

ECC Times

December 2006

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

ECC Staff and Contributors

Publisher

Marilyn Curley

Editor & Layout

Brenda Jamalkowski

Director

Marilyn Curley

Secretary

Brenda Jamalkowski

Teachers

Mary Jo Birecree

Angela Burrows

Kelly Luke

Peggy Mudd

Ron Rood

Julie Shahin

Speech/Communication

Teachers

Donna Ayer

Stacy Bary

Carol Lynch-Ricotta

Kathleen Piehler

Teaching Assistants

Shari Caruso-Walters

Christine Kelly

Niki McKeown

Charlotte Symonds

Dear Parents and Families,

As mid-December draws near and I look to the holidays, I'm also remembering November and how that month was filled with learning. Our Thanksgiving feast went very well and certainly reinforced the concepts related to this special holiday. Thanks to the teachers for planning that event and for everyone who pitched in to help.




Our F.I.R.S.T. supper held on the 15th of November was hugely successful. What a wonderful time for all. The social interactions were something to see. This family involvement and networking is a critical part of our program and I can assure you that it is alive and well! Thanks to Kelly Luke and the rest of the staff involved with this for making the event so successful. And to the parents who brought all of the delicious desserts, I thank you (although my waistline may not!).



Rochester School for the Deaf 1545 St. Paul Street, Rochester, NY 14621

*The Preeminent Provider of Educational, Developmental and Evaluation Services to Deaf
and Hard-of-Hearing Children and Their Families*

To learn more, please contact us today at 585-336-5807 (Voice) or 585-336-5808 (TTY) or visit our website at www.RSDeaf.org



Learning experiences for the children this month include celebrations of different cultures. Our next ECC event is our holiday celebration on Wednesday, December 20th. This will include a visit from Santa and Rudolph. If you have not yet sent in the response from the flyer previously sent home, please make sure to do so. Your child's teacher has the details of this so you can also connect with her. An overview of the Creative Curriculum will also be provided on that morning. Along with the Christmas celebration on the 20th, our young children will learn about Hanukkah, Kwanza and other holidays. Guest speakers have been invited for these multi-cultural learning experiences.

Our Winter Recess begins on Friday, December 22nd and extends until Monday, January 2nd, 2007, when school resumes. One more event, this time held in the evening, is being planned for mid-January. A flyer will be coming home about this event before the holiday break.

I just want to remind you to please check your child's backpack every day when he or she arrives home from school. It is not always practical for teachers to send personal e-mails or make phone calls to each parent, and unless a situation is specific to your child, teachers usually communicate by sending notes home with all the children. Checking for these notes is essential and backpacks carry a variety of information including:

- News of any upcoming field trips and permission forms that must be signed and returned to school if your child is to accompany the class on a field trip
- Lists of supplies your child needs
- Lists of items you can send in that would help the teacher with a class project
- Forms to be signed
- The school menu
- Suggested follow up activities that can be done at home to reinforce what is learned in school.

Your child's teacher will greatly appreciate your prompt response to any letters or forms calling for a reply. Early responses help her to plan.


If you have any questions, or need more suggestions for what you can do to support learning in the home, feel free to address these specific questions to the teacher so you get the help you and your child need.

I hope this holiday season is a good one for you. Enjoy the articles in this month's newsletter.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Curley, Director
Early Childhood Programs

*- A Frog's Guide to Life, Kermit shares some secrets of his success:
It starts with a dream. Dreams are how we figure out where we want to go. Life is how we get there.
Always allow time for traffic.*



Reinforcing Learning



Use the holidays to help your child learn, strengthen skills

The upcoming winter break from preschool is meant to be a time of fun, relaxation and family togetherness. But that doesn't mean your preschooler stops learning. It just means she learns in a different way.

In fact, this season gives your child some special chances to work on two important skills that will help her in school—respect and responsibility.

You can reinforce respect by having your preschooler:

- * **Practice good manners.** The holiday season often includes a visit to someone's home. This is a great opportunity for your child to practice saying hello and goodbye, to ask permission before touching something, and to take turns with toys or when getting a snack. Remind her to always use her "magic words,"—please, thank you, you're welcome and excuse me.
- * **Listen to different adults.** Your child may see some adults during this season that she doesn't usually see. This can be confusing for a preschooler, but it's also a good chance for her to practice respect for adults. Say something like, "Mrs. Jones is Mommy's friend. This is her house. I need you to use your nicest voice and follow her directions while we are here."

You can reinforce responsibility by having your preschooler:

- * **Help others.** There are dozens of ways your preschooler can help out this season. She can hand you things you need. She can help you put things away. She can go to the mailbox with you and drop in letters or cards. She can call family members to the dinner table.
- * **Show appreciation.** Your child should of course say thank you if she receives a gift. She can also tell you what to write on a thank-you note to the giver, or she can draw a "thank you" picture.

Reprinted with permission from the December 2006 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2006 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: Rick Lavoie, "Home (at Yours and Others) for the Holidays!" SchawbLearning.org, www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=398.

Developing Thinking Skills



Build thinking skills with stories, questions, conversations, play

Research on thinking skills in young children points to several successful strategies. Questions, conversations, stories and play can all help your child become a better thinker.

Thinking skills are key to your child's success in school. Build those skills by:

- * **Scheduling specific** "thinking times" with your child. This lets your child know you want her to think in new and special ways.
- * **Playing games** that require your child to sort objects in different ways—by size, color, shape and use.
- * **Using story time** to develop thinking skills. Ask your child to predict what might happen. Why did a character do what she did?
- **Having your child** think through and verbalize the steps of a process in order. Start with simple tasks with just a couple of steps, such as getting dressed or setting the table.
- **Encouraging your child** to use ordinary household items as play things. This will spark her imagination.
- * **Asking your child** to evaluate how she did a play activity, such as a puzzle. What would she do differently next time?

Reprinted with permission from the December 2006 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2006 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc.

Discipline



Restore calm before trying to teach your preschooler a lesson

Your child has done something wrong. You'd like him to learn from his mistake. But now there's another problem—your child is so upset about what happened that he is nearly hysterical. What are you going to do now?

The answer—hard as it is—is wait. Real discipline (and the word means to teach, not to punish!) can only happen after your child has let go of his strong emotions. If you can be patient, you can help your child calm himself, and then get to the root of his original problem. Both lessons will help him in school and in life.

Here are three steps to take:

1. **Help your child learn** calming activities. This may take some trial and error because every child is different. Some calming activities to try include being held, cuddling with a stuffed animal or taking a bath.
2. **Wait until your child is calm.** Then ask him if he is ready to talk about what made him cry. If he says no, wait a few minutes, but let him know that the two of you do need to talk.
3. **Avoid blaming your child** when it's time to talk. The incident is over. Focus less on the past and more on how he should behave in future.

Reprinted with permission from the December 2006 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2006 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. and Joshua D. Sparrow, M.D., Touchpoints 3 to 6: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development, ISBN: 0-7382-0678-4 (Perseus Publishing, a member of the Perseus Books Group, 1-800-345-5359, www.perseusbooksgroup.com).

Building Responsibility



Encourage your preschooler to think about results of actions

One of a preschooler's jobs is to begin to think for herself. She won't be able to learn this if parents or other adults are always supplying her with the "right" answers or giving her their judgments about what she has done.

Encourage your child to draw more conclusions about her own actions by:

- * **Telling her,** in a quiet way, what you observe. Example: You hear a crash in the other room and you know your child has probably broken something. She comes to see you in tears. Instead of pouncing on her, try, "You look sad, sweetie." This gives her the chance to tell you what happened and what she thinks about it.
- * **Waiting.** Most children, especially preschoolers, may not be able to share their thoughts right away. Example: Your child had an argument with a friend. Say, "You seem upset with Katie," and then say nothing. Sit quietly with your child until she sorts out her reply.
- * **Listening.** Once your child is ready to talk, give her your full attention.

Reprinted with permission from the December 2006 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2006 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: Don Weinhouse, Encouraging Potential in Young Children: A Guidebook for Parents, ISBN: 0-7641-0252-4 (Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1-800-645-3476, www.barronseduc.com).