

# *THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL*

*The Newsletter of the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU*



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## THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL

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*THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL* is published monthly by Training & Technical Assistance Services and the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) at Western Kentucky University. The CCR&R at WKU serves the Barren River Area Development District of Kentucky which includes Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalf, Monroe, Simpson, and Warren Counties. Primary services offered by the CCR&R include:

- Distributing consumer education materials to families seeking child care,
- Providing child care referrals to parents;
- Offering training to early childhood providers and parents;
- Helping potential child care providers establish programs,
- Supporting facilities working toward STARS;
- Assisting providers in obtaining scholarships for the Commonwealth Child Care Credential, Child Development Associate, or college classes; and
- Advocating for affordable, accessible, high quality services for children and families.



The professionals and staff of the CCR&R at WKU are ready to provide assistance in a number of areas. Our staff includes:

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Jill Norris, Early Childhood Health Coordinator  
Amy Hood, Professional Development Specialist  
Cynthia Sprouse, Professional Development Assistant

Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator  
Taylor Tucker, Infant-Toddler Specialist/Quality Coordinator  
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# Brain Development and Young Children

By Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator

We often hear about how to help young children build their brain. We hear that the first three years are the most important in brain development. There are many activities and choices that we can make as the caregiver or parent to help to build the brains of young children.

***Building Your Baby's Brain*** by Diane Trister Dodge and Cate Heroman relates the development of a baby's brain to being in a country where there is a phone in every home but only a few phones have wires connected to them. What would happen? The phones would not work well and in some cases not at all. This same situation is similar to a baby's brain when they are born. The heart, lungs, and kidneys are fully developed in a full term baby (they are just smaller than an adult's organs), but the brain is not yet fully developed.

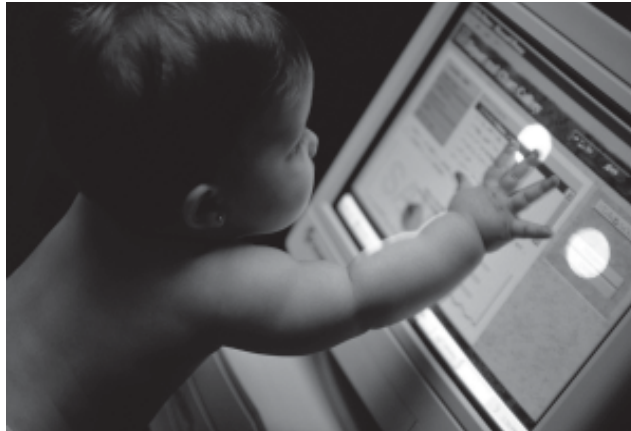
The brain is a system of wires that, at the time of birth, are not connected to anything. The first few years of a child's life are spent making the connections of needed in order for the brain to work well. To follow our analogy, the child is plugging in each disconnected wire. As the brain develops and the connections are made, paths are formed in the brain that represent the experiences that children have in their lives. When an activity is done over and over again, a path is made in the brain and the brain develops.

Every time your baby or young child uses their sense of touch, taste, sight, feel, or smell a path is being made. This can be a new path or can be an existing path. When a new path is created, the child will "practice" this new skill in order to make the path permanent and stronger. New paths are created when the child tries something new or makes a new plan with an old experience.

As time moves forward, children build upon the new paths they have created. The connections made in the brain begin to shape the way each child thinks, feels, behaves, and learns. And all of this happens at an astonishing pace.

It is so important to "feed" your baby's brain. Remember that every time you read to your child, sing to your child, talk to your child, love your child, touch your child, or provide healthy food for your child, you are "feeding" your child's brain. Feed your child's brain every day all day and watch your child grow!

For more information on building your child's brain, contact the Child Care Resource & Referral's lending library to borrow a copy of ***Building Your Baby's Brain*** by Diane Trister Dodge and Cate Heroman. The library is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Call us at 270-745-2216 or 800-621-5908 to schedule a visit. We can also make arrangements to ship materials to your home or center.



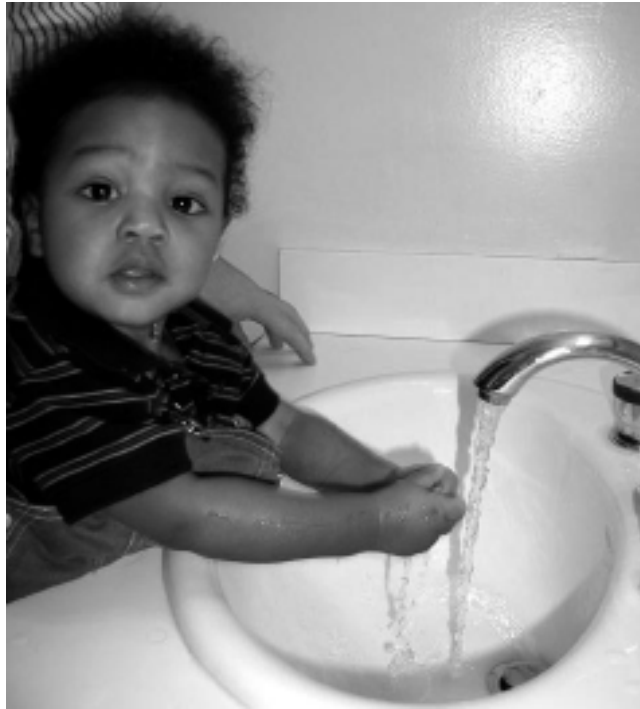
*Every time your baby or young child uses their sense of touch, taste, sight, feel, or smell a path in the brain is formed*



# Antibacterial Products: Too Much of a Good Thing?

Cynthia Sprouse, Professional Development Assistant

We have all seen them - the antibacterial products on our supermarket shelves proclaiming protection against bacteria and other harmful germs. Once only found in medical settings, within the last 20 years these products have been increasing in numbers in the private sector. Almost every manufacturer of personal and home cleaning products is marketing one or more items with “antibacterial” properties. We can find antibacterial claims in products ranging from soaps to toys to cutting boards, and even in mattresses and clothing. The Marketing Intelligence Service in Naples, New York tells us that in 1998, Americans purchased \$540 million worth of these products, without any proof that they even do what they claim!



## What Makes Products “Antibacterial?”

There are two types of antibacterials: one is a *non-residue producing antibacterial*, meaning it acts rapidly to destroy bacteria and disappears quickly, usually through evaporation. Non-residue producing antibacterial products are alcohol-based, and examples include alcohol-based cleansers, chlorine, and peroxide. These types of antibacterial products have been on the market for some time.

The other type of antibacterial is called *residue-producing antibacterial*, and leaves long-acting residues on the surfaces being cleaned. It is this second group of antibacterial products that are the most recent arrival to our supermarkets, and because of an ingredient used called triclosan, they are causing real concerns within the medical community.

## Health Concerns

Bacteria which encounter triclosan, and manage to survive, may evolve into a type of bacteria called a “superbug.” This concerns many experts in the

medical field, because superbugs will be much harder to treat by conventional methods and may even become resistant to many antibiotics.

Besides creating superbugs, triclosan uses a shotgun approach and tries to kill all microscopic organisms. This approach will destroy even the good bacteria that occur naturally in our bodies and our environment. This may potentially cause genetic mutations and could possibly create new strains of harmful bacteria for

which we have no natural defense against.

There is also the worry of the staying properties of triclosan. Since it leaves residues behind, scientists worry it may be able to linger in a person’s body for long periods of time. Researchers at Stockholm University in Sweden found that three out of five tested samples of human breast milk contained triclosan, sometimes in large amounts. Since it is unknown what the effects of triclosan in the body may be, many doctors believe we would be better off to limit our use of these products.

Dermatologists have their own worries regarding antibacterial products and triclosan. These products are somewhat harsher than regular soaps and cleansers, and doctors have found that some people are developing hand eczema, making them vulnerable to open sores.

“They literally strip away fatty acids, moisture and amino acid from the skin,” says Dr. Marianne O’Donoghue, associate professor of dermatology at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke’s Medical Center in Chicago. “They increase dryness, increase roughness and disturb the healthy growth process.”

These open sores may actually attract bacteria, and these bacteria will spread if that person touches another surface or shakes someone’s hand. So instead of preventing the spread of germs, they are actually helping spread them!

Another potential health problem with overuse of antibacterial products is their link to allergies. Called the “hygiene hypothesis,” studies have shown an increase in the frequency of asthma and allergies in persons who have been raised in more sterile environments. The thought is that through over-cleaning ourselves and our homes, our immune system is not challenged and does not develop and mature as it should, leaving us vulnerable to germs.

## Environmental Concerns

The Environmental Protection Agency has registered triclosan as a pesticide, and gives it high scores both as a human health risk and as an environmental risk. More than 95% of the consumer products that use triclosan are disposed of in residential drains. The U.S. Geological Survey tested the water from 139 streams in 30 states and found that triclosan

contaminated 57% of all surveyed sites. This study is proof that triclosan can survive wastewater treatment methods and is entering our environment at an alarming rate. Because we do not know yet what the significance of such findings may be, most scientists agree we would be wise to limit our use of these products until further studies can be conducted.



## Okay, But Do They Work?

A study was conducted by the National Institute of Health (NIH) and funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research (a division of the NIH) in which 222 New York City households were given either antibacterial soaps or regular soaps to use when washing. The group was randomly split in half, and neither group knew which type of soap they were receiving. After one year, culture samples were taken from both groups. The study concluded that the antibacterial products did not seem to reduce the incidence of common household infectious diseases any better than the regular soaps.

“It makes you wonder why they call it antibacterial, because according to our research, it isn’t any more so than plain soaps,” says Elaine Larson, PhD, R.N., associate dean for research at the Columbia University School of Nursing New York (the principal investigator of the study). “We found antimicrobial or antibacterial soaps provide no added value over plain soap.”

In an Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s *News in Science* article, microbiologist Dr. John Turnidge of Adelaide Women and Children’s Hospital in Australia said, “The sale of these antibacterial soaps and detergents preys on peoples’ fears of bacteria. They’re really not necessary since soaps and detergents help reduce the risk from bacteria anyway. It’s really a mild kind of fraud. There’s no proven benefits, and all the available evidence suggest it could be detrimental.”

In addition, these products are quite often more expensive than their regular counterparts, so we may be spending hard-earned money on a product that doesn’t really do what it should!

## So What Is the Alternative?

While antibacterial products may be useful in some instances, such as when a newborn or a preschooler has a cold (and even then, medical experts suggest using the alcohol-based antibacterials such as

*Continued on Page 6*

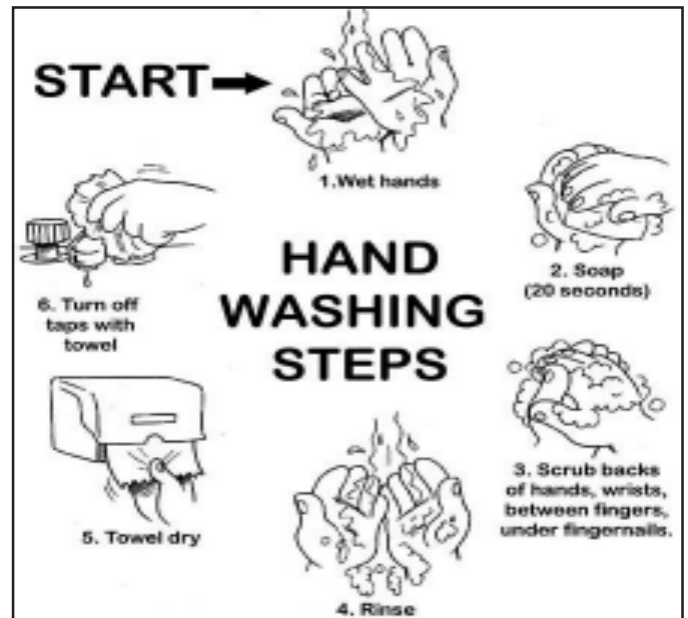
*Continued from Page 5*

hand rubs), the best defense against germs and bacteria is still the old-fashioned method of washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Over 100 years ago, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis first demonstrated that routine handwashing can help prevent the spread of disease. He worked in a hospital in Vienna, and the death rate for maternity patients was five times higher for mothers who delivered in the hospital instead of their own homes. When Dr. Semmelweis realized that the students treating the expectant mothers were going straight from anatomy class to the maternity ward, he began insisting they wash their hands before treating the mothers. Though other doctors laughed at such a notion, the death rate fell fivefold!

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), handwashing is still one of the most important means of preventing the spread of infection. Dr. Julie Gerberding, M.D., director of CDC's Hospital Infections Program, says "...for all our expertise and the tremendous advances we've made in technology and new treatments, we constantly remind ourselves of the basic in infection control...wash your hands!" And when done correctly, washing your hands will greatly reduce the chance that germs and bacteria will spread.

To wash your hands properly, use soap and warm, running water. Wash all surfaces of your hands, including the wrists and under the fingernails. Rub your hands together for at least 10-15 seconds before rinsing the soap off (some child care researchers suggest singing the 'ABC' song and rub to the finish!). When drying your hands, try to use a clean towel if possible, and patting your hands instead of rubbing them will help you avoid chapping or cracking. You can even apply lotion afterward to soothe the skin and help prevent your hands from drying out.

According to Dr. Amy S. Hood, Child Care Resource and Referral Professional Development Specialist, "It is especially critical in early care and education that caregivers and children use appropriate handwashing procedures to prevent the spread of disease. The best way to reduce illnesses among



children is to ensure that running water and liquid soap be used often. These products that promote quick sanitation without the use of water should only be used in situations where there are no alternatives.

## Marketing Triclosan

Triclosan is marketed under the trade name Microban when used in plastics and clothing, and it is marketed as Biofresh when used in acrylic fibers. Some other products which include triclosan are:

- Dial Liquid Soap;
- Softsoap Antibacterial Liquid Hand Soap;
- Clearasil Daily Face Wash;
- CVS Antibacterial Soap;
- Dawn Complete Antibacterial Dish Liquid;
- Reach Antibacterial Toothbrush;
- Old Spice High Endurance Stick Deodorant;
- Right Guard Sport Deodorant;
- Gillette Complete Skin Care MultiGel Aerosol Shave Gel;
- Solarcaine First Aid Medicated Spray;
- Chix Food Service Wipes with Microban;
- Teva Sandals; and
- Biofresh socks.

# Administration of Early Childhood Programs

There is still space available in the online course CFS 291, **Administration of Early Childhood Programs**, offered by Western Kentucky University in the Fall of 2005. Course content includes principles and practices in organization and management of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. Topics of study include managing physical, personnel, fiscal, curricular, agency, community, and family resources. At least 12 field-based hours will be required in addition to regular course work done online. Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation. Register today. (Please note that the course requires the following pre-requisites: CFS 191, 192, 193 and 194 or equivalent coursework.)

## C.O.U.R.A.G.E.

*Mary Sue Searle*

Courage comes in mind when I reflect back to the one and a half years I applied toward the transition of a certified facility (my converted living room) to my current licensed facility (Greenhill Early Learning).

**C** is for communication - the stone to pave the way.  
**O** is for organization - that I utilize each day.  
**U** is for understanding the people's lives we share.  
**R** is for respect for other involved in child care.  
**A** is for artistic expression I pray will never cease.  
**G** is for God's love, which keeps my life at peace.  
**E** is for enthusiasm, a trait I'm seldom lacking.

A huge Thank You to my family and friends for their love, support and backing. The actress Dorothy Bernard had a special quote about courage saying, "Courage is fear that has said its prayers." My courage celebrates a dedication and ongoing commitment to the lives of children. Please share your experience in this newsletter and extend the celebration.

## Provider Appreciation Day A Huge Success!

The 2005 **Child Care Provider Appreciation Day** event was a huge success!! We extend a very special thank you to all who attended. We also send A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to the local businesses that donated food, drink, and items for door prizes, including:

**Chaney's Dairy Farm**  
**Pepsi-Cola**  
**Bowling Green Public Library**  
**Parent-Teacher Store**  
**Merle Norman**  
**Essential Skin Restoration**  
**Barnes and Noble Booksellers**  
**Tumbleweed Southwest Grill**  
**Lost River Cave**  
**O'Charley's**  
**The Grand Ole Opry**  
**Pizza Hut**  
**Kentucky Repertory Theatre**  
**Canary Cottage Florist**  
**Southern Lanes**  
**Mrs. Bianca**  
**Chick-Fil-A**

We also express SPECIALS THANKS to volunteers, Alumni and current members of the Phi Mu Sorority who helped us with the event:

**Elizabeth Pemberton, Sarah Long, Emily Hock, and Marywarren Bennett.**



# Congratulations, Graduates

**Janis Flynn**, Holy Trinity Lutheran Preschool (Warren County), a KIDS NOW scholar, earned a Bachelor of Science in Child Studies. **Stacy Clark**, Simpson County Preschool (Simpson County), a KIDS NOW scholar, earned her Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE). **Sharon Hall**, Barren County Head Start (Barren County), **Teresa Manley**, Teresa's Child Care (Warren County), and **Michelle Mason**, Allen County Head Start, all recently earned CDAs. Congratulations to these hardworking individuals for their dedication to professional development!



## Want to Become A KIDS NOW Scholar?

Did you know that if you are working in a early care and education setting for at least 20 hours a week, you are eligible to apply for a KIDS NOW Scholarship?

College scholarships are available to attend community colleges, technical schools, or universities in KY and obtain a credential in early childhood education. These scholarships are available for individuals working in early childhood settings at least 20 hours a week and want to attend college on a part-time basis. To be eligible for the Fall 2005 semester, applications must be submitted NO LATER than July 15 but applications will be based on a first-come, first-served basis.

Non-college scholarships are also available for individuals interested in earning a Commonwealth Child Care Credential or Child Development Associate (CDA). If you have earned a Commonwealth Child Care Credential and are interested in continuing your professional development by earning your CDA contact our office no later than June 20.

To learn more about the scholarships or to obtain application information, please call 1-800-621-5908 or (270)745-2216 or contact us by email at [crr.expert@wku.edu](mailto:crr.expert@wku.edu)

\*Please note that the KIDS NOW Scholarships are designed for individuals working at least 20 hours a week in licensed child care centers, licensed or certified family child care homes, and public preschool programs who are interested in continuing their professional development in the field of early childhood education.

## Save the Date!

**Hands Across the State**, the 2005 Fall Collaborative Institute, will be held September 29 – October 1, 2005 in Northern Kentucky. This important event is co sponsored by the Kentucky Association for Early Childhood Education (KAECE) and the Kentucky Head Start Association (KHSA).

This professional development opportunity will provide a variety of workshop sessions designed specifically for early care and education professionals. More details will be available soon by mail or on-line at [www.kaece.org](http://www.kaece.org).

## No Training In July!

Did you notice that the **Registration Portfolio** was not included in this month's newsletter? As we approach the end of our Fiscal Year, the CCR&R at WKU is taking a short break from our busy training schedule and giving our hardworking training staff a little vacation. We are also using this time to look ahead and plan for future services and events. Stay tuned for news of the upcoming year's activities!

# Assessment Terms: Do They Confuse You?

## Part Two in An Ongoing Series

*Dr. Connie Jo Smith, CCR&R Director*

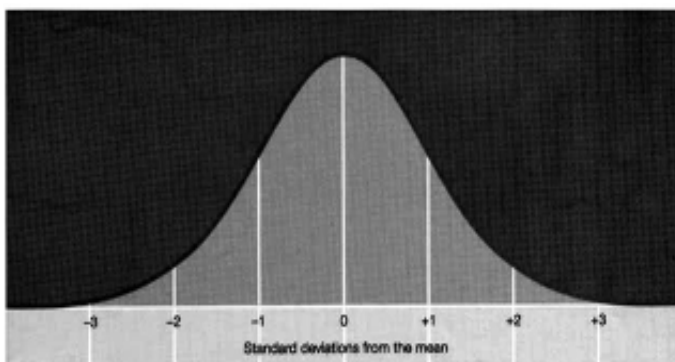
In our last newsletter, we introduced a series on the dozens of terms related to better understanding assessment for young children. In that opening article, we covered some terms that begin with the letter A. This issue, we have prepared some definitions for you that begin with the letter B.

**Benchmark** - A benchmark is reference points (or check points) for measuring children's knowledge and skill level as they move toward a specific goal. Sometimes the words milestone or performance standard are used instead of benchmark.

**Bias** - An assessment that has characteristics that show favoritism toward one population or discriminates against a group of children because of gender, culture, language, race, ethnic background, economic level, or geographic location.

**Basal** - The basal is the starting place within a test for a specific child and often based on a specific number of easier tasks done successfully. It is generally assumed that a child can complete all tasks below the basal. The basal is sometimes called a baseline.

**Bell Curve** - A bell curve is a distribution of scores where most fall in the middle (average) and only a small number fall on each side, one of which represents low scores and one represents high scores.



*A sample of a Bell Curve.*

If you're still hungry for more definitions, try out some of these web pages that have a wealth of definitions and other valuable assessment information.

- ◆ **Kentucky's Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide:** <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Kentucky%27s+Early+Childhood+Continuous+Assessment+Guide.htm>
- ◆ **Zero To Three:** <http://www.zerotothree.org/glossary.html>
- ◆ **NECTAC:** <http://www.nectas.unc.edu/chouse/dictionaries.asp?text=1>
- ◆ **Council of Chief State School Officers:** [http://www.ccsso.org/projects/scass/projects/early\\_childhood\\_education\\_assessment\\_consortium/publications\\_and\\_products/2840.cfm](http://www.ccsso.org/projects/scass/projects/early_childhood_education_assessment_consortium/publications_and_products/2840.cfm)
- ◆ **Wrightslaw:** <http://www.fetaweb.com/06/glossary.assessment.htm>
- ◆ **Northern Illinois University:** [http://www.niu.edu/assessment/\\_resource/asterms.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/assessment/_resource/asterms.shtml)
- ◆ **English Language Learner Knowledge Base – Assessment Terms:** <http://www.helpforschools.com/ELLKBase/references/EducationalAssessmentTerms.shtml>
- ◆ **Howard University:** <https://www.howard.edu/assessment/open/glossary.htm>
- ◆ **AGS:** <http://www.agsnet.com/glos/>
- ◆ **New Horizons for Learning:** <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/assess/terminology.htm>
- ◆ **Barry Sweeny, 1994:** <http://www.teachermentors.com/RSOD%20Site/PerfAssmt/glossary.html>
- ◆ **System for Adult Basic Education Support:** <http://www.sabes.org/assessment/glossary.htm>
- ◆ **CRESST/UCLA:** <http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/pages/glossary.htm>
- ◆ **Authentic Assessment ToolBox:** <http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/glossary.htm>

# Developing Critical Thinking Skills in School Ageders

By Jill Norris, Early Childhood Health Coordinator

Now that school is out, chances are you have more school ageders in your child care program (or at home) and you're wondering how to keep them active and involved. Why not concentrate on how to enhance their critical thinking skills during the summer months?

What is critical thinking, you ask? Well, let's first look at what it is not. Critical thinking is not being able to process information well enough to know to stop for red lights or whether you received the correct change at the supermarket. This kind of thinking is basic survival thinking that most people master.

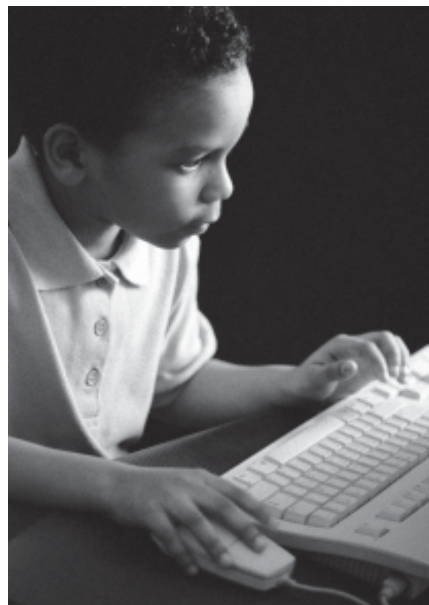
Critical thinking, on the other hand, is higher-order thinking that helps people be able to responsibly judge between political candidates, serve on a murder trial jury, or assess the consequences of global warming. Critical thinking is what enables an individual to be a responsible citizen who contributes to society. Isn't that exactly what we want to help the children in our care become?

Because children are not born with critical thinking skills, we must teach it to them. To do this it is important to think about the similarity between critical thinking skills and scientific investigation: identify a question, formulate a hypothesis, seek and collect relevant data, test and evaluate the hypothesis, and draw conclusions. So, how do you do this with children? Hopefully you can get some ideas below.

When you read books, remember **Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Thinking**, which categorizes thinking into six processes: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. After reading a story, try asking children questions about

it that relate to each of these processes. For example, after reading *Corduroy*, by Don Freeman, consider asking questions like these:

- **Knowledge** – Who was Corduroy? Where did he live? What was he missing?
- **Comprehension** – What was this story about? Why did Lisa's mother tell her they couldn't buy Corduroy?
- **Application** – How was Corduroy like a real person? Why did Corduroy go looking for a button? Draw a map of the store Corduroy lived in. Show through action, how Corduroy looked for a button.
- **Analysis** – How did Corduroy feel when Lisa's mother said they couldn't buy him? How would you feel?
- **Synthesis** – List the events of the story in sequence. You may need to do this by asking questions like, what happened after the night watchman found Corduroy? Have children make a puppet of one of the characters and use the puppet to act out that character's part.
- **Evaluation** – Would you have bought Corduroy? Why or Why not? Do you think the missing button was important? Why would a grown-up write this story for children to read?



Examples of other activities that will increase critical thinking skills include:

## Creating Art Using Music and Feelings

Select CD's or tapes with four different types of music. Provide four pieces of paper for each child along with crayons, markers, paint, scissors, glue, glitter or other items you choose. Tell children to use one piece of paper for each song they

hear. Let them know they are expressing their own feelings, not someone else's so there is no need to look at other people's pictures.

Play the songs one at a time, leaving enough time between each one for children to get ready for the next one. Ask them to express on paper the first thing that pops into their head when the music starts. Ask them to think about the mood (emotion) they are in when they listen to each song and to express that as well. When they have listened to all of the songs, ask them to share their pictures with the others and talk about the music they heard, which was their favorite, and how the different types of music made them feel. Then have some discussion about why they think music can affect their moods.

## Squiggle Art

Provide each child with a piece of paper and ask them to draw a squiggle line on it. Then ask them to look at the line and brainstorm what they see in the squiggle. Then ask them to draw a picture that includes the squiggle. Allow ample time for children to finish their drawings. Then ask them to share their drawing with the other children and talk about their squiggle art.

## Growing Plants

Have children plant seeds to grow flowers. Have them take measurements of the plants each day or week and record them in a log. Some plants could be placed in sunlight and others in shade. Have children speculate on which plants will grow faster and see if their hypothesis is right.

For more information and ideas about activities that will enhance critical thinking skills, check out the following websites or try conducting a search for activities related to critical thinking:

- The Educator's Reference Desk – <http://www.eduref.org>
- Youth Learn - <http://www.youthlearn.org/>
- Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking - <http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/longview/cta/blooms.htm>

# June 2005 Book Of The Month: School's Out!

*Heather Alms, CCR&R Office Coordinator*

Another school year has ended and summer break has begun. ***School's Out!*** by Joan M. Bergstrom states that the hours of out-of-school time comprise almost 80 percent or 195 full 24-hour days a year. After doing daily activities, what do our children do during those hours? As the B.O.M. says, "Children don't turn off their eyes, ears, and minds when the school bell sends them home. They continue to learn." ***School's Out!*** helps parents and educators make this free time count.

To check out ***School's Out!*** or other materials, please contact us at 270-745-2216 or 800-621-5908 to schedule a time to visit. The Child Care Resource and Referral Lending Library is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. We are located on the WKU campus, Jones Jagers Hall Room 117. Call us if you need directions! If you cannot schedule a time to visit the library, materials may also be checked out by telephone. We will be happy to ship materials to your home or center. To learn more about the library's services, contact Heather Alms, Office Coordinator for further information.

## Want to Be Published? Want to Announce An Event?

The CCR&R at WKU welcomes submissions from the BRADD child care community. Describe your services, let us know about an upcoming event, or share an inspiring story with your contemporaries. We will make every effort to include your articles and announcements in **THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL** on a timely basis. *All articles, submissions, and announcements should be limited to 400 words or less, and must be typed and sent electronically. (Sorry, submissions cannot be returned.)* Mail your submissions on disk to: CCR&R at WKU, 1 Big Red Way, 117 Jones-Jagers Hall, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101. Or e-mail your submissions to [connie.smith@wku.edu](mailto:connie.smith@wku.edu),

# The Food Pyramid Has a New Look

Taylor Tucker, CCR&R Quality Coordinator and Infant-Toddler Specialist

The Food Pyramid has a new look. You can take a look at the complete pyramid and learn more online at:

[www.mypyramid.gov/professionals/graphics\\_resources.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/professionals/graphics_resources.html)

Instead of the old horizontal sectioned pyramid, there is a new pyramid with vertical stripes that represent the five different food groups, as well as the fats and oils. The new rainbow of colors represents the following (in our illustration, the groups appear from left to right)

1. Orange – grains
2. Green – vegetables
3. Red – fruits
4. Blue – milk and dairy products
5. Yellow - oils
6. Purple – meat, beans, fish and nuts

The new pyramid also is personalized as its name suggests. “MyPyramid” as it is called is personalized using your age gender and amount of physical activity you do, in addition to your normal daily routine. The person climbing the steps on the side of the pyramid represents the importance of physical activity. Moderation and proportion is represented by the width of each vertical stripe. The narrower the base of the strip is, the less of that food group needs to be included in your daily food intake.

For example the yellow stripe is vary narrow and therefore you need to limit the amount of oils included in your diet. Variety is also encouraged by the six different colored stripes. Foods from all groups are needed each day for a healthy diet. The slogan, **Steps to A Healthier You**, also represents gradual improvement.

So what does this mean to us, and the children we serve? We need to include more physical activity in our daily routine. Children need to be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day. If it is raining and children can't get outside, we need to provide this physical activity inside.



If you don't have a gym or a multi-purpose room to go to, look around your center and see if there is other space that can be used. You may have a hall large enough for children to use for physical activity. You also may need to move furniture to make space in your classroom for physical activity. You can put music on and let children dance to it. Get a parachute and let children bounce a ball on it. You may need to be creative to come up with activities to do in the limited space you have.

Another way we can help children meet the guidelines on the food pyramid is to make sure the grains we serve are whole grains and not refined grains. When you check the ingredients list, whole grain foods are foods that name one of the following ingredients **first**:

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Brown Rice       | Whole Oats  |
| Bulgur           | Whole Rye   |
| Graham Flour     | Whole Wheat |
| Oatmeal          | Wild Rice   |
| Whole Grain Corn |             |

Here are some tips (from [http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains\\_tips.html](http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains_tips.html)) to help you eat whole grains at meals.

- To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole grain product for a refined product – such as eating whole wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to

- substitute the whole grain product for the refined one, rather than adding the whole grain product.
- For a change, try brown rice or whole wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes and whole wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casserole or stir-fries.
- Experiment by substituting whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancakes, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.
- Use whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs on meatloaf.
- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked treats.
- Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter. (Only for children over the age of 4)

Another way we can help children is by helping them eat more fruits and vegetables. Here are some tips from <http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid> on ways to encourage children to eat more fruits and vegetables. When it comes to vegetables:

- Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.
- Let children decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.
- Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- Use cut-up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.
- Children often prefer foods served separately. So, rather than mixed vegetables try serving two vegetables separately.

**Some tips for encouraging children to eat more fruit include:**

- Set a good example for children by eating fruit everyday with meals or as snacks.
- Offer children a choice of fruits for lunch.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop

- for, clean, peel, or cut up fruits.
- While shopping, allow children to pick out a new fruit to try later at home.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with fruit slices.
- Top off a bowl of cereal with some berries. Or, make a smiley face with sliced bananas for eyes, raisins for a nose, and an orange slice for a mouth.
- Offer raisins or other dried fruits instead of candy. (for children over age 4)
- Make fruit kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, and berries.
- Pack a juice box (100% juice) in children's lunches versus soda or other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Choose fruit options, such as sliced apples, mixed fruit cup, or 100% fruit juice that are available in some fast food restaurants.
- Offer fruit pieces and 100% fruit juice to children. There is often little fruit in "fruit-flavored" beverages or chewy fruit snacks.

Information for this article came from <http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid> and <http://kidsshealth.org>. For more information or to see what your personal nutritional needs visit <http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid>.

## Mark Your Calendar

**The 19th Annual Early Childhood Summer Institute** will be held June 20-22, 2005 at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Early Childhood Regional Training Centers in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Education, the Division of Early Childhood Development, Even Start, the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy, and the Family Resource/Youth Services Centers.

Highlights include over 50 break out sessions, strands on Developmentally Appropriate Instructions, Administration, Special Needs and Inclusion, and Family Literacy/Even Start. The registration deadline is May 20, 2005. Please call Vanessa Garland at 859-986-1929 or 800-343-2959 or e-mail Vanessa at [vgarland@berea.k12.ky.us](mailto:vgarland@berea.k12.ky.us) for registration information.

# Window Wonders

Connie Jo Smith, CCR&R Director and Charlotte M. Hendricks, President of Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc.

**“Freedom is the open window through which pours the sunlight of the human spirit and human dignity.”** Herbert Clark Hoover

From the window one can see the sun shining, rain pouring down, snow falling gently, autumn leaves floating, emergency vehicles rushing, police cars zooming, birds soaring, cars racing, airplanes flying, flowers growing, and children playing — just a few of the interesting sights! Looking through a window can be a very enjoyable and educational experience. Young children learn much about their world through observation, and windows provide a way to check out their environment.



Windows play an important role in the day of young children. Sunshine and natural light shining in through windows can brighten the day for everyone. Windows may provide adequate ventilation for a healthy environment. It is common for windows to serve as a fire escape route. Unfortunately, more than 4,000 children are injured by falls from windows each year. A fall from even a first-floor window can kill a child or cause serious injury. The wonders of windows can turn into nightmares unless safety precautions are followed. Below are recommendations to help prevent window tragedies.

## Escape Routes

In an emergency situation, caregivers should have two ways out from every location in a child care facility. Providers should consult their local fire department about using the windows as an escape route. If the windows can provide an escape route, it is essential that the windows be easily opened if necessary.

- Windows must not be painted or nailed shut.

- Security bars, intended to keep you safe, can become a trap in an emergency. Window guards, security bars, grilles, or grates on windows should have a release mechanism. Test mechanisms regularly to be sure it will work if you need it.
- Ask your local fire fighters to practice fire drills with children, including instruction on how to safely go out the window. Many fire departments

or community safety groups, such as SafeKids, have model “Fire Safety Smoke Houses” that allow children to experience a simulated fire emergency and learn about various escape routes, including out the window.

Remember, it is important for children to know how to escape through windows in an emergency, but not unattended. Windows should have secure latches (not locks) that can be easily and quickly opened by all adult caregivers.

## Prevent Falls

Looking and listening through an open window can provide a unique learning opportunity. Children can hear birds singing or raindrops falling, smell the neighbor’s BBQ or spring flowers, and feel a gentle breeze through the room. If windows are to be opened, they should have screens to keep out insects. However, a screen is not an effective barrier to prevent children from falling out! If possible, open only windows that are above children’s level. Take precautions for windows at the child’s level.

- Use “window guards” that only allow windows to open to a specified point. Make sure guards are in compliance with all fire and building code requirements, and that all adults know how to release the window guards for escape in case of fire.
- Position a barrier in front of low windows. Plastic

child safety fencing can be attached to the wall on either side of the window for a barrier through which children can still see, but be protected. Furniture is not recommended as barrier since children may climb on the furniture, resulting in falls and injury.

- Consider planting soft shrubs or dense ground cover under windows. If a fall occurs, the softer landing surface may help avert a serious injury or death.

## Prevent Breakage

It may be hard to tell if a clean glass door is open or closed, which could result in children bumping into or running through the glass. Glass doors can be made more visible by taping children's artwork to the door. Avoid using decorations, such as vinyl decals, that might be put into mouths causing choking hazards.

Approved safety glass is required for doors, and is recommended for windows, especially those within children reach. Installing safety glass or Plexiglas will help prevent breakage and injury. Another way to reduce breakage risk is to have approved security film installed. This film protects against breakage from blasts, flying objects, or intentional breakage. Other window films are available which reduce sun glare, improve heating and/or cooling effectiveness, and provide privacy, while still allowing you to see out.

## Other Hazards

Children sometimes chew on window sills, or fleck paint and eat the chips. If the window sill was painted before 1977, the paint may contain lead and be toxic. Remove any flaking paint, and be sure windows and sills are properly painted.

If window fans are used they must have safety screens to protect small fingers. Window fans and air conditioning units must be securely bolted. Avoid

dangling or loose electrical cords on fans and air conditioning units.

Another danger is strangulation when infants and young children become tangled in window covering cords – not only the pull cords, but also the inner cords (the ones that go through the slats). These entrapments occur when a young child pulls on an inner cord and it forms a loop that can hang a child. The risk is greatest when children's cribs or playpens are placed next to windows. Since 1990, at least two children have died in child care settings from getting entangled in a cord while standing in their cribs.

Pull cords should be cut so there is no loop, and then fastened high above children's reach. A clothes pin can be used to clip cords near the window top. Continuous-loop cords can be anchored to the floor or wall. Safety improvements have been made with window treatments, and caregivers should check out the new features or consider installing cordless window coverings. The Window Covering Safety Council offer consumers free retrofit devices for repairing cord hazards on older windows.



## Summary

Windows in proper working order with lead free paint allow for a safe escape. The use of safety glass and updated window treatments, combined with correct use of screens is key. To prevent falls and strangulation, it is recommended that cribs and other furniture be placed away from windows. Planning and ongoing supervision of children should help prevent window related accidents and leave windows for watching the world go by.

## Additional Resources

- <http://arizonachildcare.org/childproof/windowsfty.html>
- <http://www.hangandshineofky.com/film.html>
- <http://www.windowcoverings.org/>
- <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/cords.html>

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