

Caregiver Chronicle

We Want to Know What You Think

We are gathering early educator's opinions about this newsletter, so that we can improve it to better suit your needs.

Please click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code from your mobile device.

You may also copy and paste the web address into your browser to access the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V7HSJBV>



Plan to Attend Our Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities!

Please RSVP to Annette Borman at aborman@accap.org or 763-783-4711.

This is a place for you to meet with other child care providers, learn new things, help each other be successful, and share what you know and what works for you! Your experience providing child care and/or teaching preschool is important for children. Your thoughts, ideas and wisdom will lead the discussions along with Special Guests! This professional opportunity is offered at no cost to you. We hope you will join us!

Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities are an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues in child care.

Our August PLC will provide information about QIS, grants and goal setting. We will discuss how to create goals for spending grant money for Building Quality and your Parent Aware rating in Equip. We will also work on creating SMART goals (Specific Measurable Attaining Realistic Timeline).

All meetings take place 6:30 - 8:30 pm and the dates are:

- ◆ **Thursday, August 15th in Woodbury**
New Location: Jerry's Foods
7760 Hargis Parkway — Room 2
- ◆ **Tuesday, August 20th in Blaine**
Human Service Center
1201 89th Avenue NE

If you will need an interpreter, please make your request 7 business days prior to each event. Participants will receive a letter to confirm attendance at a Learning Community. Building Quality participants may count attendance as coaching hours.

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Inside this issue:

Healthy Habits	2
Family Fun Ideas	3
Trains are Awesome!	3
1000 Hours Outside	4



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Healthy Habits

Healthy habits can protect you from the harmful effects of stress. Here are 10 positive healthy habits you may want to develop.



Talk with family and friends.

A daily dose of friendship is great medicine. Call or write to friends and family to share your feelings, hopes, and joys, and ask them to share theirs.

Engage in physical activity.

Regular physical activity can relieve mental and physical tension. Physically active adults have lower risk of depression and loss of mental functioning. Physical activity can be a great source of pleasure too. Try walking, swimming, biking or even dancing every day.

Embrace the things you are able to change.

While we may not be able to do some of the things we once enjoyed, we are never too old to learn a new skill, work toward a goal, or love and help others.

Remember to laugh.

Laughter makes us feel good. Don't be afraid to laugh out loud at a joke, a funny movie, or a comic strip, even when we're alone.

Give up the bad habits.

Too much alcohol, cigarettes, or caffeine can increase blood pressure. If you smoke, decide to quit now. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

Slow down.

Try to "pace" instead of "race." Plan ahead and allow enough time to get the most important things done without having to rush.

Get enough sleep.

Try to get 6 to 8 hours of sleep each night. If you can't sleep, take steps to reduce stress and depression. Physical activity also may improve the quality of sleep.

Get organized.

Use "To Do" lists to help focus on your most important tasks. Approach big tasks one step at a time. For example, start by organizing just one part of your life – your car, closet, cupboard, desk or kitchen.

Practice giving back.

Volunteer your time or spend time helping a friend.
Helping others helps you.

Try not to worry.

The world won't end if your grass isn't mowed or your kitchen isn't cleaned. You may need to do these things, but right now might not be the right time.



Ideas for Family Fun from ECFE.info

Moving is essential to learning. It builds and anchors connections in a child's developing brain. Movement brings the child into contact with objects and people in the world. Contact with the world stimulates the child's development.



Get Active!

- ◆ Use hula hoops. Try them the regular way or place them on the floor and have children hop in and out of them.
- ◆ Create a bowling game with empty plastic bottles. Fill them with dried beans if you need to add some weight. Use a soft ball to knock down bottles.
- ◆ Place large pieces of bubble wrap on the floor. Watch the fun when children touch it or try to pop the bubbles by stepping on it.
- ◆ Dance. Use scarves. Play the "Freeze Game" by stopping the music unexpectedly.
- ◆ Tape a line or place a rope on the flooring or on the ground. Make it a balance beam or a road for cars and trucks.
- ◆ Choose a color of the day. Go for a walk to find things that are that special color.
- ◆ Create an obstacle course. Lay out boxes to crawl through, stools to step over, pillows to jump on top of, low tables to slither under. Describe what the children are doing as they go through the course. This helps them understand these concepts.
- ◆ Hide small objects in the sandbox for children to find as they scoop and play. Let them dig for treasures. Try using an old kitchen colander to sift through the sand.
- ◆ Being told it is okay to jump in puddles will bring squeals of delight. Go out together dressed in rain gear and stomp in the puddles.
- ◆ Poke holes in a large plastic bottle, like a milk jug. When you are outside, fill the bottle with water and let your child sprinkle the grass, flowers and driveway. This is sure to be a hit!

Trains are Awesome!

If you weren't able to see the Union Pacific Big Boy Train when it visited Minnesota in July, you can try these train-themed activities to help children write and recognize numbers and practice counting. *Choo-choo!*

Roll a railroad:

Each player draws a railroad track on paper. Take turns roll a die and drawing that number of train cars on the track (roll a 2 and draw 2 cars, etc.). Play until everyone has at least 10 cars, then number the cars in order. Now color and cut out the cars. Mix them up and put them back in the same sequence.

Load Passengers:

Have children help form an imaginary train by lining up boxes or laundry baskets. Then have them write numbers 1 through 10 on separate sticky notes and put one on each car. Use those numbers to determine how many passengers each car gets. For example, they will fill the #4 car with 4 dolls or stuffed animals. Let children pretend they're driving the train to the station to deliver the passengers. Then rearrange the numbers and reload passengers for another trip.



1000 Hours Outside: Helping Children Succeed Academically

What would childhood look like if children spent as much time outdoors as they do in front of screens? If children spend, on average, 1200 hours a year on screens, then spending 1000 hours outdoors seems like a reasonable challenge. The 1000 Hours Outside Challenge is the brainchild of homeschooling mom, Ginny Yurich. For more tips and strategies on increasing outdoor time for your children, check out her blog: 1000hoursoutside.com.

Who wants to track one more thing? You do! Nature time for children is so valuable for their development that we cannot leave this extremely important element of childhood to chance. We all know that children need nature time, but emerging research is clear that they need to experience *hours* of outside free play *every day*. In America, the average child spends 4-7 minutes in free play outside on a daily basis. We are far from where we need to be! A yearly goal is helpful because there are many factors that contribute to the possibility of getting outdoors, such as school schedule and weather. The 1000 hours (per year) outside goal averages out to almost three hours a day. Don't worry if children aren't feeling well one week or if another week is full of sub-zero temperatures. The time will be made up when spring flowers emerge or during summer camping trips.

How can spending time outdoors help children develop an enthusiasm for learning?

So often we when we think of learning, we think of paper and pencil. Or maybe we think of watching an educational program or listening to an engaging speaker. It's important to know that movement, and especially free play, is a major contributor to brain growth. In fact, movement is the pre-cursor to all learning.

Here are three easy ways to ensure that children get the movement they need for optimal brain development:

1. Give children lots of opportunities to practice balancing.

Have you noticed how children naturally look for things to balance on (think street curbs and the arms of your couch)? There is an innate drive in children to work on their balance skills and to balance on increasingly complex things. For example, an infant is constantly working on balance, moving from rolling to sitting to pulling up and a toddler will try to balance on a log and then jump a few inches to the ground over and over. As the body and muscles become more coordinated, brain capacity increases. Higher academic achievement is always correlated with higher levels of fitness.

So what can you do? Take children outside and expose them to different types of terrain. Moving over uneven terrain will help as they work on balance. Hike with them and watch as they are drawn to fallen trees and large rocks to climb on. Encourage them as they work towards more difficult goals. All of that balancing work will contribute to academic success!

2. Give children a rich sensory environment.

Every one of our senses carries information straight to our brain. Consider all of the senses that are engaged when children play in a stream: they feel the coolness of the water, rocks beneath their feet, and mud between their fingers. They hear splashes, the sound of moving water, plus insects and birds. They see variations of colors and reflections. And of course, there's the smell of the great outdoors. Every inch of our bodies is designed to take in information and send it to our brain. The more time we allow children to be in sensory rich environments, the greater opportunities there are for brain growth.

So what can you do? Take children outside and let them explore with all their senses. The longer the better! Try and find differing environments: a field, a stream, a beach, a forest. The great thing about nature is that even if you frequent the same place often, it is ever-changing and will always have something new to offer.

3. Give children lots of eye-strengthening opportunities in nature.

Vision is actually closely related to movement. Every time we move, our eyes adjust and take in new information. The more our eyes move together, the stronger they become and the stronger the connections to the brain become as well. Tracking with our eyes is an extremely important part of reading and so we want children to have developed muscles when they reach the age where they are physically ready to read.

Think about the differences between looking around inside versus looking outside. Outside the stimuluses are almost infinite: moving clouds, flying birds, swaying leaves, small insects moving on the ground, etc. The outside stimulus will change due to weather, season and other factors, whereas inside walls remain the same. Outside the lumens from the sun enter through your eyes and go straight to the brain, elevating our mood. Children in a relaxed and good mood are in a much better state to learn than those who are anxious or depressed. Consider a baby's eyes when you go on a hike: they are constantly adjusting with each step and you are helping to strengthen their eyes and organize their brain.

So what can you do? Expose children's eyes to the vastness of the outdoors by allowing them to be in nature frequently for lengthy periods of time. It's always worth your time to let children play outside! Give yourself a goal. Schedule it as one of your first things and be confident that it will contribute to greater academic success over time.

From: Community Playthings by Ginny Yurich, July 2019