

Hello Newsletter Subscribers!

Welcome to this month's issue of the Better Kid Care E-Newsletter - *A newsletter for those caring for children.*



Notable Quote: "Home is not where you live, but where they understand you." ~ *Christian Morgenstern*

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Tips for Early Educators and Practitioners

Summer Memories

"I collect interesting and researched articles that I think parents will be interested in. I send out a note to parents asking what topics they may be interested in. Each month I highlight one of the articles and place it on my parent bulletin board. This is a great way to share information on child development, issues we are facing (such as separation anxiety), or issues that are important for children and parents. Parents love it and have even offered to help copy the articles to save me some of the expense. It also is a great way to keep myself current in research!" - *Home provider from DuBois, PA*

Do you have a *great tip* or *good thing*? Send us your best tips in writing and your tip may end up in our newsletter! Email Christine at crb16@psu.edu or contact the Better Kid Care Program at 814-865-7894 or 800-452-9108 (within PA).

Feature Article



Creating a Sense of Place: Considering routine, ritual and belonging

by Christine Belinda

Many early childhood educators work hard at creating beautiful, safe, and inspiring places for the children they care for. One parent described her son's child care program as having a great "sense of place" What might a "sense of place" mean?

The term "sense of place" can mean many things, but in this case it reflects why a place is special and unique. It also reflects how attachments are fostered within the group and how each person develops a sense of belonging. A major goal for both parents and child care educators is that the children form positive attachments with the people involved in a program and with the child care program itself. So, how do you create a positive "sense of place?"

Important questions

A sense of place is something that cannot be purchased in a prepackaged curriculum or incorporated into the program in a single day. A sense of place takes time, thought, and reflection. Most importantly, a sense of place begins with you.

Consider the following:

- How is your place/program special or unique?
- How did you create these special qualities?
- What would you like to do to make your program even more special?
- What steps would you need to take to make these ideas realistic goals?

Take time to write down what you feel is special about your program; what sets you apart from other programs. Also take time to dream and plan for growth.

Routine and rituals

Think about the routines and rituals you do daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly with the children and their families. Routines and rituals offer the opportunity to repeat experiences and gain familiarity. The routines and rituals of your program are important because they not only offer predictable experiences; they help create history in your program. One can look back and have fond memories of special events and interactions or remember the safe, predictable feeling of being well cared for. The following are possible examples of routines and rituals:



- ▶ Welcome letters
- ▶ Hello and good-bye songs
- ▶ Clean-up routines (songs, jobs)
- ▶ Predictable schedules
- ▶ Special projects and explorations
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Conferences
- ▶ Journals and portfolios
- ▶ Community projects (outside clean-up)
- ▶ Annual celebrations (such as the Winter Solstice)
- ▶ Special visitors
- ▶ Birthday celebration ideas (such as the "birthday dance")
- ▶ Annual family gatherings (such as the family breakfast or art opening)
- ▶ Special fun days (pajama day)



Tip: Find out the special routines and rituals of the families you care for. Ask families to share their special routines and rituals: How they go about their days and any special family celebrations. This is a good way to get to know each family and their traditions.

More important questions

Consider the following:

How do you help children in your program form positive attachments?

What steps do you take to help children and parents feel a sense of belonging in your program?

"Growing" belonging

Children and families in your program need to feel well tended to just as a gardener tends to a newly planted seed. A sense of belonging doesn't just happen; it takes time and effort to grow. Focused, planned ideas are important. A sense of belonging can grow in many ways:

- ✓ Get to know families; find out what they wish for, let them know they are important
- ✓ Welcome each family and child into your program (a welcome sign with everyone's name or picture)
- ✓ Make spaces for children and parents (personal cubbies, mailboxes, parent bulletin boards)



- ✓ Foster interactions; invite family members to participate, offer group project work, and set up spaces and materials that encourage exchanges
- ✓ Let the environment and curriculum reflect the work and ideas of the children
- ✓ Check in with your attitude; are you being positive, supportive, communicative?
- ✓ Seek out positive qualities from each child

Growing with your families creates not only a positive sense of belonging, but also helps foster the circle of nurturing: "You've taken such good care of me; I want to take good care of you," This adds to what is special and unique about your program.


There's no place like home, there's no place like home...



You've heard it said many times before (particularly from a girl with red, sparkly shoes): Everyone wants to feel at home, particularly children and families in child care experiences. A sense of home builds a sense of belonging. You can incorporate home-like atmospheres, such as pleasing wall colors, soft lighting, comfortable furniture, and interesting materials. Ultimately, the most important home-like characteristic in supporting a sense of place is a caring, nurturing, loving adult: ***You!***

Distance Education Highlights

We've added **eight new one-hour** Web-Based Distance Education lessons!

New! **The Art of Observation Lessons!** Introducing **five** new one-hour, web-based, distance education lessons on **The Art of Observation!** Look for new QuickTime video clips  throughout the lessons.

Preview the new ***one-hour*** lessons by selecting from the following titles:

[Observation: It Starts with You!](#)

[Observation: Preparing to Observe](#) 

[Observation: A Toolkit of Methods](#) 

[Observation: Connecting to Children](#) 

[Observation: Connecting to Families](#) 

New! **Understanding Ethics Lessons** Introducing **three** new one-hour, web-based, distance education lessons.

Preview the new *one-hour* lessons by selecting from the following titles:

[Ethics: Your Responsibilities to Children](#)

[Ethics: Your Responsibilities to Families](#)

[Ethics: Your Responsibilities to Co-workers and Community](#)

To view a complete listing of all Distance Education Lessons and additional information and resources, visit the [Better Kid Care Distance Education](#) page.

Health and Safety Tips

Major Toy Recall

In light of the recent recalls of millions of toys, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) has resources on toy safety and lead poisoning to help keep your kids safe. Listed below are links created by the American Academy of Pediatrics to supply information regarding recalls of children's toys due to excessive levels of lead. Parents or anyone caring for children should be aware of toy and other product recalls posted at the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) Web site.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF) regarding recent Consumer Product Safety Commission recalls of children's toys due to excessive levels of lead

[Toy Safety - Part 1](#) (PDF) Guidelines for parents. How children are injured.
Tips for buying toys

[Toy Safety - Part 2](#) (PDF) Age-appropriate toys and toys to avoid
Newborn to 14-year-olds

[Lead Screening for Children](#) (PDF) How can lead hurt my child?
Where can lead be found? Prevention — what you can do

[AAP Policy Statement](#) - Lead Exposure in Children: Prevention, Detection, and Management

Turn the Page

Great Books to Read with Children

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around"



Baby Bear's Chairs, by Jane Yolen, published by Gulliver Books, ISBN 0152051147

Orange Pear Apple Bear, by Emily Gravett, published by Simon and Schuster, ISBN 1416939997

Jesse Bear, What will you Wear?, by Nancy White Carlstrom, published by Aladdin, ISBN 141690834X

The Big Baby Bear Book, by John Prater, published by Red Fox, ISBN 0099448092

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, by Michael Hague, published by HarperTrophy, ISBN 0060733047

Dog and Bear, by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, published by Roaring Brook Press, ISBN 1596430532

For Your Families: Family Time / Work Time

Are you looking for articles to share with your families? Do you need information for your parent/family bulletin board? [Family Time / Work Time](#) shares easy-to-read articles for busy parents and caretakers with a focus on *Building Strong Families*.

You are welcome to print and share these publications with your friends, family, and other child care providers.



A New Baby in the House by Nancy Wilson

If you are expecting a new baby, there will be some changes for your family. You need to prepare your child for the big event and about changes that will happen.

Read stories about new babies. Have your child practice taking care of a baby with a doll. Show your child how to gently hold the baby doll. Talk about when your child was a baby. Get out some of her baby pictures. Tell your child what to expect from a newborn. Talk about how babies cry when they need something, are hungry, or need to have their diapers changed.

To read more about the new baby in the house, click on the picture icon.

Better Kid Care Satellite Season 2007-08:

They're here! Satellite Dates and Topics!

Welcome to the 2007-08 satellite season! Satellite workshops offer opportunities for child care providers to learn from experts and to share their experiences with other child care providers nationwide. Professional development hours are available. Mark your calendars now with the following dates and topics:

October 11, 2007

Problem Solving with Children

Professional Development Code K2C1 / Topic Code 21 / CDA 3

Hitting, grabbing, pushing, and biting: how do children learn to play nicely? Children can learn to solve their own problems, but they need adults to teach them how to do it.

December 13, 2007

Math for Every Age

Professional Development Code K2C1 / Topic Code 17 / CDA 2

If you're able to add 1 + 1 and get 2, you can do math with children. Learn what young children understand about math at each age and simple math activities to do with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

March 13, 2008

Science for Young Thinkers

Professional Development Code K2C1 / Topic Code 187 / CDA 2

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to help future scientists learn the basics. Find out how to make science activities really fun for children and adults.

May 15, 2008

Improving Transition Times

Professional Development Code K2C2 / Topic Code 13 / CDA 1

Moving from place to place, activity to activity, is often filled with tears, screaming, and tantrums. Learn how you can smooth transitions to make them productive, fun times for children and stress free for adults.

Visit the [Satellite Workshop](#) link for more information.

Missed a show? Visit the [Past Satellite Workshop](#) page to view video online. If you live in Pennsylvania, contact your [local extension educator](#) for information to attend a workshop in your area. Outside Pennsylvania view [Out-of-State Information](#) link.

Professional Development Highlights

Interested in professional development opportunities? Take a look at the following professional development training available for early childhood practitioners:

- **September 15** - Northwest Key Professional Development Day, Bradford, PA Contact Yolanda Tamlin, yolandat@nwir.org, 800-860-281
- **September 29** - Family Child Care Entrepreneur Program, Philadelphia, PA, Women's Business Development Center 215-790-9232
- **October 6** - Together We're Better: Partnering with Families and the Community, York AEYC <http://www.yaaeyc.org/>

Professional Development Highlights (Continued)

- **October 10 - 12** - Early Learning: Creating a Foundation for the Future, PACCA 2007 conference, The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, PA
- **October 19** - Using the Kindergarten Standards and Scheduling your Kindergarten Day, 8:30 - 3:15, Harrisburg PaTTAN, contact Carolyn Gallo cgallo@state.pa.us
- **November 3** - Pike County Fall Professional Development Conference; Managing Conflict and Diversity Means Differences Among People, Milford, PA 570-296-3400, pike.ext@psu.edu
- **November 7 - 10** - NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Annual Conference and Expo, Chicago, IL <http://www.annualconference.naeyc.org/>
- **November 7 - 10** - 69th National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Pittsburgh Hilton, Pittsburgh, PA 888-781-9331, ext. 15 <http://www.ncfr.org/conf/current/annual.asp>
- **December 6 - 7** - Pennsylvania Head Start Association Fall Conference, Harrisburg www.paheadstart.org

For more professional development opportunities, visit the [PA Keys](#) online calendar.

CDA News! (Child Development Associate credential)

Get CDA Support!

Call Better Kid Care today at 800-452-9108. Talk with someone who can help you get started in the CDA credential process.

E-mail your CDA questions to Christine at crb16@psu.edu

Visit the Better Kid Care "[What is the CDA?](#)" link for more information

Better Kid Care Resources

Better Kid Care Mentoring Telephone Help Line for Child Care Providers in Pennsylvania

Do you have questions about caring for other people's children, such as:

- How do I get a child to eat?
- Why won't a child share?
- How do I stop a child from biting other children?
- What should I do when a parent doesn't pay on time?



Call the **Better Kid Care Mentoring Line** at 800-859-8340 or e-mail your questions to betterkidcare@psu.edu for information about child care and children's issues.

Better Kid Care Kit

Need ideas in your work caring for children? When you enroll in the Better Kid Care Program and sign up for the Better Kid Care Kit, family child care providers will receive several free publications in the mail. Family home child care providers will also receive [The Basics of Caring for Children in your Home](#) notebook to organize and store your Better Kid Care publications. Have you signed up to receive a Better Kid Care Kit yet? Complete our [online registration form](#) or call **800-452-9108** to order. Notebook Contains: [Tip Sheets](#), [Activities Pages](#) & [Lunch and Snack Ideas](#)

All publications are available online to print and share with your friends, family, and other childcare providers. *Select issues are also available in Spanish.*

[New Staff Orientation](#) curriculum is specifically designed for new staff members in child care centers. *Meets the Keystone STARS Performance Standards*. Order at no cost by calling 800-452-9108. Prepayment for review of each Orientation is \$5.00. If you received materials before November 1, 2006, please download new [Instructions and REQUIRED Forms](#).

[Home-Based Caregiver Orientation](#) - *Meets the Keystone STARS Core Series Training Requirements*. Order at no cost by calling 800-452-9108. Prepayment for review of each Orientation is \$5.00. If you received materials before November 1, 2006, please download new [Instructions & REQUIRED Forms](#).

Announcements of Interest:

New payment levels for subsidized child care rates effective August 1

The Pennsylvania budget for 2007-2008 includes funding to adjust child care reimbursement rates to address the minimum wage increase and provide tiered reimbursement for Keystone STARS programs. As a result, OCDEL has adjusted the Maximum Child Care Assistance (MCCA) levels in nearly every county. Click [HERE](#) for more information and a chart of the revised rates.

Revised Keystone STARS standards and award amounts released

Revised [center performance standards](#) for FY 2007-2008 are now available online

[Pre-K Now](#) is a public education and advocacy organization that advances high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds.

T.E.A.C.H. is accepting applications for Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

As part of the Keystone STARS Quality Initiative, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) are committing public funding in 2007-2008 to support STARS centers in T.E.A.C.H. Visit the [T.E.A.C.H.](#) Web site at or call (717) 657-9000.

[NASA for kids only](#) - Listen to an earthquake, look into the eye of a hurricane, find out why the wind blows.

[Chipper Woods Bird Observatory, Inc.](#) (CWBO), founded in 1996, is a federal and state non-profit organization governed by a board of directors. Our mission is to bring good science to the conservation of birds and their habitats through scientific research, scientific training, and educational programs designed for all age groups.

[Frogwatch USA](#) is a frog and toad monitoring program that gives YOU the opportunity to help scientists conserve amphibians! With as little as twenty minutes a week you can collect essential information to protect frogs and toads.

[2007 Kids in Need Teacher Grants](#) are available to fund projects that make creative use of common teaching aids, approach curriculum from an imaginative angle, or tie nontraditional concepts together for the purpose of illustrating commonalities. Maximum award: \$500. Eligibility: K-12 teachers. Deadline: September 30, 2007.

The Terri Lynne Lokoff Child Care Foundation (TLLCCF) announces the call for applications for its 2008 Terri Lynne Lokoff/Children's TYLENOL® National Child Care Teacher Awards™. Applicants design an educational, age-appropriate project for their classroom. Go online for an application or more information about [TLLCCF](#)

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Upcoming October E-Newsletter: Look for information on Self-Regulation

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