

ACTIVE PLAY EVERY DAY:

Promoting Well-Being

Carrle Melsom

As the days darken and the winter season deepens I am reminded that February is coming. We've had a great fall with lots of opportunities for active outdoor play and most programs are coping nicely with the changing season. Sadly, by the end of February I can walk into almost any centre in the city and find adults and children in the middle of a funk. Some teacher, or some child will have become the focus of everyone's angst and no one will be content until something is done.

What would you do if I told you I had the answer to this seasonal discontent but the answer requires action now and every day? Would you make time for it? Knowing that the children's healthy development and well-being depend on it; knowing that your health and well-being depend on it—would you be willing to have some fun? Would you be willing to be active and support the children in their active play?

I want you to think about it. In the coming years early childhood educators will be hearing more and more about the importance of physically active play and

their responsibility to create learning environments for young children that allow for considerable periods of both structured and unstructured active play.

It may feel like once again the most under resourced and poorly paid educators in the country are being tasked with dealing with yet another extremely complex social issue; and of course, that's true. How we choose to respond to this challenge

will have an enormous impact on the quality of our work lives today and potentially create positive outcomes for children today and into the future.



Over the last two years the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection has offered educational sessions related to the Canadian Sport for Life Active Start Guidelines. These guidelines have tremendous implications for early

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A Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

We have had an incredibly busy 2009 with the rollout of our new name, new logo, new website, etc. and the planning of our 40th Anniversary Gala.

This summer we entered into a partnership with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association/Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (MISA/HILC) to increase and improve our ability to support second language learners both in the classroom and in the field. Projects will include the design and delivery of a communications course designed specifically for ESL learners, ECE language clinics to provide assignment support, resources and strategies, and practicum support over and above what is currently offered.

This project will also be offering a FREE workshop series titled *Orientation to ECE in Nova Scotia*

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Inside this issue:

- *Active Start Guidelines*
- *Movement Resources*
- *Job Fair—February 10, 2010*

A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education

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this newsletter!**

**E-mail: info@nscece.ca
to be added to our e-mail list or
visit our website at
www.nscece.ca**



Active Play Every Day

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childhood programs. For a copy of the guidelines visit www.LTAD.ca.

The Active Start Guidelines include:

- Provide organized physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day for toddlers and at least 60 minutes a day for preschoolers
- Provide unstructured active play for at least 60 minutes per day and up to several hours per day for toddlers and preschoolers
- Toddlers and preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except while sleeping
- Provide physical activity every day regardless of the weather
- Encourage basic movement skills—these do not just develop spontaneously
- Focus on fun, inclusion and daily participation for every child

Supporting this amount of physically active play in our classrooms is likely to require some rethinking of daily routines and learning environments. One thing that can be helpful is to consider what is meant by physically active play. We easily recognize running, jumping, rough housing, and climbing as active play but active play also includes activities that engage the child's balance, coordination, strength, agility, endurance, and basic body and object manipulation. My definition of active play also includes the child's physical engage-

ment with real work such as putting out or putting away a rest mat or shaking and folding a blanket with a friend. Walking and other forms of locomotion are ways of being active too.



By nature, babies and young children are physically active in all they do. For a variety of reasons adults often stop them. (JABADAO, 2009)

One of the things that is clear in the Active Start Guidelines is that structured active play sessions do not need to be offered in 60 minute blocks. This type of activity needs to be developmentally appropriate too. Over a day you might do five minutes of the tidy-up boogie; plus animal locomotions down the hall; plus a couple of rounds of Sleeping Bunnies; plus some

yoga or stretches or a game of statues; plus a neighborhood walk; plus ... well you get the picture. Many of our routine activities and transitions are great opportunities to get active. In fact, it turns out that many physical activity breaks of different types and intensities may be the most beneficial.

The objective in early childhood is to offer environments and challenges that support the child's natural inclination to move and experience his or her body in space. We know what amazing mimics young children are. They see you doing something and they want to try it too. This is where your active participation and role modeling become key. It appears that when it comes to brain development seeing an activity performed causes mirror neurons to fire. This prepares and begins to wire the brain for the actual physical performance of the activity (Dr. Colin Higgs, Active Start Presentation, 2009).

ECE students at the College plan and implement various types of activities during their practicum placements. One thing we hear over and over again relates to the difficulty they experience implementing their outdoor activities. "We never go out in our room!" is a common complaint. If programs are not going out and getting active how active are they inside? I suspect not very—hence our mid-winter malcontent.

The message is communicated everywhere, daily physical activity is essential for all of us. Adult stress levels and sense of well-being are also related to physical activity. Imagine a program where you and the children hit the floor and do yoga or Pilates together; where you go for a walks across snowy fields because they are snowy and hard to walk on; where silly games like human bowling are common; and everyone is active everyday.

Life in our classrooms is so much better when we do things in ways that work for children. One thing I've learned over and over again is that when it works for the children it works for me. The movement to support and increase physically active play in our centres is worth exploring. There are many resources available. See the next page for some easy to access suggestions.

Director's Message Continued

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which will examine childcare issues unique to our province. Details to follow in the new year.

Thanks to the funding from the Continuing Education Child Care Program we are now offering two evening courses per semester and three evening courses every spring. Our courses this winter will be ECE 203 Curriculum II and ECE 209 Child in the Family. It is so gratifying to see an increase in the numbers accessing training.

Don't forget this funding will be available until 2016.

In closing I am delighted to share with the ECE community that we have record high enrolment in the class of 2011. The 40+ students are not only big in numbers but they are also an incredible group of adult learners who are showing great ECE potential.

Happy Holidays,

Jane Cawley

In the Resource Centre

Carrle Melsom

As we settle into our armchairs to watch the Olympics this winter it is good to know that there is a lasting legacy being created that all Canadians can share.

You will find that legacy at www.2010legaciesnow.com. Of particular interest to early childhood educators and family resource programs are a number of downloadable

publications created to help adults who care for young children think about movement, nutrition, and literacy programming.



Developed by LEAP BC, *Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers Family Resource* (372.8 LE-H) contains 40 play-based activities that promote physical activity, literacy, and healthy eating. This work is based on the *Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers* program developed by Vivien Temple at the University of Victoria. That edition focused even more directly on physical

Related Materials in the Resource Centre

- Parachute Games with DVD 372.8 ST
- Itsy Bitsy Yoga for Toddlers & Preschoolers 372.8 GA
- Active for Life 372.8 SA
- Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers 372.8 TE
- Physical Activity in Early Childhood CD 023
- Move with Me From Birth to Three 372.8 Le-M
- Coloured Circuit Activity Markers GM 176
- Cooperation Band GM 180



activity and can be downloaded at www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/temple/pages/hop/htm. The book has over 60 activities.

It is simple and easy to read with one activity per page and headings like, Let's Play, Try it This Way, and Teaching Tips.

The *Move With Me From Birth to Three Family Resource* (372.8 LE-M) focuses on activities that support physical activity, early literacy, and

healthy eating for very young children. Physical Activities in this resource are based on the following understandings (p 11):

1. *Physical activity includes any activity where most of the body is moving.*



2. *Physical activity is a natural part of every day and can easily fit into daily routines.*

3. *Infants need opportunities every day to learn to move in different ways and across different environments.*

4. *Toddlers need opportunities every day to expend energy using the large muscle groups of the body.*

5. *Both infants and toddlers need to develop confidence with basic movement skills like walking, climbing and balancing.*

6. *Children need active role models.*

7. *Children learn new skills and try new physical activities especially when they are encouraged and praised for their efforts.*

Food Flair (649.3 LEAP) is a resource for early childhood educators, designed to help us build relationships with families, and help young children develop positive eating patterns that will lead to healthy choices throughout their lives.



The Resource Centre has downloaded and made these books available for loan but encourages you to download copies for yourself.

Resource Centre services are offered with support from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Education Training Initiative.

Resource Centre Professional Development Opportunities for Centres or Groups

- Reaching In ... Reaching Out - Promoting Resiliency in Young Children in Child Care (2 day training)
- The Encouraging Classroom: Social Problem Solving for Preschoolers (full day workshop)
- Magical Environments (1/2 day workshop)
- Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviours (full day or 3 sessions)
- What are we doing here? Reconnecting with your vision (documentation visit + workshop)
- Tumble Bugs Active Play (1/2 day leader training)
- The Affective Curriculum (five, 3-hour workshops focused on cultural competence, self-esteem, optimism, problem solving, and emotional intelligence)
- Hold a Staff Meeting or Work Bee in the Resource Centre

Have a professional development need you don't see listed here? Call Carrie Melsom, NSCECE Resource Centre Coordinator at 420-1492 to discuss the possibility of a workshop designed for your centre or group.



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Paula Richard & Kathy Black share parachute activities at their workshop (June '09).

At the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education, we provide an opportunity for students to study and gain experience in Early Childhood Education through a diverse range of courses and practical settings.

We are proud to lay the foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that NSCECE graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.



Join the crowd—become a member today

Take advantage of the many services provided with a NSCECE Resource Centre membership

Resources for the early childhood community



- Organization members \$100
- Individual members \$25
- E-mail: resourcecentre@nscece.ca
- Tel: (902) 420-1492



NSCECE Annual ECE Job Fair

Barbara Rowe

Attention all Centre Directors! We are holding our annual Job Fair Wednesday February 10, 2010 from 3:30 to 5:30pm.

Large job fairs can be overwhelming and intimidating. We are proud to hold our Early Childhood Education Job Fair here at the College in an intimate setting. Our graduates will be out in the field in a few short months and our first year students are looking for summer work.

Here are some tips we are giving our students to help them prepare for the job fair. We hope this will help you and your booth representatives.

How do you make an impression? Plan to bring 25 crisp resumes to the fair. Bring a pen, pencil and notepad too, and organize it all in a portfolio. Be prepared to fill out a job application or be interviewed on the spot. In other words, you should be prepared to quickly sell your skills, talents and experiences. Job fairs tend to be

more casual than formal interviews, so you can relax and be more friendly.

Visit your targeted employers and spend some "quality time" with each. But, remember that they have more job seekers waiting, so don't try to take all their time or be offended if they cut it short.

When wrapping up your conversations with employers' reps, show your interest by asking them what the next steps are. Ask if it is alright to call them or send follow up letters. Collect business cards or contact information as you go, and follow up within 24-48 hours with a thank you letter to each of the representatives with whom you spoke. This might make you stand out in their minds and help you land follow-up interviews.

If you would like to have a booth at our event, please RSVP by phone at 420-9972 or by email to studentsuccess@nscece.ca.

(Information taken from about.com and *The Quick Interview & Salary Negotiation* Book by J. Michael Farr)



Join us for our ECE Job Fair!



Does your centre need summer help? Full or part-time staff? First and second year students will be attending; it is also open to the public.

NSCECE JOB FAIR

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

3:30pm—5:30pm

Exhibitors, don't forget to reserve your booth!

RSVP by February 3, 2010
(902) 420-9972

studentsuccess@nscece.ca