

WEST VIRGINIA
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROVIDER
QUARTERLY

*Creative Arts &
Transition*

**A Playground Designed
By Children**

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West Virginia

Puppets in Young Hands

Submitted by Professor Joann Siegrist, College of Creative Arts, WVU

From the moment that a child is born, the inanimate object that is given and cherished by all of the family is a loving gift. Whether a doll, teddy bear, other cuddly animal or fun representation of a character, this is instinctively and automatically moved and given a sound by the loving parents and grandparents to connect and communicate with the baby. It entertains and stimulates all of the primary senses--seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, tasting--which are critical to the development of a child. Although not often recognized as such, this toy and/or doll object is a PUPPET.

A puppet is defined as an inanimate object that is made to move under human effort to have an effect on a child or adult. Puppets have been part of man's civilizations since the beginning of time. If one would look at the history of puppetry, he would find a treasure of delights that can be utilized in an early childhood environment and beyond.

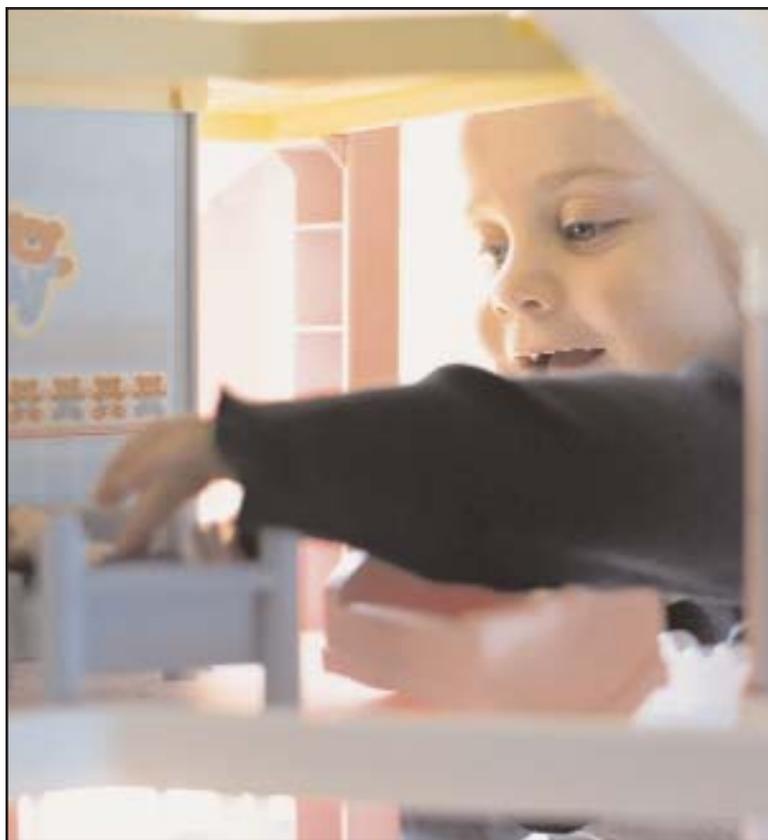
Because parents and early childhood professionals begin the important educational process for children, preparing them for elementary, middle, and secondary schools, exposure to the arts is very necessary. Children love puppets since they watch them on many morning PBS shows, see them performed in the school and church arenas, and play with them at home along with their parents. They project themselves as an individual with a puppet--how they feel and think about themselves, others, and the world. The puppet is the perfect tool to be used in the early childhood center and curriculum.

A puppet play station should be set up in a center where children can play with puppets free form, just as they have other stations and activities that are ready for singing, acting, drawing, movement, and storytelling. The early childhood professionals can also join in with the puppet by having time for the children to sing and dance with their puppets. Most importantly, the children can move and have the puppet speak to

the entire group. This creates strong self-confidence and socialization with others. Education is about individuals; puppets are about the individuality of the individual.

Finally, the teacher or leader of the group can select favorite books, stories, songs, tales, legends, and holidays to use as the subject source to base a puppet making and play session for children.

Puppets are unique and a natural fun tool for children. They have been and will always be!!!



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**THE WORLD FROM OUR FRONT PORCH:
COMMUNITY & CULTURE**

Fun Ways to Include Healthy Habits Into Creative Play

Submitted by Marshall University Community and School Oral Health Team

Old MacDonald had a farm
E-I-E-I-O.
And on his farm he grew good food
E-I-E-I-O.
With an apple here and an apple there
Here an apple, there an apple
Everywhere an apple, apple
Old MacDonald had a farm
E-I-E-I-O.

Learning important healthy habits can and should be fun. By incorporating creative play into learning, children have the opportunity to sing, dance, and play.

Children need to develop healthy eating habits when they are young to maintain good oral health and overall health and well-being. Snacking is important for young children. They have small stomachs and need to eat frequently to meet their nutrition needs. Healthy foods and drinks like fruits, vegetables, breads and pastas, and milk and other milk products contain some sugar. Because they are healthy, they should not be avoided. But it is important to limit snacking on foods and drinks high in sugar and to offer snacks at regular times between meals.

Current recommendations advocate that parents and early childhood professionals teach children how to:

- Identify and recognize foods and drinks that are healthy and unhealthy for their bodies.

- Identify and recognize foods and drinks that are good for teeth and not good for teeth.

- Understand that foods and drinks that are healthy for their bodies are also good for their teeth.

Through discussion and reading initiated by the early childhood professional, children can be introduced to foods and drinks that help keep their bodies healthy. They can also learn that foods and drinks that help keep their bodies healthy are good for their teeth, too.

Every time a child eats or drinks something with sugar (even if it's a little bit of sugar), germs that stick to teeth make acids. Once acid is made, it stays on their teeth for 20-40 minutes. If a child eats or drinks something high in sugar all day, then they will have acid on their teeth all day. That gives the acid a long time to destroy tooth surfaces and make a hole (a cavity).

A lot of drinks are high in sugar. Some drinks that are high in sugar are:

- Sport drinks like Gatorade, Powerade, Propel, and Vitamin Water
- Soda products like Coke, 7UP, Mountain Dew, and Pepsi
- Fruit juices like apple juice, grape juice, and orange juice

Pediatricians and other health professionals recommend that children drink no more than 4 ounces of juice a day. They also suggest that children eat raw fruit instead of canned fruit packed in syrup or fruit juices.

Check the Nutrition Facts label to find out how much sugar is in packaged food. Sugar amounts are shown in grams.

To figure out how many teaspoons of sugar there are in foods and drinks, divide the grams by 4. Four grams equal 1 teaspoon.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 248 g	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 114	Calories from Fat 3
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 28g	9%
Dietary Fiber 0g	2%
Sugars 24g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 159%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Another way to encourage healthy habits is through Make Your Own Plate. During this activity, children get to see what a healthy plate of fruits and vegetables looks like.

Make Your Own Plate

MyPlate template materials: Crayons, paper plates, magazines (optional), scissors (optional), glue (optional)

Instructions:

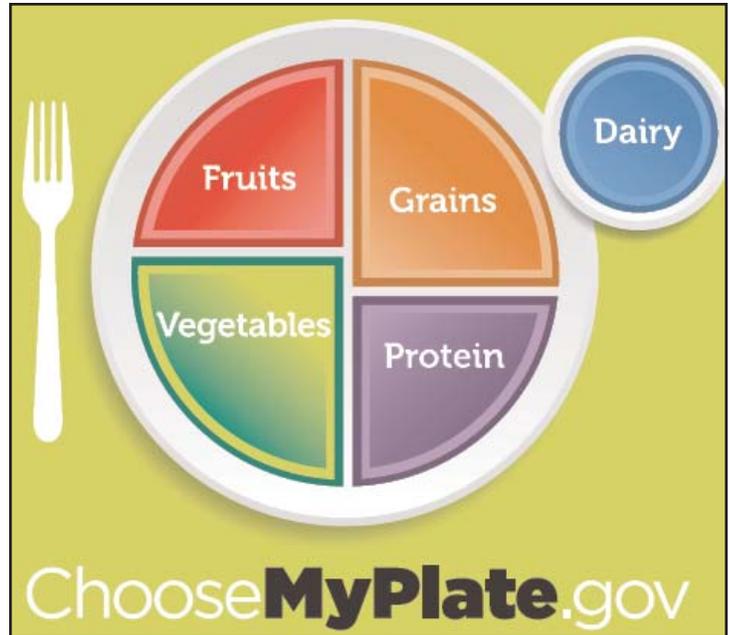
1. Review healthy foods and drinks that children might eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack.

2. Give the child a copy of the MyPlate template (full size template found on ChooseMyPlate.gov) and a paper plate. Have the child use the MyPlate template as a model, and tell them to copy the outline of each section onto their paper plate. Note: The colors of each section should match or be similar to those on the template.

3. Explain to the child that they are going to design a plate of food they would like to eat and drink and that there are five kinds of food that should be on their plate: fruits (red), vegetables (green), grains (brown), proteins (purple), and dairy (blue). Give the child examples of foods and drinks in each food category.

4. Have the child draw or cut out pictures of foods and drinks from magazines and glue them onto the correct section of the plate.

5. Remind the child that it would be nice to see at least one food or drink in each section of their plate.



Good healthy habits are so important and will last children a lifetime. By learning to take care of their bodies at a young age, children will grow into healthy and productive adults.

There are lots of other great ideas to incorporate healthy habits into creative play on the Internet.

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A Playground Designed by Children

Submitted by Laura Dice, Coordinator of KEYS 4 HealthyKids

Where was your favorite place to play as a child?

Did you like to go exploring in the woods?

How about making mud pies?

Or making a fort out of sticks and blankets?

But how many forts, sandboxes, or groves of trees do you see on playgrounds?

Probably none.



Figure 6 - Before the renovation, this OLE consisted mostly of patchy lawn and manufactured play equipment.



Figure 7 - After the outdoor learning environment was renovated and naturalized; it includes raised garden beds, a looped pathway, arbor, and many new trees.

“What do you want on your playground?” is a question not often asked to children when designing a new play space. So, we decided to do just that when KEYS 4 HealthyKids began consulting with a school in Charleston, WV. We asked the students and received some creative responses. The students were not shy once they learned that we really were going to use their ideas. Here’s what they wanted: “tunnels, tight ropes, rocks to paint, butterfly gardens, musical instruments, snails, a creek, sunflowers, forts, boulders”, and more. A common theme was to have items from nature.

We shouldn’t be surprised. A survey by the Children’s Play Council found that 86 percent of children would rather play outside with their friends building dens and getting muddy to playing on a paved surface (<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2006/aug/02/childrenservices.comment>). Imagine a children’s play space with forts, dens, more trees, vegetable gardens, winding paths, butterfly bushes, climbing boulders, wooden balance beams, and tepees. Doesn’t every child deserve a place to explore and discover nature?

Before you disregard this idea as impossible because of the regulations and requirements, note the following: This is already happening in child care centers and schools across the country including West Virginia, and these playgrounds are actually safer than traditional playgrounds that have tall struc-

tures and harder surfaces. Although we may not be able to satisfy all of the children’s desires, we can do our best to make their ideas become reality. For example, instead of a creek, we can create a dry creek bed. Instead of placing an expensive musical instrument outside, we can create a music station out of outdoor child-safe wind chimes.

Not only should natural elements in a playground be allowed, but child advocates are promoting the inclusion of natural elements into child care and elementary school playgrounds. Studies show that including natural elements into a play space for children will improve academic performance, improve nutrition, reduce stress and ADD symptoms, increase physical activity, and improve social relations (<http://www.naturalearning.org/nli-infosheets>).

The benefits of a ‘natural playground’ aren’t just for children. A typical playground structure can cost anywhere from \$30,000-\$250,000. Natural elements such as a raised bed or bamboo tepee can be almost free. And unlike a metal or plastic piece of equipment, natural materials can be gathered from a backyard and built or installed easily. In our experience, we have hired a local landscape designer and recruited parents, staff, and other community members to help build. Even the children can help in planting and building! This creates a source of pride and accomplishment that creates connections



between members in the community.

Creating a playspace for children that includes natural elements builds community, is cost effective, and most importantly...the children love it!

If you would like to learn more about adding natural elements to your existing playground or designing a new natural play space, contact Laura Dice at laura.dice@camc.org. We will be hosting the School and Youth Garden Symposium in Charleston, WV on September 27, 2014, where there will be speakers to teach you how to include natural elements into your playground. To register, please email laura.dice@camc.org.

Resources

<http://www.naturalearning.org/>
<http://www.natureexplore.org/index.cfm>
<http://naturalplaygrounds.com/research.php>



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Do you know a child who is not *moving *hearing *seeing * learning or *talking like others their age?

By 3 months,
Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,
Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,
Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,
Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,
Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,
Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

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Creative Arts and Transition

Submitted by Barbara Tucker, WV Early Childhood Transition

Through play, children learn and become creative: A simple yet profound statement.

Kerri Miller defined different types of creativity in her online article *Creative Development in Early Childhood*. “Through simple everyday actions and play, young children develop physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and creative abilities known as creative development...Children of all ages delight in expressing their ideas through sounds, colors, shapes and role-playing activities. Creativity in children can be developed by engaging them in activities that enable them to share their ideas, thoughts and feelings.”

There are several different concepts of creative development that children can explore.

Emotional Creativity

Children respond in different ways to what they see, hear, and touch and communicate their feelings in relationship to the nature of their surroundings. Interaction with peers helps improve social skills and people acceptance.

Media and Materials

Exploring media and materials is the aspect of a child's creative development in which his interaction to media, pictures, and toys are observed. Toys such as blocks and dolls help a child develop creative instincts. What child does not delight in gluing paper and painting and making a picture with colored markers?

Creative Imagination and Imaginative Play

Creative imagination and imaginative play in young children deal with how they respond to dance, stories, music, role-playing and art. The creative arts have a significant bearing on the early creative development of a child.

Creative Music and Dance

A child's ability to distinguish different environmental and musical sounds is important at an early age. Children exposed to different musical tones and patterns of dance movement are likely to develop ample creative instincts at an early age.

Knowledge and Understanding

It is important to support children in understanding the world around them. Give them the opportunity and tools they need to grow and learn. Support and encouragement gives children the courage they need to grow, learn, and succeed in life.

The creative arts play an important role in all transitions whether it is from one program to another or from one activity to another. Role playing the next step, drawing pictures, reading stories, or talking about their feelings helps children understand what is happening next. The creative arts help them feel a sense of security.

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Looking Into the Reggio Approach

Submitted by Alexandria West, Student, Marshall University and Dr. Janet Dozier, Marshall University

The approach used in Reggio Emilia, Italy, is an approach frequently touted today. Some have said it can't be done here in West Virginia; the truth is it can't be replicated here in exactly the same way because the culture is different. The approach, however, should not be disregarded. Using the socio-cultural context of our Appalachian culture as a foundation, most of the ideas of the Reggio approach are congruent with what we are encouraging in classrooms today. Concepts such as child-centeredness, aesthetic appreciation, projects, and many more are ideas that we as West Virginia teachers can readily embrace.

Reggio is a school and a way of life in Italy developed by Loris Malaguzzi. There are many different ways teachers can educate themselves on the Reggio approach. One way is through Julianne Wurm. I had the opportunity to attend the first section of the training based on her book, *Working in the Reggio Way*. She provided insight from her time in Italy and throughout different Reggio schools. She works to help individuals see how they can implement the approach in their center, and assures them it's alright if it is much different than other centers.

From this book, research, and trainings, teachers are able to develop projects that support the children's interest and environment. Teachers use the environment as a third teacher to stimulate the children's experiences and help them learn more about whatever their interest might be. Some projects may be present for an extended period

of time and others might be present for a few days.

Many different things happen in the classroom on any given day and many different projects can arise from simple conversations with the children in each classroom. Teachers take time out each morning to have a group meeting, over fruit, for the children to discuss their interests. Some of the major things that are very different about the Reggio approach is the 100 languages that are present in the classrooms. These are the ways children speak through expression of different materials such as clay, dance, and gross motor. Teachers are constructing knowledge through questions that arise.

Problem-solving in the classroom is often decided among the children. The children begin to work out their problems and express their emotions. The classroom is viewed as a science lab where research and collaboration is integrated into the classroom. The teachers collaborate with colleagues

and parents to develop a better relationship with each child. The lead teachers are viewed as the conductor, directing children and staff members to educate children positively throughout the day. Often when one tuba player is off key the song sounds a bit different. This is the same in the classroom, children are free to express their emotions and often this creates a different tune in the classroom.

"The Reggio Emilia approach predicts a project-based program development, which emerges naturally and which contains teacher's interaction with children. For this reason, teachers getting inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach find the opportunity to develop curriculum" (Arseven, 2013).

Projects are created based on the children's interests and the setup of the environment. These projects are discussed during group meeting times and then discussed throughout the day in various forms based on the children's questions and exploration. Materials



are placed in the environment based on the project and what the teacher believes is best for the children to use to expand their minds. Projects can last for a small amount of time or expand for a period of months. They all vary due to the way the children embrace the project and what they want to do next. Children gain the opportunity to learn new cultures through peer interaction as well as developing a sense of community (Arseven, 2013).

One of the ways teachers are able to learn from each day is by providing a reflective journal, asking themselves questions such as, “What did I do well? What can I do better? What should I not do?” These are questions the teacher can help use to construct the environment the next day to help improve the learning experience for the children. The child is viewed as a protagonist in the center. The child has the lead role in the story, but there are many other characters in the story. One of my favorite expressions from Julianne Wurm was “We’ll work it out, we’ll find a solution.” This philosophy describes the Reggio approach and how it is implemented in classrooms. Teachers strive to ask open-ended questions throughout the entire day. Teachers are expanding the children’s mind to be receptive of their own ideas and explore their environment to answer their burning questions.

The schedule at a Reggio based school often looks very different than other schools. Reggio provides chunks of time for the children to get their needs of exploration and food in at the same time. Children always meet for group time to listen and converse but it’s fine for the children to “get their wiggles out” during this time.



Children often express themselves through various mediums of artwork such as clay and paint. They use a variety of materials, often materials that are recycled or found in their environment to incorporate their artwork.

Throughout the day they are exploring many different forms of science. They are conducting theories and hypothesis. They take these theories and test them. Then they are able to manipulate the theory when needed and create another hypothesis, retesting their theory, and eventually coming out with a conclusion. This is often a long process and can take some time, but can also reoccur daily throughout the classroom to help the children to explore their interest.

Documentation of the children’s projects are placed on the walls of the classrooms and hallways to inform parents of the children’s days and progress they are making. These pictures are backed by a series of standards based on the child’s age to help ensure they

are on target to progress to the next level throughout their time in the center. Parents are informed through teaching strategies, which provides pictures with documentation and the materials that show what the child was learning at that point in the day. This is like a small report that gets sent to each parent’s email throughout the day.

The projects do not always last for long; however, some often last for a longer period of time depending on the environment and how interested the children are in the topic. Often there may be many different projects going on at one time. These projects maybe of the interest to some children, but not others. Some may not last for long periods of time, but may come up later and be of interest to all the children.

Parent involvement is very important in the Reggio approach. Parents often come to have breakfast or lunch with the children. This experience helps parents bond with their child in the envi-



ronment in which the child spends the majority of his time. Parents also get the opportunity to ease their mind and learn what exactly it is that their child is doing and eating. Parents have many different ways in which they can engage with their child. This is a great experience for the children to be exposed to new foods and different cultures.

Throughout the Reggio approach children learn a sense of community and what community is. Children have the chance to become involved in the community. Often children have the opportunity to grow gardens and explore plant life and how things work. They also have the opportunity to explore visual artwork in the garden area, which is so important in the Reggio approach for children to express themselves. The garden allows the children the ability to express themselves and explore a new environment.

I envision myself including several ideas from the training with Julianne Wurm, including a new set up for the dramatic play area. This is an area that I feel the children would explore more with new materials depending on a

conversation that will determine what exactly they want to happen in that area. I also would like to include more mirrors around the classroom, particularly in the bathrooms and in other spots around the room. Mirrors help children develop a sense of self and help them to take pride in what they look like. The mirrors around the bathroom will help children to see themselves from different perspectives and lighting.

I would also like for the children to develop a sense of ownership in the classroom and to make it feel more like home for them. I was recently able to collaborate with two other teachers on how best to use our connecting closet to benefit the children's interest. We decided to have a discussion with the children to see what their opinions on the space are and then decide from there. We also thought we could clean out the closet completely with the children's help and then allow them to take over the space with whatever their interest might be. Through this discussion, we found that this in its self was a major project.

I am also considering the importance of time throughout the day and how I can rethink the schedule to benefit the children. I want to base the day around the most important parts, and then include all the other things we have to do. But I don't want to limit ourselves to a strict time schedule. This allows the children to feel more relaxed and not be rushed throughout the day. The children are also able to explore their environment for longer periods of time. I feel that this will help me to develop quality anecdotes during a longer period of time.

I'm eager to incorporate several of these ideas into my own classroom. I look forward to changing my own mindset to accept the Reggio approach as a lifestyle for me.

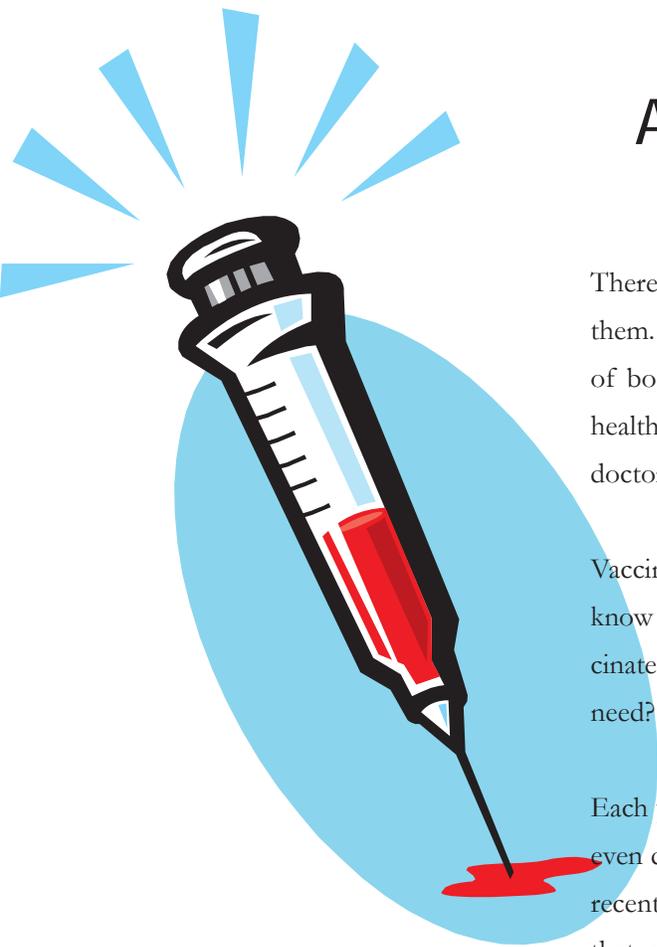
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Adults Need Vaccinations Too!

Submitted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



There are many things we want to pass on to our loved ones, illness is not one of them. You want to pass on family traditions, a grandmother's quilt, or dad's love of books--but no one wants to pass on a serious illness. Take charge of your health and help protect those around you by asking about vaccines at your next doctor's visit.

Vaccinating our children is commonplace in the United States. But few adults know they need vaccines other than the flu vaccine, and even fewer are fully vaccinated. Are you one of the millions of adults not aware of the vaccines you need?

Each year, tens of thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die as a result of diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. However, a recent national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey showed that most U.S. adults are not even aware that they need vaccines throughout their lives to protect against diseases like pertussis, hepatitis, shingles, and pneumococcal disease.

Not only can vaccine-preventable diseases make you very sick, but if you get sick, you may risk spreading certain diseases to others. That's a risk most of us do not want to take. Infants, older adults and people with weakened immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to infectious diseases. They are also more likely to have severe illness and complications if they do get sick. You can help protect your health and the health of your loved ones by getting your recommended vaccines.

The good news is that getting vaccinated is easier than you think. Adults can get vaccines at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, health clinics, and health departments. Visit vaccine.healthmap.org to help find a vaccine provider near you. Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines--a call to your insurance provider can give you the details.

What vaccines do you need? All adults should get:

- Annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal flu
- Td/Tdap to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis

Some additional vaccines you may need (depending on your age, health conditions and other factors) include:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal
- Pneumococcal
- Shingles

Traveling overseas? There may be additional vaccines you need depending on the location. Find out at www.cdc.gov/travel.

Not sure what vaccines you may need? The CDC offers a short quiz at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultquiz to help you find out which vaccines are recommended for you. All adults should get an annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal flu and Td/Tdap vaccine to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. You may also need other vaccines based on your age, health conditions, occupation, and other factors. If you are planning to travel outside of the U.S., check on any additional vaccines you may need. Some travel-related vaccines are part of a series or are needed months prior to your travel to be most effective, so be sure to plan ahead.

For more information about adult vaccines, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults

Art Recipes You Can't Be Without

Easy clean finger paint

- 1/4 cup liquid tempera paint
- 1/8 cup liquid soap

Combine the liquid tempera paint and the liquid soap. You can spoon the mixture over a piece of the paper to get the fingerpainting started.

Gak (homemade Silly Putty)

- 1 cup white glue
- 1 cup liquid starch
- Powder or paste food coloring

Pour glue into a large bowl. Add food coloring and mix well. Stir in starch, a little at a time, until smooth. The mixture will feel like putty and it will stretch, bounce, and lift colored images from the newspaper. Store in an airtight container or plastic bag.

Cooked play clay

- 3 cups flour
- 1 1/2 cups salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 3 cups water
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- Powder or paste food coloring

Mix the dry ingredients in a saucepan. Whisk in the liquid ingredients and cook over medium heat until thick. Cool and knead. Add glitter for an extra kick. Store in a tightly sealed plastic bag or bin.

Uncooked play clay

- 1/4 cup salt
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon liquid tempera paint
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap

Mix the salt and flour together in a large bowl. Add the paint, water, and soap. Mix thoroughly. Add additional water if the dough is too dry. Store in a tightly sealed plastic bag or bin.



Goop or Oobleck

- 1 pound cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cups cold water
- Powder or paste food coloring

Mix the cornstarch, water, and food coloring together in a large bowl. Invite the children to experience the dry-liquid aspects of the mixture.

Make smaller amounts with a basic 2 parts cornstarch to 1 part water mixture. Store in a sealed container; add a bit of water if the mixture dries out. Discard in the trash, not down the drain.

Water painting

- Small container of water
- Old paintbrushes

Put a little water into a container. Use the paintbrushes to paint water on anything. Paint inside or outside. Children will enjoy watching their creations dry, and their masterpieces fading. Then, they can do it all over again.

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ACDS News

Submitted by Sherrie Myers, ACDS State Coordinator

Instructor's Academy

The ACDS program just completed a wonderful whirlwind week of the Instructor's Academy. The annual Instructor's Academy took place on June 23-27 at the offices of River Valley Child Development Services in Huntington, WV. Nine participants from various locations in the state attended the week long training. It was an honor to work with each of these individuals and I appreciate their dedication to the field of early care and education. I look forward to working with these new instructors.

Fall Classes

The Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) program will soon begin fall classes. If you currently work in the field of early care and education at least 20 hours per week with children birth through eight, you may want to consider this educational opportunity. ACDS is a rewarding program at a minimal cost to the participant. It is a way to learn best practice and the curriculum taught is based on current research. The classes are taught by professionals who also have experience in the field. The program is four semesters, taught one evening per week and each semester is 15 weeks. You can also earn training hours toward licensing requirements as well as college credit. If you are interested in ACDS or have questions about the program, please contact Sherrie Myers at 304-523-0433 or smyers@rvcds.org.

For more information on the ACDS program, visit
www.wvacds.org



Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"
Volume 11, Issue 3, Summer 2014

Why Is Art Important?

Art activities provide many developmental opportunities for children. When children participate in art, they get a chance to develop their creativity and imagination, in addition to expressing their ideas and feelings.

Art is a language for many who are still unable to express their thoughts and feelings through words. This expression leads to increased self-esteem.

with the dexterity to later work with puzzles, string beads, and write.

By exploring forms, shapes, colors, textures, and spatial relationships, children begin to make connections to language concepts. This is why scribbling is so important. Scribbles help children explore the world around them as well as experiment with different shapes. Even though the child's art may look like scribbles to you, it clearly is representative of something to the child. Eventually, children will move from scribbles to symbols.

Art activities should be provided strictly for the purpose of sensory experience and expression; not for the purpose of creating a definable product. Children must learn the process before they can produce a product. Children should be encouraged to do the thinking and decision making in art activities, rather than copying a model or using pre-drawn, pre-cut forms.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Department of Education/Office of Special Education and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

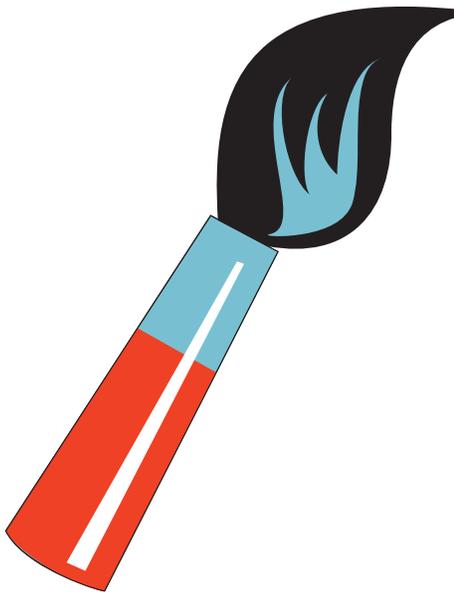
Permission to photocopy

Fine and perceptual motor skills are also developed through art. Through the use of different art materials, children learn how to grasp, hold, and control movement. This increased eye-hand coordination will provide children

Visit our website at www.wvearlychildhood.org

Everyday Items Become Art

You will be surprised what you already have that can be used to increase children's creativity during art activities.



Space

An appropriate art space doesn't have to be complicated. Essentials include a child-size table and chair, access to water, and a spot where the child can feel free to be messy. A drop-cloth or oilcloth mat under the table and a smock or protective clothing for the child will help to make clean-up easier.

Adhesives

Children love to adhere colorful designs to paper. Provide children with glue, glue sticks, scotch tape, and masking tape. Not only will these items be used to adhere things but you'll be surprised how often they end up in the design!

Materials

Be sure to include plenty of different types of art materials for children to explore. Good choices include different sizes and shapes of brushes, clean sponges, crayons, chalk, water color markers, fingerpaint, liquid tempera paint, modeling materials such as clay and playdough, stamps and other print making materials, and colored pencils.

Paper

Different choices of paper expand children's creativity. Good choices of paper to provide include white unlined paper, different colors of construction paper, newspaper, lined paper, and graph paper.

Textures

Textures provide children with sensory experiences. Textures are also important to children with visual impairments. Keep bits of fabric, cardboard, bubblewrap, and wallpaper for children to explore.

Fun Extras

There are many everyday items that can be used for art. Provide children with an assortment of pipecleaners, feathers, ribbons, yarn, tissue paper, beads, old greeting cards, magazines, plastic bottles, and small boxes. Consider recycling some of the items found around your house.

Five Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

August is National Immunization Awareness Month and it is a reminder that we all need vaccines throughout our lives.

You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates, and other ways to keep them safe. But, one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have all of their vaccinations.

Immunizations can save your child's life. Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children, are no longer common in the U.S.--primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio is one example of the great impact that vaccines have in the United States. Polio was once America's most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country. Today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is very safe and effective. Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and health care professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of the injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent.

Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Immunization protects others you care about. Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, we have seen resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. For example, more than 48,000 cases of whooping cough were reported in the U.S. in 2012. During this time, 20 deaths were reported--the majority of these deaths were in children younger than 3 months of age.

Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely vaccinated and some people may not be able to receive certain vaccinations due to severe allergies, weakened immune systems from conditions like leukemia, or other reasons. To help keep them safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or child care facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in

prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills or long-term disability care. In contrast, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance or the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children from low-income families.

To find out more about the VFC program, visit <http://www.cdc.gov> or ask your child's health care professional.

Immunization protects future generations. Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, the smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has been dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus rarely are seen in the U.S. If we continue vaccinating now, and vaccinating completely, parents in the future may be able to trust that some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm their children in the future.

Connecting Kids to Nature

Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea in a series from PLT that introduces the concept of **habitats**.

Activity 22: Trees as Habitats

From their leafy branches to their tangled roots, trees provide a habitat for a host of plants and animals. In this activity, children will inventory the plants and animals that live in, on, and around trees and discover how plants and animals depend on trees in many ways.

Doing the Activity

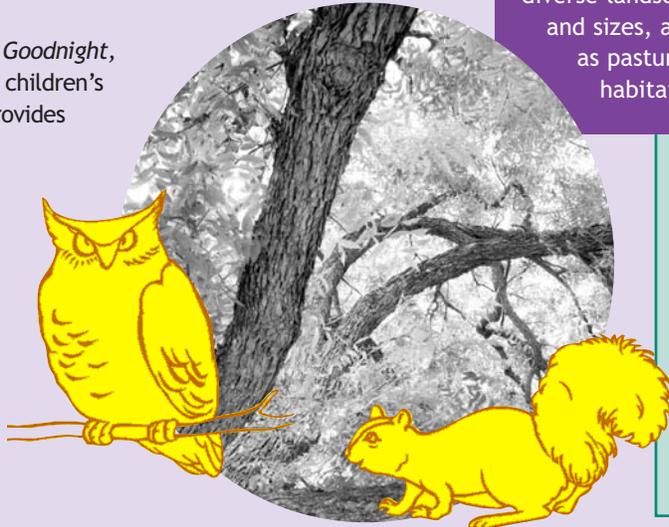
Where do you live? A *habitat* is the place where a plant or animal can get all the things it needs to survive. The next time you pass by a tree, think of it as a habitat, or living space. While observing a tree, have children learn about the different ways plants and animals can find food, water, shelter, and living space by asking:

- What are some plants and animals that depend on trees?
- What do trees provide for these plants and animals?
- Can you see signs of life on the trunk, branches, roots, and leaves?
- How is a tree affected by the plants and animals that live on it?
(*they may benefit, harm, or be neutral to the tree*)

If possible, allow children to use hand lenses or binoculars to get a closer look. Ask them to use their sense of hearing to locate more plants and animals. Finally, compare a tree to your own home, or habitat. How are they alike or different?

Conduct a read-aloud using *Goodnight, Owl!* by Pat Hutchins. For a children’s story about how a cactus provides habitat for desert wildlife, check out *Cactus Hotel* by Brenda Guiberson. Both books can be purchased at <http://shop.plt.org>.

Adapted from Activity 22: Trees as Habitats from Project Learning Tree’s *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*.



WEST VIRGINIA TREE FACT

Timber harvests are designed to create a diverse landscape with trees of all ages and sizes, along with open areas such as pastures and ponds, that provide habitat for many wildlife species.

DID YOU KNOW?

Even snags, or standing dead trees, provide an excellent habitat. For example, woodpeckers feed on insects that crawl on snags and then chickadees nest in the cavities created by woodpeckers. Tree frogs and beetles live under a snag’s bark, while squirrels and deer mice use snags to store food.

Discover how PLT can help you teach...from nature!

- Attend a workshop near you to receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- Contact your West Virginia PLT State Coordinator, Cinda Francis at cfrancis@wvadventures.net or toll-free (888) 372-9663.

www.plt.org



Project Learning Tree® (PLT)
is a program of the American
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