

The Childhood Scene



A regional newsletter for early childhood professionals, parents and the community provided by Child Care Resource & Referral Region 13 serving Chatham, Harnett, Johnston, Lee and Wayne Counties

“The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins With a Single Step”

Lao-Tzu

What if someone told you that as much as 85% of behavior issues would be reduced if you incorporated one new activity idea into your after school program? With those odds, it’s at least worth a try, right ?

Then what if they told you that it would foster better relationships between you and the children and among the children themselves, reconnect children with nature, increase Vitamin D intake, offer opportunity for exploration, relate to the North Carolina standard course of study subjects, and help satisfy the increased outdoor time required by the new child care rules!

So just what would this one idea be that offers so many rewards? As the saying goes, “Simplicity is best.” With that in mind, consider something as simple as starting a **Walking Club** at your program. Yes, you. Now don’t look over your shoulder and see who else I may be

speaking to ...
As Uncle Sam says, “this means YOU!”
Now that I have your attention, let me assure

you that this is a very easy thing to do.

Keep reading, Friends.

First, gather the children around and share your idea. Be positive, upbeat, and **EXCITED!** Your role at this point is to set the tone for the new club. Tell them there is a walker and an athlete inside each one of them; this will get their attention and empower them. It is helpful if your school agers see themselves as walkers and capable of athleticism in order for them “to buy in” to your new club. Children at this age love the idea of clubs—especially the idea of “belonging.” Invite the group to come up with a name for their club and talk about what the group’s distance goal will be. A mile a day is a good rule of thumb. At an average walking speed this will take about 20 minutes.

Consider purchasing **pedometers** to measure your course and allow for many spin off activity ideas to enhance interest levels. Most importantly, it gives the children a concrete tool with which to measure their individual progress. It also plays into children’s love of gadgets, which will help keep them

Continued on Page 7

Region 13 Partners

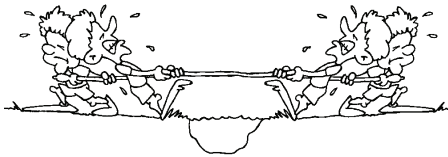


What’s Inside This Issue?

Dear Miss Challenge	2
Infant and Toddler Time	4
The School Age Corner	6
Special Days To Celebrate	8



Dear Miss Challenge:



Dear Miss Challenge,

I have been a 4 year old preschool teacher for 5 years. Recently I moved to N.C. from another state and took a position at a full day program with an excellent reputation in the community. The children and I get along great most of the day, but naptime is a disaster! Two or three of my children become clowns, making animal noises and jumping on their cots. Of course this disturbs everyone in the class. My director explained that she expects the children to sleep from 12:00 to 2:00. She explained that parents had complained in the past if their children did not get a nap at school and were ill tempered. Of course I reprimand the children for being loud and I take away privileges, but I still don't feel like "I have control." My director has peeked in twice with a disapproving look on her face. What can I do?

Naptime Weary

Dear Naptime Weary,

Thank you for writing and sharing this problem. I think many teachers in full day programs with four year olds struggle with this. By the age of four many children have given up their afternoon nap. Life is too exciting for them to want to slow down and sleep. Of course the director, the parents, and you may want the child to sleep, but sleep cannot be forced on a child (or an adult either for that matter.) I understand a parent not wanting an ill-tempered child in the afternoon or early evening, and many four years olds do drift off to sleep if they are quiet and still for a

limited time. Your director wants the children to be rested, but I am certain that she understands all you can do is give them an opportunity to sleep. I also hope she understands that forcing children to lie on a cot for two hours when they are wide awake is not developmentally appropriate. NC Child Care regulations require periods of active and quiet time (and/or rest time), but sleep is not required. NC Child Care regulations also clearly state that "no child shall ever be disciplined for not sleeping during rest period."

Since you have been a preschool teacher in a "morning only program," naptime is a new experience for you. You may be doubting yourself a little, and children can definitely pick up on those feelings.

To determine appropriate next steps, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your schedule allow time for active play in the morning so that these children have had an opportunity to jump, make noises, etc.? Some schedules go from whole group activity to small group activity, with all of the activities having the parameters of no running, no jumping, no loud voices, etc., so the children do not truly have the opportunity to release their energy. That is why outside time is so wonderful and necessary!
- Is the time immediately after lunch a "calming" time or an "energizing" time? I have seen teachers do very active dancing/singing, and then expect the children to go directly to their cots.
- Is your room environment conducive to sleep? Are you able to darken the room sufficiently? Are you playing relaxing music? I have seen some classrooms play the classical music radio station, but not



all classical music is calming, and certainly the voice of the announcer can be disruptive if a child is right at the edge of sleep. Have you considered environmental sounds? Sounds of the rain, the ocean, etc., can be very relaxing. Try audio books. Ask the children to close their eyes and create pictures in their minds of the story they are hearing. Parents can actually record books also. Just remind them to put a lot of feeling into their voice.

- Can the children have a small toy or stuffed animal (brought from home & kept in their cubby) on the cot with them? Sometimes just having something they can twist in their hand and whisper to helps them settle down.
- Can you ignore the behavior? Children want your attention anyway they can get it. A few animal sounds and a quick hop might be able to be ignored, but you probably would not have written to me if it was minor behavior.
- Can you channel the energy into activities for later? For example, can you make an “appointment” to play in the block area with the animals and have the child make the animal noises for you? Or can you measure outside how many times the child can jump, and record it? That way the child gets rewarded for doing the activities at an appropriate time.
- Can you separate with classroom furniture the two or three children who are creating the disturbance, so they do not “feed off” of one another?
- Every class has non-sleepers and sleepers. Do the non-sleepers have to lie on the cot the entire two hours? Perhaps you can set a shorter period like 30 -45 minutes, and then allow those non-sleepers to choose a book, draw or participate in another quiet activity. Two hours feels like an eternity to a four year

old. They may relax more and actually go to sleep if they know they are not required to stay on the cot for the entire time. Some programs create naptime bags (drawstring bags that contain quiet activities), and the children each choose a bag to take to their cot. In other programs the children take the bags to a table or rug. Some programs have an extra room available, and staffed, where perhaps the non-sleepers can go.

- Can you engage the children in problem solving with you? Children are more likely to abide by rules they help create.

I believe using these questions to “assess” the situation will help you create a solution that will work for your classroom. Though general strategies typically work, every child and situation is unique. If the problems persist, do not hesitate to ask for additional help. Region 13 now has two Behavior Specialists from which providers can access assistance!

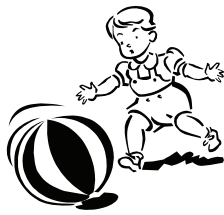
*Submitted by Pam Pace
Region 13 Behavior Specialist*

Newsflash!

CCN's Food Program Now Serves Both Homes and Centers!

Child Care Network's Food Program has upgraded their services to serve homes and centers. Using *ChildWatch® Web CACFP software* enables CCN to process claims and allow providers under their partnership to use the software and tools to more easily maintain their records and file claims — completely free of charge.

If you have questions:
Call Deborah Cade, Food Program
Specialist at 919-542-6644, ext. 21.



Infant and Toddler Time

Early experiences shape the course of children's lives. When a quality care giver sits down with a child and a book, the caregiver needs to be prepared to do more than just read the words. Young children need to be led, at their developmental level, to interact with their caregiver and the books. This is the way children learn to love books and learning.

Loving books starts with having a sense of warmth, security, and love every time one has contact with a book. Cuddling on a caring adult's lap, while listening to the adult's voice, and looking at pretty colors and pictures, is the start of a good relationship with books. Children need to have the opportunity to learn to **focus** on the voice and the pictures at the same time. Adults need to help infants **make connections** between the words being said and the pictures being viewed. In those early months children can be very passive participants with books. The infant needs only to look and listen. The **adult needs to point** to the words as they are pronounced, as well as point to the pictures. Good caregivers watch young children as they read. **Children's eyes should gradually begin to follow the adult's pointing finger** some of the time. Children should start looking at the concrete picture of the word being said.

Books with clear, simple, colorful pictures of familiar every day routines and objects are very good choices for infants. Caregivers must name objects, talk about actions, and label feelings. Caregivers need to pick the right time to read, not force the issue of story time by trying to hold a child on their lap once the child has lost interest. The positive feelings about being held, protected, and loved need to become firmly tied to books in the child's mind.

Once children are enjoying the process of being cuddled and read to, young children need to learn to respond and interact during reading time. A good way to promote this is by **asking questions** while reading the story. Even before children can answer questions, caregivers need to be asking them. **Quality caregivers wait for an answer even from non-verbal little ones.** Sometimes a little finger will point in response. Sometimes a body will wiggle. Sometimes a child will laugh. After pausing for a physical response to a question from a non-verbal child, the caregiver can then provide the answer. Quality caregivers will also encourage children who are verbal to comment or talk about the story or pictures if they wish.

"Show me who is wearing a hat?"
"Who is outside without a hat?"

"Point to the bird that is blue?"

"Can you show me which duck got wet?"



Infant and Toddler Time *Cont'd from Page 4*

"Who is jumping over the moon?"

"Which animal said, "Moo, Moo, Moo?"

"Do you see the pig? Can you point to the pig?"

Remember, there should be a **pause to allow time for a child to process and answer**. If the child does not respond to the question, the adult can point and supply it.

Clear pictures and simple story lines are helpful at this time. Reading books over and over again also helps young children learn the words, understand the story, and answer questions.

As children get older and gain verbal ability and vocabularies, more questions can be asked. At this stage the adult will encourage the child to not just point, but to respond by **using words to express what they are thinking**.

Answers can be short: "Do you think the kittens were happy to find their mittens?" or "Who do you think Big Bear sees?" Child: "Red Bird." Adult: "Let's turn the page to see if Big Bear sees Red Bird." "Were you right?" Child: "Yes!"

Answers can also be longer: "What do you think will happen next?" Child: "She sees her Grandmother." Adult: "Let's turn the page and see if she sees her Grandmother." Or Adult: "What do you think the squirrel is looking for?" Child:

"For nuts." Adult: "See this word! You were right, it says NUTS. The squirrel was looking for nuts."

Questioning should be low-key and fun. Children should also be encouraged to ask questions. Adult responses should be positive and accepting. Promote interaction, don't interrogate!

Reading to a child is not just about saying aloud every word in the book. Reading is about naming, talking, learning, questioning, thinking, and enjoying the activity together. Read every day. Use funny voices when reading. Encourage children to hold and handle books. Make sure the child is having a good time. Be funny. Have a good time yourself. When a child brings you a book, try to read it with him/her/them as soon as possible. Read several times a day. Put books in different centers around the room. Be dramatic. Let children walk away when they are not interested. Take books outside. Bring in new books. Re-read favorite books over ... and over ... and over ... and over again! Enjoying books with children when they are young is a gift they will forever cherish.

*Submitted by Jacquelin Montgomery
Region 13 Infant Toddler Specialist*

Best Wishes Jacque!

After more than 6 years of service to the children of Region 13, Jacque Montgomery has announced her retirement, effective December 31, 2010. (She promises not to be a stranger!) Thank you for your service Jacque!



The School Age Corner

The new year is the perfect time to think through new ways of doing old things. It provides the opportunity to do an inventory of what is working well, what's lacking, and try some new ideas.

Think about parent/family outreach. What are some ways you reach out and support this partnership?

Many sites have a **designated parent and family area**, usually a wall or shelf near the door so it can be easily seen on the way in and out. To really get their attention, consider a catchy name in big bright letters, such as, "Check it out!", "What's Up?" or "Parents Rock!" This sends a strong message that you want to support and serve the whole family—not only the children. It is also a great way to share relevant and helpful information that will help connect and build your program and that of your larger community.

In the School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale (SACERS), Item 34 refers to "Interactions between staff and parents." "No sharing of information" is considered to be "Inadequate." Indicators of an "Excellent" program include:

- Information provided on parenting, health care, sports, and cultural activities for families.
- Parents involved in decision making roles (Ex: parent representatives on board, yearly evaluation of program, input from parents sought regarding program content).

Additionally, the indicators of a "Good" program must be present:

- Parents made fully aware of program policies and practices (Ex. handbook, information sheets about activities, parent meetings),
- Regularly scheduled parent conferences.

- Parents welcomed as part of program (Ex: parents share a family custom with child's group).

It's easy to connect parents and families with community resources such as 4-H, YMCA or Parks and Recreation and with opportunities such as beekeeping, painting, karate, yoga, sports, etc. In addition, if there is a theater in your community, make brochures of this year's performances available. You might include affordable High School state productions in the mix. (Attending plays makes for good family times and special memories.) Local libraries often host readings and other events of interest to children *and* they promote membership by handing out library card information.

Other ways you can support your parents include having health and parenting tips available. The Charlotte Child Care Resource and Referral site, at www.childcareresourcesinc.org, has a large number of resources on wide ranging topics from homework tips to raising children's self esteem. (Click on publications and then click on "tip sheets." Make brightly colored copies that will catch the eye and enhance their appearance.)

The "parent area" is also a great place to keep extra copies of your parent handbook and any other program policy-related information or articles which can support the features of your program. For instance, after attending a workshop or reading an article, you might decide that you really like the idea of changing your schedule to take the children outside after snack and arrival. Articles or research in support of this idea, such as the American Academy of Pediatric's guidelines for recommended active play for children, make great handouts. This parent area would also be a good avenue by which you can share the new child care rules regarding outdoor time and limited TV/electronic time. These efforts all fall under parent/family education, parent/family support, and, ultimately, parent/family inclusion. Feel free to copy any of the School Age Corner articles that support your ideas, as these, too, would be considered parent education.

For resources on a particular topic of interest to support your new or improved "parent/family zone," please contact Jan Waugh at jan@childcarenetworks.org or call 919-542-6644, ext. 27.

*Submitted by Jan Waugh
Region 13 School Age Specialist*



The Journey ...

Continued from Page 1

involved. Pedometers are commonly found at sporting goods shops or Walmart and cost about three dollars apiece. (If funds are a problem, purchase one and allow the children to take turns using it!)

Keep it simple. Two other things you will need are a **poster board**—with each child’s name listed down one side, and the days of the week across the top—where they can place a sticker after their daily walk. This charts their progress so they can see what they have accomplished and how close they are to their goal. At the 10 mile mark, give out **reward prizes** (key to encouraging continued involvement and keeping it fun, and a great way to reinforce their self image as athletes. Keep rewards simple and inexpensive and stay within the sports theme. Oriental Trading Co. and dollar stores carry items such as soccer ball yoyos and water bottles.)

Samantha Goldston, group leader at the YMCA after school program at Horton Middle School in Pittsboro, and the children in the program recently started a walking club. The kids named the club, “The Wildcats.” They decided to walk every day around the loop at the school, which they measured with their pedometers to equal one mile. The first time out one of the children was overheard to say, “this is our most fun day yet!” When I asked Samantha how it was going, she said, “Everyone is enjoying being outside in nature, and parents are glad that their children are doing something active outdoors.”

The Wildcats decided that their first big goal would be to “walk to Raleigh,” which is about 30 miles. After the first 10 miles, the children had the opportunity to choose rewards, which included such things as bubbles and sports stress balls. The only real cost was the initial purchase of the pedometers by the YMCA with which the children were enthralled,

wearing them proudly during their walks.

By the end of the first week, the children all knew the routine and were looking forward to the walk. They could not wait to finish their snack and go outside. (Routine generating excitement is the biggest key to the club’s success.) Daily routines become an important tradition for children and they benefit tremendously just from knowing they can count on something day in and day out.

Also remember: there are many excellent walking resources available which offer ideas for different activities that relate to math, geography, and science.

A few important reminders:

- Field trip permission slips must be signed to enable your group to leave the fenced area.
- Make a sign and hang it out for parents when you leave, letting them know you are on your walk. (Leaving daily at a specific time will enable parents to adjust to the schedule, and if you head out right after snack parents are not yet arriving to pick up their children.)
- Take along a fanny pack with basic first aid supplies.

Remember! It’s fun, low cost, and holds huge benefits—including exercise for you! Don’t miss this chance, start one today — you will be so glad you did!

If you would like help starting a walking club at your program, email me at [jan@childcarenet works.org](mailto:jan@childcarenetworks.org).

You might also check out these resources:

- www.presidentschallenge.org
- www.walktoschool-usa
- www.schoolagenotes.com

*Submitted by Jan Waugh
Region 13 School Age Specialist*

**Child Care Networks, Inc. CCR&R of
Chatham County**

P.O. Box 1531
Pittsboro, NC 27312
(919) 542-6644



**Harnett County
Child Care Resource & Referral**

P.O. Box 1089
Lillington, NC 27546
(910) 893-7597



**Partnership for Children of Johnston County
Child Care Resource and Referral**

1406-A S. Pollock Street
Selma, NC 27576
(919) 202-4893



**Coalition for Families
CCR&R Lee County**

507 N. Steele Street, Box 3
Sanford, NC 27330
(919) 776-7157



**Partnership for Children of Wayne County
Child Care Resource & Referral**

800 N. William Street
Goldsboro, NC 27530
(919) 735-3371



Sliding into a New Year



January:

- Bath Safety Month
- National Get Organized Month
- National Mentoring Month
- National Soup Month
- Oatmeal Month
- Shape Up US Month
 - 1—New Year's Day
 - 17—Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February:

- Beans (Dried & Fresh) Month
- International Boost Self-Esteem Month
- National Black History Month
- National Time Management Month
- Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month
 - 2—Ground Hog Day
 - 12—Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, 1809
 - 14—Valentine's Day
 - 21—President's Day
 - 22—George Washington's Birthday, 1732

