



KEEPING IN TOUCH

SUMMER 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 Children's Services, Home Childcare

Toronto Children's Services, Special Services Unit

WoodGreen Community Services

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SUMMER IS FINALLY HERE!

Welcome to the Summer Edition of *Keeping in Touch*. The focus of this edition is to encourage us as professionals to reflect on the importance of facilitating language development, building social skills, and, in the process, building better relationships with children, families, and colleagues.



ASK AWAY

This section is dedicated to all of you who have questions. Feel free to send in any questions to denisepalermo@etobicokechildren.com. Often many others are wondering the same thing as you are. Each Keeping In Touch newsletter will include a question you've submitted and we will do our best to provide you with some beneficial information.

QUESTION

Here's a question that many Early Childhood Educators have been asking lately: As RECE's we use a great deal of open ended questions; "What's that?" or "What are you making?" I'm finding a great deal of the children in my particular child care have limited language and don't seem to know how to answer these questions. Is there any way to stimulate conversation and support their language development?

ANSWER

There sure is! Children with limited language skills, vocabulary, or social skills often answer these types of questions with a yes or no. This ends the interaction and interferes with a potential learning opportunity. Try to simply observe what the child is currently playing with, or which activity they are involved in. Try not to ask questions initially. Make comments and label their actions; "You are feeding the baby." Don't be afraid to pause to see if you get a reaction. Provide a question with two possible concrete choices; "Are you feeding your baby milk or apple juice?" However the child responds, reinforce and keep going. Repeat back their choice and expand. The conversation will flow and language learning has begun.

PROMOTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Learning Language and Loving It Program was designed by The Hanen Centre to provide Early Childhood Educators with practical strategies for helping all children in the classroom build language and social skills, no matter what their learning and communication styles are, and regardless of special needs.

The Learning Language and Loving It Program provides you with practical, research-based strategies for:

- promoting every child’s language development using natural everyday activities, routines, and play
- becoming attuned to children’s interests so you can follow their lead, which is known to foster language development
- adjusting the way you talk to help children develop more advanced language skills
- promoting interaction among the children themselves
- facilitating language-learning in pretend play
- fostering emergent literacy skills

*Janet Scott, Resource Consultant
WoodGreen Community Services*

*Lisa Iozzo, Resource Educator
Toronto Children’s Services*

PROFESSIONAL PUZZLE

The field of Early Childhood Education is full of terms, some old, some new. See if you can identify what the following acronyms stand for.

1. **ELECT** = _____
2. **RECE** = _____
3. **ASD** = _____
4. **OT** = _____
5. **LLLI** = _____
6. **SLP** = _____
7. **SNR** = _____
8. **CECE** = _____



1. Early Learning for Every Child Today 2. Registered Early Childhood Educator 3. Autism Spectrum Disorder 4. Occupational Therapist	5. Learning Language & Loving It 6. Speech and Language Pathologist 7. Special Needs Resource 8. College of Early Childhood Educators
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BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Working as a childcare professional means interacting with children, families, co-workers, and sometimes childcare specialists. It is important to maintain open and honest communication with all those involved at your centre. It is especially important to establish comfortable relationships with the families of the children you work with.

Establishing positive relationships with families will allow for collaboration between you and the parents of the children in your program. Creating mutual trust and respect will insure parents feel comfortable talking with you about their issues and concerns regarding their children. They will also be more likely to accept your professional observations and inferences about their child's development. It is also more likely that parents who feel comfortable with you and your team will participate in the program's events and experiences, contributing to the programming and planning in the centre.



TIPS TO HELP BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES:

Create a Welcoming Atmosphere – It's important to allow family members to participate freely in the centre's activities. Invite family members to ask questions and to explore the centre. You can provide explanations about the activities and how they link to the program. Show the family member different projects that their child has participated in and any displays such as art that the child may have worked on.

Have Open Communication – It's so important for you to have open communication with parents about their children's developmental needs. Parents have a right to know what is happening with their child. So if you have any behavioural issues or concerns with a child, talk to their parents using positive messages based on solid observations and knowledge of typical child development. At times, it may seem like parents don't take the time to communicate with us. However it's our responsibility to build up the lines of communication before there is a need to talk about any difficult situations. This can include newsletters, personalized notes, child communication books, questionnaires, surveys, suggestion boxes, etc.



Create a Room Notice Board – This will allow you to share experiences and messages with families on a daily basis. You can add the weekly program, daily photos, children's birthdays, child / parent input of the program, newsletters, and any messages or important information that you can share with the families at the centre. Just remember that this will be seen by all families, so only provide general information that will benefit all families.

Source: Aussie Childcare Network. (2009). *Building Positive Relationships in Childcare*. AussieChildcareNetwork.com

Retrieved from www.aussiechildcarenetwork.com/childcare_relationships.php on June 10, 2013.

Contributed by Nicole Livingstone, Intensive Resource Support Worker
~ Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre ~

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

~George Bernard Shaw~

AN UPPERCASE & LOWERCASE ALPHABET GAME

This simple activity incorporates fine motor movement and differentiating between upper and lower case letters. It is most suitable for kindergarten and young school-aged children.

You will make a set of alphabet cards with uppercase letters on one side and lowercase letters on the other. It is best to make multiples of each letter.

The alphabet cards can be tossed into the air or fanned out on the ground or a table. The children then flip the cards over to either all uppercase or all lowercase depending on the instruction given.

For the younger children, keep it simple, start with alphabet cards of all the same letter as in the photo below. And limit the number of cards in the game.

For older children, increase the challenge by using more cards, using multiple letters, or using a timer.

To vary the game have the children sort the alphabet cards by upper and lower case according to the way they fell when tossed. Have the children chart the amounts as they sort!



*Faye Dundas, Early Childhood Consultant
Humber Child Care Consultation Services*



NAME THAT SOUND

Help children to increase their auditory discrimination by having them identify “mystery sounds”.

Set up a short partition so you can use the musical instruments from the room behind it. Then play a musical instrument.

The children can take turns guessing which instrument is being played.

To make the game more challenging try playing two instruments at once.

To involve the children more, give them turns to come behind the partition and play an instrument for their peers to guess.

When they become quite good at identifying the instruments, try using unusual items to make noises e.g. a rubber duck that squeaks, bubble wrap being popped. Or pre-recorded sounds of objects, events, or places from the community.



*Robin Lister, Special Needs Consultant
Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough*

EXPRESS YOURSELF!

This game is for schoolage children and can be done in small or large groups. The goals are to 1) demonstrate emotional reactions specific to suggested experiences in a non-verbal way, and 2) notice non-verbal emotional messages.

Create a list of scenarios that would be familiar to the children e.g. “You lost your favourite toy.”, “Your Mom gave you your favourite treat.”, “Your family is going to Wonderland.”, etc.



Have the group spread out in the space so they can respond to the scenarios as they are called out without bumping into each other. Then call out a scenario. Remind them to only react non-verbally.

Participate in the activity as well to help the children get into it and have fun. Encourage the children to notice their peers’ reactions as well.

As a follow up you can have the children discuss what kind of gestures they used for different reactions. You can also ask the children if everyone did exactly the same thing each time to get them noticing that different people respond in individual ways to the same situations. And explore why it is important to notice non-verbal expression as a part of communication.

Source: Schilling, Dianne. (1996). *50 Activities for Teaching Emotional Intelligence*. Innerchoice Publishing

*Contributed by Robin Lister, Special Needs Consultant
Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough*

BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO



Portfolios are important in any profession. They outline your training and achievements. Here are some tips for getting started on your own professional portfolio. Remember, it is important to organize the information you have in your portfolio into an clear and logical overview of your accomplishments to date. Similar items and accomplishments should be grouped so that the reader can find the information easily.

Consider each of the following 3 categories to help you organize your portfolio artifacts:

1. WHO AM I?

In this section you want to promote yourself! So include:

- ✓ A brief biography
- ✓ A copy of your current resume
- ✓ Proof of your registration with your professional body
- ✓ A list of your memberships with professional organizations/associations
- ✓ A visual representation of your work is also useful; remember you cannot use material that is confidential without express written parental consent i.e. children's names, photos, etc.

You may also want to discuss your professional philosophy and career goals in this section. These pieces of information help the employer to determine how you will be an asset to their organization.

2. PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

This is where you want to advertise the training you have successfully completed; courses, programs, professional development. Include copies (colour, if possible) of diplomas, degrees, and certificates.

You can also add a list of your achievements. This may include activities or responsibilities you have mastered and do at present. You may also want to identify your professional development goals here; include your specific plans for meeting the goals you have set for yourself.

Adding some real examples or representative samples of you work is always an added asset. Again, remember you may not include confidential information about children or families you have worked with without express written parental consent.

3. PROFESSIONAL EVALUATIONS

Include letters of recommendation or letters of appreciation that have been presented to you by employers, colleagues, or families (with their permission) that you have worked with. When selecting which artifacts to include try to represent different areas of your skill sets to help prospective employers gain a true sense of your range.

This is also a good place to include mention of any awards or recognitions specific to your professional work.

Ensure once you have completed your portfolio that you consistently update the information. It is a representation of your expertise in providing care to children and families. Be proud of the commitment you have made to the field of Early Childhood Education!

*Denise Palermo, Special Needs Resource Consultant
The Etobicoke Children's Centre*

*Nadia Zazzarino, Resource Consultant
Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
Community Outreach Service*

WEBSITES

The following websites have lots of interesting ideas and resources:

City Wide Training Calendar ~
www.citywidetraining.ca

Connectability ~
www.connectability.ca

College of ECE
www.collegeofece.on.ca

ELECT Document ~
www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf

AECEO ~
www.aeceo.ca



The KIT Newsletter Committee members include:

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RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS



All the suggested Resources for Educators in this edition of Keeping In Touch are available in the Special Needs Resource Library at the Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough.

To make an appointment to check out the library contact the Special Needs Services team at 416-281-0262 x 203/204. Or to view a complete library inventory go to <http://www.esbgc.org/special-needs-services/>.

INTERACTIONS

Cherry, Claire. (1983) *Please Don't Sit on the Kids*. Simon & Schuster.

Dombro, A.L., Jablon, J. & Stetson, C. (2011) *Powerful Interactions*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Waese, M., Millard, R. & Miller, R. (2007) *Language and Literacy - From Birth . . . For Life*. Canadian Child Care Federation.

Weitzman, E., & Greenberg, J. (2010) *ABC and Beyond - Building Emergent Literacy in Early Childhood Settings*. The Hanen Centre.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Baker, A. & Manfredi/Petitt, L. (2004) *Relationships, the Heart of Quality Care - Creating Community Among Adults in Early Care Settings*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Keyser, Janis. (2006) *From Parents to Partners - Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program*. Redleaf Press.

PROGRAMMING & CURRICULUM

Prothrow-Stith, D., Chery, J., & Oliver, J. (2005) *Peacezone - A Program for Teaching Social Literacy*. Research Press.

Roffey, Sue. (2006) *Circle Time for Emotional Literacy*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Schilling, Dianne. (1996) *50 Activities for Teaching Emotional Intelligence*. Innerchoice Publishing.

Schwartz, S. & Copeland, S. (2010) *Connecting Emergent Curriculum and Standards in the Early Childhood Classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Sprung, B. & Froschl, M. (2005) *The Anti-Bullying and Teasing Book for Preschool Classrooms*. Gryphon House Inc.

PROFESSIONALISM

College of Early Childhood Educators. (2011) *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice - Recognizing and Honouring Our Profession*. College of Early Childhood Educators.

Johnson, Jeff. (2007) *Finding Your Smile Again - A Child Care Professional's Guide to Reducing Stress and Avoiding Burnout*. Redleaf Press.