APPENDICES

NAEYC Professional Ethics

Emergent Curriculum – Designing Curriculum Webs

Sample Weekly Planning Form

Classroom Portfolios: Windows to the Soul

Guides to Speech and Action

Preschool Problem Solving

Make Time to Talk

Working with Children Whose Home Language is Other than English: The Teacher’s Role

Celebrations, Festivals, Holidays – What Should We Be Doing?

Answering Children’s Questions about Peers with Special Needs

Understanding and Responding to the Violence in Children’s Lives

Keys to Quality Infant Care

Image-Building: A Hands-On Developmental Process

Not in Praise of Praise

Universal Precautions

Incident reports – How to fill out and sample form

Classroom Jobs

1 NAEYC, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, pp. 7
2 James L. Hymes, Jr. Teaching the Child Under Six
3 NAEYC, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs
4 Joanne Hendrick, The Whole Child, pp. 551
5 Stacey York, Roots and Wings, pp. 22
6 Louise Derman Sparks, Anti-Bias Curriculum
7 Janice Beaty, Observing Development of the Young Child, pp. 18

Anna Bing Arnold Children's Center Classroom Manual (4/99; 1/05; 11/09)
Preamble

NAEYC recognizes that those who work with young children face many daily decisions that have moral and ethical implications. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. The Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgement of an individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education.

The primary focus of the Code is on daily practice with children and their families in programs for children from birth through 8 years of age, such as infant/toddler programs, preschool and prekindergarten programs, child care centers, hospital and child life settings, family child care homes, kindergartens, and primary classrooms. When the issues involve young children, then these provisions also apply to specialists who do not work directly with children, including program administrators, parent educators, early childhood adult educators, and officials with responsibility for program monitoring and licensing. (Note: See also the “Code of Ethical Conduct: Supplement for Early Childhood Adult Educators,” online at www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/ethics04.pdf.)

Core values

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

* The term culture includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic level, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs, which profoundly influence each child's development and relationship to the world.
Conceptual framework

The Code sets forth a framework of professional responsibilities in four sections. Each section addresses an area of professional relationships: (1) with children, (2) with families, (3) among colleagues, and (4) with the community and society. Each section includes an introduction to the primary responsibilities of the early childhood practitioner in that context. The introduction is followed by a set of ideals (I) that reflect exemplary professional practice and by a set of principles (P) describing practices that are required, prohibited, or permitted.

The ideals reflect the aspirations of practitioners. The principles guide conduct and assist practitioners in resolving ethical dilemmas.* Both ideals and principles are intended to direct practitioners to those questions which, when responsibly answered, can provide the basis for conscientious decision making. While the Code provides specific direction for addressing some ethical dilemmas, many others will require the practitioner to combine the guidance of the Code with professional judgment.

The ideals and principles in this Code present a shared framework of professional responsibility that affirms our commitment to the core values of our field. The Code publicly acknowledges the responsibilities that we in the field have assumed, and in so doing supports ethical behavior in our work. Practitioners who face situations with ethical dimensions are urged to seek guidance in the applicable parts of this Code and in the spirit that informs the whole.

Often “the right answer”—the best ethical course of action to take—is not obvious. There may be no readily apparent, positive way to handle a situation. When one important value contradicts another, we face an ethical dilemma. When we face a dilemma, it is our professional responsibility to consult the Code and all relevant parties to find the most ethical resolution.

Section I

Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children’s development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children’s self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being.

Ideals

I-1.1—To be familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood care and education and to stay informed through continuing education and training.

I-1.2—To base program practices upon current knowledge and research in the field of early childhood education, child development, and related disciplines, as well as on particular knowledge of each child.

I-1.3—To recognize and respect the unique qualities, abilities, and potential of each child.

I-1.4—To appreciate the vulnerability of children and their dependence on adults.

I-1.5—To create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children’s social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development and that respect their dignity and their contributions.

I-1.6—To use assessment instruments and strategies that are appropriate for the children to be assessed, that are used only for the purposes for which they were designed, and that have the potential to benefit children.

I-1.7—To use assessment information to understand and support children’s development and learning, to support instruction, and to identify children who may need additional services.

I-1.8—To support the right of each child to play and learn in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of children with and without disabilities.

I-1.9—To advocate for and ensure that all children, including those with special needs, have access to the support services needed to be successful.

I-1.10—To ensure that each child’s culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure are recognized and valued in the program.

I-1.11—To provide all children with experiences in a language that they know, as well as support children in maintaining the use of their home language and in learning English.

I-1.12—To work with families to provide a safe and smooth transition as children and families move from one program to the next.

* There is not necessarily a corresponding principle for each ideal.
Principles

P.1.1—Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.

P.1.2—We shall care for and educate children in positive emotional and social environments that are cognitively stimulating and that support each child’s culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure.

P.1.3—We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, or the marital status/family structure, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs or other affiliations of their families. (Aspects of this principle do not apply in programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)

P.1.4—We shall involve all those with relevant knowledge (including families and staff) in decisions concerning a child, as appropriate, ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information.

P.1.5—We shall use appropriate assessment systems, which include multiple sources of information, to provide information on children’s learning and development.

P.1.6—We shall strive to ensure that decisions such as those related to enrollment, retention, or assignment to special education services, will be based on multiple sources of information and will never be based on a single assessment, such as a test score or a single observation.

P.1.7—We shall strive to build individual relationships with each child; make individualized adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environments, and curricula; and consult with the family so that each child benefits from the program. If after such efforts have been exhausted, the current placement does not meet a child’s needs, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, we shall collaborate with the child’s family and appropriate specialists to determine the additional services needed and/or the placement option(s) most likely to ensure the child’s success. (Aspects of this principle may not apply in programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)

P.1.8—We shall be familiar with the risk factors for and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse and physical, emotional, educational, and medical neglect. We shall know and follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse and neglect.

P.1.9—When we have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, we shall report it to the appropriate community agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken. When appropriate, parents or guardians will be informed that the referral will be or has been made.

P.1.10—When another person tells us of his or her suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected, we shall assist that person in taking appropriate action in order to protect the child.

P.1.11—When we become aware of a practice or situation that endangers the health, safety, or well-being of children, we have an ethical responsibility to protect children or inform parents and/or others who can.

Section II

Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Families* are of primary importance in children’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development.

Ideals

I.2.1—To be familiar with the knowledge base related to working effectively with families and to stay informed through continuing education and training.

I.2.2—To develop relationships of mutual trust and create partnerships with the families we serve.

I.2.3—To welcome all family members and encourage them to participate in the program.

* The term family may include those adults, besides parents, with the responsibility of being involved in educating, nurturing, and advocating for the child.
I.2.4—To listen to families, acknowledge and build upon their strengths and competencies, and learn from families as we support them in their task of nurturing children.

I.2.5—To respect the dignity and preferences of each family and to make an effort to learn about its structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs.

I.2.6—To acknowledge families’ childrearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.

I.2.7—To share information about each child’s education and development with families and to help them understand and appreciate the current knowledge base of the early childhood profession.

I.2.8—To help family members enhance their understanding of their children and support the continuing development of their skills as parents.

I.2.9—To participate in building support networks for families by providing them with opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services.

Principles

P.2.1—We shall not deny family members access to their child’s classroom or program setting unless access is denied by court order or other legal restriction.

P.2.2—We shall inform families of program philosophy, policies, curriculum, assessment system, and personnel qualifications, and explain why we teach as we do—which should be in accordance with our ethical responsibilities to children (see Section I).

P.2.3—We shall inform families of and, when appropriate, involve them in policy decisions.

P.2.4—We shall involve the family in significant decisions affecting their child.

P.2.5—We shall make every effort to communicate effectively with all families in a language that they understand. We shall use community resources for translation and interpretation when we do not have sufficient resources in our own programs.

P.2.6—As families share information with us about their children and families, we shall consider this information to plan and implement the program.

P.2.7—We shall inform families about the nature and purpose of the program’s child assessments and how data about their child will be used.

P.2.8—We shall treat child assessment information confidentially and share this information only when there is a legitimate need for it.

P.2.9—We shall inform the family of injuries and incidents involving their child, of risks such as exposures to communicable diseases that might result in infection, and of occurrences that might result in emotional stress.

P.2.10—Families shall be fully informed of any proposed research projects involving their children and shall have the opportunity to give or withhold consent without penalty. We shall not permit or participate in research that could in any way hinder the education, development, or well-being of children.

P.2.11—We shall not engage in or support exploitation of families. We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness working with their children.

P.2.12—We shall develop written policies for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children’s records. These policy documents shall be made available to all program personnel and families. Disclosure of children’s records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

P.2.13—We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family’s right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child’s welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child’s interest.

P.2.14—In cases where family members are in conflict with one another, we shall work openly, sharing our observations of the child, to help all parties involved make informed decisions. We shall refrain from becoming an advocate for one party.

P.2.15—We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up to ensure that services have been appropriately provided.
Section III

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace.

A—Responsibilities to co-workers

Ideals

I 3A.1—To establish and maintain relationships of respect, trust, confidentiality, collaboration, and cooperation with co-workers.
I 3A.2—To share resources with co-workers, collaborating to ensure that the best possible early childhood care and education program is provided.
I 3A.3—To support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and in their professional development.
I 3A.4—To accord co-workers due recognition of professional achievement.

Principles

P 3A.1—We shall recognize the contributions of colleagues to our program and not participate in practices that diminish their reputations or impair their effectiveness in working with children and families.
P 3A.2—When we have concerns about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner.
P 3A.3—We shall exercise care in expressing views regarding the personal attributes or professional conduct of co-workers. Statements should be based on firsthand knowledge, not hearsay, and relevant to the interests of children and programs.
P 3A.4—We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against a co-worker because of sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs or other affiliations.

B—Responsibilities to employers

Ideals

I 3B.1—To assist the program in providing the highest quality of service.
I 3B.2—To do nothing that diminishes the reputation of the program in which we work unless it is violating laws and regulations designed to protect children or is violating the provisions of this Code.

Principles

P 3B.1—We shall follow all program policies. When we do not agree with program policies, we shall attempt to effect change through constructive action within the organization.
P 3B.2—We shall speak or act on behalf of an organization only when authorized. We shall take care to acknowledge when we are speaking for the organization and when we are expressing a personal judgment.
P 3B.3—We shall not violate laws or regulations designed to protect children and shall take appropriate action consistent with this Code when aware of such violations.
P 3B.4—If we have concerns about a colleague’s behavior, and children’s well-being is not at risk, we may address the concern with that individual. If children are at risk or the situation does not improve after it has been brought to the colleague’s attention, we shall report the colleague’s unethical or incompetent behavior to an appropriate authority.
P 3B.5—When we have a concern about circumstances or conditions that impact the quality of care and education within the program, we shall inform the program’s administration or, when necessary, other appropriate authorities.

C—Responsibilities to employees

Ideals

I 3C.1—To promote safe and healthy working conditions and policies that foster mutual respect, cooperation, collaboration, competence, well-being, confidentiality, and self-esteem in staff members.
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

I.3C.2—To create and maintain a climate of trust and candor that will enable staff to speak and act in the best interests of children, families, and the field of early childhood care and education.

I.3C.3—To strive to secure adequate and equitable compensation (salary and benefits) for those who work with or on behalf of young children.

I.3C.4—To encourage and support continual development of employees in becoming more skilled and knowledgeable practitioners.

Principles

P.3C.1—In decisions concerning children and programs, we shall draw upon the education, training, experience, and expertise of staff members.

P.3C.2—We shall provide staff members with safe and supportive working conditions that honor confidences and permit them to carry out their responsibilities through fair performance evaluation, written grievance procedures, constructive feedback, and opportunities for continuing professional development and advancement.

P.3C.3—We shall develop and maintain comprehensive written personnel policies that define program standards. These policies shall be given to new staff members and shall be available and easily accessible for review by all staff members.

P.3C.4—We shall inform employees whose performance does not meet program expectations of areas of concern and, when possible, assist in improving their performance.

P.3C.5—We shall conduct employee dismissals for just cause, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. We shall inform employees who are dismissed of the reasons for their termination. When a dismissal is for cause, justification must be based on evidence of inadequate or inappropriate behavior that is accurately documented, current, and available for the employee to review.

P.3C.6—In making evaluations and recommendations, we shall make judgments based on fact and relevant to the interests of children and programs.

P.3C.7—We shall make hiring, retention, termination, and promotion decisions based solely on a person’s competence, record of accomplishment, ability to carry out the responsibilities of the position, and professional preparation specific to the developmental levels of children in his/her care.

P.3C.8—We shall not make hiring, retention, termination, and promotion decisions based on an individual’s sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs or other affiliations, age, marital status/family structure, disability, or sexual orientation. We shall be familiar with and observe laws and regulations that pertain to employment discrimination. (Aspects of this principle do not apply to programs that have a lawful mandate to determine eligibility based on one or more of the criteria identified above.)

P.3C.9—We shall maintain confidentiality in dealing with issues related to an employee’s job performance and shall respect an employee’s right to privacy regarding personal issues.

Section IV

Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children’s welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available.

As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere.

The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged in collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideals and principles that are identified as “collective.”
Ideal (Individual)

I-4.1—To provide the community with high-quality early childhood care and education programs and services.

Ideals (Collective)

I-4.2—To promote cooperation among professionals and agencies and interdisciplinary collaboration among professions concerned with addressing issues in the health, education, and well-being of young children, their families, and their early childhood educators.

I-4.3—To work through education, research, and advocacy toward an environmentally safe world in which all children receive health care, food, and shelter; are nurtured; and live free from violence in their home and their communities.

I-4.4—To work through education, research, and advocacy toward a society in which all children have access to high-quality early care and education programs.

I-4.5—To work to ensure that appropriate assessment systems, which include multiple sources of information, are used for purposes that benefit children.

I-4.6—To promote knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs. To work toward greater societal acknowledgment of children’s rights and greater social acceptance of responsibility for the well-being of all children.

I-4.7—To support policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and families, and to work to change those that impair their well-being. To participate in developing policies and laws that are needed, and to cooperate with other individuals and groups in these efforts.

I-4.8—To further the professional development of the field of early childhood care and education and to strengthen its commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.

Principles (Individual)

P-4.1—We shall communicate openly and truthfully about the nature and extent of services that we provide.

P-4.2—We shall apply for, accept, and work in positions for which we are personally well-suitied and professionally qualified. We shall not offer services that we do not have the competence, qualifications, or resources to provide.

P-4.3—We shall carefully check references and shall not hire or recommend for employment any person whose competence, qualifications, or character makes him or her unsuited for the position.

P-4.4—We shall be objective and accurate in reporting the knowledge upon which we base our program practices.

P-4.5—We shall be knowledgeable about the appropriate use of assessment strategies and instruments and interpret results accurately to families.

P-4.6—We shall be familiar with laws and regulations that serve to protect the children in our programs and be vigilant in ensuring that these laws and regulations are followed.

P-4.7—When we become aware of a practice or situation that endangers the health, safety, or well-being of children, we have an ethical responsibility to protect children or inform parents and/or others who can.

P-4.8—We shall not participate in practices that are in violation of laws and regulations that protect the children in our programs.

P-4.9—When we have evidence that an early childhood program is violating laws or regulations protecting children, we shall report the violation to appropriate authorities who can be expected to remedy the situation.

P-4.10—When a program violates or requires its employees to violate this Code, it is permissible, after fair assessment of the evidence, to disclose the identity of that program.

Principles (Collective)

P-4.11—When policies are enacted for purposes that do not benefit children, we have a collective responsibility to work to change these practices.

P-4.12—When we have evidence that an agency that provides services intended to ensure children’s well-being is failing to meet its obligations, we acknowledge a collective ethical responsibility to report the problem to appropriate authorities or to the public. We shall be vigilant in our follow-up until the situation is resolved.

P-4.13—When a child protection agency fails to provide adequate protection for abused or neglected children, we acknowledge a collective ethical responsibility to work toward the improvement of these services.
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a nonprofit corporation, tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, dedicated to acting on behalf of the needs and interests of young children. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct (Code) has been developed in furtherance of NAEYC’s nonprofit and tax exempt purposes. The information contained in the Code is intended to provide early childhood educators with guidelines for working with children from birth through age 8.

An individual’s or program’s use, reference to, or review of the Code does not guarantee compliance with NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria and program accreditation procedures. It is recommended that the Code be used as guidance in connection with implementation of the NAEYC Program Standards, but such use is not a substitute for diligent review and application of the NAEYC Program Standards.

NAEYC has taken reasonable measures to develop the Code in a fair, reasonable, open, unbiased, and objective manner, based on currently available data. However, further research or developments may change the current state of knowledge. Neither NAEYC nor its officers, directors, members, employees, or agents will be liable for any loss, damage, or claim with respect to any liabilities, including direct, special, indirect, or consequential damages incurred in connection with the Code or reliance on the information presented.

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct
Revisions Workgroup

Mary Ambery, Ruth Ann Ball, James Clay, Julie Olsen Edwards, Harriet Egertson, Anthony Fair, Stephanie Feeney, Jana Fleming, Nancy Freeman, Marla Israel, Allison McKinnon, Evelyn Wright, Moore, Eva Moravcik, Christina Lopez Morgan, Sarah Mulligan, Nila Rinehart, Betty Holston Smith, and Peter Pizzolongo, NAEYC Staff
Statement of Commitment*

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability I will

• Never harm children.
• Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
• Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
• Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
• Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
• Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
• Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
• Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
• Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
• Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

* This Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgment of the individual’s willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession.
Emergent Curriculum – Designing Curriculum Webs

Curriculum choices must be relevant to the child’s experiences at home and at the Center. One way to incorporate curriculum that is both relevant to the child’s experience and of high interest to the child is to use the curriculum planning system called “webbing”. This may also be referred to as the “project approach”. Building a web is a way of identifying all of the parts that relate to a project or topic. A project is an in-depth study of a particular topic that one or more children undertake. Projects may be generated by children or by teachers. Children generate the topic when they express interest about a subject through their actions and conversations or when they experience an important event. These topics might be generated by books or stories, friends, field trips, ideas and expressed curiosity, or events such as a field trip, going to kindergarten, birth of a sibling, death of a pet or relative, divorce, illness, hospital stay, etc. Teachers may also generate ideas for a web, but the best ideas usually come from the children themselves. Webbing/project planning emphasizes the part of the curriculum that encourages children to apply their emerging skills in informal, open-ended activities that are intended to improve their understandings of the world they live in.

Webbing allows teachers to move between smaller topics as the children’s interest and behaviors vary, while still presenting the big picture. Teachers develop webs by brainstorming about the central topic with fellow teaching staff or with the children. Developing a web with the children allows the teacher to see what the children already know as well as what they are interested in knowing more about. Webbs may be followed closely, or left for some time and returned to as interest dictates. Using webs for planning releases the teacher from having to have all of the ideas and answers. A web invites exploration and research into a topic. The teacher presents the topic to the staff or children and asks the question, “what do we want to know about this topic?” They are then free to explore all the various aspects of the topic that are presented by the group. Curriculum plans can flow from the subjects presented in the web while keeping the group on target about how the individual plans and activities relate to the whole. Children become active partners in researching the subject. They ask the questions and search for the answers with the teacher’s guidance.

Webs provide an opportunity to explore deeply – to add depth to the curriculum and depth to the child’s understanding of the topic. The back of this sheet has a sample web developed by teachers brainstorming about the ocean. What lesson plans could you develop using this web? How could you involve children in discovering the information they need?
Capturing Children’s Concepts

Key to Understanding the Diagrams:
A. The original web documents children’s knowledge of the topic at the beginning of a project.
B. The words and phrases added in italics indicate the growth in the children’s knowledge base after several days.
C. The additions in boldface show further growth in knowledge that the children used to create the final web.

A. Original Web

B. Web After Several Days

C. Final Web
Children's Interests and Classroom Happenings

Rain and Conservation

This month we continue to track our weather with our calendar and chart. We are discussing the importance of rain and conserving water. We are embracing and appreciating the rain, and have even made up a new rain song. (See details in circle time area)

Storytelling Sessions

Teacher Ann Marie has been having some storytelling sessions with the children. They are captivated by the stories and we have even heard some children retelling the stories.

The Wizard of Oz

She has also been reading the original Wizard of Oz chapter book to a small group of children who are ready to listen to a story without looking at pictures.

Music to Our Ears!

We have discovered that Teacher Julio plays the violin and invited him to play for our classroom. He played for us during lunch one afternoon and he has agreed to make this a regular event for us. It was pleasant to have him playing music for us as we ate lunch and look forward to continued concerts!

Main Areas of Development

DRDP link:
SED3: Relationships and Social Interactions with Familiar Adults.
LLD5: Interest in Literacy, LLD6: Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text
COG3: Number Sense of Quantity

Plan of Possibilities for Next Month

Tracking our rain and weather will continue, unless we have nothing but sunshine, then we may decide on another topic to chart.

We will continue to expand on storytelling and other activities to help hone our listening skills.

Discussions and preparations for a school community garden will begin.
Classroom Portfolios: Windows to the Soul

by Beth Yeager, Member
CAEYC Research Committee

Every so often, like many doting aunts, I pull out the photographs taken over the years of my nephews. As I look, I remember, and note the changes and the growth. My favorite times come when one of the boys and I sit together, choosing our favorite pictures, reflecting on our choices, comparing one with another.

"Remember this one, Auntie? I didn't know how to ride my bike. That's where I fell."
"I remember," I answer. "You were learning. And this one? What's important about this picture?"

"That's the first time I rode without help! I figured out how to balance."

Lucy Calkins, in her book, Living Between the Lines, writes that "love involves building structures that anticipate growth" and "love involves remembering growth." Day after day, young children play and grow in meaningful ways. As educators and teacher researchers, we search for meaningful ways as well, to record, understand and learn from what our children are doing and saying. Equally important, we begin to think about ways in which we can empower young children to reflect on their own play/work, on what they think and what they learn, to become the keepers of their souls as learners.

Like the pictures my nephew and I share, portfolios become reflections of development, of growth, of moments in time that show us who the child is, where he/she has been, and, perhaps, where he/she is going.

A portfolio begins, in the classroom, as a purposeful collection of a child's work in one or more areas. As teachers we must determine what it is we want to know about this child, or group of children, this year. Our decisions about the kinds of things we place in the portfolio are based on our goals and purposes for collecting.

The variety of work that can be included is almost limitless. "Portfolios are as varied as the children who create them and as the classrooms in which they are found." I may decide, for instance, that I want to know more about my children's development and growth in block play.

"When we compare developmentally expected forms and what children are building, we can ask questions that support their understanding of the world," writes Stuart Reifel. I may take a series of pictures throughout the year (or over several years) of block structures a child has created. How exciting to learn together, the child and I, as we look back and compare one structure with another.

"Which one was your favorite?"
"What were you thinking about when you built that one?"

The portfolio process is a collaborative one. Even some of the youngest children can become participants, selecting those things that should be a part of their collection. "Teacher, look at the house I built! Take a picture of it!"

Photographs record those moments of growth too large to record in a file folder. Videotapes record whole series of moments. Tape recordings of dramatic play, of conversations with the child, of songs sung, allow us to listen to growth over time. A portfolio might include selected art work, lists of books shared, records of observations, and more. Parents may be invited to share in the collaboration, commenting on what they see in the portfolio.

As children begin to experiment with writing, with scribbling, with isolated figures, and later with invented spelling, we can include these pieces in portfolios. The possibilities are endless.

What makes a portfolio for young children? A portfolio, then, are the following key elements:

- a purpose for collecting work;
- the participation of the child and the teacher in the selection of what is collected; and
- ongoing opportunities for the child, teacher, and parent to look at the contents of the portfolio, to reflect (at whatever level is appropriate for the development of the child) on them and on what they say or show about growth.

My nephew realized something very important about himself as a learner when he was able to say, "I learned to balance there." He took control of what he knew about himself. I learned that day as well.

Lucy Calkins writes, "The more we know a child, the better observers we become... By noticing growth, we nurture it." Portfolios, in whatever form they take, allow us to notice, to record and to nurture growth. Portfolios become the windows, for children, to their souls as learners.

Stuart Reifel, Block Construction, Young Children, NAEYC, November, 1984.

CAEYC Connections
What are portfolios?

1. A work folder is a collection. A portfolio is a selection.

2. The portfolio is a selection of the child's work represented by actual samples, anecdotal records, photographs, tape recordings etc.

3. The teacher, child and parents are involved in making selections for the portfolio.

4. The portfolio is organized to show the child's growth and includes summary sheets to document this growth.

5. Cover sheets or brief written statements should explain the selections. As children get older they can be involved in writing the cover sheets. For young children the teacher can take brief statements from the child as to why the item was selected for the portfolio.

6. The portfolio items are selected to demonstrate the priorities of the child, teacher, parent and curriculum.

7. The child's unique interests and competencies should be documented by the items selected.

8. Summary sheets and a few examples of work should be sent on to the next year's teacher. The entire portfolio does not have to go on.

Why Portfolios?

1. Portfolios reflect what is being taught in your classroom rather than someone else's idea of what is appropriate for your children.

2. Portfolios enable teachers to share information about student performance without interpretation of scores. Rubrics are used to reflect relative performance.

3. Portfolios document a wide variety of work in many formats and help to demonstrate complex, multi-dimensional tasks.

4. Portfolios contain examples of student work over time providing a visual picture of growth.

5. Portfolios provide a natural medium for teacher-pupil, teacher-parent and teacher-pupil-parent discussions and goal setting.

6. Portfolios encourage pupil reflection and self evaluation.

7. Portfolios encourage authentic (performance-based) assessment by linking curriculum, instruction and assessment.

- Grant Wiggins: A portfolio is not simply a folder which holds all student work. A portfolio, going back to its roots in art and architecture, is a sample of work representing two perspectives:

  1. First, it holds what students judge to be their best work.

  2. Second, from the assessor's perspective, the portfolio represents evidence of student performance on a given range of categories or genres of work.
What to Observe

1. Observe the children as they engage in the activities you have planned as appropriate.
2. Look for indications of growth and development.

How to Observe

1. Sit as close to the action as you can without interfering.
2. Focus on the child you are observing as closely as possible but practice "scanning" the rest of the room frequently so you will not lose track of the other activities in the room.
3. If the child asks what you are writing respond positively. (Ex: I'm writing down what you are doing. You said, "Look at the bridge, it's falling."

Helping the Children to Understand the Rules

1. Set the stage. Tell the children that during free choice time you will be observing and writing down what they are doing.
2. Don't let the other children interfere with your focus. Set up rules that encourage them to wait until after observation time to ask for help.
3. When a child is really in need of help (Bleeding!), help quickly and rearrange your schedule.
4. Things that help:
   - Hand signals set up ahead of time.
   - Help signs.
   - Talking about each child getting a special time to be observed - their time will come.
GUIDES TO SPEECH AND ACTION


GUIDES TO SPEECH

1. **State suggestions or directions in a positive rather than a negative form.**

A positive suggestion is one which tells a child what to do instead of pointing out what he is not to do. A positive direction is less likely to rouse resistance. It makes help seem constructive rather than limiting. When we make suggestions in a positive way, we are giving the child a good social tool to use. To put directions positively represents a step in developing a more positive attitude toward children’s behavior inside ourselves.

2. **Give the child a choice only when you intend to leave the situation up to him.**

Choices are legitimate. With increasing maturity, one makes an increasing number of choices. But there are decisions which a child is not ready to make because of his limited capacities and experience. We must avoid offering him a choice when we are not really willing to let him decide the question. It is confusing to the child to be asked a question when what is wanted is not information but only confirmation. Be sure your questions are legitimate ones.

3. **Your voice is a teaching tool. Use words and a tone of voice which will help the child feel confident and reassured.**

A quiet, firm manner of speaking conveys confidence. It may be necessary to speak firmly, but it is never necessary to raise one’s voice. The most effective speech is simple, direct, and slow. It is always better to move nearer the person to whom you are speaking rather than to call or shout across any play area. Your words will get a better reception if they are spoken quietly, face to face.

4. **Avoid trying to change behavior by methods which may lead to loss of self-respect, such as shaming a child or labeling behavior "naughty" or "selfish."**

Neither children nor adults are likely to develop desirable behavior patterns as a result of fear, shame, or guilt. In learning constructive ways of guiding behaviour, our first step is to eliminate destructive patterns: gestures, expressions, tones of voice, words which pass judgment. A child will be helped if we accept her as she is and try to make it possible for her to find some success, rather than if we reprove her because she does not meet our standards.
5. **Avoid motivating a child by making comparisons between one child and another or by encouraging competition.**

Children who are encouraged to be competitive are very likely to quarrel more with one another. In competition someone always loses, and is likely to feel hurt and resentful. Competition does not build friendly, social feelings. It also creates problems within the child. Neither constant success nor too many failures prepare a child well for what he will meet later in a competitive world. Avoid competitive kinds of motivation until children have developed ego strength and can balance off failures with success.

6. **Redirect the child by suggesting an activity that is related to his own purposes or interests whenever possible.**

We will be more successful in changing the child's behavior if we attempt to turn his attention to an act which has equal value for him. Suggestions for acting differently will take into account the different meanings in behaviors—throwing balls instead of sand; vigorous play—raking leaves instead of running wildly. Redirection should help the child face his problem by showing how it can be met, not by diverting him.

7. **The effectiveness of a suggestion or a direction may depend largely on its timing.**

The timing of a suggestion may be as important as the suggestion itself. Advice given too soon deprives a child of a chance to try and work things out for himself. A suggestion made too late may have lost any chance of being successful. Through experience, one can increase one's skill in giving a suggestion at the moment when it will do the most good.

**GUIDES IN ACTION**

8. **Avoid making models in any art medium for the children to copy.**

Art is valuable because it is a means of self-expression. The young child needs avenues of expression. Her speech is limited. Her feelings are strong. If she has models before her, she may be blocked in using art as a means of self-expression. She will be less likely to be creative and more likely to be limited in trying to copy. Art then becomes only another area where she strives to imitate the adult, who can do things much better.

9. **Give the child the minimum of help in order that he may have the maximum chance to grow in independence, but give help when the child needs it.**

Children's self-confidence is increased by independent solving of problems. There are all kinds of ways to help a child help himself, rather than stepping in and doing it for him. In leaving the child free to satisfy his strong growth impulse to be independent, we support his feeling of confidence in himself: "I can do this all by myself." To let the child do things for himself does not mean denying his requests for help. When a child asks for help, we listen to his request and answer it in a way that will make him less helpless and independent. Confidence in self is based on a foundation of trust in others.
10. **Make your directions effective by reinforcing them when necessary.**

A verbal suggestion, even though given positively, may not be enough in itself. A glance at the right moment, moving nearer a child, a verbal suggestion, actual physical help are all techniques. One common fault of parents and teachers is using too many words. Have confidence in the child's ability to hear and respond. But add different techniques together until successful, rather than depend solely on words.

11. **Forestalling is the most effective way of handling problems. Learn to foresee and prevent rather than mop-up after a difficulty.**

Learning to prevent problems is important, because in many cases children do not profit from making mistakes, or the consequences would be too serious, or the child may interpret consequences incorrectly. Effective guidance depends on knowing how to forestall and prevent trouble as much as on knowing what to do when trouble occurs.

12. **When limits are necessary, they should be clearly defined and consistently maintained.**

In a well-planned environment, there will not be many "no's", but these "no's" will be clearly defined, and the child will understand them. The adult must be the one who is responsible for limiting children so that they do not come to harm or do not harm others or destroy property. Children will feel more secure with adults who can take this responsibility.

13. **Be alert to the total situation. Use the most strategic positions for supervising.**

Observation of the total situation is essential for effective guidance: for the children's safety, for helping children, and for enrichment of experience. Trouble is seldom avoided by a suggestion given at a distance.

14. **The health and safety of the children are a primary concern at all times.**

The skillful teacher never relaxes watchfulness for things which affect the health and safety of the children.

15. **Observe and take notes; increase your own awareness of what is going on.**

Underlying all these guides is the assumption that teaching is based on the ability to observe behavior objectively and to evaluate its meaning. Skill in observing and recording is essential in building understanding.
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Preschool Problem Solving

Teaching young children problem solving skills has become a very important matter in the 90's. Children, teens, and young adults are now more than ever resorting to violence as a way of solving everyday disagreements. It is our responsibility as educators, teachers and child care providers to work to counteract this frightening trend. With childhood heroes on T.V., in the neighborhood and in the schoolyard resorting to hurtful behaviors as a way of expressing angry feelings this is no easy task.

When kids feel confidence in their ability to recognize and express feelings, and when they can be successful at coming up with a solution that works, then they are less likely to use hurting as a way of getting their needs met.

Allowing children to take responsibility for their own problems, with adult supervision, gives them the message that they are capable and competent human beings, that they can be trusted and that their needs and feelings are as important as the next guy. With guidance, children learn to express their own needs and to consider the needs of others.

The process of facilitating a problem between two people has many steps. In a preschool setting, problems can and do occur between two or more children, between an adult and a child and between two or more adults.

The How To's of Problem Solving

In most child-child conflicts, you should be very close to the children before you decide that facilitation is necessary. Let the children do as much as they can on their own before you intervene. Once you decide that your guidance is needed:

I. DEFINE THE PROBLEM as you see it. If you are really not sure what happened, begin with an open ended question or statement:
   "You guys really look upset about something."
   "Something happened to really make you mad."
   "What's up?"

II. ACTIVELY LISTEN to children's feelings taking into consideration words, body language, tone of voice and facial expression. Help children to clarify and express their feelings and to listen to and consider the other child's feelings. Continue to follow the child's lead. Remember it's not your problem and it's not your responsibility to solve it.

III. REDEFINE THE PROBLEM and ASK FOR IDEAS.
   Stay in the present and stick to feelings.

IV. GENERATE SOLUTIONS
   Listen to kids' ideas and if necessary restate them in a way that other children involved will understand. If children are having trouble coming up with ideas that they can agree upon, ask children nearby if they have any ideas or come up with some of your own.

V. COME UP WITH A SOLUTION that is acceptable to all involved. Praise hard work.

VI. FOLLOW-UP to make sure kids follow through with agreements they made.
A Problem Solving Example

You notice two kids struggling over the same bike. Maria is sitting on the bike and Teresa is standing in front of the bike with her hands on the handlebars preventing Maria from going anywhere.

I. DEFINE THE PROBLEM as you see it.
   Teacher: “You both want the same bike.”

II. ACTIVELY LISTEN
   Teresa: “She took my bike.” *Teresa shakes the handlebars*
   Maria: “You got off.”
   Teacher: “You wanted the bike, Maria and when you saw Teresa get off you thought she was done riding it. But you’re not ready to give it up, Teresa and you’re pretty mad that Maria got on.”

III. REDEFINE THE PROBLEM and ASK FOR IDEAS.
   Teacher: “You still both want that bike. Do you guys have any ideas how to solve this problem?”

IV. GENERATE SOLUTIONS
   Maria: “Teresa can get another bike. I want this one.”
   Teresa: “No! I had it first.”
   Teacher: “Your idea, Maria, is that you get this bike and Teresa can find another one. But Teresa, you feel like since you had it first you should get it. Any other ideas?”
   Teresa: “I’ll ride it and when I’m done Maria can have it.

V. COME UP WITH A SOLUTION that is acceptable to all involved.
   Teacher: “How does that idea sound to you, Maria? You give it to Teresa now and when she’s done she’ll give it back to you.”
   Maria: “Oh, okay. But you better give it to me when you’re done.”
   Teacher: “You’re worried that if you give it up, Teresa will forget to give it back.”
   Teresa: “I’ll remember.”
   Maria: “Oh, Okay.”
   Teacher: “You guys worked it out. Good Job!”

VI. FOLLOW-UP
   Teresa gets off bike and runs to the swing.
   Teacher: “Teresa, remember you were going to let Maria know when you were done.”
   Teresa: “Oh, yeah.” *Goes off to find Maria.*
Some Considerations:

1. If a child walks away in the middle of the negotiation, you can assume that she no longer wants to continue. You may want to check it out:
   "Teresa, when you walk away it makes me think that you no longer want the bike."

2. Don’t allow an older or bigger child to use intimidation to get what they want:
   If in the preceding example, Teresa (a bigger child) were to continue to shake the handle bars and yell. An appropriate response would be:
   "Teresa, I can see that when you shake the bike and yell at Maria that scares her. I’m not going to let you get the bike by scaring her. You can tell Maria what you want in a quiet voice without shaking the bike."

3. Help children to understand that there is more than one solution to any problem. If kids can’t work out a solution on their own give them two or more ideas to consider:
   "You guys could take turns or one of you could ride and one of you could push."

4. Life is not a fairytale and not all problem solving situations have happy endings. Helping children deal with disappointment can be as valuable as helping them find a solution that pleases them:
   * If Maria had refused to give Teresa the bike. An appropriate response to Teresa might be:
     "You’re really disappointed (sad, angry). You wanted Maria to give the bike back."

Learning any new skill takes practice. In order for our kids to learn how to solve their own problems we need to be willing to take the time and effort needed to facilitate each time a problem comes up. We need to make "talking about it" and "using your words" work for them.
What Have I learned about teaching and/or children today?

Curriculum:
- How was the project I was responsible for compatible with my philosophy?
- How was it compatible with the ongoing classroom curriculum?
- How did it help children meet the goals I have for them?
- How did it help children extend their knowledge about the world?
- What were my hypotheses?
- How did this project evolve from my observations of children?
- How did I change it, after I began, to better meet children's needs? Give examples.
- How was it developmentally appropriate for the age group in my classroom?
- What variations or extensions did I plan so that children would choose to repeat the activity? What did they gain from the repetition?

Teaching Strategies:
- Have I integrated my theoretical knowledge with my classroom practice?
- How did I help children be autonomous?
- Why did I set up this activity the way I did?
- How did I motivate children to be involved with this project?
- What questions did I ask to stimulate children's thinking?
- How did I allow for flexibility and spontaneity in the implementation of activities?
- How did it help me meet the goals I have for myself?
- Did I respect children's play? Did my interactions with children interrupt or extend their play?

Interpersonal Skills:
- Did I really listen to what each child had to say? Was I fair and consistent in responding to the needs of each child in a professional, unbiased way?
- Did I maintain confidentiality?
- Was I able to communicate effectively with parents? Why or why not?
- Was I open, sensitive, and cooperative with other teachers to promote a positive team?
- Was I able to accept and give constructive feedback?
- How did I get feedback about my own teaching? Was I open and receptive to comments and ideas? Was I willing to offer both supportive information and constructive suggestions?
- Did I get support for taking risks and trying something new?

What was the easiest/most difficult for me? What issues did I struggle with? Why?
Make Time to Talk
Language Building Tips for Home-Based Child Care Providers

We know that it's important to talk every day with each child, using the kind of talk that builds language and thinking skills. The phrase **MAKE TIME TO TALK** is to help you remember things you can do when talking to children to help them learn new words and how to use language to tell you their ideas and needs, and that helps them have fun with language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mealtimes can be good times to talk with children.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Ask questions that encourage the child to think—questions involving predicting things that might happen, using imagination, explaining why things happened in a particular way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Kneel or squat to be able to have eye contact with the child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Extend your conversation with the child. Conversations should go back and forth with each person responding to other speaker at least a few times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tell stories to the children and ask them to tell you stories about their families and lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Involve all of the children in the group in conversation every day. Talk with children about what they are making, ask about their play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Make connections between themes, books the class has read, recent classroom activities, and children's own play to help build children's understanding of word meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Expand on child's language by repeating it with extensions (adding descriptive words, using any words correctly that child used incorrectly), adding to or building on child's ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two-way conversations are best. The child should be doing at least half the talking.</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>One or more individual conversations with each child in the setting every day should be a goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Texts such as books, posters, newspapers, and magazines provide things to talk about with children. Read them together, asking questions and discussing them as you go along.</td>
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<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Act out stories with the children, re-using words from a book you read aloud with the children. Encourage them to retell the story with puppets, toys, and in their art.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Language should include rich, varied words that you want the child to learn to understand and use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Keep the conversation going through questions and comments.</td>
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National Institute for Literacy

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Make Time to Talk is based on the National Institute for Literacy publication Learning to Talk and Listen (2000), and the National Early Literacy Panel Report (2009). This publication was funded under National Institute for Literacy Grant #NCSG 04-90-0044 to NIFL Partners, Inc.
Working with Children Whose Home Language Is Other Than English: The Teacher’s Role

by Cecelia Alvarado

Those of us who have worked in early childhood settings where our clients speak a language other than English know what a challenge this can be, particularly if our own teacher education did not include specific strategies and methods required to be effective in this situation.

Over the past 20 years, I have spent quite a bit of time reading the research on how young children acquire a second language, different models of care and education for these children, and the effects of different approaches on the involvement and goals of families. I have also visited scores of programs serving these children. Some have been monolingual English, some have focused only on the child’s home language, and others have used a bilingual model. What I am presenting here are conclusions and recommendations for teachers and providers based on my experience and study.

As teachers, we want all children living in the United States to become fluent in English. Since research tells us that the most effective way to assure strong English language development in speakers of other languages is to begin first with a solid base in their home language, I believe that our first responsibility to a preschool child is to support the development and maintenance of the child’s home language. I also know that supporting home language is a key to a child’s strong identity development and family unity.

Essential Teacher Competencies

Home Language Skills

Obviously, one of the most helpful skills would be to learn as much of the language of the children as possible. Yes, it is easier if there are only one or two other language groups besides English in the classroom. The reality is that this is the most common situation facing teachers. But even when there are more than two languages in a classroom, there are some concrete things we can do to become at least conversational with children and parents in their home language.

Some teachers have lent parents a tape recorder and audio tapes with a list of questions or phrases written in English that they want to be able to say to the child. They ask the parents to translate these into their home language and record them on the tape. This is a valuable resource that can then be used by all staff working with the child and can be played over and over to gain correct pronunciation. Of course anyone who is motivated to take a language class can go even further in developing second-language skills.

Teachers often ask me what they should do if a parent asks that the child’s home language not be used in the classroom. I would first validate the parent for caring much about their child’s school success that they are willing to give up one of their most precious cultural practices — their language. Next, I would assure the parent that this is not necessary. In fact, they may even hinder their child’s ability to learn English by not allowing the child to keep up with critical concept development during this preschool period of rapid language learning. I would follow up with articles that support my position and continue to dialog with the parents.

Focus on Family Competency

So much of the time I hear people referring to "non-English speakers" rather than "second-language learn-
ers." This emphasis on deficiencies, rather than on what beneficial qualities these families possess, sets us up to see them as a burden, as less equipped to handle their children's needs, rather than as a resource. New ways of interacting with one another, different styles of handling conflicts and showing appreciation, can be an enrichment for program staff if we see variety as positive. Our understanding and the value we place on current early childhood education trends and approaches, such as multi-age groupings, becomes stronger as we see families who rely heavily on extended family support in the rearing of their children.

**Understanding the True Meaning of Culture**

It is common to hear teachers say and program philosophies read that they "respect the cultures of the families." What do we mean by this? It has been my experience that this statement usually refers to the staff's attempts to enhance the environment with photographs, books, dolls, etc. that represent different cultures. Also, there is often an emphasis on cultural celebrations such as holidays where special clothes, songs, and food are introduced to bring the culture into the classroom. Although many of these examples should be basic to a classroom and others may be appropriate, given some background and follow-up, they do not really address the true meaning of culture.

Culture is the basic rules, behaviors, and values that are central to the functioning of a society or group. Sometimes these are outwardly spoken and other times they are conveyed through looks and manner only; but, in the end, each group member learns the rules that keep the
group functioning. So, when we think about bringing a cultural experience to our classroom or of respecting cultures, we need to think about how we can help children to learn about these more subtle, perhaps, but also more important elements of family culture.

Including family members in as many program activities as possible is one way. Taking field trips to parents’ work places and homes is another. Having members of a group share typical activities they enjoyed as a child with your class of children would be a much more meaningful experience than bringing in ceremonial dress, the country’s flag, or talking about what it is like to be Japanese.

Strategies for Enhancing First and Second Language Development

It is important to remember that whether a child’s home language is English or another language, the same principles apply for making sure that the child’s world is rich with language and responsive to the child’s verbal attempts. So, obviously a setting that can provide good home language model(s) is preferable. But, even if we do not speak the child’s language, there are many effective strategies we can employ.

A very fine new document from the California Department of Education called Fostering the Development of First and Second Language in Early Childhood — Resource Guide will soon be available. It outlines, in great detail, many classroom strategies that are important when teaching bilingual children. Here are a few recommendations I have gathered from a variety of sources, including the one I just mentioned, that will help teachers and providers become more effective with second language learners.

- **Support the child’s home language.** Because language development is central to general cognitive development, children need have access to learning concepts through the language they know. We should not deprive them of this critical development while they are learning a second language.

- **Keep languages distinct.** Present entire sentences and conversations, if possible, in one language. This avoids confusion and permanent language mixing in children.

- **Encourage playful experimentation with a second language.** Playing with different sounds, allowing trial and error, making a game of learning new words are stress-free, fun ways to learn a new language.

- **Be sensitive to cultural differences in language activity.** Remember that doing activities with a peer group opposed to individual activity may be more familiar to children from some cultures. The teacher’s expectation that children express feelings in public may not be comfortable to others. And the amount of time we may need to wait to elicit an answer from a child may vary in conversations from culture to culture.

- **Provide opportunities for children to explore materials written in their home language as well as in English.** Some homes may not be equipped with written materials for children in their home language. We can provide book bags, with books, songs, or flannel stories in the child’s home language that go home at the end of a day and are returned the next morning. In the labeling of classroom objects, be sure to include labels in the home languages of the children.

**Identifying Personal Biases and Working to Eliminate Them**

Each one of us is filled with a lifetime of experiences that are laced with biases and prejudging of groups of people. Many of us lack experience outside our own group. In order to treat all families with respect and dignity, it is critical that we look at the messages we were given as children and as developing adults that cloud our ability to be effective with people different from ourselves.

**Next Steps — Going Deeper**

Some of the strategies and development of competencies I have suggested will require changes in our teaching approaches. If we really want to promote consistency between home and school, we each need to ask ourselves some hard questions.

- What do I find uncomfortable about dealing with children and parents who do not speak my language?

- What do I actually know and what do I need to learn about these families that will help me feel more comfortable?

- What practices and values do I hold most dear in the work I do with children?

- What practices and values do each of the parents of the children in my classroom hold most dear in the rearing and teaching of their children?

- How are our approaches and goals similar?
• Where are there differences and what areas do we need to discuss and negotiate?

• If I decide to make changes in my approach based on these discussions, how do I feel about giving up total control over what goes on in my classroom?

• Who can I talk with to get the support I need to make these changes?

I believe that teachers and providers want to be effective so that all the children in their care will gain the confidence, knowledge, and skills they need to be productive and full-filled members of our society. Working together, to both encourage and challenge each other, we will move closer each day to that reality.

Bibliography


Resources for Further Information

California Tomorrow, Fort Mason Center, Building B, San Francisco, CA 94123.

NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education), 1220 L Street, Suite 605, Washington, DC 20005-4018.

National Center on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, Kerr Hall, UC Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.
Celebrations, festivals, holidays — What Should We Be Doing?

by Francis Wardle

Celebrations, rituals, and social activities are an important part of childhood. They help children learn that they belong to history, culture, society, and community. This is clear. What is unclear is how much of this activity should occur in our early childhood programs and schools, and how schools and early childhood programs should conduct these celebrations.

My favorite memories of childhood are celebrations and festivals. Singing and dancing around the May pole, joining in colorful lantern processions, watching a Punch and Judy puppet show with peers, walking to the manger on a cold English Christmas night, and expectantly waiting to search for my Easter basket are vivid images in my mind. What’s interesting to me as I recall my favorite childhood festivals is that none of these activities occurred at school.

We must think carefully about holidays and celebrations and decide which belong in the community, and which are appropriate for our early childhood programs. We must never feel all celebrations should be replicated in the program. That’s not our job. And when we do celebrate in our programs, we must make sure these activities are positive experiences for all of our children.

We should encourage families to participate in community celebrations: religious activities like a Posada, Jewish holidays, a midnight Mass, and the Easter sunrise; cultural festivals such as Cinco de Mayo, Black Arts Festival, Kwanzaa, Greek festivals, and Celtic festivals; and historical holidays like Independence Day and Labor Day.

Early childhood programs should even sponsor and support some community festivals. It’s important that families attend festivals together. It strengthens the connection between the child, family, and community. And families can choose the activities meaningful to their culture, religion, and traditions. A family choosing to make a celebration part of their tradition gives the event far more meaning than the same activity occurring at the center.

What celebrations should we include?

Early childhood programs should be involved in celebrations that are meaningful to our children: celebrations that are magical, bigger than life, fantastical, full of hope and power and love, and that make each child feel they belong; festivals that show the brighter side of humanity: music, dance, togetherness, the importance of children, and the power of community to care for children. Harvest festivals, including fruits and vegetables grown by families, children, and the center — with singing, dancing, food made from the produce — is one such festival.

Activities that communicate hatred, segregation, superiority of certain groups, commercialism, adult fears and power trips, and the helplessness of children are not appropriate in our programs.

My children attend a bilingual/bicultural French/American school. At Christmas and the end of the school year, the children present an all French program of songs, dances, oral readings, plays, and skits. The children demonstrate to the school community what they have learned. Food is shared, and families enjoy each other, the children, and the
presented this children’s Christmas pageant to the whole community.

What made this celebration appropriate?

All the students in my class came from families that belong to the same Christian religious background. One of our children had recently arrived from Lake Titicaca, Bolivia. She had taught all the students some basic Spanish as they were teaching her English. My co-teacher was fluent in Spanish. And songs of all languages and cultures are an important part of the life of children in the community.

The Posada celebration would not have worked in a program serving children with diverse religious backgrounds. It would not have worked in a program where Spanish had no meaning. And it may not have worked in a community where singing is not culturally significant. However, this does not mean the Posada activity wasn’t new to my students. They were exposed for the first time to a largely Hispanic activity; we used unique instruments for the procession, and the concept of celebrating the birth of Jesus with a piñata was quite novel to them.

Before an early childhood program organizes a celebration, these questions must be answered: Will the activity be meaningful to each child? How will we know this? Is this activity consistent with the overall philosophy of the program?

I am continually amazed how often programs with very sound early childhood philosophies that emphasize child directed activities, positive mental health, and good nutrition consistently violate these practices for celebrations — Christmas, graduations, birthdays, and cultural holidays. It’s as if they believe the need to celebrate supersedes good early childhood practices.

I have experienced early childhood graduations where children cried, staff got mad, and parents literally walked over some children to videotape their own child in cap and gown. The atmosphere was tense; the children were bored. And the entire activity was adult dominated and only for the benefit of adults. The Hutterian Brethren celebrate an interesting alternative. Rather than celebrating graduation from preschool, they follow the German custom of celebrating entrance into school. The ceremony is very short, and includes each child demonstrating, to their individual ability, writing their name.
Beginnings

We know what's meaningful to children. They love singing, dancing, playing games, hands-on activities, bright colors, gorgeous musical sounds, and pleasing adults — especially their parents. They also like anything new, different, and challenging. They hate passively watching, doing nothing or the same old thing, being quiet, and doing adult things.

The reason the festivals of my childhood were good is because there was always an important part for children. At Christmas we were given our own candle to light and then protect from the winter wind. The May festival included children's songs and dances, games, and family activities. And in the lantern procession, we proudly carried child-made lanterns with the adults.

We must ask: Is the celebration for parents? The teachers? The administration? Or the person who insists we have a cultural celebration? Is it for politicians or board members? Is it because the greater society dictates it (Christmas, Halloween, commercial holidays)? If it is not principally for the children, then it probably shouldn't be celebrated.

What should programs do?

• Don't celebrate all the commercial holidays. These are designed to get people to spend money. Be as selective about celebrations as you are with television programs in the classroom, books you buy, and equipment you select. Also, find creative, child centered ways to celebrate these holidays. Several programs I know visit senior centers on Valentine's Day.

• Only celebrate activities where children can be directly involved. Every year, Adams County Head Start organizes a children's festival. This event includes a children's parade — where children participate on bikes, trikes, and skates — a petting zoo, performances by local children's groups, and hands-on activities from mural painting to computers.

• Make sure the way you celebrate is primarily for the benefit of the children, not the adults. Most graduation activities are designed for parents and teachers.

• Make sure your celebrations are consistent with your overall philosophy. At a small school where I taught, a Native American group celebrated Thanksgiving with us. They played their drum, danced social dances in their native dress, and talked to the children about the meaning of Thanksgiving from their perspective.

• Make sure your celebrations are ones that can be supported by every family in your program. Don't eliminate anyone! In many programs, Jehovah's Witness children either leave during celebrations or cannot receive gifts. In some programs, the families with less money don't participate in gift giving and providing birthday cakes because they cannot afford them.

• Encourage families to become involved in festivals in their own communities; but don't feel the program needs to be involved in all holidays. Some programs have Santa visit during the day or take a field trip to the mall to see Santa. It would be more appropriate to have an evening at the center where families could safely visit with Santa.

• Try to include families and community members in your celebrations. One year, a child's mother came to our Head Start class and made a piñata for our Cinco de Mayo celebration; other parents cooked and brought ethnic foods. At another program, the staff themselves learned Mexican dances which they performed for the parents and children and then taught to the children.

• Any decorations used as part of a celebration need to follow overall guidelines about what goes on the
Festivals for children must be developmentally appropriate. Just like any other activity, they must meet these criteria:

- Are there choices available? Can children choose games, different foods, different activities, and different levels of involvement?

- Can children choose not to participate? Graduation is an example of a celebration that all children must be involved in.

- Is the climate low key and supportive of everyone’s needs? A petting zoo (local 4-H club, animal shelter) is a good low key activity — children can sit and look, pet the animals, stay with one, or move around.

- Does the activity support every child in the program; does everyone feel welcome; or does it make the child whose parents are poor or have chosen a different religion or lifestyle feel left out? Adapting to meet every child’s needs is truly a multicultural experience!

- Do children appear engaged? Are they enjoying the activity?

- Does the celebration support basic early childhood values of health and safety, good nutrition, sound mental health, multicultural inclusiveness, and individual differences? All year we tell children to be wary of strangers, not to take candy from strangers, and not to go out at night. Then at Halloween we take our children out into the neighborhood to take candy from strangers. A more appropriate Halloween activity would be for the center to sponsor a Halloween party.

- Does the celebration teach positive values to children? I’m not sure the traditional Thanksgiving activity teaches positive values about Native Americans.

- Is the activity new, challenging, unusual, and broadening? We have so much to teach children!

Let’s not waste this precious time. When they studied about blacks in the west, my children’s school invited a representative from the Black Cowboy Museum to demonstrate roping techniques and talk about the life of black cowboys.

- Does the celebration fit into the overall curriculum unit — either to stimulate the children’s interest, to wrap up the whole unit, or to reward successful completion of tasks or effort?

Early childhood and school programs have the responsibility to provide developmentally appropriate activities, support each child’s unique cultural and family heritage, and allow children to experience the power, magic, joy, and importance of festivals and celebrations. It takes a balancing act to do this correctly!

References


Francis Wardle, Ph.D., is director of education for Children’s World Learning Centers in Golden, Colorado, and is on the adjunct faculty of the University of Phoenix.
A Questionnaire for Families about Celebrations

1. What special days do you celebrate in your family?

2. How would you like our program to be involved in your celebrations?

3. How do you think we could celebrate everyone’s special days, in a center as diverse as ours?

4. What are some of the myths/stereotypes about your culture that you would like us to understand so as not to perpetuate them?

5. How do you feel about celebrations at the center that are not part of your family’s tradition?

6. What kinds of things can we do to celebrate our center as an inclusive “human” community?

7. Would you have time to:
   - Read a favorite story in your native language?
   - Share a favorite family recipe?
   - Donate articles of clothing that you no longer use for our “dress-up” corner?

Created by Tamar Meyer, program coordinator, and the lead teachers at the University at Buffalo Child Care Center, Buffalo, New York.
Answering Children’s Questions about Peers with Special Needs

by Victoria Youcha and Karren Ikeda Wood

It was the fourth of July and all the neighborhood families gathered to watch fireworks. Sara’s mother noticed her staring at a little boy on the blanket next to them. He didn’t have arms and was using his feet to play with toys and eat his dinner. Sara pulled her arms inside her T-shirt and took off her shoes. She tried to use her feet to play with her toys. Sara’s mother said to her, “I see you noticed that boy doesn’t have arms. He uses his feet well to eat and play, doesn’t he?” On the way home, Sara commented to her mother, “He really does have arms, doesn’t he, mom? They’re just inside his shirt, right?” Sara was still trying to understand what she saw.

Children and adults notice and comment when they see a person who looks or acts differently. If you respond to questions about disabilities with clear and accurate information, you let children know that it is acceptable to talk openly about differences. Your words provide a positive model they can use to talk sensitively and respectfully about differences and disabilities. Your answers help them learn about and understand those differences. Talking about differences, including disabilities, helps ALL children and their families.

Two and three year olds notice other differences but don’t always have the verbal ability to ask questions or comment on what they see. They may indicate this awareness through their facial expressions or behavior. For example, you may notice a child with a concerned look on her face when she sees a child return after having the chicken pox. A child may also be unwilling to sit near another child whose differences bother him.

Older children both observe and comment on differences, especially notably visible ones. These may be physical abilities, such as the way a person walks, or characteristics, such as size or the absence of limbs. As children become more sophisticated, they notice differences in behavior and language, such as frequent temper tantrums, crying, or unusual speech.

Children don’t automatically think that differences are bad, but they do ask questions and make comments as they try to make sense of what they see. They look to the adults around them for reactions. It is up to you, the teacher, to lead the way.

People First Language

When you talk about a child with a disability, it is important to emphasize the person before the special need. A label or diagnosis does not tell you about who someone is, what they are like, what they think, or what they can do. Say “children who are deaf” or “the woman who is blind.” Using a descriptive term may give more information that a diagnosis — “Jenny has trouble walking” rather than “Jenny has cerebral palsy.”

The same rule applies when you talk about any equipment or devices that a person with a disability uses.
Refer to a person who "uses a wheelchair" instead of saying "she is wheelchair-bound." Talk about a child who "wears a hearing aid," rather than an "aided child."

Use the correct name for the disability. For example, Down syndrome is the accepted term rather than mongoloid. Try to avoid generalizations that tend to glorify the disability, such as "retarded children are always so happy." There is as much variation among people with disabilities as there is within the general population. Describing the disability does not describe the person.

Answering Children's Questions

Know how to respond to embarrassing questions. Children ask questions about things they can see and experience directly. As a teacher or a parent, you have probably been asked difficult questions by children. Children are quite candid and may make comments which surprise you. Be prepared! Children ask questions to learn about their world and satisfy their inquiring minds. They ponder answers you give them, and may come back with even more questions. Not responding to a question may lead the child to believe that what they asked should not be discussed. For example, if a child in your classroom asks, "What's the matter with her?" simply state that "There's nothing the matter. Amy is not able to walk, so she uses a special chair to get around." You can help children understand about a classmate who is blind by explaining that "Miguel's eyes don't work well, so he uses his ears and hands to know where things are." This is your opportunity to communicate positive values about differences.

Be brief and factual. Children absorb information in small doses. They may want a simple explanation without extensive details. Your responses should be direct and concrete with examples that they can understand. A child may ask, "How come he can't talk?" You might answer, "Johnny doesn't talk with words, but he can talk with his hands. Here, let me show you." "How come she's so short?" "Laurie's body grows more slowly. No one in our class is exactly the same size. We all grow differently."

Use concrete words. Use descriptive words that a child will understand. Try to relate the explanation to a child's own experiences. For example, "Remember when you wore earmuffs in the winter and it was hard to hear what I was saying? That's what Jennifer hears most of the time." "Think about what you see at night. It's dark and you can only see shapes and a little light, that's what seeing is like for Michael."

Answer the feeling behind the question or the unasked question. Look at the expression on a child's face and watch her body language. Listen to the tone of her voice. Does she have a question but not know how to ask it? Remember that children notice differences even if they don't always talk about them. Children sometimes have a hard time finding the words to express what they are thinking. You may have to voice the questions when you see a child react but not ask. If a child looks fearful and shies away from a person, you might comment, "That man's hand looks scary to you, doesn't it?" You might see a child staring. This is an opportunity to use the "some children" technique. For example, you can say, "Some children wonder if wearing a brace hurts," or "Some children wonder how you get into a car in a wheelchair. Do you wonder about that?" Then you can provide the answer. You can say, "Sometimes a person has to be picked up and moved into the car. Sometimes a person is able to stand and sit down in the car. Some people have special cars and the wheelchair rolls into the car."

Name the feelings. Differences can be frightening or upsetting when they are not understood. You can help by acknowledging and labeling children's reactions. For example, "I noticed you didn't want to sit next to Brian.
It scares me when he screams. Does it scare you, too? He needs our help to learn to use words. Let's tell him that his screaming frightens us.” In another situation, “I know it makes you sad when Felicia won’t play with you, but right now Felicia can’t run. She needs to rest. Let’s invite her to play after nap time.”

Model empathy and caring. Children learn by watching others and noting their reactions. They hear how words are spoken and see how attitudes are demonstrated through facial expression and body language. By being a caring empathetic teacher, you will demonstrate that these are qualities that you value in others. “We are going to walk down the hallway in pairs quietly. It helps the children in the other classes to work if we are quiet. Be good friends and remind each other how to walk quietly.”

Privacy and Confidentiality

All families have the right to privacy and confidentiality about personal information given to the program. Let everyone know that personal information will not be disclosed without specific permission. Although there may be questions about the child with disabilities from parents or other staff, classroom staff must not disclose any information about the child or family unless specific permission has been given by the family.

Families should be informed at the time of enrollment that your program is open to all children, including those with special needs. Parents of children with disabilities have been answering questions about their children since they were born. Ask them for suggestions about how to answer questions. Some children with disabilities are also used to being asked questions and would prefer to give their own answers.

All children deserve courtesy and respect and should be valued for who they are. Children with disabilities are more alike than different from other children. Teachers can help children value each other by communicating positively about differences, including disabilities, and answering children’s questions appropriately.

References


This article is based on material from the authors' new book, Child Care and the ADA: A Handbook for Inclusive Programs (Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1995). For orders, call (800) 638-3775.

Understanding and Responding to the Violence in Children’s Lives

by Diane E. Levin

When I work with groups of parents and teachers on issues of violence in children’s lives, I begin by asking participants what kinds of issues they want to make sure we address. With each passing month, the list of topics grows longer, the violence mentioned is more widespread, and the examples become more extreme. Some recent issues raised include:

• “Should we talk to children about the mother who drowned her children? I know many of the children in my class heard about it.”

• “A child announced at our class meeting yesterday that her brother had been shot. I didn’t know anything about it but have found out he was killed two years ago.”

• “My four year olds were on a field trip and started kicking and karate chopping cars and making real dents. They excitedly said they were Power Rangers.”

Growing Up in Violent Times

As many of us are becoming all too aware, children growing up today encounter enormous amounts of violence. There is the violence most children see on entertainment media, like the Power Rangers show which averages over 200 acts of violence per hour. There is the violence that children, especially boys, bring to their play as they imitate the violence they have seen on the screen with the highly realistic toys that are marketed with shows — retail sales for Power Ranger products reached one billion dollars in 1994 (Levin and Carlsson-Page, 1994a and 1994b).

Then there is the real world violence that children see on the news — adults hurting adults, adults hurting children, children hurting children. And, there is the violence that comes from economic and social injustice which growing numbers of children are experiencing directly in their own homes and communities — in 1992, almost three million children were reported abused or neglected and 100,000 were estimated to be homeless (Children’s Defense Fund, 1994).

The degree to which children are exposed to and affected by violence varies, but few children are untouched by it. As shown in Figure 1, the violence in children’s lives can be seen as fitting along a continuum of severity. At the bottom is entertainment violence (which is most prevalent in society and touches most children’s lives); at the top are the most extreme forms of violence — chronic and direct exposure in the immediate environment (which fewer children experience but which builds onto the exposure to more prevalent forms of violence below it on the pyramid). The degree to which children are affected is likely to increase as they move up the continuum.

Fortunately, there are many teachers who have not yet had to help children deal with the range of incidents listed above. Still, children at all ages are being affected, and it is becoming increasingly urgent for educators to begin to confront the special challenges that these violent times are creating for children and families. We need to figure out how to effectively counteract the negative effects and break the cycle of violence in children’s lives and in society (Levin, 1994).
Understanding and Responding Effectively

Exposure to violence creates special needs and problems for many children which the adults who care for them need to understand in order to help. It can affect development in far reaching ways as children struggle to make meaning of the violence they see and incorporate it into their ideas and behavior.

The meaning children make of the violence in their lives is different from that adults make (Levin, 1994). Children's understandings are influenced by such things as their current level of development, the meanings made from prior experience onto which understandings from new experiences are built, individual characteristics, and cultural background. As we work with children around issues of violence, the more we are able to take each child's point of view and understand the unique meanings he or she is making, the more we are likely to be able to help.

Child development theory and the growing body of research and literature about the effects of violence on children (for instance, see American Psychological Association, 1993; Craig, 1992; Garbarino et al., 1992; Levin, 1994; and Wallach, 1993) provides a very powerful lens for understanding how young children interpret and build ideas and feelings about the violence in their lives and how they are affected by it. Such a lens can also provide a framework for figuring out how to respond effectively (see Table 1, "A Developmental Framework for Understanding How to Counteract the Negative Effects of Violence").

✓ Violence Undermines the Sense of Trust and Safety

Many children growing up today see over and over, from both entertainment violence and the violence that they experience directly, that the world is a dangerous place. Dangers lurk in many places. Often, adults are unable to keep children safe. Fighting and weapons are necessary to keep oneself safe. Such messages undermine children's very sense of safety and trust.

Not feeling safe deeply affects social and emotional development. It can contribute to increased aggression, hyperactivity, impulsiveness, withdrawal, and distractibility. Intellectual development is also undermined as children’s energy goes into understanding the violence that surrounds them and figuring out how to keep themselves safe rather than into mastering other vital cognitive issues. This situation can place many later aspects of development at risk (Erikson, 1950).

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Children who see the world as a dangerous place need to learn how to feel safe. They need help learning what they can do to keep themselves and others safe. They should be able to let their guard down and trust the adults who are caring for them. To accomplish this goal, children require predictable, secure, respectful classroom environments. And, they need consistent, caring, and responsive adults who see helping children feel safe as a legitimate and important focus of the curriculum.

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Figure 1
The Continuum of Violence in Children's Lives

Violence Undermines Feelings of Competence and Autonomy

A central developmental task of children in the early years is to develop a sense of themselves as separate people who can effectively deal with and make a difference in what happens in the world that surrounds them. As children experience this, they feel powerful and strong; they are developing the confidence and skills they need to get their needs met and solve the problems they encounter without violence.

Exposure to violence can make children feel that being strong, separate, and competent is dangerous and requires fighting and weapons. And, for some children, few other models are provided about how to be separate and safe.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Children exposed to violence need help learning how to function as autonomous and effective people — sharing responsibility for what happens in their immediate environment, feeling important and powerful through really making a difference, getting their needs met and voices heard — without fighting and violence. To do this, you need to work to make classrooms places where children regularly contribute to what happens in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways and where their individual voices are heard and respected.

Violence Undermines the Sense of Mutual Respect and Connectedness

Another task in the early years is to learn how to participate in relationships with others and to rely on

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Table 1
A Developmental Framework for Understanding How to Counteract the Negative Effects of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Children Are Affected by Violence</th>
<th>How to Counteract the Negative Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of <strong>trust and safety</strong> is undermined as children see the world is dangerous and adults can't keep them safe.</td>
<td>Create a secure, predictable environment which teaches children how to keep themselves and others safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of <strong>self</strong> as a separate person who can have a positive, meaningful effect on the world without violence is undermined.</td>
<td>Help children take responsibility, feel powerful, positively affect their world, and meet individual needs without fighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of <strong>mutual respect and interdependence</strong> is undermined — relying on others as a sign of vulnerability, violence is modeled as central in human interactions.</td>
<td>Many opportunities to participate in a caring community where people help and rely on each other and work out their problems in mutually agreeable ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased need to construct an understanding of violent experiences in discussions, creative play, art, and storytelling.</td>
<td>Wide-ranging opportunities to develop meanings of violence through art, stories, and play (with adult help as needed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Endangered ability to work through violence</strong> as mechanisms for doing so are undermined.</td>
<td>Actively facilitate play, art, language so children can safely and competently work through violent experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overemphasis on violent content as the organizer of thoughts, feelings, and behavior.</strong></td>
<td>Provide deeply meaningful content which offers appealing alternatives to violence as organizers of experience.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted with permission from: Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom by Diane E. Levin.*
and support others in mutually respectful ways — to be a part of a caring community. As they succeed, children develop a sense of belonging which can help them feel secure enough to try new things, experiment, explore, learn, and grow as autonomous individuals.

Violence undermines children’s ability to develop positive interpersonal skills or a sense of connectedness with others. The rugged individual who can protect him or herself is the model held up to be emulated. Needing others is associated with vulnerability and helplessness. And, violence is often seen as the method of choice for solving problems and conflicts among people.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. You can provide children with opportunities to belong to a community of caring and responsible individuals. In such a classroom, children contribute in meaningful ways to what happens. They have many chances to learn about how their actions affect others and what they can do to get their own needs met. They also learn skills for solving their problems with others in mutually agreeable ways.

✓ Children Need to Build an Understanding of Violent Experiences

Children need to tell their stories and work through their experience in order to master and construct meaning from it. They often do this through their play, art, storytelling, or writing (as they get older), or by talking to a caring adult. It is through this work that a sense of equilibrium is achieved and learning and development are fostered.

When children have experienced some sort of trauma or disturbing and violent event, it is especially important to their healthy development that they have ample opportunities and the assistance they need to talk about and work it through (Garbarino et al., 1992). So, the more violence children are exposed to, the greater will be their efforts to try to work it out.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Trying to “ban” violent content from the classroom, which often seems like the easiest and safest approach, usually does not serve children’s needs well. They need wide-ranging opportunities to talk about and work through the violence in their lives with caring adults and to develop rich and meaningful art, stories, and play.

As children do this, you can gain an understanding of their needs and how they are interpreting the violence. This information can guide your efforts to provide children with the information and support they need and to counteract many of the negative lessons they may be learning.

Creating opportunities for children to work through an understanding of their experiences with violence can be quite stressful for adults. You never know what disturbing information children will bring up; you might even hear things about children’s experiences that you wish you did not know and cannot possibly make better. In some cases, it will be important to know outside resources to which you can turn for help.

✓ Violence Undermines the Ability to Construct Meaning from Experience

Children’s ability to engage in the activities that could help them work through their violent experience (e.g., play, art, language) can be seriously undermined when their energy goes into dealing with violence in their homes, communities, and TV, and using media-linked toys of violence which channel children into imitative rather than creative play. So, as children’s needs to work through violence increase, their ability to work it through is often seriously impaired.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Once children feel safe expressing themselves openly, adults can help them develop the skills and processes they need — for instance, creativity, imagination, problem solving, and communication — to work through violence in play, art, storytelling, drama, and guided discussions. The materials you provide, how time is structured, the degree to which you value and respect what children do, as well as the ways you actively enter in and facilitate children’s efforts, all contribute to their ability to work things through effectively.

✓ Violent Content Becomes a Central Organizer of Experience

What children see, hear, and do in their environment becomes the content they use for building ideas about the world. The ideas they build are then used for interpreting new experience and building new ideas. When society provides children with extensive violent content, it is hard for them not to come to see violence as central to how the world works and how they will fit into it. In this way, violence can become
a powerful part of the foundation onto which later ideas are built.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. As children work through the violence in their lives, you can also help them to get deeply involved in developmentally appropriate content that offers exciting and meaningful alternatives to violence. You can consciously build a curriculum with activities that offer such alternatives and grow out of children's deep interests and needs (see Edwards et al., 1993, and Jones and Nimmo, 1994). I have found that it is often those children most involved with violence who are the most excited about finding new and empowering ways to become involved with their world.

Meeting Children's Needs in Violent Times

It is an enormous challenge we face. Teachers alone cannot solve the problems created for children by the violence in society. Yet, there is a lot we can do. And, working to understand how children are affected and what helps to counteract the negative effects is one meaningful way to begin. It will never be easy, but it can be empowering and rewarding for everyone involved.

References and Resources


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Share Your Wisdom About How Things Have Changed

Are you an early childhood professional who has been in the field for more than TEN years? If so, Diane Levin is interested in finding out your ideas about how teaching young children and how the needs of children and families have changed over time. If you are willing to complete a questionnaire on this subject, please circle number 75 on the Exchange Product Inquiry Card inside the back cover of this issue.
Keys to Quality Infant Care

Nurturing Every Baby's Life Journey

Alice Sterling Honig

Teachers of infants need a large bunch of key ideas and activities of all kinds to unlock in each child the treasures of loving kindness, thoughtful and eloquent use of language, intense active curiosity to learn, willingness to cooperate, and the deep desire to work hard to master new tasks. Here are some ideas that teachers can use during interactions with infants to optimize each child's development.

Get to know each baby's unique personality

At 4 months, Luci holds her hands in front of her face and turns them back and forth so she can see the curious visual difference between the palms and backs. Jackson, an 8-month-old, bounces happily in accurate rhythm as his teacher bangs on a drum and chants, "Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow!" Outdoors, 1-year-old Jamie sits in an infant swing peering down at his feet sticking out of the leg holes. How interesting! Those are the same feet he has watched waving in the air while being diapered and has triumphantly brought to his mouth to chew on.

Teachers can tune in to each child's special personality—especially the child's temperament. There are three primary, mostly inborn, styles of temperament (Honig 1997). Some babies are more low-key; they tend to be slow to warm up to new caregivers, new foods, and new surroundings. They need reassuring hand-holding and more physical

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supports to try a new activity. Others are more feisty and sometimes irritable. They tend to be impetuous, intense in their emotional reactions, whether or of joy. Easygoing babies are typically friendly, happy, accept new foods and caregivers without much fuss, and adapt fairly quickly and more flexibly after experiencing distress or sudden change. Try to find out whether each baby in your care tends to be shy and slow to warm up or mostly feisty and intense or easygoing. A caring adult’s perceptive responses in tune with individual temperament will ease a child’s ability to adapt and flourish in the group setting.

**Physical loving**

Your body is a safe haven for an infant. Indeed, some babies will stay happy as a clam when draped over a shoulder, across your belly as you rock in a rocking chair, or, especially for a very young baby, snuggled in a sling or carrier for hours. As Montagu (1971) taught decades ago, babies need body loving: “To be tender, loving, and caring, human beings must be tenderly loved and cared for in their earliest years.... caressed, cuddled, and comforted” (p. 138).

As you carry them, some babies might pinch your neck, lick your salty arm, pull at your hair, tug at eyeglasses, or show you in other ways how powerfully important your body is as a sacred and special playground. Teach gentleness by calmly telling a baby you need your glasses on to read a story. Use the word gently over and over and over. Dance cheek-to-cheek with a young child in arms to slow waltz music—good for dreary days! Also carry the baby while you do a routine task such as walking to another room to get something.

Provide lap and touch times generously to nourish a child’s sense of well-being. Slowly caress a baby’s hair. Rub a tense shoulder soothingly. Kiss one finger and watch as a baby offers every other finger to kiss. Rock a child with your arms wrapped around him for secure comfort. Babies learn to become independent as we confirm and meet their dependency needs in infancy. A sense of well-being and somatic certainty flows from cherishing adults who generously hold, caress, and drape babies on shoulders and tummies.

**Create intimate emotional connections**

Scan the environment so you can be close to every baby. Notice the quiet baby sitting alone, mouthing a toy piece and rocking back and forth with vacant eyes. Notice shy bids for attention, such as a brief smile with lowered lids. The child with an easy or cautious temperament needs your loving attention as much as the one who impulsively climbs all over you for attention.

A caring adult’s perceptive responses in tune with individual temperament will ease a child’s ability to adapt and flourish in the group setting.

Shine admiring eyes at the children, whether a baby is cooing as she lies in her crib, creeping purposefully toward a toy she desires, or feeding herself happily with messy fingers. Speak each child’s name lovingly and frequently. Even if they are fussing, most babies will quiet when you chant and croon their names.

Although babies do not understand the meanings of the words, they do understand tonal nuances and love when your voice sounds admiring, enchanted with them, and happy to be talking with them. While diapering, tell the baby he is so delicious and you love his plump tummy and the few wispy hairs on that little head. Watch him thrust out his legs in delight on the diapering table. Your tone of voice entrances him into a deep sense of pleasure with his own body (Honig 2002).
Harmonizing tempos

Tempo is important in human activities and is reflected in how abruptly or smoothly adults carry out daily routines.

Because adults have so many tasks to do, sometimes we use impatient, too-quick motions, for example, while dressing a baby to play outdoors. When dressing or feeding, more leisurely actions are calming. They signal to children that we have time for them. Rub backs slowly and croon babies into soothing sleep.

A baby busily crawling across the rug sees a toy, grasps it, then plops himself into a sitting position to examine and try to pull it apart. He slowly looks back and forth at the toy as he leisurely passes it from hand to hand. He has no awareness that a teacher is about to interrupt because she is in a hurry to get him dressed because his daddy is coming to pick him up. Young children need time and cheerful supports to finish up an activity in which they are absorbed. If they are hurried, they may get frustrated and even have a tantrum.

Enhance courage and cooperation

Your presence can reassure a worried baby. Stay near and talk gently to help a child overcome his fear of the small infant slide. Pascal sits at the top, looking uncertain. Then he checks your face for a go-ahead signal, for reassurance that he can bravely try to slide down this slide that looks so long to him. Kneeling at the bottom of the slide, smile and tell him that you will be there to catch him when he is ready to slide down.

Be available as a “refueling station”—Margaret Mahler’s felicitous term (Kaplan 1978). Sometimes a baby’s independent learning adventure comes crashing down—literally. Your body and your lap provide the emotional support from which a baby regains courage to tackle the learning adventure again.

Create loving rituals during daily routines of dressing, bath times, nap times, feeding times. Babies like to know what will happen and when and where and how. Babies have been known to refuse lunch when their familiar, comfortable routines were changed. At cleanup times, older babies can be more flexible and helpful if you change some chores into games. Through the use of sing-song chants, putting toys away becomes an adventure in finding the big fat blocks that need to be placed together on a shelf and then the skinny blocks that go together in a different place.

Address stress

Attachment research shows that babies who develop secure emotional relationships with a teacher have had their distress signals noticed, interpreted correctly, and responded to promptly and appropriately (Honig 2002). At morning arrival times, watch for separation anxiety. Sometimes holding and wordlessly commiserating with a baby’s sad feelings can help more than a frenzied attempt to distract her (Klein, Kraft, & Shohet 2010). As you become more expert at interpreting a baby’s body signals of distress and discomfort, you will become more sensitively attuned in your responses (Honig 2010).

Learn developmental milestones. Learning developmental norms helps teachers figure out when to wonder, when to worry, and when to relish and feel overjoyed about a child’s milestone accomplishments. Day and night toilet learning can be completed anywhere from 18 months to 5 years. This is a wide time window for development. In contrast, learning to pick up a piece of cereal from a high chair

Young children need time and cheerful supports to finish up an activity in which they are absorbed. If they are hurried, they may get frustrated and even have a tantrum.
Compulsive rocking can mean a baby feels forlorn. Watch for lonesomeness and wilting. Some babies melt down toward day’s end. They need to be held and snuggled. Murmur sweet reassurances and provide a small snack of strained applesauce to soothe the baby’s taste buds and worries. Check his body from top to bottom for signs of stresses or tensions, such as eyes avoiding contact, teeth grinding, fingernail chewing, frequently clenched fists, so that you can develop an effective plan for soothing. Be alert, and tend to children’s worrisome bodily signs; these will tell you what you need to know long before children have enough language to share what was stressful (Honig 2009).

**Play learning games**

Parents and teachers are a baby’s preferred playmates. While playing learning games with infants, pay attention to their actions. Ask yourself if the game has become so familiar and easy that it is time to “dance up the developmental ladder” (Honig 1982) and increase the game’s challenge. Or perhaps the game is still too baffling and you need to “dance down” and simplify the activity so that the child can succeed.

Provide safe mirrors at floor level and behind the diapering table so children can watch and learn about their own bodies. Hold babies in arms up to a mirror to reach out and pat the face in the mirror. Lying on the floor in front of a securely attached safety mirror, a young child twists and squirms to get an idea of where his body begins and ends.

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**Hone your detective skills.** If a baby is screaming and jerking knees up to his belly, you might suspect a painful gas bubble. Pick up the baby and jiggie and thump his back until you get that burp up. What a relief, for you as well as baby. Maybe an irritable, yowling baby just needs to be tucked in quietly and smoothly for a nap after an expert diaper change. Suppose baby is crying and thrashing about, and yet he has been burped and diapered. Use all your detective skills to determine the cause. Is it a hot day? He might be thirsty. A drink of water can help him calm down.

**Notice stress signs.** Scan a child’s body for stress signs. Dull eyes can signal the need for more intimate loving interactions. Tense shoulders and a grave look often mean that a child is afraid or worried (Honig 2010).
Your body can serve as a comforting support for some early learning activities. Sit an infant on your lap and watch as he coordinates vision and grasp to reach and hold a toy you are dangling. Babies love “Peek-a-boo! I see you!” These games nurture the development of object permanence—the understanding that objects still exist even when they are out of sight. Peek-a-boo games also symbolically teach that even when a special adult is not seen, that dear person will reappear.

**Provide physical play experiences.** Play pat-a-cake with babies starting even before 6 months. As you gently hold a baby's hands and bring them out and then back together, chant slowly and joyously, “Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man; bake me a cake just as fast as you can. Pat it, and roll it, and mark it with a B, and put it in the oven for [baby's name] and me.” Smile with joy as you guide the baby's hands rhythmically and slowly through the game, and use a high-pitched voice as you emphasize her name in the sing-song chant. Over the next months, as soon as you begin chanting the words, the baby will begin to bring hands to the midline and do the hand motions that belong with this game. Babies who are 9 to 11 months old will even start copying the hand-rolling motions that belong with this game.

To encourage learning, try to arrange games with more physical actions. Sit on the floor with your toes touching the baby's toes, then model how to roll a ball back and forth.

**Introduce sensory experiences.** Safe sensory and tactile experiences are ideal for this age group. As he shifts a toy from hand to hand, turns it over, pokes, tastes, bangs, and even chews on it, a baby uses his senses to learn about the toy's physical properties. Teachers can blow bubbles so babies can reach for and crawl after them. Provide play-dough made with plenty of salt to discourage children from putting it in their mouths. Older babies enjoy exploring finger paints or nontoxic tempera paint and fat brushes.

**Play sociable games.** Give something appealing to a seated baby. Put out your hand, smile, and say “Give it to me, please.” The baby may chew on the “gift,” such as a safe wooden block or chunky plastic cylinder peg. After the baby passes it to you, say thank you, then give the object back with a smile. Give-and-take games with you are a sociable pleasure for babies and teach them turn-taking skills that are crucial for friendly social interchanges years later.

Seated on a chair, play a bouncing game, with the baby's back resting snugly against your tummy. After you stop bouncing and chanting “Giddyup, horsie,” a baby often bounces on his or her tush as if to remind you to start this game over and over. An older baby vigorously demands “More horsie!” to get you to restart this game.

Babies enjoy kinesthetic stimulation too, such as when you swing them gently in a baby swing. A baby will grin with glee as you pull or push him in a wagon around the room or playground.

**Observe babies’ ways of exploring and learning**

Observe a baby to learn what and how she is learning, then adapt the activity to offer greater challenge. Observation provides information that lets teachers determine when and how to arrange for the next step in a child's learning experience. Watch quietly as a baby tries with determination to put the round wood top piece for a ring stack set on the pole. His
eyes widen in startled amazement as he gradually realizes that when the hole does not go through the middle, then that piece will not go down over the pole—a frustrating but important lesson. Calmly, a teacher can demonstrate how to place the piece on top of the pole while using simple words to describe how this piece is different. She can also gently guide the baby’s hands so he feels successful at placing the piece on top.

**Enhance language and literacy in everyday routines**

Talk back and forth with babies; respond to their coos and babbles with positive talk. When the baby vocalizes, tell her, “What a terrific talker you are. Tell me some more.”

The diapering table is a fine site for language games. With young babies, practice “parentese”—a high-pitched voice, drawn-out vowels, and slow and simple talk. This kind of talk fires up the brain neurons that carry messages to help a baby learn (Doidge 2007). Cascades of chemicals and electrical signals course down the baby’s neural pathways. A baby responds when you are an attentive and delighted talking partner. Pause so the baby gets a turn to talk too, and bring the game to a graceful close when baby fatigue sets in.

Talk about body parts on dolls, stuffed animals, yourself, and the babies in the room. Talk about what the baby sees as you lift her onto your lap and then onto your shoulders.

Mastery experiences arranged in thoughtful doses bring much pleasure, such an eagerness to keep on exploring, trying, and learning.

Talk at mealtimes. Use every daily routine as an opportunity to enhance oral language (Honig 2007).

Daily reading is an intimate one-on-one activity that young babies deeply enjoy in varied spaces and at varied times of the day (Honig 2004). Hook your babies on books as early as possible. Frequent shared picture-book experiences are priceless gifts. Early pleasurable reading experiences empower success in learning to read years later in grade school (Jalongo 2007).

Cuddle with one or several children as you read and share books together every day. Use dramatic tones along with loving and polite words. You are the master of the story as you read aloud. Feel free to add to or to shorten picture-book text according to a particular child’s needs. Group reading times can be pleasurable when infants lean against you as you sit on the rug and share a picture book. Teachers often prefer the intimacy of individual reading times with babies (Honig & Shin 2001). Individual reading can help a tense or fussy baby relax in your lap as he becomes deeply absorbed in sharing the picture-book experience.

**Encourage mastery experiences**

Children master many linguistic, physical, and social skills in the first years of life. Watch the joy of mastery and self-appreciation as a baby succeeds at a task, such as successfully placing Montessori cylinders into their respective sockets. Babies enjoy clapping for their own efforts. Mastery experiences arranged in thoughtful doses bring much pleasure, such an eagerness to keep on exploring, trying, and learning. Watch the baby’s joy as he proudly takes a long link chain out of a coffee can and then stuffs it slowly back in the can. He straightens his shoulders with such pride as he succeeds at this game of finding a way to put a long skinny chain into a round container with a small diameter opening.

Vygotsky taught that the zone of proximal development is crucial for adult-child coordination in learning activities. You the teacher are so important in helping a child to succeed when a task may be slightly too difficult for the child to solve alone. Hold the baby’s elbow steady when she feels frustrated while trying to stack one block on top of another. For a difficult puppy puzzle, a teacher taped down
a few of the pieces so a baby could succeed in getting the puppy's tail and head pieces in the right spaces. If a baby has been struggling with a slippery nesting cup for a while, just steady the stack of cups so he can successfully insert a smaller cup into the next largest one.

**Promote socioemotional skills**

Babies learn empathy and friendliness from those who nurture them. Empathy involves recognizing and feeling the distress of another and trying to help in some way. A young baby who sees another baby crying may look worried and suck his thumb to comfort himself. Fifteen-month-old Michael tussles over a toy with Paul, who starts to cry. Michael looks worried and lets go of the toy so Paul has it. As Paul keeps crying, Michael gives him his own teddy bear. But Paul continues crying. Michael pauses, then runs to the next room and gets Paul's security blanket for him. And Paul stops crying (Blum 1987).

Friendliness includes making accommodations so children can play together. For example, move a child over to make room for a peer, or make overtures to invite other babies to engage in peer play. Perhaps they could take turns toddling in and out of a cardboard house. Babies act friendly when they sit near each other and companionably play with toys, happy to be close together. McMullen and colleagues (2009) observed that positive social-emotional interactions were rare in some infant rooms. But when teachers showed deeply respectful caregiving, then they observed that babies did develop early empathy and internalize the friendly interactions they had experienced. One teacher is described below:

Her wonderful gentle manner, the way she speaks to the babies, how they are all her friends…only someone who utterly respects and values babies could put that kind of effort into this the way she does, almost like she is setting a beautiful table for honored guests each and every morning. (McMullen et al. 2009, p. 27)

**Conclusion**

Later in life, a baby will not remember your specific innumerable kindly caring actions in the earliest years. However, a child's feelings of being lovable and cherished will remain a body-memory for life. These feelings of having been loved will permeate positive emotional and social relationships decades later.

Keep your own joy pipes open. How brief are the years of babyhood. All too soon young children grow into the mysterious world of teenagers who prefer hanging out with peers to snuggling on an adult lap. Reflect with deep personal satisfaction on your confidence and delight in caring for tiny ones—hearing the first words, seeing the joy at a

When teachers showed deeply respectful caregiving, then they observed that babies did develop early empathy and internalize the friendly interactions they had experienced.
new accomplishment, watching the entranced look of an upturned face as you tell a story, feeling the trust as a baby sleepily settles onto your lap for refreshment of spirit, for a breath of the loving comfort that emanates from your body.

Life has grown more complicated in our technological, economically difficult, and more and more urbanized world. But you, the teacher, remain each baby’s priceless tour guide into the world of “growing up!” You gently take each little person by the hand—literally and figuratively—and lure each and every baby into feeling the wonder and the somatic certainty of being loved, lovable, and cherished so that each baby can fully participate in the adventure of growing, loving, and learning.

Your nurturing strengthens a baby’s determination to keep on learning, keep on cooperating, keep on being friendly, and keep on growing into a loving person—first in the world of the nursery and later in the wider world. You can give no greater gift to a child than to be the best guide possible as each child begins his or her unique life journey.

References


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Image-Building: A Hands-On Developmental Process
by Janet Brown McCracken

Children learn to cut with scissors by watching others and then by trying scissors themselves. They learn language by listening and then speaking, singing, and reading. Forming a genuine, positive self-image is every bit as much of a hands-on, life-long developmental process for children as is their physical and intellectual growth.

How do early childhood educators and families encourage healthy self-images? A balanced curriculum, teaching and parenting strategies that encourage success, and friendly interactions all contribute to children’s realistic awareness of their strengths and challenges. We adults pick up on, and create, situations that contribute to children’s growing understanding of themselves as worthy, capable, interesting people.

In the early years, these four goals are at the heart of professional teaching practices:

- Instill trust.
- Promote independence.
- Foster friendships.
- Encourage success.

Instill Trust

From birth, children thrive when they experience others as trustworthy. We support children as they make sense out of the world. Predictable schedules, authentic feedback, and warm relationships help instill trust.

With babies, we figure out what a cry or smile means. We are sensitive to how infants experience the environment: Is the floor cold on bare feet? How recently was a baby cuddled? Toddlers are delighted to show their independence, but sometimes they look back to make sure their anchor is still there. Educators help families and children ease separations by promoting simple routines — a stop at the cubby, signing in, hugs and kisses good-bye.
When older children talk about their experiences, or a parent shares an event, we take time to listen, then follow up. “Jaime, tell me about your visit to grandmother’s house. How did you get there? What did you do?” Asking open-ended questions indicates our genuine interest.

**Promote Independence**

Decision-making opportunities abound in excellent classrooms. Children actively gather information, weigh options, and make increasingly difficult decisions. The curriculum’s underlying structure, combined with teaching techniques such as scaffolding, enable children to be autonomous. We assure that the environment is manageable and thought-provoking.

**Activity: After hearing “Sleeping Beauty,” three preschoolers want to build a castle. The teacher helps them focus. “What are some of a castle’s parts?” They name a moat, drawbridge, and stairs. One child sketches some ideas. The teacher helps one child get materials (assorted boxes, glue, markers, construction paper, yarn); the other arranges an appropriate space to work. Children plan and construct their castle. They ask an adult volunteer for assistance to create cones for the towers. Work proceeds over several days.**

Children’s increasing capabilities are evident in their behavior. Young children who feel securely loved and respected — as they do in high-quality programs and loving homes — are more likely to be cooperative and increasingly self-disciplined.

Conflict resolution skills enable children to independently work out disagreements with others. Guide children through the four steps necessary to work out their differences:

- Each child states her or his perspective.
- Children are helped to agree on a clear statement of the problem.
- Children suggest possible solutions; the adult helps children consider possible consequences.
- Children are supported in choosing a reasonable resolution.

**Foster Friendships**

Good teachers plan a wealth of engaging play-based activities and materials that invite collaboration. We balance our warmth and enthusiasm with firm, positive limits. By supporting children’s attempts to enter play and carefully steering unproductive play back on track, children become adept at making friends and handling new situations!

Every day, alert teachers promote relationships and altruism. Getting dressed for pretend play is an ideal way to encourage cooperation. An observant teacher is quick to ask, “Layton’s skirt zipper is stuck. Who can give him a hand?”

Curry and Johnson (1990) point out that “If our goals are to help children respect self and others, they need to be helped to see how their behavior affects themselves and others.” Skilled teachers encourage children to anticipate consequences:

“Brittany (11 months), look what happened when you took the squeaky lion away from Yadira. He reached over to get it back.”

“Raquel (3 years), you have piled up all the scoops in one corner of the sand table. How will Chaka scoop any sand?”

**Self-Worth Rests on Valuing Children, Families, and Communities**

When we value diversity in children’s families, we value children. A strong sense of self-worth is fostered by a program climate in which:

- People’s names are pronounced and spelled correctly (ask if you’re not sure).
- Family members are welcome as active participants in the group’s activities (taking children’s dictation; sharing family stories, treasures, or recipes).
- Continuity between home and group is valued (staff communicate in children’s home languages, information is exchanged regularly).
- Differences with family members or among staff are resolved gracefully (using the same conflict-resolution techniques we facilitate with children).
- We bring the community into our classroom (volunteers, hands-on demonstrations, acknowledgment of donations of materials such as lumber or books).
- Children reach out into the community (frequent field trips; walks around the neighborhood; getting to know people, buildings).
# Teaching Strategies Can Erode, or Promote, Self-Image

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Situations</th>
<th>Responses That Erode Self-Esteem*</th>
<th>Responses That Nurture Self-Esteem**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A child brings an art project or calls you to the block area.</td>
<td>You ask, “What’s that?” Message: Art and construction projects should look like something. I can’t recognize what you made.</td>
<td>You ask, “What would you like to tell me about this?” Message: I’m interested in what you do. It’s up to you if you want to share. The process is important.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You comment, “I like the way Jose is sitting.” Message: I am the one in control here. I decide what is acceptable.</td>
<td>You comment, “Jose is sitting on his mat.” Message: Jose knows what to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A child struggles, or faces a difficult task, such as finishing a puzzle.</td>
<td>You do most or all of it for the child. Message: You can’t do it yourself. I can do it better than you.</td>
<td>You suggest, “Where could you start?” Message: This is a tough problem, but I’m sure you can decide how to begin. It’s OK to try different solutions. There’s no one right way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children want the same item.</td>
<td>You settle the dispute. Message: You can’t resolve your problems. I know what’s best.</td>
<td>You prompt, “How can you work out your differences?” Message: You are capable of getting along.</td>
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*Responses that erode self-esteem rob children of the opportunity to learn from experience, convey that adults have all the answers, and indicate there’s only one right response.

**Responses that nurture self-esteem place manageable responsibility with the child(ren), indicate there are many possible answers, show trust in the child(ren)’s ability, and encourage effort.

## Encourage Success

“Good job!” exclaim well-meaning adults. If everyone in the group is praised with the same two words, children soon dismiss our comment.

Young children are usually eager to please adults; but if we value intrinsic motivation, we describe what children do rather than offer judgmental praise. Our goal is to help children draw their own conclusions, and bring out the best in each child. When we respond to situations in ways that promote — rather than erode — self-esteem, we contribute to a solid foundation of mental health.

Consider the effects (on both target children and bystanders) of a few common teaching strategies.

Skilled teachers design experiences that challenge children just enough. Children are well aware of what they do well, and realize there are areas in which they can improve.

**Activity:** A toddler classroom is presented with materials box full of sandals, sneakers, dress shoes, and boots) to play shoe store. Imagine the learning possibilities! Children choose an appealing shoe . . . find the match . . . choose to have socks on or off . . . decide which foot . . . does it fit . . . WHAT A
Learning Environments Support Self-Understanding Questions to Ask Ourselves

- How do I assure that each child is challenged just enough to succeed?
- How actively do children participate and take responsibility for their actions?
- How often do children experience safe but real consequences of their actions? How do children become more aware of relationships between cause and effect?
- How does the selection of materials (wide paint brushes, large sheets of paper) match children’s growing capabilities?
- How do the equipment and furnishings (indoor and outdoor) contribute to children’s independence?
- How often do children figure things out for themselves?
- What personal responsibility skills are taught by example or guided participation (conflict resolution, dressing, hand washing)?
- How well are children progressing in the ability to use words rather than actions to express feelings?

Toward Genuine Self-Esteem

Children soon see through popular but ineffective efforts to promote self-image such as cute self-esteem booster techniques, meaningless praise, and outright bribes. In contrast, these and related professional practices contribute immensely to strong, realistic self-images in young children:

- genuine enthusiasm for effort and accomplishment;
- intriguing materials;
- individualized experiences;
- honest, specific, descriptive praise; and
- meaningful activities in which children make real contributions.

Each day is filled with natural opportunities to encourage children’s healthy life-long development.

References


SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DO IT BY YOURSELF! Adults offer occasional encouragement or ask questions to promote the activity: “How do you know on which foot to put the boot?”

Emphasis on success also requires art experiences that focus on the process, not the end product. Adults provide materials and basic guidelines about their use.

“Here are our sponges, paint in these pans, and paper. Choose a sponge. Dip one side into the paint. Press it on the paper. You could slide or squeeze the sponge. How else could you paint with it? Keep the paint on the paper!”

Self-esteem is best supported by engaging children in valuable, intrinsically challenging enterprises. — Curry and Johnson (1990)
Not in Praise of Praise

by Kathleen Grey

"I want my baby to grow up to have high self-esteem so I praise him when he does things. Babies need to know that we admire them and think they are special. Praising them is a good way to let them know that. I think praise not only helps children learn to do things well, it also makes them want to be good." — Mother speaking of her six month old infant

"There is a little girl in my classroom who is two and a half years old and is always into everything. The other teachers and I have to put her on time-out a lot because she is so hard to handle and she has to learn to be good. We use praise with her every time we notice her doing something good so that she'll learn what's right and what's wrong." — Teacher in toddler center

"My grandson has cerebral palsy and has to work extra hard to do even the simplest things for himself. His parents always look for things to praise him about and tell him he's doing a good job. They try to make sure that everyone who works with him is willing to do the same thing. They feel that he won't keep trying if they don't praise him a lot." — Grandmother

"My son has to learn how to behave from us. We don't like spanking and shaming so we use praise to make him act right. I think it's a much better way to teach children than the way I was reared — with a lot of criticism and blame." — Father

Using praise to teach children what is expected of them is a relatively new kind of teaching and parenting technique. Less than a century ago it was commonly assumed that praise would spoil children and that criticism and disapproval would strengthen their character and turn them into good citizens (Miller, 1983).

Today it is commonly accepted that self-esteem is the root of strong character and good performance (Nelson, 1987; Clarke, 1978). From that realization has come the obvious extrapolation that good teachers and parents should therefore build self-esteem if we want our children to have a strong character. And doesn't self-esteem mean having a good opinion of yourself? Wouldn't it help our children have a good opinion of themselves if we point out what's good about them and tell them frequently how good they are?

Building Character — Themes, Old and New

There are two themes that link both the old way and the new way of building character and teaching good behavior. The first theme is the idea that how children think about themselves and evaluate themselves is dependen upon what adults tell them about themselves and has little to do with their own evaluation of themselves. This point of view supposes that adult evaluations are more right than a child's, and that adults have the responsibility to mold the way children perceive themselves by stating their evaluations frequently.

The second connecting theme is the constant emphasis on the concepts of goodness, badness, and obedience. There is good or bad behavior, good or bad self-concept, good or bad feelings, good or bad thoughts. There is an undercurrent of belief that goodness and badness are definable by adults, simply by virtue of being an adult, and have nothing to do with children's age, developmental level, psychological needs, or internal motivation. Adults are responsible for telling children what is good and what is bad and for using whatever consequences are necessary to see that children comply with this message. Children's obedient behavior, then, is seen as a measure of whether the adults have done a good job or bad job of defining and talking about goodness and badness.
Current thought, as illustrated by the introductory statements of parents and caregivers, recognizes that praise is an important and powerful form of communication. It can nourish the spirit and add a sheen to daily experiences. It is a potent payoff for effort. But... it is a judgment, nonetheless. Because children value the opinion of adults so highly, frequent evaluative comments, even when positive, can foster undue dependence on the external judgment of others, causing them to devalue their own perceptions about their competence and capabilities. Used indiscriminately, praise loses its potency and becomes empty and meaningless.

**Praise in the Classroom — My Story**

In my own teaching, both with children and adults, I don't use praise words very much any more. They often sound manipulative and insincere, even when I use them judiciously. And there are times when I don't like receiving praise for exactly the same reason.

The conviction that we should not risk putting anything of ourselves out into the world — through writing, teaching, singing, or simply just being — unless we know for sure that it will meet with approval is a devaluing, self-defeating state of mind. Yet it is a product of the old discipline of criticism which often imprisoned creative energy and perverted personality. It is no wonder that we have turned to praise to mend our ways as we search for more effective means of teaching and rearing our children humanely.

To many of us, praise seems like such a good, positive way to get children to behave. It's a way to make them feel good about themselves so they'll try harder to do what they should. We congratulate ourselves that we have abandoned the use of criticism in exchange for teaching with praise. What we fail to see is that praise is simply the positive face of criticism, that both presume the right of one person to impose judgment on another.

For many years, my ideal of good teaching was to use praise frequently and admonition or criticism rarely. These were my primary tools for controlling a group of children. It was not unusual for me to end a day of teaching feeling totally exhausted and tense, having spent most of my time trying to be one step ahead of the children, and searching for words that would cause them to behave in line with my ideas about how they should behave. I often had a headache and, in my earliest years of teaching, a heavy, barren feeling as well. I was constantly occupied with a mental image of what I expected of children and of how to make them want to behave according to those expectations. Whatever interest I had in knowing their needs was simply so I could use that knowledge to motivate them to meet my expectations. I was preoccupied with getting them to adopt my goals and expectations for their behavior.

I'm not sure why it was so important to me that they meet my expectations and behave as I saw fit. Certainly I was sure that I knew how they should behave. And I felt very deeply my responsibility to impress that upon them. I was also very sure that total permissiveness doesn't make anyone feel good, even when they protest mightily against limits on their freedom. Yet, in my zeal to avoid total permissiveness, I operated out of a position of excessive control...what I later came to perceive as simply the flip side of permissiveness.

I think that is where I made the mistake. For certainly I could see that I was making mistakes. The level of energy I poured into my teaching usually produced clingy whiners or out-of-bounds troublemakers and my classrooms were either noisy and chaotic or excessively quiet and strained...and I was exhausted and unfulfilled. I knew that many of my children were resisting me harder than they would if I didn’t have expectations about their behavior and that some of them were denying some of their own needs in order to fit themselves into the niche my expectations created for them. It was obvious to me that my expectations for these children were not good for them, yet I knew that an absence of expectations would not be good for them either!

**Reflective Listening as Image Builder**

Then I learned about reflective listening and the world opened up for me. This is a respectful and reflective communication style that had its genesis in Thomas Gordon's (1987) “active listening” as described in his book *Parent Effectiveness Training*. I discovered that reflecting back to children what they are doing, and what I perceive that they are feeling, reinforces their sense of themselves in such a way that they feel strengthened and validated as potent, competent, worthwhile human beings.

This kind of communication revealed to me something that I had glimpsed only occasionally before...that children come into the world with an intense desire to participate in the human race, to learn its rules and protocols, and to find a niche where their selfhood can be uniquely expressed. This meant that I could trust them to want to grow; no longer did I have to *make* them want to do that. I began to see that my role was to be aware of this desire in them and to communicate my support of it honestly and forthrightly.
All these realizations didn’t come at once, of course; there was no “aha, now I understand” kind of experience. What actually happened was that the reflective listening style of communicating felt so clear, uncomplicated, honest, and real that I just sank into it with a sense of great relief. It was like dropping a pebble into a still pond. From that time, the ripples that traveled outward in ever widening circles were the increasingly frequent experiences of connecting with the children, of watching their dawning understanding, and the evident pleasure in being able to behave in prosocial ways. Even when I had to set limits, I experienced the companionship that comes with genuine connection and the shared knowledge that the limits were set in the interest of continued growth.

Gradually I came to realize that reflective listening leaves no room for manipulation and that this fact is the source of its potency. Although I sometimes found myself trying to use it to manipulate, I quickly learned that when I did so, it didn’t work. In fact, I began to realize that the sense of my communications “not working” could actually be a signal that I was attempting to manipulate the children. This brought the realization that as long as my goal was to cause a certain preconceived behavior, whatever communication strategy I used would be unproductive and exhausting. On the other hand, I saw that if my goal was simply to participate in the process of a child’s growth, without manipulation and a preconceived agenda, a likely by-product of that joint endeavor might be productive and socially-competent kinds of behaviors, some preconceived and others totally undreamed of. And, most important of all, those behaviors would be self-engendered out the child’s own desire to participate effectively.

Some Negatives of Praise

So what does all this have to do with praise? Simply this... praise as it is commonly used, expressed through an excess of wow words, is too frequently a manipulation. As such, it breeds resistance and suspicion (which may be only half consciously felt) and acts to weaken the connection between the praiser and the praised. And for many people, it sets up a puzzling dilemma — “If I do this again so I can get this praise again, will I be doing it of my own accord or because I’m hooked on having this person’s praise?”

Another hazard of praise is the tangled situation that is familiar to anyone who has reared or taught young children. I want to validate this child so I praise some act or way of being only to discover that the child wants to hear the praise again and tries to elicit it by repeating the behavior I had praised. But what if it was an act for which I have lost my enthusiasm? Do I pretend I didn’t see the bid for more praise? Do I fake the enthusiasm make her feel good (this is especially hard when I fake it to start with)? Or shall I be brutally honest and tell her it isn’t cute when she does it over and over again? In other words, how do I deal with the obvious need for praise in the child who looks to me for praise for an act performed over and over again long after I have lost admiration for it? And most important of all, what is message this experience conveys to the child... that’s must dream up something more stunning in order to elicit those addicting wow words from me again? Is this what making her feel good about herself is all about? Is it really building self-esteem? It looks like abject dependence to me.

“So why not just use an enthusiastic voice and a firm ‘good job’ to praise a child’s efforts?” you may ask. “Wouldn’t that help him feel good about himself and reinforce his efforts to do well?” Perhaps it would, but what if he actually didn’t do a good job, yet you knew he tried hard and you wanted to reinforce his efforts? Reflective listening is especially eloquent in such a situation because of its focus on what’s so, not on an arbitrary standard of what ought to be. Describing what you noticed about the child’s effort and the progress he is making toward his goal communicates your interest in and support of him more powerfully than any kind of praise could do.

Praise is often empty because of our tendency to go or automatic pilot when we’re busy and to say, “Great!” “Good job!” “Oh, isn’t that pretty!” “You’re such a good painter!” without stopping to think about the child’s reality (other than the assumption that he needs praise). Such praise doesn’t tell the child what it is you’re affirming as good, nor does it tell him why you think it was good. In fact, it doesn’t even tell him what you mean when you say something is good... does it mean that’s morally right?... or that it’s what you like?... or what makes it good? Wouldn’t it be more informative, and therefore more satisfying (to you and him), if he could hear his effort described and his intention noted, no matter what level of performance he achieved?

As an adult, have you ever had the feeling that your jc or classroom performance was below par, only to hear “Good job” from your supervisor or to find an “A” on your essay? Did you then retain your original judgment of your performance or did you immediately revise it fit with praise you’d received from “someone with authority”? Did you wonder about the praise and wh
you had done to justify it? Did the praise help you understand why it was a "good job"? Or did it just make you wonder what you should do next time in order to win such a comment again?

Can We Make a Child Feel Good About Himself?

Let's go back to the earlier discussion of why we use praise to make children feel good about themselves. What is the underlying fallacy in this statement? It's the idea that we can make people feel a particular way. That's a terrible burden to carry around—the supposition that if someone isn't feeling good about herself that I have the power, hence the responsibility, to find a way to make her feel good about herself again. So I praise her with "You did a good job!" or "Good for you!" Does that validate who she perceives herself to be? Can she use such comments to build a reliable standard of competence within herself, one that she can self-reference so that she isn't constantly dependent on others' opinions?

A teacher is trying to reinforce the behavior of a child who has voluntarily carried out a classroom rule. She says to him, "Good job, Tom! You're doing just what you're supposed to do, aren't you? You're always such a good boy." The message to Tom is not about his intrinsic worth, but about his value when he does what his teacher wants him to. If Tom's teacher truly wants to affirm Tom's intrinsic worth, as he expressed it through his desire to participate competently in classroom culture, she might say, "I saw you carry all the dirty paint brushes to the sink, Tom. You had to make three trips to get them all! I sure appreciate your help."

If Tom regularly hears the unspoken message in the first scenario, how is he likely to apply it to himself? How do you think this message will affect his ability to make judgments for himself? Would he have a different sense of his competence if he regularly received the message in the second example?

In my own experience over the last ten years, I have found repeatedly that the unease I sometimes feel in a praise situation can usually be explained by this new understanding of how we use praise to manipulate children and one another. In fact, it's even getting easier for me to catch myself when I use praise in this way—and reflective listening always helps me communicate more forthrightly. One of my university students summed it up for me recently when she commented, "I really like it when you use reflective listening with us. You expect us to always be so tuned-in to the children and to tell them what we notice about their activities and their feelings. It feels awfully good to me, and I learn so much, when I realize you're that tuned-in to me!" Her comment left me glowing. Not only had she recognized my effort to support her, she also told me how much it meant to her. I didn't feel praised, I felt truly validated.

References


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Universal Precautions in the Child Care Setting

Faced with Federal and State requirements to reduce the spread of serious infections, hospitals and health centers have recently begun using a successful technique that is also required for child care settings. Rather than waiting to find out who is contagious, they treat everyone as a potentially infected person. The name of this infection control method is “Universal Precautions,” and it gives a set of guidelines for when you come into contact with body fluids and wastes that carry germs.

Germs are spread through contact with respiratory droplets, body wastes and blood. In the child care setting, the Universal Precautions method would be carried out as follows:

1) Staff should wash their hands after handling any body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, blood, saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge, and discharges from injuries or draining sores), regardless of whether latex gloves were used in the handling.

2) Staff should wear utility gloves or disposable latex gloves to immediately clean up spills of body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, blood, saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge, and discharges from injuries or draining sores). The gloves should be used only one time, for one incident, by one person, and should be immediately discarded.

3) If a staff member has any known sores, cuts, punctures, breaks in the skin, or open sores on her/his hands, the staff should take particular care to wear latex gloves when handling blood or body fluids containing blood, or discharges from any injuries or draining sores.

4) For spills of vomit, urine, and feces, staff should clean and disinfect the area including the walls, floors, bathrooms, table tops, and diaper-changing tables as soon as possible after the spill.

5) For spills of blood or body fluids that contain blood, and for any other discharges from injuries or draining sores, staff should always use latex gloves to clean and disinfect the area, and should do so as soon as possible after the spill.

6) Staff should routinely clean and disinfect the entire program and play area thoroughly, on a daily basis, regardless of whether body fluids are known to have been spilled on any surfaces. All surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected, including floors, walls, bathrooms, table tops, food preparation surfaces, and diaper-changing tables. Latex gloves are only necessary to clean surfaces that have blood or body fluids that contain blood on them.

7) Mops and cleaning towels should be cleaned, rinsed in disinfectant solution, and then wrung dry as possible and hung to dry.

8) Blood-contaminated material and diapers should be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie, and disposed of out of reach of children.

9) Whenever possible, staff should clean with paper towels, rather than cloth towels.

10) Staff who may have potential exposure to blood or actual exposure should be informed about Hepatitis B protection.

Developed in collaboration with the Child Care Law Center, CCHP Healthline & Judy Calder, Consultant
Universal Precautions

Faced with concerns about the spread of serious infections, hospitals and health centers have recently begun using a successful technique that may also be appropriate for child care settings. Rather than waiting to find out who is contagious, they treat everyone as a potentially infected person. The name of this infection control method is "Universal Precautions" and it gives a set of guidelines for when you come into contact with body fluids and wastes that carry germs. It's not a lot of extra work and it really pays off.

Many of us in child care are used to reacting to infections only when we notice signs or symptoms of illness. Then we rely on exclusion policies to control disease. But the germs causing a disease are spreading days before children appear ill. Children and adults with infections like colds, diarrheal diseases and skin and eye infections are often contagious 3-10 days before you might notice a symptom. Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS have even a longer incubation period.

With infections it doesn't pay to wait! Germs are spread through contact with respiratory droplets, body wastes and blood. In the child care setting the universal precautions method would involve:

**Washing hands frequently and well**
- when staff arrive and leave
- after wiping/blowing noses
- before and after diapering and toileting
- before and after food preparation

**Proper waste disposal**
- lining all trash cans with disposable
- using trash cans with lids
- bagging soiled diapers and wipes
- using disposable paper on changing tables

**Use of gloves for extra protection**
With the current concerns regarding the spread of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS, disposable gloves should be made available to all staff when they deal with blood.

**Bleach**
Soap and water make a good cleaning solution, but to sanitize any soiled areas such as counters use bleach and water. Use 1 tablespoon of bleach for 1 quart of water or 1/4 cup of bleach for 1 gallon of water.
Ten Good Reasons For You to Wash Your Hands...

- Pink eye
- Staph
- Pinworms
- Hepatitis
- Impetigo
- Scabies
- Diarrhea
- Colds
- Flu
INCIDENT REPORT
SAMPLE

1. When completing an incident report form, please use a ball point pen and press hard on the form to make a duplicate copy for the child’s file. Please be sure to spell all words appropriately.

2. Please use gloves for any blood injury unless child takes care of it as in the sample.

3. Notify child’s teacher if you are an observer other than the child’s teacher.

4. Parent receives the white original copy.

5. Only a full time staff person will put the yellow copy in the child’s file.

Anna Bing Arnold Children’s Center
2301 N. Levanda Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90032
213-343-2470

INCIDENT REPORT

CHILD: Alison Daniels    TIME: 10:00    DATE: 10-26-98

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: Alison tripped while running & scraped her left elbow on the bike path.

FIRST AID APPLIED: Scrape was cleaned with an antiseptic wipe and a bandage was applied.

Were gloves used? yes □ no X If no, why not? Alison cleaned scrape

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER: 

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER: Judy Gregg

COPIES: parent -- original    child’s file -- copy
Daily Checklists for Classrooms:

1. Throw away any broken items immediately. If they are to be repaired, remove them from the play area and report the needed repair to the office.
2. No water tables or swimming pools left in positions that will collect water.
3. Newspaper is to be used on all tables during messy art projects, especially when glue is being used. Paper is to be thrown away immediately after the project is completed and table and chairs are to be wiped off.
4. If you tape something to a wall use only removal painter’s tape. Please remove all tape and paper when taking it down. Left over pieces of tape are unsightly and cause dirt to stick and paint to peel.
5. Turn air conditioner to 80 degrees every evening in summer and heater to 65 degrees in the winter before leaving for the night. Those temperatures will be bearable for animals and will allow us to save energy.
6. Lead Teacher is to check side yard area each evening before he/she leaves. Make sure all toys, chairs and wood equipment are put away or brought into class as appropriate, and that sand boxes are covered.
Side Yard Weekly Check List:

1. Assign small areas of the side yard to be swept and checked for spiders routinely throughout the week:
   - Under and behind shelves
   - eaves of sheds
   - laundry room (by group assigned that job for the month)
   - under large outdoor round tables and benches
   - water tables
   - walls and windows
   - concrete ground, especially next to building
2. Mulberry room clean trash between block wall and fence
3. Once a week take rubber mats from the bathrooms and put outside for the night so the janitor will wash the bathroom floors where mats usually are.
4. Lead Teachers must check to make sure these jobs are done weekly. Also check to make sure that not toys or equipment are left on the raised hillside. This is NOT an extension of the trash can!