



YMCA

# The Child Care Professional

Winter 2010

## Season's Greetings!

'Tis the season of winter celebrations and family traditions. It continues to present us parents and caregivers with the perfect opportunity to facilitate meaningful learning among the children in our care. It is also the time of year for us to find comfort in our established traditions. While there is great value in carrying on with family traditions, I would encourage you to consider establishing new ones – ones that have a positive impact beyond our family boundaries. It is a perfect opportunity to contemplate our responsibility to model empathetic behaviour. Consider involving children you care for, perhaps their families as well. By looking outward at what we can do for our community, it becomes a living example of how children can “*learn to care for one another, their world and their future*” (as said by Mary Gordon, Founder, Roots of Empathy).

A new year will be here before we know it. Now is the time to reflect on past experiences, and decide which ones will come with us into the new year. Over the last year, we worked diligently to inform the community about the importance of quality child care in the lives of children and families. To that end, we continued to contribute to local committees and planning groups. Our outreach activities have taken us to local community festivals, health fairs, child care celebration events and even local shopping malls. We visited Family Resource Programs and Strong Start Centres. These visits have provided us a valuable opportunity to reach additional parents and caregivers and will remain one of our priorities for the new year.

Another CCRR priority is to continue to offer training and professional development opportunities. Over the last year, training remains one of our most sought after services. We have made efforts to increase the amount of training we offer, yet many caregivers are telling us that they would like more. We are exploring other opportunities to enhance our training calendar.

In addition, we have been hearing that child care waitlists are shorter, and providers currently have more vacancies than usual. This is a trend being observed by most communities throughout the province. Although the reason appears to be complex, one thing child care providers can do is to look for ways to improve their marketing strategy. For some, this will mean developing one. Inside this newsletter, you will find an encouraging and informative article to help you market your child care program.

In closing...be sure to make the most of the year ahead! Take advantage of the resources and training available to you and endeavor to provide the best child care you can. I can't think of a better way to usher in the new year.

*From the entire CCRR staff team, we wish you all a most happy, healthy holiday season and a new year full of joy.*

*~ Claire*



## Important Workshop Registration Information

In response to feedback received from child care providers in our recent CCRR Program Evaluation we are implementing an important change to our workshop registration process.

Effective immediately, workshop registration will begin approximately one week after the newsletter is distributed. The start date will be noted in the registration package included in this newsletter. In addition, the first date of registration will occur on a Saturday. This change will allow easier access to family child care providers who do not have the opportunity to register weekdays during our business hours. **Please note—we will not accept early registration by mail, fax or phone.**

If you have comments or questions concerning this new policy please contact our office.

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and lots more!

## Inserts in this issue:

- ✓ Winter Workshop/Training Schedule
- ✓ Winter Calendar

## YMCA Child Care Resource & Referral

www.vanymca.org

### Tri-Cities

1130 C Austin Avenue  
Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 3P5  
Ph: 604-931-3400 Fax: 604-931-3440  
Email: tricrr@vanymca.org

Monday to Friday  
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### Burnaby/New Westminster

Burlington Square  
Unit 161 5172 Kingsway  
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 2E8  
Ph: 604-294-1109 Fax: 604-294-6278  
Email: bnwccrr@vanymca.org

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:00 to 4:30 p.m.  
1st & 3rd Thursday each month: 1:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.  
2nd Saturday each month: 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

**Please note:** The Burnaby/New Westminister office will be closed from 2:00 p.m. on December 24th thru to January 2, 2010.

Hours of operation during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Beginning February 15th thru to February 26th.

The Tri-Cities office will be closed at 4:30 p.m. on December 23rd & at 2:00 p.m. on December 24th & 31st. We will be closed December 25th, 26th, 28th, January 1st & 2nd.

### “Circle of Friends”

Family Resource Program

#### James Park Elementary

1730 Coquitlam Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C.  
Ph: 604-931-3400  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

#### Central Elementary

2260 Central Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C.  
Ph: 604-931-3400  
Monday, Wednesday & Fridays  
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

**Please note:** Circle of Friends Family Resource Program operates on the School Calendar.

## Fee Survey Updated November 2009

The YMCA CCRR completed a child care fee survey which can be downloaded from our website [www.vanymca.org](http://www.vanymca.org) or [www.childcarechoices.ca](http://www.childcarechoices.ca)

If you have any questions regarding this fee survey, please contact Rae Ingram at 604-931-3400, extension 0.

## Multicultural Mornings @ the CCRR!

The YMCA CCRR staff and volunteers from S.U.C.C.E.S.S. host “Multicultural Mornings” at the Tri-Cities CCRR office the first Wednesday morning of each month from 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

If you know parents who speak Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese or Farsi and require information on the Child Care Subsidy program, information on child care, or child care referrals, please be sure to inform them of this opportunity. The next Multicultural Mornings are Wednesdays, January 6th, February 3rd, and March 3rd.

## New Resources

### Featured in Our Burnaby/New Westminister Library!!

Do you feel like hibernating on these chilly days? So do the bears! Please check out our featured resource in the Burnaby resource library. Bears, Bears, Bears is an activity box that includes posters, books, music, felt stories and puppets. Cozy up on a rainy day, and share these resources with the children.

We would like to remind members that they are able to borrow from both of our libraries, and return items to either library location.



## YMCA CCRR Program Evaluation

Thank you to all child care providers who took the time to complete our recent Program Evaluation.

The survey results provided valuable insight into how well CCRR services are meeting the needs of our members. Many members took the time to include written comments and suggestions. We appreciate your candid comments & suggestions and have considered all of them as we develop future plans.

Certain sentiments were echoed throughout the survey and we will respect them as we make future plans for our Program. In the meantime, we have already taken action to attend to them. Here is a sampling of your comments.

***“It has been difficult to get into classes! More classes needed!”***

In the last year we have experienced a rapidly growing demand for training due in great part to the provincial government increasing training requirements for responsible adults working in child care, and increased number of hours required to renew an ECE licence. In response, we initiated several changes to our training schedule, specifically:

- We began offering training during evening openings July & August in response to the overwhelming demand
- We began to offer school age training opportunities during weekday/daytime hours
- We offered training every evening opening and all Saturdays whenever possible.
- We increased the number of training sessions offered on Saturdays.
- We decreased the number of Child Safe First Aid courses we offered, as we felt it could be accessed in various locations throughout the community—this enabled us to provide additional child care specific training

Although we have increased our training opportunities dramatically, the demand continues to outstrip the supply.

The training schedule is included in our newsletter, and Members are given the option of receiving it electronically or by Canada Post. Typically, those receiving it via email are registering more quickly. We examined our registration policy and have made changes that will provide more equitable registration opportunities for all child care providers. Effective December 2009, registration for all workshops will begin approximately one week after the release of the newsletter. It will take place on a Saturday,

giving all members equal access to register for training. The exact dates will be announced in our newsletters.

***“I am finding it very slow and I’m worried I must take a different direction to make ends meet.”***

If you have experienced a decrease in enrollment, you are not alone. Of survey respondents, 65% indicated they currently had vacancies. Many caregivers shared comments indicating that it had been a difficult year for them.

CCRRs province-wide have experienced a decline in the number of parents calling for child care referrals in the last year. Likewise, we have seen a 25% decline in inquiries. We believe this is due (in large part) to the current economic climate, resulting in higher unemployment. Families have also indicated that they are opting to work more flexible schedules, resulting in fewer required hours of child care.

To increase awareness of our program we have engaged in new promotional strategies, which include transit advertising, magazine advertising, and web advertising. We are beginning to see an increase in calls from families, and hope this will translate into increased enrollment in child care centres.

***“It would be helpful if CCRR would have a list of qualified ECE students or grads for substitutes/staff.”***

Over 65% of respondents indicated that finding qualified substitutes is a challenge.

CCRR Service Standards set forth by the Province of British Columbia require us to adhere to certain criteria when registering substitutes. Generating and maintaining an up-to-date substitute list is an extremely challenging task requiring significant resources. Currently, our resources and staffing capacity do not permit us to take on this task. Should our resources increase, we will reconsider providing this valuable service.

***“Popular items are mostly reserved way ahead of time.”***

This is a comment caregivers have shared with us many times over the years. Earlier this year, we amended our lending policy. We appreciate that many child care providers like to plan their activities many months ahead of time. Having resources reserved for many months in advance made it more difficult for some providers to access resources that reflect current interests of the children in their care. When caregivers contact us and request a certain resource, we will hold it for up to one week. If it is not collected within that time, the resource will be placed back in circulation.

If you are interested in additional results from our survey, please contact Wendy Harvey at 604-937-1231 or by email at [wendy.harvey@vanymca.org](mailto:wendy.harvey@vanymca.org).

## Extreme Make Over: Child Care Edition

### “Developing a Marketing Plan for Your Child Care”

by Vicki Piir

If you’re like me, you are completely hooked on those reality TV make over programs. Whether it’s seeing someone reinvent themselves for a new career or improving their home for sale, it just gives you a good feeling to see something revitalized.

In the child care field, as in our personal lives, we continue day after day, often year after year, in the same spaces with the same furnishings and even the same arrangement. What was a good design 10, 15 or even 20 years ago we think is still good enough today right? The fact is we become “comfortable” and even a little complacent with our surroundings. Don’t misunderstand me—if you are content with yourself or your home the way it is, there is no need to change. However, if you happen to be operating a business like child care and are in need of new clientele becoming complacent will definitely put you at a disadvantage in the marketplace. Most people think that marketing begins by placing a classified ad. However, placing the ad is actually the final step in a carefully conceived plan designed to make your business a success. This article is meant to inform child care businesses starting out as well as those businesses which have been operating under the premise that what worked 10 years ago will continue to work today.

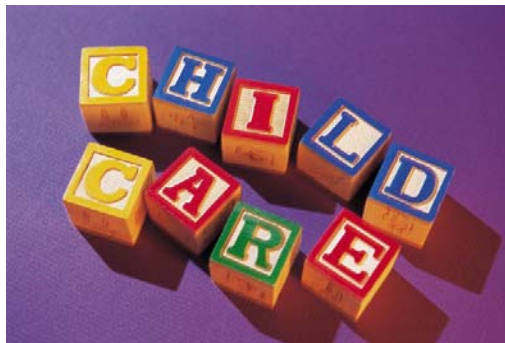
Last time I checked my calendar we were coming to the close of the first decade of the new millennium. That’s right, the new millenium and with it a new era in providing and marketing your childcare. Parents are more educated, more consumer savvy and believe it or not there are a number of choices for child care that did not even exist even 5 years ago. In short, child care is part of the marketplace and competition is just part of the package. I hope the information which follows will help you and your facility get in the game.

#### Know your business:

It is important with childcare as with any other business, to have a clear understanding of your goals and objectives. Obviously, most individuals operate businesses for financial gain and childcare is no exception. Beyond this, however, the choice for style and philosophy is endless. As a business owner you not only have to decide the direction of your business, but clearly define your boundaries and expectations in a way that makes your service appealing to others. Know yourself, believe in your work, and let your passion be an inspiration for your clients and your community. Being passionate about your business and your work is really the first step in a marketing plan. Frankly there is nothing more irresistible to new clients than someone who knows who they are, what they believe and where they are going. It is a sign of strength and maturity and when we are talking about parents leaving their children in your care, this is a great selling point.

#### Know your business community:

The second part of knowing and believing in yourself is to be a good community business person. Knowing the kind of



services that exist in your immediate community not only helps you decide what particular service gaps may exist, but also the level of services available. Understanding what other program styles and choices are available proves to strengthen your program by adding new ideas as well as affirming the work you already do. It is of great benefit to you and child care as a whole to make contacts with other providers whenever possible. This opportunity to net-

work with one another helps each individual business become sharper and enhance their existing program.. Remember to represent yourself as the professional you are. Strive to represent your business in a positive way by practicing good ethics with your business neighbors. For instance, don’t ask for a fee schedule with the purpose of undercutting your fees in an attempt to have a perceived edge on your neighbor. Each business should operate on their own merit and your fees should represent fair value for your commitment to the services you provide. Parents are facing one of the hardest decisions of their lives when they search for child care. Being able to connect with a parents need to find the “very best” care, tells parents that you are confident about your service and that they can be confident too. Helping parents understand that there is a continuum of childcare services and then establishing yourself along this continuum helps the parent gain perspective, empowering them to make choices that best suit their situation. Isn’t it counter productive to encourage parents to look at other



choices as well as your facility? Although it may seem as though you are chasing away business, there is nothing more positive than a business person who is convinced about the quality of their service and therefore gives full freedom of choice to the client. The client on the other hand doesn't feel chased away, but rather informed and confident that this provider has the best interest of their family and child at heart. To a parent, this is a crucial selling point. A client returning from an exhaustive search to choose your facility affirms your goals and objectives and begins a client relationship on the best possible footing.

#### **Start with the Basics:**

After you have set goals and objectives know what kind of service you wish to provide and have an understanding of the competition. It is time to take a good hard look at your existing facility.

If you started your business 5 to 15 years ago, give or take a few years, it is likely that your space could use a little face lift. This is an excellent time to begin to think outside the box and determine if you will make a major design change. For instance, ask yourself if there are any major problems with the way the space functions for the children. For example: Do you need a separate nap room? Are the bathrooms too far away? Can you access outside easily? Granted, some of these problems may not be resolved without major renovations but it is always worth acknowledging these issues to see if creative solutions can be found. Remember, just because you have always done it one way doesn't mean it can't and shouldn't change!

To help you get started, divide your concerns into the following four categories: *cleanliness & repair, paint, flooring, furnishings*. After determining what needs to happen, prioritize your list and set a budget. I realize that most child care programs are not financial windfalls but as a business person, a percentage of funds must be put aside for this purpose to assure the ongoing success of the business.

Remember the old adage, "you can't make money if you don't spend money".

Regardless of how minor or major the face lift will be, strip the entire space, leaving nothing but the walls and flooring. Go into the space with a clear vision and begin to imagine and dream. This is an excellent time to do a little research on the internet, leaf through home decorating magazines etc. There are excellent magazines devoted to designing children's bedrooms and play spaces which have wonderful creative ideas for storage, room arrangement and the most important of all.....COLOUR!

You may not think so, but regardless of what you do in the room with furnishings, activity centres or toys, colour sets the mood in the playroom and speaks volumes when it comes to first impressions and the livability quotient. We live in an age of "home design" and all the trappings that go along with it. If you are unsure of how to choose a great colour or colours for your facility, many paint and home decorating outlets can provide you with free or nominal cost interior designers that will work with you to help you create the mood that will suit your needs. Having viewed literally hundreds of facilities within the last 20 years I have almost seen it all. I find the best living environments for children to be ones where the colours are harmonious, cheery and restful. Remember, the children as well as staff must live in these rooms throughout all seasons so choose well. Primary colours may seem great on the paint chip but cover the walls in them and add all the colourful toys and furnishings and it could be stimulation overload. However, do the opposite and paint the rooms all white and you may have a stark, cold and clinical feel to the space, so don't be afraid to ask for advice.

The next most important item is flooring. This provides the basis for the comfort, activity level and continuity of the space. Flooring can either restrict the activities and the flow and comfort of the facility or it can enhance it. Choose something appropriate for your situation. For instance make sure there is enough hard wearing, easy clean surfacing to allow the kind of freedom small children need to be creative and learn new skills in the eating areas. Provide enough soft easy clean carpeting to provide the warmth and comfort so necessary for infants and toddlers who spend most of their time on the floor. Again, home building stores can provide you with all the necessary information and advice about a range of appropriate choices in a number of price points.

#### **Make the most of what you have:**

Once you have set the mood and prepared a workable surface, it is time to be creative. If you have been operating for sometime and find it difficult to see your space differently, ask for help. A friend, family member or even a school age child may have some wonderfully creative ideas that may

inspire you and get your creative juices flowing. Sometimes the furnishings, toys and equipment that we have had for years are still perfectly functional when utilized in a new or creative way. For instance that tired, chipped child sized table could now be given a coat of paint and a new job as the playdough / self serve art area or science table. Review your goals and objectives for your program to refresh your mind about what kind of program you want, look at what you have, and be creative! Sometimes we just get stuck and need to think of how we can use our equipment differently to meet our goals and objectives. Clutter and children seem to be synonymous so devising storage solutions is a must. Speaking from experience, it can be an uphill battle if you don’t tame this storage monster. As you place each piece of equipment and each toy back into the revised play space there should be one cardinal rule; if it has no storage, it has no place. This will force you to be ruthless in getting rid of excess “stuff” that never gets used but that you might “need” some day. Move into your updated space clean and uncluttered with a place for everything and everything in its place. As I write this I must admit, it is a monster that I have only partially tamed myself, but remember don’t give up!!

Once you have created new “areas” and developed new traffic patterns for your playrooms you may want to decide on adding one or two new ideas or pieces. Think about having areas or pieces of equipment that can be rotated seasonally or with the children’s interest or developmental age. This ability to change the space on an ongoing basis renews the staff and children and keeps you aware of your facility’s need for repair, cleaning or function change. This habit of renewal helps you to always present your space fresh and thoughtfully prepared for new clientele. Ask friends and relatives to view your space from time to time, giving their honest first impressions. This is an invaluable exercise that helps keep your program on the cutting edge. Once all the furnishings and equipment have been replaced and the make over is all but complete remember one thing--this is the children’s space and they must live here. Give them the opportunity to live in the space and be sensitive to the need to change things to fit their needs. Allow for tweaking your design for the first few weeks until it works for everyone. This of course is particularly true when families share their personal living space with that of their family child cares, so be flexible.

**Final step: Tell the world!**

Finally, your child care make over is complete and you stand amazed at this vibrant new space. I guess it is true what mother used to say, “a change is as good as a vacation.” With your facility revitalized you are ready to tell

the world about your exciting program, but how do you begin?

Although writing print ads seems fairly straight forward there really is a method to writing successful print ads which is meant to do the following three things:

1. Capture the attention of potential clients
2. Encourage clients to remember what you told them
3. Persuade them to follow through with inquiries

The following rules apply when crafting a classified add.

1. It should stand out among the competitor’s ads and attract attention. Although that may sound obvious, nothing else matters if it can’t do that.
2. The ad should appeal to the readers self interest, and in the case of parents it should answer a question. An ad which tells readers how they will benefit from your service piques their interest and then it has a fighting chance. It should communicate your programs uniqueness, whether that is specialized training, unique program or a well prepared facility.
3. It should motivate readers to take some action, namely placing an inquiry and ultimately to book a visit with your facility.

Believe it or not, this is a lot to ask of a little 4 or 5 line print ad lost among the morning classifieds. Most ads are poorly conceived and therefore perform poorly. Some business operators have confided to me that after placing costly classified ads they have only received a couple of inquiries.



Typical classified for child care:

*“Loving mom of two, licensed daycare, fenced yard, lunches/ snacks, non-smoking, crafts. Spaces available. Phone 444-4444.”*

You must admit, it leaves a lot to the imagination and I think tells you information that is expected, NOT unique. Remember, bringing out uniqueness makes you stand out among the

rest. Think from your client's point of view. Being loving is an expectation, so is a fenced yard, snacks, nonsmoking and some sort of program involving crafts! So far the add tells me nothing that would make a parent want to call this ad as opposed to a dozen other ads in this category.

The following is the same ad using the principles of successful print ad writing:

*"Meadowview licensed child care invites your family to discover the difference quality makes. Meadowview provides a nurturing family atmosphere, stimulating children's program and beautiful children's play yard. We invite parents to come by and view our unique setting by appointment. Vacancies are currently available. Inquiries at 444-4444 or email meadowviewcc@telus.net."*

The headline has my attention already because it piques my curiosity about your program. You're telling me you are different because of quality. It tells me that you are not a preschool but "family style" setting, which is very appealing to parents of young children. Offering a stimulating program tells me that there may be more to it than crayons and colouring books, and a beautiful children's play yard helps me to imagine that you have put more thought into my child's outdoor space than simply fencing for safety.

Obviously, the ad MUST be true or it is pointless. If you really don't have a beautiful children's play yard don't say you do. My point is that you should bring out the best and most unique features that parents will be looking for and grab their attention with your best foot forward. Be professional, using lingo like "spaces" to convey you have vacancies is not only unprofessional but can be misleading to parents who may not be familiar with the child care field. The best thing I have found is to make a list of your attributes such as safety, training, program uniqueness, physical space, philosophy etc. Keep writing about them until it flows and conveys the kind of message you want the world to hear. I would also encourage you to add your email address or website if you have one. In this day and age, it is a familiar way to access information and you can use this vehicle to your advantage. If a client emails you with an inquiry, it is then easy to put together a comprehensive package about your facility complete with a couple of pictures, attach it to a personal email response and further pique their interest about your facility. If you do have the ability to set up a web page, this is a great way to give potential clients a "virtual tour" of your facility by helping them to imagine "their" child in your setting.



So with the make-over completed and the marketing plan in place I would encourage you to do the all important "drive-by" of your facility and look with fresh eyes. First impressions are crucial. If you have managed to persuade clients to come for a visit, don't ruin it now with bad curbside appeal. You know what I am talking about. Clutter and garbage in the driveway, carport or doorway of your facility. Untidy lawn or garden, old broken down cars, furnishings or appliances can be deal breakers in this era of the savvy consumer. I have been told more than once by parents that they have not followed through with an appointment because when they drove by the facility it gave them a bad impression due to the visual state of the house or surroundings. It might sound harsh to judge someone's ability to care for a child based on the condition of your front yard or entrance but parents are desperately looking for signs that make them feel good, safe and comfortable and are quick to dismiss those that don't. Remember, there are more choices available than ever before in the child care marketplace so be a wise child care provider.

My hope is that this information will give you food for thought and provide you with methods and exercises designed to improve the quality of your child care business and help you put your best foot forward in a competitive marketplace.

### **The Canadian Paediatric Society**

**Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care 3rd edition** is now available. This resource contains helpful tables on age appropriate toys, developmental mile stones and caregiver emotional health. As well as simple and easy to understand information on preventing and managing infections and a great chapter on including children with special needs (care planning, activities, and an extensive list of additional resources).

[www.cps.ca/English/publications/bookstore/WellBeings.htm](http://www.cps.ca/English/publications/bookstore/WellBeings.htm)

## Keeping Current through Lifelong Learning

A diploma or certificate is an important step on a journey of lifelong learning. But as knowledge constantly changes and develops, how do you stay informed? Regular time set aside for personal and professional growth provides you with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, keeps you challenged and energized and gives you the motivation to continue. Feel free to expand on the following suggestions as you develop your own personalized strategies for keeping current.

### Six Ways to Keep Yourself Growing

#### 1. Stay informed

- Stay abreast of current research—for example, *Research Connections Canada* (CCCCF) volumes contain current Canadian research relevant to child care. Check out the Child Care Resource and Research Unit at [www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org) on the Internet.
- Build a library of reference materials on early child development.
- Subscribe to magazines and journals such as *Interaction* (CCCCF) and *Young Children* (National Association for the Education of Young Children), and to provincial newsletters and bulletins.
- Compile a list of agencies where you can access documents and videos in your community.
- Find out about and attend upcoming conferences. Take workshops on a variety of topics.
- Register for evening courses offered at a local college or via distance education.

#### 2. Join forces

- *You Bet I Care!* Consistently found that when care providers are part of a professional child care organization, the quality of child care organization, the quality of child care measurably improves.
- Join a child care organization in your province/territorial affiliate organizations automatically become members of the Canadian Child Care Federation.
- Join an international organization. Learn how others do things in your work setting, in your community and in your travels.

#### 3. Get wired

- Access to a computer and computer literacy opens many doors. Even if you don’t own a computer yourself, you can access one through a friend, colleague, community centre or public library. Set up a free email account.
- Learn how to search the Internet. Bookmark websites of interest. *Child & Family Canada*, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), is dedicated to the health and well-being of children and families. Share interesting sites you discover with colleagues.



- Join a Listserv that is dedicated to improving the quality of child care and/or is moderated. Be selective in your choice to ensure that dialogue on the list you join is child-centered and professional.
- #### 4. Challenge yourself
- Train to become a mentor to new colleagues entering the field. Connect with your provincial/territorial child care organization for contact information.
  - Supervise students.
  - Volunteer in your community.
  - Start a discussion group in your workplace.
- #### 5. Know yourself
- Keep a journal. Seek out a mentor. Be open to feedback from colleagues, parents, supervisors.
  - Be an active participant in your performance appraisal.
  - The Guide to Self-Reflection in *Partners in Quality, Tools for Practitioners in Child Care Settings* (CCCCF, 2000) can help you begin to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- #### 6. Care for yourself
- Regularly participate in physical activity—try dancing, yoga, aerobics, swimming, walking etc.
  - Nurture your mind, body and spirit—join a choir, take art classes, join a book club, go on regular walks with a friend. Laugh! Have fun!
  - Remember that to give your best, you need to be healthy and have a positive outlook on life.

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## ECEBC Call for Proposals: Communities of Leadership Innovation

Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia, with funding from VanCity Community Foundation, is seeking proposals from Early Childhood Educators across BC who are interested in playing a leading role in helping their communities become one of ECEBC's 2010/11 "Communities of Leadership Innovation." This is an opportunity for you and other ECEs in your community to develop your capacity to:

- Raise the profile and understanding of the work you do in the broader community;
- Building the leadership capacity of ECEs in your community;
- Take ECE values and ways of knowing out the door to the larger community.

Each year, ECEBC identifies ten diverse geographic and cultural Communities of Leadership Innovation where two or three licensed- to-practice ECEs take a leadership role in developing and implementing a community project that raises the profile and understanding of the value of ECEs. Through the project, participants are supported to develop their own leadership capacity, culture and confidence. Each identified community receives up to \$10,000 to support their project.

Find out more about this opportunity visit  
[www.ecebc.ca/leadership/leadership10/index.html](http://www.ecebc.ca/leadership/leadership10/index.html)

### "Introduction to Family Childcare Certificate Program (Mandarin)"

Saturdays, Beginning on January 16, 2010  
9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
(7 classes totaling 35 Hours)  
Burnaby Central Secondary  
4939 Canada Way  
Course fee: \$350.00

For more information,  
or to register  
call Josephine Wei  
at 604-276-0200



ECEBC Burnaby/New Westminster Branch presents

## Tough and Tender Issues

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Presenter: Gyda Chud

We know that positive relationships with families are key to positive experiences for their children! Yet there are times when we need to interact with parents around "tough and tender" topics, and these conversations are never easy! Cost: \$20.00. Location: TBA

To register for the workshop please contact Noella @604-540-2140 or email: [c\\_monkey@telus.net](mailto:c_monkey@telus.net) or call Roxenne @604-522-2529 or email: [rox\\_harding@shaw.ca](mailto:rox_harding@shaw.ca)

## Save Your Sanity Proactive Strategies for Challenging Children

Friday, April 9, 2010

8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites

700 Old Lillooet Rd, North Vancouver

A Professional Development workshop focusing on Practical strategies for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Oppositional Behaviour. Presenter Colleen Deveyrac has been presenting workshops on Proactive Strategies for Challenging Children to childcare centre's, parents and schools across Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

For more information email [crdconsulting@bigpond.com](mailto:crdconsulting@bigpond.com) or call (Australia) 011 61 414 094 334 or register online at [www.crdconsult.com](http://www.crdconsult.com).

## Early Years Conference: "The Rights of the Child"

February 4-6, 2010

The Victoria Conference Centre  
720 Douglas Street, Victoria

The conference will explore early childhood, family and community development through the lens of Child Rights.

For additional information visit  
[www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Early\\_Years\\_2010.html](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Early_Years_2010.html)

## Infant Activities (6-17 months)

### Looking At Things

Babies learn in relationship to their world. They respond to the world around them, to textures, tastes, smells, sights and sounds. Babies are curious. This is the foundation for learning as they grow. If you take the time to watch everyday sights with the children in your care, every day objects become *extraordinary!*

*Some of the following ideas come from the book Rapunzel's Supermarket: All About Young Children and Their Art, by Ursula Kolbe. It is available in both the Burnaby and Tri-Cities Lending Library.*

### Beautiful Spoons:

"Not just any spoons, but beautiful spoons, intriguing spoons, spoons for different purposes, spoons of wood, metal and plastic, and in all sorts of shapes" Kolbe, pg 13.

Even very young toddlers love to place objects into containers, dump them out and hear them rattle. Put the lid on a used cookie tin (remember to check for sharp edges and be certain it is safe for little fingers!), tall cardboard tea box or any safe, interesting containers with easily removed lids. Add an assortment of spoons and give the box a little shake. Let the child explore the box. She will shake it, work on opening the lid, dump out the spoons and place them back in. She may try to stack them, or pretend to stir. Spoons might be transferred from the container to a basket or laid out on a tea cloth. Very young children are already sorting and grouping.

### A Trip to the Supermarket:

"Our trip to the fruit market is the highlight of his week ... the prickly pineapples, the hairy coconuts, the smooth watermelons, and all the different smells ... He can't get enough of it!" Kolbe, pg 12.

Let infants and young children touch. Express the experience in simple language. When you use words with textures, such as 'smooth, fuzzy, prickly, bumpy,' young children *feel* the words. Sensory experiences helps them to anchor the new language in their memory.

### Snow Day Poems:

#### The Snow Fell Softly

"The snow fell softly all the night,  
(Flutter fingers in a downward motion)

It made a blanket soft and white  
(flutter fingers in a downward motion)

It covered houses, flowers and ground  
(make a house with a pointed roof, ten fingers up for flowers, and lay hands flat for the ground)

But never made a single sound.  
(whisper)

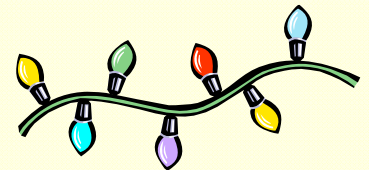
## Toddler Activities (18-36 months)

### Colour Language:

"From an early age children are able to discriminate between colours, and between shades of one colour. They show colour preferences and a remarkable ability for colour memory - that is, they remember actual colours, if not always their names" Kolbe, pg 27.

The winter season has it's own array of colours to explore: white, red, green, gold, blue and sparkle. Lights twinkle on trees and houses. Snow falls and shines. Add these elements of colour to your play environment.

Bring the snow inside. Mix water and food colouring in small water spray bottles and allow older toddlers to spray the snow in big buckets. Colours will mix, the snow will melt, and the texture will change from a solid to a liquid. These changes are magical to young children.



*Continued...*

### **Scarf and Ribbon Play:**

Fabrics are a wonderful opportunity to discover colours and textures. Pale pastels and bright jewel tones are held up to the light. Children will drape them over their hands and eyes, play peek a boo and feel the silkiness of the fabric. They will love the way the world looks brand new, through a sheer pink or green scarf. Scarves are an every day object, and are also fun to use in the tea box or cookie tin. Infants and toddlers love to pull the scarves out of the box one at a time.



A selection of soft ribbons will hold toddler's attention for long periods.

"The ribbons became a leaf falling, noodles, a blanket ... and rain, as they danced with them, chanting 'Raining! Raining!' Kolbe, pg 28.

### **Colour Song:**

#### Baa Baa Black (or white, pink, red, blue, green) Sheep

Baa Baa Black Sheep  
Have you any wool?  
Yes sir, Yes sir,  
Three bags full.  
One for (say child's name)  
And one for (child's name)  
And one for (child's name)



### **Snow Day Poems:**

#### I Am a Snowman

Now I am a snowman  
(stand with arms out)  
Standing on the lawn.  
I melt and melt and melt  
And pretty soon I'm gone.  
(body slumps and voice fades).

Children love it when they hear their own name in a song. Repeat the song several times, changing the colour names. Use simple cut felt props of coloured sheep. As you sing the song, place the coloured sheep on the felt board. Allow the children to choose a coloured sheep out of a basket, and then sing the song with the colour they have chosen.

## **Preschool (3-5 years)**

*When I think of Winter I always reflect back on my childhood and the things that I enjoyed about my favorite season. I remember enjoying both aspects of winter, the warm coziness of inside and the fresh snow fun outside. Children can gain wonderful memories from both aspects, using both the indoors and outdoors to learn more about the winter season and the world around them.*

### **Indoor Snow Fun**

Instead of having snow brought in from outside you can make your own! I have done this activity a few different ways:

☆ One way you can do this activity is by simply using shaving cream. It is easy, the children enjoy it and clean up is a cinch! It is also a great and fun way to reinforce hand washing with children, which is especially important these days.

☆ Another less expensive way to do this activity is with shampoo, using one part shampoo with one part water (for a *really* thick consistency). Add the ingredients in a bowl and mix with an electric blender. You can experiment as well finding a con-

sistency that the children enjoy by simply adding more water and blending.

☆ To enhance social interactions between the children, give them their own whisk and bowl and have them work as a team. This can open up wonderful opportunities for peer modeling and positive self esteem as they assist each other.

Some things to consider (as with all sensory activities) are:

- ☆ The scent, is it too strong?  
(There are some shaving creams that are milder than others)
- ☆ Skin sensitivity.  
(Is the shaving cream/ shampoo for sensitive skin?)

### Driving on Ice (science experiment)

This could be a winter science activity for young; however, the novelty of playing with cars on indoor ice is fun for many ages!



#### **Directions:**

Fill three cookie pans with water and freeze.

Gather small match-box cars. You'll also need spoons, salt and sand. Have children try to drive the cars over the ice.

- What Happens?

Spoon the salt over one sheet of ice and sand over another (leaving one plain).

- What happens when the children try to drive the cars over these surfaces?
- What conclusions can be drawn about driving on ice?
- Why does this happen?
- How does it work?



### Outdoor Fun

#### **Footprint Tag**

Play tag as you normally would...but stepping **only** in others' footprints

## School-Age (6-12 years)

### Outdoor Fun

#### **Outdoor Golfing**

Take some time to smooth out a fairway and a green. ( A fun way to do this is by using large pieces of flat cardboard boxes and walking on them to compact the snow a little). Take a small plastic container and plant it in the snow--this is the hole.

For golf balls, use hockey pucks or coloured hockey balls. For clubs, use hockey sticks or real golf clubs.

For a more natural twist on the game you can use pine cones for the 'balls' and rakes as the club!



### Indoor Fun

#### **Cooking**

*The smell of fresh baked 'anything' can warm the atmosphere when children are feeling anxious and want something new to do. Here is an idea that is easy, creative and tastes wonderful.*

#### **Tortilla Snowflakes**

Kids will have a lot of fun making these cold weather recipes!

Using kitchen scissors, have kids cut out tortilla snowflakes just like they would make snowflakes out of paper. Fry slightly in oil and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

#### **Snowball Throw**

##### **Supplies:**

A line drawn or taped on the floor

##### **How To Play:**

Set a time for 2-3 minutes.

Yell, "GO!!!" Each team throws their tissue paper snowballs back and forth across the lines. When the timer goes off, the team with the least amount of snowballs on their side wins.