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An Informal Caregiver Is:

In the province of Ontario, you may provide care for up to 5 children under 10 years of age in addition to your own children at any given time in your home.

Example 1: If you provide care for 1 infant plus 2 preschool children during the day, you may also provide after-school care for 2 school-age children in addition to your own.

Example 2: If you provide care for 1 infant, 2 toddlers, and 2 preschool children during the day, you are at your maximum number of children; hence you cannot care for any additional school-age children after school. Should you wish to care for more than 5 children plus your own at any given time in your home, you would require to be licensed under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act and meet all of its regulations.

*The Professional Resource Centres are sponsored by different agencies in each of the four communities. Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) in Hamilton, the Early Childhood Community Development Centre in Niagara and the Ontario Early Years Centres: Brant and Haldimand & Norfolk provide these services in their respective communities.

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We are interested in hearing your comments. Your input is important to us to ensure we are providing information that is useful to you. Please feel free to contact us.

Quiet Times



Issue 1, 2012

a newsletter for Home-Based Caregivers

Home Child Care Symposium

Through the joint efforts of Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton & Niagara, a very successful Home Child Care Symposium was held in Brantford on Saturday, November 12, 2011. The setting was a banquet room which overlooked a beautiful golf course. I'm sure you are already getting the picture.

The day was off to a good start with a session on “Managing Meltdowns”; looking at potentially ‘explosive’ children and understanding their triggers and how to deal with these types of situations.

Do you know what your predominant colour is: Green, Blue, Gold or Orange? The session on the overview of “Personality Dimensions” helped you figure that out. This session provided not only the opportunity for you to learn more about yourself but also an opportunity for you to learn about different personality types and the approach you may need to take when dealing with each different “colour”.



Have you ever participated in a “Cake Boss Challenge”? We had eight tables full of caregivers who participated in decorating a cake to a theme. A variety of materials were provided and it truly was a team effort to get to a final product. The cakes were judged and the winning group was from Niagara.

The day wrapped up with participants learning a variety of ideas for “Cooking Special Ways 4 Special Days in Home Child Care”. Group discussion took place using developmental areas to discuss ideas and activities caregivers could introduce to the children in their care.

There was a lot of laughter and fun throughout the day. If you weren't there this year, start planning now to attend in the future. You missed a lot of fun and networking.

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Professional Education Opportunities

Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY)

ASCY offers a range of educational/training opportunities for early years, child care and home child care practitioners.

Emergency First Aid/CPR

Saturday, March 3, 2012, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Cost: \$70.00, Location: ASCY

Presented by: Hearts Helping Hearts

Professional Firefighters teach Emergency First Aid/CPR in a clear and easy-to-understand format.

Please bring your own lunch.

Networks *Please check the ASCY insert for area network information and dates.*



Early Childhood Community Development Centre Helping You Achieve Your Training Goals...

The ECCDC Team is committed to offering workshops and training sessions with exactly the right mix of information, inspiration and interaction so you leave with new skills and renewed passion for the work you do every day. We are also committed to providing you with access to state-of-the-art learning resources and classroom equipment and to giving you the skills and insights you need to put these items to their most effective use. Drop in to the ECCDC to have a look at all the learning equipment that may be borrowed for your home child care program and visit our website at www.eccdc.org for a list of upcoming training sessions. We look forward to seeing you at the ECCDC soon!



Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant

Home Child Care Income Tax Workshop

Tuesday January 31 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm • No Cost

Home Child Care Start-up Workshop

Tuesday March 6 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm • No Cost



Ontario Early Years Centre: Haldimand - Norfolk *Please check the insert "Your Guide" for other professional development opportunities.*



Choosing Safe Art Materials for Your Home Child Care Program

Submitted by the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant

Art and craft time in your home childcare program can be fun, educational and result in treasures that are saved and displayed on the child's home refrigerator for years. Some art supplies and art activities; however, can be unsafe unless caregivers follow simple guidelines for selecting and storing materials and teach children how to use them properly.

Choose Products Carefully

Because drawing, gluing and painting are common activities in childcare, parents and childcare providers often assume that all art and craft supplies are safe and appropriate for children but many products can be dangerous. When choosing products for your home childcare program, here are some items to avoid and some suggestions for using products that are safe:

- Avoid permanent, felt-tipped markers that may contain toxic solvents. Use water-based markers only. Children's washable markers are best.
- Avoid adhesives that are not water-based, such as rubber cement or solvent-based glues. Use polyvinyl acetate (PVA) white glue, which is the safest for children.
- Recycled materials should always be used with caution and discrimination. Toilet and paper towel rolls, used egg cartons and re-used Styrofoam meat trays are all good examples of materials to avoid as they may contain harmful bacteria. Styrofoam packaging noodles should be avoided as they are considered a choking hazard.

Safety Precautions

Art and craft time can be relaxing and encourage children to express themselves in new ways. By following a few simple safety precautions, you and your children can enjoy your creativity safely.

- Do not eat or drink while using art and craft materials.
- Always thoroughly clean after use--wash the children's hands, your own hands and your supplies. The clean-up area should not be used for food preparation.
- Never use products for skin painting or food preparation unless the product is specifically

indicated for that use.

- Do not transfer your art materials to other containers. Always keep them in the original packaging, which includes ingredient and safety information.
- Provide appropriate supervision when children are using materials that are sharp or that could be ingested.

Paint Supplies

Paint products can become contaminated with bacteria or mould, which can lead to a strong, offensive and, in some cases, sickening odour. Paints such as poster paints and temperas that are intended for use with children often contain organic materials that can decay if not stored properly or if stored for a long period of time. This makes them unsafe for use with children.

Here are some tips to help you store paint safely and use it for as long as possible:

- Store the product in its original container in a cool, dry place and mark the date of purchase on all containers; use the oldest supplies first.
- Remove only the amount of paint you will need for that day's activity. Discard any unused paint by rinsing it down a drain (away from your food preparation area). Do not return the unused portions to the original container--they may be spoiled and will contaminate the remaining paint.
- If you dilute the paint to use with your children, do not save or reuse it. Water can dilute preservatives in the paint that guard against bacteria and mould.
- Do not place brushes, hands or other objects in the container--even stirring the paint with a stick can contaminate it.

Reference:

Creative Art and Activities: Employing Safe Materials, author Mary Mayesky



Caregiver Asks

Submitted by: Ontario Early Years Centre: Haldimand-Norfolk

At some of my network meetings, I hear caregivers talk about process vs. product when it comes to art. I am not sure what this means and how to go about implementing it.

That's a great question. When I think about process vs. product, the first thing that comes to my mind are the pictures made by two-or-three-year-olds that have eyes, a nose and a mouth all glued onto a picture to make a "perfect" face. All the pictures by all of the children look the same. Right away, I know this kind of picture has been done by an adult guiding the child's hand. So the product is the outcome of a lesson and does not lead to any artistic expression by the child.



A process-based creative program draws on the child's opportunity to explore materials, experiment with them and discover what they can make. By giving children choices in materials, by varying what you put out, by adding new materials and, most of all, by letting them decide what to do with them is what process-based art is all about. Children will also have the opportunity to plan, carry out and complete a project... this includes clean-up.

You might wonder why it's so important to have a process-based art experience as opposed to a product-based art experience. When children have the opportunity to explore, they can plan what they are going to use; they can problem solve when things don't go right and they can develop age appropriately. The same materials used by a two-year-old will be used very differently than the way a four-year-old would use them.

At my art centre at home, I always had out my regular items like paint, glue, markers, chalk, crayons and scissors. What made my art centre interesting was the constant changing of papers (colours and types), materials (adding in things like flower pots, glitter, stickers, feathers, Styrofoam balls, marbles, coffee cans, etc.) and, of course, natural things (like pine cones, leaves, branches, flowers, stones and other things you might find outside). With the varying of these materials, the children had choice and opportunity to explore and discover what they could do with these things.

Sometimes, you can blend the two and have a finished product such as a card or gift or make a wild animal collage or shadow box but giving the children the opportunity to use different materials is what makes it a process-based, creative experience.

So if you give children opportunities to choose their art materials and play with them, you will be amazed by the art they will create.

Creating Creative Kids

Introducing the "Arts" into Your Home Childcare Program

Submitted by the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant

It has been said that creativity is an approach to life. We know that children who are creative thinkers understand that problems have many different solutions. When these children encounter one of life's obstacles, they will find a way around it rather than giving up. Creative kids learn that they need to take risks as they learn new skills. They embrace the need to modify their plans and work around the problems and develop an "I Can" attitude. Having a home childcare program that is rich in creativity provides opportunities for children to explore art media, drama, dance and music throughout their day. It takes a conscious effort on your part to recognize the value of a program rich in the "arts" and then find a way to make it an integral part of your weekly routine. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Have creative art materials organized and readily available in your home so children can use them throughout the day. You may find that designating a shelf that has paper, glue, writing materials, scissors and a variety of materials to cut and glue is a good start. Encourage children to "think outside the box" and create in new and inventive ways. Take time to talk to children about their creations and give positive, descriptive feedback to their efforts. They will soon learn that creativity is a valued skill.

Offer a variety of recyclable materials. Using resources that are familiar to children such as recycled materials really encourages "out-of-the-box thinking". Used boxes, wrapping paper tubes and reused ribbons can become wonderful creative art pieces when left in the hands of an imaginative preschooler.

Display children's creative work and experiences. Have a bulletin board or wall area where you can proudly display children's art and photos of them in dramatic play and musical experiences. This will demonstrate to the families and the children that creativity is an important part of your home childcare program.

Encourage creative thinking and expression. For young children, the focus of creativity should remain on the process of the activity and not on their finished product. Praising the effort and the time children spend on an art project really supports this idea. If young children are to learn from their creative endeavours, they need to be able to explore the media and the activity without concern as to the results. They will learn so much from the mistakes they make but also from their successes. It is through the process of planning, creating, making modifications and self-evaluation that children learn about the world and themselves.

Create a dramatic play area that can be changed often to match the interests of the children. Scour the thrift stores for interesting finds that children will enjoy in their dress-up and dramatic play. Ethnic clothing, cooking utensils and pictures encourage children's imagination. Large pieces of colourful material, scarves, belts and hats of all colours and styles provide wonderful ways for children to create costumes and dress up as their favourite characters. Dolls with ethnic clothing and various skin tones should be available for the children to use and talk about.

Provide a variety of music and musical instruments for children to listen to and explore including classical, rhythmic and a variety of ethnic music. When children have opportunities to listen to music from all cultures and types, this will encourage discussions on culture and increase awareness of the big wide world of which they are an important part. The internet is a great resource for listening to music and then downloading with only the minimal expense of the fees. This allows you to put a variety of music on one CD.



Creating Creative Kids (continued)



Have music playing often throughout your childcare day. Research has shown that the early childhood years are an important window of time to nurture children's musical potential. It's the time when our little sponges are most open to new things and are eager to learn. More than just an art form, music is wonderful for self-expression and can set the stage for brain growth and development. If you have music playing throughout the day, you will soon find children happily singing or humming along to the music as they play. This helps set the stage for a positive learning environment.

Encourage children to express themselves through movement and dance in your home childcare program. From infants through to school-age children, expression through movement and dance should be part of every early childhood program. Through movement, songs, games and rhymes, children not only flex their muscles as they gain strength and endurance but they challenge themselves emotionally and cognitively as well.

Have props for creative expression readily available for children to use. Scarves, rhythm and streamer sticks for dance, puppets and story props for creative storytelling and costumes and props to support children during dramatic play-acting can all be collected at little or no cost and are wonderful tools to encourage children's imagination.

By making art, drama, dance and music an integral part of your home childcare program, you are equipping the children in your care with the skills to become creative thinkers for the rest of their lives. What a great gift to them and their future. Albert Einstein said it best through this quote: "Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

Submitted by Affiliated Services for Children and Youth

As a parent, one of my biggest concerns was missing something my child said or did while in the care of another adult.

As an Early Childhood Educator, I strived to share daily happenings with parents as they arrived to pick up their children.

While we can never share everything the children in our Home Child Care do or say, we can document a part of the child's day or week. This goes a long way towards helping parents capture some of their children's experiences while they are away from them.

Options are many and varied when choosing to document:

Record the words a child tells you about the picture he has created. This helps the child to feel his work is valued and allows parents insight into their child's works of art.

Taking a photo of something a child has built or as he works on a puzzle allows for validation of that activity for both children and adults.

You may want to take a series of photos or video to create a timeline from the start to the end of an experience.

Displaying photos, art work and the words you have recorded can add to a child's feeling of self-worth and allows parents a chance to ask questions of you and the children when they pick up their child.

Daily journal recording or writing a running record of 5 or 10 minutes of a child's day, allows parents insight into who their child plays with or near; records if the child persists with an activity or if he is easily distracted by others around him.

Use factual words such as "I observed", "she said", or "he spent 12 minutes" rather than words such as "I think" or "it seems". This shows objectivity of what

happened in that time-frame.

You may choose to design a form where you can check off what has occurred during your observation. Boxes to check off the domain of development (social, emotional, communication and language, cognition, physical) show the area(s) of learning at that time. Adding boxes such as child-initiated activity, adult-initiated activity, new task for child, familiar task for child, done independently, done with peers, done with adult guidance and a place to record the time spent on the activity offers you and the family further insight into what is happening as a child plays.

You may choose to make a portfolio for each child in your care. "Each portfolio should be as unique as a fingerprint", and reflect each child's individuality and temperament.

How and when you share items in these portfolios is up to you but parents generally respond positively to anything you can communicate about their most precious treasures – their children.

Focused Portfolios – A Complete Assessment for the Young Child, Gaye Gronlund and Bev Engel
Redleaf Press, 2001



The Art of Music and Dance

Submitted by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre

Music and Movement can be used with children of all ages. Physical movement helps children with their balance and coordination. Children become aware at a very early age of different sounds such as the clanging of pots and pans, the sound of running water or the ringing of a door bell. Children learn best when they are involved and are exposed to a variety of music that keeps their interest.

Look for opportunities to get the children rocking, marching, rolling, clapping and moving to the beat. Choose songs for infants and toddlers where they can participate in simple hand motions and dance moves. Create your own songs or have the older children create their own songs. Have the older children make song and movement books by cutting pictures from magazines of the moves they want to do or the props they want to use with the music.

Show the children how to move to different types of music. Introduce them to different beats of music to move to such as a slow beat, twirling or spinning to a faster beat, hip hop, to name a few. Introduce dances and music that are from different cultures. Use props like scarves or streamers or let them dance with their favourite stuffed toy. Introduce instruments such as bells, rattles, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks, drums or cymbals. Have the children make some of their props during creative time such as rain sticks, shakers or drums. Children will enjoy using the instruments they have made; let them take them home. This is a good way to encourage them to continue their music and dance at home and to involve the parents.

Have music and dance props readily available for the children daily. Set up a box, plastic bin or basket with props such as the silk scarves, streamers, shawls, hats, and other props that can be used for dance and movement. Set up a second one with instruments that are readily available to the children such as the bells, rattles, shakers, tambourines, rain sticks or drums. Add a CD player and have a variety of CDs available for the children to choose the type of music they want to dance and move to, including music from different cultures.



The Importance of Role-Play and Drama

Submitted by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre

Children need the opportunity to develop their imagination. Very often when we think of providing an opportunity for a child to role-play we set up the traditional housekeeping centre. Through role-play, children have a chance to play out events that they may have experienced or have observed.

Setting up the role-play area may sound simple but it is important to include the appropriate props for the activity using real materials whenever possible. Some suggestions follow:

Bakery: baking utensils (spoon, spatula, mixing bowls, etc.), mixer, cake pans, muffin tins, apron, oven mitts, chef hat, measuring utensils, empty boxes (salt, flour, etc.), empty bottles (seasonings, flavourings) and cook books. Include different cultural cook books and ingredient containers. As a creative activity let the children make their own cook books from magazines; they can also make their own chef hat.

Store: cash register, play money, empty food boxes and containers, bags for packaging groceries, plastic fruits and vegetables; add clothing for sale and small electronics; add a variety of materials (whatever is available this week). Use food items and dishes that reflect other cultures. Add shopping flyers for the children to read and help them obtain some of the items in the flyer to add to their store. Give them small labels so they can price items where age appropriate. Ask the children what else they would like to sell at their store.

Drama from picture books: you can always start a drama activity by using a favourite picture book and read the story to the children. Have the children talk about the pictures and what things they would need to set up an area for role-playing the story in the book. Let the children help you collect the items they want to include in their drama centre to act out the story.

There are so many wonderful suggestions on how to set up a Role-Play & Drama area. Some suggestions for prop boxes to get you started can be found on the following website at www.alphabet-soup.net. Remember to start collecting and labeling boxes or bins for different themes. Ask the parents for donations such as adult clothing, costumes or accessories that they no longer want. Don't forget to include both genders and multicultural items.

Role-play and Drama will enhance the child's skills in literacy, numeracy, communication, imagination and interaction.



Creative Ideas for Fun Days

It's important to start off with a well-stocked and organized craft centre. By no means do I suggest that you should have all of these materials out at any one time but having an assortment that changes from time to time keeps the creative juices flowing. I suggest that sometimes it is nice to have some inspiration on the table. Perhaps having a flower arrangement on the table will inspire children if you have flowers, buttons, pipe cleaners, etc. in your craft centre. Avoid having examples of what the children can make because this limits creativity and might lead them to try to copy what they see, thus leaving them feeling inadequate.

It's important to have certain things on hand at all times. These are:

- Crayons, markers, pencils, paint, chalk, pastels.
- Playdough (you can make your own), clay or plasticine (children do not need cookie cutters, or fancy toys in the playdough; using their hands as tools is the ideal.)
- Popsicle sticks work well as carving tools.
- Paper – construction paper, shiny finger-paint paper, newsprint (end rolls from a printing company or sheets), wallpaper books, coffee filters, paper bags, paper plates, tissue paper, crepe paper, paper streamers and; the list is endless.
- Glue – white glue, glue sticks, Scotch tape, duct tape in many colours, masking tape. For babies, as a substitute for glue, I recommend MACTac, corn syrup, or baby cereal.
- Scissors

Things I have found helpful to use for projects are:

- Cardboard boxes, wrapping paper tubes, never-been-used egg cartons or meat trays, cardboard berry baskets, wood scraps or shapes.
- Stickers, pompoms, clay and cardboard flower pots, wooden shapes, and Styrofoam shapes.
- From outside: stones and rocks, driftwood, leaves, pine cones, sand, snow, ice, acorns, branches, flowers, corn, straw, feathers, natural clay, bark and whatever else inspires you.



Finger-painting is best done on a cookie sheet or a garbage bag taped to the table so you can just peel it off and toss it in the garbage when children are finished painting. This makes clean-up a breeze. I often took off the children's shirts and let them put on an old T-shirt for painting. Some of my favourite activities are: shaving cream finger-painting.

Jello powder finger-painting – pour some Jello powder on paper or cookie sheet; sprinkle water on it, finger-paint and taste away.

Pudding finger-painting – again, a yummy way to finger-paint.

Other painting tools include the following ideas but really, the list is endless:

- Oranges, apples, potatoes, turnip
- Kitchen utensils like the potato masher, forks, spatulas, whisks, slotted spoons, etc.
- Toy cars, trucks and other interesting things.
- Marbles in a coffee can lined with a sheet of paper. Children can roll it, shake it and watch the way the colours blend to make new colours.

As you can see, the list is ongoing. If you need inspiration, mix up what I have suggested, look on line, Google is my best friend... for example: search "winter craft ideas" and see what comes up. Mainly, if you relax, offer choices and have fun, the children will have fun. Remember, don't take everything out at once and mix it up and have fun too!

Water Here, Sand There: Sensory Experiences Everywhere

Submitted by Affiliated Services for Children and Youth

*This is the way we sift the sand,
Sift the sand, sift the sand.
This is the way we sift the sand,
In the sand box, today.
(Tune: Mulberry Bush)
(Change the word sift to dig in, pour, wet, etc.)*

From a very young age, children delight in sand, water and other sensory experiences. There are endless learning opportunities that happen with sensory play.

To enhance literacy, read books or sing songs about sand and water. Use blocks with letters printed on them in your sensory bins. Label your bins and containers for holding sensory toys.

Reinforce object permanence by burying a treasure (safety tip: watch for size with infants and toddlers) in the sand and allowing the children to dig it up. As an alternative for younger children, wrap an object in a wet washcloth and let the children unwrap it.

For fine motor development, encourage children to make lines or draw shapes in the sand with their fingers. Connect dots in the sand with tongue depressors. Place large checkers in the sand in a pattern.

Gross motor development is enhanced by pouring, patting, moulding, digging, walking forwards or backwards in the sand to make tracks or jumping in the sand to make prints. Use plastic vehicles to make tracks in the sand.

Opportunities for simple science experiments with sensory materials are many.

"What stays on top of the water? What goes to the bottom?" These questions address sink-and-float concepts. Properties of wet and dry can be explored by mixing sand and water or making playdough or cornstarch goop. Make a nature collage in the sand with rocks, leaves and shells. Mix colours in the water or sand. Predict what will happen; pour, stir and observe what happens. Record your results.

Sensory experiences lend themselves to exploring math concepts. To promote numeracy, ask children to pour water into 1 or 2 containers. Make hand prints in the sand. Did another child make more, less or the same number of prints. Talking about full or empty containers, big or small piles of sand or heavy or light containers of water gives children a better understanding of measurement. By discussing facts such as "your pile of sand is near to Joey's and far away from Ahmeds" or noticing that "you put your sand on top of mine" reinforces spatial awareness. Use shape moulds such as circles and squares and count the corners and sides to discuss geometry concepts. Alternate circle and square moulded sand in a line to make a pattern. Compare and record information on sand using two categories such as wet and dry or ask questions such as "what might happen if we pour water on top of your castle"? This allows for learning in the data management and probability strand of math.

Use your imagination and add to children's learning experiences as they explore the wonderful properties of sand, water and other sensory materials.

