



All Children Considered

VOL. III • 2003/04

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

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and Public Health

Wow, All that in "Three Billy Goats Gruff"? (Or Integrating The Performing Arts in Children's Lives)

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A sense of "wonder" is such an important attribute for children to have and develop. Although, too quickly, the "real" world reduces the importance of this quality. We move very

quickly in today's world. Children and parents rush to get from one activity to another only to repeat this action the next day. It is our responsibility, as educators, to slow the pace down, help children focus, learn to be a friend, and make kind, loving relationships with each other. This is the foundation of our work with young children. But we also provide the

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From the editor...

Why an issue on Performing Arts?

As child care providers look toward programming during the spring and summer, children look outdoors to the limitless opportunities for experiencing the world beyond the confines of our centers and homes. The *Performing Arts* of drama, music, and movement/dance can maintain children's wandering attention and enrich their intellectual and emotional lives during the times they need to be inside. This issue will provide some information on how to include activities that develop children's musical talents, their imaginative dramatic skills, and their physical movement abilities. Articles also will supply you with the benefits of including such activities in your program. The information on these eight pages is only a start. Resources for you to gain more knowledge are also included.

Parent Involvement

One very important benefit of the *Performing Arts* to your programs is the powerful result of increased parent involvement and support. When parents

see their children successfully performing (The criteria of success are children's increased self esteem and active engagement, not necessarily the degree of polished quality!), they burst with pride and want to support you in any way possible.

Introducing our New Web Site www.cannr.uconn.edu/ces/accl

We are proud to unveil our "All Children Considered" website, where you can access general information about the newsletter, including how to submit articles for publication and how to offer feedback to the editorial team on content and any other ideas you have about our publication. In addition to including the current issue on the site (accessible with Acrobat Reader), we will archive past issues so that at any time you can access information previously published.

We thank you for your support and involvement with us as we assist those who care for Connecticut's children to provide high quality programming.

Harry Mangle
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basis for strong thinking skills.

Incorporating stories with the performing and creative arts enables children to solve problems and think creatively. The process of attending to the "now" and making relationships can be done through the creative arts integrated with story, myth, and enchantment. We use a different set of skills when we bring story, song, dance, movement, and art to life in our imagination and in our classroom. Using these skills allows children to practice the art of being social and helps to build community. This work engages children's Multiple Intelligences as children experience learning through different ways of perceiving.

I'll use the story of the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" as an example to show how concrete activities can integrate a range of intellectual and interpersonal skills through this favorite story:

■ **Movement/Kinesthetic/Dramatic Activities**

Move on all fours around the room. Can you be very still as if standing on the side of a mountain? How would you move around the room with three limbs touching the floor? ... with just one limb touching the floor? If two goats met each other on the road, how would they interact? What do you think a troll moves like? Does he move heavy or light? What would a nice troll move like? Play follow the goat (like follow-the-leader). Create a bridge, goat, tree, troll, and bird pose. As you read the story, every time you hear one of these words you make the pose.



■ **Art/Spatial**

Create a bridge out of blocks, big blocks, or boxes. Create a bridge with your bodies (cooperation game-full group, half group). Make a diorama out of clay.

■ **Logical/Mathematical**

Find a straight, curved, zigzag, diagonal pathway to the bridge (explore pathways in advance). Create a map from the goat house to the bridge and back again.

■ **Musical**

Change Baa Baa Black Sheep to

*Baa baa Billy goat,
Have you any milk?
When you drink it down,
It's smooth like milk.
One for my brother, one for me.
One for the mean ol' troll,
Who lives behind the tree.*

You can have children drum to the rhythm. Have children make different sounds for the different characters, and create a sound story instead of words.

■ **Interpersonal**

Close eyes and play some drumming music, from various ethnic groups. Have children imagine what color goat they would be or what the pathway and bridge would look like. Draw pictures of what they see in their mind's eye. Why was the troll so mean? When do you feel like a troll? Write a story, have a discussion, or brainstorm on how to help someone when they are feeling mean. One person could act out being the mean troll and the other could be the nice clever goat.

Approaching creativity in this way calls forth the whole child to help integrate and synthesize learning. It grounds the learning into the body and makes the experience real.

The activity of dramatizing a story in this way enables the child to develop a sense of community within their environment and safely develops the skill and trust needed to cooperate and make strong connections to each other. It builds self-confidence, enlivens the brain, and keeps the body moving and flexible. This technique enables the environment to come alive and creates

excitement, fun, and joy for the teachers as well as the children. Creating art as life is a skill that helps children blossom into lifelong learners. ✨

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Performing Arts— Important Components in Quality Child Care Programs

An interview with Ginger Vickstrom
Director, Branford School-Age Child Care
(203) 481-5066



Providing opportunities for children to experience creative drama, dance, and music is an important aspect of any high quality child care program, whether home or center based. According to Ginger Vickstrom, Director of Branford School-Age Care, these experiences encourage creativity, expand a child's horizons, and help give children self-confidence as they realize they can act, dance, and sing. She believes it is important to provide children with an exposure to the arts that family constraints of time or expense might otherwise not allow.

For young children ages 5-7, providing props, costumes, and puppets in a drama corner can encourage dramatic play. Children enjoy imitating adult activities and at this age, learn through participating in dramatic pantomime of actions (chopping wood), or moods (sad child). With encouragement from adults, they can also dramatize stories

with simple plots, like mother goose rhymes.

Dance can be introduced to young children by encouraging movement to music. The Branford School-Age Care, hires a dance teacher to teach movement and dance, and a musician who teaches theme-based songs and tells stories. Boys and girls in kindergarten learn basic ballet steps, and they learn to move expressively to music using scarves. Older children learn line

dances. Children this age like to experiment with making music on a keyboard when available and can learn to play a simple tune. The children make rhythm instruments from cans, jars, and beans. These items are kept in a music corner and are available for impromptu music making or exploring how different materials or sizes of containers produce different sounds.

Children ages 7-10 are excited about arranging and producing shows for an audience. Their dramatic play can involve creating scripts for puppet shows. They can do dramatic impersonations of characters in books, movies, or events in history. Stories they read can serve to prompt their own skits. Teachers can encourage role-playing and skits by adding a box of cards to the drama corner that suggest scenes like two people eating in a restaurant. These older children also enjoy playing instruments or singing, either by themselves or with others in duets. Line

dances, folk dances, and their own interpretive dance excite them. Children in the Branford School-Age Care program perform songs, play instruments and dance at Parent's Night programs and at impromptu talent shows they put together for whomever will watch.

Middle school youth can interpret characters in folk tales and create their own skits or plays, do dramatic readings, pantomime, and clowning. At this age, many youth are accomplished musicians who enjoy having the chance to play or sing together. Those who are involved in advanced dance, drama, or music lessons, can be encouraged to share their talents with younger children or at senior centers and convalescent homes as a community service project.

Performing arts help children develop confidence that leads to success in school and in life. Such activities **belong** in after school and day care programming!

Resources:

Koehler-Pentacoff. *Curtain Call*. Incentive Publications. Nashville, Tennessee. 1989. Source book of dramatic games, music, movement, skits, storytelling, pantomime, and improvisation.

ArtsEdge. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org> This source provides age appropriate ideas tying the performing arts to math, science, and language arts.

4-H Afterschool, *Ages & Stages*, UConn Cooperative Extension System. A reference on child growth and development for children ages 5 to 18.

Gesell & Ilg. *The Child from Five to Ten*. Harper Brothers. 1946. A reference on child growth and development for children ages 5 to 10. 🌻



Music... and More, for Your Preschoolers!

Mary Cox, Master Preschool Teacher
UConn Child Development Laboratories



An Integral Part of our Program

Although I don't play a musical instrument or consider myself a professional singer, I am in constant awe of how children respond to me as I sing a

new or unfamiliar song. To see children actively participating in dramatic storytelling or singing a classroom favorite, (regardless of their cultural background, development, or gender) has deeply affected my thinking on music's powerful influence on children's learning and development. When I began teaching young children in 1984, music and movement experiences were primarily held during large group time gatherings. It wasn't until I began working with children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children who had special needs that I learned that music, dramatic storytelling, and movement experiences allow all children to be active participants. I have learned that musical experiences provide an opportunity for children to feel successful, regardless of their culture or development. As a result, music, dramatic story telling and movement experiences are an integral part of our daily program.

Select Books That "Sing and Chant!"

Singing and chanting are fun ways that children express ideas and feelings. There are a myriad of books that "sing and chant!" I have found that choosing two or three books for extended periods allows children to become familiar with the tune and words to the song. Choose a cozy space where children can "read" and "sing" with each other. Video and audio taping of children as they experience

this activity allows children to see and hear themselves, a worthwhile result in itself. Send a tape and book home with a parent so that they can become familiar with the tune to songs they hear their child singing. Consider allowing them to "perform" for other children in your program. Familiar children's songs also make great chants. Instead of singing, chant the words and clap the beats. Ingredients for a good chant for young children include topics that are relevant to their lives (animals, families, and vehicles).

Five of my Favorite Books that Sing and Chant

1. "Abiyoyo" (Pete Seeger)
2. "Baby Beluga" (Raffi)
3. "Do Your Ears Hang Low?" (Church)
4. "Miss Mary Mack" (illustrations by Polenghi)
5. "The Seals on the Bus" (Hort)

Dramatic Story Telling and Movement

Research informs us that children learn by doing. Therefore, why not create "story prop" bags? Choose a favorite story and gather materials such as small stuffed or plastic animals, matchbox cars, dollhouse furniture, or recycled materials such as a shoebox. Be creative! I generally use the large one-gallon Ziploc bags to keep the book and materials together. Add your "story prop" bag in that cozy

(Continued on page 5)

CHILD CARE INFOLINE MAILBAG

Q. I am a family child care provider and I am looking for courses or workshops that I can attend. Do you know of any in my area?

Workshops and courses for early care professionals are listed in publications of various child care organizations. If you are not a member of any such organization, there are **two excellent sources** of workshops and courses providing information on a variety of topics of interest to child care professionals. **The first source** of such information is the Internet.

Here are some web sites that offer links to professional development opportunities:

- www.greatkidsct.org
- www.learn.k12.ct.us
- www.aces.k12.ct.us
- www.ces.k12.ct.us
- www.ctserc.org
- www.eastconn.org
- www.educationconnection.org

The second source is the "2-1-1



Child Care Infoline". Staff at the Infoline can offer referrals for professional development opportunities statewide and you may find that there are some pertinent workshops offered in your local area. In addition, 2-1-1 Child Care Infoline has a team of Early Childhood Specialists that are available to conduct workshops for early care professionals. Providers can call 2-1-1 or (800) 505-1000 for this information. ✨

space you provide. I have found that once I started creating this tool, the more fun we all had using them to sing or tell a story. Creating a dramatic play space with materials from children's stories or classic tales enables children to actively retell events from a story. In my classroom this year we transformed our dramatic play space with props from the tale "The Three Little

Kittens." The space included a washing machine, detergent, a clothesline, and of course three stuffed animal kittens with three sets of mittens. Watching the children I realized how much learning was occurring in a playful setting!

Move!

This year I introduced my preschoolers to Gregg and Steve's "Adventure in

Space." It became such a favorite that children asked to listen to it as they "built" their own spacecraft from hollow blocks and began acting out the song. Provide a space where children can listen, move, and play to music. Intentional planning of music, movement, and dramatic storytelling experiences allows all children to become active participants. ✦

The Performing Arts = Intellectual Development ... Are You Convinced?

*Dr. Susan Snyder with Aaron Snyder
Arts Education IDEAS
www.aeideas.com*

Can you afford the time?

In an educational environment where funding, assessment, and even respect are driven primarily by test scores, how on earth can you afford to take the time to teach the arts? If children learn their ABCs and their multiplication tables, that is what's really important, right?

Wrong! By limiting our program, we also limit the languages utilized. In addition to the languages of words and numbers, humans also communicate through the languages of music, visual art, and movement. Drama, one of the performing arts, combines all three of these. The reason it is important to diversify languages is that children learn in a variety of ways. Yes, some will tolerate sitting and being lectured to, but most young children are kinesthetic learners. To

eliminate movement from their curriculum and learning strategies is to deprive them of their most effective mode of learning.

For example, it has been shown that children who cannot keep a steady beat have trouble reading. Further, it has been shown that reading words causes activity in the language center of the brain, but reading music causes the brain to 'light up like a Christmas tree.' Artistic representation is one of the primary ways that children process their learning and develop layers of understanding. The point is that a well-crafted integrated arts curriculum allows young children to learn in various ways, creating neural connections that wouldn't exist had they just sat and listened.

Higher SAT Scores

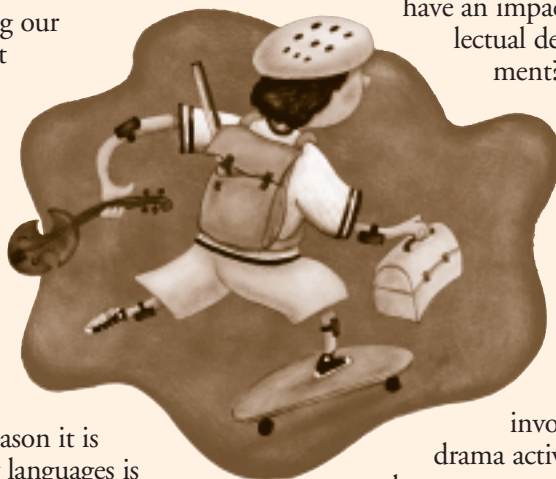
So, how does this all have an impact on intellectual development? If we flash forward to test scores, we find that children who have been involved in drama activities are shown to score, on average, 100 points better on their SATs. Why? Because they have a broad base to draw upon, are comfort-

able improvising, and are able to consider problems in multiple ways.

Test scores loom more important as our youth grow older, but the deeper level is what's truly important here. As these children grow, they will be able to see multiple angles and perspectives much more easily because they will have approached the same story, problem, or issue through multiple languages. They will appreciate the arts as they have experienced them, and they will hopefully develop a love of learning that is rarely spawned from less activity-based classrooms. Their fluency in all the languages humans use to communicate will ease adjustments and empower them in a variety of social situations. The end game is to create intelligent, well-adjusted adults with minds capable of extraordinary things.

Some early childhood and school programs are well on their way to making the arts part of their everyday curriculum, others have not yet begun.

Wherever your child's world falls on this continuum, as a caregiver you can take it upon yourself to introduce and teach the arts that those under your care need for total literacy. If you need help, there are resources out there for even those without an educational or artistic background. Just ask. (Ed. Note: In addition to the several authors represented in this newsletter, you will find a variety of other resources throughout this newsletter.)



Department of Social Services (DSS)

<http://www.dss.state.ct.us/ccare/>

Knowledge Corner: Find the Information You Need!

These two articles in the Department of Social Services Update spotlight two unique sources of information for caregivers: the "Great Kids CT" website and the publication, "Caring for Connecticut's Children, Vol. I."

One-Stop Source for Reliable Information on Young Children
(<http://www.greatkidsct.org/index.htm>)

Larry Dowler, Communications Consultant, GreatKidsCT
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It is often difficult to sort through the wealth of information agencies and organizations provide to find answers to specific questions you may have about the important job of caring for children. Sometimes it is even hard to know where to find trustworthy information. These difficulties were some of the reasons that the Connecticut State Library developed the website listed above- a one-stop source for reliable information on young children (birth to eight years) for parents and caregivers.

Topics covered at this web site range from toilet training, reading readiness, and discipline, to childhood diseases and disabilities, things to see and do with children, and organizations and support groups that can help parents

and caregivers deal with specific issues.

It's easy to use! Just go to www.greatkidsCT.org and select a term from one of three main categories – Learning, Parenting or Health & Safety – and view a list of topics. Alternatively, if you don't see the topic you want, type a topic in the search box and click, "GO." Either way, greatkidsCT can quickly connect you to information and resources on hundreds of childhood issues. If you don't have Internet access, computers are available at your local library.

In addition, the web site offers a **Training Calendar** that provides details on trainings and workshops occurring across the state. Parents, child care professionals, and other interested individuals can even sign up for sessions online! Why wait? Get started on learning!

New Health and Safety Handbook-- A Fun, Easy Reference for Parents and Caregivers

Frances Duran, Policy Associate
Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut
(860) 679-1519

Where can you find information on health and safety for young children and health and safety resources for you and the children in your care? One excellent place is the fun and colorful new publication from the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, entitled *Caring for Connecticut's Children* (January 2004), Volume I: Promoting Health and

Safety.

This publication is a user-friendly handbook developed with the help of health professionals, child care providers, and parents. It provides research-based, up-to-date information and local resources on key health and safety issues for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. It addresses important questions like:

- How can I reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)?
- When should a child first visit the dentist?
- How can I safely prepare foods for young children?
- What should I do if a child starts choking?
- How often should a child receive medical check-ups?

In addition to offering suggestions on what to do to promote health and safety, the handbook also explains the reasoning behind those recommendations. For those looking for additional help or information on covered topics, this publication provides contact information for local and national organizations referenced in the articles.

Copies of the handbook have been mailed to many parents and child care providers throughout the state. If you did not receive a copy, or if you would like to request or download additional copies, call at the number above or visit the Child Health and Development Institute's website at www.chdi.org. ✦

Department of Public Health (DPH)

(800) 282-6063, (800) 439-0437, (860) 509-8045, and
http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Day_Care/day_care.htm
Division of Community Based Regulation
Child Day Care Licensing

Why Include Performing Arts in Your Program?

Mary Emerling, R.N., B.S.N.
Nurse Consultant

When we watch children singing along with The Wiggles or playing house with their friends, it's easy to see that it is fun for them. Activities of childhood should be fun. As the saying goes, "you're only a kid once." So, why not make it an enjoyable experience? Singing, playing dress-up, and boogying to the beat aren't all just about fun and games, however. Music, drama, and dance also offer children opportunities for personal growth, social development, and pathways to higher learning. Activities in the performing arts teach children important lessons and reinforce habits that are vital to their health and well being.

Music helps listening skills, may be used to communicate lessons in health and safety, and offers a means of emotional expression. Setting daily tasks, such as eating healthy snacks, brushing your teeth, or buckling a seat belt, to music and song reinforces lifelong skills and activities of daily living. Just as important is teaching children that there are appropriate levels of sound volume and that excessive loud music and sounds can be harmful to their hearing.

Drama and role-playing allow children to practice roles and identities modeled by the adults in their lives. In playing "dress-up" they practice their fine motor skills by buttoning, zipping, and tying on clothing. By using toys, children learn how tools of society like play irons and computers are used. This also gives child care providers the opportunity to talk with the children about things like using caution in sharing items, particularly hats, in terms of health (head lice) and the dangers associated with electrical devices such as irons and plugs.

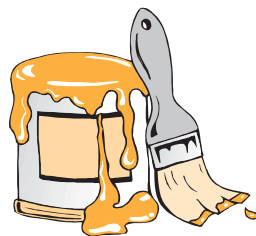
Dance provides children with the

opportunity to interact with others as well as express themselves. Through creative movement, children can communicate images, ideas, and emotions. The use of muscles and movement is a great form of exercise and encourages development of coordination and exploration of body parts and how they work. Dancing also teaches children about sharing space and may be used in teaching children about personal boundaries and safety issues such as clearing an area before the activity in order to avoid injuries.

Individually or together, music, drama, and dance are terrific ways of giving children the opportunity to learn more about themselves and the world around them. In Connecticut, activities of the performing arts may fulfill requirements described in state regulations (Child Day Care Centers & Group Day Care Home facilities Section 19a-7a-8a(a) 3 and Family Day Care Homes Section 19a-87b-10(c)(1) and 19a-87b-10(d)) for licensed day care providers which support the understanding that appropriate activities are important in the growth and development of children. ✦

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) Takes Center Stage

Ana Chambers, MPH, CHES
Health Education Coordinator
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program



I. Connecticut's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Forms Task Force to Eliminate Lead Poisoning in Connecticut

The Connecticut Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) has progressed to a point where a statewide, comprehensive lead elimination plan is critical to achieve the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy People 2010 goal of childhood lead poisoning elimination. The program has been receiving funding from the CDC since 1992 to conduct its lead poisoning prevention activities, with local programs receiving guidance and assistance from the state.

Since that time, practices have been instituted to ensure proper medical and environmental management of children with elevated blood lead levels. The adoption of the Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Regulations in September 1992 gave increased authority and power to the state and local health authorities to enforce investigation and abatement standards. State funds were allocated in 1994 for two regional lead treatment centers—Yale New Haven and Hartford.

The CT CLPPP has convened a statewide task force, comprised of public health professionals and other partners from throughout the state, to develop a comprehensive childhood lead poisoning elimination plan to reach the 2010 goal. The task force will address focus areas of primary prevention, screening, case management, housing, and surveillance. Members represent a wide array of agencies and organizations, including: the Access Agency in Willimantic, the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, the State's Attorney's Office, Fairfield University School of Nursing, local health departments, and the Connecticut Commission on Children. The group held its first meeting February 19th and will meet again on April 1st. Stay tuned for more news about this important issue!

II Lead Free Families – A Bridgeport Pilot Project

The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) has launched a community based, outreach, and education initiative called “Lead Free Families”. This new program will work primarily with the residents of the East End Neighborhood of the City of Bridgeport. This project involves the Department partnering with the Fairfield University School of Nursing Health Promotion Center, which will act as the fiduciary agent for the project. Other partners include the East End Community Council (EECC), the Bridgeport Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED), and the Bridgeport Health Department.

The Bridgeport Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

will provide operational support of the proposed program by conducting property inspections, issuing and enforcing abatement work orders, and assisting in the relocation of lead-poisoned children. Bridgeport will serve as a pilot model for more targeted interventions in other urban and rural areas throughout Connecticut.

The goal of this project is to reduce the prevalence of lead poisoning in this high-risk population through screening, education and risk reduction, case management, and follow-up. In collaboration with our partners offering neighborhood-based services, and with the neighborhood residents playing an integral role, the initiative offers:

- Accessible screening for lead poisoning in an environment that is family-friendly. Screening events are held on-site at child day care facilities, family resource centers, community centers, churches, and schools.

- Education for parents and children is made available to anyone in the community. In addition to this individualized education, group education is offered at the screening sites and other community programs.
- In this initiative, multiple contacts are made to reduce risks. This project includes repeated visits to the screening and education sites for on-going screening and education efforts.
- A nurse case manager and student nurses provide case management and follow-up services. Where necessary, families are referred to the Lead Safe House Program at Bridgeport Hospital for temporary relocation. Follow-up includes referral to the individual’s primary provider. If there is no primary provider, the client is referred to the Bridgeport Health Department or one of the two federally qualified health centers. 🌿

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