



ELSA Child Care Connections Bulletin

Creating a Welcoming Classroom

Spring Issue, March 2011

Welcome to ELSA Child Care Connections

ELSA Child Care Connections is a communication bulletin recognizing Early Childhood Educators, Newcomer Children and their Families to Canada.



Check out our website

www.elsanet.org for Current Updates and ECE resources

Our goal is to provide a bulletin for each season. Please email Naznin Dhanani, ECE Resource Coordinator at ece@elsanet.org for ECE resource information and to provide your favourite topic(s) for the upcoming bulletins.

Here are some ways to create a Welcoming Classroom:

- ECE Learning Centres
- Defining ECE Learning Centres
- Multicultural Programming
- Values of Play
- Digital Photography
- Criteria for Evaluating Toys

What are ECE Learning Centres?

ECE Learning Centres are environments that support children's learning. High-quality curriculum provides opportunity for exploration, discovery, positive interactions and encouragement to learn. Young children learn through direct hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. Children learn through responsive and nurturing environments.

ECE Learning Centres include:

- Art Centre
- Block/Puzzle Centre
- Literacy Centre
- Dramatic Centre
- Music/Movement Centre
- Water & Sand Centre
- Outdoor Play



Defining ECE Learning Centres

Core elements of creating a welcoming classroom:

Remember that the environments we create support children's learning. One way is to **distinguish** learning centres. This supports newcomer children identify with their own culture and learn to respect the environment.

Children feel welcome when they are comfortable in the setting. Example: having their own cubby with their photograph and printed name creates a sense of belonging.

This link has free posters to design and define your ECE Learning Centres

www.sparklebox.co.uk

"... transitional spaces ... allow the children to build bridges between the past and the present, their culture of origin and the host society, home and school, and their internal and external worlds."

Colbert, J.A.. (2010). *Welcoming newcomer children*. St. Agatha, ON: Kidslink, p. 104



Defining ECE Learning Centres

The new book, *Welcoming Newcomer Children—The Settlement of Young Immigrants and Refugee* by Dr. Judith A. Colbert talks about a concept of settlement which is useful in working with newcomer children.

Here are some of the ways that you can support Newcomer Children and Families:

- Initiate activities for developing each child's positive identity.
- Set a tone – inclusiveness in the classroom.
- Recognize that the classroom environment needs to reflect the diversity in your daycare community.
- Organize the centres to have materials that support each child's culture and identity.
- Organize classroom to have displays and objects that are from their own country.
- Organize a "Family Wall". Include photos and write-up of children and families.
- Organize materials and interpreters to support families. This link has multi-lingual resources.
www.parentsmatter.ca

"Being settled means feeling welcome and having needs met in a new environment, finding a balance between the old and the new, and being able to participate comfortably with others in new social settings."



Check out this book:
Harms, T., & Clifford R., & Cryer, D. (2005)
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale.

*This is a self-assessment to enhance the quality of your overall child care program. This book can be borrowed from Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
www.wstcoast.org*



Children at this centre were learning about space and planets. Educators supported children through art work, creating a space centre, reading stories about planets and more...

Photos: Courtesy of Coquitlam Continuing Education, ELSA Childminding

Values of Play

Physical

Energy release & relaxation
Development of body concept
Fine & gross motor skills
Eye-hand co-ordination

Emotional

Empathy & respect
Self-respect
Patience & tolerance
Learning to adapt and be flexible



Social

Communication skills
Social responsibility
Sharing & taking turns
Problem solving



Intellectual

Building language skills
Concepts (size, shapes, color & vocabulary)
Imagination & creativity
Curiosity & attention span

When I Play, I Learn

When I play, I learn to count, sort and classify

When I play, I learn to take turns, share and co-operate

When I play, I learn to respect myself and others

When I play, I learn about the world!

Naznin Dhanani, ECE



Multicultural Programming

How can we enhance multicultural programming?

In the book: *Early Childhood Education for a Multicultural Society*, the authors discuss goals. Here are some of their thoughts:

Provide opportunities for children to explore cultural/ racial similarities and differences.

Expand children's awareness of the variety of ways that families of different cultures live and work.

Introduce the ways in which family lifestyles vary according to climate, available materials and economic resources.

Help children understand that all cultures have ways of marking significant events.

It is not how many toys you get, it is how much satisfaction you get from your toys".

Author Unknown

Check out this book:

Chud, G., & Fahlman, R. with Baker, R. & Wakefield, P. (1947). *Early childhood education for a multicultural society: A handbook for educators.*

The book offers excellent suggestions for teaching in multicultural classrooms with sample lesson plans. To borrow, contact Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre www.wstcoast.org

New!

New Resources: Embracing Diversity

- ♦ Videos of children's songs or rhymes in 15 languages
- ♦ Videos of five welcoming phrases in different languages
- ♦ List of books and materials about cross-cultural understanding, raising bilingual children and importance of maintaining first languages

www.bpl.bc.ca.nmsrv.com/kids/embracing-diversity

Harvard University Research

Harvard Research "A growing body of scientific evidence demonstrates that emotional development begins early in life and is closely connected with the emergence of cognitive, language, and social skills. Early emotional development lays the foundation for later academic performance, mental health, and the capacity to form successful relationships. A child's capacity to regulate emotions develops in a complex interaction with his or her environment and ongoing cognitive, motor, and social development"

Read more:



www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Digital Photography & Documentation in ECE Classrooms

Children should be engaged in learning opportunities throughout the day that support their emotional, physical, social & intellectual development.

One way to support newcomer children and their families is "making children more visible" through photography and documentation.

This link has information on "making children visible" through taking short video and adding text.
www.videatives.com

Photographs will help in the following ways:

Newcomer children will feel safe, secure, self-confident and recognize their self-worth.

Newcomer families will understand what their child is learning.

Educators will play a vital role in supporting the importance of the early years.

To learn more on how to document children's work, email ece@elsanet.org to receive a copy of Dr. George Forman's guide.

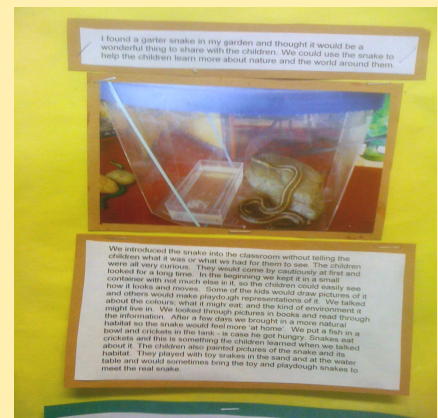


Photo: Courtesy of Coquitlam Continuing Education, ELSA Childminding



Criteria for Evaluating Toys

Age Appropriate

Can it be used by both older and younger children? What kinds of physical, emotional, social or intellectual skills does the toy demand?

Safety

Sturdiness of construction – does it fall apart or break easily? Avoid objects that are too small, or that contain non-toxic paint.



Manageability

Can it be lifted, managed or carried by the child? Can it be stored properly?

Flexibility

Is it an open or closed toy? An open toy invites imagination, creativity and variety of use.

Individual or Group Use

Use toys that invite social skills. Example: Bingo Games

Durability

Will this toy stand-up after 20 people use it? Is it washable?

Learning Potential

What kinds of skills and concepts can be fostered with this toy?

Safe Kids Canada is the national injury prevention program. Order free safety resources in various languages.
www.safekidscanada.ca

Springtime

(Tune "The Muffin Man")

Springtime is garden time,
Garden time, garden time,
Get your spades and come
outdoors,
Springtime is here!

Springtime is planting time,
Planting time, planting time,
Get your seeds and come
outdoors,
Springtime is here!

Springtime is jumping time,
Jumping time, jumping time,
Get your ropes and come
outdoors,
Springtime is here!

Springtime is singing time,
Singing time, singing time,
Children sing a happy song,
Springtime is here!

Spring Wreath

Materials:

Colored construction paper
Glue
Scissors
Frame

Activity:

Trace each child's hand
Trim each child's hand work
Glue each child's hand work to
make a circle on a large colored
construction paper
Place the wreath in a frame

The Spring Wreath will display
renewal of friendship.



Multicultural Component:

Extend activity by taking
photographs of each child and
parent's hands.

For song books, recipes or
more information on early
childhood resources please
email ece@elsanet.org.



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