

Play: “The Best Things in Life are Free”

“Play” is the new buzzword and is a topic that seems to spring up in any forum discussing child development. In fact, our cover article for the “Fall 2007” issue of our newsletter was titled, “Attention: Children at Play”.

Because this subject is so important to our children’s development, we are extending the topic for another look.

Let’s begin by defining what play is *not*: gymnastics class, karate lessons, soccer practice, video games (even Wii), computer games (even educational ones), coloring books, crafts, board games, or any type of adult moderated activity. These activities themselves aren’t harmful, but if too much time is devoted to adult-oriented activities and screen time, they encroach on the time that children have to play freely. Excessive television viewing also limits a child’s imagination because of the preconceived scripts they provide.

When we hear “play” we think of toys, or at least what materials we should have available. Play is not a thing, it is an activity, and an activity that can take place with absolutely no materials whatsoever. Children create play materials from whatever is available and don’t require expensive, commercially produced items in order to play or learn. In fact, the more special props and scripts a child has, the less their imagination is used. For example, in the absence of play dishes, a child will create or imagine the dishes they need out of what materials they have available - this of course could be anything or nothing at all.

Adults often, unknowingly, suppress children’s imaginative muscles by providing children materials, directions or activities. If a child is engrossed in play involving - say a flying turkey who escapes the farm Thanksgiving morning, we don’t want to interfere by offering a “teachable moment” and telling them that turkeys really can’t fly. In true child’s play, children control the script, improvise props, make the decisions, and plan their course of action. To do this, they use private speech. They plan in their head what they are going to do, and how they are going to do it. Private speech used in free play is precisely what children use to develop self-regulation. Children who have strong imaginations and have been offered more time to play freely are likely to do better in school than their peers who had less free play. Advocate for free play and resist the pressure from the academic arena to allow this time to shrink by filling it with adult directed activities and lessons. Our children will be more successful if we just trust in their ability to play and learn while doing so. *Added bonus...* the best kind of play costs nothing at all!

Recommended Resources:

February 21, 2008 NPR transcript “Old Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills”

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=19212514>

February 28, 2008 NPR transcript “Creative Play Makes for Kids in Control”

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=76838288>

“Einstein Never Used Flashcards” by Hirsch-Pasek and Golinkoff *

“Your Child’s Growing Mind” by Jane M. Healy *

“Play the Foundation that Supports the House of Higher Learning” by Lisa Murphy *

“Where Do the Children Play?” DVD by PBS and the University of Michigan *

“A Place for Play” by Elizabeth Goodenough

* Available in our resource libraries

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Programa de Estudios: Panadería de Nieve

Del libro: "Good Earth Art"

Materiales:

- nieve
- cortador de galletas y de bizcochos
- molde de pastel
- molde de panecillos
- hoja de lámina para galletas o para pizza
- colorante para comidas o azúcar de color (opcional)



Proceso:

1. Oprima firmemente la nieve en el cortador de bizcochos o molde de pastel. (Utiliza nieve limpia)
2. Voltea el molde de panecillos o de bizcochos sobre la lámina de galletas para panecillos blancos de nieve. Use el cortador de galletas para cortar diferentes formas y ponerlos sobre la lámina de galletas.
3. Déjelas así o decorarlas con colorante de comida.

Variaciones:

1. Rocía los bizcochos con una mezcla de agua y colorante de comida en una botella de tipo rociador.
2. Haz un pastel de matrimonio afuera con una variedad de moldes y recipientes. Asegúrese de oprimir firmemente la nieve.
3. Forme galletas, pasteles y golosinas con sus manos.

Panadería de Arena

Del libro: "Good Earth Art"

Materiales:

- arena
- agua
- cortador de galletas y de bizcochos
- molde de pastel
- molde de panecillos
- Hoja de lámina para galletas o para pizza
- semillas, cerezas, hierbas, ramitas, piedras pequeñas (opcional)



Proceso:

1. Humedezca la arena para que pueda tomar forma en las manos.
2. Oprima la arena dentro de los moldes para galletas arenosas o bizcochitos.
3. Voltee el molde sobre la lámina para bizcochos arenosos. Usa el cortador de galletas para cortar diferentes formas y volteando las formas arenosas sobre la lámina de galletas. Pueden decorarlas con: cerezas, fresas, hierbas, arena seca, piedras pequeñas u otros objetos naturales.

Variaciones:

1. Construye una escultura de pastel imaginaria con latas, cubetas y recipientes.
2. Trata de usar moldes de pasteles en forma de animales o de formas inusuales.

Huevos

¡Celebramos la primavera con huevos! ¿Sabías que la Asociación Americana del Corazón ya no recomienda cuantos huevos se puede comer a la semana? La recomendación eran tres o cuatro yemas de huevo por semana. Sabemos que las grasas trans y saturadas pueden aumentar los niveles de colesterol aun mas que comidas ricas en colesterol.

- 6 huevos, bien cocidos
- 1 cucharadita de light sour cream
- 1 cucharadita de mayonesa light
- 3/4 de cucharadita de mostaza preparada
- 1 cucharadita de pepinillos (en vinagre)
- 1/8 de cucharadita de cebolla en polvo
- 1/4 de cucharadita de sal
- 1/8 de cucharadita de pimienta

Corta las huevas por la mitad. Saque las yemas y aparte las claras. Haga un puré con las yemas usando un tenedor, agregue todos los ingredientes restantes hasta que estén muy bien mezcladas. Ponga aproximadamente 1 cucharadita de mezcla en medio de la clara de cada huevo. Déjelos enfriar para que se mezclen bien los sabores.

Head Lice: New Treatment Recommendations

Head lice are very common from 3-12 years of age. Children in group settings are at increased risk, because of their frequent head-to-head contact and sharing personal items. Although head lice are a nuisance, they do not transmit infection. Often times, the reaction to a head lice outbreak in a facility is far greater than the lice and their threat to health. This “hysteria” has all too often led to uninfected children being treated “just in case”. Over the past two decades, head lice have become resistant to nearly all first-line treatments (permethrin, pyrethrin, lindan). As a result, these treatments will no longer kill the lice, are a waste of money, and expose children to unnecessary side effects and toxicity. So without these chemicals, how does one treat head lice?

Non-chemical removal:

Mechanical removal of nits is time-consuming, but safest for young children. Use a nit comb, a good light and magnification, since nits are small and hard to see. Of course, this is a great time to engage in some one-on-one conversation with the child, tell stories, etc. This process must take place daily, for ten days (the life cycle of head lice). Haircuts will make the search for head lice easier. Heat from ordinary hand-held hair dryers may be sufficient to kill both the lice and their eggs.

Alternative treatments involving the use of herbal shampoos, mayonnaise, food grade oils, kerosene and hair gels are not proven to be effective.

Lice are not able to survive off of humans for more than a few days. As prevention, it is best to wash clothing (especially hats and scarves), bedding and towels in very hot water and then send to the dryer. Vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture. Soak hair combs, barrettes, etc. in hot water (149°F) for at least 1 hour.

Chemical methods:

Malathion is currently the recommended chemical choice but is not approved for children younger than 6 and is only available by prescription.

Children with head lice should not be excluded or sent home early from childcare or school because of head lice. Instead, parents should be informed on how to properly treat their child and do so before returning to care the next day. If one child in care is diagnosed with head lice, all children should be screened, including siblings of the diagnosed child.

Parent/Provider Solutions

Spring 2009 – Parent/ Provider Solutions

With the tax filing deadline fast approaching I am getting many requests from my clients for year-end child care receipts and my social security number. I know parents need information for filing their taxes but I am very nervous about giving out my SSN. How can I help my parents without putting myself at risk for identity theft?

Year – end child care receipts and giving families your social security number are not required, however, providing families with this information is good business practice and can be done in a way that protects the provider’s SSN information. Using an Employer Identification Number instead of your SSN protects you from identity theft and can be obtained in a few minutes on the IRS Website at www.irs.org. Step by step directions are in the January 2007 Redleaf Institute newsletter at www.redleafinstitute.org and Choices for Children. Use IRS Form W-10, available on the IRS Website or from Choices for Children, as the family’s year-end receipt. Be sure to get the parent’s signature on the form and keep a copy. This will protect you, the provider, in the event there is a dispute about payment received. Families may be eligible for a number of tax credits or tax preparation assistance. The National Women’s Law Center’s webpage, www.nwlc.org/loweryourtaxes has information and additional resources.

CfC Resource Lending Libraries:

CfC Resource Lending Libraries Newly added resources include:

- ~ Wikki Stix Educational Resource Manual
- ~ Where Do the Children Play? This DVD was a winner of the 2008 Eugene International Film Festival Best Film in Social Issues/Family Values
- ~ A Place for Play: A Companion Volume to the Michigan Television Film "Where Do the Children Play?" Elizabeth Goodenough, Editor
- ~ Literacy Kit (children's books, cd's and tapes) - Cameron Park

Wikki Stix

In celebration of Month of the Child in April, CfC is hosting it's 18th Annual Provider Appreciation Breakfast on Nutrition and fun hands-on activities using Wikki Stix. You may now find a wide variety of wikki stix available for sale in all three Resource Lending Libraries. For more information on wikki sticks, visit:

<http://www.wikkistix.com/>

Looking for resources on head lice ?

Visit the Tahoe Resource Library, where you can check out "Those Itsy-Bitsy Teeny-Tiny Not-So-Nice Head Lice book from Judith Anne Rice. This fun illustrated book is also bilingual. In Cameron Park, check out "The Lice Buster Book - What to Do When Your Child Comes Home with Head Lice", by Lennie Copeland. You may also find Good Earth Art by Mary Ann F. Kohl and Cindy Gainer in the Tahoe Resource Lending Library. This environmental art book for kids offers great projects ideas using nature to gather materials to keep children occupied while developing an awareness of the environment and encouraging a caring attitude towards the earth.

Curriculum Corner: Snowy Bakery From Good Earth Art

Materials:

snow
cookie cutters and cake pan
cupcake or muffin tins
cookie sheet or pizza pan
food coloring or colored sugar (optional)



Process:

1. Pack snow into cake pan for snowy cookies or cupcake tins for snowy cupcakes. (Use clean snow)
2. Turn cupcake tin upside down on cookie sheet for snowy cupcakes. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes from cake pan and turn snowy shapes onto cookie sheet or pizza pan.
3. Leave plain or decorate with food coloring or colored sugar.

Variations:

1. Spray snowy baked goods with food coloring and water mixture in clean spray bottle.
2. Make wedding cake outside with variety of pans and containers. Pack firmly.
3. Form cookies, cakes, and treats by hand.

Sandy Bakery From Good Earth Art

Materials:

sand
water
cookie cutters and cake pan
cupcake or muffin tins
cookie sheet or pizza pan
seeds, berries, grasses, twigs, small stones (optional)



Process:

1. Moisten sand with water so that it can be molded by hand and holds its shape.
2. Pack sand into cake pan for sandy cookies or cupcake tins for sandy cupcakes.
3. Turn cupcake tin upside down on cookie sheet for sandy cupcakes. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes from cake pan and turn sandy shape onto cookie sheet or pizza pan. Leave plain or decorate with berries, grasses, twigs, dry sand, small stones or other natural objects.

Variations:

1. Build an imaginary cake sculpture with cans, buckets, containers.
2. Try using one of the cake pans formed as characters, animals, or whimsical shapes.

Subsidy Update: New Eligibility and Need Regulations for Child Care Subsidy Families

California has passed new regulations that Choices for Children is required to follow when documenting the eligibility and need for services for families receiving childcare subsidy services. Choices for Children had implemented many of the changes prior to the new regulations taking effect. However, in response to the new regulations, we have begun requiring additional documentation from families in order to be in compliance with state requirements. Families are being given ample time to provide the needed information and subsidy counselors continue to be available to families with questions about the new regulations. Following are some highlights of the new regulations. Families are encouraged to contact their subsidy counselor with questions regarding how to document their ongoing eligibility and need for services.

Education and Training: Parents continue to be eligible to receive subsidized child care services based upon participation in education/training activities. The classes covered must lead to the completion of a vocational goal that will result in gainful employment. Parents are required to clearly outline their goal and they must document satisfactory progress toward this goal. The regulations now limit education and training status to six years from the start of the parent’s subsidy for training activities. If parents have already obtained a Bachelor’s Degree, they can be covered for no more than twenty-four semester units beyond their degree.

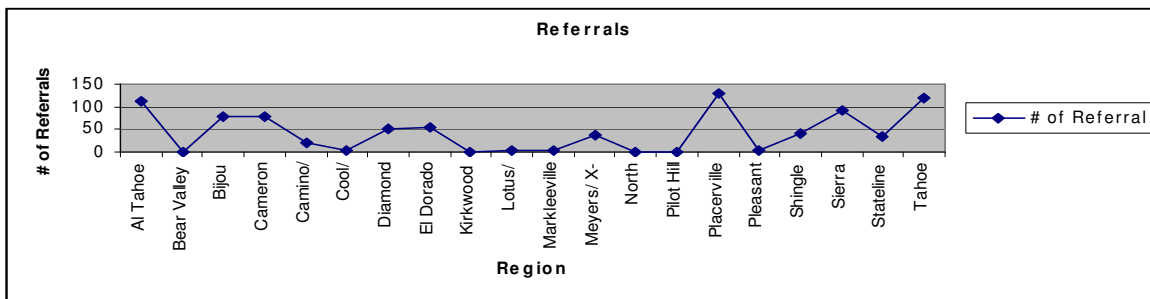
Seeking Employment: Parents can still receive child care services while looking for work for children that are not yet school age and for school age children during school breaks/holidays. However, the new regulations specify that services are limited to sixty working days, Monday through Friday (excluding Federal Holidays), per fiscal year, regardless of how many days per week the parent plans to look for work. In addition, this is now a part-time need for services. Parents must work with their subsidy counselor to develop a clear plan for their seeking employment time and they must decide specifically what days and hours they would like to devote to this. Parents must submit monthly lists of their seeking employment activities to document their need for child care.

Documentation of Family Size: Families receiving a child care subsidy must clearly document who is residing in the home. The enrolled parent is required to provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. Parents may be asked to submit birth certificates or other records to confirm the children in the family. If only one parent signs the application for services, they are responsible for providing documentation that confirms the presence or absence of the other parent. A single parent may provide documentation such as a rental agreement, custody paperwork, child support payments, or other proof to establish the absence of the other parent. Two parent families must establish qualifying needs for service for both parents. Generally, the documentation of need (paycheck stubs, etc.) for both parents can establish that they are each in the home.

While the areas above detail some of the most significant changes, the new regulations address other areas of eligibility and need for families receiving subsidized child care. We are working with all currently enrolled and newly enrolling families to ensure that the new requirements are clearly explained and that families have the opportunity to provide the necessary information to comply. As with any aspect of the child care subsidy program, please contact a Choices for Children subsidy counselor for assistance with questions. Call (530) 676-0707 for the Cameron Park office and (530) 541-5848 for the South Lake Tahoe office.

Resource & Referral Update

The following information provides data gathered over the last six months on referrals given in El Dorado and Alpine Counties. The total number of referrals given from July 1st, 2008 to December 31, 2008 was 862.



Taking Time to Refocus on Your Family

Believe it or not, the economic downturn is providing some unique opportunities to strengthen your family. As we cut back on activities that cost us money, we find ourselves at home more with time on our hands. So why not “seize the moment” and formulate a game plan that allows you to transform your family into a more cooperative, supportive, and loving unit?

It may be a challenge to look beyond the circumstances over which you have no power, but setting an effective course of action puts you back in control. Working together and valuing everyone’s input is a wonderful first step in transforming your family. Start with a family meeting. Discuss your current situation and be honest about the need to tighten your belts. Brainstorm strategies to cut back and innovative ideas for fun family activities - focusing on solutions rather than complaints.

Use the time at home with your family to get everyone committed to the family. “We” are the family, not just the kids or just the parents. When we work together everything is accomplished quicker which allows more time to participate in fun. Also, teaching children to contribute around the house provides them with a sense of responsibility and accomplishment, can make them self-reliant when they recognize “what needs to be done next”, and establishes some good habits that will serve them throughout their lives. Just be sure to teach them first *how* to do the laundry before turning it over and work alongside them. Soon they will be masters of many skills which they can now teach to a younger sibling – a great boost to their self-esteem!

www.parentingpress.com

Redirecting Children’s Behavior, K. Kvols

Deviled Eggs

Let’s celebrate spring with eggs! Did you know that the American Heart Association no longer makes a recommendation about how many eggs we can eat each week? The recommendation used to be three to four egg yolks a week. We now know that trans fats and saturated fats may raise cholesterol levels more than cholesterol-rich foods.

- 6 eggs, hard-cooked
- 1 tbsp. light sour cream
- 1 tbsp. light mayonnaise
- 3/4 tsp. prepared mustard
- 1 tsp. green relish
- 1/8 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, optional
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Cut eggs in half lengthwise. Remove yolks and set whites aside. Mash yolks with fork. Stir in remaining ingredients until well blended. Refill whites, using about 1 tablespoon yolk mixture for each egg half. Chill to blend flavors.

In Loving Memory of Terry Hill

On Friday, December 12, 2008, Terry peacefully passed away in her home in El Dorado Hills. She had pancreatic cancer and courageously fought for her life for a full year.

Many of you knew Terry as the Subsidy Counselor from Choices for Children in Cameron Park. She was known as a compassionate person who always went above and beyond to help her clients. She was one of the senior staff at CfC and worked for the agency for 10 years. Terry’s cheerful attitude and beautiful smile would light up the office each day. She dedicated her career to making a difference in the lives of children and families. Terry will be greatly missed.

Terry is survived by her husband Tony Hill, son Anthony Hill and mother Dixie Lopez.