

# ECC Times

December 2005

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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Dear Parents,

I hope the holiday season is a good one for all of you. Our Holiday Break will be here before you know it, and then 2006. This school year is moving along quickly and the progress in each of the children is readily apparent. Again, I have to thank you and the staff members here for helping with that growth.

Attached you'll find some photos of favorite November and December activities. I am also including the Power Point presentation I gave on November 30th at our ECC parent get-together. I know some of you could not make it and would like information on the Creative Curriculum and how the NYS Learning Standards guide our program. If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to call or email. Flyers have been sent home for our next get-together: our Christmas celebration on the morning of December 21st. Additionally, we have planned activities to increase awareness of Kwanza and Hanukkah.

Articles I've included this time from the Parent Institute show ways of boosting your child's thinking skills with questions, fun ways of approaching math at home, ideas for helping with fine motor development, and how to help teach your child respect.

You will find in this ECC Times, copies of the Parent and Child Activity Calendar for December, January and February. These daily ideas are sure to boost learning at home. Also in hard copy is an article from the November issue of Young Children magazine. The article lists out ten ways of including reading at home on a daily basis. We all know how important print is to a young deaf or hard of hearing learner.


Another valuable resource for you is the ASDC website ([asdc@deafchildren.org](mailto:asdc@deafchildren.org)). ASDC stands for the American Society for Deaf Children and the site is updated regularly with links to a listserv, news related to education and other issues, press releases and available services for parents and deaf children. Since many of you have recently attended or will soon attend CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) or CSE (Committee on Special Education) meetings with your home school districts and RSD, the following information included in this site may be helpful when discussion arises related to Least Restrictive Environment and your child. A roundtable discussion sponsored by ASDC and other groups generated views, concerns and recommendations that were submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and you can read about that in full on the site. I am sharing part of this with you here to possibly pique your interest. The paper begins by stating the groups' views and the three views are:

*(continued on page 2)*

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](http://www.RSDeaf.org)

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- B *Access to language, communication, and information is critical for any child, but often inadequate for our children. Children who are blind or visually impaired must receive Brailled; audio, and or large print information such as textbooks at the same time their sighted peers receive written information. All visual information must be presented to these children in an accessible format. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing must have access to direct communication with peers and professionals in the child's primary language and communication mode. For some that will occur through the use of sign language, for others it will be the use of residual hearing and spoken language, and for others it will be a combination of the two.*
- B *The provisions of "least restrictive environment" and "natural environment" often have been misinterpreted for our populations. While common thinking is that the neighborhood school classroom is always the "best" place to be, our students often receive more effective and appropriate services in specialized settings, therefore we support the continuum of alternative placements. Least Restrictive Environment should refer to the LRE for the individual child, not a preconceived idea of what LRE is. LRE will be different for each child, depending on his or her needs. For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, we like to think of LRE as representing a "language rich environment."*
- B *As with other areas of special education, there is a severe shortage of professionals available to serve our populations. Our students require specialized services from well-trained, qualified personnel who understand how our children learn best. These personnel need to be able to provide instruction in the use of Braille, assistive technologies or visual efficiency skills, use tactile signing, communicate in American Sign Language, or use other skills, which can only be attained -after a significant period of in-depth training. Because sensory disabilities are low- incidence, most states do not have sufficient resources to train these professionals. We believe this is an area where the Department should play an ongoing leadership role through support of state and regional training programs.*

These concerns are real and current. I can assure you that our ECC provides a language-rich environment for your child and we recognize that a Least Restrictive Environment will be different for each child. We understand the meaning of Natural Environment for our deaf and hard of hearing students and we implement programming accordingly. Our professionals are highly qualified and certified and are able to provide a specialized setting as appropriate to best facilitate learning.

As the paper continues, recommendations are outlined. These include the hiring of highly qualified teachers, consideration of the language and communication needs of the deaf or hard of hearing child, and opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, as well as opportunities for direct instruction with this in mind.

Further recommendations by this group include support to families for learning sign language in order to facilitate a child's learning, recognizing that Teachers of the Deaf with that certification are essential for a successful program, and calling for Congressional support for the "full range of options for families with deaf and hard of hearing children who now have the potential to develop age appropriate language in whatever modality their parents choose".


As you consider the above recommendations, keep in mind all that our program offers. We strive to meet the communication and instructional needs of our students. We work with families so that facilitation of language development is supported at home as well as in school. We teach positive parenting strategies and help to link parents with each other.

The valuable and positive aspects of our program need to be considered when the time comes for a CPSE or CSE discussion of an optimal educational program for your child. Please consider visiting the ASDC website. I'm certain you'll find it beneficial.

Happy Holidays! I look forward to seeing you at our morning parent get-together on Wednesday, December 21st.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Curley, Director  
Early Childhood Programs



## Stringing & Sewing Help Your Child Build Important Skills



- β Stringing beads and learning about sewing lets your child make something new and sharpen key skills.
- β Tape a long piece of yarn to a table. String beads, large tube-shaped pieces of pasta or o-shaped cereal onto the yarn. Tie ends together to make “dress-up” jewelry.
- β For sewing, punch large holes in cardboard. Help your child use fingers to move the yarn in and out of the holes.
- β These activities build small hand muscles, which are used for writing. They also help your child work his hands and eyes together.

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## Building Responsibility



### *Learning about limits will help teach your child respect*

Preschool children need, and crave, limits. It may appear that your preschooler would like to do exactly as he pleases, but this isn't really so.

Your child wants you to step in and help him curb his behavior because this tells him you love him and care about his behavior. It also teaches him to trust and respect the authority figures in his life—such as parents and teachers— because they want what is best for him.

When you set reasonable limits, and your child lives within them, he will learn:

- β How to control himself. No hitting or biting, fewer tantrums.
- β How to stay safe. No running across the street.
- β How to think for himself, because soon he won't have to ask you the right thing to do. He will know.
- β How to feel secure, because he can look to an authority figure, such as a parent or teacher.
- β How to get along with others, because having limits shows him that it's not all about him. Other people matter, too.
- β How to follow rules with confidence, because he trusts the authority figure who set them.

Your child has the best chance of learning these responsible behaviors when you set limits that are:

- β Important. Preschoolers can't remember dozens of minor rules.
- β Fair. Your child should be able to accomplish living by the limit most of the time.
- Consistent. Your child needs to know what to expect. He will get confused if rules change from day to day.

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## Questions & Answer



**Q:** I want to show my daughter that math can be fun. We already do lots of counting and I'm looking for additional suggestions.

**A:** Math can be fun, because it helps us do so many things!

Encourage your child to solve problems such as, "How can we cut up this sandwich so we each get a fair share?"

Help her notice patterns, such as, "Look at the stripes on your shirt; red, blue, red, blue!"

Let her see where numbers fit into real life, such as "1-2-3-4! That's how many candles are on your cake!"

This kind of thinking will give your child a great head start when she begins math at school.

Here are a few other ideas:

- β Help your child become familiar with shapes. The sandwich is a square. Cut in half, it becomes a rectangle or triangle. The birthday cake is a circle. If these are easy, go on to more advanced shapes—a stop sign is an octagon.
- β Show the meaning behind the number when you count. When children first learn to count, they are simply reciting a number list. They move into real counting when they learn that each number actually represents something. Start low—here is one book, you have two eyes (show her).
- β Play board games. Your child gets to practice counting as she moves her piece around the board. She also learns words about direction, such as "forward." A card game such as "Go Fish," where each player tries to collect matching cards, teaches children to recognize numbers.

The most important thing to remember is to have fun!

—Maria Koklanaris, *The Parent Institute*. Reprinted with permission from the December 2005 issue of *Parents make the difference!*® (Early Childhood Edition) newsletter. Copyright ©2005 *The Parent Institute*®, a division of NIS, Inc.

## Developing Thinking Skills



### ***Boost your child's thinking skills with questions***

Does your child understand intangible ideas? Can she reason? Then she's ready for "higher level" thinking!

You can develop your child's ability to think by posing certain questions to her.

Don't just ask her to repeat what she's heard or what you've told her. Try questions that challenge her to think in new, more complex ways.

Ask your child to:

- β Compare and contrast two characters in a story, two songs or two pet animals. How are they similar? Different?
- β Classify and sort items like toys, books, food and her clothes—for instance, toys with wheels, or clothes that are blue.
- β Summarize a story you've read to her or a show she's just seen on TV. Ask what happened first. What happened next? What happened at the end? Or ask her to give a title to a picture in a magazine.
- β Guess what would happen in various situations. For instance, if a character in a story made a different decision; if you press a certain button on a radio or TV; or if you place a cube of ice in a cup of coffee. Or ask how many stuffed animals would fit into a box. Proceed with the "experiment" so she sees the result.
- β Make an assumption. Ask your child which box is heavier—a large one or a small one. Or ask what people in various pictures are feeling, based on their expressions.

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