscapes with their ecosystems entice young children to engage in scientific exploration. Natural environments with their capacity for change provide rich, diverse, multi-sensory

experiences. Uneven, natural surfaces provide opportunities for sensory exploration as well as for practicing balance and co-ordination. Children become part of the natural landscape as they manipulate and combine elements of the landscape for their own learning experiences.

The most important role for early childhood educators and parents is to provide time, opportunity and space both indoors and outdoors for free play. We support children's learning in play by observing the children's interests, scaffolding their learning, guiding and role modeling. We can pose questions that enhance the children's learning, provide the tools and materials for constructing knowledge. The most wonderful benefit of this collaboration is that we learn from the children ourselves.

The importance of play is supported by a multitude of research, yet a growing number of children are spending substantial time in structured educational and recreational activities, leaving little time for participation in open-ended, self-initiated and creative play. The commercialization and exaggeration of certain details of research misleads parents into obtaining educational toys, flash cards, video games as memorization tools. Today's thinking influenced by corporate interests often attempts to equate memorization, and acquisition with intelligence and overlooks the importance of play in raising a future generation of innovative, creative thinkers willing to take the risks that lead to new discoveries.

Creative, innovative thinkers create healthy, dynamic, progressive communities. Enjoy your autumn together; discover, experiment, learn and reclaim the joy of play with your children!

Sharing

Through the Eyes of a Child

by Bev Laking, RECE, Conestoga College

Abby enters the playroom, her attention is immediately drawn to the playdough table where there are several children rolling, pounding and shaping some dough. She approaches the group and reaches in to pick up a wad of dough. Immediately throughout the playroom all you hear is Jake say, "Hey, I was using that".

After working as a team to make a batch of playdough, one child leans over and scoops all the dough towards himself lying over it and not letting anyone else have some.

As teachers we have seen scenarios like the ones above over and over again in many areas of our programs. It's what we do in this moment that really counts. Do we insist that Abby gets to keep the playdough? or do we take a different approach, one perhaps that meets the needs of both children and is grounded in what we know about child development. Do we allow the child in the 2nd scenario to keep all the playdough?

No matter what role you play in a child's life we all want children to develop the ability to

share with others. In society, if we can share we are viewed in a positive light; we are on the road to developing strong social skills. It can be interpreted that we are kind towards others and have one of the qualities that it takes to be a great friend. Throughout the ELECT developmental charts in every age category we will see lots of indicators that support children's ongoing development of sharing abilities. Piaget reminds us though that young children are still egocentric and are just beginning to take the perspective of another. It is not until children have entered the school-age years that they cognitively truly grasp the concept of altruism (*unselfish interest in helping another person*). What does this really mean? If you're a preschooler or younger you share not for empathetic reasons but for the fun of the social play ritual or out of mere imitation. If you're a kindergartener, you share because you're beginning to develop empathetic awareness, and adults are encouraging you to share with others. It may feel more like an obligation you have to do. However, once you've hit your school-age years you begin to understand how your actions affect others, thus the term "perspective taking". Due to these cognitive and social changes occurring sharing becomes a concept that you truly grasp.

Let's go back to Abby's situation....

If we allow Abby to keep the playdough I view this as 'FORCED SHARING' –having to give up something just because someone else wants it. I don't believe I'm being much of a support to the child who had to give up the playdough if this is how I choose to respond. We may often hear teachers say, "There's enough for everyone to have some",

"Abby would like to play too, can you give her some playdough" thinking we are supporting the concept of sharing, but we often don't realize the impact we're having on the other child.



If we approach the situation recognizing both children's needs and respecting all involved the scenario may play out like this:
Teacher: Abby I can see you would like to use some playdough. I hear Jake telling you he's using it. What do you think you could do? (Some children may need help with the words and approaches, especially if you as a teacher are changing your practices)
Abby: I don't know.

Teacher: Well, you could ask Jake if you can play or you can ask him if you can have a turn when's he's finished with it.

If Jake opts to continue on his own we need to respect that. He may have had a plan for the playdough. As a teacher we now must ensure we follow-up with this scenario. Keep an eye on the playdough table, watch for when Jake is finished or perhaps someone else there is done. We then can approach Abby and let her know there is playdough now if she chooses to want to play there. If Jake opts to include Abby we can then make statements that support the pro-social

behavior that Jake has exhibited.

The second scenario is much different. Whenever I see a group of children all headed for the same material at once I know this is my cue to observe and be available for support. If one child immediately begins to monopolize the materials, I pull out my developmental hat and recognize this is quite normal behaviour. I then proceed to assist the child through my choice of words, acknowledging that the others joined at the same time and would like to use the materials as well. I will then inquire to the group "How can we make this work?" encouraging problem solving and decision-making. In this instance allowing the child to keep all the playdough does not promote pro-social behavior as the group all worked together to create it. Remember in these situations we want to put ourselves in the child's "shoes" and remember to respect and support all children involved.

There are a few ways that we as teachers can provide natural opportunities for children to work and share together.

Consider these as you look at your own programs:

- *View children as competent, capable beings
- *Do not limit the amount of children in a play area.
- *Have lots of the same type of materials in an area. Ex. Lots of playdough tools, several blocks of different types, lots of cars, many dishes in Dramatic Play
- *Put open-ended materials (items that can be used in more than one way) in all play areas. Ex. Use small rocks for food in Dramatic play, put shells out to accompany block play, add nuts and bolts to the playdough.

SUMMARY CHART OF REFLECTIVE, INTENTIONAL PRACTICES TO SUPPORT SHARING

*Take into consider where the child is on the developmental continuum
*Be available to listen to each child's point of view
*Consider the situation
*Remember to be a support to each child
*Offer words and phrasing if needed
*Follow through if a child has asked for a turn when someone is finished with the materials
*Set up materials/areas of play where sharing can occur naturally

What Do the 2011 Provincial Election Platforms Have to Say About the Future of Early Learning and Care?

The field of Early Learning and Care is changing. Practitioners in the field are working hard, and the significance of early childhood education is being realized by the public. One major policy change included the implementation of the Full-Day Kindergarten program that began in 2010, with province-wide implementation for all public elementary schools in Ontario by September 2014.

The provincial election, to be held on Thursday, October 6, 2011, will greatly affect the outcome of our early learning programs. The public has a voice in deciding the future of our children, and it is crucial that we know who we're voting for. Take a look below to see where each party platform stands on early learning and care this election.

Communist Party:

The Communist Party's "A People's Agenda for Ontario" platform includes:

- Expanding Early Learning to every school
- Building an accessible, affordable, quality, public childcare system
- Implementing \$7 per day / per child fees
- Creating thousands of subsidized childcare spaces
- Requiring ECE diplomas for childcare workers & raising wages

Click [A People's Agenda for](#)

[Ontario](#) for more information.

Green Party:

The Green Party's "It's Time: Five Points to a Better Ontario" platform does not specify plans for the future of Early Learning and Care.

Click [It's Time](#) for more information

Progressive Conservative Party:

The PC party's "Changebook" platform includes:

- Implementing full-day kindergarten in all schools by 2014

Click [Changebook](#) for more information.

Liberal Party:

The Liberal Party's "Ontario Liberal Plan 2011-2015" platform includes:

- Implementing full-day kindergarten in all schools by 2014
- Following implementation of all full-day kindergarten programs, the Liberals will begin creating after-school programs in all schools for children 6-12 years of age

Click [Ontario Liberal Plan](#) for more information.

New Democratic Party:

The New Democratic Party's "Plan for Affordable Change" platform does not specify plans for the future of Early Learning and Care, however, a statement released by NDP leader Andrea Horwath says:

- "New Democrats will make child care affordable and keep spaces open for families across the province."
- "are committed to moving ahead with full day kindergarten, but we won't let parents who need child care spaces fall through the cracks,"

The New Democrat plan described in the statement would

- "provide licensed child care centres with \$125 million in each of the next two years to keep spaces open and freeze fees."

Click [New Democrats would freeze child care fees, keep spaces open](#) for more information

Source:

Child Care Resource and Research Unit. (2011). Early childhood education and care in the fall 2011 provincial/territorial elections. Retrieved from <http://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-care-fall-2011-provincial-elections/ontario>

Network Update

Here's What's Coming Up...

The Preschool Network is designed for any professional working with young children between 2 1/2 and 5 years of age. During this event we will hold an open forum. Please come out to share your ideas and your questions!
Next Meeting: October 4th, 2011

The Infant and Toddler Network is for anyone working with children between the ages of 0-3. During this meeting we will be viewing the video "It's Mine: Responding to Problems and Conflicts" from the Infant Toddler Series. A discussion will be held following the video.
Next Meeting: October 5th, 2011

The Full-Day Kindergarten Network is for anyone working with children in a full-day kindergarten program. The focus on the next meeting will be to reflect back on the first year of the full-day kindergarten program, moving forward for new teams, and discussing the question "Where is FDK going?".
Next Meeting: October 17th, 2011

Save The Date!

Fall Symposium for Early Learning and Care
Saturday November 19, 2011
Conestoga College

"Shifting Ideas, Shifting Practices"

A focus on the changing landscape of Early Learning and Care

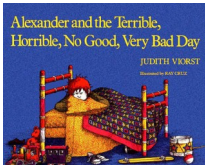


The Top 10 Books Every Child Should Read

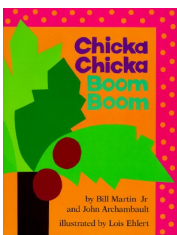
by Courtney Eidt, Student in the ECE program, Conestoga College

Here is a list of the top 10 books every child should read. These books are staples in any library, enriching literacy skills, supporting creativity and imagination through the great big doors of the world and beyond that books have the magic of opening. The illustrations, and the meaningful message behind each of these great stories is one that children and adults will both delight in reading!

10. 'Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day' by Judith Viorst

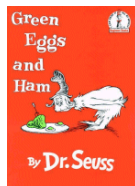


In this book Alexander has the worst day ever and by the end of the story wants to move away to Australia. His mother fills him in on the fact that everybody has bad days, even people who live in Australia. This book is great for teaching children that bad days don't just happen to them, but that everyone has a bad day once in awhile and that's just part of life.



9. 'Chicka Chicka Boom Boom' by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

This book is wonderful for its rhyming style building letter recognition through rhyme and colorful illustrations.



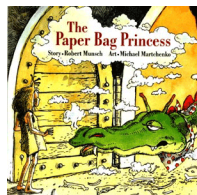
8. 'Green Eggs and Ham' by Dr. Seuss

This book is an excellent beginner book for children who are just learning to read. The vocabulary in the book is simple and repeated frequently. The repetition and rhyming of the words in this story are a great way for young children to build confidence in their ability to read as they can easily predict what comes next. Learning is simultaneous with laughter...so snuggle up and share a good laugh together.

7. 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?' by Bill Martin, Jr.



Here is another great book for the beginner reader or for the infant/toddler who loves being read to. The rhythm is fun and the illustrations aid young children in reading independently. This fun book keeps you guessing who is coming next.



6. 'The Paper Bag Princess' by Robert Munsch

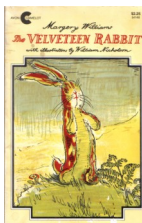
This book will make the

children laugh as they await to find out if the "Paper Bag Princess" will be able to get back her prince. Along the way this princess learns how to think and stand up for herself... a lesson each of us can learn from.

5. 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs' by Jon Scieszka



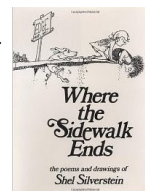
In this tale, the story of "The Three Little Pigs" (that we all grew to love as children) is told by the "Big Bad Wolf." The children will love this story because it will make them hoot and holler with laughter. They will learn that there is always two sides to each story!



4. 'The Velveteen Rabbit' by Margery Williams

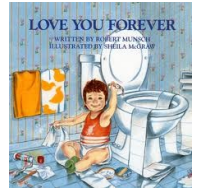
This story will spark the child reader's imagination and make believe world. In this book the author shows that inanimate objects have feelings and the child will learn about how strong love really can be!

3. 'Where the Sidewalk Ends: the Poems and Drawing of Shel Silverstein'

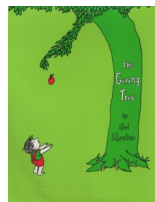


This book of collected poems and drawing from Shel Silverstein will take any reader on a wild ride into the mind of the creator himself. These poems are a delight for both adults and young children. Discover the joy of rhythm and rhymes.

2. 'Love You Forever' by Robert Munsch



This is a wonderful story for children to read and to understand love, growing older, and loss. This story will touch any reader's heart.



1. 'The Giving Tree' by Shel Silverstein

"The Giving Tree" is the #1 book on my list because it shows the children a lesson of giving selflessly when others are in need. The illustrations are simple yet depict the story of how the tree gave so much to the boy (who becomes a man) out of love. It is a story of the passing of time; it captures how relationships change and grow, how our needs and desires, both happy and sad change over the course of our lives. Mother nature a.k.a the tree, shares the gift of life and a message of love in this heart felt story.



The Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region presents an Early Literacy Café...

Esso Family Math for Practitioners

Monday, November 7 from 6:30 pm - 8:30pm

ECE Building, Conestoga College

Email laura.dick@kpl.org to register

**Professional Resource
Centre Hours for October**



Hours of Operation

Monday 9-8pm
Tuesday 9-8pm
Wednesday 9-8pm
Thursday 9-5 pm
Friday 9-5pm
Saturday & Sunday closed

*Closed on Monday, October 10
*Wednesday, October 19 we are open 9-4 in support of Fall Focus
*Monday, October 31 we are open 9-4 for Halloween

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!



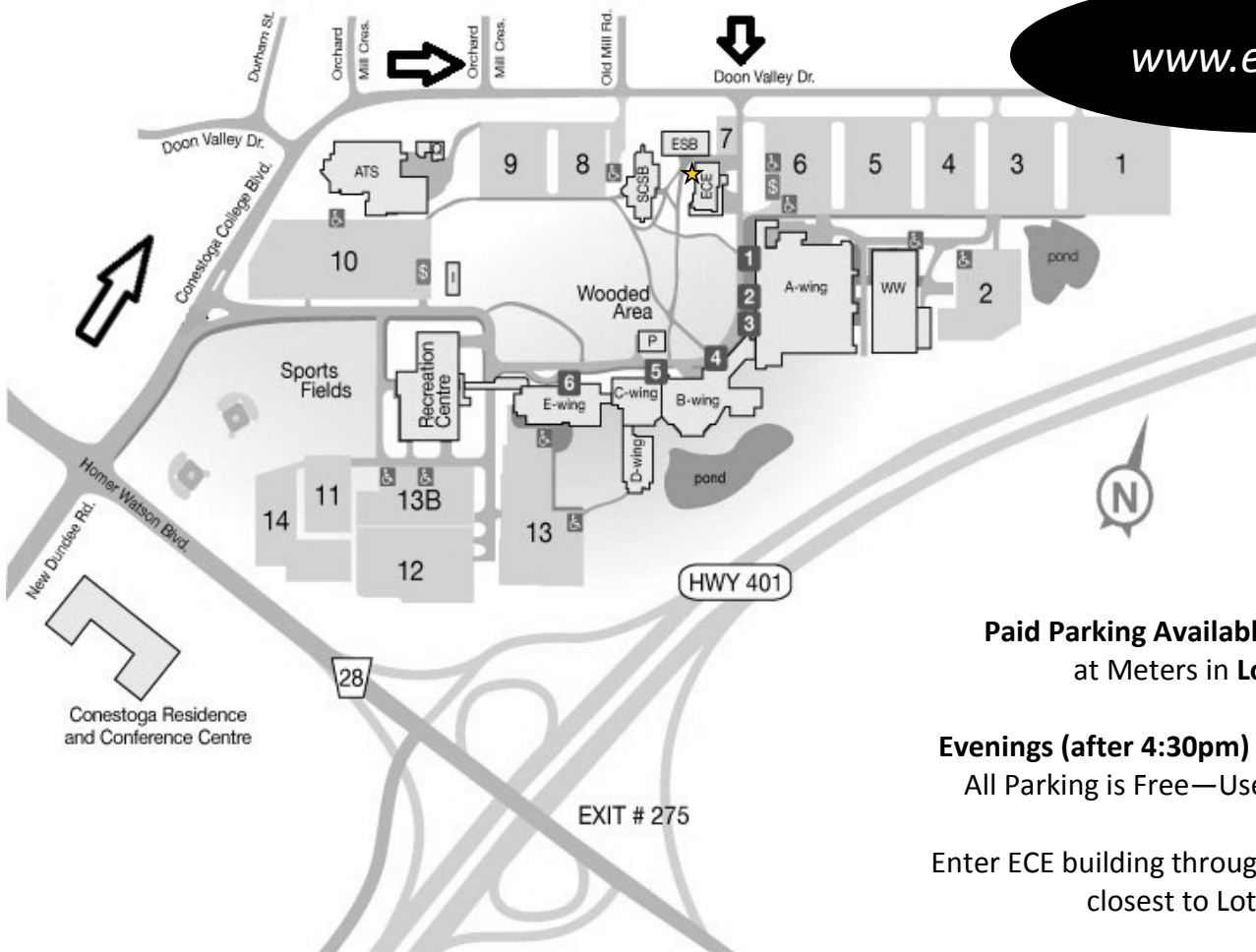
Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
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