



A publication of ACSI Eastern Canada
Early Education Division



Enabling the Early Childhood Educator

Fall 2010 Edition

Issues



Updates



Program Resources



Little Thoughts... "Data Explosion"

As we move into a deeper dependency and addiction to technology for communication, we begin to become inundated for the need to develop a systematic way to avoid data explosion. No longer are we limited to local information but we get bombarded by every topic under the sun from around the world. How can we keep track of what we need to read, know, keep, file or delete? Unlike the old paper distribution method, how do we ensure that all our information is received by the right person and actually read? Does our website comprehensively reflect updated information? How do we implement an effective risk management system that will enable us to operate our centres and schools in a way that is financially sound and accountable in our daily practices?

Environmental disasters used to be our prime area of concern but we now face the onslaught of potential international power grid failures, data worms and hackers which pose as a very deep seated threat to the continuity of our communications with others. Our critical usage of Intranet and E-mail exposes us to lost e-mails and e-mail/intranet outages which mean that we have to find ways to restore and recover all relevant communications and transactions that may impact the flow of our daily operations. Technology changes by the minute; we need to be ready to change and upgrade our systems almost as fast in order to stay current and relevant.

The good news in the midst of this entire data explosion is that there are just as many innovative solutions to help us manage these technological challenges. What it does do is force us to continuously evaluate how we use our IT resources so that it enables us to have a strong infrastructure ready to meet anything that comes our way!

Dr. Stephanie Ling, Editor, ACSI EE Co-ordinator

Noteworthy Quotes...



Milk tastes a lot better through a straw.

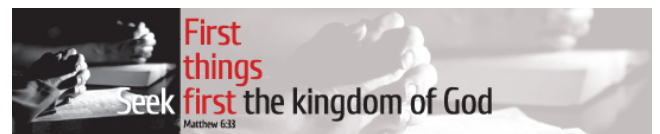
There is no good reason why clothes have to match.

Even babies like to grab for things just beyond their reach.



ACSI Canadian News...

Our next Impact Conference is scheduled for Sat. May 14, 2011 at Tyndale University College & Seminary. We are delighted to have, as our keynote speaker, Debbie Carter, the ACSI Field Director for the Central States, USA. I have had the pleasure of knowing her through our ACSI International connection and am confident that you will benefit from her wisdom and comprehensive EE experiences that she will share with you. The conference theme will be:



Please set aside this date so that you can join us once again for a fabulous time of renewal !

Directors' 2010-2011 Meetings



To keep you current and well informed, join us:

October 1, 2010

November 26, 2010

February 18, 2011

April 29, 2011

May 13, 2011 (conference prep day)

May 14, 2011 (Saturday: Impact Conference Day)

June (TBD)

"That in all things He might have pre-eminence" Colossians 1:18



Encouraging Creativity ...

Our children's creativity is often limited by how we want the end result to look like. Here are some tips from an article written by Carolyn Pope and Kay Wright Springate on how to overcome this as well as understand how you can guide this creative process in your role as an educator.

TIME: Creativity does not follow the clock. Children need extended, unhurried time to explore and do their best work. They should not be artificially rotated, that is, asked to move to a different learning center or activity when they are still productively engaged and motivated by a piece of creative work.

SPACE: Children need a place to leave unfinished work to continue the next day, and a space that inspires them to do their best work. A barren, drab environment is not conducive to creative work. Rather, children's work is fostered by a space that has natural light, harmonious colors, comfortable and child-sized areas, examples of their own and others' work (not only their classmates, but as appropriate, also their teachers' and selected adult artists), and inviting materials.

MATERIALS. Without spending great amounts of money, teachers can organize wonderful collections of resource materials that might be bought, found, or recycled. These materials can include paper goods of all kinds; writing and drawing tools; materials for constructions and collages, such as buttons, stones, shells, beads, and seeds; and sculpting materials, such as play dough, goop, clay, and shaving cream. These materials are used most productively and imaginatively by children when they themselves have helped select, organize, sort, and arrange them.

CLIMATE. The classroom atmosphere should reflect the adults' encouragement and acceptance of mistakes, risk-taking, innovation, and uniqueness, along with a certain amount of mess, noise, and freedom. This is not a matter of chaos, or of tight control, but instead something in between. In order

to create such a climate, teachers must give themselves permission to try artistic activity themselves, even when they have not been so fortunate as to have had formal art training or to feel they are naturally "good at art." Through workshops, adult education classes, or teamwork with an art teacher or parent, classroom teachers can gain the confidence for, and experience the pleasure of, venturing some distance down the road of self-expression in a medium in which they did not know they could be successful. Their skill will then translate into the work with the children.

OCCASIONS: Children's best and most exciting work involves an intense or arousing encounter between themselves and their inner or outer world. Teachers provide the occasions for these adventures. Children find it hard to be creative without any concrete inspiration. Instead, they prefer to draw on the direct evidence of their senses or memories. These memories can become more vivid and accessible through the teacher's provocations and preparations. For example, teachers can encourage children to represent their knowledge and ideas before and after they have watched an absorbing show, taken a field trip, or observed and discussed an interesting plant or animal brought into class. Teachers can put up a mirror or photos of the children in the art area, so children can study their faces as they draw their self-portrait. Teachers can offer children the opportunity to check what they have drawn against an original model and then let them revise and improve upon their first representation.

Conclusion: All of these activities can be combined with the teachers' goal of gradually introducing children to new art materials and techniques. Finally, there is no "one right way" for helping young children achieve their creative potential. Teachers will need to continue to experiment and test alternatives to see what is effective in their situation. (Source: **ERIC Identifier:** ED389474 **Publication Date:** 1995-12-00 **Author:** Edwards, Carolyn Pope - Springate, Kay Wright **Source:** ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education Urbana IL.)

Helping Parents Be Helpful...

Educating and supporting our parents is a key strategy in enabling young children to feel good about themselves. David Sheslow, PhD, outlines some strategies you can share with your parents in helping them develop strong self-esteem in their young children they leave in your care.



How Parents Can Help

Dr. Sheslow has some simple tips for parents:

1. **Watch what you say:** children are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying something like, "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.
2. **Be a positive role model.** If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitations, your child may eventually mirror you. Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.
3. **Identify and redirect your child's inaccurate beliefs.** It's important for parents to identify kids' irrational beliefs about themselves, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept. Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a false generalization, it's also a belief that will set the child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in its true light. A helpful response might be: "You are a good student. You do great in school. Math is just a subject that you need to spend more time on. We'll work on it together."
4. **Be spontaneous and affectionate.** Your love will go a long way to boost your child's self-esteem. Give hugs and tell kids you're proud of them. Give praise frequently and honestly, without overdoing it. Kids can tell whether something comes from the heart.

5. **Give positive, accurate feedback.** Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again next time.
6. **Create a safe, loving home environment.** Kids who don't feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem. A child who is exposed to parents who fight and argue repeatedly may become depressed and withdrawn. Also watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other factors that may affect kids' self-esteem. Deal with these issues sensitively but swiftly and always remember to respect your kids.
7. **Help kids become involved in constructive experiences.** Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

Memorable Sayings...



"There is always time for a nap." Suzy Becker

"Words must be weighed and not counted."
David Baird

"If someone is mad at you, do not ask him to keep his cool, just keep yours." Hervé Desbois

It's best to follow "stop doing that" with "Start doing this".
Ron Morrish

"True courtesy is the ability to be polite to the people you don't like."
Ron Morrish

"Leading a spiritual life is a lift and not a load."

"A lengthy prayer is the best way to avoid a short temper."

Early Literacy for Babies and Toddlers...

The foundation for literacy begins in a number of ways for babies and toddlers and it is important to realize that this reading readiness is significant to their cognitive development. The Elmhurst Public Library in Illinois, distributes the following information to young parents who visit their site:

What is early literacy?

Early literacy is everything children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write.

Why is early literacy important?

Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school, even from birth. The development of early literacy skills through early experiences with books and stories is critically linked to a child's success in learning to read.

What can parents and caregivers do?

Parents are important in helping their children get ready to read because:

- You know your children best;
- Children learn best when they are in a good mood, and you know their moods best;
- You can help your children learn reading skills in ways that are easiest for them;
- Children learn best by doing things—and they love doing things with you.

Take every chance you have to read with your children, tell and talk about stories, say nursery rhymes and sing songs. Early literacy is not the teaching of reading. Your child will learn how to read in school. The most important thing you can do to foster early literacy is to provide an atmosphere that's fun, verbal and stimulating. When you read, talk and play with your child, you're stimulating the growth of your child's brain and building the connections that will become the building blocks for reading.

A Healthy Morning Start...



Blueberry Maple Muffins

- 1/5 cup whole flaxseeds
- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 cup nonfat buttermilk, (see Tip)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 2 teaspoons freshly grated orange zest
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 tablespoon sugar

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat 12 muffin cups with cooking spray.
2. Grind flaxseeds in a spice mill (such as a clean coffee grinder) or dry blender. Transfer to a large bowl. Add whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda and salt; whisk to blend. Whisk eggs and maple syrup in a medium bowl until smooth. Add buttermilk, oil, orange zest, orange juice and vanilla; whisk until blended.
3. Make a well in the dry ingredients and stir in the wet ingredients with a rubber spatula just until moistened. Fold in blueberries. Scoop the batter into the prepared muffin cups. Sprinkle the tops with sugar.
4. Bake the muffins until the tops are golden brown and spring back when touched lightly, 15 to 25 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Loosen edges and turn muffins out onto a wire rack to cool slightly.

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