



All Children Considered

VOL. II • 2006/07

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

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Fun with Language and Literacy

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Children learn Everywhere

What can a caregiver or parent do to help a child learn and practice early literacy skills? Although it only seems like child's play, singing songs, rhyming words, repeating silly sentences, and talking together are some of the important activities that can happen at any time of the day, and promote reading and writing skills.

To be good readers and writers, children must have:

- Oral language skills (learn new words, follow directions, and retell stories);
- Auditory awareness skills (notice sounds, rhyming words, and number of words in a short sentence);

- Print awareness and letter knowledge (understand that print carries a message and letters are used to make words);
- Motivation to engage in activities related to literacy development (access to many books, watching others read and write); and
- Opportunities for a variety of early literacy activities.

Pretending to Read

Although it is fun to watch children "pretend read" and write, these activities actually support the development of literacy skills. Pretend reading happens when a child appears to read the words on the pages of a familiar picture book to tell the story, while in fact, the child is instead using his or her own words to tell the story. This is a great way for children to practice using learned vocabulary words. To develop listening comprehension skills,

(Continued on next page)

From the editor...

Although literacy fundamentally describes the ability to read and write, it also can be understood as including the appreciation and understanding of literature, drama, and song.

Early literacy, the theme of this issue, is the first step in the process by which children gain the language skills that lead to literacy and their ability to understand and be engaged with their environment.

A few of our authors have provided information about three of the many

Connecticut programs promoting early literacy. Others have outlined specific methods to assist your efforts in helping young children acquire language skills and early literacy.

Be sure to check out State Agency Updates, Child Care Mailbag, and Caregivers' Resource Corner. And lastly, we invite you to share your comments with us about our newsletter.

Harry Mangle, Editor



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Departments of
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and Public Health

(Fun with Language from front)

an adult can ask the child questions about the pictures in the book, and point out and name additional items in the pictures.

Promoting Literacy is a Natural Activity

Simply talking with children, one-on-one or in groups, also helps develop oral language and vocabulary skills. While engaged in conversations, a parent or caregiver can model certain sentence patterns and introduce new words. Children will often practice using those same words during dramatic play or at other play times. Have you ever been surprised to hear a child innocently repeat parts of an adult conversation at the most inopportune

moment? Children, just like sponges, are ready to soak up the language around them.

Once children are aware that print is everywhere around them, they start noticing letters and words. Magnetic letters on the refrigerator or playing with letter tiles on a table are excellent ways to help children recognize the letters in his or her name or even practice creating and reading words on signs or doors.

The more children play with language, listen to stories, and practice using words in speaking and writing, the better prepared they will be for learning early literacy skills. Keep children excited about literacy (and have fun yourself!).

Fostering Reading Readiness

Teri Lawrence, Executive Director
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Literacy Experiences and Kindergarten Readiness

Readiness in its fullest context includes many skills, abilities, and dispositions such as being able to identify letters, recognize sounds, write one's name, follow directions, participate in a group, count and organize a few items, curiosity, and the ability to speak with and listen to others. (Connecticut State Department of Education, Preschool Performance Standards)

High quality early care and education programs devote time and focus to these performance standards. Real experiences and connections with literature, such as reenacting the story of "Three Billy Goats Gruff" or making newspaper hats like Curious George that will float in the water table are examples of positive experiences for young children. These are based on

the belief that when children play in a meaningful and purposeful manner they will notice letters, think about new words, build connections, and remember stories and characters. Children need multiple opportunities over time where they can play with language, build their vocabulary, and delight in the world of literature.

Supporting Parents

As caregivers and educators, we help parents navigate the "getting ready for Kindergarten" waters, by:

- Helping families realize their time with their child and their interest in activities is far more important than flash cards or supermarket workbooks.
- Encouraging parents to be excited about their child's attempts to read and write.
- Pointing out that reading opportunities are not just found in stories, but on signs, in the stores, and on a favorite cereal box. They can write messages for lunch boxes, tell stories from memory, make up stories as they drive to school, and play with rhymes and poetry while giving baths.
- Reminding parents to listen more, encourage children to talk, rhyme,

References

Connecticut State Board of Education. *Connecticut's Blueprint for Reading Achievement: The Report of The Early Reading Success Panel*. Hartford, CT: 2000.

National Research Council. *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999. 🌱



(Photo courtesy of Patsy Evans)

sing more, and to find the joy in language and communication

Link Sounds and Symbols

Wonderful, easy to remember Mother Goose rhymes, songs, and values once learned, stay with us forever. Children love to play with language and rhyme; sounds, and poetry provide this opportunity. They especially enjoy the social exchange of chanting and reciting favorite pieces with others.

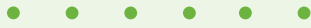
Literacy Experiences are all Around

Most importantly, in order to read and write, children need to be able to talk and understand language. No matter where we are, there are numerous opportunities for children to develop those basic skills for reading and writing. Enjoy and share the enjoyment of reading and writing yourself -it's contagious! 🌱

“Tips From the Field”

Introduction

Promoting early literacy is a topic which researchers have studied extensively. This article translates some of those scholarly findings into “ready to use” information by three professionals from different educational environments.



Reach Out to your Children and Read!

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Early Intervention

Among other things, inadequate literacy skills in adults have implications for accessibility and quality of healthcare for families. What can be done? Because the infant-toddler years are crucial in developing future readers, it

is never too early to start! Studies indicate that reading to children as young as 18 months old can help foster language and early literacy skills

As a child care provider, you have an important role in shaping children's futures by sharing information and literacy strategies with the child's parents, as well as creating an environment that encourages frequent reading.

Things to consider when reading to young children:

1. Use age-appropriate books to gain the child's interest. This is also important because developmentally appropriate books contain language that is appropriate for the child. Allow the child to choose the book.
2. Show interest in the reading experience. This may mean paying attention to the child's verbal and non-verbal cues, being responsive to the child's behavior, and encouraging the child's interest in reading.
3. Monitor the child's enthusiasm.

Do not force the reading experience, but create a positive environment.

4. Elaborate on new vocabulary. Giving examples and explaining the meaning of new words is one of the most important ways to help the child gain word mastery.
5. Repeated readings of storybooks may help increase children's understanding of the vocabulary. Repeating the new word several times has also been associated with greater retention of the newly acquired words.

One national, not-for-profit organization that promotes early literacy is Reach Out and Read. More tips on reading to children and choosing age-appropriate books are found on their website:

http://www.reachoutandread.org/about_tips.html ➔



books in your art, block, snack, and drama centers.

Suggest ideas! “I see you are playing restaurant. Someone could pretend to be the waiter/waitress and take orders!” Have a group that argues about the rules for kickball or another outdoor game write a “rulebook” that empowers students to own their game.

Make a “word wall.” Use magnetized letters or words on the side of a cabinet or cookie sheet to encourage the children to build words and sentences. It's a great group project to come up with silly sentences.

Be a Role Model and talk about your favorite books or how being able to read and write is useful in your every day life. Lastly, show that you ENJOY reading! ➔

Literacy-Rich Environments in Afterschool Programs

*Linda Heidorn
CT Afterschool Network Trainer
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How can afterschool program staff members provide a literacy rich environment?

Read aloud to children whenever possible! Read books, menus, and all the print around you. Read, Read, Read! Help beginning readers by pointing to the print, or use the child's finger to point to the print. Pointing helps reinforce that print begins on the left and continues to the right. Children will learn to focus on individual words and sounds as they begin to connect letters and sounds.

Be expressive and entertaining! When reading aloud, pause often, make eye contact, and give characters different voices; children will listen and understand better. Add your own thoughts and predictions: “Hmmm...I wonder what will happen next?” or “He is really excited about going to the zoo. I love the zoo too!” These comments model thinking that will make students better readers; predicting events and connecting to the characters is very important for comprehension.

Label everything in the program. Create photo displays. Have the children write captions. Students will want to write and read about themselves and friends.

Send the message that reading/writing is important. Write notes to friends and family. Write grocery and supply wish lists. Place clipboards, paper, and pencil in each activity center. Place

Reading in Afterschool Program – Why Not?

Maureen Toomey,
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Infusing reading into activities enhances the program and strengthens the child's chance at success in other life areas. Here are some ideas to make reading part of the afterschool hours.

- Get children used to reading together by making it part of the daily or weekly routine. Read to the group during snack time. Not all children need participate, but for those who want to, set up a quiet corner to hear a story and enjoy a healthy snack. Start by making it staff directed and, over time, have the children volunteer to be guest readers. Having one child read one page is a good way to build the group's confidence and respect for each other. Remember, in an afterschool setting readers should have the chance to volunteer and not be put on the spot to read.
- Try using reading as a transition activity. At the end of the day it can become chaotic when parents are arriving to collect their children. Settle the children in a quiet space at the end of the day, and the children can enjoy the story until it is time to leave. Parents may also be encouraged to join the reading space for a few minutes at the end of their long day. Be sure to give the parents prior information on this transition. And, teach the children that the parent's decision is final when it is time to leave.
- Another way to transition is to start activities with a book. I use stories to teach an art concept. Book illustrations are a great way to teach color, shape, use of space and line, plus balance, unity, and emphasis.

- Have what I call "exploration books" available at all times. When finishing an activity a child can pick up an exploration book, piquing his/her curiosity. Exploration books have colorful graphics with riddles, mysteries, puzzles, or mazes to solve. The *I Spy* and *Where's Waldo* series are exploration books. Art books to try are *Art Fraud Detective*, and *The Great Art Scandal*.

- Introduce every book by reading the title, author, and illustrator. Share the publisher and copyright date with older children. Have the children create their own books, using the many simple and low cost ways to make books

Every story leads to questions and discussion. Include simple open-ended questions in your reading time, and ask the children for their opinions about the characters and story line. Children can have a "book group" just like adults. Having fun is perhaps the most important aspect for reading; take time and enjoy the process.

Sources:

- Reading with elementary school kids
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/home/funways.php#elementary>
- Love to Read,
<http://www.nbcdi.org/programs/LTR/> ♣



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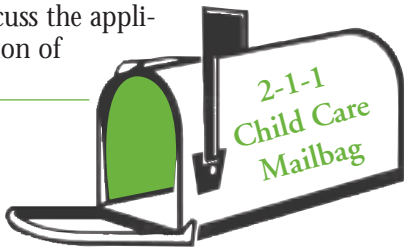
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Keeping Cool in Licensed Child Day Care Facilities

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Summer Programming in All Programs

When getting ready for summer activities, remember the requirements for keeping children COOL as well as safe. Here are helpful reminders on both topics. First, all programs need to be sure that playgrounds provide adequate shade. Second, since sunscreen is not considered to be a medication, it is not addressed in the administration of medication regulations. Therefore, providers should discuss the application of



Question:

I am a licensed family daycare home provider and lately have had a difficult time attracting families to my program. My enrollment has been low, and I do not know how to create more business. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer:

The first step in attracting families to your child care program is active marketing. Here are several ways to market your business successfully. Creating a business name that is easy for people to remember and that describes the business is a great tool.

sunscreens with children's parents and obtain written permission before their use.

Family Day Care Homes

Regulations [Section 19a-87b-9(f)] require that, "when there is a swimming pool or any other body of water at the facility or near enough to the facility to attract or be accessible to children at any time of the year, there shall be a sturdy fence/barrier, four feet high or higher, with locked entrances, which **totally and effectively bars access to the water** by the day care children." Although shallow wading pools are permitted at family day care homes, shallow wading pools that are not fenced must be emptied after each use and must not collect water.

Connecticut General Statutes, Section 29-265a, states that no building permit will be issued for the construction or substantial alteration of a swimming pool at a residence occupied by, or

being built for, one or more families unless a pool alarm is installed with the swimming pool. Be sure to check with your local building official before installing a new pool or altering an existing pool.

Written permission is required from the parents of the day care children if the children will be transported from the family day care home on field trips. Such permission must specify the conditions under which the parent will allow swimming when recreational swimming is part of the family day care program [(Sec. 19a-87b-10(b) (3)]. If travel is to a public beach or pool, it is important to be familiar with the area and to be sure the area is safe for the children in your care, including the availability and qualifications of lifeguards.

Be sure you are within your licensed capacity for the summer. The addition-

(Continued on next page)

If it is possible, place a sign for your business in the front yard by the road. Be sure to include the business name and telephone number on the sign. It is also important to make sure you have an answering machine with a clear and professional message so you do not lose any potential business

Advertising in local newspapers, newsletters, mailing flyers, placing ads in brochures for local events and posting flyers at local places such as dance studios or grocery stores can create a lot of interest in your child care program. Think about including a coupon in your advertisements that offers a week of free child care. You may also want to provide a referral incentive for families that currently attend your program. For example, tell these families that if they refer another family to you, a week of child

care is free for them if that family enrolls in your program.

Listing your child care program with 2-1-1 Child Care can also help generate business. The resource and referral agency receives over 30,000 calls a year from families seeking child care in Connecticut. For more information on marketing your business, just call 2-1-1 Child Care, and good luck!

2-1-1 Child Care also provides specific information regarding professional organizations, child care resources, consumer education, statistics, and training opportunities. Our website at www.childcareinfo.org also provides information on quality child care. For information on any of these topics, call 2-1-1 or 800.505.1000. 🌱

al school age children permitted before and after school during the school calendar year are not allowed in the summer [See Sec. 19a-87b-5(d)]. Children must be supervised at all times [Sec. 19a-87b-10(h)]. Have assistants approved by the Department in advance in case additional supervision of the children is needed on field trips or around water. Be sure your first aid certification from a Department approved course is current.

Make sure that there is sufficient ventilation and that the temperature at the facility assures the health and comfort of the children [Sec. 19a-87b-9(g)]. Readily available drinking water must be accessible to children at all times [Sec. 19a-87b-10(c) (2)].

Group Day Care Homes and Child Day Care Centers

Swimming may also be part of the summer program at group day care homes and child day care centers. Written parent permission is required for any activity away from the premises

and for transportation services [Sec. 19a-79-5a (a) (1)]. Program staffing must be adequate to assure that the appropriate level of supervision is provided and staff/child ratios are maintained, depending on the ages and developmental levels of the children in care and the activity [Sec. 19a-79-4a(c)]. Swimming, wading, and bathing facilities, if provided, must comply with Sections 19-13-B33b, 19-13-B34, and 19-13-B36 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies applicable to public pools, artificial bathing places without a controlled water supply and public bathing establishments. For more information, you may check the DPH web site at www.dph.state.ct.us or call your local health director or the Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health at 860.509.7296. Wading pools are not permitted at group day care homes or child day care centers. The use of sprinklers is allowed as long as the area is safe and well supervised.

Drinking water must be available and accessible [Sec 19a-79-7a (h)]. When the temperature exceeds eighty (80) degrees Fahrenheit, the operator is required to provide more fluids and increase ventilation [Sec. 19a-79-7a (e)].

Knowing the regulations and planning in advance can help make the summer a safer and more enjoyable time for everyone.

Important Note to Licensed Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes

Regulations have been drafted that, if approved, will have a significant impact on your programs. Some of the proposed changes include requirements when swimming is part of the program. Please be sure to check the Child Day Care Licensing Program web page at www.dph.state.ct.us under Programs and Services to be sure you have a copy of the most current version of the regulations. ➔

CONNECTICUT STATE AGENCY UPDATE

Department of Social Services (DSS)

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

Collaboration Efforts for Early Literacy

Productive collaborations exist among state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and communities for the purpose of promoting children's early literacy. Funds provided by the Department of Social Services, through the Quality Enhancement Initiative, support, in part or completely, these collaborations. Lessons learned from three such collaborations are provided below; to learn more about them, contact the author of each section.



Middletown's Commitment to Early Literacy

*Cindy Cappetta, Family Learning Facilitator
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Infants and Toddlers

Language is the key that opens the door to literacy for infants and toddlers. When babies hear their parents and caregivers talking or singing to them, and they respond to those sounds, that is the beginning of literacy. When caregivers respond to children's babbling and cooing with the same sounds, encouraging them to continue the dialog, they are helping the development of pre-literacy skills

that lead to reading and further language.

Many parents feel that newborns are too young to be read to. But when children are in the arms of a parent or trusted caregiver, sharing a sturdy board book that they can mouth and touch freely as the adult talks about the pictures, literacy skills are building. Children will feel that reading is a pleasurable experience and will want to be read to.

Talking about body parts while changing a child's diaper, singing songs and reciting nursery rhymes while riding in the car, and talking about what you are doing as you go through your daily routines helps

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children enlarge their vocabulary. Understanding more words will help children understand words in books that they will eventually read for themselves.

Using various approaches, many different Middletown programs collaborate to engage families in their children's early literacy development. Among these are two medical practices that participate in the **Reach Out and Read** program which provides children with books at their well-child visits, and two Middletown Board of Education programs whose mission is to reach out to parents of infants and toddlers. ♣

Bristol's Family Learning Kits Promote Early Literacy

Mary-Alice Petrucelli-Timek, Grant Manager
Bristol School Readiness Council
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The Bristol School Readiness Council is targeting Family literacy with the new **Family Learning Backpack Program**. This is being accomplished in partnership with the Women, Infants, and Children Program; Board of Education; library; Head Start program; Bristol Preschool Child Care Center; Bristol Housing Authority;

The Imagine Nation Museum; and the Family Resource Centers.

Specifically selected educational materials are included in an appealing backpack for low-income Bristol children ages 3 and 4. Four family workshops, focusing on different aspects of literacy, are scheduled throughout the year at the library. During these workshops, parents and children engage in a fun family art expression activity, children participate in a story time and the parents are given instructions on how to work with their children to encourage literacy skills. Parents are then encouraged to try these new skills with their children as library and school readiness council staff members model the new skills intro-

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Caregivers Resource Corner

Upcoming Multicultural Education Conference

The 12th Annual Northeast Conference on Multicultural Education, to be held on Thursday, October 11th, 2007 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, is designed to provide the opportunity for pre-K to higher education professionals to:

- Learn how to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, while working toward equity in our schools and society,
- Hear about innovative programs and strategies that infuse multicultural education into the curriculum to prepare all students for a global society,
- Learn about effective strategies to increase student achievement among diverse students, and
- Highlight the work of exceptional individuals and programs.

For more information or to become part of this established event as a par-

ticipant, sponsor, exhibitor, or other kind of supporter, contact: Dr. William A. Howe, State Department of Education Consultant for Multicultural Education and Gender Equity, 860.713.6542; email: william.howe@ct.gov

Access to Training Lessons and Assets at the Latest Lab Schools

Two higher education institutions have received the latest grant award for their laboratory schools. Southern Connecticut State University, with a strong early childhood education program, is working with Leila Day Nursery School, the oldest continuously operating child care program in the state and the second oldest in the nation. Norwalk Community College, a teacher training institution, is partnering with Room to Grow Preschool to serve as the model site.

The goal is to give reasonable access to state-sponsored professional development partners, such as Regional

Education Service Centers, the State Education Resource Center, colleges, and universities for filming, photographing, and using technology to share the lessons and assets of the program with a broader community of professional developers, trainers, and learners.

The lab school partnerships are expected to offer early childhood educators opportunities to: 1) observe a high quality early care and education program for 3, 4, and 5-year-old children; 2) observe an environment that promotes the overall development of children as addressed in the CT Preschool Curriculum Framework; 3) attend early childhood workshops and presentations. In addition, parents will be able to participate in parenting workshops and family events.

For additional information, please contact Yemi Onibokun at 860.807.2029 or by email at yemi.onibokun@ct.gov ♣



duced during the workshop.

The main goal of the Learning Kit Program is to reach out to low-income children in the community by ensuring educational materials are available to their families to assist them in attaining school readiness. 🌱

New Haven Readiness Council and “Mornings at the Museum”

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For the last five years, the project ***Mornings at the Museum*** has offered kith and kin caregivers and family child care providers a community resource as a classroom where children in their care can gain the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for school. The project encourages these providers to bring their children regularly to a museum setting and helps them build their home libraries with high-quality children's picture books.

Because children acquire knowledge in many different ways, an important concept for providing quality early care, each exhibit in the Museum is designed to provide a kaleidoscope of different experiences

matching the eight unique “intelligences” and ways children learn: musical, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, spatial, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, and naturalist.

All of the exhibits include children's picture books written in English, Spanish, and Braille. In addition, exhibits encourage providers to include such books in their homes' mini-classrooms. At the conclusion of each morning session, providers are given bilingual children's picture books and literacy curriculum props to complement the stories. Each child enrolled in the program also receives a bilingual book to take home. 🌱

News Flash!

The Department of Social Services just released the 2005-2006 Annual Report to the State General Assembly on “The Status of Child Care in Connecticut.” It is available at <http://www.dss.state.ct.us/pubs/CCAnnReport06.pdf>. Please submit any questions or comments about the report directly to amparo.garcia@ct.gov.

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