

“SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMMING THROUGH PLAY”

Through her many years of research, Judith Colbert, Ph.D., author of *Welcoming Newcomer Children: The Settlement of Young Immigrants and Refugees*, has gathered important insights into the settlement needs of newcomer children.

Here are some of Judith’s inspiring suggestions to help children settle into child care, taken from her chapter on Play.

Teacher Observations

If we observe young newcomers in child care from a more culturally informed, “world-wide” perspective, children’s play that at first seems unusual or problematic may reveal new meaning.

Teachers may observe that ...

- **Children do not seem to know how to play**

Children from cultures where a parent or other adult takes the lead during play may not know how to initiate play or may not be comfortable when asked to do so. They may not be accustomed to playing independently and may be more familiar with games and shared activities.

- **Children are not playing with the toys and equipment**

Children who have never had access to commercial toys may be unfamiliar with objects that have no other function except to provide experiences for children, some of which are so representational that they do not tax the imagination. Once familiar with such objects, they may tire of them quickly because they limit their creativity and seem unrelated to other aspects of their lives.

Teacher response:

- Introduce new play materials gradually. A newcomer child may be overwhelmed by too many new “things.”
- Provide real items (e.g. a real – not pretend – telephone) that familiarize the children with objects in their new environment.
- Restrict the number of commercial toys. Ensure that children have access to basic items such as building blocks and to “found objects” they can adapt for creative play.

- **Children seem to be emotionally upset or disturbed**

Children wander aimlessly, lash out at others unexpectedly and have frequent tantrums, or withdraw from the group. When they play, their treatment of dolls and other objects is concerning. The pictures they make are troubling.

Teacher response:

- Sort out whether difficult behaviour arises from a general unfamiliarity with approaches to play and other activities, or from deeper separation issues and trauma associated with their pre- and post-migration experiences.
- When children seem unfamiliar with what is happening, introduce them to new play patterns and materials, and encourage peers to include them in games and other activities.
- When children seem to be struggling with separation issues and trauma, it may be necessary to introduce play experiences designed by professionals to help such children to express themselves freely.

Strategies to Support Settlement

Children who do not seem to play appropriately or do not wish to play should not be disciplined or subject to teasing by other children. Instead, teachers should ...

- Discuss the children’s play behaviour with parents to find out how they are used to playing, and how parents, especially mothers, support their play. Ask for information about favourite games and toys, music and stories.
- Invite parents to play with their children in the classroom and observe their interactions. With permission, record parent voices or take pictures of parents with their children.
- Introduce parents to mainstream activities and help them learn how to support their children through the transition to their new environment.

When a child and his or her parents seem comfortable with new ways, teachers can help the child benefit from mainstream activities and interact successfully with other children. In this way, play builds bridges that support the settlement of both the child and family.

Adapted from Judith A. Colbert, 2010, *Welcoming Newcomer Children: The settlement of young immigrants and refugees. A resource for teachers and others with an interest in supporting young newcomers from birth through age 8.*

For details and to order, see www.welcomingchildren.ca.

RESOURCES

Health information topics in Chinese

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/bilingua/chinese/Chinese.pdf>

Nourishing Our Young Souls – from 6 month to two years

Culturally adapted resources in different languages (video)

<http://www.toronto.ca/health/peernutrition/newvideo.htm>

Multilingual Health Resources

This initiative from the Hospital for Sick Children's aboutkidshealth.ca (funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) makes trusted answers about child health and family quality of life more accessible to newcomers to Canada, and to families and health care providers around the world.

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/Multilingual/Pages/home.aspx>

Families and Practitioners: Working Collaboratively to Support Cultural Identity in Young Children

Canadian Child Care Federation has developed a self-assessment tool to discover how well you and your program are doing and what can be improved.

See pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter for your copy!

HEALTH & SAFETY / A Parent's Guide to Immunizations

Child care providers sometimes find it very challenging to explain to parents the importance of having their children immunized. This may be due in part to a lack of understanding by parents of the nature and importance of immunizations (including inaccurate information) and language barriers.

Public Health Canada has published *A Parents' Guide to Immunization*, available in 13 different languages in addition to English and French. The *Guide* can help childminders answer such parent questions as:

- Can the vaccine make my baby sick?
- How many vaccines can my baby safely have at one time?
- Is there a strict immunization schedule?
- Is my child required by law to be immunized?

To obtain a **free copy** of *A Parent's Guide to Immunization*, please contact:

1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)

UPCOMING EVENTS

"VALUING CHILDREN: A CANADIAN CONVERSATION"

Early Childhood Care and Education NB / Canadian Childcare Federation National Conference

May 26 - 28, 2011
Saint John, New Brunswick

Keynotes: *Martin Liberio, Deb Curtis, Christine MacLean and Pam Whitty*

<http://www.eccenb-sepenb.com/cccf2>

"LEADERSHIP & TEAM BUILDING CAMP"

61st Annual Provincial Conference – Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

June 9th - 11th, 2011
Trent University,
Peterborough, ON

Special emphasis on health and well-being; exciting indoor and outdoor activities

[Conference flyer](#)
www.aeceo.ca

"REFLECTING IN PRACTICE / LA RÉFLEXION PROFESSIONNELLE"

CCECENS, CCCNS, CPRPS and NSCCA

June 10, 2011 - June 11, 2011
Holiday Inn Harbourview,
Dartmouth (Halifax), Nova Scotia
Focusing on reflection and how it enhances ECE practice.

<http://www.cccns.org/conf11/home.htm>

INFO: voice (902) 423-8199 /
fax (902) 492-8106
info@cccns.org

CMAS Training

Training that meets your organization's needs.

Child Abuse: Prevention and Intervention

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Giovanni Caboto Club, 2175 Parent Avenue, Windsor, ON N8X 4K2

Friday, March 11, 2011

Immigrant Women's Centre, 8 Main Street E., Suite 101 Hamilton, ON L8N 1E8

Anaphylaxis: Responding to Life-Threatening Allergies

Contact **Brian Robertson** to schedule a workshop for your site!

brianrobertson@cmascanada.ca

416-395-5027

PROFILE: BRIAN ROBERTSON



Brian comes to CMAS from Kids Internet Safety Alliance, where he provided on-site management support and over-saw design implementation. He has worked in the event industry for five years, planning functions and celebrations to raise funds for major charitable and other organizations, including Concert For A Cure, Toronto Wine & Spirit Festival, Canada Green Building Council National Summit, KINSA's Golf Classic, and An Evening with Jim Cuddy. He is also President of the Ontario Intercollegiate Women's Fastpitch Association.

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Families & Practitioners: Working Collaboratively to Support Cultural Identity in Young Children

Culture is a fundamental building block in creating children’s identity. Quality early learning and child care supports the development of identity by providing experiences that are in harmony with the culture of the home, practitioners who are able to understand diverse perspectives and appropriately interact with members of other cultures in a variety of situations, and curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, linguistically responsive. Use the self-assessment tool below to discover what you and your program are doing well and areas for improvement.

Use culturally, linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child’s learning and development. Start by identifying the unique early learning needs of children within the context of their families, and taking this information into account when planning the curriculum and pedagogy of the program.

Practitioners	Ways this is done well	Ways it could be improved
Encourage children and their parents to share aspects of their culture and lifestyle with the other children.		
Build an understanding the child’s culture and the values and beliefs within that culture.		
Learn key words in the first language of the children.		
Provide a learning environment with books, print materials, and other artifacts in home languages that respect and promote language and literacy learning, and that reflect diversity in unbiased ways.		
Recognize that children may be dealing with complex changes.		
Build knowledge of family dietary practices.		
Actively identify and counter any practices, curriculum approaches or materials which reflect a degrading bias toward language, race, religion or culture.		

Adapt programs to the needs of diverse families. Respect the home languages and cultures of all children served and find meaningful ways to incorporate diverse languages and cultures into everyday curriculum. Give families input into the design and development of early learning programs and content.

Practitioners	Ways this is done well	Ways it could be improved
Make extra efforts to include newcomers in programs.		
Create opportunities to learn about childrearing practices from families that have different backgrounds.		
Provide information about relevant resources.		
Provide information in first languages		
Support the development of informal social networks among families with young children		
Because many children live in newcomer families, collect information on migration experience		

Increase culturally competent staff.

Employ and support culturally competent staff. Recruit and adequately compensate qualified practitioners from immigrant and language minority communities as well as increasing the culturally relevant training for staff currently working with diverse families. Professional development standards for current staff should include access to training in cultural sensitivity and second-language acquisition strategies.

Directors/Staff	Ways this is done well	Ways it could be improved
Actively recruit practitioners who reflect gender, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversities.		
Support the child's home language.		
Become knowledgeable about more than one culture		
Provide opportunities for practitioners to rethink their assumptions and consider life's issues through the lenses of people who come from cultural backgrounds different from their own.		
Acquire an understanding of socio-cultural and economic issues pertaining to the communities the program serves.		

Provide access to comprehensive services.

Knowledge of and access to comprehensive services is a critical component of high quality early childhood programs serving diverse families. As someone who has established trust with families, you are well-positioned to help them access services, including parenting education and ESL classes. Some newcomer groups may prefer activities that focus on parents and children together. Community services should be linguistically- and culturally-appropriate, and easily accessible in neighborhoods where families live.

The program	Ways this is done well	Ways it could be improved
Establishes relationships with, and uses the resources of, the children's communities.		
Helps families connect with needed resources to further each child's healthy development and learning.		
Facilitates parent to family literacy experiences.		

Quality rating systems (QRS).

Programs can use these evaluation tools to incorporate new standards into EC programs, in order to encourage the recruitment of culturally competent providers, create and implement culturally appropriate standards and practices, and provide financial supports to help them meet these goals. In addition, the standards can be used to educate and inform parents and other advocates about high-quality programs.

The program	Ways this is done well	Ways it could be improved
Reassesses its philosophies regularly to ensure they reflect shared values and current thinking about preferred practice and research on child development.		
Regularly assesses its quality and effectiveness using a tool(s) that highlights strengths and identifies areas for improvement.		
Uses a performance appraisal process in which directors observe individual staff, then review and discuss the observations with individual practitioners, acknowledging areas of strength, and identifying specific strategies for improvement.		

Prepared by Karen Chandler for the Canadian Child Care Federation. Permission is not required to make photocopies for public education purposes. Photocopies may not be sold. To purchase this resource sheet, contact the Canadian Child Care Federation, 201-383 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4R4. Phone (613) 729-5289 or 1 800 858-1412. Fax (613) 729-3159. Email info@cccf-fcsge.ca. Website www.cccf-fcsge.ca. © CCCF 2008.