

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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Review of *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* And Accompanying Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments

by Brenda Gavloski, RECE C.R.T., Supervisor, Millen Woods Child Care Centre

Inspiring Spaces for Young Children by authors Jessica Deviney, Sandra Ducan, Sara Harris, Mary Ann Rody and Lois Rosenberry is 239 pages of visually, awe inspiring delights for anyone who is wanting to create an esthetically beautiful learning environment for young children. The book boasts beautiful color photographs of not only beautiful classrooms, but also close-up photos of flowers, leaves, and natural elements along with inspiring quotes throughout. Even the table of contents is presented as a visual treat for the eyes.

For me, the intent of the book was summed up best with a quote from Anita Rui Olds: “Children are miracles... we must make it our job to create, with reverence and gratitude, a space that is worthy of a miracle” (Deviney, Duncan, Harris, Rody, & Rosenberry, 2010, p. 29).

In the introduction the authors have you consider the stages of “growth” for your inspiring space. Are you at the *Sprouting*

Stage- at the beginning of your undertaking and understanding of the principles of design?; the *Budding Stage-* beginning to become competent with increased knowledge of the design principles and esthetically pleasing components?; or, the *Blooming Stage* – the highest



level of growth, reaching your fullest potential in the inspiring classroom? These three stages are the base of the accompanying rating scale ROSIE which I will discuss further in this review.

After the introduction, the book is divided into three parts: Part 1 Inspiring Part 2 Learning – Divided into

the 7 principles of Design Part 3 Designs Each section or sub-section is denoted through the use of beautifully rich background hues which make it easy to feel the flow.

Part 1, *Inspiring*, attempts to prompt the reader to look in many varied and often nontraditional places when looking for inspiration for the classroom from television makeover shows to consignment shops and home improvement stores to museums and galleries and more.

Part two (which is the bulk of the book), *Learning*, is subdivided to educate the reader on the 7 principles of design;

- Nature Inspires Beauty
- Color generates Interest
- Furnishings define space
- Texture adds depth
- Displays enhance environment
- Elements heighten ambiance
- Focal points attract attention

The authors promote that “When

The Benefits of Nature

Studies have shown that allowing children regular access to nature contributes to their overall health and well-being:

- ◆ Children whose play areas contained natural spaces (such as a field or orchard) have higher powers of concentration than those who use traditional playgrounds.
- ◆ Children who have access to natural areas show greater emotional coping skills and are better able to handle stress.
- ◆ Green outdoor spaces have been found to promote more creative social play than that of the play on built equipment, and these spaces attract balanced groups of boys and girls.
- ◆ Children who are diagnosed with ADD and ADHD have been shown to function better with nature. They exhibit fewer symptoms after playing in green outdoor settings, and the greener the environment, the fewer symptoms are shown.
- ◆ Children who play amongst trees, rocks and uneven ground show greater motor development, particularly in the areas of balance and agility.

Benefits of Nature for Children's Health. Fact sheet #1. April 2007. Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design. University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. www.cudenver.edu/cye

they are implemented, these design principles will motivate all who enter your space, stimulate those that occupy your space, and enliven those whose interest in the space is beginning to fade.” (Deviney, Duncan, Harris, Rody, & Rosenberry, 2010, p. 43) Throughout this section, side boxes highlight: Questions to be asked, Tips, and Ideas for authenticating the space.

Part 3 *Designing*, guides the reader to apply the knowledge that has been gained through the first two sections of the book. In this section the reader is given guides or tips to draw up floor plans, narrow down design plans, work with a team... This section also has a *Resources* list (I did not find useful) and *Additional Website Resources* (I found very helpful).

The Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE) is an environmental rating scale that assists the reader to objectively look at how well they have incorporated the elements discussed in *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children*. It strictly looks at the environment and does not rate the quality of relationships between the protagonists who live within the space. The 3 stages of growth: Sprouting, Budding and Blooming are used as the benchmarks to help you determine your level of growth within each of the 7 principals of design. The authors assert that it takes at least two hours to complete, and that preferably you conduct your assessment without the children present. If the observations are not completed in one sitting, the authors stress the importance of completion within the week. The instructions for use, scoring and tallying are clear and easy to understand.



Definitions for further clarification are found in the back of the book. The *Scoring Guide*, also found in the back is meant for photocopying. Again, the rating scale is beautifully presented with colored background hues that correspond with the background colors of that particular section in *Inspiring Spaces*. It also has beautiful color photographs that depict examples of what is being rated throughout the scale.

If you are wanting to make a classroom where “relationships are fostered, families are respected, and children are honored.... nature’s gifts are valued and children’s thoughts are a captured... learning is alive and aesthetic beauty is appreciated” (Deviney, Duncan, Harris, Rody, & Rosenberry, 2010, p. 43) then, *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* and the accompanying Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments

(ROSIE) would make an excellent choice for you to check out of the Professional Resource Centre.

“We value space because of its power to organize... and its potential for sparking all kinds of social, affective, and cognitive learning.”

– *Loris Malaguzzi* (Deviney, Duncan, Harris, Rody, & Rosenberry, 2010, p. 43)

Deviney, J., Duncan, S., Harris, S., Rody, M.A., & Rosenberry, L. (2010). *Inspiring spaces for young children*. Silver Spring, MD: Gryphon House, Inc.

Deviney, J., Duncan, S., Harris, S., Rody, M.A., & Rosenberry, L. (2010). *Rating observation scale for inspiring environments*. Silver Spring, MD: Gryphon House, Inc.

Reconnecting Children with Nature

You don’t need to go far to find interesting ways of reconnecting children with nature in your programs. It can be as simple as opening the door and exploring the playground and surrounding area. Many centres face a challenging dilemma of having pavement where grass should be...but there are ways of adding green to your playscape! Bring in additional planters— or try a blue bin garden (recycling bins are great self-contained spaces to start a garden). Keep adding boxes and watch your garden grow! If you want to go beyond your fence, there are local treasures waiting for you near by.

There are many great places locally that are wonderful destinations for field trips, walks and visits. Have you thought about planning your next fieldtrip to incorporate more nature?

Check out these places... or others just like them in your area!

- Garden Centre (Bloomingdale Nurseries has a butterfly conservatory on site as well! An added bonus are the animals they have on site like ducks, bunnies and chickens)
- Park (Waterloo park has a large water park and picnic area)
- Conservation Area (Laurel Creek has a Nature Centre where they run children’s programming from)

Take pictures and allow children to bring their discoveries back to the classroom so you can revisit them again and again! Get messy and have fun.

Early Indicators of a Possible Reading Disability

by Dianna Gamble

With the introduction of full day Junior and Senior Kindergarten becoming a reality for all young children in Ontario by 2015, many more of them will be introduced to early reading skills at a younger age. Most of these children will go on to become fully efficient readers. However, what about the 3-5% of all children who have reading challenges? Can we identify them and help them earlier? Research shows that almost 70% of students who are identified and receive research-based early intervention can learn to read at an average grade level. Currently only about 10% of students with reading difficulties are diagnosed by age seven. The majority of children who do not receive help until age nine are more likely to be slower and less efficient readers their whole lives. It is therefore important to have your child assessed as early as age six/seven if you suspect a reading disability. Although a formal diagnosis may not be offered, a provisional diagnosis is often possible.



What are the early predictors of reading difficulties? Research shows that any child with a family history for reading and/or language difficulties is considered at risk for developing later reading problems, because language is so foundational to reading. Other key risk factors include developmental delays in language, difficulty with attention and self-control and delays in specific pre-academic skills.

One of the most important early warning signs are early speech and language issues. These include children who are late talkers, have articulation/pronunciation problems and/or have delayed vocabulary growth (that is, children who do not use as many words as same-aged peers or have difficulty finding the right word to use). At twelve to eighteen months, most children can understand the word “no”, wave goodbye and play pat-a-cake, make the “sounds” of familiar animals, point to their toes, eyes and nose when asked and bring objects from another room when asked. By their second birthday, children should have approximately 50 simple

words, and by two and half years they should be starting to put two or three words together in a sentence. By age three, children should be able to tell story, have a sentence length of four to five words, no longer be using “baby talk”, and he/she should be able to pronounce words they know correctly. If your child is delayed in these areas, it is important to consult your doctor or paediatrician, and ask to see a speech and language pathologist as soon as possible.

In terms of behavioural development, by two years of age most children should be able to sit and listen to a story from a book. By three years of age, they should be able to listen to and retell a familiar story. Children who display a high degree of restlessness and distractibility, have difficulty following directions and routines and demonstrate poor frustration tolerance may not have the behavioural stamina to learn early reading skills. While they may not have a learning disability, their behaviour keeps them from achieving early reading skills and thus they need assistance to develop better behavioural control. Talk to your family doctor, paediatrician or a registered psychologist if you have concerns in this area for your child.

Thirdly, there are important pre-academic skills (some of them known as phonological skills) that need to develop to aid in reading. For instance, by four, children should be able to name the letters of the alphabet. By five, they should be able to identify all letters out of sequence, name the first few letters of their names and begin to learn letter sounds (such as, “c” makes a “cah” sound). Children this age should be able to name a rhyming word for many familiar words, and can recognize when two words do not rhyme. If your child is struggling in this area, be sure to mention it to the teacher and ask for help and input.

Parents, especially those with family history for reading and/or language difficulties, should take note of their children’s early language, behavioural and cognitive

development. In the meantime, every parent can do some important things that will help their own child in terms of early reading development. Read aloud every day, and use rhyming books to help your child connect letters to speech sounds. In addition, invite him/her to join in when words in a storybook are repeated, sing nursery rhymes and the alphabet song to him/her and talk to your child as you go about your day pointing on traffic signs, labels and packaging. Listen with them to children’s CD’s and videos. Give him/her magnetic letters to reinforce learning, make letters from clay, in the sand or using buttons or pasta glued to the page. Finally, play word games while travelling in the car or waiting in line such as, “How many words can you name that begin with the letter D?” As much as possible, expose your child to sounds and flow of language and praise your child’s efforts to communicate.

In summary, children at risk for reading disabilities should be identified as soon as possible (even if they are not formally given a diagnosis) and receive research based intervention from a phonological basis. This can begin as early as Kindergarten. Consult with a professional if you have questions, and do not accept the explanation that “he/she will just outgrow it” if you intuitively feel something may be wrong. However, it is important to remember that development varies from child to child and the milestones described in this article are guidelines only.



Dianna Gamble is a Registered Psychological Associate at Norfolk Psychological Services in Guelph, Ontario. She specializes in assessment of learning disabilities, including early reading issues.

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 (except in May and June) 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 2011/2012

- July 19, 2011
- Aug 16, 2011
- September 20, 2011
- October 18, 2011
- November 15, 2011
- January 17, 2012
- Feb 21, 2012
- March 20, 2012
- April 17, 2012

For Further Information:

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

RTB Tuesdays take place at the ECE Professional Resource Centre Conestoga College ECE Building
299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener
Phone: 519- 748-5220 ext 3388
Website: eceprc.ca

What's New in Childcare

Links to the News in Early Learning and Care

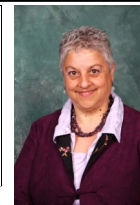
With the eyes of the Province, Country and other parts of world focused on our FDK programs, great attention on play based learning has emerged. Check out the [Kindergarten Diaries](#) where a team of reporters and researchers have followed over 100 students during their first year in school.

More and more focus is being placed on play and the dangerous impacts being reported around the lack of opportunities to play outdoors freely. Check out this seven minute clip of a newly released documentary by Scott Harper, "[The Lost Adventures of Childhood](#)".



A great resource to add to your website favourites is Earlychildhood NEWS—check out this article [Making the Most of Sand Play](#) and you'll see why!

Do you have something to share with us? We are looking for professionals in our field to share their stories, ideas, comments and research with us. Send your ideas or article entries to the Professional Resource Centre, care of Samantha Burns, RECE at sburns@conestogac.on.ca



**A
Message from your
Local
AECEO President,
Cathy Barrie**

On Wednesday June 8th the Waterloo/Wellington AECEO held their annual General Meeting at Shades Mill in partnership with the Professional Resource Centre. This year, keeping in tune with the large AECEO conference, we held our meeting around a campfire at a beautiful and tranquil Conservation Park in Cambridge.



This location offered us the perfect area to gather, network and celebrate the last year over a wonderful barbeque dinner and later side by side around a crackling fire. This was the desired backdrop for our special guest Barb McKee as she shared with us the art of oral storytelling. Her message was clear as she passionately told us stories of how Chipmunk got his strips and wove tales of culture, history and pieces of herself into the evening air as we all sat eagerly anticipating what might happen next! Stories have a way of bringing people together, but also serve the purpose of sharing information. Many tales have comedic relief and entertain us, but others give us roots, or instill a sense of caution... sending us a warning not to get too close to the smiling crocodiles mouth. It was a refreshing reminder for educators that you don't always need the latest book or beautiful materials to embed into your programs to make them great places for children... you are your greatest resource. So the next time you find yourself wondering, what story should I read to the children...dig deeper and share a little piece of yourself and you might be delightfully surprised at how the children eagerly eat up each word you have to offer!

Your new executive board has been selected, however we are currently looking for someone to step into the role of secretary. If you are interested please contact Cathy Barrie. Thank you!

**Cathy Barrie....President / Samantha Burns....President Elect / Tracy Rees....Treasurer
Debbie Ainley....Website Coordinator**

Brenda Gavloski / Liam Neufeld / Sheri McFee /...members at large

Our next meeting will be September 21, 2011 in the PRC at 6:30 pm.
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



Beginning with Books

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

Fun! Free! Cool!

Looking for ways to keep the kids busy, entertained and learning while they are having fun this summer? Looking for free events for your family? If so, then the public library is the perfect place for you. We have a wide range of fun, free and educational programs happening all year long, but in the summer our schedule is packed with kid-friendly programs and events, all in nice air-conditioned facilities.

It all starts with the TD Summer Reading Club, a program that is run at libraries across the country. It aims to keep children and families reading over the summer break, and to make reading fun. Teachers, librarians, and parents know that reading during the summer vacation is an important factor in ensuring children's success

in school. Studies prove that the reading level of children who do not read

during the school break decreases, and they return to school in September behind where they were in June. Here at KPL, with some help from the National Library and the TD Bank, we are able to offer kids lots of encouragement and incentive to keep reading, along with some free stuff to keep their attention.

KPL Kidders

KPL staff are willing to do just about anything to make kids laugh. In this kick-off to the summer, we will sing, dance, tell stories and jokes, and more. Fun for children of all ages.

Tadpoles

Babies and toddlers (ages 0-23 months) and their caregivers are invited to join us for stories, rhymes, bounces and songs.

Pollywogs

Toddlers (ages 24-35 months)

take over in this fast-paced program full of stories, songs, and lots of movement.

Starfish

Preschoolers (3 – 5 year olds) will splash through lots of great stories, songs and rhymes, and make a craft.

Wave Runners

The KPL Children's Programmers have created a fabulous schedule of programs for children ages 6 – 12. From pirates to sharks, the Titanic to Survivor, there are cool programs happening every week.

Kidspark

A free festival featuring hands-on fun for kids that push the limits of creativity. Victoria Park Sunday, August 14, 11am - 5pm.

For a full list of dates, times and locations please visit: www.kpl.org



Children's Book - of - the Month



Perfect Square
By Michael Hall

From an award winning graphic designer comes this lovely adventure. Excitement awaits the star of this story — the perfect square — who feels hemmed in by the edges of his book and transforms himself into familiar objects such as boats and flowers and rivers. Great for introducing the concept of letter awareness, *Perfect Square* is all about thinking outside of the box...or the square!

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

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



SPLASH: Celebrate Summer!

KPL is getting ready to make a splash - from sharks to starfish, toasting marshmallows to gazing at the stars, our summer is going to be full of fun. **Registration begins on June 30th** at all KPL locations and every child in Kitchener is invited to join. Over the summer children will receive a free reading booklet, a poster, stickers, and be entered in the draw for weekly prizes. All they need to do is to dive in and join the club, and keep reading along summer long. It's simple. It's free.

Hours for July & August 2011



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Hours of Operation

Monday 1-9pm

Tuesday 10-6pm

Wednesday 1-9pm

Thursday 10-6 pm

Friday 10-4pm

Closed Saturday & 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!



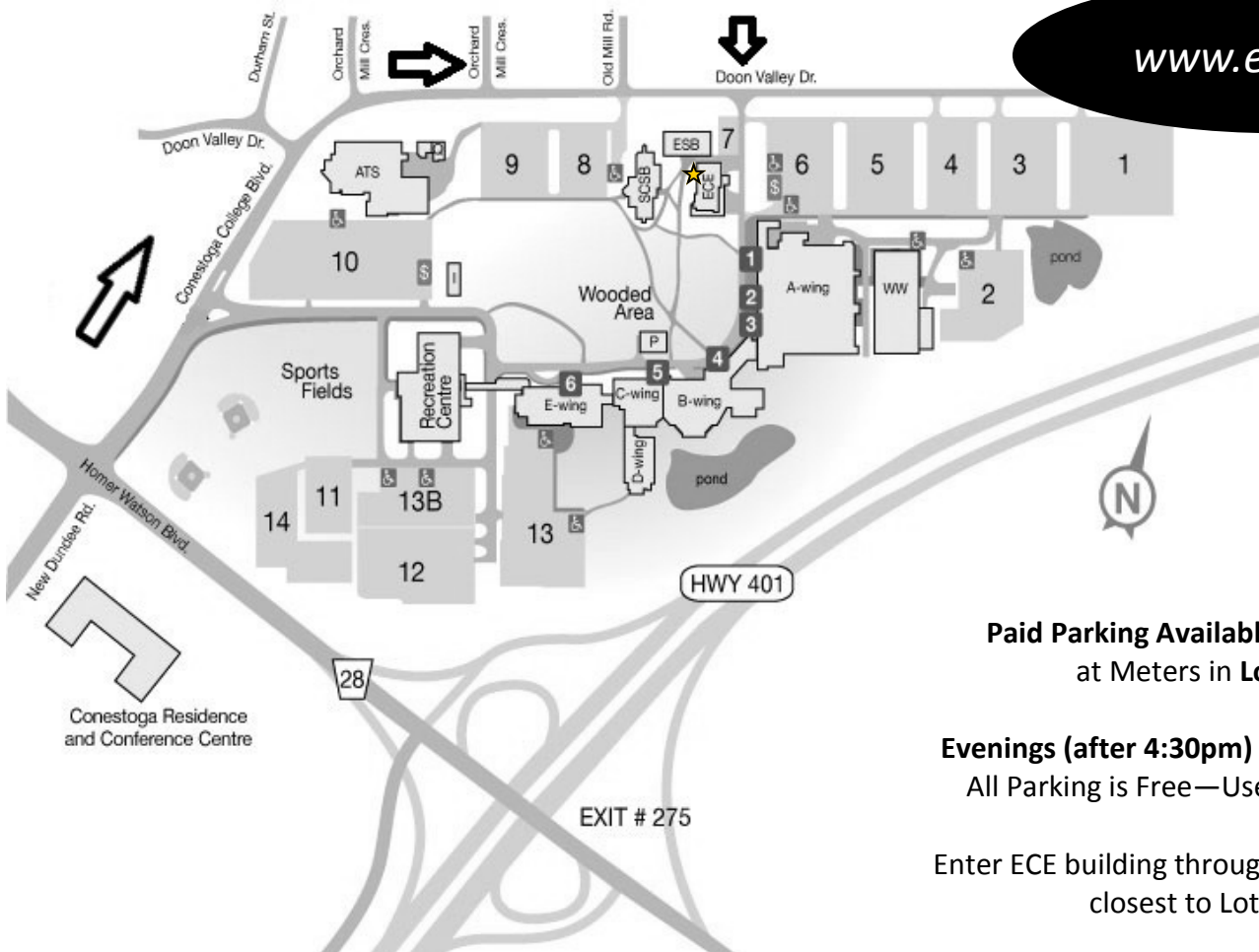
Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning



LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION



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.