



Preschool Program
2011 | 2012

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THE TOTTLE INN CHILDREN'S CENTRE

OUR MISSION

To provide loving and nurturing early childhood education environments for each child's living and learning. We instill a lifelong love of learning and foster the development of positive self-esteem through family oriented, developmentally appropriate programs centered on the individual needs and interests of the children we serve.

OUR VISION

To be community leaders in early childhood education by providing exceptional quality child care programs for the families we serve. Through innovation, continued growth and a passion for excellence, we will ensure that all of our children are intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially ready to enter Elementary school, and ready to navigate their educational journey.

Through our leadership, service and passion we will:

- Provide a secure, caring and enriched environment that promotes learning and the development of the whole child.
- Develop lifelong relationships, create partnerships with parents and enhance the quality of life for our families.
- Expand our business to strengthen our ability to benefit families and increase the number of children we serve.
- Support families in balancing their personal and professional lives by diversifying the programs we offer.
- Provide programs and environments that enrich the development of the children, promote respect for children and celebrate the joy of childhood.
- Enhance the communities in which we live by initiating and participating in community events.
- Focus our passion in caring for children into excellence in our programs.

OUR CORE VALUES

Trust *Respect* *Innovation* *Inclusion* *Love of Learning* *Passion for Excellence*

PHILOSOPHY

"What else in the entire world is as precious to us as our children?"

The Tottle Inn Children's Centre believes that all children should have the opportunity to grow, learn and develop to their fullest potential. We recognize and accept each child as a unique individual with their own strengths and challenges, and having their own rate of growth and development. To assist all children in achieving their potential, our teaching team is committed to knowing the children individually, how they grow, feel and interact, which enables our educational team to plan appropriate experiences and curriculum. We believe all children have the right to feel safe, physically and emotionally. Children also have the right to express their ideas, creativity and feelings naturally and freely.

From this philosophy, we present the following goals for our Preschool Program:

- Assist the child in acquiring expressive (speaking) and receptive (listening) skills necessary for thinking and solving problems.
- Assist the child in developing visual discrimination and auditory perception skills necessary for interpreting the world around them.
- Assist the child in developing gross and fine motor skills necessary for maximum participation in the physical aspects of life.
- Assist the child in acquiring interpersonal (self-care) skills necessary for achieving independence and emotional security.
- Foster the development of positive self-esteem and a sense of belonging within each child.
- Assist the child in the formation of stable, caring relationships with their care providers and peers.
- Assist the child in the development of problem solving and negotiation skills as well as an awareness of equal opportunity and justice.

INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY

Inclusion, as a value, supports the right of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. Natural settings are those in which the child would spend time had he or she not had a special need. The Tottle Inn Children's Centre supports and advocates that young children and their families have full access to health, social, educational and other support services, that promote full participation in family and community life. As young children participate in our programs, their active participation is guided by developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum. Access to and participation in the age appropriate general curriculum is central to the identification and provision of specialized support services.

Inclusion is about community, about membership, about relationships, and about development. The goal of the programs offered at The Tottle Inn Children's Centres is to provide a positive educational experience to all children with

diverse abilities in a setting that enhances the strengths and supports the needs, of all children in our programs; and provides children with opportunities to build memberships, establish relationships and develop functional skills.

The goal of our programs is to enhance the competence and confidence of the children and families with whom we work. Our programs are committed to providing children with opportunities to learn communication skills, to develop social relationships and to learn other functional skills in an integrated, developmentally appropriate environment. Families are involved in identifying the priority skills for their child and are encouraged to take an active role in the program. We believe in ensuring Parents are Partners in the care we provide for their children. We value and encourage their input and participation in helping us to ensure we meet the needs of their children.

A goal of our program is to promote active social integration between children with and without special needs across all parts of our daily routine. Effective and systematic assessment and instructional strategies are used to identify, teach, and support these important skills. Skills are taught within the context of meaningful activities across the curriculum. Support services (e.g. speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, E.I.B.I.) are provided in naturalistic settings (i.e. the classroom, playground etc) and use activity-based instruction to enhance skill acquisition and generalization. Data are collected to monitor child progress and instructional decisions are based on those data. Our complete Inclusion Policy document is available for parents to review.

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY:

At The Tottle Inn Children's Centre, we are committed to providing a superior quality educational experience for our children and their families. We understand the significance of our influence on the children in our care as well as the enormous amount of trust parents place in our decision making processes. With this in mind, we have implemented many programs to ensure we are meeting the expectations of our families as well as to ensure we are providing exceptional quality programs, which reflect the current and proven research ideologies of the professionals within the child development field.

Licensing:

The Tottle Inn Children's Centre is licensed through the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Development Division. Licensing means the regulations set forth in the Nova Scotia Day Care Act must be strictly followed. Some of the areas the Regulations cover are: group size; the number of children that can be cared for vs. the number of staff required; staff qualifications; learning programs appropriate to specific age groups; healthy nutrition, including meals and snacks; hygiene and cleanliness, including space for washing and bathroom areas; emergency and safety procedures, including monthly fire drills; behaviour guidance policies; indoor and playground equipment, toys and furniture; adequate indoor play space and natural light; current health and medical records; health, safety, programming, staff training requirements, student records, staff to child ratios, equipment and many other areas of focus to help ensure a positive experience for your child. Licensed centres are monitored and inspected on a regular basis by licensing officers from the Department of Community Services as well as health inspectors, fire inspectors and other professionals. Licensed centres also have a support system in place with Early Childhood Development Specialists from various organizations to help ensure each child's developmental needs are being met. Since we offer licensed programs, we are approved to accept Nova Scotia Portable Child Care Subsidies. The subsidy program is designed to help alleviate some of the cost associated with child care for Nova Scotia families. All of the regulations and subsidy information are available at the links provided. The Tottle Inn Children's Centre has an excellent compliance history. We strive to exceed the standards set forth in the Day Care Act. Some of the ways we accomplish this is through enhanced ratios, attendance at regular professional development seminars and workshops for staff and through our Continuous Improvement Program. As part of our licensing regulations and to help keep parents informed, the following items can be found in the Parent Information Binder located on top of the cubbies in the Parent Information Area: a copy of the Day Care Act and regulations, a copy of the parent handbook, the license for the facility, a copy of the report of the most recent inspection of the facility, a copy of the licensee's behaviour guidance policy, a copy of the current menu, a copy of the daily program plan and routine, a list of the names of the current members of the parent committee, a copy of the most recent minutes of the parent committee and notification of funding provided by the Minister.

Parents as Partners:

We maintain an "Open Door Policy" for the families we serve. Parents are invited to phone or visit the centre at any time. Should a parent have a concern or topic they wish to discuss with the Director, advance notice may be required in order to schedule the time for a private meeting. We believe communication between parents and teachers is a key component to providing a superior quality of care for the children we serve. All up to date policies, program information and other resources are available on our website www.TottleInn.com. Newsletters are sent home each month to keep parents up to date on their child's time with us. Calendars are also sent home with upcoming special events. We also have a parent committee that all parents are invited to join. This committee serves as a forum in which parents provide input and receive notice of any matters of interest or concern to the parents. Parent meetings are held throughout the school year. We invite parents to join our parent committee or add topics to the agenda for our meetings. We encourage family and friends to attend our "Family Events" which are normally held in the evenings.

Parent Information Centre:

Our parent information centre is located near the entrance. The following information is located in the P.I.C. : Day Care Act & Regulations, Parent Handbook, License, Inspection Reports, Behaviour Guidance Policy, Current Menu, Daily Routines, Program Plans, Parent Committee members and meeting minutes and Funding notifications.

Progress Updates:

To ensure the program is meeting the individual needs of the children, observations are completed regularly for each child. Written Progress reports are sent home twice through the school year to update parents on their child's progress. Parents are also given informal updates during drop off and pick up times. Another program to help keep parents up to date on their child's progress is our "Chit Chat Program". Since many parents are not able to drop off and pick up their children due to work commitments, we will be contacting each family regularly throughout the school year to discuss your child's progress. Contact will be from your child's teacher and can be via phone or email, whichever you prefer! Our teachers will also be sending home written comments from time to time providing additional information about your child's time with us. These programs are not intended to replace the "informal" updates parents receive from our teachers. In addition, parents are welcome to contact the centre at anytime to discuss your child's progress. We understand the busy lives our families often have. Our intention is to keep parents informed and keep the lines of communication open.

Come & Play!:

We are pleased to introduce our "Come & Play" program for interested parents. We will be posting a "roster" on which parents may select a day to come to the centre and spend the morning volunteering with our teachers. This program is intended to strengthen the relationships with our parents as well as to provide an opportunity for children to have a special day with their parents, grandparents or other special adult. Many family members are excellent resources for our program and have wonderful talents they are able to share with the children! Prior to participating in this program, all interested adults must complete a "Child Abuse Registry Screening" and sign a confidentiality statement.

Continuous Improvement Program:

In an effort to ensure the needs of the families are being met as well as to expand upon our curriculum, we implement a Continuous Improvement Program. This is a means for family and friends to provide feedback or suggestions for our program. It is often referred to as the "suggestion box". We appreciate any feedback from families and friends and will respond to all entries.

Professional Resources and Referrals:

Through our many years in the childcare field, we have developed many relationships with professionals who care for children. We are members of many professional associations, attend seminars and workshops and often invite other professionals to come to the centre to assist us in ensuring our program is meeting the individual needs of the children. Our dedicated teachers are trained to identify issues, which may require professional referrals. Parents can be assured should we have any concerns regarding your child's development; we will discuss those concerns with you prior to making referrals to our colleagues. Some of our professional relationships include The Nova Scotia Hearing & Speech Clinic, Adolescence and Youth Services (Mental Health), Valley Child Development Association, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Association of Nova Scotia, Learning Disabilities of Nova Scotia, IWK, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Autism Society of Nova Scotia, local elementary schools and many other memberships and associations. We also have print materials available on a variety of topics related to issues surrounding child growth and development.

PROGRAM ORIENTATION:

At The Tottle Inn Children's Centre, we encourage the involvement of parents in helping each child to become comfortable in their new environment. We understand the needs of the children will vary and we will work with parents to make the transition as easy as possible for everyone involved. At the very least, all children must have two visits to the centre with a parent. These visits can last for a few minutes or a couple of hours. We prefer if parents do not initially stay for the entire preschool session since this could create a difficult situation for the child once the parent no longer stays. We understand children may have separation anxiety and we have specific proven strategies, which we implement to help make the transition easier for the child and to help ease their anxiety...and their parent's anxiety! Please be assured separation anxiety is a normal part of the child's development and it is something we have worked through for many, many children. We have reference articles, which contain information for parents and tips to help ease your child's anxiety. During the orientation process, children will be paired with a student who has been at the centre for a longer period. This "Buddy System" often helps to ease the anxiety and give the child someone to seek out during periods of uneasiness. Our teachers are always available to ensure all children feel safe and comfortable in their new class!

STUDENT SUPPLIES:

For your child's comfort and health, it is important to have clothing on hand which is suitable for our changing weather. A change of clothes and indoor sneakers or slippers with non-marking soles can be left in your child's cubby or brought each day. We ask that all children have a full change of clothes on hand each day. Appropriate outerwear must also be on hand everyday. Since some of our activities are planned to take place outside, *parents are asked to apply sunscreen* prior to drop off during the warmer months. The centre provides snacks. Parents provide diapering supplies.

Preschool children pride themselves in their self-help accomplishments. One of our goals is to prepare the children to take care of their own needs at Elementary school. By supporting their developing skills, we are supporting their self-esteem and helping them to form a positive self-image. It is very frustrating for children who are practicing their independence to fail at a particular task because it was unreasonably difficult. For this reason, we ask parents to provide clothing, footwear and other supplies, which are appropriate for your child's developmental level. Taking care of his/her own needs should be challenging but not overwhelming. We also encourage parents to allow their children to dress and undress themselves, with parental support when being dropped off or picked up. Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings so we are able to help him/her to identify them. This is a great integrated opportunity to practice name recognition!

PAYMENT, HOLIDAY & FUNDRAISING POLICY:

Our program fees are set for the year prior to the start of the fall session. Many things are considered when setting our program fee, including the number of scheduled sessions for the year as well as the anticipated number of cancelled sessions due to the weather, in-services, Christmas Break, March Break etc. Our goal is to provide high quality, affordable programs for families in our community. We must also ensure our financial commitments can be met when setting the program fees. Since we are a private, part day program, we do not receive government funding that many other centres receive. In an effort to keep program fees low, maintain our quality standards and meet the increasing expenses, we sometimes organize fundraising activities. Participation in these events is strictly on a volunteer basis. We normally hold two fundraising events each year, one in the fall and one in the spring.

All accounts are due to be paid on or before the 1st of each month, in advance. Parents may choose the monthly payment plan where one payment is made for the entire month on or before the 1st of the month. Alternatively, should a parent prefer to pay in two equal instalments, a payment and a post-dated cheque dated for the 15th must be received by the 1st of the month. Accounts cannot be held for two payments per month without a post-dated cheque being left with the payment on the 1st. Late fees will be applied to payments not received by the due date. Parents are asked to be prompt when making payments as late payments increase our operating expenses.

The monthly fee has been averaged so the fee due each month remains the same. Invoices will be issued indicating any additional charges such as late pick up or late payment fees. Monthly rates are unaffected by absenteeism. Payment is required for all days which your child has been scheduled even if your child is absent for any reason, in order to hold your child's spot at the centre. This applies to sick days, vacation days, holidays and days when the centre is closed (e.g. storm day). We make every effort to provide care in a reliable manner. However, we reserve the right to close if weather conditions make it inappropriate and unsafe to travel with young children or if external circumstances restrict our ability to care for the children in a safe, comfortable environment. (E.g., extended power interruption-please refer to storm day policy). The regular preschool program operates from September through June. There is no preschool during Christmas break, March break or on days when the local elementary school has a *full day* in-service. Parents will be advised with as much notice as possible when these days occur.

The Tottle Inn will be closed on the following holidays:

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| -New Year's Day | -Remembrance Day | -Natal Day |
| -Good Friday | -Easter Monday | -Thanksgiving Day |
| -Victoria Day | -Christmas Eve | -New Year's Eve |
| -Canada Day | -Christmas Day | -Labour Day |
| -Boxing Day | | |

STORM CLOSURES:

Every effort is made to remain open on storm days. However, we reserve the right to close if weather conditions make it inappropriate to travel with young children. On days when the local Elementary school is closed due to weather conditions, the preschool program will be cancelled for the day. A prolonged power outage will force the Centre to close for the day. If the power is off in the morning and is not restored *prior to 8:45am*, the Centre will be closed for the day. Should the weather/power interruption cause the Centre to close prior to opening for the day, staff will attempt to telephone parents who do not live in the immediate vicinity. All parents should phone the Centre on these days to check for cancellations prior to leaving their home. Should there be a power interruption that lasts more than 20-30 minutes after the Centre has opened for the day, we will close for the remainder of the day. Should the Centre be forced to close after the day has begun, each parent will be notified by telephone of the impending closure. If the parents are unable to be reached by telephone, the emergency contacts will be phoned. *Parents must have arrangements in place to have children picked up quickly in this situation-i.e. within 10 to 15 minutes after contact has been made.*

ATTENDANCE, DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURE:

The centre opens for the preschool program at 8:30am. Drop off time is 8:30am – 8:45am. Parents should arrive for pick up at 11:20am. The children are dismissed between 11:20am-11:25am. If there is sufficient demand, we will offer

the early drop off (8:00am) and extended pick up (12:00pm) program. This is available for parents who register and pay the fee. Should you require this service on an occasional basis, arrangements must be made with centre staff to ensure it is available. We understand sometimes unforeseeable circumstances arise which cause parents to be late; we appreciate any notice you are able to provide. Additional fees will apply for parents who are late picking up their children or early dropping them off. We are required to record all attendance information each day. If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please contact the centre to advise. This also helps us when preparing for the daily activities.

Should parents require someone else to pick up their child on any occasion, written authorization must be at the centre. In situations when this is not possible, a parent must phone the centre to give verbal authorization. Adequate identification must be shown to the Centre's staff prior to releasing the child. We reserve the right to keep the child at the Centre and contact the parent or other designated person if we are not comfortable with any person who has arrived for pick up.

Parents are asked to be prompt when picking up your child. Many aspects of the day are affected by unexpected late pick-ups or early drop offs. Please advise centre staff of any anticipated variations in scheduled attendance. Additional charges will apply for changes in scheduled attendance at the Director's discretion.

PARTICIPATION:

The Tottle Inn Children's Centre plans a variety of activities based on the interests of the children. The Centre is not responsible to provide staff to care for any child during activities, which the parent does not want their child to participate. Should there be an activity scheduled which the parent does not want his/her child to participate in, the parents have the option of keeping the child at home or joining the child during the activity. (E.g. field trip).

NUTRITION POLICY

Our menu is designed to meet nutritional requirements while introducing the children to a variety of foods. We follow the guidelines set forth in the Food and Nutrition Support Policy for Regulated Child Care Centres. This policy is based upon the Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide book. The food is served in such a way as to be appealing to the children. All children are encouraged to try every item unless they are unable to eat a particular food for medical reasons. Should a child dislike something after tasting it, the teacher may substitute something the child is known to like. Should this be a regular occurrence for a particular child, a parent teacher meeting will be arranged to discuss possible solutions. Each snack contains a serving from two different food groups. Policies for children who have specific nutritional needs will be dealt with on an individual basis. Through discussions with parents centre staff will strive to ensure each child's needs are met with regards to nutritional requirements. The centre may or may not be able to accommodate the needs of children with severe food allergies. Concerns will be discussed with parents prior to enrolment. Please request a copy of our "Special Nutritional Requirements" policy should you have concerns regarding your child's diet.

There are times when parents wish to send a "special treat" with their child to share with the other children (e.g. parties etc). Food brought in from outside the centre must have a list of ingredients attached and must comply with our Food and Nutrition regulations. Details can be found on the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services website or by following the link provided on The Tottle Inn website.

COMMUNICABLE ILLNESS POLICY:

To help prevent the spread of communicable illnesses within The Tottle Inn, the following policies are **strictly enforced**. Parents are asked to adhere to the guidelines below. It is very difficult to prevent the spread of communicable illnesses when contagious children are in a preschool setting. In order to minimize absenteeism for all children, your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Immunization:

Since immunization offers permanent protection against all preventable childhood diseases, all children and staff should have all immunizations as recommended by the appropriate authority up to date. Parents must provide the centre with the dates of all immunizations for their child upon enrolment. The Centre must receive written verification from the child's parent confirming the appropriate vaccinations have been administered as they become "due". A list of the immunizations can be provided to parents upon request.

Exclusion Policy:

One effective control measure available to caregivers is to identify and remove sick children from the group setting. This eliminates the immediate source of infection. However, since many communicable illnesses are infectious before the symptoms appear, additional cases may still develop. All employees are instructed to check children on arrival for signs of illness. The Tottle Inn's exclusion policy involves children who the staff identifies as not feeling well. In order to protect the entire group of children, as well as the individual child, **we ask that parents keep children at home if they**

have experienced any of the following symptoms in the *twenty-four hours prior to attending one of our programs*:

- A fever over 100 F (37.8 C) orally or 99 F (37.2 C) auxiliary.
- Signs of a *newly developing* cold or cough.
- Diarrhea, vomiting or an upset stomach.
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability or headache.
- Any discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears or open sores.

Children who become ill with any of these symptoms will be returned home. Parents are asked to have an action plan in place for occasions when your child may become sick. Sick children must be taken home "immediately". If your job prevents you from being able to pick up your child promptly in the event of illness, please find a friend or family member willing to assume this responsibility. ***Children who are sent home sick may not return to the Centre until a period of twenty-four hours has passed, symptom free.*** If a parent/guardian has any questions as to whether or not a child should attend on a particular day, please call the Centre before bringing your child. Licensed facilities are required to maintain a record of symptoms for children who are absent due to illness. Should your child be ill, please advise staff of his/her symptoms. Caregivers are instructed to follow the same guidelines as above for their own personal health. We have a very strict exclusion policy concerning head lice. Information is posted in the Parent Info Centre. The Director reserves the right to exclude children from any program if she feels there is a need to do so.

Notification of Exposure to Disease:

Parent/Guardians will be notified in writing when their child may have been exposed to a communicable illness. The letter will include the possible time of exposure and symptoms to watch for in their child. Information about the illness will be provided by the Centre to the parents. Should your child show signs of the symptoms, please keep him/her at home to prevent further infection. The guidelines for readmission will be outlined in the information letter given to parents. If a parent/guardian is aware that his/her child has been exposed to a particular communicable illness outside the Centre, please inform the Staff as soon as possible so we are able to watch for symptoms. Parents must provide detailed symptoms on any occasion when a child is absent due to illness.

Administration of Medication:

Medication will not be administered by a caregiver without written consent of the child's parent or guardian. In addition, the written directions of a licensed physician must be received by The Tottle Inn prior to the administration of the medication. The label on a prescription drug is acceptable directive from the physician. Non-prescription medicines must be accompanied by written instructions from the child's physician stating the date, the child's name, and the name of the medication to be given, the dosage, the frequency it is to be administered and any special precautions which may be necessary. Non-prescription medications will not be administered to any child without written instructions from a licensed physician. All medicines must be received by The Tottle Inn in the original container with the labels attached. Prescription medications must also be accompanied by a physician's note verifying that your child is not contagious.

A permanent record will be maintained to record each dose of medicine that is administered. It will include the following information:

- The date and time the medicine was administered.
- Name of the caregiver administering the medication.
- Dose of medication given.
- Any unusual physical changes or behaviours observed after the medication was administered.

Parents will be informed of the information within their child's permanent record.

Environmental Control...Hand washing:

Hand washing is perhaps the single most effective control measure against the spread of communicable illness and infectious illness in childcare environments. Caregivers will be trained to use effective technique for washing their hands and will wash their hands often. Children will be taught to model their caregivers.

Environmental Control...Sanitary Procedures:

All staff will follow strict sanitary procedures. A disinfecting solution will be used to wipe off various items in the Centre. Play equipment and mats shall be cleaned with this solution not less than three times weekly. A strong solution will be used to wipe off surfaces contaminated with blood, urine, stool or vomit. Care will be taken to ensure these surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Toys, which have been placed in a child's mouth, will be removed from the play area for cleaning and disinfecting immediately. These items will be washed in a soap and water solution, rinsed in a disinfecting solution and allowed to air dry. Other items such as tabletops, chairs etc, will be washed and disinfected daily. The air quality of the Centre will be monitored and rooms will be well ventilated. The humidity level will be monitored since extremely warm, dry air increases the chances of respiratory infection. The water play and sand play areas will be cleaned regularly.

Education:

Teachers and caregivers make a valuable contribution to the control of communicable illnesses through education. Continuous instruction on subjects such as personal health habits, exercise and nutrition can be a key factor in improving children's resistance to infectious organisms and shortening the length of convalescence. Topics of special value to young children include:

- Appropriate technique and times for hand washing.
- Proper method for covering coughs and blowing noses.
- Sanitary use of drinking fountains.
- Not sharing personal items.
- Dressing appropriately for the weather.
- Good nutrition.
- The need for rest and exercise.

For this reason, special attention will be taken to education children and parents on some topics of interest and concern. This education will be ongoing in the Centre during the day. When possible, special educational information will be passed onto the parents. Additional information on Preventing the Spread of Communicable Illness is available on the Department of Community Services Website or by following the links to the "Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention" on the Tottle Inn website.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY:

A developmentally appropriate, well-planned program, which is implemented in a stimulating environment, is the most effective means of behaviour management. When situations arise which require teacher intervention and or support, the following guidelines will be used:

- Fair and reasonable limits shall be set clearly and consistently enforced.
- The adult's style of guidance has an effect on several parts of the child's personality development and their approach to life. The staff of this Centre will adopt a positive attitude towards the children at all times which includes enjoyment of and respect for the children as individuals.
- Staff shall sustain activity with the child and listen to the child during times of upset behaviour.
- Giving children real choices helps to encourage appropriate behaviour. Equally important is not offering a choice when there really is not one.
- Transition times are very often times when conflict occurs. Advance warnings and cues will be used to help reduce the potential of these times for behavioural problems.
- Teachers shall be accepting and support the development of positive self-esteem within each child. Encouraging autonomy, self-responsibility and credit taking, acknowledging pleasant and unpleasant feelings, expressing genuine interest in the children and their activities and avoiding sexism and not judging physical attributes are ways in which the teachers will support the development of positive self-esteem.
- The teachers shall NOT implement "Time-out" unless it is a part of a behaviour management program prescribed by the child's health care professional. The teachers if required may implement a brief period of quiet time. No child shall be placed alone in a room or be removed from a situation in any way, which is disrespectful of the child.
- Adults within this Centre shall implement only positive behaviour management strategies. (See Attached).
- The following forms of discipline shall NOT be used:
 1. Corporal punishment, including but not limited to the following...
 - Striking a child directly or with any physical object.
 - Shaking, shoving or other forms of aggressive physical contact.
 - Requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements.
 2. Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical.
- All teachers will work with each child as an individual. Should a particular behaviour become an "issue", teachers will work with each other and with parents to find an acceptable solution. Our resource Library can be used by parents at anytime.

As parents, you have the right to choose how you will discipline your child(ren). However, since other children attending The Tottle Inn may be able to hear or see the interactions of their peers with their parents, while on the

premises of The Tottle Inn, parents are asked to please follow the guidelines outlined within this policy therefore modeling positive behaviour guidance techniques for all children within the Centre. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask.

Positive Behaviour Guidance Strategies:

The following information has been taken directly from: Guidance of Young Children, 4th edition. 1995 Prentice-Hall Inc, Columbus Ohio.

1. Limit Setting
2. Identifying Problem Ownership.
3. Teaching More Appropriate Behaviour.
4. Giving Signals Or Cues For Appropriate Behaviour.
5. Teaching New Behaviour That Is Self-Rewarding.
6. Identifying Mistaken Goals And Using Encouragement.
7. Using Effective Praise.
8. Using Tokens.
9. Extinction-Ignoring Behaviour When It Is Appropriate To Do So.
10. Redirecting Young Children's Behaviour: Diversion/Distraction.
11. Redirecting Older Children's Behaviour: Substitution.
12. Active Listening.
13. Using I-Messages.
14. Using Logical Consequences.
15. Resolving Conflict Through Problem Solving.
16. Managing Strong Emotions Responsibly.
17. Withdrawing From Certain Situations.
18. Helping Children Preserve Their Dignity And Save Face.

A detailed description of the above strategies can be obtained at any time from centre staff.

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS & HOLIDAYS:

The Tottle Inn Children's Centre maintains an anti-biased, multi-cultural environment for the children it serves. A diverse range of holidays is celebrated/acknowledged and every attempt made to educate the children and support their anti-biased development.

Each child's birthday is celebrated in the same manner. Parents are asked to refrain from bringing in cakes, treats or other party favours for their child's birthday as every attempt is made to celebrate each child's birthday in the same manner to avoid hurt feelings and confusion among the children. Birthday invitations may not be brought to the Centre to be distributed unless all children are being invited. This is also to avoid hurting the feelings of any children who may not be invited. We have a "family contact information" sheet which parents are invited to complete upon enrolment. Due to "Privacy Act" concerns, we are not able to provide personal information to other families such as phone numbers, addresses etc. However, the "Family Contact Information" which is completed on a volunteer basis will be made available to interested families. The purpose of this form is to provide a means for families to communicate away from the centre for things such as parties, play dates etc.

FIELD TRIP POLICY:

A variety of field trips and outings are planned and information will be posted on the Parent Information Centre. Trips, which require transportation other than walking, also require an individual field trip consent form to be signed by each child's parent. Outings to areas within walking distance of the Centre fall under the guidelines of the general consent form. Every attempt is made to give advance notification to parents of these local outings. However, often times a local outing is a last minute decision and no notice is given. In all cases, a note is posted on the Centre door giving details of the trip while students and teachers are away from the Centre. During all outings adequate supervision will always be a number one priority. Parents and other volunteers are invited to attend many of our field trips.

ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES:

Any child who receives a minor cut or bump while playing is tended to by staff. A report of such accidents is completed by the staff member in attendance and signed by both the teacher and the parent. One copy of the report is given to the parent and one copy is placed in the child's file.

In the event of a serious accident, injury, or illness, staff will attempt to contact the parent(s) and/or other designated person immediately. Should it be impossible, impractical or imprudent to contact the parent immediately, given the nature of the emergency and risk of peril the child may be subject to by taking the time to attempt to make contact, or when the time necessary to contact a parent or guardian indicates a delay in securing proper attention, emergency medical treatment will be administered to the child as deemed appropriate. Should 911 be required, local authorities

will transport the child. Should 911 not be required, a responsible person as designated by The Tottle Inn shall transport the child so he/she may receive medical attention. As per our licensing regulations, serious accidents or events that occur while under the supervision of The Tottle Inn Children's Centre will be reported to the Department of Community Services by providing a copy of the Serious Incident Report that is provided signed by parents as well.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT:

Our program plans comply with the Standards for the Daily Program in licensed child care facilities as part of the Day Care Act and Regulations. All employees of The Tottle Inn work together as a team to provide the support and guidance required so the adult and child share control of the learning environment. The Centre layout and activities are planned in such a way as to support active learning and the child's right to make choices. Positive adult-child interactions support the belief the child's power to learn comes from within. Together as an Early Childhood Education team, daily assessments take place and are reviewed by teachers so appropriate plans can be implemented to further support the child's growth and learning.

(*Reference: Active Learning Practices For Preschool & Child Care Programs. Educating Young Children; High Scope Education research Foundation. High/Scope Press-Ypsilanti, Michigan USA. Mary Holman & David P Weikart @ 1995.)

Planning Time:

During Planning Time, each child states in words or through gestures what he/she plans to do during work time. The Planning Process helps the children to establish a problem or goal and to imagine or anticipate actions. The children express their intentions and shape these intentions into purposes. The children deliberate and make ongoing modifications. Planning Time is a critical component in the Pre School environment. Planning encourages children to articulate their choices, decisions and ideas. The development of the child's self-confidence and self-esteem is supported through planning. The child is given a sense of control over his/her day. The child's play eventually becomes more complex since the planning process leads to involvement and concentration. Children will eventually engage in the planning process at home.

Work Time:

During Work Time, children play with purpose as they carry out their intentions. Problem solving, building social relations, discovering logical relationships and using language to communicate are some ways in which children construct knowledge during work time. Children play in a variety of social context and engage in different types of play during Work Time. Teachers offer comfort, support, and conversation and participate in children's play during Work Time. The children complete a truly amazing process during Work Time as their developing skills are utilized to their fullest potential. Work Time is often referred to as free play.

Recall/Review:

During Recall Time, the children remember and reflect upon their actions and experiences. The children associate their plans, actions and outcomes. The children are able to form and talk about mental images. The children select which experiences to recall and talk with others about personally meaningful events. The children's capacity to recall past events grows as they recall experiences in a variety of ways. They construct their own understanding about what they have done. The teacher supports their development using active listening skills.

Small Group Time:

During Small Group Time, the children meet with the same teacher for an adult initiated activity. The children's interests and development are the key components used to plan this learning experience. Small Group Time is a very important part of the daily routine. It often introduces the children to materials and experiences they may miss without adult support. Small Group Time builds on the strengths of the children. The regular peer contacts and interactions support their social development. Teachers are able to make observations on each child to plan future activities, which support their individual developing skills. During Small Group Time, the children play, explore and work with materials. The children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. Problem solving is another key aspect of Small Group Time as children solve problems they encounter. Small Group is often a favourite time among the children. Our Preschool Program includes an additional Small Group-Academics segment. This provides an opportunity for the teachers to focus on a specific area of development in order to provide the children with additional support for their developing skills. The academic activities are designed to meet all developmental levels of the children and are implemented through a play-based, fun activity.

Circle Time:

Circle Time is often referred to as Large Group Time as all teachers and children are together. The communal setting provides opportunities for active learning and enjoyable experiences. The children are able to build a repertoire of common experiences, which help the children to form bonds among each other. Group membership is encouraged during circle time as a sense of community is built. The group problem solving experiences, which are a part of Circle Time, help support the development of individual problem solving skills. During Circle Time, the children actively

participate. The children are encouraged to initiate ideas, offer suggestions and generate solutions. Circle Time may occur indoors or outside.

Outside Time:

Outside time provides many opportunities for social play. Children are encouraged to use their energy in ways, which may not be safe indoors. The outdoors provides a healthy and unconstrained classroom for the children as they have contact with nature. The children play, converse and solve problems they encounter. Many gross motor skills are practiced during outside playtime. Outside time is an important part of the daily routine. When weather permits, field trips to various parks, playgrounds, nature trails and other locations are planned to add variety to the outside playtime. Many of our Preschool Program plans are implemented outside when the weather allows us to do so.

Transitions:

Transition times occur frequently during any child's day. Transitions are those times when the children pass from one place or activity to another. In an Early Childhood Education Environment, teachers can use transition times to help reinforce learning. The teachers plan activities to be utilized during transition periods. The children are taught how to use their time constructively.

"Transition activities are teaching techniques and are used to prepare children to relax, to listen, to sit down, to move from place to place and activity to activity with ease while providing an opportunity to think, reason, to apply and reinforce concepts, and to learn."-Betty Ruth Baker.

CHILD ABUSE:

All caregivers are required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

TERMINATION OF CARE:

The goal of The Tottle Inn Children's Centre is to provide quality care for the families we serve. Every effort is made to personalize our care to suit each child as individuals. Because we pride ourselves on quality care for all of the children, and this is our foremost goal, there may be times when the care we provide is not suitable for some children or families. Should we deem the care inappropriate for the child or parent for any reason, we will decline from providing that care. If, regrettably, we must decline the provision of care, we will do what we can to help the parent find alternate care. However, the ultimate burden of finding alternate care rests solely with the parent. Respectively, if a parent feels the care we provide is not suited for their child or family, the parent also has the right to terminate care. For the termination of care, both the caregiver and the parent agree to submit thirty (30) days written notice. In lieu of thirty days written notice, a charge equivalent to the session fees due during the thirty days will be paid by the parent immediately upon withdrawal. **Additional requirement** – Although we do not require our families to commit to a full year of preschool, if a parent wishes to withdraw his/her child after February 1st, the total fees due for the remainder of the school year must be paid in full. We require this commitment from our families because a Preschool space is extremely difficult to fill with another child with only 3-4 months remaining in the school year. There will be no exceptions to any of our termination of care notice and payment policies. No notice will be given by The Tottle Inn if termination of care is due to non-payment of delinquent fees by the parent. The parent acknowledges responsibility to pay their account up to date in addition to the thirty day notice fee requirement which would also be due beginning on the date of termination of care by The Tottle Inn for non-payment or the fees due for the remainder of the school year if termination is on or after March 1st. The same thirty-day notice is required for parents who wish to reduce/change their child's scheduled attendance. The Tottle Inn makes no guarantee it will be able to accommodate such changes. Fees for the original attendance schedule shall be charged during the thirty-day notice period when the change involves a reduction in attendance. Reason for withdraw must be provided by parents and is recorded on the child's admission documents as per our licensing regulations. As part of our Continuous Improvement Program, we ask that all parents who decide to remove their child from our program for any reason complete an exit survey. This survey is designed to help us understand ways in which we can improve our programs to meet the needs of a greater number of families in the community. We also ask that parents complete this survey when their child graduates from our Preschool program. We appreciate any feedback parents are able to provide.

NEW CENTRE

We are preparing to build a new centre in Falmouth. The timeline for completion has not been set. Our Falmouth programs will move to our new centre once construction is complete. The location is Dyke Road Falmouth, not far from the current location. We will be introducing several new activities and events once the new centre is open. We are very excited for the opportunity to provide additional services to the community. New centre policies will be added as required – parents will be advised in advance.

NOVA SCOTIA CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The Nova Scotia Child Care Subsidy program provides financial assistance to working parents or parents attending school. The program is designed to help parents afford licensed child care. Funding is provided to reduce the daily fees for each child. The maximum income level has increased significantly. The following information is from the NSDCS web site:

“Income Eligibility:

Effective April 1, 2008 the maximum allowable income levels are as follows:

<i># Children</i>	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children	5 Children
<i>Net Income</i>	\$62,731	\$62,731	\$76,461	\$93,200	\$108,200

Income eligibility will be based on net income as defined by line 236 of the T1 general income tax form. For example, an applicant who reports net income up to \$62,731 with 1 child could be eligible for subsidy. The daily subsidy rate will vary depending on the income of the family.”

Normally, a copy of your most recent tax return is required for income verification. However, if your situation has changed significantly since your last return was filed, then recent pay stubs can serve as verification.”

We encourage all families who may qualify to apply for subsidy funding. The level of funding will be based on the financial information provided. Complete information about the program as well as application forms are available at :

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/childcare/ChildCareSubsidy.html>

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PRESCHOOL PROGRAM DAILY ROUTINE

8:00am - 8:30am	Early Drop Off Program Free Play and Teacher Led Activities.
8:30am - 8:45am	Regular Drop Off Table Toy Activities
8:45am - 9:05am	Small Group Academics
9:05am - 9:15am	Opening Circle Welcome, Planning Time
9:15am - 9:45am	Work Time Tidy Up Time
9:45am - 10:00am	Snack Recall
10:00am - 10:25am	Small Group Arts and Creations
10:25am - 10:50am	Work Time Tidy Up Time
10:50am - 11:15am	Circle Time
11:15am - 11:30am	Dismissal Preparation Dismissal (11:20am – 11:25am)
11:30am - 12:00pm	Extended Pick Up Program Free Play and Teacher Led Activities

Please refer to the Curriculum Statement on Page 8 of the Policy section for a detailed description of our daily activities. The schedule is used as a general guideline for the time frames for each activity. Depending upon the lesson plan, some activities may require more or less time than the amount allotted. The teachers also take cues from the children with regards to their interest level, activity level or their involvement in their current play activities prior to ending a learning experience. There are times when we implement an “Open Snack” in order to extend the amount of work time available for the children. Open Snack involves having snack available for the children during the work time rather than ending work time to serve snack to the entire group.

Although the daily routine remains the same for our Junior and Senior classes, all activities are modified to meet the developmental levels of the children enrolled.

The Tottle Inn Children's Centre

School Readiness Goals of the Preschool Program

The school readiness goals of The Tottle Inn Children's Centre include providing a developmentally appropriate preschool program emphasizing growth in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development, and personal and social competence. Our goals include supporting the development of a strong sense of self worth within each child. We believe supporting the development of self-confidence within the children encourages the children to take chances in their school environment which leads to the successful development of school readiness skills. Nurturing this self-confidence enables the children to continue their success throughout their educational experiences. *Some* of the activities included within our curriculum are as follows:

Language and Literacy:

- Understand and tell stories (Participate in Dialogic Reading Activities).
- Recognize pictures, words, and stories
- Recognize ABC s
- Understand that writing is communication.
- Beginning printing skills.
- Learn & practice rhyming skills.

Math Concepts:

- Count and sort objects into groups
- Recognize shapes
- Make comparisons of size, shape, length, and weight.
- Recognize numbers.
- Beginning printing skills.

Science:

- Explore the natural environment
- Observe seasonal changes
- Communicate observations
- Use tools to measure.
- Participate in simple science experiments.

Art & Dramatic Play:

- Express ideas and thoughts in creative ways
- Use a wide variety of artistic medium to express creativity. (Paint, draw, and sculpt)
- Listen to music, play games and sing songs, including action songs.
- Recognize colours.
- Use materials and imagination in creative ways.
- Participate and initiate dramatic play activities.

Physical Development:

- Move with balance and coordination (Gross motor skills)
- Participate in indoor and outdoor physical activity
- Use writing tools, puzzles, scissors, blocks, clay, and computers. (Fine motor skills)

Social Competence:

- Play and work cooperatively
- Follow classroom rules
- Interact positively with other children.
- Develop a strong foundation of problem solving skills.
- Predict, anticipate & participate in a structured routine.
- Enjoy spending time in a new environment away from parents & regular caregivers without separation anxiety.
- Form meaningful friendships with their peers.

Goals for Parents:

- Actively participate in your child's education
- Understand the correlation between home environment and school success
- Be aware of available community resources.
- Communicate openly with teachers and support staff.

Preschool Program

Fee Schedule

2010/2011 PRESCHOOL PROGRAM CLASS SELECTION

DATE OF BIRTH	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL START YEAR	PRESCHOOL GROUP JUNIOR OR SENIOR
October 1 st , 2006 to December 31 st , 2007	2012	Senior Class Three Sessions per week Monday, Wednesday & Friday
January 1 st , 2008 to May 30 th , 2008	2013	Option of Choosing: Junior or Senior Class 2 or 3 sessions per week
June 1 st , 2008 to December 31 st , 2009	2013 or 2014	Junior Class Two sessions per week Tuesday & Thursday (Possibly Mon/Wed in Hantsport)

When selecting a class for your child, please follow the guidelines above pertaining to your child's date of birth. If your child could be registered for either the Junior or Senior group, please feel free to contact the centre to discuss your child's development with the Director to ensure he/she will be appropriately challenged. When placing the children in a class, the age groupings are used as a guideline along with each child's developmental level. Exceptions can be made to the guidelines at the Director's discretion. Please contact Jacky should you have any questions. Thank you!

FEE SCHEDULE:

PROGRAM	REGULAR DROP OFF & PICK UP	EARLY DROP OFF OR EXTENDED PICK UP	EARLY DROP OFF AND EXTENDED PICK UP
JUNIOR GROUP 2 DAYS PER WEEK	\$103.00 \$93.00 Sibling	\$133.00 \$91.00 Sibling	\$153.00 \$112.00 Sibling
SENIOR GROUP 3 DAYS PER WEEK	\$143.00 \$133.00 Sibling	\$173.00 \$153.00 Sibling	\$193.00 \$173.00 Sibling

Early Drop off and Extended pick up programs are available if demand is sufficient. Once a parent enrolls a child in either of these programs, the additional fee for the program(s) must be paid each month for the entire year even if the parent no longer requires this service. This is due to the fact we must have enough parents requiring the service to cover the added expenses and we do not want to cancel the service part way through the year for parents who do require it. A full year commitment is required for parents registering for this service. Parents who request this service on an occasional basis, are asked to provide advance notice, if possible. An additional fee of \$10.00 per early drop off or extended pick up will apply. Exception to this is if the extended pick is not offered, and a child is picked up after 11:30am; a late pick up fee of \$20.00 for each 15 minute interval or part thereof will be charged. No exceptions.

A SAMPLE OF OUR SPECIAL EVENTS

As part of our curriculum throughout the school year, we organize special events for the children. Some of the activities are as simple as bringing in a toy from home or dressing up as a special character. We also plan outings or family events to take place outside of the preschool hours. All special events are posted on the calendars, which are sent home each month. A sample of some of our activities is listed below.

BOOK BUDDIES

-Each month a calendar is posted listing the children who are “Book Buddies” for the day. The Book Buddy is invited to bring a book to share with their friends at circle time. The themes are posted on our Calendar of Events, so if the book matches our theme...that’s great!

SPECIAL HELPER

-Each day a preschooler is selected to be the teacher’s special helper. Children LOVE to help prepare activities and snack for their friends. Children know when it is their turn to be Special Helper because it is the same day as their turn to be Book Buddy.

THEME DAYS

-We have a variety of special events that take place relating to each of our themes. All special events are listed on the calendars, which are sent home with the newsletters. Some activities involve bringing in an item from home, others are classroom activities. The children LOVE our theme days!

P.J. DAY

-Crawl out of bed, eat your breakfast & come to preschool in your PJ’S! Don’t forget your slippers!

SHOW & SHARE

-Many of us know this day as “Show & Tell”. The children have the opportunity to bring something special from home to share with their friends.

GAME DAY

-We ask the children to bring a game to class and teach their friends how to play. This is a great opportunity for the children to practice their leadership skills!

BEST BUDDY DAY

-The children bring in their “Best Buddy” ... toy that is! Many children have a favourite doll, bear or other item that is special to them. Lots of stories are usually told on this day!

I DRESSED MYSELF TODAY!

-With busy mornings sometimes it is difficult to take the time to allow the children to dress themselves. With our focus on self-help skills and independence, we are encouraging the children to dress themselves everyday! Today is a day to give the children extra recognition for a job well done! Remember, not everything has to match; picking out the clothes is half the fun!

SMELLY, TASTY, TOUCHY DAY!

-This one could be a bit disgusting! The children are asked to bring in 1 item, in a covered, closed container so their friends can try to guess what it is. We will be using all of our senses on this day! The item can be something to touch, taste, or smell or even listen to! The children are encouraged to use their imaginations to try to trick their friends! *If bringing in something to taste, please list all ingredients so we can be cautious of food allergies.

BRING A SHAPE DAY

-As easy as it sounds. The children are asked to bring in a “shape”. It can be a toy, a picture or drawing. Please be sure whatever is brought in is safe to share with the class.

MOTHER GOOSE DAY

-On this day the children can bring in any item related to any of the Mother Goose Rhymes. I am sure we will have lots of books, so toys or other items are best. It can be anything at all that relates to one of the rhymes. The children will be guessing which rhyme matches the items.

LET’S MAKE A RHYME

-Mother Goose is an excellent theme to reinforce our rhyming practice. The children are asked to bring in two items that rhyme... Perhaps a can & a fan. We will be encouraging the children to use their rhyming skills and to be creative! Children love to find words that rhyme...it’s a great game to play during transitions!

INSIDE OUT & BACKWARDS DAY OR ZANY DRESS DAY!

-Today is the day to wear the crazy clothes, inside out & backwards! Two shoes that don't match add to the zaniness!!!

MURAL DAY

-This is a classroom activity. All of the children will be helping to create a mural to hang on the classroom wall.

ANIMAL ANTICS

-During our farm theme, the children enjoy being animals! Today is the day to dress up as your favourite farm animal.

DOWN ON THE FARM

-Today is the day to bring in any toy that can be found on a farm. Maybe a tractor or other farm equipment, toy animals etc!

BABY ANIMALS

-Perhaps everyone's favourite part of the farm...the baby animals. Today the children can bring in any toy that relates to baby farm animals. (The mom or dad animal is ok too!)

COWBOY & COWGIRL DAY

-The Tottle Inn is moving West! Today is the day our classroom will be full of cowboys and cowgirls! Simply wear a hat or scarf or go all out in full costume!

FRIENDSHIP FRUIT SALAD DAY

-During our Healthy Bodies Theme, we will be discussing the many ways we can stay healthy. From healthy food, to exercise to getting enough sleep. Today the focus will be on healthy food. The children are invited to bring in one piece of fruit which we will use to make Friendship Fruit Salad!

PRESCHOOL OLYMPICS

-Another part of staying healthy is exercise. Today's class will be devoted to exercise & movement games. All that is required from home is for the children to wear comfy clothes and indoor sneakers! We would like each child to bring a bottle of water as well if possible, as we will be bringing this important item into our games as well.

BEDTIME BEAR DAY

-The final focus area of our Healthy Bodies Theme will be sleep!!! Something parents love but children often avoid! Today the children are invited to bring their favourite Bedtime Buddy....the teddy bear, blanket, book, whatever they may like to take to bed each night.

MUFFINS FOR MOM / DONUTS FOR DAD!

In celebration of Mother's Day and Father's Day, we invite our special Moms and Dads (or other significant adult) to join us for the first half hour of class and share some muffins and donuts with the children.

THINGS THAT MOVE

-During our transportation theme, the children are asked to bring in an item that "moves".

Some of our "Family Events" include:

CINDERELLA BALL

-The children, their friends and family are invited to the Cinderella Ball! Fancy clothes, a fancy ballroom, refreshments and dancing make for a wonderful evening of make believe!

ART GALLERY

-The time to showcase the wonderful & creative work of the children. This is an Open House style gathering where friends and family are invited to drop by and enjoy the creative pieces of art!

HAWAIIAN LUAU & ICE CREAM SOCIAL

-An opportunity for children, parents and friends to mingle...and enjoy some ice cream treats!

HOLIDAY PARTIES

-We select one or two holidays each year to celebrate with an evening party which includes our family and friends.

SKATING PARTY

-Each year just before Christmas we have a skating party at the Windsor Rink. A special visitor often drops by to say hello to the children!

HOP FOR MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

-This is a new event for the centre...and will continue in upcoming years. The children are asked to collect sponsors for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. During our Easter Party, the children participate in a "hop-a-thon" (for a few minutes). Everyone has a wonderful time and we raise money for a worthy cause!

TRANSPORTATION DAY

Our transportation theme is an excellent opportunity to plan a display of machines for the children and their family and friends to enjoy! A "mini fair" is set up for the children including a BBQ, face painting, mini carnival games and lots more!

OAKLAWN FARM ZOO TRIP

This is a great opportunity for families to get together with the preschoolers and share a morning of fun at Oaklawn Farm Zoo! Family and Friends are invited to join us on this field trip!

FALL FAMILY FUN FAIR

This annual tradition has become very popular within the community. The Community Centre is transformed into a fair with games, treats, a magic show and even some furry friends!

Preschool Quality Checklist

Parents are invited to use this Preschool quality checklist when researching possible Preschools for your child. The Tottle Inn Children's Centre strives to exceed all regulations set forth in the Nova Scotia Day Care Act. Please contact our centre Director for details regarding our commitment to quality.

Learning & Nurturing	Centre 1	Centre 2	Centre 3
Is there a structured program you can see in action with teacher led activities?			
Is the Daily Routine posted with a variety of stimulating activities planned?			
Is there an area where the daily curriculum plans are posted for parents to review?			
Does the centre implement a developmentally appropriate practice?			
Will the program help to prepare your child for Elementary School?			
Does the centre provide parents with clearly stated goals, which are developmentally appropriate for the age of the children being served?			
Does the program integrate the development of self-help skills into the daily activities?			
Does the centre have a clear mission statement and philosophy which is given to the parents in print form?			
Are positive behaviour guidance methods used to guide behaviour? Education versus punishment?			
Do children have access to a variety of engaging activities throughout the day?			
Do children have time to play and explore child – initiated activities?			
Do teachers interact with children in both small and large group activities?			
Are teachers responsive to the requests of children and child initiated conversations?			
Are special activities planned to enrich the curriculum?			
Health & Safety			
Is the centre licensed? Are licensing requirements met on an ongoing basis? (Positive inspections)			
Is the building safe, clean and well maintained?			
Are all outdoor play areas fenced & monitored?			
Are safety inspections of equipment and facilities completed on a regular basis?			
Are health and safety reports and fire inspection reports available for parents to review?			
Is there an evacuation plan posted and evacuation drills completed regularly?			
Are children adequately supervised? Refer to Day Care Act for teacher to child ratio requirements.			
Are all caregivers trained in 1 st Aid and infant and child CPR?			
Does the centre enforce a strict Communicable Illness Policy requiring contagious children to remain at home?			
Are health guidelines and emergency phone numbers posted clearly?			

Health & Safety, continued.	Centre 1	Centre 2	Centre 3
Are health care policies in place including hand washing procedures?			
Is there a policy in place to ensure children are not released to persons without consent from parents?			
Are nutritious snacks served each day?			
Communication			
Is there a newsletter distributed to parents on a monthly basis?			
Are written progress reports given to parents at least twice per year?			
Are there parent/child activities to do at home that connect parents with what is happening at school?			
Are special events planned to include family members from time to time? Are parent's ideas welcomed?			
Are teachers available to discuss concerns or questions parents may have?			
Do the parents have access to child care resources through the centre, including information on child development?			
Do all parents receive a copy of the centre's policy & procedure manual? Does the manual provide clear information with regards to the centre policies?			
Does the centre have strong relationships with child development professionals in the community? Can the centre make referrals to developmental specialists if deemed necessary?			
Is there a designated area in the centre to post information for parents?			
Teaching Staff			
Do the teachers interact positively with the children?			
Do the teachers meet the training requirements set forth in the Day Care Act?			
Do the teachers receive regular performance evaluations, at least annually?			
Do the teachers meet regularly to plan and evaluate the curriculum?			
Do the teachers have a procedure in place to observe the development of the children and implement program modifications if required, as well as a procedure to ensure each individual child is appropriately challenged?			
Family First			
When entering the centre and speaking to the teachers, do you feel comfortable with this very important decision?			
Additional questions, concerns or requirements you feel should be included: 1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

R E S O U R C E S

What Are Child-Initiated Activities?

Child-initiated activities offer a wide range of opportunities for children to directly experience and manipulate new ideas and objects. The following are examples of child-initiated goals:

Choice Making:

The curriculum offers the children the opportunity to choose from a variety of activities throughout the day.

Creating:

Activities encourage children to create their own ideas for art projects, block constructions or dance improvisations.

Interacting:

Talking with other children and adults fosters a child's sense of self and self-esteem. Through conversation, children learn new words and learn to co-operate. Thus, language skills and a positive self-image are encouraged through conversation.

Playing:

Creative play materials encourage children to question, experiment, and pretend. A housekeeping area, block area or pretend grocery store provides children "real experiences" to develop vocabulary and gain an understanding of the world around them.

Discovering:

Real experiences provide children with opportunities to exercise their curiosity and discuss events that are relevant to their everyday lives. Visiting grocery stores, farms and hospitals; preparing snacks; and talking to police officers, firefighters, and janitors contribute to a child's understanding of the real world. The world can also be discovered through good books. Reading books daily to children is an essential part of a quality program.

What is the Role Of The Preschool Teacher?

Studies have consistently found that it is the teacher who makes a difference in whether children profit from preschool activities. It is the teacher who plans the activities, listens and talks to children, and encourages growth in the child's intellectual and social development. Thus, the lead teacher in a preschool program should have training in early childhood education and child development.

About The Author:

Beverly B Swanson is the Director of [ACCESS ERIC](#), the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Preschool Education & Brain Development

Brain Growth and Development

A peek at the early stages of brain development and how early childhood education encourages brain growth, memory and language development in babies and young preschool children.

At birth, a baby's brain already has 100,000,000,000 cells. This is about the same number of stars in the Milky Way. Unlike the rest of a new baby's body, the brain is not complete at birth. In order to start working, the cells need to communicate with each other. As a baby starts to experience life, connections are made between cells - the more connections there are, the more the brain can do.

A baby's brain develops so fast that by age two a child who is developing normally has the same number of connection as an adult. By age three, a child has TWICE as many brain connections as an adult.

Early milestones in brain growth.

4 months: The infant's brain responds to every sound produced in all the languages of the world.

8 to 9 months: Babies can form specific memories from their experiences, such as how to push a ball to make it roll.

10 months: Babies can now distinguish and even produce the sounds of their own language (such as "da-da") and no longer pay attention to the sounds of language that are foreign.

12 months: Babies whose parents say, for example, "Lookeee at the doggiee," will go to the appropriate picture of a dog in a picture book more often than those babies who are talked to in normal, flatter voices.

12 to 18 months: Babies can keep in memory something that has been hidden and find it again, even if it has been completely covered up. They can also hold memory sequences of simple activities, such as winding up a Jack-in-the-box until the figure pops up.

24 months: Preschool children now have clear pictures in mind of people who are dear to them, and they get upset when separated from these people (even their peers).

30 months: Preschool children can hold in mind a whole sequence of spatial maps and know where things are in their environment.

36 months: A preschool child can now hold two different emotions in his mind at the same time, such as being sad that he spilled ice cream on his clothes but glad that he's at a birthday party.

How Preschool Education Helps Brain Development

Morning Greeting

Whenever an adult speaks directly and personally to a preschool child, cascades of impulses go through the child's neurons (nerve cells), which are connected to one another by synapses. The repetition of these kinds of positive early interactions actually helps the brain reinforce the existing connections and make new ones.

Fingerplay

By a couple of months of age, babies can process the emotional contours of language (prosody), which means they tune in to the emotional variations in your voice. (In fact, toddlers can memorize nursery rhymes because rhymes have prosody!) As the preschool teacher raises her voice an octave and draws out her vowels, the child's brain responds by sending even more chemical and electrical impulses across the synapses.

Story time

Early childhood teachers are careful to have small groups for story time so that preschool children are able to get involved and process information. Young children need real interactions in order to learn. As she reads, the teacher will use melodic voice tones to ensure children's involvement and learning.

Free play / Work time

During free play, preschool children interact with one another. As they communicate, whether through beginning language or more sophisticated use of words, the neurons in their brains are making more connections, critical for reinforcing learning.

Snack

Further opportunities for communication lead to the repetition of impulses sent through the brain. The more repetition that goes on, the more the brain grows sure in its understanding. Repetition of language sounds is crucial to brain development.

Circle time

As the early childhood caregiver focuses her attention on each individual child in the large group activity, the child must think about the topic for the day. The child's brain will be active as he/she retrieves from memory something special in her own personal history that she has learned. Each day children reap the benefits of preschool education.

**Brain development information from an article in *Scholastic Parent & Child*, by Alice Sterling Honig, Ph.D. April/May 1999

General Developmental Sequence Toddler through Preschool

This page presents typical activities and achievements for children from two to five years of age. It is important to keep in mind that the time frames presented are averages and some children may achieve various developmental milestones earlier or later than the average but still be within the normal range. This information is presented to help parents understand what to expect from their child. Any questions you may have about your child's development should be shared with his doctor or teacher.

Physical Development

Walks well, goes up and down steps alone, runs, seats self on chair, becoming independent in toileting, uses spoon and fork, imitates circular stroke, turns pages singly, kicks ball, attempts to dress self, builds tower of six cubes.

Emotional Development

Very Self-centered, just beginning a sense of personal identity and belongings, possessive, often negative, often frustrated, no ability to choose between alternatives, enjoys physical affection, resistive to change, becoming independent, more responsive to humor and distraction than discipline or reason.

Age 2

Social Development

Solitary play, dependent on adult guidance, plays with dolls, refers to self by name, socially very immature, little concept of others as "people." May respond to simple direction.

Intellectual Development

Says words, phrases and simple sentences, 272 words, understands simple directions, identifies simple pictures, likes to look at books, short attention span, avoids simple hazards, can do simple form board.

Physical Development

Runs well, marches, stands on one foot briefly, rides tricycle, imitates cross, feeds self well, puts on shoes and stockings, unbuttons and buttons, build tower of 10 cubes. Pours from pitcher.

Emotional Development

Likes to conform, easygoing attitude, not so resistive to change, more secure, greater sense of personal identity, beginning to be adventuresome, enjoys music.

Age 3

Social Development

Parallel play, enjoys being by others, takes turns, knows if he is a boy or girl, enjoys brief group activities requiring no skill, likes to "help" in small ways--responds to verbal guidance.

Intellectual Development

Says short sentences, 896 words, great growth in communication, tells simple stories, uses words as tools of thought, wants to understand environment, answers questions, imaginative, may recite few nursery rhymes

Physical Development

Skips on one foot, draws "Man", cuts with scissors (not well), can wash and dry face, dress self except ties, standing broad jump, throws ball overhand, high motor drive.

Emotional Development

Seems sure of himself, out-of-bounds behavior, often negative, may be defiant, seems to be testing himself out, needs controlled freedom.

Age 4

Social Development

Cooperative play, enjoys other children's company, highly social, may play loosely organized group games - tag, duck-duck-goose, talkative, versatile.

Intellectual Development

Uses complete sentences, 1540 words, asks endless questions, learning to generalize, highly imaginative, dramatic, can draw recognizable simple objects.

Physical Development

Hops and skips, dresses without help, good balance and smoother muscle action, skates, rides wagon and scooter, prints simple letters, handedness established, ties shoes, girls small muscle development about 1 year ahead of boys.

Emotional Development

Self-assured, stable, well adjusted, home-centered, likes to associate with mother, capable, of some self-criticism, enjoys responsibility. Likes to follow the rules.

Age 5

Social Development

Highly cooperative play, has special "friends", highly organized, enjoys simple table games requiring turns and observing rules, "school", feels pride clothes and accomplishments, eager to carry out some responsibility.

Intellectual Development

2,072 words, tells long tales, carries out direction well, reads own name, counts to 10, asks meaning of words, knows colors, beginning to know difference between fact and fiction-lying, interested in environment, city, stores, etc.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Coping with Separation Anxiety

Entering into a new childcare arrangement can be an emotional experience for both parent and child. However, careful planning, and the knowledge that some separation anxiety and tears are normal, can make the transition from parent to caregiver as pleasant as possible. How quickly the child adapts depends on a number of factors including: the child's age and stage of development; the child's past experiences in the care of others; the skills of the new caregiver and appropriateness of the new setting; the child's exposure to social experiences which have fostered independence and often most importantly, the adults' ability to prepare themselves and the child for the separation. If a child experiences separation anxiety, it is important for parents to remember it is not an automatic indicator that the child is not 'ready' for the new setting, or that the new setting is not appropriate for your child.. In fact, the opposite is often quite true. Children who experience separation anxiety either in a mild or extreme manner often are the children who will benefit most from being integrated into their new environment, thereby allowing them to develop their sense of independence, self-confidence and self-worth. Here are some strategies to help make the process go smoothly.

Share information with the caregiver

Share your child's unique likes, dislikes, fears, eating/sleeping habits and anything else that will help the caregiver understand your child, ease the transition and provide care that is reasonably consistent with yours.

Visit the new setting with your child

Show children where they will be eating, sleeping, playing and introduce the new caregiver. Familiarity will make the actual separation easier. Preschoolers may enjoy having a book read to them about going to childcare. Try to avoid spending the entire day/session with your child so you will be able to talk to you child about the other things he/she will have fun doing one the day mom/dad isn't with them.

Shorten the first few days

Shorter visits will give your child more time to adjust and will allow him/her to learn by experience that you will return.

Build trust

Let your child see you and the caregiver building a friendly relationship. Include the three of you in a brief conversation or play activity. Children often use their parents as a "bridge" for developing a relationship of trust with a new adult.

Prepare the night before

An unhurried, pleasant start to the day is crucial to successful separations. If the child is old enough, involve him/her in the packing of lunches and the selection and laying out of clothes. For young children, a choice between two items (e.g., white or blue socks, grapes or an apple) is enough.

Something from home

Young children often use an object from home (such as a favourite teddy or blanket) to comfort themselves. Other children prefer to put a family photo or parent's familiar scarf or glove in their pocket or backpack. Eventually, the need for these "cozies" or transition objects diminishes.

On the way, the first day

Have a calm, positive attitude. Children are especially sensitive to your moods and are quick to pick up any tension in your voice, face, touch or mannerisms. Sing a favourite song or talk about what the child or you will be doing today. A specific detail ("I will be taking the elevator upstairs to talk to the boss") is far more interesting than a vague comment ("I will be working at the office all day"). In terms the child will

understand, explain when and where you will be picking him/her up ("After lunch and sleep, I will come. You will probably be playing outside then. I will know where to find you"). A common fear is that you will not return or that you will not find each other.

Develop a "goodbye" ritual

Rituals are reassuring, especially during stressful times. Plan a special way to say goodbye, such as a wave through the window or a lipstick kiss stamped on the back of the child's hand. You might ask your older child, "How shall we say goodbye? A kiss or a hug? One hug or two?" Giving them choices in little matters helps them feel that they have some control over what is happening.

Take time to say goodbye

Leave your child with a positive picture of what you will do together at the end of the day ("Save a big hug for me when I pick you up! Then we'll get your brother at school"). Keep the goodbye short. Lingering often makes the child feel more anxious. Regardless of how tempting it may seem, never sneak out while the child is distracted. This destroys trust and will encourage the child to cling more on future occasions.

Avoid repeated goodbyes

Once you say "I'm leaving now" and go through the established goodbye ritual then go. Stalling can make the child more fearful and clingy.

Accept and listen to negative feelings

If you or your child is feeling upset about the separation, reassure yourself that you have taken all the required steps to place your child in a safe, nurturing and stimulating setting. Telling children that they are too big to cry or that they are making a fuss over "nothing" only aggravates their fears and fails to help them understand their true feelings. Saying, "I know you are feeling sad. I will miss you too," is more helpful. Accept the fact that a temporary period of adjustment and some feelings of parental guilt or worry are normal. If it would help, arrange for you and the caregiver to communicate by phone during the day to "see how things are going." Stress from separations and adjusting to new situations can be a real strain for parents and their little ones. However, with careful planning, the adjustment period can be brief for many children. However, parents should be prepared to follow the same routine and guidelines for as long as it takes for your child to adjust. Remembering each child is different and allowing as much time as necessary are important factors when dealing with separation anxiety. It is very important for the child to know a parent feels comfortable and happy about the decision they have made to place their child in this new situation. Children can sense when a parent feels upset or uncertain and this will add to their own feelings of anxiety. It is important to discuss the new surroundings and experiences in a positive manner to the child and even to others when the child can hear the parent's discussions. Knowing the parents are comfortable with help the child to feel re-assured in their new surroundings.

Separation Anxiety throughout the school year.

It is important for parents to remember even if your child did not experience separation anxiety when first entering a new situation or setting, it is common for him/her to experience this anxiety after attending for some time. Children who appear well adjusted and comfortable in their surroundings can often experience feelings of separation anxiety days, weeks or months after joining a new group. These feelings are still considered normal. Children's needs and ability to deal with situations change as their social and emotional development continues. When a child experiences separation anxiety for the first time after appearing adjusted, or when a child has a re-occurrence of separation anxiety, the cause may have nothing to do with their "new" surroundings. A wide variety of feelings regarding issues away from the new setting can cause a child to experience separation anxiety at their new environment. Changes in routine or other changes at home often lead to separation anxiety away from the home. Even the "mood" or emotional undertone the child is exposed to during his time away from the school can cause feelings of separation anxiety when at an unrelated location. Sleep habits or patterns, illness, as well as unstructured environments the child is exposed to away from the "school" also lead to separation anxiety. Missing time from the "new" environment can

also cause separation anxiety to return. It is important for parents to remember the worst thing to do is to allow your child to stay at home or miss time from their new surroundings because of separation anxiety. Consistency is extremely important and changes or “giving in” to your child only lengthens the adjustment process.

Reference : Carol Wagg, Special Projects Coordinator, London Children’s Connection, London, Ontario.

FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships - By Shel Silverstein

I've discovered a way to stay friends forever --
There's really nothing to it.
I simply tell you what to do
and you do it!

Adults recognize that to have a friend, you need to be a friend. A preschooler's thinking is more self-centered, much like the poem above. This is a normal stage of development, and with a lot of help, understanding and encouragement, young children can develop friends in spite of their egocentric stage of life. Young children learn how to get along with others the same way they learn most things. They learn by seeing and hearing their adult models (parents) and by practicing the skills they've seen and heard.

Why Are Friendships Important?

The idea of a playmate to share toys and laughter, excitement and special times is the bright side of friends and friendships. The downside is the arguing and hurt feelings, the tears and the jealousy. Parents of preschoolers might ask, "Why bother?"

When children play with other children their own age, they have great opportunities for learning fairness, sharing, taking turns, following the rules, negotiating, compromising and cooperating. They learn other children also want the biggest piece and the first turn. They learn other children feel bad when they have to wait or when someone pinches them. Children who only play with adults or older children never have the chance to work out their friendships as equals.

Children who are rejected by their peers or have no friends are at risk for later emotional and mental health problems, dropping out of school, delinquency, lower grades, a harder time adjusting to school and a negative outlook about school.

How Can Parents Help?

Friends are important to a growing child. Parents provide nutritious foods, plenty of rest and exercise to help their children develop physically. Practice at being a friend is just as important to social and emotional growth.

The success of the play experience depends on several factors:

Parent's Expectations -- Children do not share until they are somewhere between 4 to 6 years old. Some don't share until much later if they haven't had practice at it. Parents can expect some arguments, perhaps threats, bribes and other unpleasant ways of dealing with people. Try not to get involved unless you are asked to or if someone is going to get hurt. Adults who get mixed up in preschoolers' problems frequently make things worse. Help children *talk* about what they want and need. Teach ways to wait and above all, ways to negotiate.

Children's Activity Level -- Children can range from calm to very active. Be ready for differences and provide standard equipment that gives everyone a feeling of success. Sand, water, big balls, a lot of open space, dress-up clothes, play dough, and an arts and scraps box are usually favourites of the preschool age.

Toys and Turns -- The amount of practice children have had at being friends can impact how they accept or reject the idea of playmates using their toys.

Experiences with other friendly children will help them realize other children can add an element of fun playing alone doesn't offer.

Amount of Time Together -- Parents need to decide the length of time children will be playing together. However, if they are having difficulty, separating and trying again another day might be the best answer.

Play -- The space and toys available will determine the kind of play to expect. An arsenal of war toys will lend itself to running and shooting and loud sounds and words. A puzzle will be quieter and more cooperative in nature. Large, open spaces invite fast movement while small, full spaces demand that people go slowly.

When Should Adults Step In?

When It's Going Well

When children are sharing, talking kindly to one another or showing other friendly behaviour, encourage them with a statement such as, "I like the way you are working together on that castle," "I enjoy watching you two play together" or "That's what I call cooperation!" Children feel good about being noticed for positive reasons. The behaviours we pay attention to are the ones that often get repeated.

When It's Not Going Well

Introduce a new game or snack time. Perhaps you could sit down together and review the rule that people are not for hurting. Next, talk about a different way the children might play to ensure nobody gets hurt.

Be prepared to hear 5-year-olds barter friends: "If you do this for me, I'll be your friend." Three- and 4-year-olds will seem unkind when they say, "I don't want to be your friend." Translated this means, "I want to play alone right now." While another 3- or 4-year-old would not take this comment personally, parents find it rude and unacceptable. If this type of statement makes you uncomfortable, help the child restate what he has said without making an issue of it. A statement such as, "You would like to play alone right now," will clarify the point for all concerned.

Skills to Make and Keep Friends

- Make eye contact, use people's names and touch them gently on the shoulder to get their attention.
- Ask for what you need then think of other things to do while you wait for your turn.
- Teach children to suggest alternatives to their friends' ideas when they don't want to play. Instead of simply saying, "No," they could say, "We played that this morning. Let's play blocks or draw now."
- Help children feel comfortable joining a group. This may make a difference in how the playing will go. Children who burst into play are often rejected. Children who hover around the edges are ignored. Encourage your children to welcome others into play.

Children who feel loved and accepted in their families and whose ideas and talents are valued feel confident in themselves and competent in forming successful relationships. They are better able to develop skills that attract friends and maintain successful friendships.

North Dakota State University
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The Importance of Play

From an Adult Viewpoint....

It often seems that all children do is play! They play until they are five or six, then they go off to school and start to learn. They play until they are big enough to really begin to do things... so it seems to grown-ups!

From a Child's Viewpoint....

Play takes on a very different meaning. Play to a child IS learning! They learn to play and play to learn. Play is terribly important to a child. It is not a distraction. It is not something they do to take up time. It is the child's life.

At birth, the infant is a pioneer setting forth to explore a very new and very strange place. She does not know how the world works. She does not know that when you drop something it goes down, that balls roll, or that things faraway look smaller than they really are. Infants are born beginners in life. They have to set about learning everything!

Not only does the newborn not know these worldly things, she does not know that she can learn to do the things she needs to do to get along in the world. She does not know that she can learn to turn over, sit up, walk, feed herself, dress herself, ride a bike, be a friend, or even talk. But she does learn all of these things, and she learns them in five or six years, before she goes to school.

We know that the young child learns more sheer practical knowledge during the early years than at any other time in life. In these early years, the young child is finding out what the world is like. She is exploring her abilities to cope with it.

She is learning about the world around her through play!

CREATIVE PLAY HELPS CHILDREN GROW

Every child is born with creative potential, but this potential may be stifled if care is not taken to nurture and stimulate creativity. Creativity shows one's uniqueness. It is the individual saying: "I can be; I can do." Isn't this what we want for our children? Creativity is the ability to see things in a new and unusual light, to see problems that no one else may even realize exist, and then come up with new

WAYS TO STRENGTHEN A CHILD'S CREATIVITY

Relax the controls. Adults who constantly exert supervision and control diminish the spontaneity and self-confidence that are essential to the creative spirit.

Inspire perseverance. All the creative energy in the world is useless if the product is not seen through to completion. Show appreciation for a child's efforts. Suppress the impulse to accomplish tasks for children.

Tolerate the "offbeat." Let children know that it is not always critical to have the "correct" answer to the problem - that novel, innovative, and unique approaches are valued as well.

Provide a creative atmosphere. Creative materials should be available to the young child for his use. Some of the basic equipment includes books, records, drawing materials, objects to make sounds with, clay, and blocks. Toys for imagining: Supply preschoolers with unstructured toys and materials. Provide the child with toys that can become a variety of things. Be careful about discouraging daydreaming. Daydreaming is really an imagery process. Some of what goes on in the name of daydreaming is really problem solving.

Planning and problem solving. Encourage creative problem solving in a variety of ways. Teach a youngster to look at alternatives, evaluate them, and then decide how to carry them out successfully.

Offer - but do not pressure. Resist the temptation to overcrowd children with organized activities in an attempt to cultivate their creativity. Allow the child time to be alone to develop the creativity that is innate in all of us.

CREATIVE GAMES

OBJECT CREATION

Have the children create a "machine" piece by piece. Some players become parts that move and make noise, while other players operate the machine. Others can then guess what it is. Try making a lawnmower with people as wheels, body, and handle, and have another player push it. Everyone can join in the sound effects as it tackles the lawn. More good objects to role-play: eggbeater, record player, garbage disposal, toaster, pencil sharpener, and water fountain.

CONTINUING STORY

Someone starts a story and each person adds a part.

CREATIVE DRAMATIC PLAY

One of the best ways children have to express themselves is through creative dramatic play. Here they feel free to express their inner feelings. It occurs daily in the lives of young children, as they constantly imitate the people, animals, and machines in their world. It helps them understand and deal with the world. Stimulate this spontaneous kind of drama by providing simple props and encouragement.

Animal Cracker Game - Child chooses one cracker; looks at it; then eats it. Then the child becomes that animal for 1-2 minutes.

Read a story and then act it out.

Puppets

CREATIVE MOVEMENT

A child can develop and express his or her personality in his own way - pretending to be animals, snowflakes, fairies, giants, snails, mice, etc.

Role playing family happenings, everyday activities such as a visit to the doctor, store or bank, day care situations, etc., stimulates creative thinking and is a good way to help children see the viewpoints of others, help them explore their own feelings, and handle their emotions.

The following are some creative play activities that require the use of large muscles and help in the development of those muscles:

Follow the Leader - The leader child moves freely about. He or she may imitate animals, hop, skip, or whatever. The others must follow the leader and act as the leader does.

Guess What I Am? - Without saying a word, a child tries to act out the movements of some object. Suggestions include an airplane making a landing, a rooster strutting around the barnyard, a cement truck dumping its load, a clock telling the time of day. The child may think up things to do, or the teacher may whisper suggestions.

Building with Sand, Mud and Clay - Children use large muscles to build sand mounds with moats around them. Sand pies and sand forts can be built in a sandbox, on a sand table, or at the beach. Children use mud to make large structures. Clay is also used to create structures and shapes.

CREATIVE QUESTIONING

Ask open-ended questions: Show the child a picture, and then ask questions to stimulate and create a thinking atmosphere, for example: What are the people in the picture doing? What are the people saying? What would happen if ...?

Ask children to use their senses: Young children may often have their creative talents stretched by asking them to use their senses in an unusual way.

- Have children close their eyes and then guess what you have placed in their hands - a piece of foam rubber, a small rock, etc.
- Have children close their eyes and guess at what they hear - use such sounds as shuffling cards, jingling coins, rubbing sandpaper, ripping paper, etc.
-

Ask children about changes: One way to help children to think more creatively is to ask them to change things to make them the way they would like them to be, for example:

- What would taste better if it were sweeter?
- What would be nicer if it were smaller?
- What would be more fun if it were faster?
- What would be better if it were quieter?
- What would be happier if it were bigger?
- What could be more exciting if it went backwards?
-

Ask questions with lots of answers. Any time you ask a child a question which requires a variety of answers; you are aiding creative thinking skills. Here are some examples using the concept of water:

- What are some of the uses of water?
- What floats in water?
- How does water help us?
- Why is cold water cold?
- What always stays underwater?
- What are the different colors that water can be?

Other concepts: fire, sand, cars, smoke, ice

Ask "What would happen if..." questions. These questions are fun to ask and allow the children to really use their imaginations. Here are some:

- What would happen if all the trees in the world were blue?
- What would happen if all the cars were gone?
- What would happen if everybody wore the same clothes?
- What would happen if you could fly?
- What would happen if no one cleaned the house?
-

Ask "In how many different ways..." questions. These questions also extend a child's creative thinking.

- In how many different ways could a spoon be used?
- In how many different ways could a button be used?
- In how many different ways could a string be used?

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What Are They Learning?

Seeing the concepts and skills children can learn through play

One of the skills that a child care professional develops is being a good observer of children. By watching and listening as children play, we can see what skills and abilities they are just beginning to learn. Once we know where they are in the learning of new ideas and skills, we can support children as they practice this new understanding.

The first step in helping children as they learn new things is to know what learning looks like in young children's play. The second step is to take the time to watch and take note of the children in your care with the questions in your mind, "What is it they might be learning right now?" and "What other activities will give them a chance to practice what they're learning?"

This article will give you a good starting place as you look for clues to children's thinking and learning. You'll find two parts: Part I is a chart that gives examples of concepts and skills that children can learn through play. Part II provides some ideas for you to use as you make your own observations of children playing.

PART I: What does Learning Look Like in Children's Play?

Although children learn new ideas and skills in nearly every kind of play and activity, for this exercise, we'll focus on children's pretend/dramatic play. Most child care settings offer a housekeeping area where children can pretend to play house and take on the roles that are so familiar to them. [If you haven't tried creating an area like this in your program, do! It's a terrific place for children to use their imaginations, practice their social skills, try out their understanding of concepts like counting and sorting - there's just no end to the learning and fun!]

This chart gives examples of what you might see a child doing in the "house" and what skill or concept might be developing through that activity. The chart is divided into three different age groups, 1's & 2's, 3's & 4's, and 5's & 6's. Within each age group, examples are given for six different areas of children's development: mathematical thinking, language development, emotional development, social development, small muscle development and large muscle development.

1- and 2-year olds	Activity	Skill or Concept
mathematical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sorting socks• putting lids on containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• matching by color or pattern• matching by size
language development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "talking" on the phone• cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding the purpose of language• building vocabulary
emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking care of baby• wearing dress-up clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• nurturing skills• awareness of self
social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking care of baby• talking on the phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• awareness of others• understanding of communication
small muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dressing the baby• opening/closing containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hand and finger coordination• hand strength
large muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• wearing dress-up shoes• stirring while cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• muscle strength in legs• arm strength

3- and 4-year olds		
	Activity	Skill or Concept
mathematical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting the table • sorting fruits and vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-to-1 correspondence • categorizing
language development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing ideas for play • matching labels on shelves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • putting thoughts into words, describing • understanding words as symbols
emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking on other roles • playing monster or bad guy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressing emotions • dealing with fear
social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing "family" • offering new ideas for play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding relationships • compromising/ negotiating
small muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing with dress-up clothes • pouring drinks into cups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hand & finger coordination • eye-hand coordination
large muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sweeping • riding a tricycle to "work" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arm & upper body strength • all-over body strength; stamina

5- and 6-year olds		
	Activity	Skill or Concept
mathematical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooking • making a map of the pretend "neighbourhood" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measurement • mapping skills (representational thinking)
language development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following a recipe • writing list of new props needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizing familiar words • sounding out words
emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing super hero • contributing ideas for play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding feelings of power & control • self-esteem
social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brainstorming new ideas for dramatic play • coordinating several different roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respecting others' opinions • taking another's perspective
small muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing grocery lists • making jewellery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hand & finger coordination • eye-hand coordination
large muscle development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • painting a cardboard garage • using balance beam bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arm & upper body strength & coordination • balance; muscle tone

Reference:

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