

HOME & CLASSROOM

SUMMER 2019 | 01



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hello

Welcome to the first edition of Home & Classroom, our new magazine designed especially for people who want to create a world where all children are understood. This is for readers who want to better understand child development so they can contribute to the lives of the children they love.

We hope to be informative, entertaining, and useful. Inside you'll find a mixture of news, features and regular columns on a wide range of development-related topics. Essentially, if it helps children, we want to include it. Regular columns will include submissions from our staff on subjects including parenting, mindfulness, infant and toddler development, nutrition, and do-it-yourself activities. We also want to include writing from readers like you. If you are interested in becoming a contributor to Home & Classroom please contact Kate Smith.

Home & Classroom will come out three times per year in the Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall. Members of the Council will receive Home & Classroom delivered through the mail. Subscriptions are available by visiting the Council website and copies can be picked up for free at select community locations (see website for exact locations).

We are excited to publish this inaugural issue; it has truly been a labor of love. We hope you enjoy it and please let us know if there are any topics you'd like to see covered in the future.



New and Noteworthy



HOME & CLASSROOM PODCAST

We now have a Home & Classroom podcast with Council staff: hosts Hannah Wise and Rachel Mandel and producer Lindsay Clark get down and talk all things child development, in home and in the classroom. Episodes are published weekly. Listen wherever you get your podcasts. Email us topics you would like to hear covered at homeandclassroom@cdcccc.org.

PLAYWISE KITS

Playwise brings creativity and inspiration right to your door. Earlier this year, we hand delivered the very first set of Playwise kits to lucky (random!) child care providers all over the Capital Region. It's time to deliver another round! The next Playwise kit is inspired by Home & Classroom podcast episode 1 and includes information on the developmental benefits of gardening with children, tips on creating a container garden, seed packets, organic soil and some recipe ideas for your newly grown veggies. Give us a call if you want to be sure you receive this fun and useful tool.

TRIVIA NIGHT IS BACK!

Assemble a team and bring your A game to rack up some free training hours at our second fun and fact-filled evening of trivia on early childhood and a little pop culture peppered in between just to keep things interesting. Join us July 15 at Il Faro Restaurant and Bar in Menands.

BIG CHANGES ON THE HORIZON

We have some very exciting things in the works that you won't want to miss. That means giveaways, contests, and special events. Sign up for enews, follow our social media and check our website for updates and the latest news. You can do all of those things and more at cdcccc.org.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUITE

The Instructional Suite is your go-to guide, training catalog and schedule of events in one booklet. Be sure to get yours by visiting our website.

MINI CONFERENCES

We still have our annual conference in October but we added two mini conferences this year to better serve the community. They're held on Saturdays in March and September. Online registration makes it simple to reserve your spot.



A WORLD WHERE
all children
ARE UNDERSTOOD



HIDDEN NATURE

of the

by Mary Miranda, Legally Exempt Educator

CITY


Making direct experiences with nature an integral part of daily life for children in rural areas is relatively simple; however, it can feel difficult in a city environment with its endless acres of concrete. But it doesn't have to be, because nature, with dogged determination, will find a place for itself in any environment. Birds, squirrels, and chipmunks flit around busily, going about their daily business. Insects scurry along the edge of the sidewalk and weeds grow through the cracks. Spiders make webs

between the house foundation and stairs. Weed flowers bloom, fade, and make seed while the tree leaves bud, green out, and fall. It is there, continuous and cyclical - and if we take conscious notice of it with children, we can make experiences with nature as much an integral part of city lives as it is for rural children.

Nature study is as important as other more traditional aspects of the children's curriculum and is in fact an ideal part of STEM curriculum. It can be worked into daily outdoor routines, such as walking to pick up older children from school or going to the playground. Drop some cracker crumbs or a bit of fruit next to the steps as you leave; when you return, see if it has been eaten. Who ate it? Did it attract ants? Can you follow them back to their colony and observe how they carry their load? Note the position of the sun when you leave; has it changed when you get back? Set up a bird feeder and observe it each day as you all pass by. You could leave a little earlier than normal to allow for extra time to stop and observe - to see, smell, touch, collect, discuss, and to just wonder. Use outside time for more than just running around and playing on equipment. Set aside some time for nature.

Making time to "stop and smell the roses" and to make daily observations of nature is terrific for children and adds to their base of nature knowledge. But to enable children to forge their strongest bonds with nature and achieve its greatest benefits, children need unstructured opportunities to interact with nature. With so many buildings, cars and people - where in the city can we find a good place for children to freely interact with nature? Each of the Capital District cities does have a least one major park and some small neighborhood parks. City

parks are often landscaped for beauty, not for free exploration by children. Rules may prohibit walking off pathways, picking flowers or climbing and you will obey these rules; however, children cannot have direct experiences with nature by merely observing it behind velvet ropes or glass windows, as in a museum. They need to get down and dirty. Head for the edges of the parks, to the freer, less manicured spaces that allow for more opportunities for children to peek under rocks, explore puddles, catch insects, and have pretend adventures using found natural objects as props.

 We can make experiences with nature as much an integral part of city lives as it is for rural children.

Your own street may have a neglected vacant lot that, after ensuring its safety, could make an ideal natural environment play space where children could freely explore: they might chase butterflies, climb boulders, pick flowers, make little rock caves,

dig holes or build forts from dead branches. Bring a few supplemental supplies, such as magnifiers, collection containers, and nature identification guides.

Diligently follow all OCFS regulations regarding health, safety, and competent supervision, but try not to be unnecessarily cautious. Remember your own childhood and how much richer your play and more deeply focused your explorations became when you did not feel adults were hovering over you. Join in their play and adventures when needed or invited, and have fun yourself. You will all go back to your house peacefully refreshed and filled with the deep internal contentment that is one of the wonderful benefits that spending time in nature provides for us all.

REMEMBER *how*

by Kim Polstein, Director of Development Education Services

Play is the work of the child, and is vital to their ability to learn and grow; but play can also be vital to adult well-being; plus, play fuels imagination, creative problem solving, and general health. When was the last time you really got to play? Somewhere between childhood and adulthood we seem to forget to play.

Recently I was part of a close friend's wedding party. When it came time to plan the bachelorette party, we all decided on one thing: we wanted to be able to play! What better way to celebrate a friend than to spend time bonding, laughing and playing outside? We chose to spend the weekend exploring Saranac Lake and The Wild Center.

The Wild Center, located in Tupper Lake, is a museum that showcases the unique environment of Adirondack Park. It's not just a museum though, it's an interactive experience for kids (and adults) of all ages.

While visiting The Wild Center, the "I Do Crew," as we called ourselves that weekend, were able to explore the many different areas inside the museum. Now when I say 'explore,' I really mean it. We were crawling on the floor into exhibits to look up into the display cases of critters inhabiting the Adirondacks. We got up close and personal with an otter. We played with an interactive terrain map and various tree barks represented in the region, and met a porcupine who showed off his quills. We were a group of 5 adult women

crawling on the floor with children laughing and learning about the environment around us, engaging in insightful conversations with each other and the strangers we came to meet along the way. Free from the pressures of the workday world, we disconnected from our adult brains and spent the day reconnecting with our childlike enthusiasm for play.

After we explored the museum from top to bottom, we ventured outside to the iForest. As we followed the nature trails through the iForest, we were completely immersed in Center's "place-based sound and art installation, meant to create a novel way of experiencing nature." This exhibit is one of the first immersive art installations of its kind in the world, and was simply amazing to experience.

Then we headed over to the Wild Walk. This is where we were instantly transported back to childhood. Try to picture five grown women, running through an adult sized playground, while laughing and having the time of their lives. We were not alone; there were many families with children and other groups of adults playing with just as much enthusiasm as we were. We engaged all of our senses, used large and small muscles, and worked together to climb in (and try to climb back out of) the giant "spider web." We traversed bridges and jumped onto stumps; we sat on swings and ran through the trees. We finished off our adventure in the Birds Nest, taking in the spectacular view of the Adirondack Park.

To PLAY?

The experience of playing with other adults in an interactive place, designed for us to do so, reminded me how important play is for a child's development. As a social worker, my focus is on self-care and really being present in the moment, putting our best selves out there for the world, I couldn't help but wonder why adults don't play more. The benefits of play reach far beyond the bond of laughter with friends. Play is beneficial in many other ways. It relieves stress and helps us to add joy to our lives, connect with others and

enhance our own learning, and can even make us more productive at work. A daily dose of playful interaction with co-workers enhances trust and security in the work place aiding in more productive conflict and discussion during problem solving.

Play stimulates our minds and boosts creativity. We often learn best through fun, interactive hands on experiences in which all of our senses are involved. This helps us to form stronger brain connections than when we learn through one sense alone.



The "I Do Crew" at the Wild Center.

Play in the Workplace has been known to help adults stay functional when under stress and to find creative solutions to tough problems. Play encourages teamwork and collaboration, prevents burnout and increases energy. It also helps us to feel more connected to the work we do, as well as the people we work with. I'm lucky enough to work for an agency that values play and encourages the collaboration of different teams through playful interactions and bonding activities. Encourage your work team to get out and play a little!

Consider adding play to your own self-care plan. Whether you choose brainy challenges like a game of chess or a challenging puzzle; or challenging the muscles of the body through a game of football, you can boost your creativity, happiness, and so much more through play. Playing with children is just as beneficial for the adult as it is the child. Whether you visit a destination like The Wild Center or your own back yard, remember the benefits of play.



Bride and bridesmaid playing on the swing at the Wild Center

“We don't stop playing because we grow old. we grow old because we stop playing.”

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



Mindful Moments

with Kim Polstein



You can't pour from an empty cup. Self-care can often get lost in the hustle and bustle of daily life, and when caregivers take time for themselves it can feel "selfish" or rushed; however, self-care is a vital part of taking care of others. In fact, those who practice strong self-care techniques are often more emotionally available and feel more prepared to take care of others.

What is self-care? Bubble baths and girls' nights out? Maybe! However, self-care is more than just the occasional practices of relaxation. Self-care is the practice of taking action to improve and/or preserve one's own physical and mental health. Think of it as preventive health care; take care of your physical body with healthy eating and engaging in physical activity, as well as taking care of your mind by practicing reflection, mindfulness or seeking mental health support.

Self-care is really about refilling what makes you, you! Imagine this: you work a full 8 hour day, then go home to cook dinner and take care of your family; the dishes need washing and the toys need picking up. You have been putting off finishing your favorite book or spending quality time with your partner or friends. What would happen if tonight, you went to bed without picking up the toys and read your book instead? Or played a game with your family? How would you feel the next

morning? How would you feel if you said to yourself "the chores will be there tomorrow, but this quality time with my family might not?" How would it feel to set a limit for yourself either to say "I'm not going to go out tonight" and rest, or to say "I'm going out even though there are things to do here?"

As you begin to think about the ways you take care of yourself, reflect on what makes you happy, refreshed, excited, etc. Work to set aside time in your day to do those things! Making a physical plan, whether you write it in your journal or post it on your wall, can assist you in being more accountable. You can search the internet for guides, or create your own self-care plan: keep it simple, make it super detailed, get creative; it's all up to you.

I challenge you to create a plan and practice one simple mindfulness activity. Notice how your body feels throughout the day; check in as you move through the activities of normal daily life. Notice how you breathe; *are you breathing?* Or do you tend to hold your breath? Notice where your shoulders are throughout the day, can you move them down away from your ears? Check in and begin to take notice of your own body. Share your self-care plans with us on our Facebook page.

CALENDAR TIME

Interview by Carrie Yund, Social Emotional Educator

Children gather on little rug squares sitting crisscross-applesauce around their teacher as she takes the stage to conduct circle time. A common activity in preschool rooms everywhere, circle-time typically involves the teacher leading the children through a series of group activities that can include reading books, doing finger-plays and sing-alongs, and reviewing the calendar date and day of the week, the weather, and letters and numbers.

Viewed as “learning time” to the untrained eye, circle time can give the appearance of classroom style learning. For older children, who have longer attention spans and a stronger grasp of abstract concepts, group learning can be beneficial. For young children, such as preschoolers and toddlers, circle time may not provide the intended benefit.

In the Article “Calendar Time For Young Children: Good Intentions Gone Awry” by Sallee J. Beneke, Michaelene M. Ostrosky, and Lilian G. Katz, the authors assert that children’s concept of time, as well as the passing of days, weeks, and months is far less developed in the preschool years than we may expect. The authors challenge preschool teachers to take a step back and reflect on the tradition of “calendar time.” Are the children really getting it? What other ways may we use this time to develop other skills as well as talk about upcoming classroom events, birthdays, and community events?

Adrienne Todd, a local teacher for Albany Head Start in Watervliet did just this. Adrienne made the change to using a linear calendar in her classroom. A linear calendar is one in which all

of the days of one month are lined up in one horizontal row. I asked Adrienne about her experience switching to a linear calendar.

Why did you decide to change from a traditional calendar to a linear calendar?

I had used the traditional calendar in my classroom for 2 years, but was noticing that students weren't getting as much from it as I had hoped and that it wasn't very meaningful to them. I want every part of the day to hold meaning for the children in the classroom and the traditional calendar time was becoming a teaching time that I didn't enjoy and that I don't think my students enjoyed either. I began researching different methods to make calendar time meaningful for young children and read a lot of positive information on linear calendars. I decided to try it in my own room and am so happy that I made the switch.

In what ways do you see the calendar more beneficial than a conventional calendar?

I find the linear calendar more beneficial because I can teach all of the concepts I was teaching before, such as patterning, counting, 1:1 correspondence, etc.; however, I think what the linear calendar does better than the traditional calendar is give students a clearer understanding of the passing of time. I have found that it is much easier for children to follow the linear progression of the month and even though a sense of time is not very well developed with this age group, they are always excited to utilize the calendar to see what events are upcoming and to look back on activities we have already done.

What concepts do you focus on during calendar time?

Our calendar time is only about 5 minutes but during that time the concepts that we focus on include patterning, counting, 1:1 correspondence, answering "how many" questions, numeral identification, and we briefly discuss concepts related to time. We discuss terms like yesterday, today, tomorrow and I think the visual of pictures as a reminder of what happened yesterday or what will be happening tomorrow make the passage of time more understandable to students. Calendar time is also more than just a scripted ritual that we follow like it used to be, it is more of a forum where along with academic information the students are also able to discuss things that are happening within our classroom that are important to them.

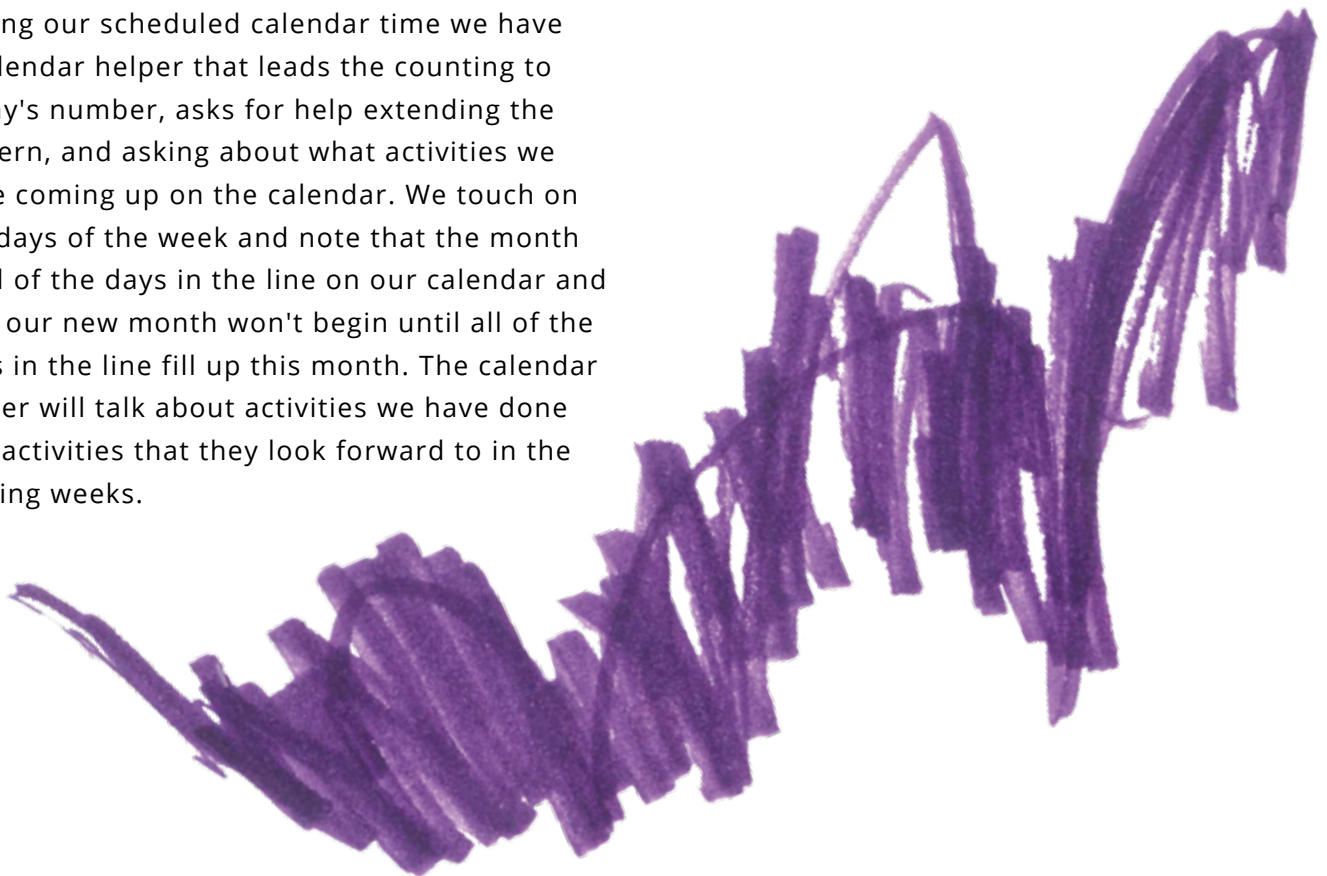
How do your students use the calendar?

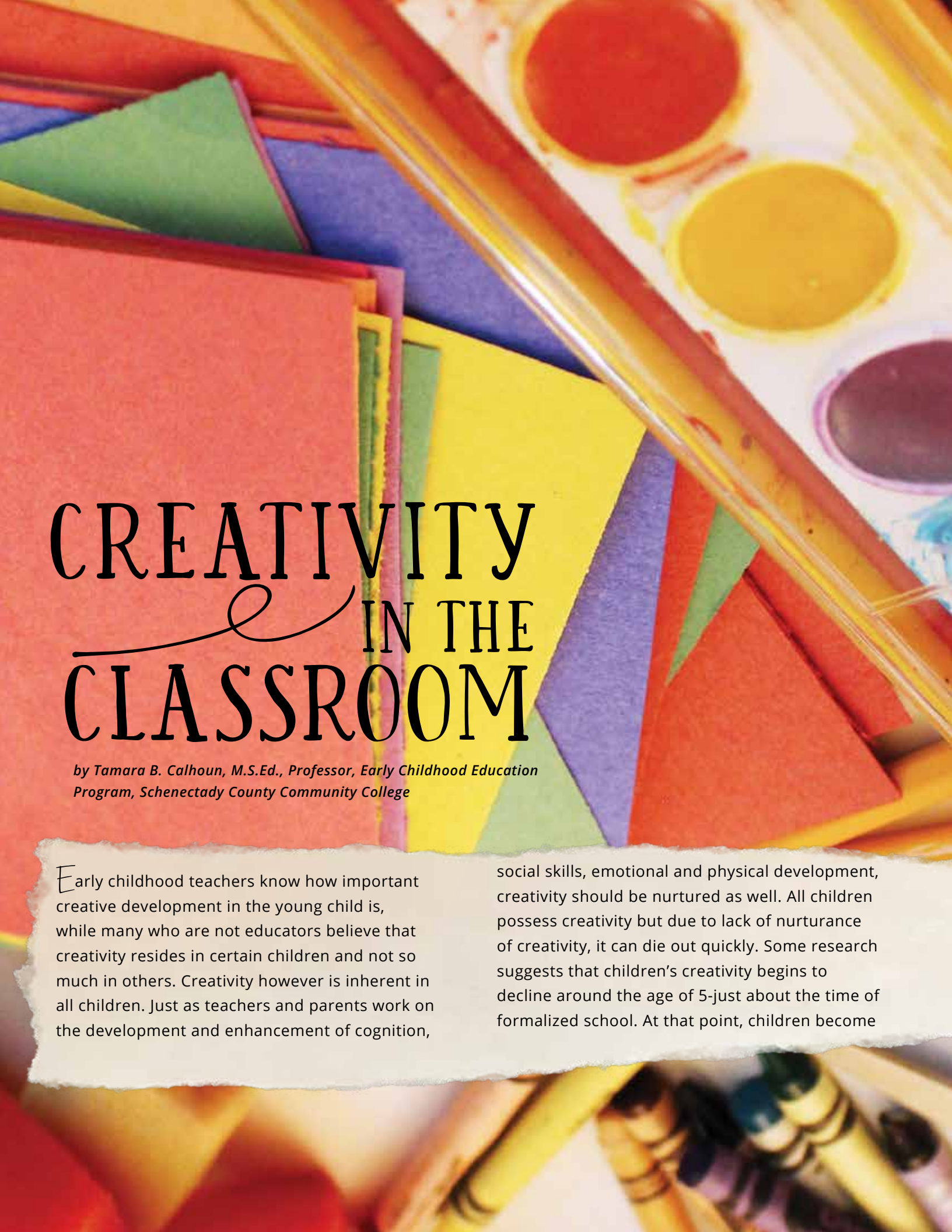
My students use the calendar both during calendar time and by simply going over to the calendar at various points in the day to use it. During our scheduled calendar time we have a calendar helper that leads the counting to today's number, asks for help extending the pattern, and asking about what activities we have coming up on the calendar. We touch on the days of the week and note that the month is all of the days in the line on our calendar and that our new month won't begin until all of the days in the line fill up this month. The calendar helper will talk about activities we have done and activities that they look forward to in the coming weeks.

The calendar is available for use during all parts of the day and I have students frequently go over independently and start counting to see what number today is, count how many days until an activity is coming that they are looking forward to, or trying to figure out what is coming next in the pattern. I love the use of this calendar because it is doing what I had hoped, which is that it is meaningful. Students utilize it without being asked, and are successful while using it.

If another teacher wanted to make the same change, what advice would you give them?

Make linear calendar time interactive, and make it something that students look forward to by using visual aides to depict an activity or visitor that is relevant to their lives. I feel that is what makes this calendar successful, because students are constantly seeing pictures of people or things that matter to them and it gives them something to look forward to, as well as gets them excited to use the calendar.





CREATIVITY *e* IN THE CLASSROOM

by Tamara B. Calhoun, M.S.Ed., Professor, Early Childhood Education Program, Schenectady County Community College

Early childhood teachers know how important creative development in the young child is, while many who are not educators believe that creativity resides in certain children and not so much in others. Creativity however is inherent in all children. Just as teachers and parents work on the development and enhancement of cognition,

social skills, emotional and physical development, creativity should be nurtured as well. All children possess creativity but due to lack of nurturance of creativity, it can die out quickly. Some research suggests that children's creativity begins to decline around the age of 5-just about the time of formalized school. At that point, children become

students in formal education and the ability to be original and to practice divergent thinking decreases dramatically. Children are expected to engage in tasks that all the other students do and to produce the same learning products as their peers.

Because of this it is imperative for early childhood educators to provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which children can be free to choose activities, spend as much time as they want on any topic, provide a wide variety of hands-on materials, and finally allowed to produce items that reflect divergent and original thinking.

Choice in the early childhood classroom promotes creativity in several ways. First, when choice is part of the everyday schedule children have no restraints in thinking. That is, the child's focus can expand to many areas and into whatever direction they are particularly interested in. Having choice also allows the child to spend as much time as they want studying a particular topic. With increased understanding of concepts, children have the opportunity to expand their learning into areas that not even the teacher could think of. For example, if the students are learning about the elements of art, many activities that emphasize line, texture, color or form are open and available for children for a large block of time and over several days. In this way children can experiment with a variety of materials and create individual products. Children can practice fluency of ideas when they have choice, materials and time.

Nothing quashes creativity quite like models of products that should be completed at the end of a particular activity.

Consider the following scenario:
Quentin and Quinn are very excited to go the

table where children are making bird feeders. When they get there the teacher holds up a pine cone with bird seed stuck to it via honey. The teacher tells the children to take a pine cone, spread honey and then roll the pine cone in the bird seed. Quentin said, "I want to build a bird house and put the bird seed inside." To which the teacher replies, "We're not making bird houses, we're making something for the birds so they can eat." Quentin and Quinn sit quietly and take the directions, finish the bird cone and neither have any input.

What happened here? Quite frankly, both children have had a bit of their creativity stolen from them. A better method to enhance creativity would be to have many different kinds of materials for the children to make their own bird-feeders. When they can choose from many materials and visualize their own original structure, they are expanding their thinking in many ways.

In addition to the schedule, activities and environmental layout, the classroom has to be a safe secure place for children to feel comfortable to take chances. The teacher is responsible for creating a trusting environment in which the child can make mistakes and still feel competent. Creativity relies on trial and error and persistence in seeing an idea through.

The SUNY Schenectady Early Childhood Education Program's Engendering Creativity: Arts in the Classroom course instructs tomorrow's teachers by using methodologies that promote divergent, original thinking. After instruction and manipulation of media, students apply these strategies in the design and implementation of interactive art and music activities with children in the SUNY SCCC Integrated Montessori Laboratory Preschool. Visit <https://sunysccc.edu/coursex/Schedule/fall/all.html> to register.

NOT ALL MILKS ARE CREATED EQUAL

by Maggie Hartig, RD, CDN, Growth and Nutrition Educator

A cold, creamy glass of milk, once a childhood staple, no longer holds the line for the “go-to” healthy drink of choice for kids. Visit any dairy aisle and you will find tons of options, from soy to almond to lactose free. For many families, the availability of non-dairy alternatives is really helpful considering the increasing numbers of children presenting with dairy allergies and lactose intolerance. There are also many families who follow vegetarian or vegan diets.

Alternatives can be a great source of nutrition, however it is important to understand that not all milks are created equal, and when it comes to milk substitutes, very few stack up nutritionally to cow's milk. Many alternatives come in flavors, or are sweetened, which makes them taste great, but adds extra calories and sugar. They also tend to be much more expensive. Take look at a few popular varieties:

SOY MILK. Soy milk is the most common replacement, because

its nutrients most closely match cow's milk. 1 cup (8oz) of soy milk has about 7 grams of protein, compared to 8 grams in whole milk, and most are fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Soy milks are also available in flavors such as vanilla and chocolate.

ALMOND MILK. Almond milk has the most calcium per serving; almost double the amount in cow's milk. Unfortunately, almond milk only contains 1-2 grams of protein per serving, so this is not recommended for infants unless a doctor requests it. Just like soy milk, it comes in flavored, sweetened, and unsweetened options, and most are fortified with extra vitamins and minerals.

COCONUT MILK. Coconut milk is sweet, creamy, and has as much saturated fat as whole milk. For children whose parents are concerned about their weight, it may be best to skip this one. Protein content is low at only about 1 gram per serving, but it is a

good source of the vitamin B12, which is important for children's development. As with the other alternatives, most are fortified and can be flavored.

A quick note on goat's milk: It can be easier to digest than cow's milk, but it still contains lactose, and if there's an allergy, most infants or children who have a cow's milk allergy are also allergic to the protein in goat's milk.

If you are a child care provider participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), you can serve milk substitutes if a parent or guardian requests it in writing, but a medical statement from the doctor is needed if the substitute doesn't nutritionally align with cow or soy milk. Call your CACFP home visitor with any questions. As a best practice:

Always check with the parents or guardians regarding alternative milk choices, and make sure you have up-to-date documentation.

Read labels carefully to make sure you're buying the correct milk/milk alternative.

Be mindful of added calories and sugars in flavored options.

Serve 1% (low-fat) or skim cow's milk to children 2 yrs and older.

Serve whole milk to infants from 12 months (1 yr. old)-2 yrs. old.

MILK ALTERNATIVES

	Whole	Rice	Soy	Coconut	Almond	Oat	Hemp
Energy (kcal)	149	115	105	76	37	130	70
Protein (g)	7.69	.68	6.34	.51	1.44	4	3
Total fat (g)	7.93	2.37	3.59	5.08	2.68	2.5	5
Saturated fat (g)	4.55	0	.5	5.083	0	0	.5
Cholesterol (mg)	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carbohydrate (g)	11.71	22.37	12	7.12	1.42	24	1
Calcium (mg)	276	288	300	459	481	350	300
Iron (mg)	.07	.49	1.02	.73	.85	1.8	1.8
Vitamin D (IU)	128	96	108	96	96	100	100

THE GOOD ENOUGH PARENT

by Barbara Mitchell, Social Emotional Educator

When you recall your early childhood, there are probably a few specific core memories that come to mind, however for most of us childhood is remembered in its tone, theme, and feeling. How we remember the period of time is the calculation of a million events and feelings, filtered and blended together through temperament, environment, and your own sense of identity. Even as children we have an internal working model or assumption about who we are, and how people see and treat us.

This internal working model begins as early as an infant's first experience of themselves in their mother's eyes. A sense of delight, joy, and love teaches an infant that they are delightful, enjoyable, and loveable. Kind and responsive caring teaches them that they are seen, important, and that they can trust that there are safe people to take care of them. In other words, the infant intuitively constructs an understanding of themselves and what they illicit from others based on their experience of how others respond to them. Does the parent read and respond attentively to the cry for a diaper change instead of the cry of hunger? Does the parent provide the physical security of being held and swaddled? Each instance adds up like coins in a piggy bank.

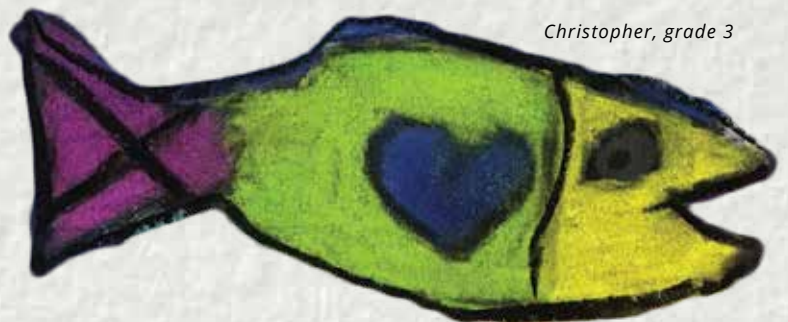
It sounds like you would have to be perfect. But it's best to be good enough.

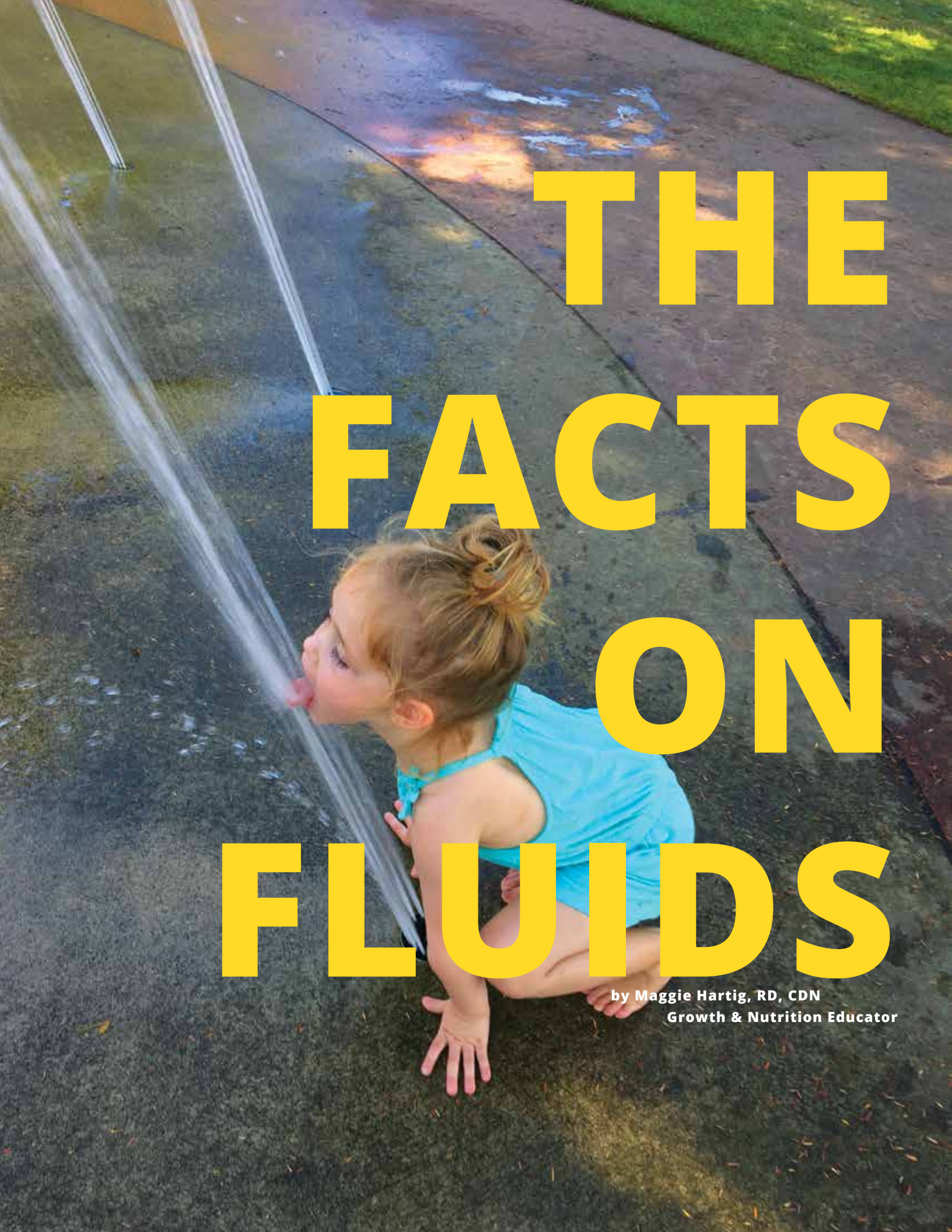
Donald Winnicott, a pediatrician and psychoanalyst, studied child-parent dyads in the 1950's and identified that although attentive, consistent, and responsive caring is fundamental for forming a secure base, moments where the toddler is not attended to instantly or perfectly are also ideal. These moments where the child has to learn to wait, allow him tiny opportunities to learn to persist. In moments where your attention is temporarily diverted and the child has to problem solve for herself, she develops the skills she will need to function in the world.

Just as you helped a child construct a self-image as loveable, you are also building an image of capability and efficaciousness. The children learn that they can do hard things and they can endure momentary age-appropriate discomfort. The good enough parent shapes the resilient child who believes they are loveable and capable. The toddler who is given moments to persist in learning to stand-up by grabbing onto the table on their own, will become the adult who learns to triumph over life's challenges.

The next time you find that you cannot be the perfect caretaker, remember that your moments of "imperfection," might in fact be good enough.

Christopher, grade 3



A young child with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a light blue swimsuit, is crouching on a paved playground surface. She is drinking from a water fountain, with a stream of water flowing into her mouth. The background shows a paved area and some green grass. The title text is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters.

THE FACTS ON FLUIDS

by Maggie Hartig, RD, CDN
Growth & Nutrition Educator

Water is essential to health and life. The human body is comprised of around 60% water and as one of the most important elements our bodies need to function, proper hydration is vital.

Water also helps us digest our food, have normal bowel movements, regulate body temperature, carry nutrients and oxygen to our cells, and keep our joints lubricated. Through normal daily activity, the human body loses water, not just through sweat, but when we breathe and go to the bathroom. That's why it's really important to drink plenty of water to replace what is lost to prevent dehydration.

Children are at a higher risk of dehydration than adults. Children don't always recognize when they're thirsty, and if they aren't reminded to stop for a water break, they may forget to drink altogether.

Water is the best choice for preventing dehydration, and is naturally fat free, sugar free, and calorie free.

How much water children need depends on age, activity level, the outside temperature, and gender.

AGE RANGE	GENDER	TOTAL WATER CUPS/DAY
1-3 yrs	girls & boys	5½-6 (44-48oz)
4-8 yrs	girls & boys	7 (56oz)
9-13 yrs	girls	9 (72oz)
	boys	10 (80oz)
14-18 yrs	girls	10 (80oz)
	boys	14 (112oz)

**Data are from Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) Tables. Recommended Daily Allowance and Adequate Intake Values: Total Water and Macronutrients.*



Christopher, grade 3

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A CHILD IS DEHYDRATED?

- Headaches
- Thirsty
- Dry Mouth
- Cracked Lips
- Dark-colored Urine
- Constipation
- Trouble Concentrating
- Lethargic/Fatigued

TIPS TO ENCOURAGE WATER CONSUMPTION

- Try adding fresh fruits or vegetables for variety and flavor
- Let kids pick out their own water bottle/cup
- Serve water in colorful cups or jugs
- Be a role model and let children see you drinking water
- Always offer water with meals and snacks
- Offer water throughout the day
- Encourage drinking water before and after playing
- If it's hot outside take plenty of water breaks
- Serve fresh "juicy" fruit and vegetables like cucumbers, watermelon, tomatoes, berries etc.

WHAT ABOUT SPORTS DRINKS?

Sports drinks might be helpful for older children and teens that play a high endurance or high intensity sport lasting more than 1 hour such as long-distance running, soccer, hockey, and cycling. It may also be good after exercising in very hot weather. Sports drinks contain carbohydrates (sugar), salt, and potassium, which are lost during extreme sweating. For most kids though, simply drinking water is enough.



TIP
1 OZ EQUALS ABOUT
1 "GULP."
1 CUP IS 8 OZ.

INFUSED WATER

INGREDIENTS

Any combination of fruit, vegetables and/or herbs

MINTY CUCUMBER LIME

1/2 cucumber, sliced into circles

1/2 lime, sliced into circles

1/4 cup fresh mint leaves

STRAWBERRY LEMON

1/2 cup sliced strawberries

1/2 lemon, sliced

PINEAPPLE ORANGE WITH GINGER

1/2 cup cubed pineapple

1/2 orange, sliced

A few slices of fresh ginger

STEPS

1. Choose and gather ingredients
2. Wash the fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs
3. Place ingredients in a quart sized jar. Mash gently with a wooden spoon to release the flavor
4. Fill the jar with water or seltzer (carbonated) water
5. Enjoy right away or refrigerate overnight for more flavor

**Add ice cubes if desired*

**Adjust measurements and water based on size of pitcher or jar*

LEMONADE SPORTS DRINK

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup lemonade plus 2 TBPS of lemon juice

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup hot water

3 1/2 cups cold water

STEPS

1. In a pitcher or quart-size water jug, add the sugar and salt to the hot water; stir until sugar and salt are dissolved.
2. Add the lemonade, lemon juice, and cold water
3. Mix well

Calories: 213kcal | Carbohydrates: 56g | Sodium: 35mg | Potassium: 33mg | Sugar: 51g | Vitamin C: 20%

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www.eatright.org

Institute of Medicine of the National Academies

Kids Health

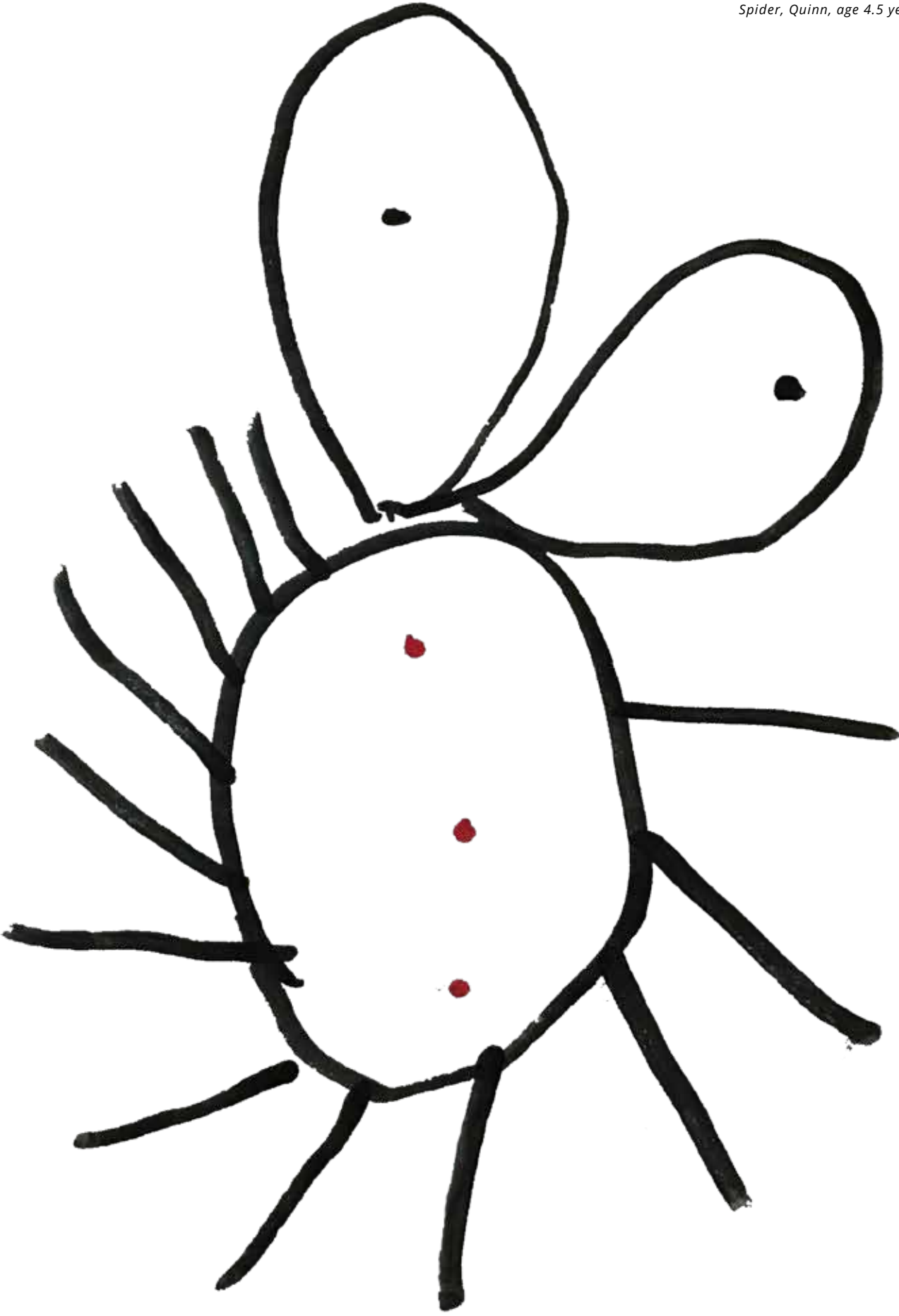
Infused Water recipes adapted from USDA's Supplemental Nutrition

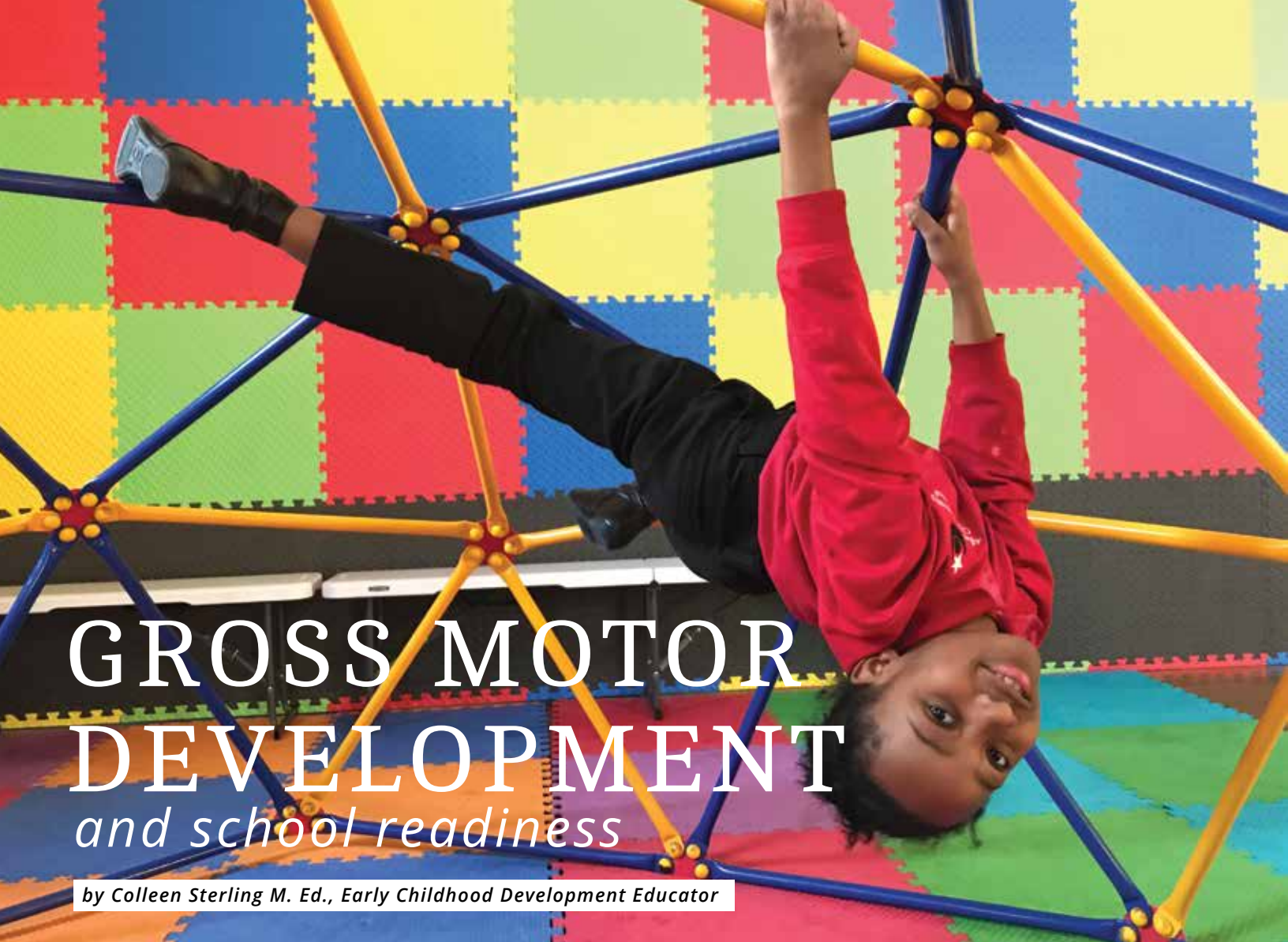
Assistance Program (SNAP) for Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings

Make Your Own Sports Drink (Lemonade Sports Drink) recipe from Jill

Castle, Author of Eat Like a Champion: Performance Nutrition for Your

Young Athlete.





GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

and school readiness

by Colleen Sterling M. Ed., Early Childhood Development Educator

When talking about gross motor development in early childhood we primarily focus on the milestones for children to move along from an infant who needs to rely on an adult to a walking toddler exploring their environment, and then for preschoolers and older children to maintain healthy bodies. Gross motor development is also an integral part of strong school readiness skills. There are many gross motor school readiness skills that can affect children as they transition to kindergarten that can impact their performance.

Gross motor development includes the physical skills associated with whole body movement including balance, coordination, strength, endurance, and eye hand coordination. Many

children love to run, jump, climb, throw/kick balls, go swimming, and ride bikes. These activities are important for being healthy and participating in sports. The above skills are also important for academic learning. Many physical and occupational therapists agree that children who are not physically active may have more issues with core strength, eye hand coordination, and self-regulation skills.

Core strength is the ability to control your spine and hips. Starting in Kindergarten, children require strong core strength to sit for significant periods of time and focus attention on the teacher. When a child has poor core strength, they may become fidgety in their chair, start to slouch over their desk, or need to focus more on maintaining their position

than on the lesson. Poor core strength can also affect children's handwriting skills. Handwriting will often be illegible.

Gross motor also affects children's eye hand coordination especially when having to cross their mid-line. Crossing the midline is when children need to use their right hand on the left side of their body and vice versa. This skill affects reading and writing which requires a child to read left to right. Eye hand coordination also affects the child's ability to have effective cutting skills and the endurance needed to hold a pencil for writing and drawing that is used during all academic subjects.

Self-regulation skills are the abilities for a child to adjust their activity level, emotions, and behavior throughout the day. These skills impact their social interactions, taking turns, finding another choice of activity when the first one isn't available, appropriately expressing their emotions, and solving problems. Often young children need time to spend excess energy with gross motor play breaks in order to focus and participate in lessons.

Here are some ideas of active play to strengthen your child's gross motor skills: Hop Scotch, Wheelbarrow walking, balloon and bubble play, animal walks: pretend to be a bear, frog, crab, elephant, etc., dancing, go to the park, playground, or pool; parachute play, Freeze Tag or dance: have them freeze into funny poses that encourages them to balance or cross their mid-line.



The following is a list of websites that have some great ideas for outside play that often incorporate academic learning as well:

- Learn ~ Play ~ Imagine
learnplayimagine.com
- Tinkergarten
tinkergarten.com/activities
- The Inspired Treehouse
theinspiredtreehouse.com
- Hands On Growing
handsonaswegrow.com/
- Teaching Mama
teachingmama.org

References:

- The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness>
- Kid Sense <https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/gross-motor-skills/>
- The Inspired Treehouse <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/a-surprising-cause-of-attention-problems-in-kids/>
- The OT Toolbox <https://www.theottoolbox.com/2017/06/6-ways-core-strength-impacts-handwriting.html>
- Harvard Health Publishing <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/understanding-and-improving-core-strength-2018090414662>



A baby with blue eyes and a white long-sleeved shirt with a red smiley face patch is sitting on a pink patterned blanket. The baby is wearing a white diaper and has their hands clasped. The blanket is decorated with various patterns like strawberries and cupcakes. Surrounding the baby are several colorful toys, including a blue and pink rattle, a pink plush toy, and a large colorful caterpillar toy with rings. The background is a grassy area with a pink fabric border.

Your Bag of Tricks
for **INFANT
OUTDOOR
PLAY**

by Kathleen Harland, Infant
Toddler Regional Specialist

As children are running and climbing and pushing heavy objects across the playground or backyard, they are developing their large motor skills. They may even engage in dramatic play in the playhouse or climber, developing their social skills. As they talk with their teachers and friends about the squirrels they see hopping from tree to tree, brain connections are forming and a deeper understanding of the natural world is developing. The benefits of outdoor play extend into every aspect of early childhood learning.

But, what about babies? Non-mobile babies benefit from opportunities to freely explore the outdoors. However, making this happen regularly in group care can be tricky. Caregivers work hard to meet children's individual needs, like mealtimes according to individual hunger schedules, and naptimes based on personal sleep needs. This can make it difficult to have children awake, fed, and ready to engage outdoors at the same time. A simple strategy to make the most of outdoor time is to create an "inside out bag."

An "inside out bag" is any bag or tote that you that you have handy and can pre-pack with items to set up a safe, engaging outdoor play area for non-mobile infants. Consider including: a picnic or beach blanket (a great surface to lay down under

a shady tree), additional smaller blankets, like receiving blankets or textured mats, play items that encourage sensory exploration like colorful ribbons tied to shower curtain rings, water bottles with acorns and pinecones in them, or socks filled with various materials and tied (we call them "sensory socks"). That may be all that you need to make the most out of outdoor exploration. Enjoying the birds flying above or talking with your babies about the shadows you see moving may be the most fun of all.

Remember that babies' most exciting thing to explore may be their own movement. The freedom to rock from side to side, to look from the grass to the tree or to push up from laying on their stomachs to better see you and the things you are noticing and talking about fosters large motor development, social skills, and cognitive connections, just like the older children are experiencing outdoors.

The songs and back and forth interactions you share with babies about all that you are experiencing together outside will benefit you and them. Having some items packed and ready in your "inside out bag" will make it easier when you realize that a beautiful day is calling you and that children are ready to explore.

"Inside out bag" packed and ready to go.



"Inside out bag" contents unpacked



NATURE DEFICIT

by Megan Morrow, RDN
Registered Dietitian

I spent much of my childhood playing outside. Some of my fondest memories come from these times where life just felt simpler. Summer evenings seemed tailor made for biking around the neighborhood with my friends and playing manhunt until dark, when we would then grab our Mason jars running around looking for fireflies to catch. Being outside was an integral part of family life as well. Between tossing a softball around with Dad and birdwatching with Mom, playing on the swing set with my sister and swimming in the lake with my cousins, we were active and entertained. It was where we learned some of life's simplest and best lessons. It seems unfortunate that the past two decades have seen such a change in the activity levels of young children, especially

when it comes to outdoor play. As parents and caregivers, it's important to recognize these changes and be aware of some of the reasons why.

One of the biggest reasons for a decrease in outdoor play has to do directly with the advancement in technology that we tend to take for granted in our own lives each day. While it's now commonplace for us to pass the time in a waiting room scrolling through our social media accounts on our phones, our children are mimicking our behaviors. They are becoming engaged in sedentary activities involving little to no physical movement. Playing video games, using apps on their tablets or smartphones, or simply watching internet videos and TV keeps them indoors, eyes glued to their

electronics. This increase in “screen time” is becoming a large concern to our society and simply being aware is the first step towards monitoring and perhaps limiting the issue. It can be difficult to do with technology being such a large part of our society, but a great way to begin to kick-start a decrease in screen time is to make it a family competition, with the adults leading by example. Challenge yourselves and your children to disconnect from your gadgets for a full week. Instead of grabbing their tablets and sitting inside on the couch, help your children grab their sneakers and walk outside in the park. Whether that’s playing basketball or running in puddles after a rainstorm, the outdoors is tremendously more beneficial for a child’s emotional and physical well-being than another episode of their favorite show. A great resource for a week free of screen time would be www.screenfree.org/. The website provides many additional resources, a blog page, and materials to help unplug from those beloved electronics and enjoy some time outdoors with friends and family instead.

Another consideration for the activity decrease is because parents and caregivers are simply exhausted after working a full time job (or more). Many feel as if there is just not enough time in the day or that they don’t have enough energy to encourage and motivate children to play outside. There may also be some boundaries to outdoor play, such as limited access to playground or parks, lack of proper street lighting and sidewalks, or unsafe neighborhoods. When a parent is already having difficulty finding the time or energy to encourage outdoor playtime, these restrictions can make it even more troubling to do. However, knowing the health benefits that this outdoor time can have for our children is something that makes the effort all the more worth it.

Current academic research is now beginning to suggest that the decrease in time spent outdoors is taking a toll on children’s health and well-being.¹ An article written by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley introduces a term called “Nature-Deficit Disorder.” The

author explains this is not a medical diagnosis, but a term that describes the lost connection with nature and outdoors.¹ This particular article argues that as a result of this disconnect, children may have higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses, child and adult obesity, and Vitamin D deficiency.¹

We hear outdoor play is beneficial for children (and of course adults too), but how so? Outdoor play promotes fitness, confidence, and self-control.¹ It also improves sleep, supports learning, focus and concentration.² Children begin to learn how to socialize with their peers and exhibit their creativity.³ For parents and caregivers it also helps us release energy, recharge, and get a good dose of Vitamin D for ourselves as well. UC Berkeley states, “As parents and educators, we can spend more time with children in nature. We can go there with them. Taking time to do that can be quite the challenge. Getting kids outside needs to be a conscious act on the part of parents or caregivers. We need to schedule nature time. This proactive approach is simply part of today’s reality.”¹

Not only is outdoor play important now for young children to get outside and play, it is going to help them remain active in adulthood. It’s never too late to teach young children the importance of nature and appreciating the outdoors. Rain, sun, and snow, there are wonderful opportunities waiting for children to get outdoors and have some fun. Help them create their own great childhood memories.

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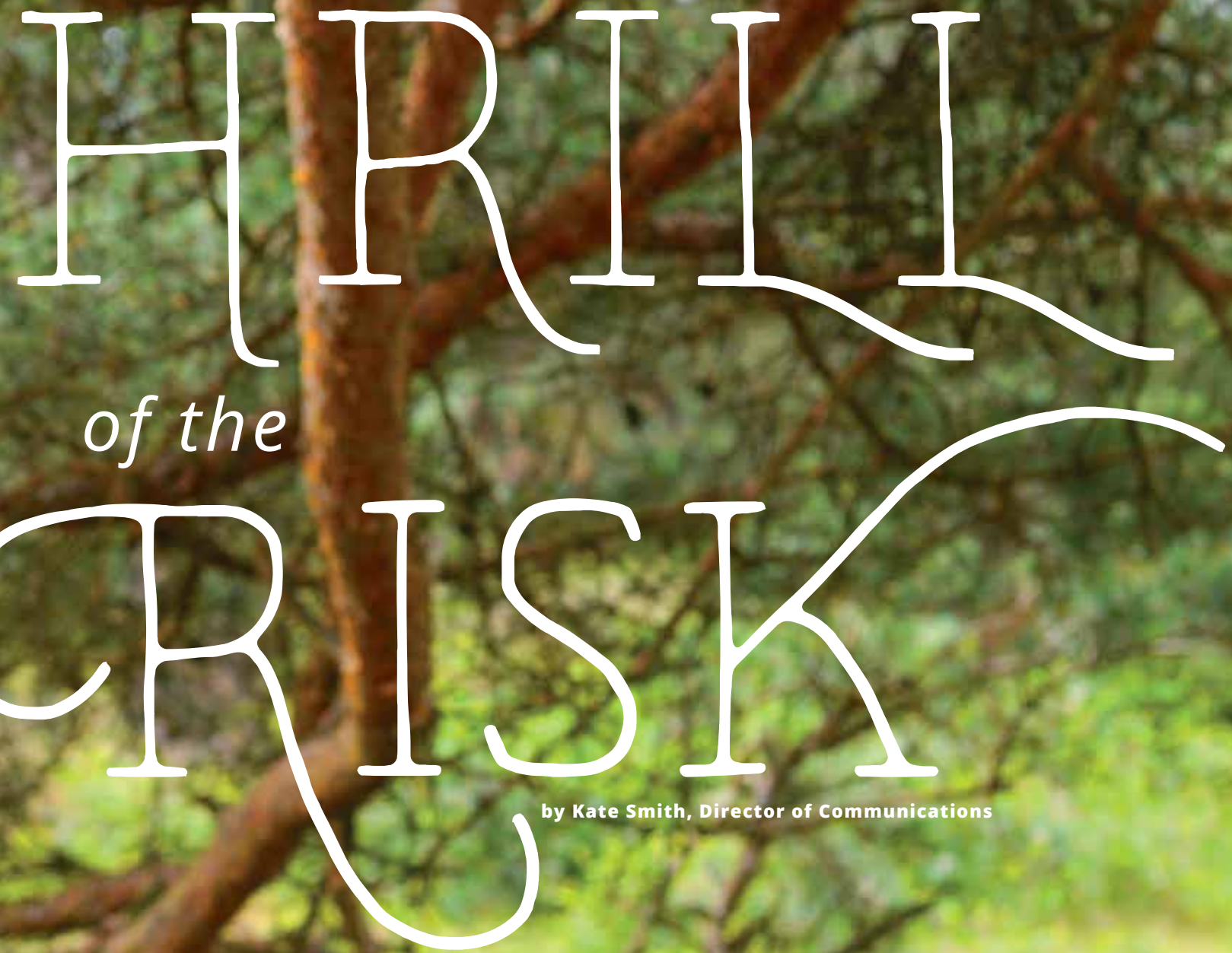
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HRILL
of the
CRISK

by Kate Smith, Director of Communications

When I was a kid, there were two big trees in my grandparent's front yard. A beautiful pair of maple trees, planted together back when my grandfather bought the house after coming home from WWII. They had grown together, like partners, reaching the same height over the years, providing beauty, height, and shade to my grandparent's quaint little front yard. I imagined they were a couple, his and hers; like my grandparents; living, growing sentries of love and partnership planted in the front yard.

They were beautiful, with a textured bark that wasn't scratchy or completely smooth either. The bark gave enough roughness for little sneakers to get some purchase and make the climb. And the big, lush green leaves gave the ultimate, dark and cool shade to defend against the sun on a hot summer day. They grew sturdy, thick branches extending out horizontally, just low enough for me to reach and still high enough to challenge a little girl to scramble, climb and pull myself up. A perfect set of climbing trees. They looked like the stereotypical tree that almost everyone draws when doodling. The image of a straight trunk, full canopy, and one little branch that always sticks out to hint at more beneath the leaves.

The one on the left was mine. The one on the right, with the slightly less than perfect climbing branch, I left to my cousins and little brother. The one on the left, closer to the driveway, with the perfect branch at the perfect height leading up to a Y in the upper branches – this was where I loved to go, climb, play, pretend, and hang out. Sometimes it was my house, sometimes a fortress. Sometimes I would bring a book and read. It was my little escape among the leaves, and I felt like I was at the top of the world.

Thinking back to the time I spent at my grandparents' house, I have no memory of ever being told that I shouldn't attempt to climb the tree. My grandmother never came outside and told me to be careful, or not to go too high, or that I should come down else I get

hurt. I was allowed to explore, climb, and test my limits on my own terms. In my child's eye, the tree was massive; a towering giant that took all my courage, strength and determination to climb.

The draw to climb the tree emanated from my childlike need for thrill. Risky play is generally defined as thrilling and exciting play that involves a risk of injury, and is an essential component of children's development. According to *Psychology Today*, "children love to play in risky ways—ways that combine the joy of freedom with just the right measure of fear to produce the exhilarating blend known as thrill." Of course, as a child I wouldn't have articulated this concept in this way. I would've just told you, "I did it, I climbed that tree." I might have even added that 'I wasn't even scared.' Was I really in danger? No. Was there just enough of a blend of risk and danger to make me feel like I overcame a great challenge? Absolutely. And if you're wondering, yes, my grandmother was always watching anxiously from the window. I just didn't know it at the time.

This childhood experience falls into one of six categories of risky play as described in the article, "Risky Play: Why Children Love It and Need It" from the research conducted by Sandseter, Ellen Beate Hansen. (2007). Categorising risky play—How can we identify risk-taking in children's play? The category they refer to as great heights, allows children a sense of great accomplishment and a "birds-eye" view of the world. In addition to height, risky play categories also include: speed, tools, dangerous elements, rough and tumble play, and hiding/getting lost. In each area, the sense of danger is heightened by the presence of one or more of these elements. Children's gains from these experiences, much like my own, are a great sense of independence and achievement. Each category of risky play develops the child's ability to assess what is safe and unsafe, and make quick decisions and judgements. Consider what happens when a child climbs a tree, each branch is examined, each step higher is planned and executed, a slip

from a branch after reaching too far is handled quickly (or not) through fast decision making. Each accomplishment involved in risky play builds the child's own sense of their abilities. A failed attempt to reach a certain height is not seen as a failure but a challenge to create a new approach.

“Allowing children to take risks isn't impossible. With some planning and intention, risk can be encouraged while still ensuring safety from serious injury.”

By allowing children to participate in risky play, we are showing them that we have confidence in them and trust in their abilities. Finding the balance between what is tolerable and allowable to the adult while still allowing children to pursue risky play is the challenge faced by parents and caregivers alike. Like my grandmother was, unbeknownst to me, many adults are reluctant to allow children to engage in risky play for fear of injury. She certainly didn't have a background in child development to help her ease her worry about her grandkids falling from trees. What I guess is, she had my grandfather standing behind her telling her to leave us alone, that we'd be fine; kids climb trees.

Over the years, the trend has been towards restricting access to risky play, making play spaces safer and more managed to provide a completely manufactured safe play environment. As a result, risk-taking during play has become increasingly regulated, managed and controlled and even removed all together (Tovey, 2010, pg. 81). When we restrict children from engaging in risky play, often out of a sense of protecting the child, we are likely causing an unintended negative

effect. Limiting or reducing children's risky play can cause them to feel less confident, more anxious and vulnerable.

Because of increased safety regulations, early childhood teachers often find it difficult to provide a good balance of risk and play. A study in 2009 by Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter in Norwegian preschools found that preschool teachers used four main strategies to regulate children's risky play, these are, "restricting/constraining, keeping a close eye, not present/distance and contributing/initiating." What she found was that when teachers interfere or make decisions for the child, the result is stopping the play activity altogether. Restrictions placed on children's risky play are often the result of the adult perception of risk, leaving the child feeling disempowered, anxious, and frustrated.

Additionally, adults can face harsh criticism for allowing children to be "free-range." Plug a search into Google and you'll find dozens of articles shaming parents for allowing children to be outside, playing, seemingly unsupervised in their own yards. One case in particular resulted in national news when a stay at home mom had child protective services conduct an unannounced wellness check. Her three children had been playing in the backyard while she was indoors, checking on them through the living room window (just like my grandma!). Her yard was fenced on three sides by stockade fencing and chain link across the front. She was completely comfortable and felt it was a safe place for her children to play. Her neighbor did not and called the police accusing her of neglect.

The news on risky play, however, is not all bad. In March, 2018, the New York Times published a piece on the growing trend in England to allow risk back into children's lives after years of working to mitigate it. Educators looked at their play environments, assessed the situation and decided to bring back the risk. They discarded their plastic climbers and brought in lumber, crates, hammers, saws, tire swings, mud pits, and all manner of "dicey" materials. Over time,

more “risk-based” playgrounds popped up in England, prompting a researcher to gather data on their effects. What they found was, “British playgrounds had 55 percent more visitors over all, and children and teenagers were 16 to 18 percent more active. The features that held visitors’ attention the longest — sand, grass, high swings and climbing structures...” In the US, where litigation costs are higher, finding playgrounds offering risky play opportunities is a little tougher.

Allowing children to take risks isn’t impossible. With some planning and intention, risk can be encouraged while still ensuring safety from serious injury and staying in compliance with all the rules and regulations we need to maintain while working with children. Hike it Baby, a national organization whose mission is to help people connect with nature provides the following advice on their website regarding risky play:

- **Don’t force your child to participate in risky play. Each child knows their limits and you should respect them.**
- **Don’t say “Be careful.” A better phrase is, “Are you feeling safe? What is your plan?”**
- **Don’t panic. It can be scary to watch your child participate in dangerous activities.**
- **Don’t come to your child’s rescue if they are “stuck.”**
- **Don’t let the “haters” discourage you.**
- **Do be present. Talk them through their play if there is an exceptional risk. Make them aware of what they are doing. “You are up there so high! You are so brave. I see you stepping so carefully.”**
- **Do expose your child to risky play opportunities frequently. Even if they don’t take to risky play right away, it’s important to expose them to the opportunity.**
- **Do allow children to play with sticks.**
- **Do allow your child to go up the slide.**
- **Do allow your child to explore on their own. Be close enough to talk to them, but don’t follow**

too closely. This will create more independence and self-confidence in their ability to participate in risky play opportunities.

- **Do allow them to fail. Failing is how children learn! It’s OK if they get “stuck” in the tree. It’s OK if they fall off the log while they are balancing. And, above all else, don’t panic if they do!**
- **Do trust your child. They know their limits. If they weren’t ready for something, they wouldn’t do it.**

As a mother who has had the opportunity to enjoy risky play as a child, and through my exposure to child development experts in my career, I have made it my practice to not just allow risky play by my own children, but to encourage it with great intention. In researching for this article, I found none that reflected on the memories created by the experiences where children are allowed to engage in risk. I remember with vivid detail the tree climbing adventures in my grandparent’s front yard. In contrast, and with less tolerant adults, my memories of other forms of play activities are not as detailed. Even without knowing the research, data, and play education from my colleagues, I can tell you that the risks I took in my play were beneficial to me and have lasted into adulthood.

The trees, along with my grandparents are gone now, but the memories, joy and learning they provided me in allowing risky play will remain with me forever. When we prevent children from engaging in self-driven, risky play in order to protect them, we’re setting them up for future failures and breakdowns. Children are designed to learn through experience, and through that experience they gain a sense of their own ability, strength, and interests. I know my grandmother watched me out the window to make sure I was okay, as I do now with my children and I am so grateful that she was able to let me be in nature, without interference, playing in my tree.

SEEK AND FIND

by Bonnie Schultz, Registered Dietitian

On a chilly morning inside the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center we were told to cut some simple shapes out of colorful construction paper. Some followed precise geometric lines, some cut free-form. We then punched a hole in each shape. What was this all about we wondered? Armed with a pipe cleaner each, we strung our paper pieces on to it. To finish we twisted the pipe cleaner together to form handle.

Then the facilitator asked us to put on our coats. We were heading out on a shape hunt. I wondered what I would find to match the odd shapes that I cut. With an artist's eye, we were challenged to really look at the shape of things. One young participant looked up and found a diamond shape. It was not a leaf, but the shape of a patch of sky, edged on all sides by leaves. Stones on the path were turned. We stretched our necks to examine stumps. Our sense of adventure and satisfaction grew with each find.

We took a well-established path. An adult had scouted ahead of us for potential dangers such as poison ivy. Our footsteps warned larger wildlife of our approach. Adults were strategically spread to allow for continuous supervision.

Caring about Earth starts with safe exploration of nature all around us. The folks at Project Learning Tree have put together robust curriculum.

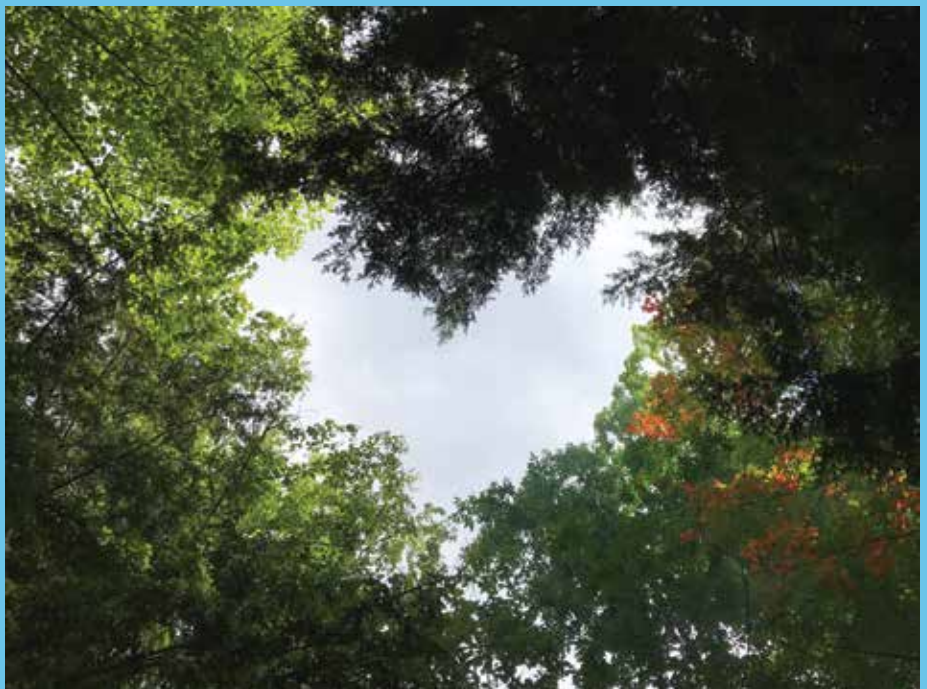
To get a free copy of "The Shape of Things" go to www.plt.org/sample-lesson-plan/early-childhood/shape-of-things/ Once back inside, with hands washed, we explored our same shapes in the classroom environment. Some shapes were easier to find than others. We compared shapes in the natural and human-made environment.

As an extension activity for another day, we were challenged to create color samples in all shades of green, brown, grey and other colors found in nature. All shades are not the same. Every shade can be celebrated in our diverse world, our Earth!

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Heart shaped hole among the trees



BUILD A FOUNDATION WITH PLAY

by Jessica Orellana, Social Emotional Development Educator

All children need a strong social and emotional foundation. Every day brings a new opportunity to develop social-emotional skills. Here are some outdoor games that promote social skills and self-regulation.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

One person is chosen to be the traffic cop; everyone else begins on the starting line. When the traffic cop says 'green light' everyone will move towards the finish line. When the traffic cop says 'red light' everyone must immediately stop. Start a new round when everyone gets across the finish line or when most players make it across the finish line.

Children will learn to:

- Take turns being the traffic cop and manage their expectations when they are not chosen first.
- Pay close attention for the red light, green light cues in order to start and stop on time. This requires focused attention and ignoring distractions.
- Manage strong emotions such as anger, disappointment, and frustration. If children do not immediately stop, they are sent back to the start line.
- Start and stop, which requires self-regulation.

TREASURE HUNT

Set up the treasure hunt by drawing a map of your neighborhood, home or classroom. Mark locations where children can find missing puzzle pieces. When all the pieces are found, the treasure hunt is over. Bring the puzzle pieces together and solve the mystery puzzle.

Children will learn to:

- Make a plan and problem-solve to complete an activity.
- Negotiate and work as a team to solve a problem.
- Manage emotions such as excitement and frustration.
- Practice perseverance and determination when looking for the puzzle pieces and assembling the puzzle.





FIRE SAFETY

by Jackie Farmer, Early Childhood Educator

Summer is a time when children are at a higher risk of fire related injuries. According to Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 10 unintentional injury deaths among children ages 3 to 5 is fire related. Play Safe Be Safe Fire Safety Education for Children says that despite popular opinion, children are curious about fire, have easy access to lighters and matches, and have no concept of the power of a single match.

Children are naturally curious about fire; and fire related activities like camping, grilling, and fireworks bring create such fond memories that even adults can underestimate the danger. Fire safety should be practiced at all times and taught from an early age.

GRILLING

- Grills should be kept at least 3 feet from any structures and children should stay 3 feet away
 - Never leave your grill unattended
- Clean the grill regularly to remove grease or fat buildup

FIREWORKS

In 2017 the National Fire Protection Association reported 12,900 people had firework related injuries, of which 36% were children

- Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, a sparkler burns at 1200 degrees
- If you want to see a fireworks display, leave it to the experts
- If an adult is going to use fireworks, never light more than one at a time, relight a "dud," or point or throw them at people.
- Always keep children at a safe distance

Children should be taught from a very young age about fire safety. Statistics show that using a fire safety curriculum, like Play Safe Be Safe, will reduce fire related injuries. Adults need to keep matches and lighters out of reach of children, supervise closely around fire sources, and set a good example.

IF SOMEONE DOES GET INJURED:

- Stop: Stop the burn by removing the source of injury, if it is safe to do
- Cool: Immediately place the burn site under cool or cold water for at least 10 minutes
- Cover: Cover the burn loosely with a sterile dressing

CAMPFIRES

- Check the area to ensure that campfires are permitted
- Campfires should be 15 feet from any structures or items that could burn
 - Avoid burning on dry or windy days
- Never use gasoline or combustible liquids to start a fire
 - Make sure that the fire is extinguished

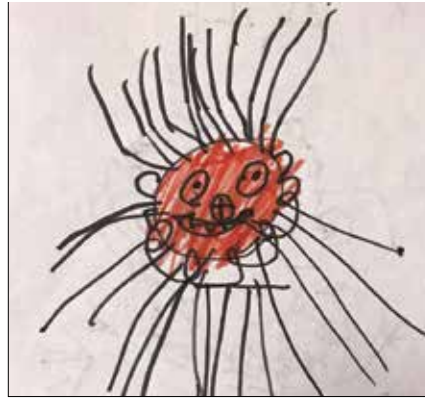
References:

Fire related deaths account for 1 in 9 (10.7%) unintentional injury deaths among preschool children ages 3 to 5 (Source: CDC WISQARS 10/2015 using 2013 data) <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

ARTWORK FROM THE COUNCIL'S FIRST ART EXPERIENCE & SHOW



Riya, age 10



Dominick, age 6



Ayla, age 3



Brendan, age 11



Alice, age 5



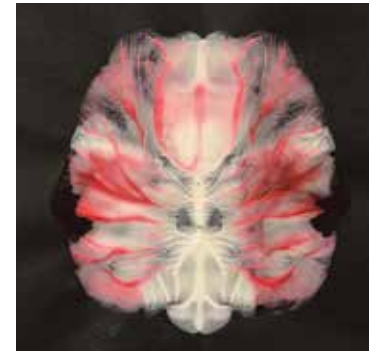
Pius, grade 2



Riley, age 9



Anthony, age 10



Zi'Arya, age 2



Kilie, age 9



Christopher, grade 3



Evan, age 5

**SEE PAGE 46 FOR MORE
ON THE EXPERIENCE**

Painting with Nature

by Nicole Pulcino, Community Educator

SUPPLIES

Natural items like rocks, pinecones, acorns, shells, leaves, twig, etc.

A bag for collecting natural items

Paint

Paper

A shoe box or a similarly sized box with a lid

STEP 1: EXPLORE

Let the children lead you on an exploration of the natural spaces around you. Take a walk in your yard, around the block, or through your favorite park. Encourage the children to examine the textures of nature and gather items that they would like to use in their paintings. Remind them to not pick any growing items so as to minimize their impact on the natural environment.

STEP 2: SHOW AND TELL

Have children describe the natural items and why they were selected.

STEP 3: SET THE STAGE

Place a piece of paper in the bottom of the box. Help the children dribble approximately two to three tablespoons of paint onto the paper (the less paint you use the better you will be able to see the different patterns each item makes).

STEP 4: SHAKE AND PAINT

Have the children place their natural items into the box and close it. While securely holding the lid in place, have the children move the box around. Invite them to experiment with different ways of moving the box: shaking it, swirling it, sliding it side to side.

STEP 5: Repeat steps 3-4 with different colors and different items from their collection. Discuss the different patterns that emerge when using different natural items. Experiment with different combinations of colors and examine how they mix to create new hues.

Looking for new places to explore with your children but don't know where to start? Check out these local groups that strive to engage children and their caretakers with the outdoors.

WILDERNESS KIDS

Local mom, Lynn Slocum, started Wilderness Kids in 2016 as a way to find parents and caretakers to commit to weekly outdoor activities with her. It now has nearly 300 members working together to build an all-inclusive community centered on a shared love of nature. Meet-ups occur on Fridays (snow, sleet, rain, or shine) and are announced on their Facebook group page.

Ages: All | Cost: Free

For more information, please check out their Facebook page or email lynnslocum@hotmail.com.



HIKE IT BABY

Shanti Hodges founded Hike it Baby in 2013 when she invited a few young families to join her for a hike. It has since grown to include over 300 branches around the world. As an organization Hike it Baby strives to welcome all families and leave no hiker behind. Activities range from park and plays to mountain climbing and everything in-between.

Cost: 90-day free trial (\$10 per year thereafter, scholarships are available)

Ages: All (see hike descriptions for specific age/pacing information)

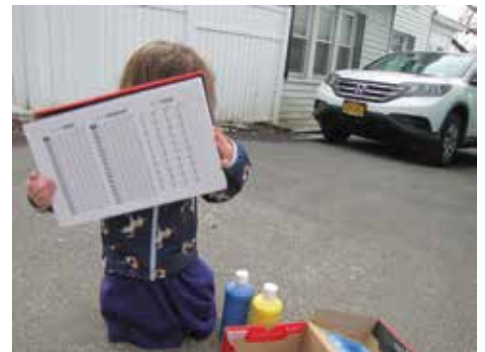
For more information: <https://community.hikeitbaby.com/branches/capitol-region-ny/>

FREE FOREST SCHOOL OF ALBANY AND THE CAPITAL REGION

Inspired by the Scandinavian forest school tradition, Anna Sharratt founded the first chapter of the Free Forest School in Brooklyn, NY in 2015 to provide children with opportunities for unstructured playtime in nature. Facilitated by volunteers, FFS meets weekly for a snack, play-time in the woods, and a closing circle time.

Ages: 0-6 years old | Cost: Free

For more information: www.freeforestschool.org/free-forest-school-albany-capitol-region-new-york/



Lily, 3 years old, at home painting with nature



VOLUNTEER FAMILY

Spread Kindness

Getting children involved in volunteering from an early age can instill an ethic of giving back that will last a lifetime. Volunteering as a family provides a fun way to make memories while contributing to the community. It also teaches children the value of kindness and allows for family members to use their talents to work on a project they feel passionate about.

Why should your family lend a helping hand? It feels good! The satisfaction and pride that come from helping others are important reasons to volunteer. When you commit your time and effort to an organization or a cause you feel strongly about, the feeling of fulfillment can be endless. It strengthens your community. Organizations and agencies that use volunteers are providing important services at low or no cost to those who need them. When a community is doing well as a whole, its individuals are better off, too. It can strengthen your family. Volunteerism is a great way for families to have fun and feel closer. But many people say they don't have the time to volunteer after fulfilling work and family

commitments. If that's the case, try rethinking some of your free time as a family. You could select just one or two projects a year and make them a family tradition (for example, making and donating gift baskets to care facilities for the elderly around the holidays.)

WHAT KIDS CAN LEARN FROM VOLUNTEERING

A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. By volunteering, children and teens learn what it means to make and keep a commitment. They learn how to be on time for a job, do their best, and be proud of the results. They also learn that we're all responsible for the well-being of our communities and one person can make a big difference.

THE BENEFIT OF SACRIFICE. By giving up a toy to a less fortunate child, a child learns that sometimes it's good to sacrifice. Cutting back on recreation time to help clean up a beach tells kids that there are important things besides ourselves and our immediate needs.

TOLERANCE. Working in community service can bring children in touch with people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, and education and income levels. They'll learn that even the most diverse individuals can be united by common values.

JOB SKILLS. Community service can help young people decide on their future careers. Are they interested in the medical field? Hospitals and clinics often have teenage volunteer programs. Do they love politics? Kids can work on the real campaigns of local political candidates. Learning to work as a team member, taking on leadership roles, and setting project goals are all skills that can be gained by volunteering and will serve them well in any future career.

RESPECT. By volunteering with your family, you can teach your children respect for the contributions of others and respect for the experiences and needs of other people in the community.

GRATITUDE. Children learn to appreciate the gifts in their own life when they spend time noticing and responding to the needs of others.

9 WAYS KIDS CAN HELP

1. Donate food to a food pantry. Have your child pick out one item each time you go to the store. When you get a bagful, take it to a local food pantry.
2. Walk to fight disease. Many organizations use walks to increase awareness and raise funds. Kids 5 and up can walk a few miles, and you can push little ones in a stroller.
3. Put together activity boxes. If your child is a preschooler, decorate shoe boxes and fill them with a deck of cards, small games, and puzzle books for kids at the local hospital.

4. Visit a nursing home. Your family can be matched with one person to call on regularly.
5. Clean up. Pick up litter at a local park or while you take a walk in the neighborhood. (Wear gloves and supervise your children closely.)
6. Gift Giving. Anonymously give holiday gifts to families in need. Shop, wrap and donate toys and clothes to children and families is a great way to help children on how they can give to others.
7. Deliver meals. You and your child can bring both hot food and companionship to homebound people through a local charity food service.
8. Yard Work. Have your children shovel snow, rake leaves or mow the lawn of a neighbor that is unable to do the work themselves.
9. Share storytime. Read your child's favorite books to children in the hospital. She can sit next to you and turn the pages.

FINDING THE RIGHT ORGANIZATION

A great place to start when searching for volunteer opportunities is vounteermatch.org. The site matches the causes you care about to the causes that need you.

PLACES TO VOLUNTEER

- Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York
- Equinox
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region
- Northern Rivers Family Services
- Toys for Tots
- Schenectady City Mission
- Local Libraries
- Local Hospitals and Nursing Homes

References:

Parents magazine and kidshealth.org

NATURAL PLAYGROUNDS AT HOME

by Tricia Howland, Family & Community Engagement Director

Natural playgrounds are places that provide endless hours of exploration, discovery, creativity and learning. Every day there are new discoveries to be made and new opportunities to encourage a child's development. Natural playgrounds are changed and manipulated by children and provide an opportunity for young children to connect with the natural world.

Did you know that children who play on natural playgrounds tend to play longer and stay more engaged than those who play on brightly-colored equipment. Natural playgrounds allow children to use their imaginations, motor skills and curiosity. You can create a natural playground in your backyard.

STEPPING STONES OR STUMPS

Create a path by re-purposing tree stumps that have been removed or large boulders. Secure them in the ground by partially burying the bottoms so they don't tip over as the children hop, step or jump along the natural path.

GRASSY HILLS OR SLOPES

With gardening season upon us you may find that you have extra dirt from digging a new garden or landscape bed. Use the extra dirt to build a small hill for children to roll or slide down. The addition of props (trucks, balls, etc) to the area will allow for endless play opportunities.

DIGGING SPACE

Children love to dig and digging provides hours of enjoyment. Sand (or dirt) play is an open-ended activity, meaning the children determine the direction their play. It provides opportunities for sensory, physical and cognitive development.

MUD KITCHEN

A great place for all those messy activities. You can re-purpose an old table, recycle old pallets or make tables out of old tree stumps to create a "mud kitchen" where children can make mud pies and more.



Children play in a sandbox outside Pineview Preschool



Children play in a dirt box



Children play in a sandbox outside Pineview Preschool



Lily climbing on stumps and exploring her back yard natural playground





LUCAS



Kevin, grade 3

Unifying Communit

Hundreds of people attended our first children's art experience event held at the Colonie Youth Center in Latham. The day consisted of various art activities (spray bottle painting, 3D construction building, self-portraits, and finger painting to name a few) hosted by our expert child development staff, vendor tables, a silent auction and an art exhibit, highlighting several young artists in the community. Thank you to all the parents, teachers, providers and children artists for your contributions and engagement.

It was by far my favorite event we have ever put on. Art has incredible value to me, as an artist myself, so experiencing art through the eyes of children and learning about their development through their brush strokes or color choices or the composition was pure joy. I had so much fun bouncing around to the different creation stations watching the children and their parents fully engaged and happy. Everywhere I looked people were having fun. Creating art is one way children express themselves, and share what they know, how they see the world, their families, and themselves. Art is a way for children to tap into their imaginations by putting themselves into their paintings; it's universal, all-inclusive and there is something very therapeutic about creating something unique that has never existed before. Those are just some of the plethora of benefits of art, but I couldn't stop thinking about how art also has a way of unifying communities.

This event was a true collaboration; from planning, to set up, to execution; everyone from Council staff to Colonie Youth Center staff to the parents and teachers and children, we all came together and had such an incredibly fun and immersive day.

Until next year's art experience, keep on creating!



Activities Through Art

by Lindsay Clark, Graphic Designer



Pictures of some of the artwork on exhibit on page 37. More pictures from the event on pages 48-49.





Spotlight

At the Council, our vision is to create a world where all children are understood. To make that happen, we need a team of dedicated and purpose-driven employees who come together every day to work towards making that dream a reality. We take great pride in the team we've built and our work is fueled by their enthusiasm and motivation.

In this issue, we are excited to highlight Raquel Saddlemire, Hispanic Child Care Project Director. In the newly created role, Raquel's overall goal is to support Spanish speaking child care providers by creating culturally-informed, bilingual professional development opportunities.

At the heart of every great organization are the relationships it builds with its clients; Raquel excels at building meaningful relationships with the providers she works with. If you're lucky enough to drop into any one of Raquel's trainings, you'll find a smiling group of engaged learners coming together as a community to support one another while learning about children's development.

Thank you Raquel for your passion and vision for this new role. We are delighted to continue building relationships with the Hispanic provider community and thank them for their ongoing commitment to promote superior child care.



Raquel Saddlemire, Hispanic Child Care Project Director



Raquel demonstrating a science experiment with eager students capturing the moment



**CDA? MORE
LIKE CD-YAY!
¡FELICIDADES
GRADUADOS!**



Dog, Adrianna, age 5



Fishing, Logan, age 5



Hedgehog, Quinn, age 4.5







Capital District
Child Care
Council

A WORLD WHERE
all children
ARE UNDERSTOOD



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