

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) 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. We cannot predict how long it takes each child to decide to be curious about the shape of things or how long it will take that child to discover that many items in our environment share the attribute of "squareness." In grade school children are 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, if you have decided to provide family childcare, you can provide this utopia, at least for a short time, in a child's life.

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 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.

You can bring these philosophies into your Family Childcare home without having to adjust them to your young age group because they are not based on completion of projects or mastery of a skill. To the right is an example of a family childcare curriculum based on these philosophies.

You'll see that activities are not chosen by the adults. The children choose their 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 children to find a more comfortable time to stop their artistic exploration.

The day is not without a framework. The fluid structure, based on the child's needs, allows toddlers the comfort of knowing what is going to happen during the day. You can use a curriculum such as this every day, adapting the flow of time to your group. Your children will never be bored as long as you've set up your environment so they can engage freely in the activities they choose. If you've set up a stimulating environment, (see February's newsletter)

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 with 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 mode of artistic expression, while others will want to choose a different type of material 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.

the children will have exposure to all the concept areas they need to experiment with before they reach Kindergarten. They'll feel comfortable knowing what to expect in their caregiver's home. Most of all you've given them the precious gift of time.

Read

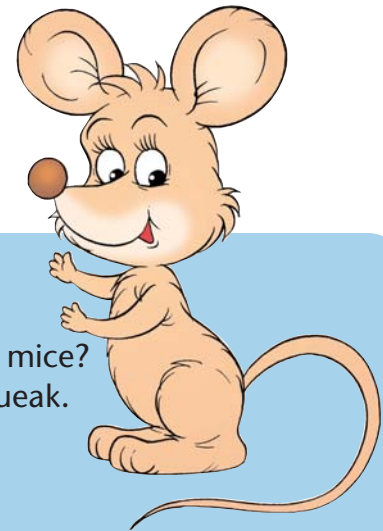
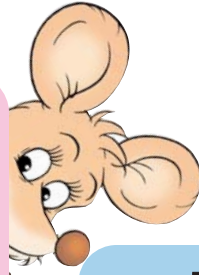
Working in the Reggio Way
by Julianne P. Wurm

**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.

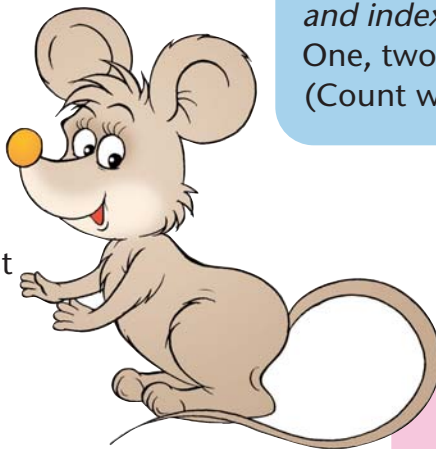


Baby Mice

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.)

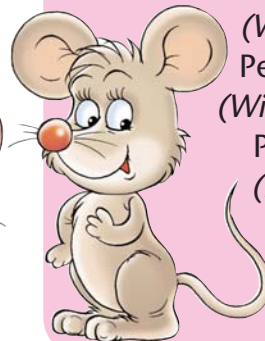
Pull your head back in.

(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 each child. Give them a piece of paper and let them mix the colors. Talk about what's happening on the paper. You can give children brushes, if they ask.

Place a large tarp on the floor in a warm place. Help the children strip down to diapers. Let them 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 them to explore at their 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 the children roll the styrofoam eggs or balls in the paint. Allow them to dry overnight.

When dry, allow the children to use markers to make a face on the mice. They can use their mice to play, rolling them around the house. Store their new toy in the egg carton. If the children like, they can decorate the egg carton so it looks like a mouse house.

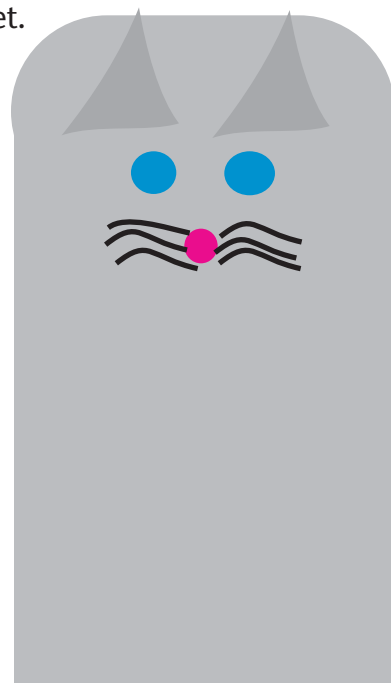
Mice Fingerpuppets

Fingerpuppets are great toys for character play and are easy to make while your kids are napping. Make one every day until you have a good-size mouse family for the children 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 markers or cloth paint 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 the children to pretend with their new mouse family.



All About Town

Are You Prepared To Do Your Taxes?

If not, then make a pact right now to get organized so you won't be in trouble again next year. A Family Child Care Provider can lose thousands of dollars by not preparing her taxes properly. You can also get yourself in hot water by not saving receipts and keeping good records in case you get involved in a tax audit. You should own the following things:

1. A divided folder where you'll file all your receipts for the year. Mark it 2006. Vow to keep every receipt.
2. If you own a computer, purchase Quicken or a similar program.
3. If you don't own a computer and you plan to be self-employed for a while, I suggest you buy one, if only to keep your books. If used properly, it will take you five minutes at the end of the year to print a report of all your income and expenses. Bookkeeping programs don't need fancy computers to support them. The smallest, least expensive computer serves the purpose and is a tax deductible business expense.
4. If you're technology opposed, then buy a good bookkeeping notebook at an office store.

What receipts do you save?

- Anything you bought that's going to be used by the children you're caring for, including food, toys, art supplies, diapers, bedding and safety equipment.
- Anything you bought that's used to run the business, including paper, computers, tax prep programs or books. Also bookkeeping programs or books, accountant or lawyer fees, cleaning and office supplies.
- Anything purchased to make home repairs directly to the day care space(100% deductible).
- Anything purchased to make repairs to your home and landscaping (partially deductible).
- Receipts for gas, electric, water, sewer, phone, cable and internet connections.
- Receipts for mortgage, insurance rent or property tax payments.
- Any receipts for books about small business operation, childcare, child development or curriculum.
- Receipts for classes taken concerning childcare or small business operation.
- Receipts for conferences attended, including registration, hotel, meals and transportation.
- Advertising costs.
- Start up costs.
- Any costs involved in registration or certification.
- Receipt of payments to employees.

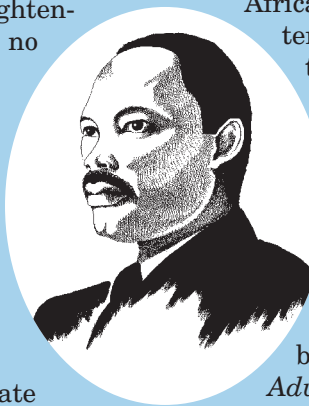
You should also have orderly records for the following:

- Each child's attendance and how

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 children with complex adult issues is to make sure your childcare home library includes lots of books that have African American characters. In this country African American chil-



New Educational Material

Identifying Signs of Stress in Young Children is a new DVD set provided by Programs for Parents to help you recognize early, subtle signs of stress in children 0 - 5 so they can be brought to the attention of the child's parents and healthcare professional. This early detection can change a child's bumpy beginning to a life of achievement.

- many meals eaten each day.
- Your personal health care costs including the cost of insurance.
- Contributions made to IRA's or SEP accounts.
- Records for all payments made to you and copies of the deposit slips.

Start organizing now and next year's taxes will take no more than a couple of hours to complete.

dren continue to be bombarded with negative depictions of people of color through the media. We need to be aware of this and do our best to offset this negative influence. Filling your bookshelves with fiction and non-fiction that includes positive

African American characters opens up possibilities that a 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 her 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. This mouse has a feast. 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)

WARMLINE

Providing you with practical, accurate information on health, behavior issues and regulatory information relating to the children in your care.

1-800-713-9006



Directory

Montclair Office
973-744-4050

Newark Office
973-297-1114



Childcare Matters

January 2006

Newsletter 86

Writer/Editor

Elizabeth A. Allen

Copy Editor

Simona Bana

Susan Boyle

Page Layout

Elizabeth A. Allen

Distribution

Simona Bana

Family Childcare Department

Published by

Programs for Parents

Barbara Fedoroff, CEO

20 Church Street

Montclair NJ 07042

973-744-4050

Childcare Matters (copyright pending) is a monthly newsletter published for Registered Family Childcare Providers and parents using their services.