

Child Care Services Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2003

CCSU Phone #s

Calling from out of town? Please call toll free, 1-800-661-0408 and ask for the extension of the person you wish to speak with.

Virginia Kettley	393-7123
Wendie Howe	667-3492
Cheryl Buchan	633-7992
Carol Oberg	667-5091
Tammy Reinhart	667-3493
Ann Gedrose	667-8851
Fax:	393-6250

You can email us:

virginia.kettley@gov.yk.ca

wendie.howe@gov.yk.ca

cheryl.buchan@gov.yk.ca

carol.oberg@gov.yk.ca

ann.gedrose@gov.yk.ca

tammy.reinhart@gov.yk.ca

Office Hours: Child Care Services is open Monday through Friday 8:30 – 5:00.

CCSU will be closed for our regular unit meeting Thursdays 9:00 am until noon unless this falls on the last day of a month, in which case the office will be open to distribute cheques.

Yukon
Health and Social Services

Welcome Hannah!

We are happy to announce that YoHanna Emma Falle was born on March 21, 2003. She was 5 pounds 9 ounces at birth. All reports indicate that Hannah looks just like her proud papa. Congratulations to Leslie and Len.

Your Questions

Q. My school age children like to have their friends over after school. Should I be counting their friends as day home children even though I'm not getting paid for caring for them?

A. We consider that any child, 12 years of age or younger, attending the dayhome is counted in the numbers, except for the operator's own school age children.

Q. I operate a licenced family day home and I am a foster parent. Am I eligible to collect subsidy for my foster children?

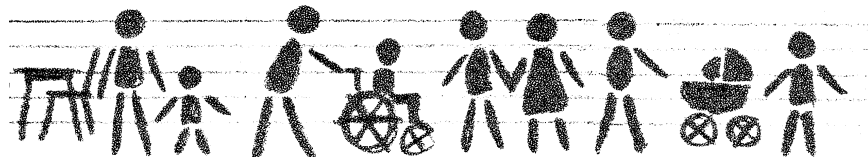
A. The operator of a FDH, who is also a foster parent, is not eligible to collect subsidy if the foster children attend her own program. If you are fostering preschool children, up to and including kindergarten age, they do count in the licenced number. If you are fostering school age children they do not count in the licenced number.

Cool websites

<http://www.dietitians.ca/english/menuplanner/overview.html#>
Then use the "Food Guide Calculator" as a quick and easy tool to see if you are eating well.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/forms/>

Click on this site to find frequently used Government of Yukon Forms. The Societies Act forms are of particular interest to non-profit day cares, societies, and associations.



Northern Lights Song

*Sung to the tune of
"Twinkle, twinkle, Little Star"*

Twinkle, twinkle, northern lights
Sparkle in the arctic night
Up above the clouds so high
Blue - green ribbon in the sky
Twinkle, twinkle, northern lights
Shimmer in my dreams tonight.



Microwave Playdough

2 c. flour
2 c. water
1 c. salt
1 Tbsp. cream of tartar
1 1/2 Tbsp. oil
food coloring

Place desired food coloring in measuring cup and fill with water to make 2 cups. Pour in plastic bowl that will fit in your microwave. Add remaining ingredients. Stir well.

Cook at high power for 1 minute. Then stir. Cook another minute. Then stir. Keep repeating cooking and stirring one minute at a time until playdough reaches desired consistency. The playdough will change slightly in color and will become more dense as it cools. Enjoy! This playdough has a fine texture and should last a long time.

*This recipe has been shared with
the compliments of
Cherylee Terry*

Programming

What is programming? Programming refers to all the things you do each day with the children in your care. Because children learn from the activities throughout their day, the general term programming refers to all these learning opportunities.

Why is programming important? Children thrive when they are learning new things and challenging themselves intellectually, socially, and physically. The early learning opportunities children have in child care are extremely important because they set the stage for later learning. Young children, engaged in a variety of fun and interesting activities with their parents or care providers, are establishing the brain patterns they will rely on for years to come. Children who feel successful and excited about learning during their early years are most likely to continue to do well when they go to school.

Why plan programming and why keep records? Family Day Home providers and Child Care Workers frequently tell us that they see fewer discipline problems when they have planned their days to be full of interesting, fun activities. Keeping records of the activities helps you keep parents informed. It also helps you ensure that children's programming is balanced throughout the days, weeks, and months when they are in your care.

How do I program for the children?

- *Observe* – Watch and listen to the child throughout the day. What is the child choosing to do?
- *Reflect* – What are the skills the child is learning or perfecting through these chosen activities?
- *Hypothesize* – What other ways could the child practice these skills? What other activities can broaden the child's experience?
- *Experiment* – Provide the additional tools, materials, time, and space the child needs to continue to explore and learn.

Make notes about your observations, the activities you've provided for children, and those they have come up with themselves. All this information helps you to plan the next steps most knowledgeably. During the early years children are busy learning an amazing amount through their daily actions, interactions, and reactions. Caregivers play an important role in making the most of these early learning experiences by supporting children's learning, exploration, and play.

References:

Or Further Reading

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Hohmann, C. (1998) Evaluating and Selecting Software for Children. *Child Care Information Exchange Vol 123*, pages 60-62.

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"Review Corner" (n.d.), Retrieved July 23, 2003, from <http://school.discovery.com/parents/reviewcorner/softwareevaluation.html>

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Children and Computers

Computers can be a very useful tool within the Childcare Centre and can enhance your programming if you choose to include them. With so many new computers and software programs popping up, it is time to take a look at the literature and decided for yourself what benefits and drawbacks a computer can have in your Centre.

Computer Use for Children over 3

One article suggests asking yourself these three questions to determine if your child is developmentally ready to use computer software:

1. Do images and events on the screen represent experiences that have meaning for the child?
2. Is the child able to make connections between what is on the screen and what is in the real world?
3. Does the child really understand who controls the computer, or is he or she randomly hitting keys?

If you can answer yes to all three questions then the child may be ready for developmentally appropriate computer software.

Computers allow children to increase their social interactions and learn about taking turns, cooperating and problem solving together. Computers can also help enforce what they are learning in other areas. Many software programs can help children enhance their vocabulary or can teach them about music, colours or shapes. Open-ended software that allows the child make choices is most appropriate for this age group, try to avoid drill-style programs. When paired with other programming, computers help children explore their world.

A cautionary note - professionals suggest that children under 5 be exposed to only one hour of combined computer, television and video game use per day.

Children and Computers continued...

Computers and Young Children

A review of the literature suggests that using computers with children under 3 is developmentally inappropriate and may have some serious hazards. Children under 3 are still developing and exploring their world. It is important for them to be able to explore their world in it's entirety; computers are very strongly visual and may cause the child to focus exclusive on visual cues to the detriment of their other senses. That is, their eye sight will develop but their hearing or another sense, may not.

Another item to consider is an inherent quality of computer software, which is the right or wrong nature of activities. The programs may suggest to the parent or caregiver that there is a right or wrong answer and this may in turn be communicated to the child who will view it as random praise or reward for hitting keys on the keyboard. This could create stress and anxiety for the child who may not understand the parent's emotions and reactions.

The last item to consider is the level of developmentally appropriate software. The software developed for children under three has two major flaws. The first is that the programmers often have no knowledge of child development and will often create programs based on market research and parental appeal. The program may try to teach young children skills that they learn without the aid of computers at a very young age. The second flaw is the reverse of this; often the developers create software to teach children skills that they are incapable of mastering until age 4 or 5. This creates stress for a young child who, rather than trying to master tasks suitable to a four-year-old, should be mastering tasks suitable to their younger age.

Computer Area Set-up

Some things will make using a computer more enjoyable and educational for everyone involved.

- ★ The computer area should be set-up so that at least two children and one adult can work together and interact.
- ★ A low table or even the floor is appropriate.
- ★ Put the interactive elements of the computer (keyboard, mouse, microphone, and monitor) at the child's level. Be sure they are secure.
- ★ Post and talk about rules when using the computer; have specific computer time or a specific time limit to playing.
- ★ Kid-proof your computer.
- ★ Use software that goes with your themes and programming ideas.

Appropriate Programming Ages 3 and up

With all of the programs out there, it can be hard to know which programs to buy. Here are some useful pointers and web-sites.

- ★ Reputable companies will let you send you a demo or let you preview their software before you buy it Try www.riverdeep.com to reach The Learning Company, Broderbund, Reader Rabbit and Living Books
- ★ Check out the reviews for the program you are considering: you can try www.learningvillage.com or www.discovery.com, click on "discovery school" and then parents
- ★ Some special needs programs out there can be used for children of all abilities, do a search to find a site that will work for your needs
- ★ For more information on children and computers you can check out www.netc.org/earlyconnections/index, or the National Association for the Education of Young Children at

www.naeyc.org or look through past articles of Child Care Information Exchange at the Child Care Unit.

SMART Supervision

Seeing the child. Try really seeing the child while they are playing, watch what they play with, what they are interested in and how they interact with other children, staff, and their environment.

Monitoring the child. Watch the child while they play or work to ensure that they are safe, happy, and interacting in positive manner with other people as well as with their toys and materials.

Atending to the child's needs. Be aware of what the child wants and will need throughout an activity.

Responding to the child. Children need different things from us throughout the day. With time, we learn what each child needs and wants from us and become better able to give a hug, smile, answer to a question, or other care and nurturing.

Teaching by taking advantage of the everyday learning opportunities. Use the

Ashea Headstart

The Ashea Headstart program is chosen this year, among a number of sites across Canada, as part of the evaluation of Headstart's success nationally. Georgina and Janet, the program's main teachers, consider Ashea Headstart to be a great a success.

While Ashea's is one of the smaller programs compared to others in southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the class size of 20 children is comparable to larger centers. Throughout the six years of Ashea Headstart's operation its popularity has grown. All First Nations children in Whitehorse can benefit from this free program.

Headstart's main focus is to give children an opportunity to learn positive behaviours in a social setting. This is done, for example, at circle time as children listen to elders tell stories about creation and living on the land. Play time, craft time, snacking, and resting all provide opportunities for children to make choices and interact positively with their peers and adults. Both Georgina and Janet have certificates in the Yukon language study program. They make up songs to teach the children Southern Tutchone. The children also enjoy learning traditional crafts such as beading.

Children who graduate from the Headstart program move on to kindergarten at Elijah Smith School where teachers report they are pleased with the children's skill level.

Asked about Ashea Headstart's future plans, Georgina and Janet say their wish list includes a bus driver to bring children to the program and a toddler teacher to work with the younger children.

**"It takes a whole village
to raise a child."
African Proverb**

Field Trips

The awe, the fun, the satisfaction, and the adventure of taking a group of excited children to their “most favourite fun place in the whole world”. You mark the day on the calendar for all the children to observe. As the day draws near, you watch as the children check the calendar to count how many more sleeps until the big event. All the time seeing their smiling faces and energetic voices as the joy and excitement builds in anticipation of the day they get to go on.... the field trip.

As exciting as field trips can be, they can also be stressful for both children and caregivers. A caregiver who has planned a well thought out field trip and is well prepared can help reduce the stress for all involved and in the process create and present a beneficial learning experience.

Components to consider when planning a field trip:

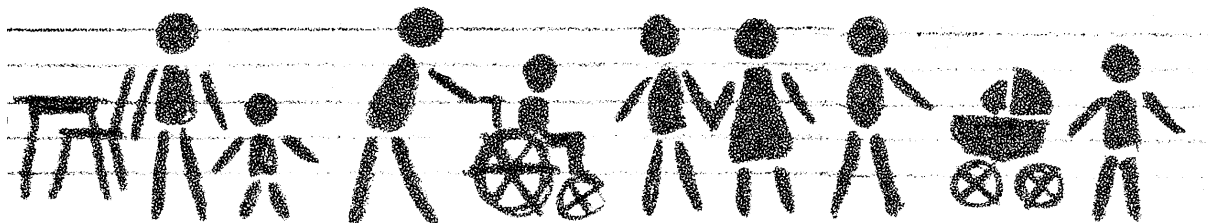
1. The purpose: what you hope to achieve, potential learning opportunities...
2. The introduction: planned activities leading up to the field trip, arrangement of the classroom, providing props and stories related to the upcoming field trip experience....
3. The preparation: planning the route, permission slips, child/caregiver ratio....
4. The outing: child/caregiver ratio, first aid kit, direct supervision....
5. The follow-up: plan follow-up activities to provide continuation and reinforcement of the learning, which occurred on the field trip. This could include dramatic play, fingerplays, songs, books to read and look at, even re-creating elements of the field trip destination right in your playroom.

When all these components are included, the trip becomes a focal point in an integrated learning process, ensuring a high learning value along with the fun. During the field trip, consider your planned learning experiences and embrace those spontaneous moments for learning.

Many field trips involve children attending a public place like the community swimming pool, public restaurants, arcades, the library, etc. It is important for caregivers to consider the potential safety issues around field trips. Remember that public places are open to all members of the public. Even though children are taught to be cautious around strangers, the best method of ensuring children’s safety is to provide direct supervision – this is a must when on a field trip. Direct supervision is achieved by keeping the group of children together in the same area with you at all times during an outing. Because it is so important to never leave a child unattended, many caregivers recommend that at least 2 adults accompany children on a field trip.

Be adventurous, be safe, and enjoy the wonderful learning opportunities field trips offer.

For more information pertaining to field trips see our Guidelines and Policies for Child Care and Family Day Home Programs.



Games for School-Age Kids

Try these games and more from <http://pbskids.org/zoom/games/index.html>

Doodles

Materials/Equipment:

paper, markers, tape

Players form a line and tape a sheet of paper on the back of each player, except the first person in the line. The first person's paper is taped to the wall in front of her.

The last person in the line begins the game by drawing on the paper taped to the back of the person in front of her. This person draws the same thing on the paper of the person in front of her. Each person in line, feeling what is being drawn on his or her back, draws the same thing. The first person in line draws on the paper in front of her on the wall. When all drawings are completed, tape them all up on the wall and compare.

Backwards Alphabet Race

The object of this game is to recite the alphabet backwards in the least amount of time. Players split into two equal teams, Team 1 and Team 2. Teams line up and face each other. The first person on Team 1 says "Z," then the second player says "Y," the third person says "X" and so on. If a player messes up then Team 2 gets a turn. The team to get through the alphabet first wins.

Odds and Evens Match

Like "1, 2, 3 Shoot" but with teams. Divide into two teams with one team being "odds" and the other "evens." One person calls out "1,2,3 Match!" and everyone throws out a few fingers from one hand. Add up all the fingers on both teams and if the number is odd, the odd team gets a point; if it's even, the even team gets a point. The first team to get three points wins.

The Spider Web Game

Be a webmaster and untangle yourself from the web.

To set up the game, get different colored balls of yarn for each player. Then, tie the end of each ball of yarn to a different piece of furniture and wind the yarn through obstacles, like under chairs and around the legs of a table. Make it look like a spider web by overlapping the different colors of yarn. If you're having a party, you might want to set up your spider web before your guests arrive. All the balls of yarn should meet at the end; this is the players' starting point. Each player takes the loose end of their yarn and makes their way through the web, rewinding their ball of yarn. The first player to untangle their yarn from the web wins.

Activity Ideas from Yukoners

Bubbles!

During a recent spot inspection at Jasbir's FDH, we saw their work with children using the "Bubbles" book. They are using it to teach the concept of personal space for each child. They have a "bubble time" where each child can choose a tupperware container of special toys and use it surrounded by their individual invisible bubble. The children all respect the bubbles of the others.

We heard that previously they were having a hard time with their boundaries and there were lots of squabbles as they worked on them. This idea has been working very well and the kids love the idea.

The Earlybird Catches the Worm

Pre-schoolers at Dlunkat Hit, the day care centre in Teslin, enjoy baking cupcakes. It gives them a great opportunity to learn some early math and pre-reading skills as well as to practice their fine motor skills as they decorate these cupcakes with *wiggly worms*. Each month they take their cupcakes to the elementary school to present to the children who have perfect attendance at school. These earlybird school children, who have come in to school on time each day throughout the month, are proud to catch their *worms*.

Patty Wiseman, director of Dlunkat Hit, says that when the program started last year, there were 7 children with perfect attendance. In the most recent month 29 children had perfect attendance. We think this is a great way to involve the day care children in the larger community and to celebrate learning.

Reading!

Dlunkat Hit hosts another program which involves the larger community in the daily day care program. This program which began last year as a volunteer program is now funded by a grant from the Literacy Action Committee. Students from grades 3 through 9 are hired to read to the younger children at the day care. Each student first needs a letter from their parents indicating their approval, next the student has an interview with the day care director, they then sign a contract. The students select the books they will read to the day care children. While the day care children have the fun of hearing stories, the students are improving their reading while gaining some work experience and an appreciation of the work of caring for and educating the younger ones.

