

WEST VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVIDER

QUARTERLY

**Should Math
Be Fun?**

**Woodworking
and Math**

*Science & Math,
Oh My!*

Executive Editors

Melanie Clark
Traci Dalton
Ginger Huffman
Pam Roush

Editor-in-chief

Brooke Hunter

Associate Editor/Layout & Design

Michelle Tveten Rollyson

Contributors

Helen Arthur, Sherrie Barrett, Sarah Brown, Tarabeth Brumfield,
Kay DeWitt, Cinda Francis, Paula Lucas, Helen Post-Brown,
Barbara Tucker, West Virginia CHIP, Heidi Zbosnik

Group Publisher

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Please refer to the following list to contact group publishers:

WV Department of Health & Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education

350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301
(304)558-1885
www.wvchildcare.org

WV Office of Maternal, Child & Family Health/ WV Birth to Three System

350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301
(304)558-5388 • (800)642-8522
www.wvdhhr.org/birth23

WV Head Start State Collaboration Office

350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301
(304)558-4638

WV Department of Education/Office of Special Education

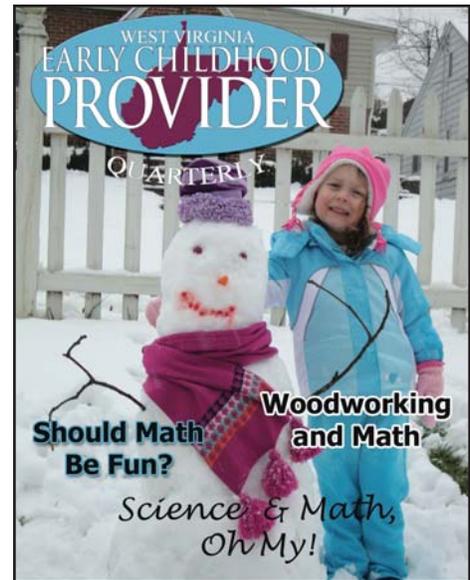
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25305
(304)558-2696 • (800)642-8541
http://wvde.state.wv.us/ose/

Editorial Offices

WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources
611 Seventh Avenue, Ste. 322
Huntington, WV 25701
(304)529-7603 • (888)WVECTCR
Fax: (304)529-2535
www.wvearlychildhood.org
Email: TCR@rvcds.org

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Celebrating Success:

From STEM to STEAM in a Preschool World

Submitted by Tarabeth Brumfield, Marshall University Early Education STEM Center

The Marshall University Early Education STEM Center's staff is rethinking the way they do business as they embark on the third year of operation. A collaborative effort of the University's June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development and Cabell County Schools, the center is designed to be a model program of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) preschool education.

Typical preschools have snack time, nap time and all sorts of games, but the MU Early Education STEM Center has all of that, plus robots and voice activated technology that its Pre-K students are not only enjoying, but are helping build almost on their own. Children enrolled in the program engage in global studies and foreign language experiences as well as research in project work and technology – both inside and outside of the classroom. This year, however, the focus is shifting from STEM to a more purposeful way of integrating the arts called STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics).

After two June Harless Center staff members participated in a study abroad program to the world-renown early childhood programs of Reggio Emilia,

This approach will capitalize on the creative thinking that is innate for young children, while promoting the critical thinking skills necessary for success in the 21st Century.

Italy, where the arts are a living breathing phenomenon, they knew that there was much work to do. This past summer the classroom was redesigned with light tables and natural materials to complement the already ubiquitous technology to provide the optimal learning environment for three and four year olds.

Thanks to the continued partnership with the Create Lab at Carnegie Mellon, integrating the arts and technology in the prekindergarten classroom remains seamless. To name a few, Arts and Bots, Hear Me Appalachia, Gigapan, Children's Innovation Project, and Message from Me, are all programs that are developed in the lab by engineers, software specialists, and other specialists and are tailored to young children.

For example, Message from Me, allows the students to wirelessly upload a

photo of themselves or their work, record a message that explains the picture and send the photo and message via text or email to someone from a list of people including their STEM teachers, their classmates and their parents. The Message from Me machine is one of thirty in existence. A great example of this technology in action was demonstrated as Parker Adkins, a 4-year-old STEM student, operated the Message from Me machine like a pro. His parents, Nisa and Shawn Adkins, said they've seen so many changes since their son began attending preschool at the STEM center. "We wanted to send him to a place where we knew he wouldn't fall through the cracks, where he could get one-on-one attention, and he's gotten that here," Nisa Adkins said. "He's opened up so much, and there's so much difference in the way he deals with problems, works through things, and uses technology. The whole program is just great."

As the staff continues to grow professionally and as practitioners, they commit to purposefully integrate the arts while creating a STEAM centered classroom. This approach will capitalize on the creative thinking that is innate for young children, while promoting the critical thinking skills necessary for success in the 21st Century.



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News About ACDS

Submitted by Sherrie Barrett, ACDS State Coordinator

ACDS Instructors Academy

The Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) program is preparing for the annual Instructor's Academy on June 24 – 28, 2013. Individuals wishing to teach the ACDS class must complete an intensive five day training. They also must attend a one day update every other year to continue certification.

The Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist program is always looking for new instructors all over the state, but due to the large number of individuals desiring to enroll in the course, we are in urgent need for instructors in Kanawha, Cabell, Wood, Roane/Jackson and Ohio/Hancock counties.

From a personal perspective, being an instructor is a wonderful experience. It is very rewarding to witness the growth and development of students as they begin the program, complete the fourth semester, and ultimately graduate. Many gain the confidence to continue their education and receive their associate and/or bachelor's degree. What a testament to the success of the program! If you are interested in this wonderful opportunity to continue your professional development and sharing your knowledge, please contact Sherrie Barrett at 304-523-0433 or sbarrett@rvcds.org.

Spring 2013 Classes Starting Soon

The Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) will soon begin spring 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 Barrett at 304-523-0433 or sbarrett@rvcds.org.



Science & Math, Oh My!



Submitted by Helen Arthur, St. Joseph Preschool

Science and math, my mortal enemies! At least that is how I felt in school. Truthfully, I felt that way for years after school.

Sadly, I bought into the whole theory of the times;
Boys are better at math and science!

That was years and years ago, and no where near the truth. Luckily for me, a wonderful professor at Marshall University taught me a new theory; I can do anything I set my mind to. I just had to over come the fears I had of failing miserably at math and science.

Then, along came another good friend who suggested we submit an application to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to conduct a workshop at the NAEYC Annual Conference and Expo, the largest early childhood conference in the world. I agreed and she smiled and said “Good, I have already submitted it.” I was excited because I thought we were going to do some crafts or something. When she said “Let’s do a science workshop,” I panicked!

I tell you all of this for a reason, I have grown to love science and math in a way I never thought I would.

Have I become an expert?

Certainly not.

Do I work harder at it?

Most definitely!

Am I continually learning?

Absolutely!

Is it fun?

Yes, yes, yes!

Fast forward to today, and you will find me searching for ways to introduce new and fun ways to engage the children in my class in science and math.

The most important thing I learned from children is that they don’t expect me to be perfect, or know all of the answers. So, we plow through together. Many times they teach me. Best of all, their enthusiasm is encouraging and

contagious. They get excited over the simple things.

These are some fun and simple suggestions and ideas that I hope will encourage you:

- Take a walk. So simple, yet we never take the time to go in our own backyards.
- Declare a no technology day! Give up all T.V., games, and electronics.
- Use the teachable moments. A rainbow appeared in the sky at the exact same time we were talking about the weather. We all ran outside to get a better look, and before we knew it we had a lot of questions and discussion going. Who makes a rainbow? How is it made? What causes a rainbow? Have you seen two rainbows together? Got Google? Did you know rainbows are actually a full circle?
- Go on a scavenger hunt. Look for the smallest rock or biggest leaf. Use the alphabet to determine what to search for. A- acorn, B – butterfly. You will be surprised how much fun it is to create your own list.
- Make walking sticks and back packs for safety and fun. Pack a snack.
- Pick a single topic for the moment – trees, clouds, flowers, bugs.

- Do a little research for yourself if you wish, but remember you can take a picture and come back and explore together.
- Pick a new word or question of the day.
- Go on a sensory walk. Discover the feel, sound, smell, and look of things close up.
- Ask open ended questions? Why do you think that? Which is your favorite? Why?
- When visiting a state park, be respectful. Take pictures, not samples.

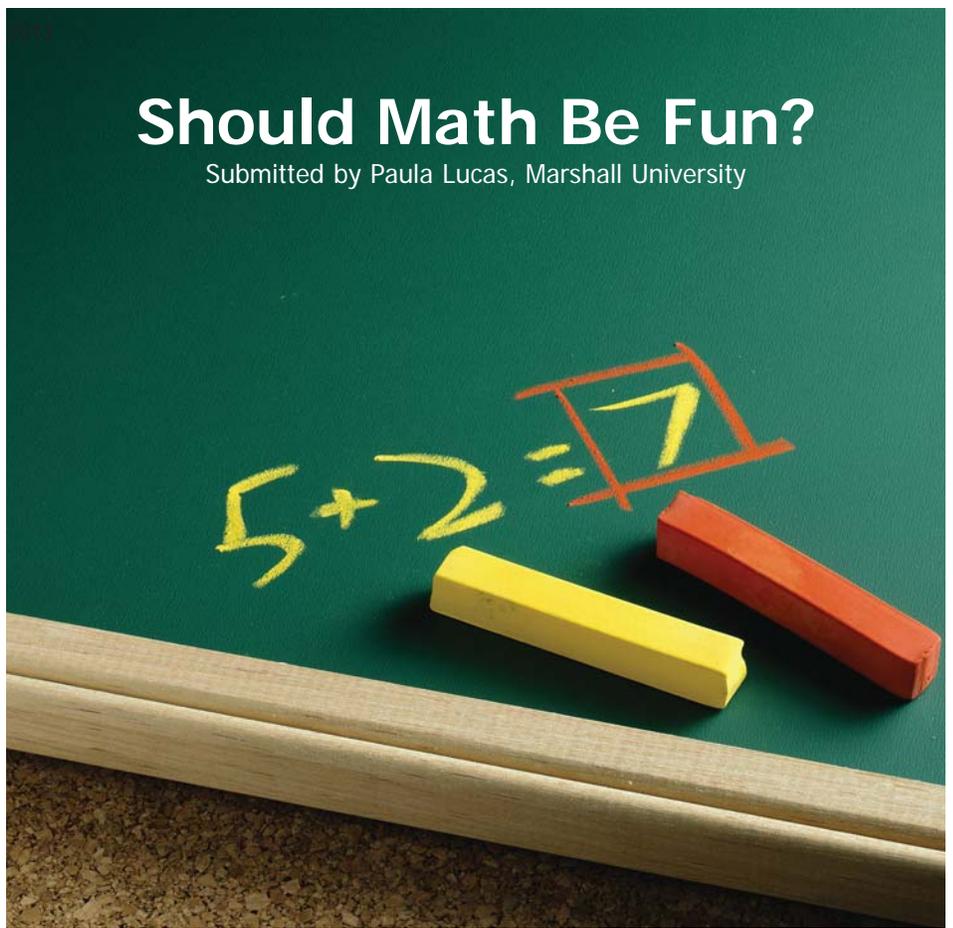
It is important to always be safe. Don’t let children go alone and don’t venture into unfamiliar places. Also, remember allergies and take the proper precautions. You may also want to take a walking stick for coming upon the unexpected.

The best way to get children and yourself to venture into the outdoors is through reading. Find a book, discover the nature in the book and make it come to life, then go for a walk. Begin looking for the science and math in every book you read.

Above all, don’t be afraid to embrace the science and math in your classroom. You’ll be glad you did.

Should Math Be Fun?

Submitted by Paula Lucas, Marshall University



If we want children to learn math, shouldn't we make it fun and interesting? How many of us want to do something that isn't fun, much less interesting? So, why should math be any different?

We can ask students to do problems in a math textbook, which can be boring and repetitive, or we can have them practice the same skills in a fun fashion, like playing a game. For example, let's say we are practicing our multiplication facts. We can ask students to open the text book to a page and do the 30 multiplication problems, or we can play a game. Put the students in groups of 3, give each of them 2 dice (6-sided or make it even more challenging and use 10-sided dice), have them roll the dice and make a multiplication problem, solve it, and the person with the largest product (answer) gets a point. Students can continue "playing" this until a certain score is reached. Which do you think students would prefer to do? Which would you prefer to do? Which activity (textbook problems or dice rolling game) do you think is enjoyed the most? During which activity will you hear more interaction, hear laughing and see excitement and fun? During which activity will you hear moaning/groaning and see boredom?

Any math concept can be turned into a fun activity. Does it always have to be a game? Should you always turn math into a game? The answer is no, but you should ALWAYS make math FUN! Students will develop a “love” (or at least a strong “like”) for math and will look forward to doing math. Isn’t that what we ultimately want? Isn’t it much easier to teach children a subject that they enjoy rather than one they would prefer be skipped?

Here are some easy steps to making math fun:

- Make math interactive.
- Make math look different from “homework” or “seatwork.”
- Encourage discussions about math in the classroom with the teacher facilitating, but more often with the students brain-storming and leading the discussion.
- Use manipulatives to help students “see” math, not just “hear” it. Be careful not to over-kill with manipulatives and certainly don’t use them “just to be using them” if you don’t know for what they are best used to teach.

Be ENTHUSIASTIC! If students see that you are excited about math, they will be too.



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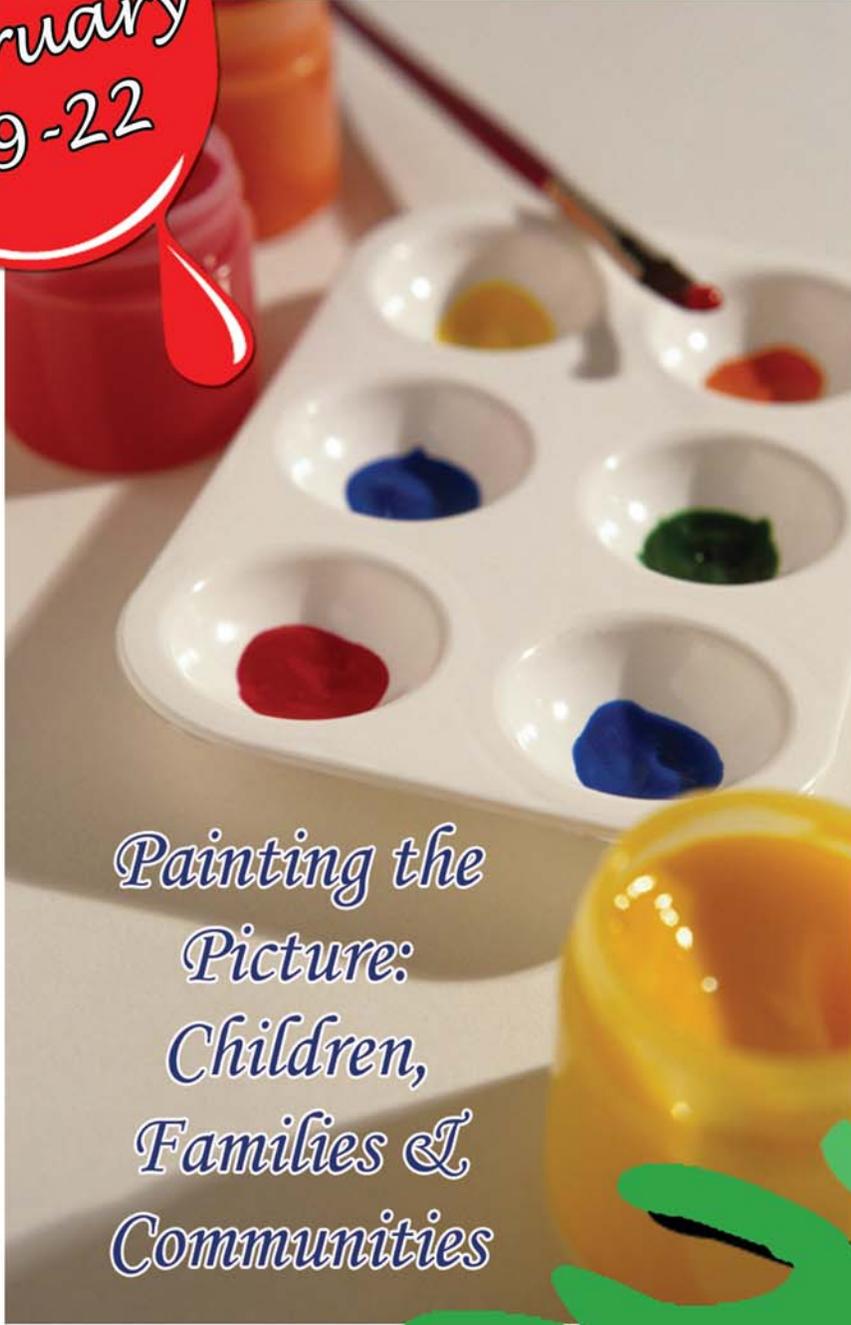
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naeyc and nctm

on early childhood mathematics

To succeed in school and in life, young children need a strong foundation in mathematics. Yet U.S. children's mathematical proficiency is far below that of many other countries, and the mathematics gap is widest for children living in poverty and those who are members of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minority groups.

Early childhood is the place to start addressing the mathematics achievement gap: Preschoolers already enjoy and are keenly interested in the mathematical aspects of their everyday world. Families and early childhood programs can play a crucial part in nurturing these interests. Drawing on the latest research, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) have come together with a joint position statement: *Early Childhood Mathematics: Promoting Good Beginnings*.

NAEYC and NCTM take the position that all young children should experience *high-quality, challenging, and accessible* mathematics experiences. They make specific recommendations to guide curriculum and teaching practices in programs for 3- to 6-year-old children, and they recommend actions for policies, systems changes, and other steps needed to support high-quality mathematics education.

Recommendations

In high-quality mathematics education for 3- to 6-year-old children, teachers and other key professionals should . . .

1. enhance children's natural interest in mathematics and their disposition to use it to make sense of their physical and social worlds

2. build on children's varying experiences, including their family, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds; their individual approaches to learning; and their informal knowledge

3. base mathematics curriculum and teaching practices on current knowledge of young children's cognitive, linguistic, physical, and social-emotional development

4. use curriculum and teaching practices that strengthen children's problem-solving and reasoning processes as well as representing, communicating, and connecting mathematical ideas

5. ensure that the curriculum is coherent and compatible with known relationships and sequences of important mathematical ideas

6. provide for children's deep and sustained interaction with mathematical ideas

7. integrate mathematics with other activities and other activities with mathematics

8. provide ample time, materials, and teacher support for children to engage in play, a context in which they explore and manipulate mathematical ideas with keen interest

9. actively introduce mathematical concepts, methods, and language through a range of appropriate experiences and teaching strategies

10. support children's learning by thoughtfully and continually assessing all children's mathematical knowledge, skills, and strategies

**National Association for the Education of Young Children and
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics**

To support high-quality mathematics education, institutions, program developers, and policymakers should . . .

1. create more effective early childhood teacher preparation and continuing professional development in mathematics
2. use collaborative processes to develop well aligned systems of appropriate, high-quality standards, mathematics curriculum, and assessment
3. design institutional structures and policies that support teachers' mathematics learning, teamwork, and planning
4. provide resources necessary to overcome the barriers to young children's mathematical proficiency at the classroom, community, institutional, and system-wide levels

A positive attitude toward mathematics and a strong foundation for mathematics learning begin in early childhood. Working together, educators, administrators, policymakers and families can raise awareness about the importance of early childhood mathematics, inform others about sound approaches to mathematical teaching and learning, and develop resources that support high-quality, equitable mathematical experiences for all young children.

The complete position statement, with research and references, is available online at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/mathematics

Beyond Early Childhood Mathematics: What Else Matters?

Learn more about...

- early learning standards, as described in NAEYC and NAECs/SDE's 2002 position statement, online at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/learning_standards.
- teaching strategies and other elements of developmentally appropriate practice. See C. Copple & S. Bredekamp (eds.), *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*, 3d ed., Washington, DC: NAEYC, 2009. Access the position statement online at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/dap.
- standards for early childhood programs and accreditation performance criteria, online at www.naeyc.org/academy/primary/standardsintro.
- standards for early childhood professional preparation programs as updated by NAEYC in 2009, online at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ppp.
- implementation of professional standards. See M. Hyson (ed.), *Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's Standards for Programs*, Washington, DC: NAEYC, 2003.

The National Research Council and Early Childhood Mathematics

Affirming the critical need for improved mathematics education in early childhood, in 2009 the National Research Council released a report summarizing the evidence and making key recommendations for practice, policy, and research. The report's recommendations strongly align with those in the NAEYC/NCTM position statement.

"Providing young children with extensive, high-quality early mathematics instruction can serve as a sound

foundation for later learning in mathematics and contribute to addressing long-term systemic inequities in educational outcomes" (Cross, Woods, & Schweingruber 2009, 2).

Cross, C.T., T.A. Woods, & H. Schweingruber (eds.); Committee on Early Childhood Mathematics; National Research Council. (2009). *Mathematics learning in early childhood: Paths toward excellence and equity*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Online: www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12519.

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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.

Every child deserves a great start.

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

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WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

Woodworking Project Helps Children Learn Math

Submitted by Sarah Brown, Pre-K Teacher, Sunbeam Early Learning Center

The West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework: Content Standards and Learning Criteria for Pre-Kindergarten children states that mathematics is the ability to think logically, to solve problems and to perceive relationships. Mathematics involves: numbers and operations, patterns and relationships, geometry, spatial sense and measurement.

Our woodworking project did not start because we (the teachers) felt we needed to work on math activities in the classroom. It started with the interest of one child.

I first noticed “Bobby” lying under a chair and “fixing it” with pretend tools like you would a car. From there we looked around our room to see what materials we could work on with actual tools. We started with a wrench and screwdriver to try and take apart an old wire drying rack that was no longer of use.

Before beginning the work, we had a discussion about safety and how to respect the tools we were using. As more children got involved, we moved on to something harder.

Another teacher found a large 6 foot branch from a nearby tree and offered



it to our classroom. We voted on what to do with it and the majority of children decided we should cut it. We started with a small saw you would use for drywall. Once we discovered it couldn't cut all the way through, the children decided we needed a larger saw, which did the job.

The children enjoyed the woodworking activities so much that we knew we needed to continue to offer them more opportunities. We considered the needs and safety of the children and also the affects woodworking would have on the overall noise level in the classroom.



The concept is to build responsibility, respect, and trust between you and the child and also the child and their peers. Every step we took we laid a foundation by discussing what we were doing, the purpose, and then the limits so everyone can experience it safely. We had one teacher supervising any time the tools were brought out. Safety goggles were worn and only a certain number of children were allowed to work at one time, depending on the situation.



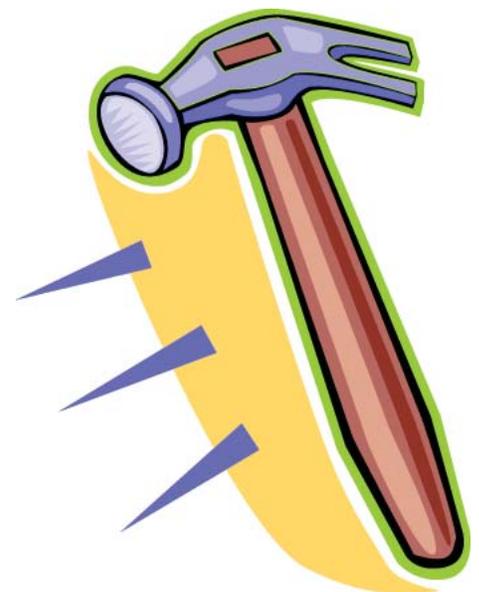
Through this project we built cognitive and social-emotional skills. The children observed what was happening as they worked and then made a hypothesis on what would happen if they used a different tool and tried something else. They looked to each other for ideas and used teachers as resources.

We had an old science table in the storage building that we thought would make a good workbench. Looking at the cost of hardware, available tools, and level of difficulty to assemble, we decided bolts, lug nuts, and wrenches were the best way to go.

We asked a family volunteer (my brother) to bring in his tools and help us put our work bench together. All along we described what we were doing, the names of the tools, and what could

happen if friends were not safe. This helped add that level of seriousness that children can pick up on.

Through this experience the children were learning about the geometric shape of the lug nut and how to compare different sizes so their wrench could fit the job. They were using real levels and rulers to measure and judge spatial relationships. The best part is they didn't realize they were doing all of this.



How Important Is Math to Preschoolers?

Submitted by Kay DeWitt, Preston County Starting Points

Just as preschool teachers put a lot of emphasis on socialization and literacy, is math and science that important?

Number concepts are the foundation of mathematics. Counting in rote, one-to-one correspondence, measuring, patterns, and other skills should be used daily in your classroom.

As children gain a sense of numbers, they understand what “two or three” really means. They also begin to explore the relationships between quantities of more, less, or the same. Gradually the child will begin to understand number order by counting from left to right.

Young children can learn the names of numbers without having any idea what the symbol represents. Rather than teaching a child to recognize numbers, link that number to a quantity. For example:

- Have a child notice that it takes 5 scoops of sand to fill the cup
- Have the child predict how many blocks it will take to make a road to travel to the shelf
- Set the snack table with five place settings then have five children sit down

There are several mathematical concepts that children, including preschoolers, enjoy learning. These concepts include patterns and relationships, spatial relationships, and measurements.

Patterns and Relationships

You can demonstrate patterns and relationships through play by lining up the dinosaurs, one big then one little. Repeat the pattern. Let the children predict what comes next in the pattern.

Spatial Relationships

Spatial relationships include concepts of in, around, up, and down. Or the triangle has three sides and the rectangle has four sides.

Measurements

Exploring the concept of measurements should be very hands-on for preschoolers. Ideas for providing measuring opportunities include encouraging children to use measuring cups, determining which block is longer in the block area, or who is the tallest child in the classroom.

As you watch children engage in the activities, you will observe the developmental progress and an understanding of math in your classroom.

Circle time activities can include songs and fingerplays which emphasize math concepts and rote counting. Here is an example of counting by rote in a fingerplay:

**5 little ducks went out to play
Over the hill and far away
Mother duck called with her
“Quack, Quack, Quack”
(clap hands while saying quack)
4 little ducks came running
back**

(Continue counting until you get to none)

**Then father duck called with
his “Quack, Quack, Quack”
(clap very loud)
And all the little ducks came
running back.**

Most children will enjoy engaging in this type of fingerplay activity. Many will not even realize they are counting, until the end of the song.

Science Engages Preschoolers Natural Curiosity

Submitted by Kay DeWitt, Preston County Starting Points



Science facts are important for preschoolers to encourage them to explore the world around them. When you provide an environment with many varied materials, children become curious about how things work. Children ask questions, seek answers, and learn to appreciate their surroundings.

The content of science in any classroom should be geared to the children's interest in the world around them.

Here are a few examples:

- Teach life sciences by including plants and animals. Help children understand the difference between living and non-living things, and learn about their own bodies with pictures, models and displays.
- Introduce physical science by adding balls, ramps, pulleys, and magnets to your science area. Have children mix different combinations of flour, water, salt, and add baking soda with vinegar to watch it fizz.
- Talk about the living earth. Teach children how to take care of the classroom pet. Which animals lay eggs or what does a plant need to grow?

- Get out a magnifying glass and find out what is in the dirt in your backyard or introduce planting using seeds, pine cones or acorns.

The goal is for children to become curious and interested in science, learn key ideas, and develop respect for their world.

Guide children as they make their own discoveries. Help them to learn how to observe, collect information and make predictions.

Math and science are in your classroom! It's everywhere!!! Look around your classroom at your interest areas: blocks, dramatic play, manipulative, sand, water, circle time, computers, library, outdoor play--all have math and science concepts included. Pointing them out to our children can make great teaching moments.

Reference:

Dodge, D. Colker, L. and Heroman, C. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. Teaching Strategies, Inc. Fourth Edition, 2002.

MEET THE SPEAKERS FOR SECA 2013

We're going to Mobile, Alabama for our SECA 2013 conference and our theme is **Hand-in-Hand: Children and Nature**. Our speakers will be bringing you information that you can use to transform your outdoor play space into an *Exemplary Outdoor Classroom*.



Keynote & Featured Speakers

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Opening General Session/ 7:00 pm



David Kisor

The Power of Music to Build Social and Emotional Skills

Attendees will learn how songs can be used to promote social and emotional development in early learners. The songs that we will explore are based on important findings in the fields of resiliency theory, mastery motivation and positive psychology.

Friday, March 1, 2013

Friday Morning General Session



Professor Robin C. Moore

Outdoors by Design: Why? How? Who Wins?

Across human history, children have spent large chunks of each day outdoors, learning about the wondrous world around them, including each other. Landscape design can be an effective tool in helping to create an antidote to contemporary lifestyles: compelling, naturalized, outdoor learning environments.

ling, naturalized, outdoor learning environments.



Sarah Livesay & Angel Rohnke
"Growing Up WILD:
Exploring Nature With
Young Children"

Featured Session/1:00-4:00 pm/Thursday, February 28, 2013

(requires separate registration)

Come play with us as we romp through this nationally award-winning environmental education curriculum guide created specifically for early childhood classrooms. Growing Up WILD*, brings wildlife and nature into focus using art, math, science, literacy, nutrition and physical activities for the early childhood educator. Journey with us as we introduce the exciting new research identifying the importance of a child's connection to the outdoor world in relation to their psychological and physical development. Participants each receive a copy of the full-color guide, which is correlated to NAEYC, Head Start and My Plate! Food pyramid standards.

For more information about our speakers, go to http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/seca_conference_speakers_and_schedules.php

Friday Afternoon Featured Session



Susie Wirth of Nature Explore & Kevin Carnes of Lakeshore Learning, Inc.

Successful Outdoor Classrooms in Both Urban & Rural Environments

An outdoor classroom spurs outcomes in all curriculum areas, and children will develop independence and confidence,

enhancing their own concept of self and the greater world around them as they explore the outdoors.

Susie Wirth is Nature Explore Outreach Director for the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. **Kevin Carnes** is President of the Educational Division at Lakeshore Learning Materials.



Saturday, March 2, 2013

Saturday Morning Featured Session

Susie Wirth of Nature Explore

The Arts and Nature

Discover engaging art experiences inspired by nature that help children make deeper connections with the world around them. Experience the Look-Move-Build-Sketch planning tool that encourages multi-faceted arts exploration.

FOR COMPLETE CONFERENCE INFORMATION, INCLUDING AGENDAS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS, INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE HOTEL, AND HOW TO REGISTER, GO TO http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/seca_conference.php.

Participants Inspired by Reggio Workshop

Submitted by Helen Post-Brown, President, WVAYC

Life Changing! Inspirational! Enriching!

These are just some of the words used by participants in the presentation,
"The Reggio Journey Begins."

The two-day presentation was sponsored by The West Virginia Association for Young Children (WVAYC) and held at the Bridgeport Conference Center. Over 100 early childhood educators in West Virginia embarked on a life-long journey of becoming "Reggio inspired."

The presentation provided an introduction to the work inspired by the Schools of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy. It included the history of the schools in Reggio Emilia and the work in the United States, an overview of the fundamental framework that supports the work, and specific examples and information regarding the implementation of the approach. During the Saturday presentation, participants had an opportunity to develop their plan to begin using this work.

The presenters, Elizabeth McMaine and Sally Whitehead, work at the Reggio inspired center at Audubon Head Start in Henderson, Kentucky.

In 2013, The Audubon Head Start and the Ohio Valley Collaborative is sponsoring the travelling exhibition, "The Wonder of Learning." This exhibition is offered as a democratic piazza calling international attention to the importance of education and schools as places for discussion and mutual exchange. The exhibit is housed at the Henderson Fine Arts Center.

For more information about these special events check out the web site: www.wonderoflearninginky.org. The exhibit will be available January 31 to June 14, 2013.



"Reggio inspired" calming
area for
quiet reading

West Virginia Children Are Growing: But in the Wrong Direction?

Submitted by Heidi Zbosnik, WVECTCR, Nurse Health Consultant

Technological advances, such as computers and media devices, have improved the education of children all across the nation. But are young children paying the cost with their health? Studies have shown a relationship between exposed media time to overweight children.

Obesity is a serious medical problem which occurs when a child is well above the normal weight for age and height. Childhood obesity paves the road for serious health consequences such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

There is a direct correlation between decreased physical activity and increased caloric intake. Children are lacking in physical activity by remaining in a sedentary position for hours at a time.

Television viewers also have a higher intake of non-nutritious foods and are exposed to unhealthy food and drink advertising.

Because of these risks, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends limited screen time, media time and computer time in the early childhood setting.

In the first few years of life, a child's brain and body, is going through important growth and developmental changes. Before age three, cognitive development can be harmfully affected by viewing television. The AAP recommends that in the early care and education setting, screen time should not be permitted for any child under the age of two. For children two and older, total media time should not exceed thirty minutes once a week, and that time must be used for educational or physical activity use only.

The AAP further states that meals and snacks should be used as a developmentally appropriate learning experience and include nutritious healthy foods.



Early child care providers have the perfect opportunities to teach children healthy eating habits by allowing children to determine the amount of food they will consume in one setting. Forcing children to clean their plate may contribute to overeating and becoming overweight.

Allow children to make healthy choices on which foods they like to eat. Children are born with the ability to know when they are full, but can easily lose that ability if forced to eat beyond their recognition of fullness.

What about activity? In the newly revised edition of *Caring for Our Children*, the AAP recommends daily physical activity should be provided to every child, every day. All children from birth to six years should have daily participation in two to three outdoor activities (weather permitting), two or more structured activities promoting movement, and continuous opportunities to develop and practice age appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Daily physical activity not only encourages the development of these skills, but also is an important step in the prevention of childhood obesity. There is also some evidence leading to an improved learning curve after short bursts of physical activity.

As a child care provider, you have a unique opportunity to help stop a growing obesity health crisis in America. Teaching children proper food choices and providing opportunities for physical activity, will help young minds create habits that last a lifetime. Share information with parents who may be unaware of the consequences of prolonged media exposure and lack of physical activity. Learn creative ways to promote healthy learning activities and exercise. Challenge yourself to believe you can make the difference in not only a child's future, but the future of America as well.



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WV Early Childhood Provider Quarterly Reader Survey

We want to make sure that we bring you the magazine YOU want to see and use. Your feedback will help us be responsive to your needs and serve you better. Tell us what you think! Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey.

1. Which kinds of WVECPQ features do you find the most interesting, informative, relevant, or helpful? (Mark top three choices)

- Feature/theme articles
- Celebrating Success
- Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS)
- WV Birth to Three
- Parent Blocks Newsletter
- Sharing Corner

2. How many of the last four issues have you read?

- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

3. What is the average time you spend reading an issue?

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes – 1 hour
- More than 1 hour

4. Do you share the WVECPQ magazine with co-workers or others interested in early care and education information?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

5. Do you distribute copies of the *Parent Blocks Newsletter* to families in your program?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

6. How do you receive issues of the magazine? _____

7. Would you be interested in receiving the WVECPQ electronically?

- Yes
- No

8. What topics would you like to see covered in future issues? (Please be specific)

9. The information provided in the WVECPQ is applicable to my work in early care and education.

- Yes
 No

10. How would you rate the overall quality and your satisfaction of the magazine?

- High
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

Additional Comments: _____

Reader Information:

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- Master's Degree or above
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(Optional:)

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Please send your completed survey to:
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Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"
Volume 10, Issue 1, Winter 2013

Science and Math From a Three-Year-Old Perspective

I recently had an "ah ha" experience while spending a few days visiting my grandchildren.

Like children, adults learn best from discovery and what is relevant to them. Children are curious about the world around them and have many questions about why things happen. They are natural learners.

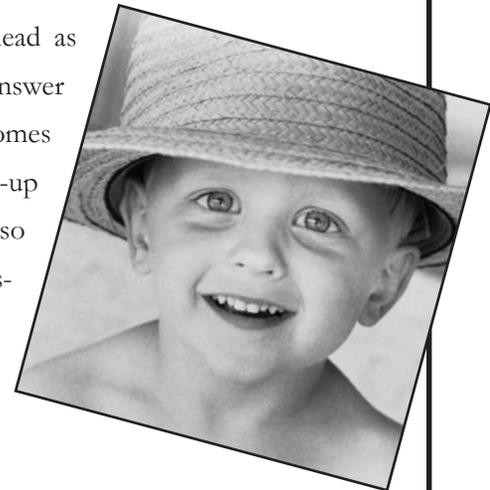
WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; 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

Although she is my daughter, Eileen has an innate ability to nurture my grandson Trent's inquisitiveness. And does he ever ask the questions!!

Communicating is a step in building early math skills. One can

almost "see" the wheels turning in his head as he thinks the answer through and comes up with a follow-up response. It is so much fun to listen to his answers to "why" questions.



Math is problem solving and valuing Trent's answer helps him understand there is more than one answer. This helps build his reasoning skills. Counting the number of steps from the second to first floor, asking him to give his sister Claire two red blocks, and playing Candy Land are all math problems using numbers, shapes, and colors. These fun games are building the skills needed later to work through math and science questions.

Continued on next page

Puzzles are also a good way for children to develop problem solving skills. Of course, there are frequent shouts of “I did it myself.” What wonderful music to the ear! Trent is learning basic math concepts of sizes and shapes. Building a block tower with daddy provides an opportunity to problem-solve how to make the tower balance. Or how many blocks are needed to make it higher than the doll house? I put my toe into his shoes and asked Trent if he thought they would fit, why or why not.

Children are naturally curious about science. They are curious about how things work. Every day situations amaze them. How do plants grow? What happens when you add water to dirt? Oh, how much fun to throw big mud balls and small mud balls. If there is one puddle in the yard children seem to find it and to jump with as much force as they can to splash the water.

Young children develop the necessary skills for scientific thought while making observations and interpretations about their world.

Back to adding water to dirt to produce mud. Trent and I took a walk around the pond in the neighborhood. It had recently rained and there were mud puddles. Mud puddles + pond + children = throwing



mud into the pond! We talked about the big pieces of mud, how the rain makes the mud, and how smaller pieces were easier to throw. The next day at preschool Trent looked at the dirt around a tree and told me if we added water it would make mud.

Through what can look like purposeless and repetitive actions, children learn basic principles of physics and the six simple machines (lever, incline, plane, wheel and axle, screw, wedge and pulley) that make our lives easier. Trent experiments with inclined planes while pushing his trains up a ramp. He looks to see why the wheel on his scooter is not turning and with his workbench he can use a lever (hammer). Fishing with Gramps is a fun activity and he does not know his fishing pole is a pulley – all that is important to him is that you cast into the water and

you may reel in the fish. That is until he finds rocks to throw into the water.

Playing Candy Land is a new favorite. We use communication to talk about the number of squares on the card. We also count the squares until we find the correct color. Candy Land can also be used to show sequencing, as one thing comes after another, and pattern recognition.

Attitudes about math and science start early and parents play a major role in determining if the interest continues. By building on the natural curiosity of children, parents can set the stage for a life time of interest. It can begin with a simple board game and throwing mud balls!

-Submitted by Barbara Tucker, West Virginia Birth to Three

Fright in the Night: Are Nightmares Normal?

Submitted by Heidi Zbosnik, RN, WVECTCR, Nurse Health Consultant

The coming holidays can be an exciting time for children of all ages. The environmental changes and shorter days can also affect sleep routine. This can lead to a change in a child's behavior at school or in the child care setting. Images seen on television or in real life can hide in the child's mind and surface during the quietest hours of the night. Lack of sleep can also create problems during the day.

Children between the ages of three and six are most susceptible to nightmares because this is the age in which normal fears and imagination develops. Dreams can be the result of scary situations, ghosts, animals or bad people. Often they are a direct result of not getting enough sleep, having an irregular sleep routine or experiencing increased stress or anxiety. Most nightmares are simply a normal part of coping with the changes in our lives.

Children who have interrupted sleep routines can become sleep deprived and are more impulsive and irritable. They may become



quick to cry, lose their tempers or get frustrated. This creates a challenge in the early education setting. It's important to encourage normal routines at bedtime.

If a child does experience a nightmare, provide soothing words of comfort, cuddling, and reminders it was only a dream.

Be sensitive to children's feelings toward animate objects associated with the holiday seasons, as well as

allowing time for extra rest during periods when a child is going to be up later than normal.

Knowing each individual child's normal behaviors makes recognizing sleep deprivation easier and offers you, as the child's primary caregiver, a chance to promote positive sleep habits.

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 from PLT that introduces the concept of **seasons**.

Early Childhood Activity 6: Evergreens in Winter

Evergreen trees offer a sensory overload! Through these experiences, children will touch, smell, see, hear, and taste the season of winter. Consider trying these experiences year-round in areas with or without snow.

Doing the Activity

Bundle up and enjoy a stroll around your yard, neighborhood, local park, or evergreen forest. On your winter walks, try the following:

- Stop and listen to the sounds of winter (e.g., wind or snow under feet). Ask: *How does our walk sound, smell, or look different from the last time we walked? What is the same?*
- Search on the ground for cones. Look up high in the trees for cones still on them. Look at the branches and knobs on deciduous trees. With the leaves gone, these shapes are easier to see.
- Find places that are out of the wind (e.g., close to a building or next to a tree or hedge). Ask: *If you were an animal outside in winter, where would you stay?* Search on the ground for tracks and other animal signs.
- Search for animal homes in deciduous trees. Nests and holes should be more visible now. Look for evidence of ways animals survive in winter.
- Lie down under evergreens, and look up through the branches. Talk about the visible patterns, and experience the way evergreens provide shelter from wind, rain, and snow.
- Look for the whorls of branches on conifers, such as pine, spruce, and fir. Each year, the tree adds a new whorl of branches. You can estimate the age of the tree by counting the whorls. Add two or three years to represent the first few years of growth before the tree started making whorls.

Winter Treats

Mix one part peanut butter (or suet, if available) with five parts corn meal and pack the mixture into the crevices of a large pinecone. This Audubon-approved, all-season mixture will attract woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and warblers.



Once back inside, prepare and enjoy some hot tea or cocoa, and remind children that these tasty treats also come from trees! Plan to visit the trees again in the spring to look for new growth.

Adapted from Activity 6: Evergreens in Winter from Project Learning Tree's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* guide.

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, cfrancis@wvadventures.net or toll-free at (888) 372-9663.

DID YOU KNOW?

To conserve energy during cold West Virginia winters, ruffed grouse will “snow roost.” The ruffed grouse will burrow into snow drifts at least 10 inches deep to create “snow caves,” making the grouse less visible to predators and protecting them from the wind and cold.

www.plt.org



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

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