

E-Newsletter -- February 2008

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: "Children will not remember you for the material things you provided but for the feeling that you cherished them." - *Richard L. Evans*

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Tips for Early Educators and Practitioners:

Plan Now for Week of the Young Child: April 13-19, 2008

Week of the Young Child is held each year to honor young children and thank teachers and all those who make a difference in young children's lives. The theme for Week of the Young Child 2008 (WOYC) is Bring Communities Together for Children - Children Bring Communities Together.

Ideas to plan:

- Hold a kick-off breakfast for family and community
- Hold an open house or art exhibit highlighting the children's work
- Work with the local library, early childhood organizations, etc. to plan community-wide celebrations.

Check out more resources and start planning ways to bring your community together for children! Visit [NAEYC](#) web site links below:

New for Week of the Young Child 2008:

[Week of the Young Child 2008 Event Planning Handbook](#) 

[Share Your WOYC 2008 Plans](#)

[Key Facts](#)

[Community Partners](#)

[Suggested Activities](#)

[WOYC Resources](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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



Play with Clay

by Christine Belinda

Most adults caring for children have experienced and offered playing with play dough and modeling materials, often called "clay." But have you ever tried using natural or real clay?

Because clay comes from the earth, it's a natural material. Since children love natural materials (think rocks, sand, water, mud, pinecones, and sticks) clay will probably be a hit, too. Natural materials are also a springboard to creative thinking and a connection to nature and the arts (along with many developmental skills!).

Play with clay: You and me

Some early childhood providers believe that playing with natural clay should be a regular experience for young children, just like outside time, water play, or painting. There are other adults who have never experienced natural clay. This brings up an important question: When we offer children materials to play with, shouldn't we know what it's like to use these materials? And for that matter, shouldn't we understand what developmental skills they support and how they benefit children? Before introducing clay to children, try playing with clay yourself to get an idea of what it's like.

Observe children as they play with clay. Each child is different, so adapt the experience to their abilities, needs, and interests. When working with clay, there really is no right or wrong; just what works best for the children and your program.

Children and clay

Introducing clay to young children provides multiple creative outlets for their individual ideas, feelings, and development. For young children, clay holds no preconceived ideas as to what it is or how it is supposed to be used; a new play relationship begins. Children will show many parts of themselves through clay experiences:

- **Approaches and reactions to a new material** (imagination, steps of involvement, temperament, feelings)
- **Initiative, curiosity, and problem solving**
- **Technique and manipulation** (what they do and what skills they use)
- **Physical development** (fine and large motor skills)
- **Children's ideas in representational forms** (connecting ideas to meaning, symbolic demonstrations)
- **Expression and communication** (language, literacy, and social and emotional skills)
- **Interactions** (with other people, other materials)
- **Progressions over time**

~Along with many discoveries in getting to know children through their experiences with clay, we can also easily identify many Early Learning Standards! Visit your state's Department of Education to learn more about Early Learning Standards. In PA go to [PA Department of Education](#) site.



Tips for clay play

Safety first - Any material for children must be safe. Choose clay that is clearly labeled Certified Non-Toxic and meets the guidelines set forth by the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUBS/5016.pdf) (http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUBS/5016.pdf.) All children need to be well supervised. Be aware of and do not offer any choking materials for children ages three and under.

- Find a reputable site to buy **certified non-toxic** clay labeled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Use wire to cut clay pieces (found at hardware or art stores)
- Have proper work surfaces: Large tables, protected floor space, or individual boards for children to work on (wood, heavy cardboard, etc.)
- Some teachers recommend the first clay experience be in a small group, with one large slab of clay (children will interact). Others suggest offering each child a small slab, balls, or rolled "snakes" or coils (thinly rolled "snakes" that are rolled into circles or onto other pieces of clay)
- Store clay in sealed tight containers. To keep clay moist, place small amounts of water in the container, either using a damp cloth or by poking holes in balls of clay and adding a small amount of water to the holes.
- Many teachers recommend waiting to offer "tools" until children have had the opportunity explore clay with their hands. When the children are ready for tools, offer wood sticks, wire, plastic knives, and objects to make interesting marks. Child-safe clay tools can be purchased from art sources or educational supply sources.



Distance Education Highlights



Introducing **six** new one-hour, web-based, distance education lessons. Visit the [Web-Based learning](#) link for more information. Preview the new lessons by clicking the title links below:

- [All By Myself: Self-Help Skills in Childcare](#) (K1C1) CDA 3
- [Making a Great Day for Preschoolers](#) (K2C1) CDA 5
- [Prevent Obesity: Get Children Moving!](#) (K2C2) CDA 2
- [Preventing Childhood Obesity: Encourage Healthy Eating Habits](#) (K7C2) CDA 1
- [Sensory Art - A Creative Art Experience!](#) (K2C1) CDA 2
- [Through the Eyes of an Infant](#) (K1C1) CDA 8

View a complete listing of **all** distance education lessons and information about how to register by visiting the [Better Kid Care Distance Education](#) page.

New Distance Education Brochure Now Available!
Click on graphic to download (pdf) or call **800-452-9108** to request brochure.



Health and Safety Tips

Updated Vaccine Schedules

Every January the nation's experts release an updated schedule of the vaccines that children should have. Look for this schedule on the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/vaccines. The 2008 Immunization Schedule was released 1/2/2008. It is posted at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/default.htm



Turn the Page

Great Books to Read with Children: *Love, Love, Love*

Mommy Loves, by Anne Gutman, published by Chronicle Books, ISBN 0811846164. Animal mommies show their love to their babies in many special ways.

Max's Valentine, by Rosemary Wells, published by Viking Juvenile, ISBN 0670036684. Uh-oh! Ruby uses all the candy to make her valentine cards! What about Max? Find out what Max's grandma does to be sure he gets a special treat.

I Love You Just the Same, by Erica Wolf, published by Henry Holt and Co., ISBN 0805071288. This story reminds us how important it is to be loved.

If You'll Be My Valentine, by Cynthia Rylant, published by Harper Collins, ISBN 006009270X. A little boy creates and presents valentines to his pets, family members, and even his teddy bear!

I Will Kiss You: Lots & Lots, by Stoo Hample, published by Candlewick, ISBN 0763627879. Mother rabbit kisses her way through this tale of parental love, sharing places and things she will kiss to amuse her child.

More stories about LOVE:

The Day It Rained Hearts, by Felicia Bond, published by Laura Geringer, ISBN 0066238765

I Love You the Purplest, by Barbara Joose, published by Chronicle Books, ISBN 0811807185

What Is Love, Biscuit? by Alyssa Satin Capucilli, published by HarperCollins, ISBN-13: 9780694015177

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.



The Power of Words

by Nancy Wilson

Early Childhood Program Specialist

Words can be powerful. We are eager for our children to learn to talk and learn new words, but sometimes your child may say some words that are inappropriate or even hurtful to someone else. How can you teach your child when that happens?

While testing new sounds and rhyming words, a young child might accidentally say a word that you consider a swear word. If you react too strongly to the use of that word, your child will probably repeat it at other times just to get that reaction again. What should you do?

<--- Click on the graphic to read the entire article

Better Kid Care Satellite Season 2007-08:

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:

Next up! March 13, 2008

Science for Young Thinkers

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

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.

CDA News! (Child Development Associate credential)

View a complete listing of Better Kid Care [Distance Education by CDA Content!](#)



[CDA Professional Development Record](#) is a tool to help keep track of your CDA Professional Development Training. A free, downloadable resource from Better Kid Care!

Council for Professional Recognition: Online Assessment! The Council's Online Assessment is expected to debut in September 2008, and information about the system is now available online at http://www.cdacouncil.org/CDA_online.htm. There you can access a brochure and a video about the new process. Visit the [Council](#) Web site to find out more.

Visit the Better Kid Care "[What is the CDA?](#)" newly revised link and get answers to your CDA questions! Call Christine at 800-452-9108 or e-mail your CDA questions to crb16@psu.edu.

Professional Development Highlights

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

In Pennsylvania:

- **February 23** - Focus on Strong Families Conference, State College, PA For more information about the conference, people may contact conference co-chairs: [Connie Schulz](#), 814-231-1070; [Donna Ricketts](#), 814-231-1061; or [Ann Walker](#), 814-238-5480
- **February 29 - March 2** - PAEE Environmental Education and Play in Nature: Leap In! Conference, Bolivar, PA, www.paeenet.net, 412 963-6100 x24
- **March 1** – Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow; Finding the Leader Within You, PSU Cooperative Extension, Mill Hall, PA 570-726-0022
- **March 6 - 8** - National Association of Social Workers Annual Conference
Monroeville, PA,
<http://www.nasw-pa.org/associations/772/files/confregis2008.pdf>
- **March 7** - The Effects of Stress and Trauma on the Developing Brain, Fulton County Center for Families, McConnellsburg, PA 717-485- 5038
- **March 8** - Lawrence County professional development: ADHD what can you do? and ODD and other conduct disorders, New Castle, PA. Contact Darlene Sansone, 724/654-8370, dxs74@psu.edu
- **March 11-12** - Conference on Building Inclusive Communities
PEAL (Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership) Center, Mars, PA, <http://www.pealcenter.org/>
- **March 29** - Building Blocks to Early Learning Conference, Dubois, PA, Penn State Cooperative Extension, 814-765-7878 x5
- **March 29** - Media Literacy: The Power of Commercial Media Targeting Children, WQLN Educational Services, Erie, PA, 814-864-3001, www.quin/education
- **April 5** - Create, Innovate, Educate, Central Susquehanna AEYC Conference, 570-594-0732, jbaltzer13@hotmail.com
- **April 6** – Lehigh and North Hampton Area Association for the Education of Young Children, “Model the Way,” Bethlehem, PA 610-252-6137 http://www.pakeys.org/profdev/calendar_details.asp?eventid=23921
- **April 10 -12** - DVAEYC, Delaware Valley Association of the Education of Young Children, 215-893-0130, http://www.dvaeyc.org/annual_conference.html
- **April 17 - 19** - Pennsylvania Music Educator Association (PMEA) Annual In-Service conference will be held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center 610-567-9757 <http://www.pmea.net/conference.html>
- **April 25** - Learning Early Conference, Sayre, PA, 570-268-2787, [Annual Conference](#)
- **April 26 - 27** - PA Home-Based Child Care Providers Association Annual Training Conference, Providers & Parents Untied for Excellence, State College, PA 800-294-3324
- **May 1 - 2** - PA Head Start Association Spring Conference: “Choosing Our Path, Embracing Our Future,” Harrisburg, PA http://www.paheadstart.org/index.cfm?mm_id=11
- **May 8 - 9** - The Cyert Center Program for Collaborative Learning will hold its 9th annual Visitation Day. The Visitation Day schedule is designed to offer observation in the classrooms while the program is in session and also includes presentations by the Cyert Center educators and parents. 412-268-2149 or visit: <http://www.cmu.edu/cyert-center/Professional%20Development/index.html>
- **May 29 - 30** - PA Higher Education Institute, State College, PA 717-213-2064, beraho@berksiu.org
- **June 4** - 15th Annual Family Support Conference, University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, Pittsburgh, PA, <http://www.education.pitt.edu/ocd/training/>

Other:

- **2008 PA Governor's Institutes for Early Childhood Education** - "Affective Development: Supporting Children's Approaches to Learning." Keystone College, June 22 - 27, Juniata College, July 13 - 18. Applications for registration will become available soon online at: <http://www.papde.ws/new>.
- **Blair County Spring Professional Development Opportunities** 814-940-5989
<http://blair.extension.psu.edu/families/Spring08BKCSched.htm>
- **Ounce Scale Implementation Institute**, various dates and locations, contact www.pattan.net
- **The Work Sampling System Implementation Institutes**, various dates and locations, contact www.pattan.net
- **PA Director Credential Program** – Leadership and Management, Early Development and Education Institute, PSU, State College, PA 814-865-7951
- **Early Childhood Professional Development Course**, Level I, January 16 - June 4 - 10 three-hour workshops, PA Keys Career Development, 717-771-4164

Outside Pennsylvania:

- **February 14** - Relationships: The Heart and Matter, VAECE, Reston, VA, www.VAECE.org, 703-239-1514
- **February 24 -27** - A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base, Tampa, Florida
<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtccconference/default.cfm>
- **February 26 - 29** - Beyond Standards: Reaching Every Child's Potential, Atlanta, Georgia <http://www.acei.org/annualconfex.htm>
- **February 25 - 27** - National Conference - Children 2008: A Call for Action-Leading the Nation for Children and Families, Washington, D.C. www.cwla.org
- **March 6 - 8**, 36th Annual National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers Conference, Stand Up and be Heard! Washington, D.C. <http://www.campuschildren.org/conference.html>
- **March 28** - New Mexico, AEYC Albuquerque, NM, www.nmaeyc.org, 505-823-0975
- **March 30** - National Conference on Family Literacy, www.familit.org
- **April 10-12** - National Conference on Child Health Psychology, Miami Beach, FL www.childhealthpsych2008.com
- **April 16-19** National Association of Child Care Professionals, How Successful Directors Manage, www.naccp.org, 1-800-537-1118
- **June 9-11** - NAEYC National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, New Orleans, LA, 800-424-2460, www.naeyc.org
- **June 25 - 28** – 2008 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, Costa Mesa, CA
<http://www.cfaitc.org/Conference/national.php>

More professional development resources:

- Better Kid Care Distance Education <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page02a.html>
- PA Keys Training Calendar [Professional Development Calendar](#)
- NAEYC Affiliate Conferences <http://www.naeyc.org/conferences/affiliate/results.asp?list=1>
- World Forum - ongoing global exchange of ideas on the delivery of quality services for young children in diverse settings
http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/projects/men_ece/index.php

Announcements of Interest:

Volunteers Needed for Child Development Study - Early Childhood Practitioners are needed for a study looking at the effects of a social-emotional assessment called SEAM. The study involves early childhood providers participating in: 2-hour training on how to use a social-emotional assessment (SEAM) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), using the SEAM and ASQ with at least one parent of a child who is 6 to 36 months (*estimated time to administer is under 60 minutes*), and completing a brief practitioner demographic form and satisfaction survey.

For information contact Dr. Marisa Macy, the Pennsylvania Field Coordinator, at mmacy@psu.edu or call (814) 232-0342. Free SEAM & ASQ training, materials, and compensation will be provided.

The Family: America's Smallest School - A new study conducted by the Education Testing Service (ETS) examines factors that influence learning gaps, beginning in early childhood and persisting into adulthood, and found


large discrepancies in home life variables and achievement. The authors suggest that reform efforts focus not only on improving schools, but also on improving home and community learning environments.

<http://www.ets.org/familyreport>

Kindergarten, Here I Come! - The PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is pleased to announce the availability of the newly-printed Parent Activity Resource Guide, *Kindergarten, Here I Come!*, free of charge, to kindergarten and pre-kindergarten practitioners for distribution to families with young children. To obtain copies, e-mail contact and shipping information to: fulfill@wavelinedirect.com or contact Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126, 717-787-7489. Copies are also available to download below:

"[Kindergarten, Here I Come!](#)" (Microsoft Word)


"[Kindergarten, Here I Come!](#)" Calendar (PDF). 

Helping Your Child Learn - Mathematics is part of the president's efforts to provide parents with the latest research and practical information that can help them both support children's learning at home and understand what they should expect from their children's schools. This booklet includes a range of activities for families with children from preschool age through grade 5.  <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/math.pdf>

The Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) Program links National Park units with teachers from low-income school districts. Under this program, selected teachers spend the summer working as park rangers, often living in the park. Then, during the school year, these teacher-rangers bring the parks into the classroom by developing and presenting curriculum-based lesson plans that draw on their summer experience. For additional information about the Teacher Ranger program go to <http://www.nps.gov/wupa/forteachers/trt.htm>.

Baby Steps - ZERO TO THREE has just launched Baby Steps, its first online e-newsletter devoted to parenting issues in the birth-to-three crowd. Each month, they will feature topics near and dear to parents--like potty training, power struggles, and picky eating. Whether you are a parent, a grandparent, or a professional who works with parents, there is something for everyone in Baby Steps. Preview the [first issue](#) now http://www.zerotothree.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=1381.0

Get Ready to Read! - *Get Ready to Read!* is an early literacy program designed to help parents, early educators, and child care professionals ensure that young children are equipped with the fundamental skills necessary for learning to read. Visit the Get Ready to Read! Web site for ideas and free [resources](#). <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>

PA Department of Education - Attention Early Learning Program Directors: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts pre-kindergarten program could bring quality pre-kindergarten to more than 11,000 three- and four-year-olds next year. Learn more... [view PDF](#)  (http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/Pre-K_Counts_provider_memoflyer2-20.pdf)

American Star of Teaching - The U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative is accepting nominations for 2008 American Stars of Teaching until March 31. To nominate a teacher, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>.

African American History Month - February is African American History Month. During this celebration of history and culture, take a look at informative and inspiring materials from the [Smithsonian Institution](#) and the [U.S. Department of Education](#). You'll find links on influential African American artists, inventors, civil rights figures, entrepreneurs, and others. For additional resources on African American history and culture, check out **USA.gov**TM web site link: [Culture and Ethnic Groups](#), to research genealogy, learn about plans for a new national museum, and find web sites that celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.

Better Kid Care Resources

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.

Preview notebook contents: [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.

[Home-Based Caregiver Orientation](#) - *Meets the Keystone STARS Core Series Training Requirements.* Order at no cost by calling 800-452-9108.

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.

Subscribe to the BKC E-Newsletter!

New subscribers can join by sending an email to: BetterKidCareNews-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu.

View archived [Better Kid Care E-Newsletters](#)

Upcoming Feature Article in March E-Newsletter: Early Educators: Why you are important

Reflections...We would love to hear from you! E-mail your ideas to crb16@psu.edu or call 814-865-7894.

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