

THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL

The Newsletter of the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU

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Your Everyday Actions Have the Greatest Impact 2nd in a Series of Articles Based on the *Growing Great Kids* Curriculum

Jill Norris, CCR&R Early Childhood Health Coordinator

The *Growing Great Kids*™ Curriculum centers all activities around caregiver's daily actions, called the **Daily Do's**. This involves the child caregiver in consistently supporting five developmental areas as they go through their caregiving routine, including:

- *E-Caregiving: Supporting Empathy and Caring*
- *Character Builders: Supporting Social-Emotional Development*
- *Brain Builders: Supporting Cognitive Development and Learning*
- *Play-By-Play: Supporting Early Language Development*
- *The Four Steps to Success: Supporting Self-Esteem and Learning*

Each of these areas of development plays a critical role in the healthy development of children. *E-Caregiving* involves letting children know and feel that you understand what they are experiencing and feeling. Children depend on you to share their joy and excitement about life and learning. They need for you to make them feel



protected and safe and know that you will help them understand and manage their emotions. These actions display empathy and are important in helping children grow to be caring, capable adults. Demonstrating empathy for children in your care involves asking yourself what the child is feeling or experiencing, putting her feelings into words and doing something to show support for him such as clapping, smiling and laughing.

Growing Great Kids™ lists the following things that you can do to show a child empathy: distract her; protect him; give him a hug or kiss; pick her up and hold her; tell him what a good job he is doing; remove her from the situation; and talk to her about what is happening.

Depending on the age of the child in your care, your primary responsibility may be providing security, encouraging discovery, identity, or independence. Activities that assist in developing these areas are considered *Character Builders*.



Incorporating the following practices into your daily caregiving will increase the character builders the children in your care are exposed to:

1. Respond quickly to a baby's needs and wants by paying attention to her cues and signals.
2. Hold and touch in ways that make the baby feel safe and loved.
3. Do or say things that let the baby know you understand what she is experiencing.
4. Position the baby so that she can see your face and make eye contact with you.
5. Bring him interesting things to interact with as you play with and talk to him.
6. Tell him what he is seeing, hearing, doing and feeling.

7. Take the baby to see and experience new and interesting things.
8. Avoid over stimulating with loud voices, activities and music, tickling, bright lights or rough play.
9. Encourage exploration, movement and curiosity.
10. Get down on the child's level to visit and play.
11. Encourage and teach her to do things by herself.
12. Be a secure base that the child can come to for reassurance, encouragement and hugs.
13. Provide a safe and interesting environment for play and investigation.
14. Show children that you understand their feelings.
15. Show children that you enjoy and are proud of their accomplishments.
16. Encourage children to make choices.
17. Set limits for children that will teach them to respect themselves and others and keep them safe.



18. Talk to children about what they are doing, feeling and experiencing.
19. Assist with play and learning.
20. Encourage pretend play and creative exploration.

Babies need to learn object permanence - that things exist even when you cannot see them. This is the foundation for memory. Babies need to develop an understanding of space or how things look, fit together, and move: such as ... a ball rolls, a plate cannot fit into a cup, a toddler's foot cannot fit into a doll's shoe, things far away look small but when you walk closer they look big, water drips or pours.

Babies need to learn cause and effect. Doing something to an object such as pushing a button, pulling a lever, or shaking, can cause something to happen. Babies learn the use of tools that help them to accomplish what they want. Among the tools infants use are a cry, a hand, a caregiver and an object. They begin to make sense of the world by tasting, listening to, and experiencing objects and situations. Babies learn to put things into categories such as things that are soft, things that make loud noises, things that move fast, animals, fruits, colors, shapes, food, people who make them feel good, people or things that scare them.

Babies learn by imitating the actions of others. They also learn when others imitate them because this is a reflection of their own actions. Think about

Child Care Resource & Referral

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Jill Norris, Early Childhood Health Coordinator

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activities that will assist babies in learning these things and incorporate them into your daily routine. These activities are also known as *Brain Builders*.

Providing *Play-By-Play* to support language development for babies involves getting on their level, telling them what they are seeing, hearing, doing, or feeling and using your face, voice, and touch to communicate your message. These acts allow babies to hear spoken words and begin to make sense out of their environment.

The final **Daily Do** involves supporting self-esteem and learning through *Four Steps to Success*. Getting a baby's attention is the first step. Next, show her how to do the activity such as shaking a rattle or rolling a ball. Then watch and wait for her to do it herself. Finally, once she does it, praise her for a job well done.

If you already incorporate these **Daily Do's** into your routine or do them naturally, pat yourself on the back for a job well done. Using these methods strengthens the caregiving foundation you already have in place and allows you to increase the positive impact you have on children. If you would like to learn more about incorporating the **Daily Do's** of caregiving into your program, contact Jill Norris at 800-621-5908 or by email at jill.norris@wku.edu.

(For more information on *Growing Great Kids*TM: *An Interactive Parenting and Child Development Curriculum*, contact Great Kids, Inc., 1200 New Church Court, Ambler, PA 19002 or visit the website at www.greatkidsinc.org.)



Child Care and Development Fund Plan

The Cabinet for Families and Children is currently renewing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan for the fiscal year 2004-2005. In order to improve the quality of child care and continue efforts, this plan is very important. The Cabinet is seeking input from child care consumers, business and community leaders, legislators, child care advocates, child care providers, and representatives from state agencies interested in the well-being of children.

The plan for the federal fiscal year 2004-2005 is due April 1, 2003 to the Legislative Review Committee (LRC). The Cabinet has scheduled a hearing for Friday, May 16, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. EST in the Cabinet for Health Services Auditorium, Health Services Building, First Floor, 275 East Main Street, Frankfort, KY, 40621.

If you would like to receive a copy of the plan please call the CCR&R office and ask Heather to send a copy to you. Comments on the plan will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. EST May 16th or you may to make plans to attend the hearing on this day at the above location.

New Office Coordinator for CCR&R

An unknown author once wrote, "The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm." I am honored to join an organization whose arms are united toward a common goal for a fantastic community.

For those of you I have yet to meet, my name is Heather Alms and I joined the CCR&R as Office Coordinator on February 26th. Thank you for your warm welcomes! I look forward to working with you in the future.

Environmental Rating Scale: How Can It Help Me?

Taylor Tucker, Quality Coordinator

The past several newsletters have included articles on the subscales of the Environmental Rating Scales. This article will help you see how the Environmental Rating Scales fit into the STARS for KIDS NOW Quality Rating System and how the scales can help you assess the strengths of your program.

Any licensed child care center or family child care home can participate in the STARS for KIDS NOW quality rating system. As part of this voluntary rating system, the score your program receives on the Environmental Rating Scale helps determine which level of STARS you receive. At level one, you must just agree to have an Environmental Rating Scale done at your center with no minimum score required. At Level two, the STARS rating team will do the Environmental Rating Scale and your center must receive at least an average score of three. For a level three STAR, your center must reach an average score of 4.5 on the Environmental Rating Scale. And to receive a level four STAR, your average score on the Environmental Rating Scale must be a 6.

What do these scores mean? The scale is scored from one to seven, one being inadequate, and seven being excellent. Three is defined as minimal and five as good. So, as you can see, you only need to score somewhere between minimal and good to be a two or three STAR center. Of course, there are other requirements that go along with the Environmental Rating Scale (and for more information on those requirements, call Taylor Tucker at the CCR&R).

The other way this scale can help is to show you what your program's strengths are as well as your program's needs. You can use the scales as a self-study on your program and make an improvement

plan from your observation. This will also point out your program strengths. This can be useful to let staff know when they are doing a good job. As a self-study, you may choose to use only sections of the scales. For example, if you want to know if you have the right materials in your room, you may choose to just do the "activities" section.

Finally, you can use the scales to prepare your center for their STARS rating visit. You may choose to give each staff a copy of the age-appropriate scale and let them rate the environment as they see it. If you want a complete scale done on any classroom, I am available to visit your center and complete a scale on any classroom you choose. If you choose to invite me to do a scale at your center, I will arrive about 8:30 and spend about three hours in the classroom. I must see meal time, nap time, and a major portion of the day. I can only complete the scales on one room a day.

After I have completed the scales, I will sit down with the director and who ever else the director chooses, and give them feed back on the results of the scales. You are the only person who will see your score. Your score is not released or reported to anyone but you. From this score we can work together to write an improvement plan for the classroom. By having me come in and do a scale on your classroom, it also allows the classroom teacher to "practice" having someone watch them in a non-treating way. As you can see, there are many ways to use the Environment Rating Scales to help your center.

If you want more information on the Environment Rating Scale or want a representative from the Child Care Resource and Referral to come to your facility and provide technical assistance based on the Environment Rating Scale, contact Taylor Tucker at 800-621-5908 or e-mail taylor.tucker@wku.edu



Education News Parents Can Use



Join other parents and educators to watch

SPECIAL EDUCATION

*on the campus of Western Kentucky University on Tuesday,
April 15, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. CST.*

This is a free program provided locally by the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU. There is no registration fee but we do ask that you please pre-register so the appropriate room size can be arranged for viewing the program.

To register, call the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU at 745-2216 or 800-621-5908 for local meeting information. Please register no later than Thursday, April 10, 2003.



To view live or archived web casts of this program on the Internet visit <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>. Handouts and identified related web resources for the most recent show can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/television/>



The U.S. Department of Education web page indicates that in some communities local cable channels are carrying the program. The program will be rebroadcast on the Discovery Networks' TLC (The Learning Channel), the Channel One Network, and some Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations.

Please copy and post this flyer in your place of employment or in your child care facility.

Scholarship Program

Amy Anderson, CCR&R Professional Development Coordinator

It's that time of year again. The college spring semester is well under way, and the summer semester is quickly approaching. With that in mind, I would like to encourage you to consider applying for a KIDS NOW KHEAA scholarship. If you work 20 hours weekly in an early childhood setting and want to pursue an Associate or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, the scholarship program is a wonderful resource.

As the Professional Development Coordinator for the BRADD region, I am currently working with KIDS NOW KHEAA scholars from the 10-county area. The scholarship program is currently serving 25 scholars attending Western Kentucky University this spring 2003 semester. By participating in the KID NOW scholarship program, the costs of attending college for those interested in obtaining a degree in Early Childhood Education are greatly reduced. In addition to paying for classes, the KHEAA scholarship program includes reimbursement for textbooks and other school-related expenses. A monetary award is also granted upon completion of a degree.

Another aspect of the scholarship program involves the Child Development Associate, or CDA. As many of you already know, the first step toward obtaining the CDA involves completing the Commonwealth Child Care Credential. This 60-hour credential is recognized throughout Kentucky. After obtaining the Commonwealth Child Care Credential, scholars may then enroll in the second 10 hours of CDA training. Once the entire 120 hours of classes are completed, the scholar may apply for additional



funds to cover the cost of the CDA assessment. Upon successful completion of the assessment, each scholar then holds a nationally recognized credential. Like the KHEAA scholarship program, the scholarship also pays for the Commonwealth and CDA classes.

The CCR&R office provides the Commonwealth and CDA training at Western's campus. Currently, 19 scholars are participating in the Commonwealth classes. The majority of those in the class plan on pursuing the additional training to obtain their CDA.

On a personal note, it is very satisfying to see the level of interest and excitement the scholars demonstrate as they pursue their educational and professional goals. Please consider joining the ranks of those who are furthering their professional development. We at the CCR&R would love to help you reach your goals!

Now is the time to begin submitting your applications for the summer semester. To request an application, or for more information on the scholarship program, please contact Amy Anderson at (270) 745-2216 or 1 (800) 621-5908.

Provider Appreciation Day

May 9, 2003 marks Provider Appreciation Day. Now is the time to mark your calendars to join the Child Care Resource and Referral at Western Kentucky University in celebrating the important work that you do every day in the lives of children.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 8, 2003 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. CST for a celebration of child care providers. Watch your mail for the registration form for the fun filled evening of activities. We look forward to seeing you then. Remember - watch your mail. You don't want to miss out on the fun!

National Provider Appreciation Day

Since 1996, Provider Appreciation Day has been celebrated the Friday prior to Mother's Day. May 9, 2003 is National Provider Appreciation Day. What have you planned for your child care provider?

- ✓ A simple "Thank you" will be appreciated by your child care provider.
- ✓ Assist your child in making a picture by providing the needed materials for your child such as glue, paper, crayons, markers, or paint. With the child's permission, be sure to write the child's words on the picture upon completion.
- ✓ As the parent or director, write your own note of appreciation.
- ✓ Provide a small gift of appreciation.
- ✓ Provide lunch for the staff.
- ✓ Provide a gift of a book or art supplies for the classroom.
- ✓ Plan a picnic.

There are so many ways to say "Thank you" so be creative but above all, show your appreciation for the individuals that work so hard for the young children in our communities.



Art Workshops at the Kentucky Museum

Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 5th and Saturday, May 3rd to tour an exhibit at the Kentucky Museum located on Western Kentucky University's campus and to complete an art project. There will be opportunities to try printmaking, painting, or collage. Space for this activity is limited to 25 participants for each session. The cost for participating is \$10 for each participant.

For more information about the art workshops or to register call Lynne Ferguson, Artist-In-Residence or Laura Harper Lee, Education Curator, at the Kentucky Library and Museum on Western's campus at 270-745-6082, or visit:

Playground Danger Warning

Be an advocate for playground safety, and be on the lookout for potentially hazardous equipment. For instance, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has stated that molded plastic "animal" swings have caused several children to suffer severe head injuries. These swings were commonly installed in various playgrounds from 1951 through 1991.

If you see any of these animal swings on any playground, contact the owner and inform them of the warnings about this equipment. For more info on these dangerous swings, or on *National Playground Safety Week*, visit the website, www.uni.edu/playground or call 800-554-PLAY.



National Playground Safety Week

Amy S. Hood, Infant-Toddler Consultant

Each year over 200,000 children are treated in emergency rooms for playground injuries. This means that *every two and a half minutes* someone is injured on a playground! The National Program for Playground Safety along with Kentucky Governor Paul Patton have declared April 21-25 *National Playground Safety Week 2003!* This is a week for everyone to focus on playground safety and advocate for injury prevention on our playgrounds. Here are just a few things you can do to advocate for safe playgrounds:

- ✓ Conduct daily safety checks on the outdoor play areas. Make sure that there is no debris such as broken glass, used needles, or other trash that can be hazardous for our young children.
- ✓ Challenge your setting to an injury free week during the week of April 21-25.
- ✓ Host a guest speaker to come and speak to the children about being safe on the playgrounds.
- ✓ Check the surfacing under the playground equipment. If the equipment promotes climbing, swinging or sliding, then there must be appropriate surfacing. If these kinds of equipment have grass, dirt, concrete or asphalt alert someone to change this immediately! These four surfaces do not prevent children from being hurt.
- ✓ Along with the children, make five rules for your playground in order to help them be safe!
- ✓ Keep up with recalls from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for any recalled equipment that could harm children.

For more information, checklists and playground safety handbooks, contact the CCR& R office at 800-882-7482 or 270-745-2216. You can also email us at ccrr.expert@wku.edu.

Inspire Lifelong Learning

by Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator

As parents and child care providers, our time is very precious. We feel the need to be involved with many things - work, church, civic organizations, and our children's activities. Our involvement in these activities is very important to us, and time with our children is perhaps more important. We, as parents and child care providers, are role models and set examples for children of all ages.

Be supportive of the learning that children are experiencing every day; be excited when a child shows you their book from the library or their favorite page. Read the book with the child or, if the child can read, encourage and assist while reading the book together. Is there a child you know who has a special interest such as science, math, or reading? If so, help the child to find community activities that emphasize that interest and encourage the child to learn more about that topic. Take a trip to learn more. Don't be afraid to learn new facts or skills along with your child. It is alright to not have the answer to all their questions.

Don't let the television become the after-school entertainment. Encourage children to play with others, explore the outdoors, read, play games, and do what children do best - play. Children learn and remember what may have been forgotten by being with other children and experiencing the world.

Help children to realize that learning is a life-long process. The goal of learning is not for "good" grades but for the rewards of feeling good about yourself. Learning does not stop just because school is out for the day, summer has arrived, or because we graduated. Some parents and child care providers are furthering their education by attending training or college classes. What a great model for young children!

Remember, we support a child's lifelong commitment to learning by being learners ourselves. To learn more about ways to support our youth or about the 40 developmental assets, visit the "Kentucky Child Now" web site at www.kychildnow.org.