



KEEPING IN TOUCH

FALL 2013

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre, Child Care Consultation

Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough, Special Needs Services

The Etobicoke Children's Centre, Special Needs Consultation

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Community Outreach Service

Humber College, Child Care Consultation Services

Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services, Home Childcare

Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services, Special Services Unit

WoodGreen Community Services

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IT'S HERE ONCE AGAIN!

Welcome to the Fall edition of Keeping In Touch. The focus of this edition is on promoting the healthy development for our toddlers and preschoolers. Specifically there is information regarding language development and supporting social/emotional development. To enhance our work we've also included ideas related to the team building process, including team building exercises. And there is a short, but thought-provoking, piece on professional development.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT - WHAT TO EXPECT

By 18 Months a child should:

- ◆ Understand the meaning of in, out, off and on
- ◆ Point to at least 2 body parts when asked
- ◆ Use at least 20 words consistently
- ◆ Demonstrate some pretend play with toys



By 2 Years a child should:

- ◆ Use 100 - 150 words
- ◆ Consistently combine 2 - 4 words in short phrases
- ◆ Enjoy being around peers

By 30 Months a child should:

- ◆ Use over 350 words
- ◆ Use some adult grammar (two cookies, bird flying, I jumped)
- ◆ Participate in some turn-taking activities with peers using words and toys
- ◆ Remember and understand familiar stories

By 3 Years a child should:

- ◆ Understand who, what, where and why questions
- ◆ Create sentences using 5 - 8 words
- ◆ Tell simple stories
- ◆ Talk in a way that most people outside of the family understand what he/she is saying most of the time

By 4 Years a child should:

- ◆ Follow directions involving 3 or more steps
- ◆ Tell stories using a beginning, middle and end
- ◆ Show increasingly complex imaginary play
- ◆ Match some letters with sounds

Source: Toronto Preschool Speech & Language Services, *Communication Checklist*, Toronto Public Health. Retrieved November 18, 2013 from www.tpsls.on.ca.

Building an effective team in child care is a key component of the role of a Supervisor. The following information is an excerpt from the University of California - Berkeley's text Guide to Managing Human Resources, created by the managers and staff in Human Resources at UC Berkeley.

TEAM BUILDING

Team building is an ongoing process that helps a work group evolve into a cohesive unit. The team members not only share expectations for accomplishing group tasks, but trust and support one another and respect one another's individual differences. Your role as a team builder is to lead your team toward cohesiveness and productivity. A team takes on a life of its own and you have to regularly nurture and maintain it, just as you do for individual employees.

With good team-building skills, you can unite employees around a common goal and generate greater productivity. Without them, you limit yourself and the staff to the effort each individual can make alone.

BENEFITS OF TEAM BUILDING

Team building can lead to:

- Good communications with participants as team members and individuals
- Increased department productivity and creativity
- Team members motivated to achieve goals
- A climate of cooperation and collaborative problem-solving
- Higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment
- Higher levels of trust and support
- Diverse co-workers working well together
- Clear work objectives
- Better operating policies and procedures



STEPS TO BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE TEAM

The first rule of team building is an obvious one: to lead a team effectively, you must first establish your leadership with each team member. Remember that the most effective team leaders build their relationships on trust and loyalty, rather than fear or the power of their positions.

- **Consider each employee's ideas as valuable.** Remember that there is no such thing as a stupid idea.
- **Be aware of employees' unspoken feelings.** Set an example to team members by being open with employees and sensitive to their moods and feelings.
- **Act as a harmonizing influence.** Look for chances to mediate and resolve minor disputes; point continually toward the team's higher goals.
- **Be clear when communicating.** Be careful to clarify directives.
- **Encourage trust and cooperation among employees on your team.** Remember that the relationships team members establish among themselves are every bit as important as those you establish with them. As the team begins to take shape, pay close attention to the ways in which team members work together and take steps to improve communication, cooperation, trust, and respect in those relationships.
- **Encourage team members to share information.** Emphasize the importance of each team member's contribution and demonstrate how all of their jobs operate together to move the entire team closer to its goal.

- **Delegate problem-solving tasks to the team.** Let the team work on creative solutions together.
- **Facilitate communication.** Remember that communication is the single most important factor in successful teamwork. Facilitating communication does not mean holding meetings all the time. Instead it means setting an example by remaining open to suggestions and concerns, by asking questions and offering help, and by doing everything you can to avoid confusion in your own communication.
- **Establish team values and goals; evaluate team performance.** Be sure to talk with members about the progress they are making toward established goals so that employees get a sense both of their success and of the challenges that lie ahead. Address teamwork in performance standards. Discuss with your team:
 - ✓ What do we really care about in performing our job?
 - ✓ What does the word success mean to this team?
 - ✓ What actions can we take to live up to our stated values?
- **Make sure that you have a clear idea of what you need to accomplish;** that you know what your standards for success are going to be; that you have established clear time frames; and that team members understand their responsibilities.
- **Use consensus.** Set objectives, solve problems, and plan for action. While it takes much longer to establish consensus, this method ultimately provides better decisions and greater productivity because it secures every employee's commitment to all phases of the work.
- **Set ground rules for the team.** These are the norms that you and the team establish to ensure efficiency and success. They can be simple directives (team members are to be punctual for meetings) or general guidelines (every team member has the right to offer ideas and suggestions), but you should make sure that the team creates these ground rules by consensus and commits to them, both as a group and as individuals.
- **Establish a method for arriving at a consensus.** You may want to conduct open debate about the pros and cons of proposals, or establish research committees to investigate issues and deliver reports.
- **Encourage listening and brainstorming.** As supervisor, your first priority in creating consensus is to stimulate debate. Remember that employees are often afraid to disagree with one another and that this fear can lead your team to make mediocre decisions. When you encourage debate you inspire creativity and that's how you'll spur your team on to better results.
- **Establish the parameters of consensus-building sessions.** Be sensitive to the frustration that can mount when the team is not achieving consensus. At the outset of your meeting, establish time limits, and work with the team to achieve consensus within those parameters. Watch out for false consensus; if an agreement is struck too quickly, be careful to probe individual team members to discover their real feelings about the proposed solution.

Source: University of California-Berkeley, *Guide to Managing Human Resources*, VC Administration and Finance Berkeley HR.

Retrieved November 8, 2013 from <http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/guides/managing-hr>.



TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

~ Andrew Carnegie ~



Back-to-Back Drawing

Divide your group into pairs, and have each pair sit on the floor back to back. Give one person in each pair a picture of a shape, and give the other person a pencil and pad of paper. Ask the people holding the pictures to give verbal instructions to their partners on how to draw the shape – without actually telling the partners what the shape is.

After they've finished, ask each pair to compare their original shape with the actual drawing, and consider the following questions: How well did the first person describe the shape? How well did the second person interpret the instructions? Were there problems with both the sending and receiving parts of the communication process?

Survival Scenario

This exercise forces your group to communicate and agree to ensure their 'survival.' Tell your group that their airplane has just crashed in the ocean. There's a desert island nearby, and there's room on the lifeboat for every person – plus 12 items they'll need to survive on the island. Instruct the team to choose which items they want to take. How do they decide? How do they rank or rate each item?

Human Spring

Ask group members to stand facing each other in pairs. Their elbows should be bent, with their palms facing toward each other. Instruct them to touch their palms together, and gradually start leaning toward each other, so that they eventually hold each other up. Then, instruct everyone to move their feet further and further back, so that they have to depend solely upon their partners to remain standing.

Mine Field

This is a great exercise if you have a large room or outdoor field. Set up a 'mine field' using chairs, balls, cones, boxes, or any other object that could potentially be an obstacle and trip someone up. Leave enough space between the objects for someone to walk through.

Next, divide your group into pairs. Pay attention to who you match with whom. This is a perfect opportunity to work on relationships, so you might want to put together people who have trust issues with each other.

Blindfold one person, the 'mine walker' – this person is not allowed to talk. Ask his or her partner to stay outside the mine field, and give verbal directions, helping the mine walker avoid the obstacles, and reach the other side of the area. Before you begin, allow partners a few minutes to plan how they'll communicate. Then, make sure there are consequences when people hit an obstacle. For example, perhaps they have to start again from the beginning.



Source: Mind Tools, *Team-Building Exercises - Planning Activities that Actually Work*, Mind Tools Ltd.

Retrieved November 13, 2013 from www.mindtools.com.

Contributed by Faye Dundas, Early Childhood Consultant ~ Humber Child Care Consultation Services

CAN YOU FIND THE WORDS RELATED TO TODDLER DEVELOPMENT?

E	V	I	T	I	S	I	U	Q	N	I
Q	T	D	C	P	M	U	D	P	L	C
O	N	V	D	F	I	Y	W	H	I	U
K	J	M	G	V	L	B	S	R	Y	B
M	S	G	I	Z	E	C	T	U	G	K
M	N	A	I	N	A	N	U	Z	B	L
T	I	P	T	R	E	X	A	M	B	A
Y	J	X	R	C	G	X	B	M	M	T
X	B	Y	O	M	E	Z	I	P	U	H
N	Z	G	C	W	A	L	K	I	N	G
C	E	O	V	A	C	T	D	X	O	H

smile - talk - walking - inquisitive - busy - dump - carry - mine - no - climb - egocentric

Janet Scott, Resource Consultant ~ WoodGreen Community Services

WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

You may ask, "Why are we talking about this subject?" Many people do not speak about Professional Development because the general consensus is that, it is time consuming and boring. Now, if we are honest, who in his/her right mind would want to do something that he/she considers being time consuming and/or boring. I'm sure, not you, and most definitely not me.

Here, however, is my take on the importance of Professional Development. Professional Development, like its name implies, is doing something or making an effort to enhance or add to your contribution in your chosen profession or career. And this can be a fun thing to be involved in! Which is a good thing, because the College of ECE is preparing to release the new legislated expectations regarding Professional Development and Registered Early Childhood Educators very soon.

What does this mean for us as Early Childhood Educators? It means that we should seek to add to our reservoir of resources, be it learning Sign Language, some super fun crafts, new songs, team skills, or any number of other important topics. Learning does not always entail being in a classroom and listening to a lecture. We could have fun as we learn and in turn, we should try to ensure that the children in our care have fun as they also learn. And the best way to do this is to insure we are up to date in our knowledge and skills. After all the foundation of quality care for young children is quality Early Childhood Educators.

Maggie Samaroo, RECE

**For more information about the College of ECE and Continuous Professional Learning
visit www.college-ece.ca.**

SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF 2 & 3 YEAR OLDS

What do we love about 2 and 3 year olds?
They're busy, inquisitive, and full of life!



What drives us crazy about 2 and 3 year olds?
They're busy, inquisitive, and full of life!

Part of the reason that these little ones have such a high energy level is that they are beginning to develop a sense of autonomy. This keeps them on the go constantly. And into everything. At the same time they are only just starting to develop a sense of self and emotional regulation. This is a very exciting time developmentally for children, but it can also be quite frustrating for them. And for us. Toddlers and young preschoolers are not developmentally wired to wait, take turns, share, or understand how others feel. They are very egocentric beings who are concrete thinkers. And these social/emotional skills are very sociocentric and abstract.

Does this mean we abandon hope? Absolutely not; after all we are Early Childhood Educators and our role is to support a child's development. We must adjust our expectations so they are realistic. Our approach must be more about the development of these skills, rather than disappointment in the child's "failures". Because they're not really failures at all. The young child who "still takes other's toys, can't wait for turns, and cries when upset" is developmentally right on target. And ready to grow!



So how do we get them to the next level of development? By being proactive and responsive to the child's individual needs and development, instead of being reactive. Rather than disciplining a 2 or 3 year old for a lack of self and emotional regulation, which is like disciplining a young infant for not being able to walk, consider how you can teach, facilitate, and support the child's skill development.



Model

Show children the skill/behaviour that is expected. We know children are paying close attention to the adults in their world. Be the model they need to learn the skills you want them to have. Remember that children need time to develop and master any skill, so model desired behaviour consistently; all day, every day.

Label & Narrate

Describe your actions and the actions of others when appropriate prosocial skills are being demonstrated. Sometimes children need you to bring their attention to something so they can observe. Labeling and narrating is not the same as directing a child to look at something or to "pay attention". It is the process of day to day conversation and discussion in the program with the children and with your colleagues.

Concrete Instruction

Young children need very concrete instructions to help them to be successful. And these instructions should be clear and concise. Too often the adult "over-talks" an instruction. This usually results in the young child forgetting what the instruction was. And then the adult is frustrated and upset because the child "isn't listening".

Use short, one-step instructions that include follow through. You must also insure the instruction is concrete so the child can understand the expectation. “Wait” is a very abstract term for a young, egocentric child. Try using the labeling and narration strategy to help a child understand what waiting is and what it looks like; i.e. “Waiting. Sheila is on the bike and you’re watching. You’re waiting. When Sheila is done it will be your turn on the bike. You’re watching. Sheila is coming around the climber. You’re waiting. Sheila is done with the bike, her turn is finished. You’re done waiting, it’s your turn on the bike. Thank you for waiting.”

Acknowledge Needs, Feelings, & Wants

Sometimes children just need to know that you “get it”. They need a chance to tell their story. And receive confirmation about their needs, feelings, and wants; “You’re sad because you want to play with the blocks.” Sometimes the adult’s fear with this strategy is that they might be giving in. Not to worry. Acknowledgement is just another method of narrating. It’s not about giving the child what they want in response to their inappropriate behaviours. Instead the purpose is to help children calm so you can support them in planning a better way to achieve their desires. The best way to do all of this just to listen and narrate.

Facilitate



Help the child to learn how to socially engage their peers by facilitating their experiences. The focus of this should be first on facilitating social experiences between the child and yourself. All children need to master social skills with adults before they can competently utilize them with peers. So be a play and social partner with the children in your program. Have conversations with them about their interests while playing. One of the best methods for learning waiting and turn taking is conversation. It is the ultimate turn taking experience; the child says something, then the adult says something, then the child responds, etc. In the case of promoting social interactions with peers, provide scripts of words and actions for both children when necessary; i.e.

“Charlie, Maria is going to tell you something. Stop and look at her.” “Maria, Charlie is looking now, ask him ‘Can I play?’”

Praise through Acknowledgement and Evaluation

Children need lots of practice of correct behaviours to master them. They need adult feedback to know which behaviours to repeat. This means we need to encourage children when they do well. This goes beyond the standard, “Good job!” We must be specific in our praise; “You gave the car to Simon. That’s great sharing!” Even more important is acknowledgement of a behaviour through general commenting and discussion; “I see you’re taking a turn with the dinosaur. When you’re finished it will be Javier’s turn.” General commenting also allows us to help children to evaluate the experience they have just had; “You waited for a turn with the ball. Now it’s your turn!”

Be Patient

Learning anything, especially something as complex as self and emotional regulation, takes time. Once is not enough. Saying it once will not help a child learn. Reminding a child of the rules once during group time in the morning will not help them remember in the moment. When a child happens to remember to use a skill during snack it does not necessarily mean they have mastered it and will be able to use the skill again at the creative table. And a child being able to tell you the rules or describe waiting, sharing, and turn taking is not the same as being able to access the skill and use it effectively in times of stress or upset. So be patient, support the child’s learning process, because it is a process, and celebrate all the small successes on the way to mastery!

“Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting.”
~ Ivan Illich ~

WEBSITES

The following websites have lots of interesting ideas and resources:

AECEO ~

www.aeceo.ca

City Wide Training Calendar ~

www.citywidetraining.ca

College of ECE

www.college-ece.ca

Connectability ~

www.connectability.ca

ELECT ~

www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf



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RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

WEBSITES



Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists ~ www.caslpa.ca

Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development ~ www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca

Do2Learn - resource for individuals with special needs ~ www.do2learn.com

Infant Mental Health Promotion ~ www.imhpromotion.ca

Toronto Preschool Speech & Language Services ~ www.tpsls.on.ca

Toronto Early Childhood and Family Resource System: Pathway and Resource Listing ~ www.healthykidstoronto.ca

Contributed by Lisa Iozzo, Resource Educator ~ Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services



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