

ECC Times

March/April 2008

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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Dear Parents,

February and March were two more great months here in ECC and you'll see on the next pages some wonderful pictures that depict a few of the activities your children were part of to promote learning. Although the actual celebration for "Week of the Young Child" supported by the Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children (RAEYC) this year is planned for the week when we are out on spring break, ECC teachers will be planning activities throughout the month of April to celebrate our young children.


Julie Shahin and others are planning to focus on Earth Day for "Week of the Young Child" and are looking into activities for this during the week after this month's break, with a "kick off" on the day we return to school. The children will engage in reading a Big Book about the earth and will learn ways of taking care of the earth, and recycling. Our celebration will hopefully include cake (what more is needed??)an earth cake with green frosting is a nice idea...A two week study that encompasses Earth Day with trash/garbage/ recycling will be included. A presenter from the Recycling Center will visit us. A service project of collecting batteries or other items to recycle is being considered, as is a Junk Art Show featuring our students' work! Kelly Luke and her class will be planting seeds to learn about plant care and the plant life cycle. Angela Burrows and Peggy Mudd are planning to set out bird feeders, engage the children in Earth Day songs and related cooking activities as well as activities related to nature. Stacy Barry and others are asking for pictures of family vacations or outings, along with a few written sentences about the pictures, to use for language stimulation when the children share these with her.

(Continued on page 2)

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In addition to celebrating the earth and young children, this time of year is especially busy with important CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) and CSE (Committee on Special Education) meetings. We're looking forward to seeing you at those meetings and before if possible to go through the draft IEPs (Individual Education Plans) that we are proposing for your children. Teachers have contacted you and I'm hoping that we can bring in as many parents as possible for these important conversations.

With this newsletter you will find articles from the Parent Institute related to practical suggestions for home. Two articles relate to ways of developing thinking skills and the ability to make predictions, as well as helping your child to figure out things for him or herself, two others involve ways of promoting writing and math skills with your young child, yet another recommends strategies for nurturing curiosity in your child, and lastly another deals with ways of identifying emotions that connect with reasons for a child acting out.

As a reminder, the following are days when your child will have no school:

April 14th – 18th –Spring Break

And please look for communication from our Family Service Specialist, Lisa DeWindt-Sommer, about our Shared Reading Program and respond to her if you are interested in participating in this extremely worthwhile literacy initiative. Please let me know if you have any questions. Enjoy April and our great Rochester springtime!

Sincerely,
Marilyn

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."
Anatole France

Welcome to new students who have joined our Early Childhood Program!!!



**Henry Powell –
FIRST Program/Burrows**



**Jack Williams –
FIRST Program/Mudd**



**Alexis Willcox -
Julie Shahin's Class**



**Mr. Peabody
ECC Pet**

Chloe Pittinaro – Home Visits/FIRST Program (no picture available)



**A visit from a
local dentist.**



Bringing cheer to Penfield Nursing Home for Valentine's Day.





Develop thinking skills, have your child make predictions

Making predictions may sound like something a fortune-teller does, but it's something we should all do to develop thinking skills. Your young child is no exception—even a preschooler can learn to make “educated guesses” based on what she knows.

Here's how to inspire your preschooler to predict:

- * **Use books.** Predicting what will happen next in the story helps your child use her brain to better comprehend what you're reading to her. Before turning the page, ask questions like, “What will the bear eat?” or “After they get in the boat, where will they go?”
- * **Use experiences.** “What will we see in the grocery store?” “Will it be hot or cold when we go outside?”
- * **Use familiar routines.** “What will we do when we finish with dinner?” “What do you think you'll need for your bath?” “Mommy has her briefcase and she's ready to leave. Where is she going?”
- * **Discuss prediction results.** “You said we would see apples and grapes in the grocery store. You're right! There they are. Look, I see bananas and strawberries, too.”

Reprinted with permission from the March 2008 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2008 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: Lilliann Alice Noda, June Mori-Shida & Nancy Chisato Adachi, Off to A Great Start! Activities for Becoming Your Child's Best Teacher

Encouraging Writing



Help your preschooler see that writing is fun and purposeful

Older preschoolers are usually ready to begin writing. This is good, as writing is an important part of the kindergarten curriculum. Just be sure, at this age, to let your child discover writing at his own pace.

You can:

- * **Ask your child to “write” about a picture he drew.** Have him tell you what his “writing” says. Don't worry about spelling or forming words. The only important thing now is that he is interested in communicating through writing.
- * **Encourage your child to show ownership of his drawings and other papers by writing his name on them.** Help him practice the letters in his first name.
- * **Ask him to write with you.** When writing a shopping list, give him paper to make his own list.
- * **Involve writing in role-playing.** Have your child pretend he is a doctor writing you a prescription or a restaurant server writing down your order.

Reprinted with permission from the March 2008 issue of Parents make the difference!® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2008 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: Meri Wallace, Keys to Parenting Your Four-Year-Old, ISBN: 0-8120-9745-9 (Barron's Educational Series, 1-800-645-3476, www.barronseduc.com).

Parent Quiz



Are you raising a preschooler who is eager to learn?

Children are born with a desire to explore their world. They are curious, and it is important that they remain so if they are to learn and grow.

Take this quiz to see if you're doing the kinds of things that will help keep your preschooler's natural curiosity alive. Answer yes or no to each of the statements below:

1. I model being curious. I wonder about things out loud. I try to find answers when I don't know something.
2. I encourage my child to ask questions. When she does, I say, "That's a good question!"
3. I give my child things she can explore, take apart and put back together.
4. I help my child use a small magnifying glass to examine things—bugs, flowers, newsprint, walls, carpet, dirt!
5. We take "adventure walks" to see how many new things we can spot.

How well are you doing?

Each yes answer means you're keeping your child's spirit of investigation and wonder active. For no answers, try those ideas from the quiz.

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Let your child figure things out to build responsibility

As the parent of a preschooler, it's easy to get into the habit of telling your child exactly what he needs to do. But a preschooler can figure some things out by himself, and once he's in school, he should be actively doing so.

Try giving your child information and letting him take it from there. Here's how:

- * **Ask questions.** Instead of saying, "Get your raincoat," prompt your child to think of it. Say, "It's raining outside. What do you think you should wear?"
- * **Offer facts.** "I am going to vacuum the playroom later today. If small toys are on the floor, they might get vacuumed up." Even if your child doesn't make the connection that he needs to pick the toys up, he will probably show some alarm at this. Then you can say, "What can you do to keep your toys safe?"
- * **Make suggestions.** Use phrases such as, "Sometimes, I ..." or, "One idea is to ..." to suggest solutions for your child. He can try your suggestion or he can decide to do something else and see how that works. Most problems are solved through trial and error.
- * **Watch for frustration.** Learning how to solve problems should be a positive experience. Don't let things progress to the point where your child is in tears. If he tries several times and still can't figure something out, gently step in to give the solution.

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Discipline



Find emotions behind your child's actions

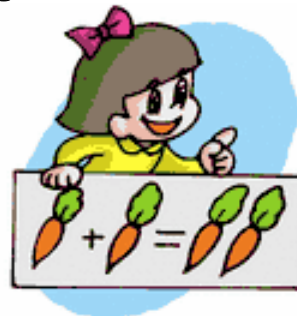
Something has gone wrong for your child, and so she is acting out. She may not be able to explain why she is so upset. But if you can figure it out and address it, your discipline will be more effective.

Some common emotions that lead your child to act out:

- * **Confusion.** Your child does not know what the right choice is. If she wants a drink and pushes ahead of a child at a water fountain, move your child to the back of the line. Say, "You're thirsty, but you must wait your turn."
- * **Anger.** If you turned off the TV and your child threw a tantrum, say, "You are very angry. You may tell me, 'I am angry' but you can't yell. Let's sit quietly until you are calmer."
- * **Excitement.** If your child screams when she sees a friend, say, "You are excited to see Ella. But we must use inside voices in the store."

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Building Math Skills



Introduce your preschooler to patterns, shapes and numbers

April has been deemed "Math Awareness Month" to encourage the study and use of math. And one of the best places for children to learn math is at home. In your home, you can help your child:

- * **Practice counting.** Count the steps as you walk up the stairs. Make number requests: "Please bring Mommy five forks."
- * **Learn shapes.** Walk around the house. Explore the pantry. See how many circles, squares, rectangles and triangles you can find.
- * **Experience fractions.** Cut an apple in half. Let your child put it back together.
- * **Classify.** Have her sort things by size, shape, texture, function, etc.
- * **Practice estimating.** Ask, "How many spoonfuls will it take to finish your soup?" Then playfully count each spoonful she eats.
- * **Notice patterns.** For example, see how big flowers are followed by little flowers on a towel or curtain.
- * **Learn about time.** Use a timer to see if your child can brush her teeth in two minutes. Or count seconds out loud to see how long it takes her to get dressed. "One second. Two seconds"
- * **Understand order.** Review the steps your child takes to get ready in the morning. (Get out of bed. Get dressed. Eat) Or ask, "Which is first?" "In the middle?" "Which is last?"

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