



For the Love of It

September 2011 Updates

CAP Services ECD

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Monica, Bobbie Jo, Kristie and Tera have been receiving internal training as they take on their new role of supervising Early Head Start staff. Formal training in Parents as Teachers, which is required for supervisors, will occur in the fall.

The WI Pyramid Model Leadership Team had their first meeting in August. Unfortunately it was held just a few days after learning that the External Coach – Wendy Bowe – had been promoted to a new position at the Head Start Regional Office in Chicago. During the meeting a Mission Statement was identified and a logo and tag line were discussed. Dates for the training series were planned. A training was held in Wausau at the end of August to train the coaches in completing the TPOT (classroom observation). The program has been able to identify a new external coach – Joan Rice from CESA 5 - who will begin working with the program in September. The first training module was presented to teaching staff by the leadership team on August 26th.

Head Start CMs and FSSs returned from summer lay off on August 8. The topics dur-

ing the morning of the Pre-service included Enrollment and ERSEA procedures, the WI Pyramid Model and an ASQ-SE overview, and a review of materials in the Initial Home Visit packet. Break-out sessions in the afternoon allowed for more in-depth training and networking in family services and education.



The administrative Education and Health Services staff presented information and changes in their respective departments at three Regional trainings held the first week that staff returned. Staff evaluations from these meetings indicated they liked the format and staff provided positive feedback on changes.

Mary attended the Skills Enhancement Board meeting on August 9 and presented on the Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Mary trained two staff from the Butler County Ohio Head Start program on the CAP Services Family Development Partnership Planning tool on August 10th. The program has retained the rights to use the tool and will begin

implementing it this fall. An Integrated Services training was conducted by White Pine Consulting Service on 8/26. Lead staff will continue to implement this process with families in HS and EHS.

ECD Administrative staff updated the Program Plan and Executive Summary this month.

A meeting was held with the Westfield School District on August 12. Carla, Kathy and Bobbie Jo were able to meet the new District Administrator, as well as the Building and Grounds Manager, the Transportation Manager, and the IT Manager. The child care licensor completed the licensing visit on Aug 26th.

Center staff have been busy completing home visits, conducting center Orientations and Open Houses, recruiting children to fill the slots of those that moved or dropped, attending trainings and setting up classrooms and transportation. CPR with AED training





September 2011 Updates (cont.)



was completed and center meetings were completed covering required child care topics.

Cheryl S worked closely with Lamers all month to ensure bus routes would be ready to go by the start of school.

At CDC children transitioned into their new classrooms in August and several staff have changed classes as well. The unit leaders are in place and the Child Care Manager has been hired and is being trained. The Head Start classroom is at full enrollment.

Early Head Start children are also transitioning into Head Start and new children and families are beginning services.

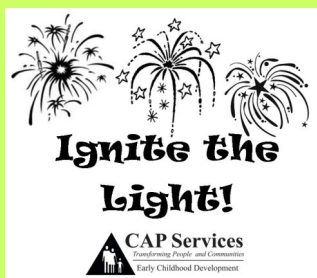
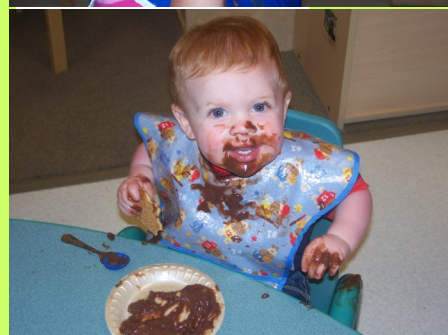
The ECD ALL Staff was held on August 29 and the theme was "Ignite the Light". Carla opened the day with introductions and program and legislative updates. A staff member from the Children's Service Society in Appleton presented Child Abuse and Neglect training, ECD's Special Services Manager

discussed Disability Awareness and shared a short video clip, and the Nutrition Consultant completed CACFP training. The culminating event consisted of parents self-sufficiency stories and while the song "Fireworks - Ignite the Light" played, staff reviewed their hopes for the coming school year.

New hires: Sarah Wallner – CM at FDC; Susan Edgren – BA at FDC; Zia Chang – LTE CA-I at FDC; Amanda Buska – Child Care Manager and 4K Teacher at CDC; Ashley Johnson – TA at FDC. Bonnie Brewer – TA in Oxford retired after 17 years with CAP. Resignations were received from Nang Yang, Maggie Czaikowski, and Stephanie Sell. Helen Stelter will be joining the Oxford staff as the TA.



Amanda (Mandy) B



Easy Nature Play Ideas for EC Centers



Institute for Nature in Childhood

Great nature play doesn't require elaborate and expensive play spaces! Even a limited outdoor area can be affordably enhanced for nature play, using common materials and plants to create a young child's heaven that is chock-full of small-scale wonders and magical discoveries.

Why More Outdoor Play?

For eons children have enjoyed the outdoors as their greatest playground — climbing trees, digging holes, catching frogs, building forts, picking berries, or just running gleefully through tall grass.

These are fond memories for most adults, but unfortunately they have little to do with modern childhood. Today's children are disconnected from nature. American kids (ages 3-12) now spend 27 percent of their time with electronic media, versus only one percent outdoors. If you count only time for *unstructured* outdoor play — that is, play that kids make up themselves, on their own schedules— it amounts to just 30 minutes per week!

With a little planning, outdoor enrichment, and commitment, your early childhood program can easily double that weekly amount of outdoor free play! This kind of play is perfect for developing the “whole child.” In fact, a growing body of research shows that frequent, unstructured play in diverse natural settings is great for:

- Social and emotional development
- Creative development
- Intellectual development
- Physical fitness and overall health; and
- Creation of lasting personal bonds to the natural world.

What Makes the Best Nature Play?

Green Hearts promotes three key dimensions of great nature play.

1. The right kind of place: A naturalistic area where kids are free to explore, play and relax — an even to cause a little minor damage. The “richer” the space, the better: extensive and diverse plantings, dirt piles or digging pits, water, shrub dens, vines, boulders, “secret” niches, expanses of sand, balancing logs, etc. The space doesn't need to be large, but it should be “dense” with natural features, on the small scale of children!
2. The right kind of play: Truly free play, where the kids “make it up as they go.” Adult supervision is fine and necessary for all childcare, but adult *intervention* should be limited. Let the kids use their own imagination to create play: don't try to be their coach! If the site is naturally rich, they'll find plenty to do. And be sure to stress play with nature — i.e., digging, wading, picking, catching, smelling, climbing, etc. — not just lay in nature!
3. The right kind of re-play: That is frequency! Research finds that the greater impacts of nature play come when it is a regular part of children's lives. Early childhood centers have the perfect opportunity to provide that frequency, since kids re-

turn to your site day after day. Even a small play area can offer a powerful experience of nature for your young children!

For more ideas and understanding, visit www.greenheartsinc.org. Be sure to check out our Parents' Guide to Nature's Play.”

Ideas You Can Do!

Outside Door

Use it — more than you already do, in all safe weather conditions!

Water

Kids love water play! Provide water from multiple sources, if possible: a hose, a faucet, a sprinkler, a rotating sprayer, a rain barrel, a hand pump, or even just spray bottles.



Water Transport

Part of the fun of water play is moving it around! Use watering cans, buckets, hollow bamboo poles, plastic pipe (with curves & connectors), plastic gutter sections, pots and pans, recycled milk jugs, etc. You can get the water from a faucet or hose, or use rain barrels to collect it.

Leaf Pile

If you're lucky enough to have large deciduous trees nearby, rake the fallen leaves into giant piles and let the kids have at 'em! Better yet, let your kids do the raking — they'll love it! The good memories will last longer than the leaves.



Continued on pg 4

Easy Nature Play Ideas (cont.)

Vegetable Garden

Choose vegetables that will ripen during your school season — either rapidly in the spring (like peas, radishes) or ones that will be ready in late summer. (If you operate year-round, this is no issue.) Good possibilities include potatoes, sugar snap peas, corn, carrots, and cherry tomatoes. Use planting beds, giant pots, or both. If you have a sunny window sill, you can start most veggie seeds inside during late winter or early spring, then transplant them outside after last frost. Ask one family to voluntarily tend the garden each week until school re-opens.



Milkweed and Monarchs

Milkweed inevitably attracts Monarch butterfly caterpillars, as it is the only thing that they eat! The caterpillars (easy to identify with a field guide or the internet) can be collected by cutting a branch they're on, and then placing them (with the branch) into a screened box (about the size of a ten-ream paper box). Keep the box supplied with fresh milkweed leaves until the caterpillars turn into chrysalises (usually in less than a week). There must be a bare twig or two leaning up in the box, from which the chrysalises can hang in open air.



After 9 to 14 days, an adult butterfly will break out of the now-transparent chrysalis. Be sure there is enough room in the box for its

wings to fully open, so they won't be deformed—and then release the adult with in a few hours. This is a *truly* magical process for children to see! (Note: Swamp milkweed from a nursery is prettier than the common milkweed that grows wild everywhere, and it works just as well.)



Seating

Kids use small seats for talking with a friend, looking at books, day-dreaming, or just plain resting. Use a variety: benches, bench swings, kid-size Adirondack chairs, hammocks, hammock chairs, rockers, boulders, stumps, logs, etc. Locate some of them in intimate sheltered spots, ideally with overhead shade.



Loose Parts for Outdoor Construction Play

Use small logs, large wooden blocks, boards, branches and tree cookies. Sand the edges and corners of these to avoid splinters. Also use sticks, milk crates, tarps, sheets of cardboard, blankets, pine cones, corn stalks, reeds, etc. Do not use chemically treated lumber.



Tools and Toys

Keep handy a variety of tools and toys to help kids explore and play with nature — e.g., insect nets, bug houses, magnifiers, binoculars, spades, scoopers, sieves,



colanders, buckets, rakes, small plastic containers, pots and pans, watering cans, etc.

Bird Houses

Kids like to watch nest building activity, and then see (and hear) the babies! Not all bird houses are alike though:



swallow, wren or bluebird boxes are usually good choices. Get building instructions and advice from a nature center or the internet, including where to mount the houses and how high. Site them wisely, as they can produce messy droppings below.

A Change of Clothes



Good nature means that kids will occasionally get muddy and wet! Keep a change of clothes handy for each child. Plastic bags can also be helpful for keeping kids from soaking car seats on their way home.

Reprinted in part from Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood. Green Hearts is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to restoring and strengthening the bonds between children and nature. We speak, write, teach, and consult about the power of nature play and how it can be returned to childhood. We are also currently developing our first children's nature center in Papillon, NE. For more information contact www.greenheartsinc.org.