

WEST VIRGINIA

EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROVIDER

QUARTERLY

Fun in the Sun

**Your Outdoor
Learning Environment**

Nature Education: Yes!

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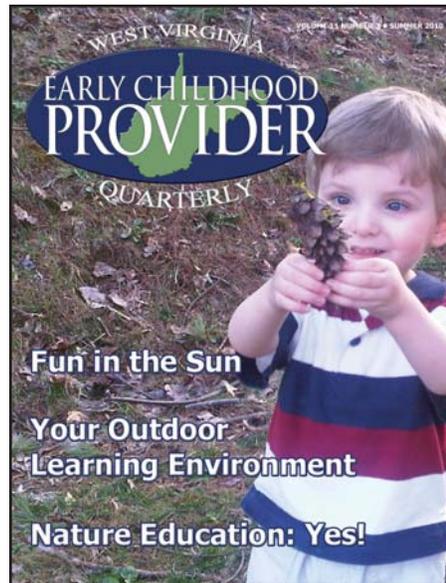
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News You Can Use

Summer 2010

West Virginia native Jayne Anne Phillips is the fourth author announced for the West Virginia Book Festival, to take place on October 16 and 17 at the Charleston Civic Center. Phillips will present the Settle Session on Sunday, Oct. 17 at 12:30 p.m. The session is named in honor of the grande dame of West Virginia literature, Mary Lee Settle.

Phillips grew up in Buckhannon. She earned a BA in English at West Virginia University and an MFA from the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. Parts of her latest book, "Lark and Termite," are set in Winfield, W.Va. The book was a 2009 National Book Award Finalist, a 2009 National Book Critic's Circle Award Finalist, and a Finalist for the 2009 Prix de'Medici Etrangers Prize.

"We are pleased to welcome Ms. Phillips back to her home state for the 10th annual West Virginia Book Festival," said Alan Engelbert, Kanawha County Public Library Director. Phillips joins Nicholas Sparks, New York Times best selling author; Civil War historian James Robertson; and children's author Carmen Deedy as a headlining speaker.

The West Virginia Book Festival is an annual, two-day event celebrating books and reading presented by The Library Foundation of Kanawha County, Inc., Kanawha County Public Library, the West Virginia Humanities Council, The Charleston Gazette, and the Daily Mail. For more information, visit www.wvbookfestival.org.

Check out the newly redesigned Web site of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources. Lots of great information and resources for early childhood professionals.

Visit www.wvearlychildhood.org



The Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) will soon begin fall classes. If you currently work at least 20 hours in the field of early care and education with children birth through eight, then you may want to consider the ACDS educational opportunity. ACDS is a rewarding educational program with minimal cost to the participant and is a way to learn best practice based on current research. The classes are taught by professionals who also have experience in the early care and education field. The program is four semesters, taught one evening per week for 15 weeks. You can also earn training hours toward licensing requirements and college credit. If you are interested in ACDS or have questions about the program, please contact Sherrie Barrett at 304-523-0433.

Save The Date!

October 6, 2010



WEST VIRGINIA
Department of

**Health &
Human
Resources**



What: Annual Child Care Center Directors' Meeting

When: October 6, 2010

Where: Village Square, Route 19, South Clarksburg, WV

Lodging: A block of rooms have been held at the Holiday Inn on Lodge road in Clarksburg under **Early Care and Education**. The rate is \$70 for the night before the meeting, October 5, 2010.



Please note: This meeting is mandatory for all center directors to attend. Failure to attend will result in the center becoming ineligible to participate in the tiered reimbursement program and the associated grants. If you cannot attend, please send a designee in your place.

More information coming in August, 2010.



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Nature Education: Yes!

Submitted by Mary Jo Graham, Marshall University

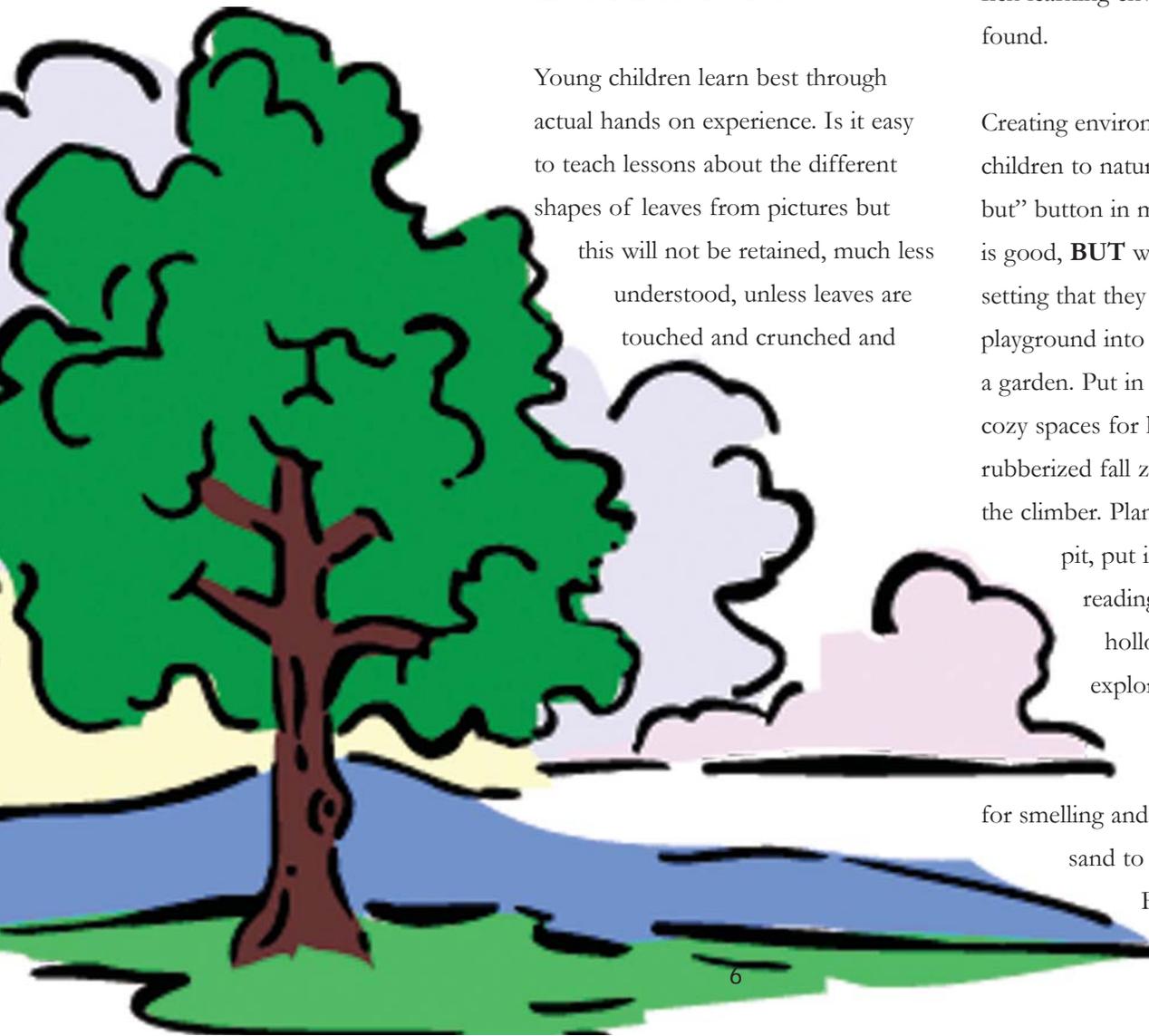
A movement is afoot. It has been around for centuries; however, a sense of urgency has been rekindled among early educators worldwide. Far too many children are losing touch with nature, a rich source of learning. Early childhood professionals are uniting to reconnect children to the natural world. Knowledge of the natural world is important to our survival. Children who understand and appreciate nature develop the skills and motivation to make wise decisions about using and protecting resources.

Nature offers children (and adults) so many benefits. Children in natural settings are more relaxed and creative. Their senses are alert and open. Outside activity improves children's stamina and well being as they run with unrestricted energy. But for many, the natural world is replaced by an indoor world. This is an unfortunate trend. Much is missing in the education of children if they have never dug in the earth, run their hands over bark on a tree, smelled the sweet smell of the weeds growing along a path, or felt the cool shade of a tree.

Young children learn best through actual hands on experience. Is it easy to teach lessons about the different shapes of leaves from pictures but this will not be retained, much less understood, unless leaves are touched and crunched and

thrown about. Children can recite much about animals from a television show, but unless a child actually touches a chick, that child has no idea how soft and stinky something can be. Standing next to a horse puts a whole new perspective on a picture of a horse. Once children have hands on experiences, they can learn much more from books and other media. But young children have not had those first experiences to build upon unless we give them rich environments to start. Nature is the most concentrated rich learning environment that can be found.

Creating environments that connect children to nature pushes the "yes but" button in many of us. Yes, nature is good, **BUT** we don't have a natural setting that they can play in. Turn your playground into a natural setting. Plant a garden. Put in shrubs that create cozy spaces for hiding. Tear up the rubberized fall zone and take down the climber. Plant grass, make a mud pit, put in tree stumps for a reading circle, find a hollowed out log to explore. Let weeds grow into a wild flower patch. Grow herbs for smelling and tasting. Allow the sand to escape the sandbox. Better yet, make a sand



pit. Plant a water garden. Google nature playground companies for ideas; there are several.

Yes, **BUT** they get so dirty! Plan for muddy clothes by having coat and boot racks next to the door from the playground. Lay out mud mats to the closest sink for washing up.

Yes, **BUT** we have only a cement environment for outdoor play. Set up raised beds for gardens on the cement. And bring the natural world into the classroom. An Australian teacher reported gathering natural materials, leaves, seeds, sticks, cones, shells, etc., with the help of her families. One weekend she removed all plastic toys from her classroom, put out baskets and boxes of natural materials, and watched the children's reaction on Monday morning. The reaction was so positive that instead of leaving these materials out for just a week as planned, the materials have been there for months and the plastic toys have remained stored. Parents have continued to supply the classroom, and her children have been engaged in some highly challenging studies.

Yes, **BUT** the weather is bad in the winter. According to Claire Warden of Mindstretchers in Perthshire, Scotland, "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." Cold weather does not make children sick; in fact, children who play outdoors on a daily basis are usually healthier. Children can

be dressed for any kind of weather. It takes time to put on snowsuits and boots but look at the fine motor development occurring as children work on this activity. It is well worth the time it takes. The real problem is that many adults do not wear the right clothing for outdoor fun and they bring the children in before the children are ready. Snow pants, jackets, boots, hats and mittens are made for adults too. Use them!

Yes, **BUT** it is so hot in the summer. Plant trees on the playground and put up sun shades. Put plenty of drinking water out and use sunscreen and hats.

Yes, **BUT** all that vegetation will attract critters and children might be stung, get a rash, or eat something poisonous. And crawling things are just too creepy! This is where adult learning and planning comes in. Consult extension services and garden clubs; go to garden centers and home improvement stores. Get information about appropriate things to plant. Some places will make donations to nonprofit programs. Learn about the crawling things and find out about how to care for them while avoiding hazards. Start small, ask for help, and engage the children by listening to their ideas and including them in the work.

Join your colleagues from around the world by learning how to connect children with nature. This movement was

ignited by the World Forum on Early Care and Education, which holds meetings in different parts of the world every two years. Emerging from this exciting conference is the Nature Action Collaborative, which is focused on uniting a variety of professions: landscape architects, playground designers and early educators, to plan and develop natural environments for children. They offer a free online newsletter called *Wonder* and will be meeting in Nebraska in October of 2010. Check out these website: www.worldforumfoundation.org www.dimensionsfoundation.org www.mindstretchers.co.uk



Your Outdoor Learning Environment

Submitted by Madelyn Russ, Design Consultant, Grounds For Play

For many, the phrase, “the outdoor learning environment” may be new. But the idea of using the outdoors as an area for learning is nothing new. Think about playing outdoors or going on a walk with a preschool age child. Think of it as a child. To him everything is new. Examining rocks and what are under the rocks, leaves, sticks, dead limbs, etc. is all new with each item he chooses to pick up. The sounds, the smells, and the feel of the air seem so everyday to us, but to a child it can be new over and over.

Recently I watched a one year old playing outdoors. A couple of days later, I watched a five year old and a seven year old working outdoors. There really was not that much difference in their attitude, intensity or urgency to complete the task. For them, work is play and play is work. How easy to blur the objective, especially when outdoors enjoying nature.

As a playground designer, I encourage my clients to think about the vision they have for their outdoor area. Do you want an area for gross motor development, more active play; an area that is more natural; or an area that is an extension of your classroom? Sometimes people want one or the

other or maybe all the above. The outdoor area must fit the staff or it will not be utilized to its fullest potential. Teachers must buy into the idea of a more natural area because it does require work, and if it is an extension of the classroom, then we expect learning to take place in the outdoor classroom. The teacher is now the facilitator outdoors, not just the observer.

Approach the outdoor area as you would an outdoor classroom. You certainly appreciate the value of a well-organized and properly equipped indoor classroom. Just like in your indoor classroom you set up centers. We do the same outdoors but call the different areas, zones of play. As you



think about what zones to include, consider the ten areas with six supplemental areas discussed in the book, Learning With Nature Idea Book, a Collaborative Project of The National Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions. When a client asks me for the ideal design for an outdoor learning environment, I always try to include a play structure, swings, sand, water, loose parts, music, art, open area for games, nature and science area, dramatic play, storage, gardening and signage. Of course, space will affect much of what you do, but money should only dictate how many phases you have to use to complete your area.

Just like your indoor classroom, the outdoor learning environment is ever evolving and a constant process. Variety is extremely important, almost as important as safety. For safety information go to www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf to print a copy of the Public Playground Safety Handbook. The federal government publishes this handbook and it includes all the safety requirements needed and it is the basis for licensing regulations.

As you continue to make improvements in your outdoor play/learning area, begin by thinking of all the strengths and weaknesses of your area. It might be helpful to get an outside

opinion to look at every aspect from an objective perspective. Make a list of all the types of activities you want to occur such as climbing, running, riding trikes, skipping, etc. Next make a list of equipment you have seen on other playgrounds or in books. Match the activities to the equipment. Which pieces of equip-

ment meet the most needs and encourage the greatest variety of play? One of the groups I assisted in this process found loose parts provide the greatest variety of play activities. Yes, we were surprised too. For you, this activity may have a different result, but I think it will help you know best where to start and how best to meet your needs.

As you think about your outdoor learning environment, keep in mind: safety, variety, nature, ever changing and evolving. Take advantage of that outdoor space to enhance the learning that takes place at your center.



Why Outdoor Play?

Submitted by Kay DeWitt, Preston County Starting Points

Outdoor play is fun for children and important for their growth and development. Many different types of outdoor areas can provide rich settings for learning. The outdoor area may be an open grassy space or blacktop area where children can engage in group games, ride wheeled toys, or just run freely. Many may have sandboxes or small playhouses, add a picnic table to enjoy lunch or snacks instead of going inside.

Because the outdoor environment is not confined by walls, it can be more than just a play area. Take children on a field trip in the neighborhood or nearby park. Discover ponds, hills, streams, and woods. Taking trips to national forests, nature centers, and farms will enhance children's learning.

Being outdoors will give children the opportunity to run, jump, hop, throw, catch, and use their outside voices. Children can have a healthy release and break from the quiet activities they have been doing inside. Children can stretch their muscles, breathe in fresh air, enjoy the sunshine, and enjoy the freedom of unlimited space.

Science comes alive when nature is explored and observed. Children can watch plants grow, follow the season changes, as well as the trees, taste snow, hear birds and crickets, smell the air after a spring rain. Children can use their senses to learn about their world. Art, music, reading, dramatic play, constructive play, and social play can be moved to the outdoors.

Some areas you can set up for outdoor play are:

Digging and Pouring – sandbox using pails, shovels, funnels, sifters, scoops

Riding Area – tricycles, big wheels, scooters

Quiet Play Area – crayons, chalk, paper, music, books, paints and easel, blanket

Garden Area – garden tools, seeds, water, plants, wheel-borrow, dirt, string and wood to mark off a space for a garden

Woodworking Area – homemade workbench, nails, hammers, safety glasses, old tree stump for driving in nails, rulers, hand drills.

Being outdoors gives children the opportunity to demonstrate social skills, cause and effect, increase vocabulary, understand basic math skills, learn about science, develop large muscles, increase independence, and much more.

While enjoying outdoor play, safety should be a primary concern. Because of the many types of activities, keeping children safe is no easy task. It is essential to balance the challenge and risk by progressively increasing the children from less risk at a young age to more difficult as the children get older.

Do you know a child who is not *moving *hearing *seeing * learning or *talking like others their age?

By 3 months,
Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,
Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,
Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,
Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,
Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,
Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

Every child deserves a great start.

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

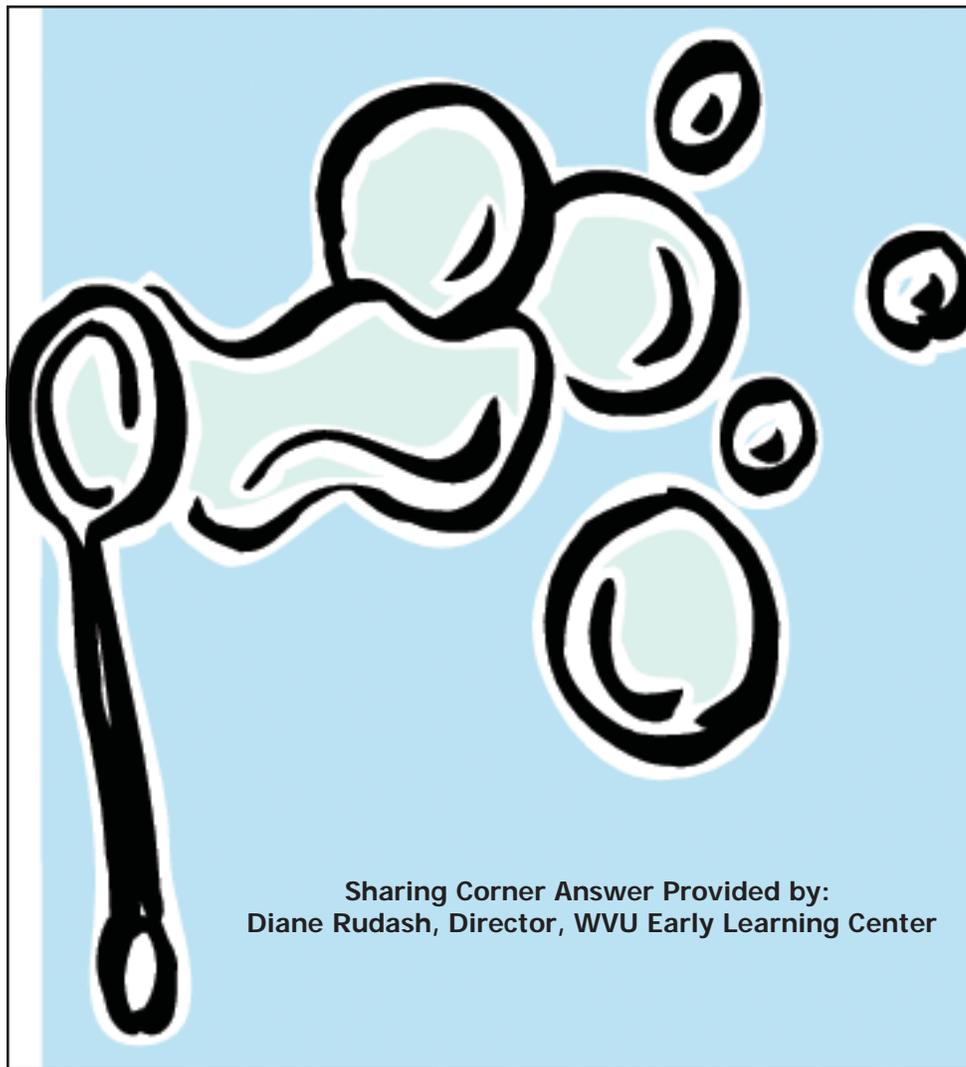
To learn more about the
WV Birth to Three services
in your area, please call:

1-866-321-4728

Or visit www.wvdhhr.org/birth23



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.



**Sharing Corner Answer Provided by:
Diane Rudash, Director, WVU Early Learning Center**

Sharing
Corner:
As a director
of a child care
center, I want
to encourage
opportunities
for children to
play outdoors
but I'm unsure
how to get
started. Any
suggestions?

Answer: It is amazing to me how many catalogs are out there with toys and gadgets to preoccupy a child's mind. As an educator, we are commonly looking for unique ways for children to experience their world, and today we have so many avenues we can search to unfold ideas to accomplish this goal.

I am firm believer that children best learn about their environment through their own play. I also think we sometimes complicate play and we forget how natural it should be.

There is nothing more beautiful than sitting in a park and watching a group of young children engage in activities. Try it sometime, I guarantee it will bring a smile to your face. Listen to the language, hear how they wonder, watch how they solve problems, and see how they interact. It's easy and very POWERFUL.

We can learn a lot from a child. We just need to scale down "our" world to "their" world. I utilized this concept when I was managing a center in Clarksburg, West Virginia. It was a child care center located on federal property with a lot of very strict regulations--not child care regulations but security regulations. At this center there was a summer camp program for school age children. In this area, there is a huge demand for programs that operate in the summer for school age children. My first year at this center I couldn't understand why this program was not full. With over 2000 employees at the client's site, surely there was a customer base for this program.

I learned that not many activities happened outside the fence line of the playground. I also noticed that there was a wonderful baseball field just on the other side of that fence. I observed the children spending 80 percent of their day

inside and there was very little excitement generated from their activities. We were losing families because the children were expressing their boredom. There was definitely something wrong with this picture.

It is so important for managers of these types of programs not get stuck in a rut. Tap into your customers, and I am not talking about the parents. In order to turn this program around we needed to talk to the children. That is exactly what we did.

Not only did we talk to the enrolled children in the current program, we contacted the children that left the program and went somewhere else. We asked them why they left and what we would need to do to get them back. We sat some of the children down in a group and defined “brain storming”. We explained that we were going to write down every idea they had that would make our summer camp the most exciting place for a kid to be. We told the children that no idea would be left off. That is what you do when you brain storm.

We also told them that we would take their ideas to big important people and discuss the possibility of implementing them in our program (we had to tell them what imple-

menting meant). We told the children after meeting with the important people they will help us separate what activities are possible and which ones were impossible.

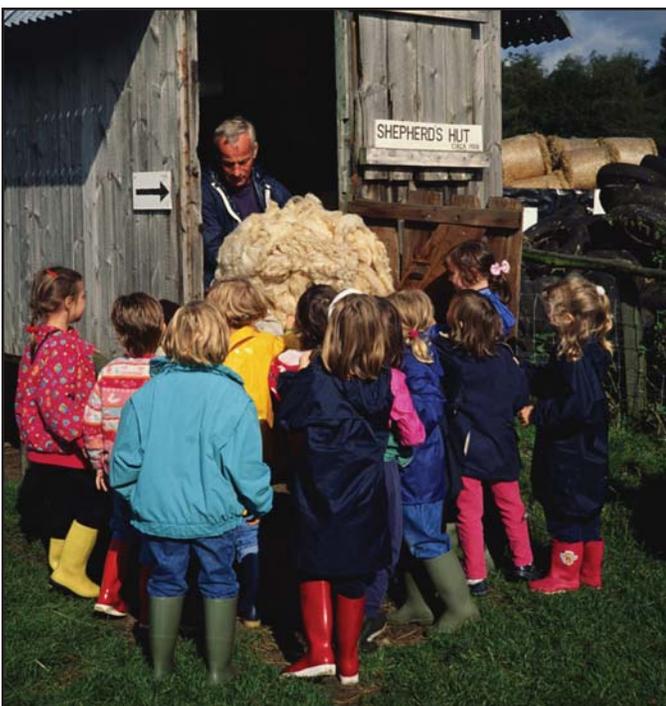
Now that the children understood this, we were ready to compile our list. Their ideas were amazing. They ranged from simple things like riding bikes, skateboarding, and swimming, to more complex things like landing a hot air balloon in the middle of the baseball field. They wanted to hike and wash cars, some even wanted to go fishing.

When we were finished with the list I couldn’t believe that just about everything they requested related with something to do outside.

I remembered an observation from weeks before. I overheard a teacher asking a group of children where cucumbers came from. Several children shouted out, “the grocery store.” The teacher asked, “Where does the grocery store get them?” One child answered, “Someone grows them.” The teacher asked the children if anyone had a garden. Only a few hands rose. Several children said, “My grandpa has a garden.” I realized that this is a perfect opportunity for a teachable moment. I added gardening to the list.

I then met with my Program Coordinator and we created “Operation Revamp”. Our goal was to incorporate the ideas of the children into a curriculum that mainly focused on outdoor activities. We wanted the outdoors to be the classroom. We wanted it to be exciting, challenging to their physical abilities, and a learning environment where the children didn’t even realize they were learning. Most importantly, we wanted it to be fun.

As simple as their requests were, we had to get approval to offer these activities. This can sometimes be tough when you are dealing with individuals not in the field of early childhood education. I will never forget this meeting. I met with the head of security, we sat down and I introduced my goal. I then asked him to remember his childhood and how



every special memory probably reflected around some type of outdoor activity. Presentation is very important when you are trying to influence others to collaborate in your concept. Attitude is everything, so you must be confident in your approach.

I then went through the entire list created by the children and supported it with the reason why offering this activity would be beneficial. His response to biking, “I don’t see a problem with that.” I smiled.

His response to moving the cars in the parking lot and putting out cones so we can rollerblade and ride scooters, “Not a problem”. I’m feeling good.

Then I expressed how I wanted to take the children fishing in one of the ponds on the site. His response, “We will have to have the police officers escort you to the pond. If you give them ample notice, I don’t see why we can’t do this.”

Now I’m getting real excited. As a joke, I thought I would ask about the hot air balloon landing on the baseball field. Now I want you to know that in no way did I ever think this would be approved. But I kept a straight face, and expressed the request of one little girl in our program. To my surprise, the answer was, “You know, my neighbor has a hot air balloon, and he sometime launches it at the Clarksburg airport, I could call him and see if he would be available.” I about fell off my seat.

Think about how much time a child spends outdoors. Compared to when I was a child, it’s very little. I remember riding bikes until dark, playing kick ball in the road, and going to my grandparent’s house on the weekends. They lived on a farm and we played in the creek building dams, we climbed trees, and we helped plant gardens. I remember learning how to drive a riding lawn mower and helping hang the wet laundry on the clothes line. We had chores and it helped us build a strong work ethic. Playing with one another taught us good communication skills, we had to solve



problems and it helped build our self esteem.

We developed our curriculum around these standards; our motto was to “think outside of the box.” We wanted to do things that parents wouldn’t expect from a child development center. For example, going fishing. There was a 12-year-old boy who attended our program. His love was video games. He spent very little time outside and he was slightly overweight.

When we announced we were going fishing he told me that he didn’t like to fish. I asked him if he’d ever gone. He said, “No, I just know I won’t like it.” I told him that everyone had to go. I also told him to make sure he wore comfortable shoes because he wore sandals every day.

The next day when we were lining up he complained constantly. “I don’t know why we have to do this, I hate to fish. Why can’t I stay here?”

While we were walking to the pond (which is about ½ mile walk) he continued complaining about the whole excursion. “It’s hot out here, I’m tired, are we almost there? How long are we staying here?”

When we got to the pond I took him in my group. He stood beside me but he wouldn’t participate. He just sat and

complained about everything. Meanwhile, while holding a fishing pole in my hand. I caught a fish but didn't tell anyone. I asked this 12-year-old boy to hold my pole while I baited another pole for a child. I thought for sure he'd feel the fish on the end, but he didn't. I waited a few more minutes and told him to reel in the line so we could move to another spot.

As I walked away, he reeled in the line and realized he'd caught a fish. He was so excited, he yelled across the pond, "Diane, I caught a fish." I started jumping up and down and "woo-whooping." I yelled for everyone to look at his fish. He was eager to get his line baited again and learn how to cast it out into the lake. He caught five fish that day.

On the hike back home he couldn't stop talking about how many fish he caught, and he told me that he had a lot of fun. He kept reminding everyone how many fish he caught. When his father came to pick him up that evening, he told him he wanted to go to Wal-Mart. His dad asked why, and he said, "I want to buy a fishing pole." This is a memory I will never forget.

Another example was our garden. We tilled the ground and the children planted it, weeded it, watered it and picked it. We donated half of the proceeds to a shelter and we had the children and their parents drop off the produce to the shelter. We would invite guests from the Agriculture Department at the local college to come and teach the children about the soil, different types of bugs (good bugs/bad bugs), and fertilizers.

We incorporated our garden into learning stations with tasks for each child that tended to the garden. They watched it grow and they were excited about the produce that formed. They also learned that sometimes the plants did not produce, but when it did, they picked it and sold the other half to parents.

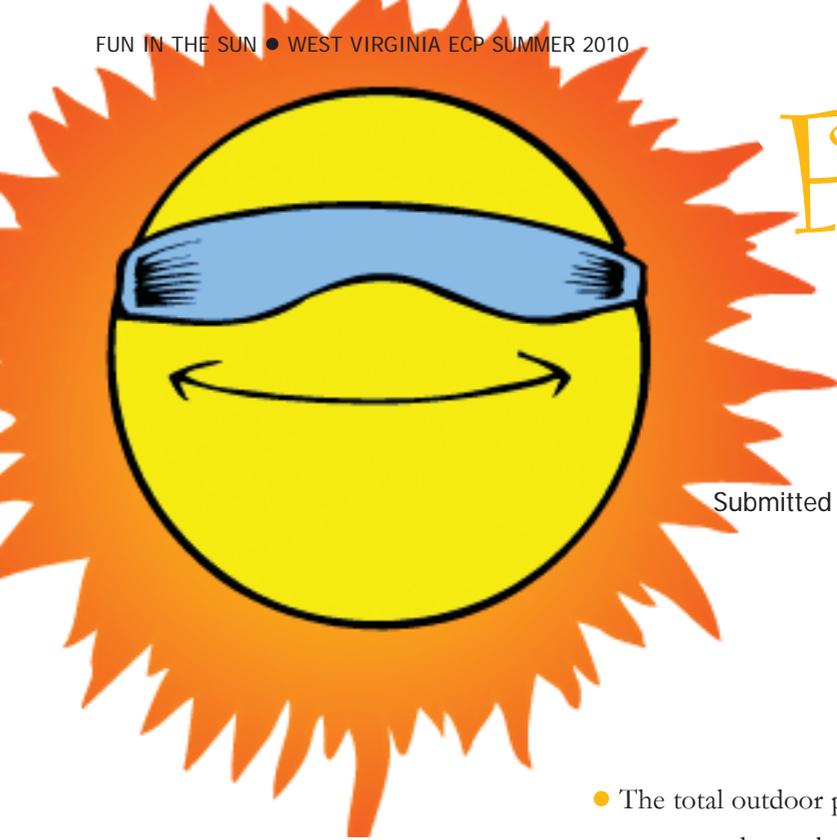
I remember one day the children picked the green beans

from the garden. We had them deliver the green beans to our cook in the kitchen. She cleaned them up and served them for their lunch. When I came into the classroom, I noticed that not too many of the children had eaten their green beans. I asked why no one ate their green beans. Several of the children said they don't like beans. I told them that those were the beans that they had picked that morning. They replied, "No they're not!" I said, "Yes, they are." One child said, "They don't look the same." Another child said, "The beans we picked were real long and these aren't long." The one thing we forgot to go over with the children is how to prepare what they grew and we never told them about what happens to food when you cook it and how it reduces.

There were so many math, science and health lessons that we could have incorporated into this one experience. I guarantee if they would have known those were the green beans they had picked more children would have eaten those beans. That is why it is so important to have children establish ownership in their curriculum activities. The lesson becomes more productive and relative to their interests.

Put your catalogs away, stop spending money for expensive video games and get your children away from the television. All you have to do is take them outside and think in simple terms. Bring back basic activities, the ones that generate interactions, communications, independence, and self help skills. Incorporate movement and challenge their problem solving skills.

Continue to build on these traits which in turn will help build self esteem. Do let a child say "I can't" or "I don't like," but encourage them to try. Then celebrate every accomplishment, no matter how minute it is. We need to instill these traits to establish strong work ethics in our children. That is something we are losing very rapidly. Each of us needs these skills to succeed in life. Let's get outside and start building that foundation.



Fun in the SUN

Submitted by Joyce Malson, Nurse Health Consultant, WVECTCR

After such a long, hard winter everyone is more than ready for summer and some fun in the sun. This is the perfect time to survey all outdoor play areas for safety checks and needed maintenance. Here are some tips taken from the National Health and Safety Standards:

- Whether indoors or outdoors, please be mindful of any strings, ribbons, drawstrings or cords on pacifiers, clothing, toys or window coverings, as these pose a threat of strangulation.
- Outdoor play areas should be no more than 1/8 of a mile from your facility and shall comprise a minimum of 75 sq. feet for each child using the playground at any one time.
- The total outdoor play area shall accommodate at least 33 percent of the licensed capacity.
- The outdoor play area shall be arranged so that all areas are visible to the staff at all times.
- The playground site shall be free of hazards and more than 30 feet from electrical transformers, high-voltage power lines, electrical substations, air-conditioner units, railroad tracks and sources of toxic fumes or gases.
- Playgrounds should be laid out to ensure clearance of equipment according to the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
- Swings shall have a clearance area of 6 feet.
- All fixed play equipment shall have a minimum of 6 feet clearance space from walkways, buildings, and other structures.
- Metal equipment shall be placed in the shade.
- All equipment shall be arranged so that children playing on one piece of equipment will not interfere with children playing on or running to another piece of equipment.
- Moving play equipment, such as swings and merry-go-rounds, shall be located toward the edge or corner of the play area.
- Outside play areas shall be free of bodies of water (pools, ditches, ponds, etc.).
- Sunlit areas and shaded areas shall be provided in the outdoor play space.

- The outdoor play area shall be enclosed with a fence or natural barrier.
- The soil in play areas shall not contain hazardous levels of any toxic chemicals or substances. Do soil samples if there is reason to believe a problem may exist.
- Sandboxes shall be constructed to permit drainage; covered with a lid; regularly cleaned and located away from prevailing winds.
- Play equipment shall be of safe design and in good repair. Inspect at regular intervals for:
 - Visible cracks, bending or warping, rusting or breakage
 - Deformation of open hooks, shackles, rings, links, etc.
 - Worn swing hangers and chains
 - Missing, damaged or loose swing seats
 - Broken supports or anchors
 - Cement support footings that are exposed
 - Accessible sharp edges or points
 - Exposed ends of tubing
- Protruding bolt ends
- Loose bolts and nuts
- Splintered, cracked or deteriorated wood
- Lack of lubrication of moving parts
- Worn bearings or mechanical parts or missing rails, steps, rungs, or seats
- Worn or scattered surfacing material
- Hard surfaces where resilient material has shifted
- Chipped or peeling paint
- Pinch or crush points
- Broken or worn play equipment
- Building supplies and equipment
- Glass
- Sharp rocks
- Stumps and roots
- Twigs
- Toxic plants
- Anthills
- Beehives and wasp nests
- Unprotected ditches
- Wells
- Holes
- Grease traps
- Cisterns
- Cesspools
- Unprotected utility equipment

Now that the work is done, get out the sunscreen and head outside for some fun!

- All pieces of play equipment shall be designed to guard against entrapment or situations that may cause strangulation by being too large for a child's head to get stuck or too small for a child's head to fit into.

- All walking surfaces shall be of a non-slip surface, well-drained and be free of holes and abrupt irregularities.

- Remove all hazards from the play area:
 - Debris
 - Dilapidated structures

Preventing Choking in Child Care

Submitted by Joyce Malson, Nurse Health Consultant, WVECTCR

Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a new policy statement on preventing choking among children.

This is a good time for child care providers and teachers to assess practices that can prevent choking in child care through these helpful tips.

For children under 4 years of age, foods that are round, hard, thick and sticky, smooth or slippery should not be served. Examples are:

- Hot dogs and carrots
(whole or sliced like coins)
- Whole grapes, marshmallows, peanuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, hard candy, apples, sausages
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter

Other choking hazards that should not be present with children:

- Gum
- Balloons, plastic bags, latex gloves
- Styrofoam cups and plates used with children under 4

years of age. Children can bite them and choke.

A special note for children under 3 years of age (or for older children who still put objects in their mouths), they should not have access to:

- Toys or objects less than 1 1/4 inches wide and 2 1/4 inches long
- Balls that are smaller than 1 3/4 inches in diameter
- Coins
- Marbles

Note: Tiny toys or objects can end up in the pocket of an older child, and then in the hands of an infant or toddler. Caregivers need to watch constantly and carefully.

For more tips on preventing injuries in child care, Healthy Kids, Healthy Care special section on Injury Prevention http://healthykids.us/chapters/injury_main.htm

West Virginia



Infant/Toddler Professional
Development Program

Great Beginnings Infant/Toddler Conference

September 17 - 18, 2010

Summersville Convention & Visitors Center
Summersville, WV

Model Room featuring
Gross Motor Activities and Equipment

Professional Development Opportunities
For Administrators and Caregivers of
Infants/Toddlers

Topics addressing nutrition, health and
active play.

Registration Opens April 1, 2010
Contact your Infant/Toddler Specialist



Transition of the West Virginia Transition Steering Committee

Submitted by Barbara Tucker, West Virginia Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee

Seventeen years ago a number of state agencies came together to problem-solve ways to strengthen transition processes for young children with disabilities. It was the start of local Tadpole Teams. Through the years, the self-imposed charge of the West Virginia Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee has been to be proactive with best practice recommendations. The time has come to officially end the state committee as other local and state parties can assume transition-related issues. Sustainability plans are in place.

In reflection, the committee has accomplished much related to the vision and mission statements.

VISION:

Local communities in West Virginia will have effective transition policies and practices for all young children ages birth to five years that will:

- Maximize positive outcomes for children through effective early childhood programs that are compatible as the child moves from one program to another.
- Foster positive ongoing relationships between families, professionals, and participating agencies.
- Result in a smooth transition process for children, families, and involved agencies.

MISSION

The mission has always been focused on state and local agencies and family members representing the Birth to Three System, Head Start, Department of Education, childcare and other related entities.

The committee accomplished the vision through providing supports for effective transitions at the local level including:

- Celebrating Connections, the annual statewide conference, in which 1500-2000 practitioners and parents participate from all aspects of West Virginia's early childhood system. This conference will continue under West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources with support from various interagency collaborative partners.
- Products and technical assistance materials including materials located on the Transition Steering Committee website.
- Information dissemination via West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources trainings and individual agency trainings.
- Mailings
- WV Early Childhood Newsflash Email

Accomplishments noted by the Committee include:

- Spurred the development of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources through committee work.
- Increased collaboration on transitions between WV Birth to Three and county Boards of Education.
- Recognized nationally as a leader in early childhood transition.
- Developed products that have supported local capacity regarding childhood transition knowledge and practice.
- Developed web-based interagency agreement template and multiple resources for the local negotiation and adoption of related policies and procedures.

At the state level, the committee has “walked the talk” modeling collaborative relationships and providing various resources for local leadership development.

The committee has been a sounding board for policy across West Virginia’s various early childhood systems, helping to ensure there is a unified system for policy development and interpretation, resource development and dis-

semination, and problem solving.

Tadpole Team Training beginning in 1994 resulted in the establishment of local early childhood collaborative teams in over 50 of West Virginia’s 55 counties. Policy, products, training and technical assistance initially focused on young children with disabilities and compliance with IDEA, Part B and Part C regulations and Head Start Performance Standards. Over time, the focus has evolved into universal transition processes for all children birth through five.

These interagency teams served as the basis for the establishment of West Virginia’s collaborative pre-K program and established structures and relationships that will support sustainability as this committee concludes its operation. West Virginia Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee members are very proud to have served as a collaborative vehicle for systems change.

The committee is also proud to have been a model of state level interagency collaboration, cooperation, and commitment for the good of a common cause. Many thanks to Peggy Hayden who brought expertise from national, state and local levels, along with her famous “sticky wall”. Those on the committee are forever indebted to Peggy for her support and vision.

“The West Virginia Early Childhood Transition Steering Committee is proud to have been a model of state level interagency collaboration, cooperation, and commitment for the good of a common cause.”



Featuring art from Norma Gray Early Learning, Enterprise Child Development Center, the School Age Connections Program, and local artists. Plus silent auction, sports memorabilia and more.

Friday, November 5, 2010

At the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center

Art Viewing 6:30-7 p.m.

Auction 7-9 p.m.

Sponsored by Marshall University College of Fine Arts

If you would like to place an ad in our program or donate items, please contact Suzi Brodof at 304-523-3417 ext. 208.

If you are a local artist and would like to donate to a great cause, please contact Suzi Brodof at 304-523-3417 ext. 208.

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WVCCU Announces Annual Leadership Academy

Submitted by Helen Post-Brown, WVCCU

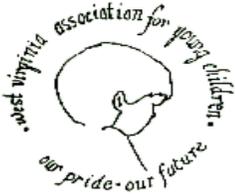
The third annual WVCCU Leadership Academy will be on August 3-6, 2010, at the Blessed John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston. Last year, 20 West Virginia child care center directors met for four days of intense and life-changing instruction. The academy was successful and more directors are being encouraged to participate in this program.

The academy will provide a wonderful program for center directors. Holly Elissa Bruno, author, teacher, and keynote speaker in early childhood education leadership, will jump start the first two days with her unique ability to take early childhood leadership to a completely different level. The director as a manager, organizer and communicator, as well as staff selection and supervision, discipline and legal matters will be some of the subjects covered. The Myers Briggs test will be used to help directors discover their leadership styles, personal strengths, and needs. The following two days will be devoted to work on Program Administration Scale and budgets.

Do not miss this wonderful opportunity to recharge and to network with fellow West Virginia child care center directors. To view the registration form, visit www.wvccu.info. Participants are expected to stay at Blessed John XXIII Pastoral Center during the entire academy.

Only 20 spaces are available on a first come, first serve basis. WV STARS credit and CEU's will be offered.





West Virginia Association for Young Children
Presents
Dr. Thomas Moore

Capture the power of a dynamic educator to help jumpstart your 2010 school year. Dr. Thomas Moore is an inspirational, cutting-edge educational consultant who uses music and fun to encourage developmentally appropriate learning in children.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2010
9:00am To 3:00pm
BRIDGEPORT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(registration 8:00—9:00)

GRADES Pre-K—1:
CELEBRATING WHAT WE HAVE FROM THE CHILDREN WE TEACH
BOYS WILL BE JOYS: MEETING BOYS' NEEDS IN THE CLASSROOM
ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN: YOU ARE MY HOPE. I AM YOUR FUTURE

Reservations must be in by Friday, July 30, 2010.

The number of participants is limited. There will be no refunds after August 1, 2010
For more information, contact Brenda Stephens at 304-422-0399 or visit www.wwayc.com

**STARS REGISTERED

West Virginia Association for Young Children

(Please make a copy for your files)

Name: _____

please print

Child Care Center/School: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Yes, I would like lunch—Add \$ 7.00 to registration fee (Subway 6 inch turkey & cheese, chips, cookie and water)

No, I will bring my own lunch

Member \$50.00

Non-Member \$55.00

Student \$35.00

_____ **Total Enclosed**

Checks made payable to WWAYC Check # _____

Mail check and registration to: Shelia Edwards, 851 Eli Locust Road, Washington, WV 26181

We need children's photos for the 2011 Early Childhood Calendar!

This year, West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources would like to design the 2011 Early Childhood Calendar on exploring literacy, science and math.

We need photos of children and families/adults participating in:

- ❖ Talking together
- ❖ Playing games together
- ❖ Reading together
- ❖ Counting, measuring or sorting objects
- ❖ Enjoying each other
- ❖ Cooking together
- ❖ Exploring nature
- ❖ Participating in simple investigations

Children should be infant, toddler, or preschool age.

Please include the child's name and age, name of person submitting photo, address, and phone number. All photos must be accompanied with a WVECTCR photo release. Download a copy of the release at www.wvearlychildhood.org/photorelease.PDF. If sending photos via email, please do not resize the pictures.

Send to:
WVECTCR
611 Seventh Avenue, Ste. 322
Huntington, WV 25701
Attn: 2011 Calendar
or email the photos to tcr@rvcds.org

Deadline: August 31, 2010

For questions, please contact us at 1-304-529-7603 or tcr@rvcds.org

Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"
Volume 7, Issue 3, Summer 2010

Exploring the Great Outdoors

Children have a natural tendency to want to explore the world around them. Because children learn best from hands-on experiences, summer is a wonderful time to provide your child with the opportunity to explore a little deeper.

It is important to remember that experiences don't have to be created for children. Often times, children will find wonderful opportunities to explore through play. As adults, we just need to be watching for those opportunities.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Department of Education/Office of Special Education and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

Permission to photocopy

Here are some simple ideas to get you thinking:

1. Spend time with your child watching the rhythms of the day. What time

does the sun come up? What time does it go down? Journal the entries.

2. Go on a rock walk. Gather rocks during the walk and organize them by size.

3. Sit outside under a tree and read a book together.

4. Draw a picture of a bird and then go outside and see if you can find that bird.

5. Go for a walk and look for blooming flowers. Take photos and then paste into a scrapbook.

Outdoor fun is all around us. We just have to slow down and enjoy it.

A black and white photograph of a young child with light-colored, curly hair. The child is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Outdoor Activities for Energetic Children

Sometimes the best way to work off excess energy is to take to the outdoors. Here are some simple outdoor activities that will entertain and exercise children at the same time. Pick and choose those that are appropriate for your child, or gather a group of children and participate yourself.

As with all activities that include children, safety considerations come first. Be ready to intervene if children attempt actions beyond their abilities. Adjust the activities as needed for the number of children and ages.

1. Ball Roll. Each person has a ball to roll from point A to point B. Decide whether the ball should be rolled or kicked. Or do both.

2. Balance Beam. Find a crack in the sidewalk, a driveway edge, a log, or a plank. Walk along the crack or plank, carefully balancing to keep from falling over. Older children will want more of a challenge, so be sure to monitor their balancing.

3. Target Throw. Mark off a court and place a target at one end and a safety line at the other. Children can take turns tossing beanbags or balls at the target. Each person



must remain behind the safety line at all times. Children may want to make up their own rules.

4. Simon Says. An old but still popular game. The leader indicates movements of the players by making statements like, “Simon says take three giant steps.” Statements that don’t include the words “Simon says” are ignored. Players attempt to reach a goal first. Other actions include “baby steps,” “kangaroo hops,” “snake slithers,” and “backward steps.” You can make up more of your own, the sillier the better.

5. Motion Obstacle Course. Make up your own stations on an obstacle course that includes actions. For example, at station one, the player must turn around

three times, then move on to the next station. At station two, do three sit-ups. At station three, jog in place for one minute, and so on.

Children can help monitor the stations while waiting on their turn. For variation, you can use a stopwatch and record individual times or divide up into teams. Teams can participate in a relay, passing an object to the next person at each stop after completing the required action.

To keep these games lively, introduce variations when the action slows down. Take your cues from what the children are doing and talking about as they play--they are the source of the best ideas!

-Reprinted from Growing Together

SUMMERTIME

Sunny Day Ice Play

This is a great experiment for children over age three. Place small toys such as miniature cars, rubber worms,

kitchen utensils, balls and jacks, or plastic insects into cubicles of ice trays

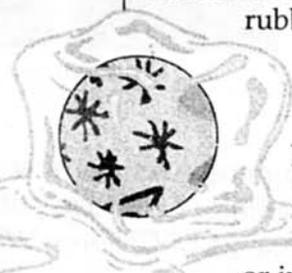
or in plastic storage containers. Fill the

containers with water and freeze. On a warm

day, bring them out into the sun and let your child have a front-row seat to the thawing process.

Ask questions to get him thinking:

What does the word *thaw* mean? Why is the ice melting? What would happen if we put the toys and water back into the freezer? How does the cold water feel on your hands?



A-Camping We Will Go

Children can have a great pretend adventure right in the backyard. Place a sheet over a tree limb or picnic table. Provide items such as sleeping bags, backpacks, a compass, binoculars, flashlights, and canteens.

EXTEND THE FUN

Eat a snack or meal outside. Provide something simple such as granola and lemonade or macaroni salad and watermelon.

Take a rest. Sneak an afternoon nap into the camping adventure by letting your child snooze outside.

Make up a story about camping. Start the story

with statements such as these:

"When I went camping, I saw a big bear and..."

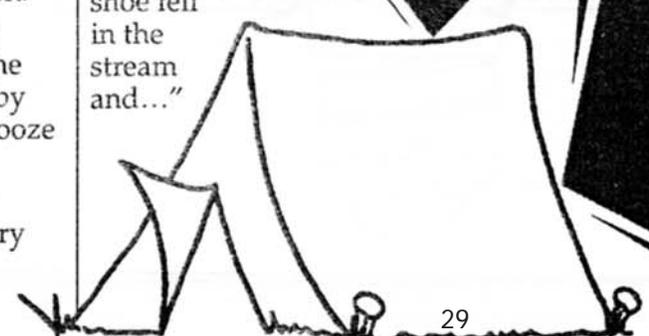
"I went camping and forgot to pack my..."

"On the camping trip, my tennis shoe fell in the stream and..."

Out and About

Children like to hang out in the community, and they need you to take them there. Here are some good places to visit in the summer:

- kite store
- zoo
- nature conservatory
- park
- lake or swimming pool
- ice cream parlor
- county fair or community festival
- baseball game
- duck pond



- Reprinted from *Growing Together*

Pack a Family Picnic!

A picnic is fun family time: Indoors or out.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| City or county park | Playground | Beach, pool, riverside |
| Local fair | Your yard | Community center |
| Relative's home | Parade route | Pick-your-own farm |
| Community garden | Zoo | Family idea: _____ |



What's in Your Picnic Basket?

No-chill Foods

- Whole fruit, raw finger vegetables (Most can be left at room temperature for a few hours.)
- Dried fruit (raisins, apples, apricots), juice boxes, canned fruit
- Wheat tortillas, bagels, pocket bread, whole-wheat crackers or bread, pretzels, buns
- Nuts, peanut butter, unopened canned meat



Cooler Foods

- Cooked and uncooked chicken, meat, shrimp or fish, hard-cooked eggs; deli-meat
- Salads that contain cut-up meats, or vegetables, or fruits
- Cheese, string cheese, yogurt, boxed milk
- Single-serving pudding

Warm-Up Foods

(in an insulated container)

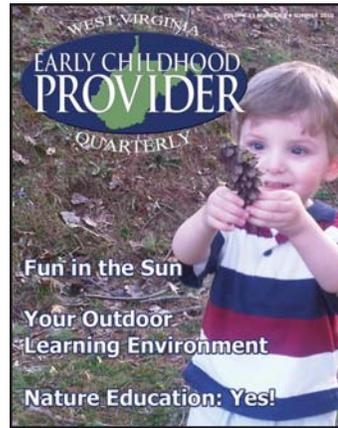
- Soup, hot cocoa with milk
- Baked beans, hot dishes (eat within 1 hour).

Keep Family Picnics Safe at the Plate!

- **Bring** water and soap to wash hands, surfaces, cutting boards.
- **Bring** a meat thermometer. Use it to grill to safe inside temperature: 160 degrees for burgers; 180 degrees for chicken.
- **Store** chilled foods in a cooler with ice or ice packs.
- **Store** uncooked meat, poultry, or fish for grilling in a well-sealed container. Pack it in the bottom of the cooler so juices won't leak onto other foods.
- **Put** grilled foods on a clean plate, not the plate used for uncooked foods. Disposable paper plates are great!
- **Keep** coolers in the car as you drive, not a hot trunk. At the picnic, keep them in shade under a tree or bench.
- **Return** chilled foods to the cooler right after serving.
- **Discard** leftover meat, chicken, fish, eggs, and foods made with them if left out for one hour.



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