



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES,  
SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

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Organization  
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Kalispell, MT  
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www.nurturingcenter.org



*The Nurturing Center is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to providing services to strengthen families and support early care and education in Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Sanders Counties.*

## THE FLATHEAD CHAPTER OF MONTANA ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

With the Support of FVCC & The Nurturing Center

### 2010 ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS SERIES

Beyond the Curriculum –  
Exploring the How & Why of Reaching Children Through Your Teaching

TOPICS INCLUDE:  
Emergent Curriculum  
The Project Approach  
Reggio Emilia

Environmental Education

2nd Tuesday of Every Month – January – May

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Flathead Valley Community College Early Childhood Center

January - March, 2010

Volume 11 Issue 1

# NURTURING NOTES



**the Nurturing Center**

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

... from our house  
to yours

## Storybook Time

*By Eileen Donohoue*

For me, even the phrase “storybook time” conjures up wonderful memories of cozy magical times ensconced with a book and a pile of children nested around me. Together we would enter the world of wonder and adventure as we looked at marvelous pictures and read well crafted words. I cannot think of a better time to revisit the warmth and importance of reading together than these next few months when winter closes us in a bit!

Story time is the corner stone for early literacy. Early literacy can be summed up as everything children know about reading and writing before they can do either. Early literacy includes a baby teething on a “chunky” book, a toddler who never tires of a favorite book, which is read over and over and the preschooler who joyfully pretends to “read” a book to you. All of these activities set the foundation for later success at reading and success in learning overall. It is important that young children are introduced into an atmosphere of learning that is fun, verbal and stimulating! How you approach a discussion about the events within a book can set the stage for early science “inquiry” skills or foster budding language skills. Consider the following thoughts to help set an inviting atmosphere:

- Associate reading with warm pleasant feelings.
- Provide a comfortable place where books are accessible.

- Plan to delight in words and language, help children expand listening skills, note how written language differs from spoken language, listen for sounds – notice how they are the same or different- play with the words! For example, explore rhymes and alliteration.
- Help children relate the stories and plots within the books to their own lives.
- Read books that foster children’s vivid imagination, reinforce their own growing abilities or observe their world.
- Help children make comparisons, describe events and draw conclusions.
- Ask the thinking questions and help children make predictions: What happens next? Why did she do that?
- Follow up on the stories you read. Invite children to include what they have heard in their artwork, their pretend play and their own storytelling.

All of these activities can help us lay important, solid groundwork for future learning by fostering an interactive, literacy rich environment that provides opportunities to talk and be listened to. Story time truly is special valuable time!

If you would like to share a favorite book or a personal story about reading with young children we invite you to join our discussion on Facebook!

## What’s New with Provider Training Professional Development

*From our Early Childhood Coordinator*

- .....so there is the first thing...Let’s make the switch from the word “training” to the words “professional development”. As one person said...let’s leave training for dogs and think about “developing” people. I am looking forward to working with you on your professional development! It is a hard habit to break, but let’s start down that road.
- I am sending out provider updates every few weeks about upcoming professional development opportunities around the region. I have emails for about 75% of our providers but I sure would like to get the rest of you on board. If you have not been receiving my emails but have an email address please call or email me and I will get you added to the list. sherrie@nurturingcenter.org
- Changes you may notice in this quarter’s professional development calendar; We are now holding our evening classes in BSS Room 132 at Flathead Valley Community College; Beginning in January New Provider Orientations will primarily be held at The Summit in conference room 2; This quarter includes two evenings with a “let’s talk” format on the calendar. Some providers requested an opportunity to brainstorm and visit with other providers...I hope many of you will join us and we’ll

see if it is a development opportunity we want to continue.

- I am looking forward to meeting and working with those of you in communities outside of Kalispell. I would like to get professional development offerings going in other communities by spring quarter so please let me hear from some of you in those other communities and help me figure out “what, where and when”.
- RECRUITMENT FOR BEST. BEST is offered through the Nurturing Center for family and group child care providers who have been in business less than three years. We meet together at your program to provide support and individualized training during your first years of business. When we complete the curriculum you receive 23 hours of approved professional development and... there is no charge to you! Call or email Sherrie if you might be interested in participating.
- I am also hoping to begin visiting your programs after the first of the year...I need some kid time...so don’t be surprised if I call and want to come and visit. Looking forward to meeting more of you in the months to come....Sherrie

## Mini Grants

Notice on Mini Grant awards should be going out to providers soon! The Nurturing Center was able to award all of this quarter's \$11,000 during the first round of applications. NEXT DUE DATE!! Applications for the January-March quarter are due into the Nurturing Center by 5:00 pm on Monday, January 4, 2010. Access the application and information on our website [www.nurturingcenter.org](http://www.nurturingcenter.org) or call or come by to pick up an application.

## Billing for Holidays & Absent Days for Scholarship Families

*From our Family Services Department*

Registered or licensed child care providers can charge for the following holidays when closed, with certain limitations. Approved holidays are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Limitations to this are:

1. You may only bill for the number of hours that the child would be regularly attending on that day,
2. If the holiday falls on a day that the child is not normally scheduled to be in attendance you may not bill for the holiday.

Registered or licensed child care providers can also bill for (claim certified enrollment hours) for days that a child was absent if the child is authorized for 30 or more hours per week. Providers must bill for the number of hours that the child would have attended on the absent day and then mark "CE" in the comments column. You may not bill for "CE" hours if your facility was closed on that day, or if the child does not normally attend your facility on that day.

Providers must provide a copy of your facility's contract to the Nurturing Center in order to be eligible for holiday payments and / or certified enrollment absent days to assure that the policies are. Please refer to your Child Care Provider Guidelines Handbook for more information.

## Guardian Program

Are you willing to volunteer to help in case of a local disaster or emergency? As part of the Early Childhood Services Bureau's Emergency Plan, child care professionals in all communities are invited to volunteer to help in case of an emergency or disaster. If you would like to help, please contact Diane Clark at 406-756-1414 or [diane@nurturingcenter.org](mailto:diane@nurturingcenter.org).

## Flathead Chapter News

*From Flathead Chapter of MtAEYC*

Our Flathead Chapter-MtAEYC is gearing up for the 9th year of the Essential Connection training series. All Essential Connection's workshops will be held at FVCC's Early Childhood Center and will be offered on the second Tuesday of each month from January through May 2010.

This year's focus will be on a variety of curriculum philosophies and ways of teaching and learning that are child-centered and developmentally appropriate. The series is titled Beyond the Curriculum – Exploring the How and Why of Reaching Children Through Your Teaching. Topics will include: Emergent Curriculum; the Project Approach; Reggio Emilia; and Environmental Education. Similar to last year, the series will be offered as both 2-hour stand-alone workshops or as a 15-hour series that will include additional discussion-time before each workshop and tasks to reflect on between workshops. The cost for the 2-hour workshops is \$10.00 for members of Flathead AEYC and \$15.00 for non-members. The cost for the 15-hour series is \$60.00 for members and \$85.00 for non-members. (One college credit is available for the 15-hour series by registering at Flathead Valley Community College.)

Our Flathead Chapter-MtAEYC meets the 4th Tuesday of every month, except in January, when the meeting will be a workday on Saturday, January 16th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Members are welcome to participate as we line out goals for the upcoming year. (For more information, contact Collette). February's meeting is Tuesday, February 23 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at FVCC's Early Childhood Center. Our forum topic will be "Collaborative Relationships in Early Childhood". For more information about Flathead MtAEYC or about Essential Connections workshops, call Collette Box at 756-7295 or 261-8366.

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The Editorial Staff reserves the right to review all news and advertisements on a basis of appropriate content and space available.

## Higher Education Merit Pay Options Extended

*From Early Childhood Project*

Due to the increase in funding from the ARRA (stimulus funds) we are able to open up the Higher Education Merit Pay for another round which will be available for the Spring and Summer semesters of 2010 only. The application will be available under "What's New" on January 6th and will be due in our office (Early Childhood Project in Bozeman) by 5:00 p.m. on January 27th. Visit [www.mtecp.org](http://www.mtecp.org) to download the application.

## Is the Finicky Eater Born or Made?

**From our Child & Adult Care Food Program**

Some children are naturally very sensitive to taste, texture, and smell. That can be positive or negative. They can enjoy food a lot, or they can be so upset by something they eat that they gag or throw up.

The finicky eater can also be made. Parents who take an interest in novel food and approach it with curiosity and optimism pass those same attitudes along to children. Parents who are offended by novel food and fussy about what they eat will often pass their fussiness along to their children. Parents who pressure their children to eat or offer too few opportunities to learn to like new food can turn their children into finicky eaters.

You can't get a finicky eater to eat; you can only teach him how to behave appropriately at mealtimes. Then you have to back off and let him take it the rest of the way. If he can stay calm, behave nicely and be polite but firm about refusing food, he will be able to ever-so-gradually approach new food and learn to like it. He will learn to sneak up on new food by looking at it, watching you eating it and tasting but not swallowing it (what do you think napkins are for?). After 10 or 15 or 20 tries, he may like it. In the meantime if he can say "no" to food, it frees him to say "yes" more often. Children always do more and dare more if they feel they have control over a situation.

## Children Need Outdoor Play

**From the Quality Assurance Division**

It's that time of year again!! The wind blows, outdoor temperatures go up and down with little notice and rain & snow may cover the grass. Kids have sniffles and colds and parents request their child / children don't go outside during your scheduled outdoor activities. Some parents may even request their toddler not be allowed to go outside if it's below 32 degrees.

However, ARM 37.95.1011(4) states, "Infants shall be taken outside for some period during each day in good weather." And ARM 37.95.715(2) states, "There must be developmentally appropriate activities for the children which foster sound social, intellectual, emotional and physical growth including: (c) Outdoor play each day except when precluded by severity of weather."

Please refer parents to this rule and let them know you're required to take children outside every day in good weather. There isn't an exact temperature cited in the rules & regulations allowing for no outdoor activities. It's left up to each child care provider to decide what "good weather" is. When is it too hot or too cold for children to play outside or go for a walk?

Here are a few guidelines that might be helpful when planning outside play time in the upcoming winter weather:

- Have kids DRESS TO FIT THE SEASON. When it's cold outside, wear loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing in several layers. Trapped air insulates. Layers can be removed to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent, and hooded. Wear a hat because half your body heat loss can be from the head. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extreme cold. Wear mittens, snug at the wrist. Try to stay dry. Wear boots.
- Kids should MOVE AROUND FROM TIME TO TIME by moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm. If children can't move and it's cold outside, they are at risk of getting frostbite. If a child uses a wheelchair or has a disability that prevents them from moving their limbs, you may need to discuss with their parents what temperatures can be tolerated.
- BE AWARE OF THE WIND! Wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by combined effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from the body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature. When it's cold outside and the wind is blowing, it may be one of those rare days you need to stay indoors.

Kids love to play outside and it's good for their bodies to move about. If it's cold and snowing but the wind isn't blowing, it's probably a fun day for kids to play outside. Visit (<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf>) for printable cold & heat index charts.

If you have questions about this or any other day care regulation, please contact your local Child Care Licensors Babby McCartney at 751-5962 or Fern Sutherland at 751-5932.

## H1N1 Vaccine is Open to the Public December 14

*From Flathead Health Department*

The Flathead City-County Health Department is pleased to announce that both H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccines are available to everyone 6 months of age and older beginning December 14, 2009. An ample amount of both vaccines are available for all age groups and vaccines may be administered simultaneously. "This is an ideal time to be vaccinated for protection against influenza during the holidays, as it takes up to 2 weeks before influenza immunizations are fully effective," stated Joe Russell.

Influenza is generally most widespread in this area during January and February. The novel H1N1 influenza virus will continue to cause illness for quite some time. "Even though it appears novel H1N1 influenza illness has subsided in our community, we continue to receive reports of illness," said Russell.

H1N1 influenza vaccine is free of charge. Seasonal influenza vaccine is \$25 for adults 19 years of age and over. Medicare and Medicaid are accepted (bring your card) and credit card service is available. Seasonal influenza vaccine for children 6 months through 18 years of age is \$15 and no child will be denied vaccine due to inability to pay.

Please visit the Flathead City-County Health Department website at [www.flatheadhealth.org](http://www.flatheadhealth.org) or call the Flu Hotline at 751-8188 for any additional information.