

## Time: A Child's Pace

If you've been reading this newsletter over the years, you've noticed the word "curriculum" used quite often. There are some that say there is no curriculum for infants and toddlers and designing one is inappropriate. ([waldorfhomeschoolers.com](http://waldorfhomeschoolers.com)) Others have used the curriculum of the American Kindergarten, adapting it to Pre-K and later to infant-toddler programs. My experience is that the best curricula lies in between. Both extremes, the scheduled curriculum, designed for older children and the absence of any curriculum can lead to unhappy toddlers. Neither is workable for a heterogeneous group of children zero to four years old.

Time is very different for a preschooler. Children have no internal restrictions on how long they should inquire, discover and play. You cannot predict how long it takes your child to decide to be curious about the shape of things or how long it will take him to discover that many items in our environment share the attribute of "squareness." In grade school your child will be expected to learn in a certain time frame. Those who learn a subject more slowly or those who learn exceptionally fast are considered outside the norm. In the perfectly designed educational system no one works outside the norm, but we've yet to reach that lofty goal in our society. However, you can find Family Childcare Homes that are willing to offer your child this gift of time.

In the Reggio Emilio philosophy, a method employed by many preschools in Italy, time is viewed as something precious



and endless. Projects are not designed to be completed in a time frame, nor are there special times of the day to do certain things. Children are given the time to inquire and explore on their own time in an environment set up for their comfort. They learn through this unhurried process of discovery. In America, the term "constructivism" is used. In a constructivist classroom the teacher understands that each child learns about the world through a series of experiences. It is the teacher's responsibility to make available the situations in which the children learn about the world. Time plays no role in these classrooms. A child does not have to reach a certain point in order to earn a good report. He can meander along

his path in order to reach his understanding of a universal concept.

Family Childcare Homes can use these curricula with their age groups because they are not based on project completions. When looking for a provider, ask how the day is structured. You want some structure and rhythm, but within that structure your child should be able to make choices about what he wants to do. The curriculum to the right is one that embodies these philosophies.

You'll see that activities are not chosen by the adults. Your child can choose his own projects and play freely. Transition times are much longer than in traditional preschool scheduling, where children are expected to move from one activity to the next in a matter of minutes. Clean up time is also much longer, allowing your child to find a more comfortable time to stop his artistic exploration.

The day is not without a framework. The fluid structure gives your child the comfort of knowing what's going to happen during the day. That expectation gives him a sense of security. He won't be surprised every day by what happens, but can make his own leaps to new things when he is ready. Don't worry that your child won't receive the exposure needed to advance his skills. If the equipment is engaging and the environment safe, your

## Family Child Care Curriculum

### 7am - 8am

**Indoor Free Play** - Children arrive and are free to play in the indoor environment. This time allows them a transition from home to school and time to find their place in the group. Providers are ready to read stories or engage in children's play as requested and will greet children and help the transition, if necessary.

### 8am - 9am

**Breakfast Time** - Children eat a leisurely breakfast. They can engage in age-appropriate activities to help set up and clean up.

### 9am - 11am

**Outdoor Play** - Children play freely outside. They construct their own games, play in the sandbox, go for a walk, play on playground equipment or large motor toys. The morning may include snack time.

### 11am - 11:30am

**Transition** - Children transition to the indoor environment with a half hour of free play.

### 11:30am - 12:30pm

**Lunch Time** - Children eat leisurely lunch. They can engage in age-appropriate activities to help set up and clean up.

### 12:30pm - 2pm

**Nap Time** - Nap time can include reading time and quiet music.

### 2pm - 3pm

**Art Time** - During art time all art supplies should be made available. It takes some children weeks to be interested in a certain mode of artistic expression, while others will want to choose a different mode every day.

### 2pm - 2:30pm

**Clean Up Time** - Allow children plenty of time to clean up and transition out of this time.

### 2:30pm - 4pm

**Outdoor Play** - More time to stretch limbs and exercise.

### 4pm - Home

**Indoor Free Play** - A repeat of the morning's indoor play including a transition to their home.

child will choose the activities that help him grow.

Finding a provider who allows your child to grow at his own pace is important. This is a time in your child's life when you can take advantage of the lack of time constraints. Time is a special gift in our fast paced, hectic world.

## Read

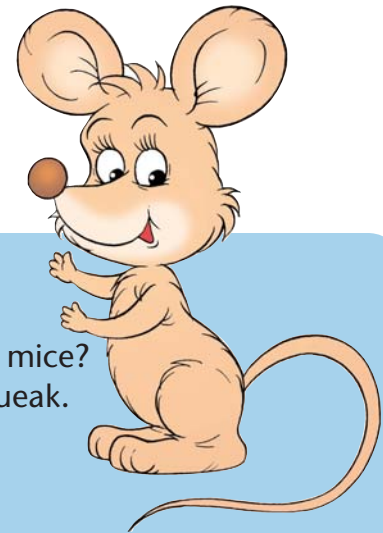
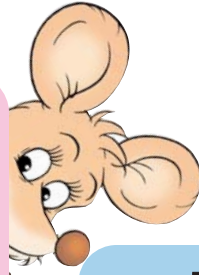
**Working in the Reggio Way**  
by Julianne P. Wurm

**In Search of Understanding:  
The Case for Constructivist  
Classrooms**  
by Jacqueline Grennon  
Brooks and Martin G. Brooks

# Fingerplays: Simply Silly Little Mice

## Hickory, Dickory, Dock

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,  
*(Swing your arms.)*  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
*(Run your fingers from toe to head.)*  
The clock struck one.  
*(Clap hands.)*  
And down he ran.  
*(Run fingers from head to toe.)*  
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

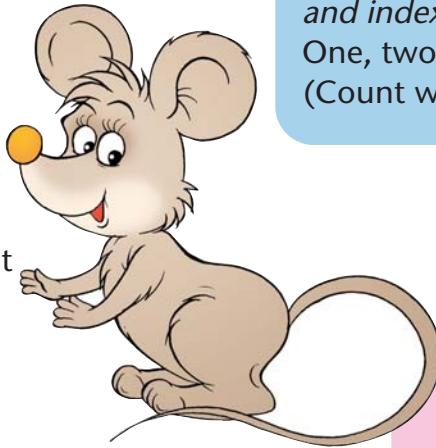


## Baby Mice

Where are the baby mice?  
Squeak, squeak, squeak.  
*(Hide your eyes.)*  
I cannot see them.  
Peek, peek, peek.  
*(Peek through your fingers.)*  
Here they come from the hole in the wall.  
*(Make a circle with your thumbs and index fingers.)*  
One, two, three, four, five - that's all.  
*(Count with your fingers.)*

## Little Mousie

See the little mousie,  
Creeping up the stair.  
*(Creep your fingers up baby's arm.)*  
Looking for a warm nest  
*(Tickle behind baby's ear.)*  
There! Oh there!



## Mousie in a Hole

Here's a little mousie,  
*(Poke your index finger through the fist of the opposite hand.)*  
Peeking through a hole.

Peeks to the left.

*(Wiggle finger to the left.)*

Peeks to the right.

*(Wiggle finger to the right.)*

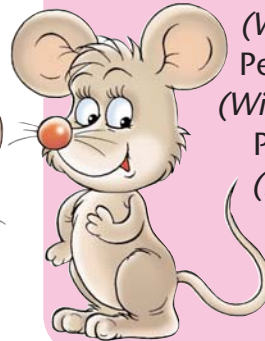
Pull your head back in.

*(Pull your finger back in.)*

There's a cat in sight!

## Hurry, Scurry Little Mouse

Hurry, scurry little mouse,  
Starts down at your toes.  
*(Tickle baby's toes.)*  
Hurry, scurry little mouse,  
Past your knees he goes.  
*(Move up to baby's knees.)*  
Hurry, scurry little mouse,  
Past where your tummy is.  
*(Move up to baby's tummy.)*  
Hurry, scurry little mouse,  
Gives you a mousie kiss.  
*(Give baby a kiss.)*



# Mouse Activities

## Mouse Paint

Read the story *Mouse Paint* (on page six)

You need:  
Red, blue and yellow  
fingerprint  
Fingerprint paper



Place a large spoonful of paint on a paper plate for your child. Give her a piece of paper and let her mix the colors. Talk about what's happening on the paper. You can give her paint brushes, if she asks.

Place a large tarp on the floor in a warm place. Help your child strip down to diapers. Let her walk in the fingerprint and make colorful foot prints on the paper. Some toddlers won't like the feeling of the paint on their feet. Allow her to explore at her own pace.

## A Carton of Mice

Gray Tempera paint  
Small egg shaped or round styrofoam balls, approximately the size of an egg  
Egg carton  
Markers

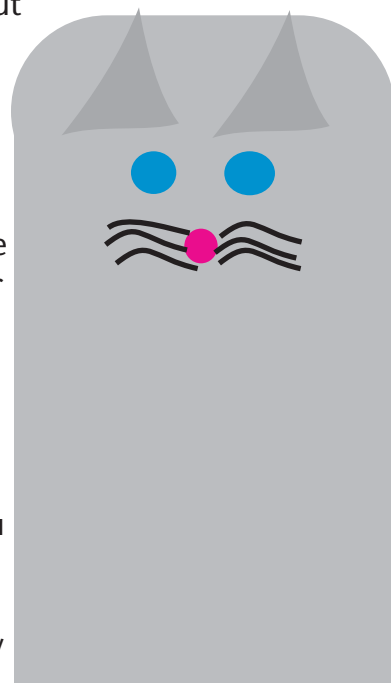
Place the gray paint in a low dish. Have your child roll the styrofoam eggs or balls in the paint. Allow them to dry overnight. When dry, have your child use markers to make a face on the mice. He can use his mice to play, rolling them around the house. Store his new toy in the egg carton. If your child likes, he can decorate the egg carton so it looks like a mouse house.

## Mice Fingerpuppets

Fingerpuppets are great toys for character play and are easy to make while your child is napping. Make one every day until you have a good-size mouse family for your child and her friends to play with. You need:

Gray felt  
Assorted felt scraps  
Embroidery thread  
Cloth markers or cloth paint available at craft stores.

Clip out the mouse below and use it as a pattern to cut two mice bodies from the gray felt. Use your scraps to make ears, eyes, nose and mouth and sew them to one of the bodies. Use your embroidery thread for the whiskers. When complete place your two mouse bodies together with the decorated piece facing inward. Sew the two pieces together  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the edge, leaving the bottom open. Turn the piece inside out and you'll have your first finger puppet. Use the paint or markers to embellish your mouse. Repeat the project using your scraps to make mice with different personalities. You can even make hair, hats and scarves, if you choose. Allow your child to pretend with her new mouse family.



# All About Town



## Reduce Early Childhood Stress

than it is to simply not expose your child to that adult until you know the relationship is going to have some stability.

When you search for a family childcare situation, ask how long the provider has been operating and how long she plans to continue to work. At what age do the children in her program move onto larger daycare centers? Do the children in

her care tend to stay for a number of years?

Researchers hypothesize that building strong relationships builds neural pathways that lead to stronger behavioral and intellectual growth. By giving your child stability in the early years you're actually supplying her with more of the tools she needs to have life-long success.

While we've had evidence for awhile about the damages of stress in adults, a new report, (*Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain*, July 2005) states that a child's IQ, language development, reasoning, critical thinking skills and social competence can be undermined by long term stress. The worst stress damage occurs when children don't experience stable relationships. This can happen in an unstable home or in a daycare environment that has constant turnover of staff. There are things you can do to help your child avoid these stressers.

Pay very careful attention to the adults your child has contact with. It's more stressful for a child to form a relationship with an adult who leaves

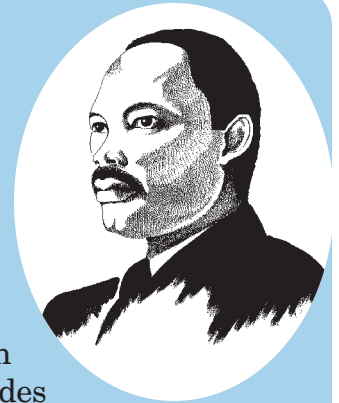
## Martin Luther King Day

It's important for all of us to celebrate the life of Martin Luther King. However, preschoolers are not old enough to understand the issues that define his life. Some of the incidents may even be frightening to a child who has no experience with the politics of institutional racism. Happily some preschoolers have yet to experience racism in their short lives and will remain color blind through their preschool years.

One way to celebrate this day without burdening your child with complex adult issues is to make sure your private library includes lots of books that have African American characters. In this country African American children continue to be bombarded with negative depictions of people of color through the media. You need to be aware of this and do your best to offset this negative

influence.

Filling your bookshelves with fiction and non-fiction that includes positive African American characters opens up possibilities that your child may not otherwise experience. There are now hundreds of fiction books published with diverse characters. Go to Amazon.com and do an advanced search by going to *Books*, then *Advanced Search*. In the subject area type in "African American" and the appropriate age group. You can do the same for any culture. Make sure the world is represented in your library. I think it would make Martin Luther King smile.



## Mice Books



### Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh

The cutest little white mice discover color blending after they each jump into a jar of paint; one blue, one red and one yellow. They drip puddles on a white piece of paper and then decide to dance and play in the colors. As they dance, the puddles make new colors. After a bath they decide they can do the same with a paint brush. An adorable little board book for artistic toddlers. (ages 6 mon. - 3)



### Bernelly and Harriet by Elizabeth Dahlie

The City Mouse and the Country Mouse is told in a new way in this charming adaptation. Bernelly and Harriet are two very feminine little mice. Bernelly, needing a new pair of boots, visits her artist cousin, Harriet, in the city. After a great deal of shopping and sight-seeing, Bernelly gets homesick. Harriet, not wanting to end the visit, returns to the country with her cousin. Each discovers something new and exciting but is happy to return to her home. These very graceful and elegant mice are sure to attract many little girls who want to see what it's like to go a little bit further from home. (ages 3 - 6)



### Mouse Around by Pat Schories

Wordless books are a treasure to read with a toddler, because the child becomes the reader and writer of the story. In *Mouse Around*, there are beautiful illustrations depicting a mouse, who in his quest to explore a drop of water, gets stuck in a plumber's pocket and has a great adventure. On every page there's a large illustration with lots of detail in the background encouraging preschoolers to spin their own creative tale. There's also a small illustration giving a clue to where the mouse might be. This is a book that can be used to encourage young children to tell a story and older children to write their own mouse parable. (ages 3 - 9)



### Mouse Mess by Linnea Riley

A mischievous little mouse has a great meal after hours. The little mouse wakes up and discovers all kinds of treasures in the kitchen. Children will love to identify all the familiar foods such as Ritz Crackers and Oreo Cookies. Luckily, noticing the huge mess, which he insists someone else made, he cleans up. The rhyming, bouncy text make this a great read-aloud book. The illustrations are large and clear and leave no question what this mouse is up to. Toddlers will identify with the mess that enjoying a meal can leave. (ages 2 - 6)

### Don't Forget.....

*Angelina* Stories by Katherine Holabird

*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* and other stories by Laura Numeroff

*Ralph* stories by Beverly Cleary (great read aloud chapter books)

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