

# WELL-BEING

*Professional Support Document*



EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND  
POSITIVE IDENTITIES

Sense of Self

Sense of Other



BELONGING

Sense of Place

Respectful and  
Responsive Relationships



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Personal Care

Food & Nutrition

Body & Movement

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# NEW BRUNSWICK CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ~ ENGLISH

## WELL-BEING

*Professional Support Document*



By Emily Ashton, Anne Hunt, and Leigh White.

Published 2008 for Social Development, Government of New Brunswick by the Early Childhood Centre.

Series Editors: NB Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Collection: Pam Whitty, Pam Nason and Emily Ashton.

Design and Layout: Mandy Wright

Printing and Binding: Taylor Printing Group Inc., Fredericton

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ISBN 978-1-55131-130-2

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We are inspired in our work by the commitment of early childhood educators throughout the province and by the children in their educational care.

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THANK YOU TO THE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES  
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS CURRICULUM DOCUMENT.



# WELL~BEING

*Children experience safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected.*



Well-being is important to all human beings. For young children and their families, a positive sense of well-being is nurtured through participation in an environment that is consistent and where respectful, responsive relationships and community connections are valued.

Children actively co-construct their identities in relation to the people, places, and things within the various communities to which they belong. Communities that support persistence, perseverance, and pleasure promote a zest for living and learning.

Children have the right to feel safe. When provided with the space and freedom to take healthy risks, their willingness to do so reflects a sense of security, self-confidence, courage, and body strength. Over time, participation in healthy risk taking builds the skills, knowledge, and resolve that will sustain them as they face new pleasures and challenges.

## USING THIS DOCUMENT

This support document accompanies the *New Brunswick Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework – English*. Building on the values, goals and intended learnings introduced in the Framework, additional ideas and suggestions for planning and practices are offered. This document presents possibilities, provides openings for collaborative explorations, and celebrates the work of New Brunswick early childhood educators who bring the *Framework* to life in their local centres. You will find examples that illustrate what some children and early childhood educators *have* done using the framework, rather than a model of what *should* be done. There are many other possibilities. We invite you to join us in the ongoing process of creating curriculum with and for our youngest children.

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Relationship building is recognized as one of the most important parts of early childhood educators' work. Listening respectfully to children and their families contributes to everyone's well-being - their sense of self, sense of other, and sense of belonging. Relationships and positive identities are strengthened when educators and children make connections with each other, with their families and friends, and with the people in their communities. For example, taking walks in the local neighbourhood on a regular basis helps children become familiar with the adults, landmarks, and events within their immediate vicinity. Equally as important, these walks help adults within the community see children as part of the larger world.



It was last year and it was sunny and I went out to play by Jordan

Children are active learners who require opportunities, indoors and outdoors, for physical activities. In a seasonal climate as varied as that of New Brunswick, there are daily opportunities to be outside playing in a range of weather conditions. Time and encouragement to practice self care skills and to participate in learning about food and nutrition also contribute to well-being.

## *Cultural Practices of WELL BEING*

Educators share with families the responsibility of teaching and learning cultural knowledge, practices, and beliefs. A disposition of compassion, care and curiosity can provide a beginning place for conversations around different cultural practices. Cultural practices that affect well-being may occur around:

- Greeting and leaving rituals
- Sleeping and toileting routines
- Expressions of affection
- Age related expectations
- Children's roles in families, centres, and communities
- Food and eating habits
- Communicative interactions
- Different gender-based expectations
- Beliefs around play and learning

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# WELL~BEING AT A GLANCE

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

### *Sense of Self* *Sense of Other*



Lanna



Me and my friend Jessica by Nicole

- Developing recognition of self
- Co-constructing their identities
- Experiencing growing self-confidence, self-respect, and ability to take initiative
- Growing in their capacity to express feelings, concerns, and needs
- Pursuing interests, passions, and strengths
  - Being curious and questioning
  - Persevering and persisting
  - Supporting, encouraging, and listening to others
  - Caring for others
- Experiencing trust and compassion with children and adults
- Learning constructive ways to negotiate a range of relationships

- Negotiating new spaces
  - Identifying, creating, and using personal landmarks
- Becoming familiar with the sights, sounds, rhythms, and routines of new situations
- Generating a shared repertoire of narratives and memories
- Making connections between the centre, home, and broader communities
  - Developing cherished as well as casual relationships
  - Forming close relationships with a range of adults
    - Growing in their awareness that their actions contribute to the well-being of others
  - Participating in group initiatives

## BELONGING

### *Sense of Place*

### *Respectful and Responsive Relationships*



Miya

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PHYSICAL HEALTH  
*Personal care*  
*Food and nutrition*  
*Body and Movement*



Flying outside by Lauren

- Growing independence in self-care routines
  - Learning about individual differences in self-care practices
    - Helping others with personal care
      - Understanding the relationship between food and their bodies
      - Building confidence to try new foods
      - Exploring a range of cultural practices of eating and sharing foods
      - Making decisions about food consumption, preparation, serving, and clean-up routines
        - Participating in a variety of physical activities, indoors and out
          - Learning about their bodies in space
            - Increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large motor coordination
              - Increasing fine motor capacities
                - Knowing and stretching physical limits
                  - Releasing and restoring energy in outdoors places



A fish getting away from a bird by Laura

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## Sense of Self

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Developing recognition of self
- Co-constructing their identities
- Experiencing growing self-confidence, self-respect, and ability to take initiative
- Growing in their capacity to express feelings, concerns, and needs
- Pursuing interests, passions, and strengths
- Being curious and questioning
- Persevering and persisting

Children construct self-knowledge from the input they get from others. Children regard the way people react to them as mirrors that reflect who they are. They don't know that mirrors can be distorted. They take in reflected images as truth.

*Janet Gonzalez-Mena (2008, 434)*



**How can you encourage children to share their interests, passions, and strengths?**

**Make interests, passions, and strengths visible by:**

**Saying** ◦ "Susan, you love horses... can you tell us what a baby horse is called?"

**Displaying** ◦ "Bobby, thank you for bringing in your collection of dinky cars."

**Advocating** ◦ "I bet Sam could help you tie your shoelaces"



"It's a rocket ship! Look it has a flag... these are the wheels so it can land when it comes outta space." Olivia Nov 1 '07



*Are children's works on the walls?*

*Are children's names displayed? Where?*

*Are children's creations and words positioned at their eye level?*

*Have children written and illustrated their own books?*

**See Me:**  
Watch my facial and body expressions.

**Hear Me:**  
Listen to my theories, ideas, and questions.

**Support Me:**  
Pay attention to my concerns; be nearby, just in case.

**Encourage Me:**  
Promote self-initiative with supportive words.

**Believe Me:**  
I can do it!

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**DO NOT  
WRECK!**

*Who is that in the mirror?*  
Shatter-proof mirrors are on the NB standards checklist.



*"Do Not Wreck" — Kate*

Let children know that you take their work seriously by:  
**Asking  
Respecting  
Revisiting  
Extending**

**Yesterday I was a giant.  
Today I'm a giant pirate.  
Tomorrow I'll be a pirate nurse.  
Next I'll be...**

- Inventor**
- Writer**
- Artist**
- Friend**
- Foe**
- Chef**
- Cleaner**
- Player**
- Reader**
- Runner**
- Caregiver**
- Poet**

**BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER**

- Go Away, Big Green Monster* by Edward Emberley
- Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* by Martin Wadell
- Where The Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- Everett Anderson's Goodbye* by Lucille Clifton
- The Ghost Tree* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- My Grandson Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow
- Are You My Mother?* by Philip Dey Eastman
- How Many Kisses Goodnight?* by Jean Monrad
- The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown
- Bedtime for Francis* by Lillian Hoban
- Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Waler



**Who are you?**



**Co-constructing identities:  
Reading their own learning stories**

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## Sense of Self

### LEARNING ABOUT OURSELVES: *Self-Portraits*

#### **A Moment of Insight...**

Early in the year, a parent shared a conversation she had had with her child. As the child had spoken of her new friends, she had referred to children of colour as 'different' while the white children were 'normal'. This story prompted an exploration of what we look like. How do we see ourselves? How do we represent ourselves? How do we talk about visual differences?

#### **Planning and Process...**

**Setting up the Environment:** We worked at our usual drawing centre but I added specific tools to aid in drawing self-portraits.

**Materials:** I provided paper, small standing mirrors, and markers- including multicultural markers to more closely match a variety of skin tones.

**Support:** I invited children to draw themselves and I sat with them at the drawing table, posing questions such as "What colour marker do you think matches your skin?" or "What colour are your eyes?", and suggested children revisit their image in the mirror.



*Lola colours in her brown eyes.*



*"I have green eyes." — Felix*

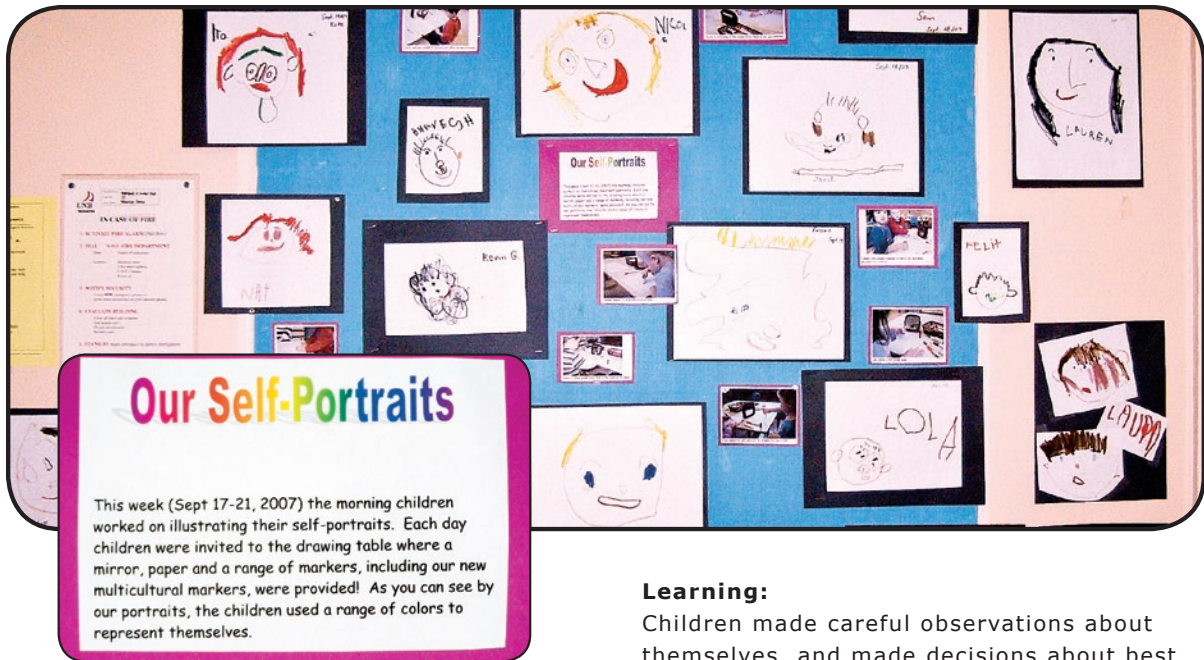


*"My hair is kind-of yellow." — Sam*



*Lauren uses the mirror to study her features.*





**Documenting:**

When the children were finished we mounted the portraits on a construction paper background and displayed a range of process photographs with captions on a bulletin board for families and visitors to see.

**Learning:**

Children made careful observations about themselves, and made decisions about best fit. They were able to use and gain language to talk about differences and similarities as they worked along side each other constructing their self-images. The children’s work shows how they actively represent themselves artistically as they transform their vision from one form to another.

*Leigh White* UNB Children’s Centre

**Why this matters:**

As children take a closer look at themselves they begin to see what makes them unique. The task of representing themselves provides opportunities to see their individual features. By mounting a display their educator gives them a place to see themselves in relation to others and to talk together about how they are alike and how they are different. Skin colour is now represented by a range of tones – not just white and other. Children will continue to shape their identities through their relationships with others in a variety of social and cultural environments.

**Other Possibilities:**

- Create family portraits
- Sketch self-portraits later in the year to compare and contrast
- Construct books about selves (for example: “What our names mean”)
- Draw graphs and take surveys “About Us” (for example: bed times or number of pets)
- Use other art materials (for example: paints or pastels)
- Make 3-dimensional models (for example: yarn for hair or modeling clay)
- Have children photograph themselves and each other

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## *Sense of Self*

READING CHILDREN: *What song would you like to sing?*

**How can I offer the children (15 months) choice when they haven't any [verbal] language yet?**

*I invite the infants to make choices of what song they would like to sing each day. I read their body language and gestures to determine what song to sing together. I have introduced a series of songs with gestures and the infants perform the gesture for the song they wish to sing.*

Patty Morrice Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.

READING THE ENVIRONMENT: *Where do I put their names?*

**I looked around my room at the children's eye level and I was surprised to see that there were no children's names displayed. How do I change this with limited space for documentation? Where do I put their names? What form do I use to display their names?**

*I decided to trace their names out of foam so they would rise off the paper. That way the children can feel their names as well as see them. I taped their names, at their eye level, on the mirror. Now the children could feel and see their names, as well as their own reflections.*

Donna Baisley Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.



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## For Reflection

Reflect upon your reactions to children's behaviour. What strategies do you draw upon to address issues of conflict and disagreement between children? Who do these help and who might they harm? Think about how you model perseverance and persistence.

In what ways are individual children's expressions of feelings, ideas, or concerns encouraged and supported? Think about time to listen, space to listen, and ways to encourage self-expression. Ask yourself if you are helping them to learn to take initiative.

Think about how varied cultural backgrounds influence feelings and beliefs about touch and personal space. Think about the kinds of touch children experience in your program. What is your own level of comfort with touch?

Recall specific examples of how you invite children to actively set their learning goals, persist in pursuing them, share their strengths and interests, celebrate their accomplishments, and persevere to solve challenges they encounter. In what ways does your planning reflect the interests and passions of the children?



First day I went out in my backyard  
and my hands were behind my back  
by Olivia

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## Sense of Other

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Supporting, encouraging, and listening to others
- Caring for others
- Experiencing trust and compassion with children and adults
- Learning constructive ways to negotiate a range of relationships



Using the other children's name tags, Maggie writes invitations to a dramatic play party.

Do children take their own photographs?

- > Ask if the children want their picture taken
- > Take action shots (at work, at play, at rest, with friends)
- > Get down to the children's level
- > Shoot children's painting, drawings, and constructions
- > Take process photos (what came first, what happened next, what did the final product look like?)



Caring for others



Recognizing others

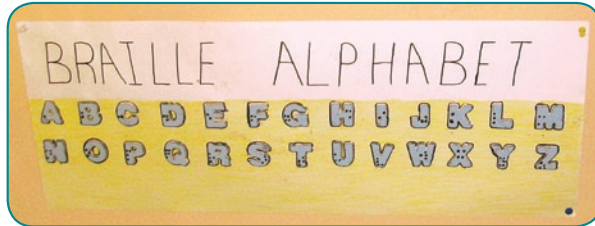
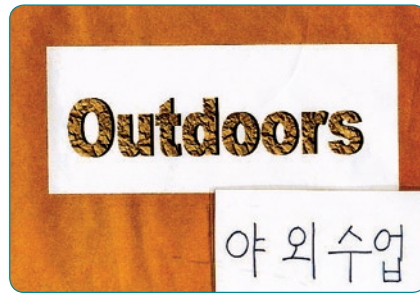
Share **Your** favourite things... Gardening • Pets • Italian food • Snowmobiling •

*Your passions can inspire others!*

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Knowing that Edward speaks Korean, the other children turn to him for help reading Korean words.



**C**hildren thrive within webs of friendship and love. They develop their worldview and expectations by living inside relationships and by observing relationships around them.

Amy Baker and Lynn Manfredi-Petit (2004, ix)



## BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER

- Flower Garden*, by Eve Bunting
- Old Henry*, by Joan Blos
- Stellaluna*, by Janell Cannon
- Moosetache*, by Margie Palatini
- Ruby The Copycat*, by Peggy Rathman
- Pig Pig Grows Up*, by David McPhail
- Ginger*, by Charlotte Voake

## Communicating to work together

**Listening...**  
is a way of thinking and seeing ourselves  
in relationship with others and the world.

Carlina Rinaldi (2005, 6)



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## *Sense of Other*

### CARING FOR OTHERS: *The Mitten Story*

Every year at Christmas time our centre likes to do something to create awareness of our community. This past year we decided on a Mitten Tree. Our families would donate mittens and we would take them to a local charity. To help the children understand what we were doing we asked them questions such as how many mittens they had at home and why we wore mittens on our hands. The answers varied but we all understood that we had to have mittens to be able to play out in the snow. The next question concerned what it would feel like if we didn't have any mittens or if we only had one pair. The children decided that if we only had one pair that would "suck" because than we would have to come inside as soon as they got wet or dirty.

The toddler room decided to make a paper tree and hang it on the wall. As the children brought in mittens they were hung on the tree. In the pre-school room we chose to hang our mittens on our Mitten Tree. Each

child was given a snowman to decorate, write their name on and attach to the mittens they donated. Many of our children joined in to sort through their mitts at home, bringing in several pairs that were too small for them.

One morning in December we all got ready to take our mittens. We packed full grocery bags and off we went. The children were very excited to see the people who would be giving our mittens to, children who needed them. Once we arrived everyone got some mittens and we took them inside the building, dropping them in a box as we were enthusiastically thanked by the volunteers.

Later that month I didn't have my mitts with me when we were going outside, I said I must have lost them and one of the children thought they could start a Mitten Tree for teachers!

*Angela Thompson* Kings County Kids Daycare Centre



*snowman girl by Morgan*





### Why this matters:

Cold, mittenless hands in the winter are something the children in the centre could all understand. Knowing that some people do not have mittens was a beginning to developing empathy and compassion for others. The educators designed a project to help children and their families take action. Compassion and care were enacted throughout as children and families brought in mittens and gloves and together delivered them to a local organization.

### Other Possibilities:

Caring for others can take many forms:

- Visiting seniors regularly
- Contributing to the local food bank
- Making cards for sick friends
- Fundraising for global initiatives

*What could you do in your centre?*

*What special occasions and local events can you celebrate by caring for others?*

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*Sense of Other*

LISTENING TO OTHERS: *Welcoming new families into the classroom*

*Dear Families,*

*We are very fortunate to have a new student, Vénel, in our classroom. Vénel started his life in Haiti and his parents are involved with "Healing Hands for Haiti" a group that travels from here to Haiti to provide health care and rehabilitation for people in that country. Vénel and his family will be making a trip to Haiti in April and we have decided to join in their efforts. We will also be fundraising to make money to send musical instruments and other equipment to be used in an orphanage. The first fundraiser will be to collect change jars in front of our room and in the cafeteria downstairs. On February 12 and 13 we plan to have a bake sale with the money going to this project. Colleen, Vénel's Mom, will be coming into our room on February 12 to teach us about Haiti and we hope that Vénel will take lots of pictures to share with us when he is there.*

*Please talk to us if you have any questions or great ideas concerning this next fundraising project.*

*Jill and Leigh*

Vénel, we have eagerly been waiting to meet our new community member and earlier this month we were able to welcome you into our room. Getting to know you and your family has inspired us to co-construct a project about caring for others.

Vénel's family knows so much about the country of Haiti and are going on an upcoming trip with the group "Healing Hands for Haiti". We are raising money to buy things for the orphanage his family and friends work with. Vénel's parents approached us to come into our class and teach us a few things about this fascinating place.

Vénel and his mother showed us pictures of fishing boats, banana trees, art work, and the beautiful Haitian countryside.



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Vénel's dad pulled an incredible tiger mask from his big sports bag. We were interested to hear that it is made from paper mâché as we have just finished making a paper mâché dragon. In Haiti they don't use boxes to make the basic form, they use sand or mud.

Vénel and his mother showed us the instruments from Haiti that people play during Carnival. Vénel led a procession around the room playing a Haitian instrument and everyone else followed with cha cha chas. It was fun to parade (Ra Ra) to the lively Haitian music.

Vénel, we are thrilled to have you with us this year. We can tell already that this classroom community will be a special place for you.

*Gillian Bateman and Leigh White,*

UNB Children's Centre



### *For Reflection*

How do you plan for welcoming new children and their families? Think about how you invite other children to participate in this process.

How do you support children in new situations and new relationships? Think about the children's moments of anxiety, change, and responses to new people, places, and activities.

In what ways does your centre build upon dispositions of optimism, joy, and a zest for living and learning? Think about positive self-talk, problem solving, curiosity, humour, contributions, accomplishments, and care.

In what ways do you encourage children to think about how their actions affect other people, places, and things in their environments? How do you acknowledge the contributions children make? How do children acknowledge each other's contributions?

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*Guest readers connect the centre with the community*

*Do families feel a sense of place within your centre?*

*What do you do to welcome families and friends?*

*How is a feeling of belonging nurtured?*

**How do you build connections with other places in children's lives – homes, places of worship, play groups? Think about places to which YOU belong.**

**Ask • Inquire • Wonder**

- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Where can we find...?</b> | <b>What comes next?</b>       |
| <b>Where does this go?</b>   | <b>What do we need to do?</b> |
| <b>Who was here before?</b>  | <b>Do you remember when?</b>  |

**BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER**

*First Tomato: A Voyage To The Bunny Planet,*  
by Rosemary Wells

*The Island Light: A Voyage To The Bunny Planet,*  
by Rosemary Wells

*Moss Pillows: A Voyage To The Bunny Planet,*  
by Rosemary Wells

**Children seek out places...**



**...personal, private spaces where they can be alone.**

**...communal, shared spaces where they can be together.**

**What makes a space special?**

**Think about what draws people to particular places.**



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## Sense of Place

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: *Angela's Walks*

The 3-year-olds and I often walk from our centre to "The Point". This is a favourite neighborhood playground for the children. I planned for today's trip by packing dollar store bags full of wind toys. There is always a nice breeze at The Point. We take a route that includes a field of wildflowers. We pass this way often and I always talk with the children about what they are seeing. The children now name the flowers and note what is in bloom.

When tide is out the children see the clam diggers at work on the beach. My uncle has parked his truck by the shore. He buys clams from the diggers and the children stop to chat before continuing to the park.

Several children are interested in collecting stones, leaves and insects. I brought along some "just-in-case" bags for their use.

Knowing that interests and passions vary, I am always expecting children to want to do different things. There is another educator with me so we can share supervision of the children on the play equipment and of the children collecting in the woods.

An early summer storm is brewing as we head back to the centre. We talk about the rumbling thunder and the storm clouds. The children note boats returning to the harbor and can say whose boats they are. Back at the centre the children construct a fishing boat out of cardboard boxes. They use string to make fishing lines.

Here is the catch of the day.



*Angela Little* Passamaquoddy Children's Centre



### Why this matters:

Well-being includes a sense of belonging. As children move beyond the family and into the larger community they learn to feel comfortable with their environment and the people in it. Jane's and Angie's daily walks provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the world outside the day care centre, to begin to identify landmarks and to learn about the people and places that are part of their past and present communities. The walks also provide material for shared memories that strengthen the sense of belonging. "Remember the day we saw the squirrel eating the chestnut?" "Remember the time we heard thunder and had to hurry back from The Point?"

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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: *Jane's Walks*

I noticed that the town was having a display of Pumpkin People during the month of October. Several local businesses and the post office on the main street were sites for these displays. I planned a walk with my 2-year-olds, talking to them first about what they might see along the way. Although the path of the walk was planned ahead, I also took along plastic bags for collections of things of interest to the children. On the way back from the main street the children noticed a squirrel in a tree eating something. Prepared for the spontaneous learning that invariably happens, I stopped while the children watched and speculated about what the squirrel was eating. They found chestnuts on the ground around the tree, opened one up to look inside and then collected a few more to take back to the centre for further investigation.

*Jane Beckerton* Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.



### Other Possibilities:

#### Documenting Learning

While out on a neighborhood walk, the 3-year-old children at Unicorn Children's Centre became very excited when two squirrels scurried past. Maria and Christa, their educators, recorded the children's words and posted the documentation on the wall. Recognizing the children's interests was an initial step in planning an investigation of squirrels.

Squirrel talk  
Hannah-Jo: I saw two squirrels.  
Amelia: There was one squirrel and he was running fast.  
Austin: He ran away from me.  
Emma: He was running through the trees.  
Nicholas: The squirrel even jumped.  
Hayley: The squirrel ran on the trees and in the woods.  
They run fast, Scurry, Scamper



## Sense of Place

### HOME CONNECTIONS: *Jennifer's Blocks*

At the beginning of the year I was trying to think of ideas that would help children just starting at the centre feel more comfortable in their new surroundings. I thought that incorporating pictures of the children and their families into my homeroom would be a good idea. I had made similar picture blocks in the past, but I had used pictures that were connected to certain themes that I was doing at the time. Making the blocks with the children's family pictures connects the centre with home.

Each child and educator in the room has their own individual block. When the children first saw their blocks they took immediate ownership of them. They carried them around and would often spend time sitting looking at and studying their block. The blocks helped give the children a sense of belonging in their new environment. The blocks also fast became a prize possession at daycare. The children often bring us their blocks and tell us who is on them. They also look at their educator's blocks and talk about their families too. Now, the children always recognize our children and husbands when they come in to visit. The blocks have really connected the children's families with their daycare family.

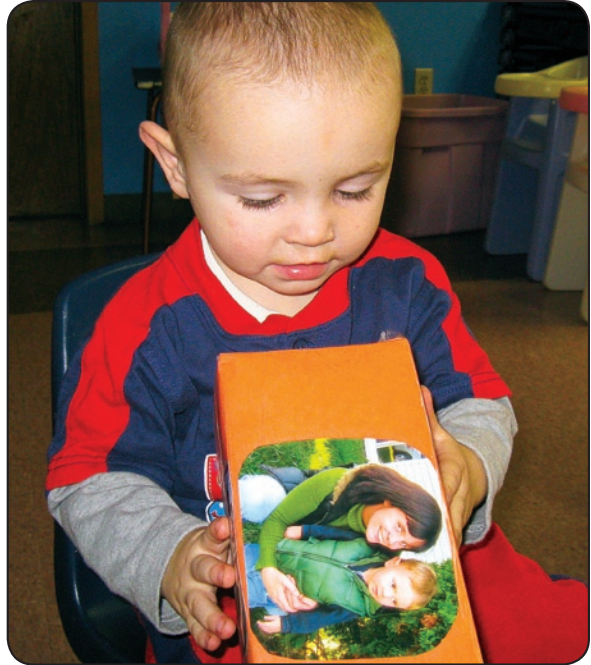
It is eight months later and the children still have an interest in the blocks. They now build more with them. They are not as possessive with them as they were at first. They share their blocks with their friends and we often see them working together to build towers. They still carry them around sometimes and will sit and talk about the pictures on them.

Jennifer Curtis Chatham Day Care Center Inc.



#### How to make: *Family Blocks...*

- Use empty milk cartons that you can get from your local dairy. You could also save used ones and wash them out well.
- Stuff the cartons with newspaper. This makes them a little sturdier.
- Cover them with coloured paper.
- Glue pictures of your choice to the block. (I scanned borrowed family pictures and used them.)
- Use clear packing tape to cover the entire area of the block to protect it, and this makes them easy to wipe clean.



*After Jennifer presented her family blocks at a curriculum workshop, the UNB Curriculum Team noticed similar blocks appearing at other centres around the province. A toddler at the Preschool Centre on Clarke St. eagerly shares his family block with us.*

### *For Reflection*

Each centre is situated in its own unique community. How do you help children to identify with the area surrounding the centre? Think about identifying and visiting local businesses, parks, and familiar landmarks. Think about community members who can participate in the centre or whom the children can visit.

How are daily routines made familiar to the children and how is their participation encouraged? How are changes in routines handled? Think about clean-up, diapering and dressing for outdoor play.

In what ways do you affirm families' connection to the centre? Think about how families see themselves reflected at the centre — through artifacts from home, favourite recipes, family pictures and stories. How do you invite families to share hobbies and talents? How welcoming are your entry ways and your arrival and departure routines?

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## Respectful and Responsive Relationships

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Developing cherished as well as casual friendships
- Forming close relationships with a range of adults
- Growing in their awareness that their actions contribute to the well-being of others
- Participating in group initiatives

### Relationship words to consider:

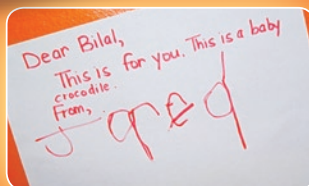
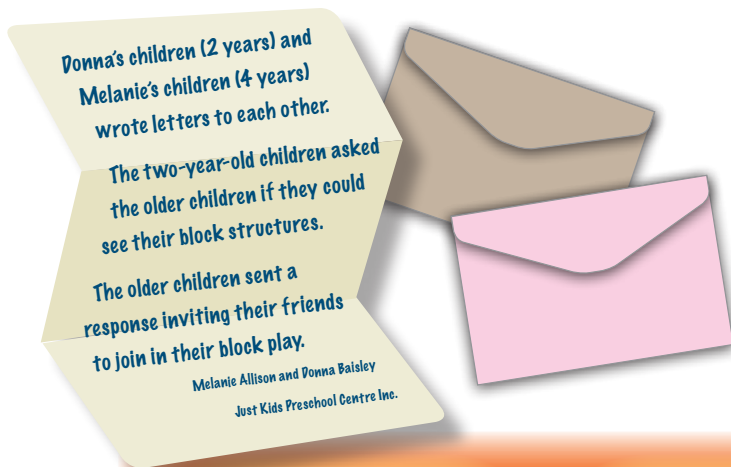
|               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| cooperative   | flexible      | appreciative  |
| amiable       | willing       | tender        |
| aware         | compassionate | sympathetic   |
| trusting      | open          | sensitive     |
| consistent    | forgiving     | accepting     |
| contributing  | polite        | playful       |
| friendly      | empathetic    | supportive    |
| understanding | kind          | complementary |
| questioning   | discussing    | negotiating   |



### Building respectful relationships includes:

- ~ Basic trust
- ~ A safe and secure environment
- ~ Time for uninterrupted play
- ~ Freedom to explore
- ~ Active involvement by the child
- ~ Sensitive observation and consistency by the adult

Magda Gerber and Alison Johnson (2002)



Jared and Bilal (in 2 different classes) communicate with each other through drawing and letter writing. Their communications span several days in a row.



Each time we have a chance to respond to children **individually** in a caring, nurturing, and respectful manner, we build trust. Making the time to listen to a child, as well as giving the child time to respond back to you, is vital in building a strong relationship.

Donna Baisley  
Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.



Some infant programs have a 'circle time' with singing and simple movement games or activities, but such group times are more for adults' enjoyment than for the infants' entertainment or learning. Infants benefit most from group experiences that arise spontaneously. Janet Gonzalez-Mena (2008, 301)

*It should be noted that the boundaries of physical contact should be established in partnership with the parents and the child and be respectful of different cultural norms.*

Manju Varma-Joshi (2007, 7)



**Clean-Up**  
A time to contribute to the well-being of others



Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. "Pooh!" he whispered. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

—A.A. Milne

### BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER

- Mama Do You Love Me?*, by Barbara Joosee
- Koala Lou*, by Mem Fox
- Meet Max and Roxy*, by Karen Huszar
- Knuffle Bunny*, by Mo Willems
- The Relatives Came*, by Cynthia Rylant
- A Chair For My Mother*, by Vera B. Williams
- More More More Said The Baby*, by Vera B. Williams

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## Respectful and Responsive Relationships

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: *Donna's Cubbies*

Our daycare was painted and I had a new group of children and so I had no pictures of children's families in the room. I decided to ask parents to bring in some family pictures from home. Due to the limited space for displaying things I decided to paste them to their lockers. To my surprise it was a huge success. The parents are engaging in conversation with their children and children are having lots of conversations with each

other over the pictures. It also encouraged more parents to participate and bring in their pictures of the children. Parents are also talking with other children about their photos.

*Donna Baisley* Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.



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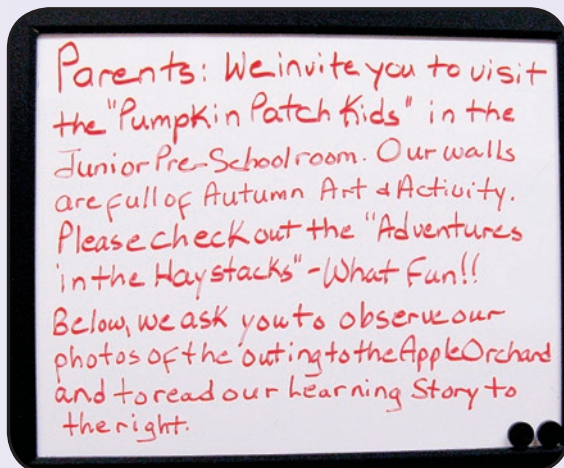
## Why this matters:

Recognizing the importance of having families represented in her new family room, Donna asked families to bring in pictures. Her documentation encouraged conversations out of which new relationships developed. Children, adults, and families interacted, shared stories, and developed friendships. Children talked with children, families with families, and children with other children's parents - a classroom community was created.

## Other Possibilities:

What else have educators done to encourage families to share their lives with each other? At Unicorn Children's Centre, Maria Gillis and Christa Kierstead:

- Asked the children: "How many people are in your family?" The children's graphed responses and ongoing families' discussions revealed many different ideas about what and who counts as family.
- Used white boards to invite families into their room to look at ongoing projects.
- Invited families to create posters about themselves. Maria and Christa encouraged the children to look and tell them their own stories about the events depicted. They then added the children's words to the posters.



## Respectful and Responsive Relationships

### HONOURING RELATIONSHIPS: *A Heroic Heart – Moments of Kindness from Sam*

**It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s SUPER SAM!**

Sam, often you come into the classroom and tell us which super hero you are that day. We have even seen you sign your name as ‘Superman’ on our sign in sheet! Many mornings you are involved in dramatic play where you pretend to be the hero with super powers. However, I believe you are a real-life hero. Lately, we have noticed your compassion, concern for others, kindness and encouragement ...heroic traits indeed! Here are some snapshots of Sam McKinney’s heroic heart.

**February 20** Sam is helping Gillian, his other educator, make pancakes for Pancake Tuesday. Gillian is showing Sam how they can cook three pancakes together so it resembles a mouse with big ears. Leigh, the afternoon teacher, arrives in the classroom and comments that the pancakes look and smell delicious! Sam pauses and ponders. Then, he says, “Gillian, if we have enough batter to make a mouse pancake, don’t you think we have enough to make Leigh a pancake?”

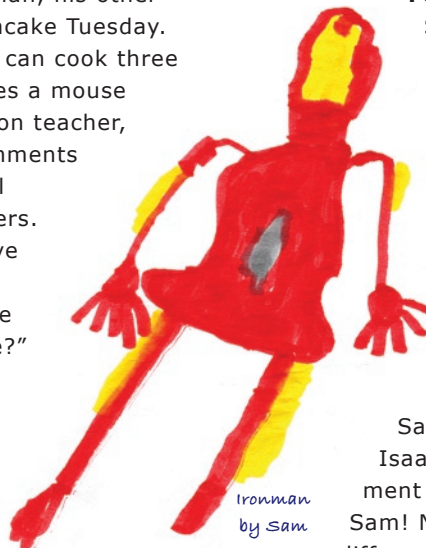
**February 21** Today is bake sale day. Sam’s mom, Stacey, brings in a very scrumptious looking batch of cinnamon buns to sell. Stacey tells Gillian that Sam was quite concerned that Gillian will not be able to eat her cinnamon buns because Gillian is allergic to wheat. Sam thinks he and his mom should make a wheat-free treat for the bake sale sometime so Gillian can enjoy it!

**February 22** While we are sitting at the reading corner as a class, Rosie is in the dramatic play centre sitting on a low table. As she comes off the table, she falls on the floor and the little table falls on its side. Sam rises to his feet immediately and makes sure Rosie is all right. He picks up the table and puts it back in place.

**February 26** I have been known to lose things from time to time. Today is one of those days. I lost my computer memory stick and thinks it is somewhere in the classroom. During group time on the carpet, I announced to the class that it is missing. Curiously, Sam stands up and walks to the other side of the classroom. We are wondering what he is doing. When he comes back, he says to Jill sincerely, “Jill, I looked for your thing, but I didn’t have any luck!” Thanks, Sam (and by the way... I found it!)!

**February 27** By accident, today, Sebastian does not have a place setting for snack time. He was missing a nametag, napkin and cup. Sam was with some other friends, but he chooses to help Sebastian by finding him a napkin and a cup and giving them to him.

**February 28** Isaac was water painting and was very excited about his painting. He exclaimed, “Look at my sun!” Sam said authentically, “Nice sun, Isaac!” What a positive encouragement you are to those around you, Sam! Nice words can make a big difference in the world.



Sam, looking back over the past while, it is clear that you can be a hero by being you. The way you look out for others’ needs, your helpfulness and thoughtfulness are noteworthy. We hope to see these heroic characteristics grow. They will be a fabulous example to the people around you, both young and old.

*Jill McGuigan* UNB Children’s Centre

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## REFLECTIONS

*As human beings, we are made up of a mind, a body and a spirit. As educators we often tend to focus on the childrens' minds and their physical bodies, but what about who they are as people? Could it be that a student's character is just as important as how much they know academically or their physical fitness? I believe so. To ignore the child's personality or character devalues who they are as people which is crucial to how they see themselves and how they relate to others. It is difficult to objectively evaluate a student's spirit. It's simply who they are. Learning stories provide an opportunity to share even the very heart of a child.*

*One of the best things about the learning story approach is the children are the ones who create the stories; we simply capture their moments on paper. In this case, Sam acted kindly, so I wrote about acts of kindness. I remember being blessed every time I observed Sam act kindly toward others. He has such a heart to help others and I wanted to bring this part of Sam to light. I also thought it would encourage Sam to continue acting kindly toward others by valuing this part of his character. Sam had a real passion for superheroes. At times, he would "pretend fight" his enemies. Heroes do fight enemies of some sort, and I didn't want to discourage Sam's passion to be a hero by dictating how a hero should or should not behave. This learning story provided an opportunity to teach Sam that when true heroes fight, it is for good and not for evil; ultimately to help rather than hurt.*

*This story resonates in my mind as one of my best memories in the UNB Children's Centre. I remember before I had finished writing the story, I took Sam aside and we sat on the classroom stairs in the reading corner. Many times in my experience, when a teacher says, "I would like to talk to you about something," it is usually for a rebuke of some kind. However, this meeting I had with Sam was simply to encourage him. I told him that I had noticed the many times he reached out to others to help or comfort. I connected Sam's passion for heroes with Sam's character. I told him that helping others is a big part of what makes a hero a hero. I could see in his face that he really grasped that lesson. What a privilege to be able to encourage and speak into the life of a child! To me, this is what teaching is all about.*

*Jill McGuigan* UNB Children's Centre

### *For Reflection*

What beliefs do you hold about children's participation in self-care routines? Think about snack time, dressing, toileting, sleeping, diapering. How might your beliefs shape the practices in your centre? How do these practices inhibit or encourage children to take initiative?

In what ways are children encouraged to help themselves? In what ways are children encouraged to help others? Think about your responses to children's requests for help. Think about access to supplies, peer helping, and contributions to procedures.

How do you address children's comments and questions about individual or family differences in self-care routines? Think about learning about families' practices, having open discussions, and taking what children say seriously.

How are government health and safety regulations made visible in your centre and within centre policies? How do you negotiate these regulations as you plan for learning? Think about access to required posted information and responsibility for the management of regulatory information.

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## Personal Care

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Growing independence in self-care routines
- Learning about individual differences in self-care practices
- Helping others with personal care



**Allow time for children to try things on their own. Encourage children to DO for themselves.**

Visually depict routines, such as: Hand washing

### Conquering the Zipper

*Alicia showed me something very special. At first, nothing looked out of the ordinary so I wondered what she was going to tell me. She told me, "I zipped my coat up." I asked her if it was the first time she had ever zipped her coat on her own and she told me it was!*

*When we arrived outside, I asked Alicia if she could explain how she managed to zipper her jacket. She said quietly, "I just put this piece into this piece and pulled up my zipper."*

**Congratulations, Alicia!**

Jill McGuigan UNB Children's Centre



### Encourage independence.

In this New Zealand centre children collect their own diapers and climb up to the change area themselves.

Toni Christie and Robin Christie (2004, 12-14)

### Carers put Love into action.

The way you care for your baby is how he [she] experiences your love. Everyday caregiving routines, like feeding or diapering, can be educational and loving interactions.

Magda Gerber (2002)

### BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER

*Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*, by Margaret Chodos-Irvine

*Buz*, by Richard Egielski

*Now One Foot, Now The Other*, by Tomie DePaola

*Red's Best*, by Kathy Stinson

*Grandpa*, by John Burningham

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# Nap Time or Quiet Time? some possible quiet time activities...

Books • Headphones & CDs • puzzles • small manipulatives • Playdough • Thinking time • \_\_\_\_\_

## Communicating with parents

*Consistency from all caregivers is important. You and the parents of children who are ready for toilet learning will want to communicate closely.*

- Gather information about toilet learning from the parent of each child. What expectations does the parent have about toilet learning? Do you need to be aware of specific cultural considerations?
- If toilet learning has not been initiated at home and you think a child is ready, discuss this with a parent. Agree on a workable plan to follow. Ensure that each child has a good supply of extra clothing.
- Know what words the parent wants to use to refer to body fluids, functions and body parts. However, because you are caring for more than one child, it may be more practical to use the same terminology for all the children.
- Children quickly learn the meaning of different terms. It is best to be direct about toilet learning.
- Communicate daily about the child's toilet learning.

CCCF (2002)

One afternoon while playing with the Treasure Basket, Paige focused her attention on a spoon and measuring cup. She was pretending to mix and then she brought the spoon up to her mouth with great ease. As I watched Paige play, I realized she was ready to feed herself lunch and snack.

•  
Tiffany  
Yeomans  
100  
Aker  
Woods  
Daycare



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## Personal Care

### PLANNING FOR PERSONAL CARE: *Arrival Routines*

In our classroom we have worked together to build a familiar routine that allows the children to manage their own arrival as they transition into the classroom from home.

Once the children arrive and enter the classroom, the first thing they do is...wash their hands. This routine becomes automatic and the children do it independently.

The children then make their way to the 'sign-in' table where they complete a series of arrival activities each morning: signing their names on a sign-in sheet; finding and putting on their name tag; and locating a clothespin with their name and putting it in the basket.

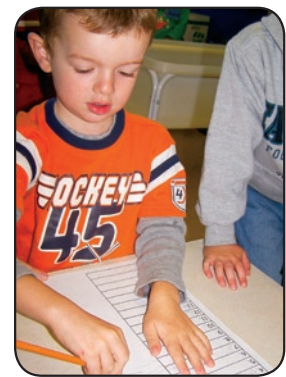
*Leigh White and Gillian Bateman* UNB Children's Centre



*Felix washes his hands.*



*Jacob, Natalie and Mitchell sign in.*



*Nametages are set out on sign-in table each morning.*



*Kate and her Mom find her nametag and get ready to put it on.*



*The name tag basket is a quick way for the educators to see who has arrived and for children to learn to distinguish their name from others.*



## Why this matters:

A daily entry routine provides opportunities for children to become familiar with rhythms and routines of new situations, take responsibility for their well-being, and participate and increase independence in self-care routines. The printing and selecting of their names allows children to engage with the symbols and practices of language while they ease into their day.

## Other Possibilities:

Arrival time is an important transition time for educators, children, and families. Routines should respect the needs of each family and provide continuity between the home and centre.

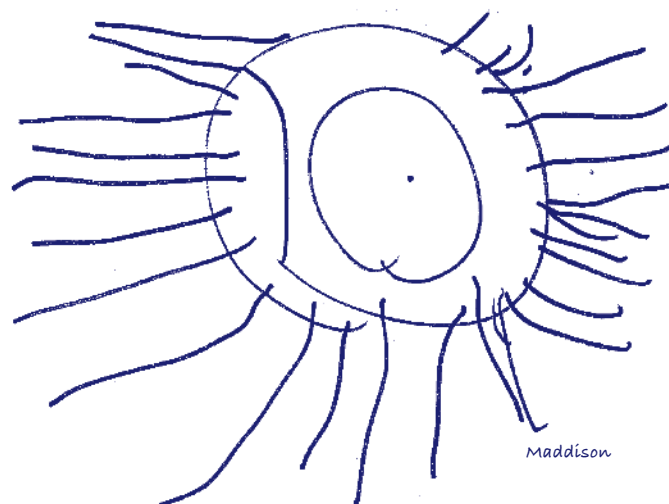
Strategies some centres have used to manage arrival times included:

- Children's names on peg boards
- Documentation to revisit
- Notices to read together
- Comfortable places for family farewells
- Goodbye doors
- Farewelling Steps (see right)

How are children involved in transition times?



[Image] Toni Christie and Robin Christie (2004, 9)



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## Personal Care

### GROWING INDEPENDANCE: *Maria's Visual Routine*

**Why did you feel photographs of the daily routines would be useful?**

*The photographs story the children's day from arrival to departure. The photographic timeline of a typical day is a much more realistic and practical way to help children understand the passage of time as opposed to counting abstract numbers on a calendar or chart. The children are actually experiencing these events each day in the centre. This practice enables children to predict events, promotes receptive and expressive language, and includes children in documenting the timeline of their day.*

**How did you see it as helping children to grow in their independence with self-care routines?**

*I see it as encouraging independent action because the children can visualize events on the photos occurring and then they are able to independently carry out the actions. For example, when snack is brought into the room the children immediately and independently walk to the bathroom to wash their hands.*

*I think this practice promotes self confidence and eases transitions. For example, Nicholas depended much less on his Mom at arrival times. He learned to place his personal belongings in their special places and then put on his own sneakers.*

**How did you see it as encouraging children to help others?**

*The photos of "tidy-up time" provided encouragement for some children who were not always the most enthusiastic "tidiers". The children depicted in the photos were so proud to be in this position and took pleasure and pride in completing these tasks well. I also make sure to occasionally change the photos so that children see themselves and each other in different routines.*

*Children are aware of expectations. For example, if a child does not want to tidy-up I might ask, "What is Hannah-Jo doing in the photo?" I usually get the response "She's putting away blocks" and a change in action.*

*Pictures are "interactive communications." I regularly observe the children, alone and in groups, talking about the activities happening in the photos.*



Arrival Time



Morning Play



Hygiene/Hand-washing



Lunch



Rest Time

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**Did you have times when children commented on or noticed differences in routines at the centre and in their homes?**

*Children would often say, “Mommy puts on my sneakers”, or “Mommy puts on my snow pants”, or “Nanny washes my face”. Such comments presented challenges as we endeavored to help our children become increasingly independent.*

*Sometimes, children would comment on the fact that, at home, Mommy or Daddy cleaned up their toys and declared, “I don’t want to do it!” or “I don’t have to do this at home.” The photos really helped because children saw their friends carrying out self-care routines.*

*We talked about these events and the photos seemed to inspire the children to take control of their own tasks and responsibilities.*

*Maria Gillis Unicorn Children’s Centre Inc.*



Large Group Play



Outdoor Time



Afternoon Departure



*For Reflection*

What beliefs do you hold about children’s participation in self-care routines? Think about snack time, dressing, toileting, sleeping, diapering. How might your beliefs shape the practices in your centre? How do these practices inhibit or encourage children to take initiative?

In what ways are children encouraged to help themselves? In what ways are children encouraged to help others? Think about your responses to children’s requests for help. Think about access to supplies, peer helping, and contributions to procedures.

How do you address children’s comments and questions about individual or family differences in self-care routines? Think about learning about families’ practices, having open discussions, and taking what children say seriously.

How are government health and safety regulations made visible in your centre and within centre policies? How do you negotiate these regulations as you plan for learning? Think about access to required posted information and responsibility for the management of regulatory information.

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## Food and Nutrition

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Understanding the relationship between food and their bodies
- Building confidence to try new foods
- Exploring a range of cultural practices of eating and sharing food
- Making decisions about food consumption, preparation, serving, and clean-up routines

### Cooking — Children Participate by:

|                  |                 |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Stirring</b>  | <b>Kneading</b> | <b>Setting</b>  |
| <b>Cutting</b>   | <b>Sifting</b>  | <b>Flipping</b> |
| <b>Measuring</b> | <b>Washing</b>  | <b>Shaking</b>  |
| <b>Rolling</b>   | <b>Wiping</b>   | <b>Mixing</b>   |
|                  | <b>Drying</b>   |                 |

### *Adventures in Eating*

*Introduce new tastes.*

*Introduce new ways of eating.*

*Introduce local products.*

*Include family favourites.*

*Include foods from around the world.*

*Make sure you participate in the adventure too.*

### Ask • Inquire • Wonder

**Where do eggs come from?**

Visit a food producer.

**How does a seed turn into a plant?**

Plant carrots outdoors; grow beans inside.

## How do you celebrate seasonal foods?



**DOWN TO EARTH: PLANT • GROW • WEED • WATER • HARVEST**

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*What happens when children say they are not hungry?*

*Are they given opportunities to eat at other times?*

*How flexible are your centre's meals and snack times?*



**People use different tools:  
Forks  
Chopsticks  
Fingers**



*In what ways do you invite families and community members to share their recipes and culinary talents?*

**BOOKS TO READ TOGETHER**

*Growing Vegetable Soup*, by Lois Ehlert

*Stone Soup*, by Marcia Brown

*Pancakes, Pancakes!*, by Eric Carle

*Mean Soup*, by Betsy Everitt

*I Will Not Ever Eat A Tomato*, by Lauren Child



**Did you know?**

Food as an art material in toddler and two-year-old programs is an issue because children of this age need to learn to distinguish between food

that goes into the mouth and other objects and materials that don't. And although scented play dough, felt pens, and finger paints are popular,

they can confuse some children under three who are not sure yet what can be eaten and what can't.

Janet Gonzalez-Mena (2008, 324)

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## Food and Nutrition

### MAKING DECISIONS: *Angela's "Open Snack"*

We had heard about and discussed the concept of "open snack" with another daycare at a curriculum orientation presentation. When we left that weekend I was still thinking about how it could work and had a lot of reservations about having 2-4 year olds helping themselves!

We had already been encouraging the children to pour their own drinks from small juice containers so that was not an issue. The biggest fear we had was letting the children have free choice with a tray of snacks. What about portion control, hygiene and general snack etiquette? We imagined spills and children grabbing handfuls of snack and general chaos.

The first time we tried it we put out snack at 3:15 and said "Snack is ready for anyone who wants to have it now". As we expected everyone rushed to wash hands and were very impatient waiting in line. There were spilled drinks and napkins full of snack were dropped and wasted. We stepped back afterward and re-thought the approach.

Next time we placed snack out on table at 3:15 and I very quietly approached a small group asking "Would you like to have snack now or later?" Some chose now, others picked later. We also used plates instead of napkins to let the children carry snack to their table easier. This time snack went smoothly and it still does.



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Once in awhile we need to ask a child to leave some snack for the other friends too, but usually just the first time or two. Portions are very close to what we would have given them so there is not an increase in food cost and the children are much more relaxed.

When finished they clear their spot, and can go back to play until everyone has a chance to have snack. The snack is cleared away by 3:40; everyone has helped themselves for firsts and seconds and cleaned up after themselves. Even the youngest toddlers get to participate and the pride and independence they feel is very evident as they strut back to their seat carrying their plate and cup.

We have a true buffet style snack that is very relaxed and the children love it!



*Angela Thompson* Kings County Kids Daycare Centre

### Why this matters:

The open snack concept gives children the opportunity to make choices about when, what, and how much they want to eat. As Angela points out in her account, there is a short period of time when children may be adjusting to this routine but that they soon learn what a reasonable amount is for themselves. Serving themselves allows children control over the amount they take and gives them practice with pouring and carrying food and drink. They are also able to say “no” when they are not hungry, an important concept in learning about the relationship between food and their bodies.

### Other Possibilities:

Your centre’s schedule, numbers of children, and physical space will shape your snack time routines. An open snack works for Angela and her children, but that does not mean it will work for everyone. Important learning considerations to think about from Angela’s story are choice and independence.

There are many reasons for snacking together too:

- celebration times
- tasting new foods
- eating food the children have prepared
- guest chefs



## Food and Nutrition

### PREPARING FOOD: *Donna's Muffin Making*

**How did you decide to make muffins with the children?**

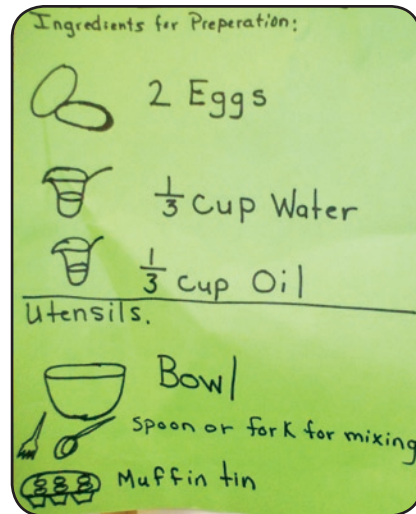
I make play dough once a week with the children in my class. I noticed how they take great pleasure in helping to pour the flour, oil, and salt into the bowl. I thought that they might enjoy making something other than play dough, so I decided to make a muffin mix with them. This would require more ingredients and a lot more interaction with the process of baking including, mixing, and pouring. I also felt it would be fun for them to see how things were made from start to finish.

**What were you hoping the children would learn?**

I was hoping they would learn more about how to mix a batter, pour ingredients, as well as the different names of the products that go into baking, i.e. oil, eggs, flour etc. I also wanted them to have the experience of holding, cracking, and seeing the inside of an egg. I posted a recipe with both words, and referred back to this recipe throughout the activity to initiate language between the children. I also gave the children a turn either pouring or mixing; this gave them more experience with taking turns.

**What provisions were made so children could do things for themselves?**

I had prepared the activity ahead of time and had decided to allow the children the opportunity to do the entire procedure themselves. I would assist them when they needed help, but they were allowed to try for themselves first. I had decided to make a muffin mix because the ingredients were simple for the children to measure and pour. This activity would give the children a feeling of success in their accomplishments. I also did a recipe that pictorially showed what was needed to be added to the mixture and how many. An example of this would be: one egg. I gave each child a plastic knife and a plastic container full of frosting so that they were able to frost their own muffin. By doing this procedure the children could take ownership of the cooking activity.



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### Where did you go from there?

*I was amazed by the pride and ownership the children took in the muffin activity; they beamed with self-confidence. Since then cooking has become a regular part of our days at daycare. I decided to add to this experience by making different recipes, which involved more ingredients, more pouring, more mixing and the cracking of eggs. The children have made different types of foods since their first cooking experience. We have made bread and even ice cream. The children really relate to the recipes more now. They have confidence in their abilities, and are starting to do more for themselves on a daily basis. They are pouring their own milk for snack and lunches. THEY CAN DO IT!*



### What other cooking experiences have I considered?

*I have thought about uncooked edible play dough, and preparing a stew using vegetables etc. At the end of the year, after lots of exposure to cooking and baking, I would like to present to the children actual measured ingredients that are put out on a tray, and a visual recipe to see if they would know what to do. Would they use the recipe? What would they do with the ingredients?*

Donna Baisley Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.



### For Reflection

How can you become more familiar with the food practices and preferences of children and their families? How might such insights influence your practices? Think about regional favourites, family traditions, and dietary choices.

How does your centre encourage and balance families' contributions for snacks and meals with government standards for food and nutrition? Think about the time, space, and supplies necessary to work with families to prepare foods on site.

How are children included in food preparation and serving? Think about developing safe routines so children can participate regularly in food preparation. Think about children's questions, potential learnings, and discussions about food — cooking, shopping, and growing.





## Body and Movement

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

- Participating in a variety of physical activities, indoors and out
- Learning about their body in space
- Increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large muscle coordination
- Increasing fine motor capacities
- Knowing and stretching physical limits
- Releasing and restoring energy in outdoor places



## Encourage Physical Activity

- ★ Participate with children, be a role model.
- ★ Dress in everyday clothing that encourages free movement and mobility.
- ★ Photograph children being active.
- ★ Actively support children's initiatives and interests in physical activity.
- ★ Visit parks. Practice the fundamental skills of running, throwing, catching and kicking a ball.
- ★ Introduce both boys and girls to active women, as well as men.
- ★ Make observations without reference to gender.
- ★ Plan activities within children's' abilities.

Elaine Lowe and CCCF (2001)



### A physical focus on Infants and Toddlers...

- Ramps, railings, and low steps
- Graphics on the floor
- Push and pull toys that make sounds
- Multi-levelled play spaces





## Body and Movement

### EXPLORING BODY AND MOVEMENT: *Lisa's Yoga Classes*

A component of my yoga teacher training certification was to instruct practice sessions. I was interested in teaching yoga to children so I approached the morning educators at my son's centre. We thought this would be an opportunity for children to try something new. I wrote an information letter and consent form to inform families of my project. Once all consent forms were collected we scheduled our first session.

I researched Yoga instruction for children by reading books and articles and by speaking with other instructors who work with children. I planned the sessions to engage children in imaginative ways. I began the first session by inviting the children to "Visit a Mountain" in their minds. I asked them for ideas about what they would see on their journey to the mountain. Their ideas included: trees, bears, and butterflies. I connected the various parts of the mountain journey to traditional Yoga poses. For instance, before going to the mountain

the children had to make sandwiches for the journey which allowed the practicing of the forward bend pose. The yoga sessions included many bends, twists, balancing and stretches. For the second session I created a sun dance and an accompanying story to teach the sun salutation poses, again drawing on a story to incorporate the children's imaginations.

While the children worked through the yoga poses, turning themselves into flowers, butterflies, bears and mountain climbers, a range of comments were made such as: "I do yoga at home." "My mom does this sometimes." "I've done this before."

*Lisa Wilby* UNB Children's Centre



**Tree pose** helps with balance and the idea of being rooted to the earth. I asked, "How strong is a tree? No matter what the weather, a tree is strong and stands straight and proud." Using such imagery allows the children to connect with the poses and it resonates with them as they practice.



**Butterfly pose** stretches inner thighs. I had the children search from flower to flower with 'antennae' (arms), allowing to add back stretches as well.





**Eagle pose** requires balance and is also a shoulder stretch.



**Stretching forward** bends with the help of a partner stretches back muscles.

### Why this matters:

The yoga sessions provided the children and their educators with more variety in their physical activities. As the children tried different poses they explored their bodies in space and challenged their physicality in new ways. As they stretched they had to test and respect their bodies' physical limits. The poses provided children with opportunities to increase bodily strength and control, balance and limberness, and large and fine motor coordination. Children were able to try the poses on their own, while other poses required the children to work together.

### Other Possibilities:

Who in your community could share their knowledge about bodies and movement?

- yoga, dance, and movement instructors
- nutritionists and naturopaths
- high school leadership students
- athletes and coaches
- community recreation leaders
- nurses and doctors
- family members

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## *For Reflection*

How do policies at your centre promote or prevent exploration of natural spaces, healthy risk-taking, and quality outdoor activity? Think about regulations regarding going off site, weather-related policies, and schedule restrictions.

In outdoor/indoor areas collect examples of children's healthy risk taking. Think about conversations, gestures, facial expressions, body movement, patterns of action, and social relationships. Think about how you support children's initiatives in outdoor and indoor spaces.

How do you discover the interests, hobbies, and activities of families and staff after centre hours? How are such interests and activities explored in your centre?

Think about where you played outdoors as a child. Who did you play with? What did you do? What materials were available? What risks did you take? How might this experience inform your planning for outdoor participation?

How do you involve children in decisions about safety and appropriateness of play space equipment and materials? Think about issues of inclusion, gender, and age appropriateness.



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