



Early

Learning & Education PROGRAMS

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Appreciating Diversity

In the book *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint Exupéry wrote, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." Learning to appreciate diversity involves practicing empathy daily, finding those things within both ourselves and others that make us unique, and discovering ways to respect and celebrate that uniqueness and allowing it to enhance the way we view the world.

Research shows children begin noticing similarities and differences between people during infancy. Infants gaze at all faces for the same amount of time, but by the time they are two years old, they show a preference for faces that are similar to theirs. Between the ages of five and six, children can show the same level

of implicit bias as adults. Implicit bias is an unconscious negative attitude towards a specific group (or groups) of people. This is why it is important to begin conversations about different races, families, and cultures at an early age. Approach these conversations with an open, calm, and positive attitude so children can learn how to talk about diversity without judgment.

The *Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP): School Age* is an assessment tool used to monitor the development of school-age children.

The DRDP defines awareness of diversity as being able to "show awareness, acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of others' special needs, genders, family

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PROMOTING PEACE

Help children discover that all people are unique and can live peacefully together by reading and discussing the following books.

- *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud
- *Stand In My Shoes: Kids Learning about Empathy* by Bob Sornson Ph.D.
- *Llama Llama and the Bully Goat* by Anna Dewdney
- *Heartprints* by P. K. Halliman
- *A Rainbow of Friends* by P. K. Halliman
- *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz
- *Someone Special, Just Like You* by Tricia Brown
- *Families* by Ann Morris
- *Talk and Work It Out* by Cheri J. Meiners M.Ed.



Activities with Families

Parents and educators are partners in helping children develop the life skills and academic knowledge they need to be successful. When you plan activities to encourage parent involvement, include opportunities for them to see their child's work displayed, to participate directly with their child in your program, and to form social connections with you and other parents.

Start by creating inviting displays of children's work that include photos and written descriptions of the project. This helps parents understand what their children are learning, and gives them ideas of things they can do together at home. The following are some ideas for building stronger connections with families.

- **Art Show:** Schedule an evening or weekend art show. Encourage children to create a variety of art projects such as paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Explain that they will present their favorite artworks to parents at the art show. Allow children to create and mail formal invitations to their family members.
- **Nature Outing:** Schedule a family field trip to a local nature center, tide pool, or wilderness park. Pack picnic lunches, binoculars, bug catchers, bags for collecting fallen leaves, rocks, shells, or pinecones, and magnifying glasses. Use photos and collected materials to create a memory book for the reading area.
- **Potluck:** Schedule a lunch or dinner potluck, and invite parents to prepare and share traditional food. Advise them of any food allergies. This is a great way for parents to relax with their children, share their family traditions, build relationships with other parents, and get to know you better.
- **Concerts and Plays:** Parents can be invited to share an evening of fun listening to their children sing, play musical instruments, tell their favorite stories using props, or create their own original stories to perform.
- **Community Garden:** Start a garden and invite each family to participate in maintaining it. Keep tasks easy for parents to accomplish in short time frames, such as spending ten minutes helping their child water plants or pull weeds each week.



Infants and Crying

A baby usually cries when it needs something, and the caregiver will check to see what the baby needs. In most cases, having their needs met will stop the tears. But what about the infant who cries for hours and cannot be soothed? The first step is to check with a pediatrician to make sure the baby is not suffering from an illness or is in pain. If the doctor determines there is no medical reason for the crying, then it is possible that the baby is going through what is called the period of **PURPLE** crying.

The word **PURPLE** is an acronym that describes the infant as being at the **Peak** of **Unexpected** crying that **Resists** soothing, with a look of **Pain** on their face, and crying that is **Long-lasting** (five hours or more) and most often happens in the **Evening**. The period of **PURPLE** crying can begin

when a baby is two weeks old and can last up to four months. Remember that this crying is normal. Your job is to make sure the baby has what it needs and offer comfort. The baby's job is to learn how to accept that comfort and soothe themselves.

Develop an action plan to support the baby and help you stay calm. Make a list of basic needs to check, and then make a list of things you can do, such as rocking, singing, using a stroller to take a walk outside, or playing soft music or nature sounds while you rub the infant's back. Eventually, the baby will learn to soothe themselves, and the crying will become less frequent. If you feel like you need help, talk to a doctor or visit <http://purplecrying.info> for more information.



Appreciating Diversity

structures, ethnicities, cultures, and languages.” Adults can help children develop an awareness of diversity and appreciation for others by talking with them about similarities and differences, and engaging them in activities that build empathy and understanding.

Build empathy by offering dolls or action figures with similar and different physical characteristics to children of all ages. Include materials that offer practice in caretaking, such as blankets, bottles, or doll clothing. Engage children in conversations that encourage them to see different perspectives. For example, “If you were at school and no one spoke English, how would you ask for help?”

Read books that explore diverse family structures, a wide variety of people, and friendship such as *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman, *All the Colors We Are* by Katie Kissinger, *A Friend for Henry* by Jenn Bailey, *Home Is in Between* by Mitali Perkins, *Different: A Great Thing to Be* by Heather Avis, *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, *Families* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kellyor, *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, or *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller.

Art projects allow children to develop their self-identity and explore the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Invite children to look at themselves in a mirror and draw self-portraits. Children can then draw portraits of friends and family members from memory, or by looking at photographs. Talk about the physical characteristics in the portraits; discuss what is alike and different. By engaging children in art and learning activities that build empathy and understanding, educators provide them with opportunities to appreciate diversity.

Sources:
Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP): School Age by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2010).

“Talking to Very Young Children about Race: It’s Necessary Now, More than Ever” by Rosemarie Allen, Amy Hunter, Erin Barton, and Ben Riepe (National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, 7/20/20).

WELCOMING SPACES

Children who feel welcomed, accepted, and valued develop confidence and tolerance for others. The environment and social interactions help shape their perceptions of themselves and others. Use the following questions to reflect on your own practices:

- Do the books, pictures, music, and food represent different cultures, races, ages, abilities, and genders (non-stereotypical roles)?
- Are multi-cultural dolls, ethnic clothing, and cooking materials part of dramatic play?
- Are cultural experiences offered on a consistent basis?
- When children engage in stereotyping, or demonstrate prejudice, how does the educator intervene and guide children towards more positive perspectives?
- If a child has disabilities, how do you educate yourself in regard to their needs, reasonable accommodations, and abilities?

Sources:
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) Revised Edition by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer (Teacher’s College Press, 2005).

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) Revised Edition by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford (Teachers College Press, 2007).

RECIPES

Creative Cooking

Encourage children to explore the creative side of cooking by making these snacks. Ask open-ended questions such as, “What else could you make with this?” Connect the activity to a familiar book, such as *My First Book of Planets* by Dr. Bruce Betts or *Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* by Richard Scarry to build language and literacy skills.

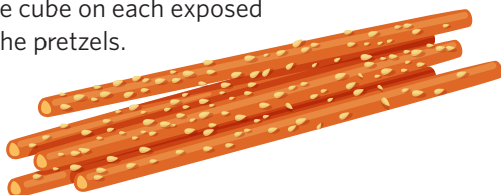
Apples From Outer Space

Ingredients for each child:

A handful of stick pretzels and small cheese cubes, an apple (whole), and a metal fork.

Directions:

Invite children to use a fork to poke holes in the apple, push pretzel sticks into the holes, and place a cheese cube on each exposed end of the pretzels.



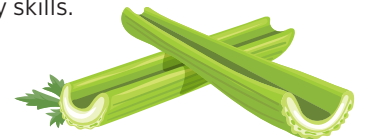
Celery Cars

Ingredients for each child:

Celery cut into two-inch sections, four carrot slices (circles), two toothpicks, raisins or dried cranberries, and nut butter or cream cheese.

Directions:

Children can poke a toothpick through each end of the celery to create axles for the carrot wheels. Now, they can slide a carrot circle on the outer end of each toothpick to make wheels. Next they can add nut butter or cream cheese to the celery and place raisins or dried cranberries on top to be the passengers.



Source: The recipes were featured on the following website: <http://familytlc.net> in April 2024.

Activities for Physical Development

Spend time moving and playing outside each day. This allows children to enjoy the fresh air, release excess energy, build large motor skills, practice balance and spatial awareness skills, and maintain good physical health. Below are some activities that will get everybody up and moving.

Activity: Touch and Feel Walk

Age group: Infants

What you need: An outdoor space to explore (back yard or nearby park), stroller (optional), walking rope (optional), and a cloth tote bag.

What you do: Take infants for a nature walk and encourage them to gently touch and feel the grass, bark on a tree, leaves, flower petals, and any other nature item that is not toxic. Guide them in how to touch and see nature without putting items in their mouth or picking flowers. Closely supervise infants and collect fallen materials (such as leaves) that they can continue to explore indoors. As infants explore, describe the items they are touching. For example, "You're touching a leaf. It is green and soft."

What they learn: Children practice muscle development as they learn about nature through their senses. They are also introduced to new vocabulary and practice self-regulation (not picking items or putting them in their mouth).

Source: Adapted from <http://www.familytlc.net> in April 2024.

Activity: One, Two, Three, Roll

Age group: Toddlers

What you need: Two balls.

What you do: Once the toddler is sitting down, sit down across from them. Touch the bottoms of your feet to theirs and give them a large ball. You hold the other ball. Say, "One, two, three, roll the ball to me." Roll your balls slowly toward each other, trying to get them to touch. Each time the balls connect, you and the toddler must move slightly apart (further away) from each other and roll the balls again, saying, "One, two, three, roll the ball to me." Any time the balls miss each other, you and the toddler scoot toward each other.

What they learn: Toddlers build muscle development, spatial awareness, and coordination. You can also introduce movement concepts when you use phrases such as: move closer, move back.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.familytlc.net> in April 2024.

Activity: Creative Workouts

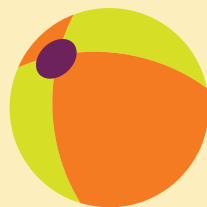
Age group: Preschool

What you need: Poster board or large paper and markers and a variety of exercise equipment such as: hula-hoops, balls, jump ropes, and light weights (you can also use cans of soup or sealable sandwich bags filled with sand).

What you do: Tell the children you want them to create a daily workout program that everyone can do. Explain that they can use the materials provided, and add things like running, jumping jacks, hopping, crawling, etc. Explain that you will write the routine down on the poster, and everyone will practice every day for a week. Change the exercise routine each week, allowing a different child to take the lead in making suggestions.

What they learn: Children learn to make a plan for daily fitness and engage in activities that build their muscle strength, coordination, and balance. They also learn to work together to create and execute a plan.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.familytlc.net> in April 2024.



Activities for Physical Development

Activity: Step Ball

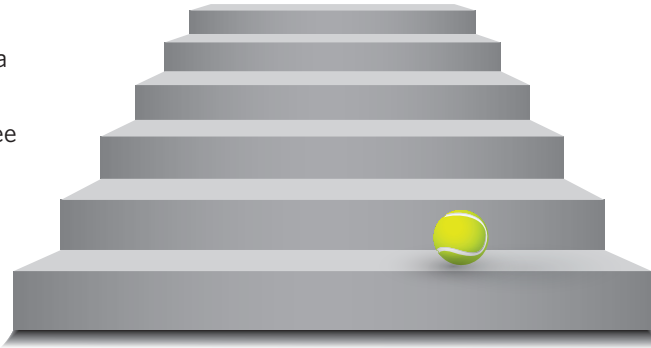
Age group: School Age

What you need: Tennis ball, stair steps (indoor or outdoor), a pencil, and paper.

What you do: The first player stands at least three to four feet from the stairs and pitches the ball at the steps, trying to bounce it back and catch it. If the ball hits both a step and a riser (wall behind the step that goes up to the next step) and the player succeeds in catching the bounce, they get five (5) points. Balls that are caught after bouncing directly off the point of the step are worth ten (10) points. A point is deducted from the player's score if they miss a catch or do not perform the throw properly. Take turns pitching the ball. Keep score and see who can reach one hundred (100) points first.

What they learn: Children build large motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and spatial awareness. Keeping score allows children to practice basic addition and subtraction. They also learn to take turns, negotiate rules, and enjoy some healthy competition.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.familytlc.net> in April 2024.



ABOUT CHS

For over 130 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for child care providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at www.chs-ca.org.

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