



KEEPING IN TOUCH

SPRING & SUMMER 2019

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre, Child Care Consultation

The Etobicoke Children's Centre, Special Needs Consultation

Humber College, ECB Training Committee

Toronto Children's Services, Special Services Unit

WoodGreen Community Services



Photo taken by Sheri Robb, The ECC

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IT'S RAINING, IT'S POURING, LET'S GO OUTSIDE!

After a snowy winter full of play opportunities (walking through deep snow, tasting maple tree sap and syrup, feeding chickadees), spring and summer afford additional opportunities for sensory and active play that cannot be replicated indoors!

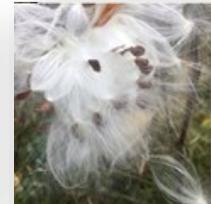
Noticing, exploring and engaging with seasons, nature's cycles and weather are a free and always changing opportunity for programming.

Children are drawn to water (it is in our evolutionary history) and especially wild water. Rain is a play opportunity that touches on multiple play and learning domains and skills. Watching snails and worms when it rains are captivating and great for stories and storytelling.

As Educators, we need to reframe our language around weather – rain and cloudy days are as important for play and learning as are sunny blue-sky days. After walking with children outdoors for the past two years in all weather, children who are dressed for the weather pay more attention to exploration than the temperature!



"My stick is making lines in the water"
Sticks and water – accessible loose parts!



Not all of us have access to natural and wild spaces (though look around, parks are everywhere and nearby!), so...

Grow a garden: an herb garden for tasting basil, mint and making lemon balm team.

Plant a native flower garden: milkweed plants are easy and attract monarch caterpillars and butterflies – a beautiful flowering plant in the spring and fluffy seed pods in the winter.

*Submitted by Josie Iannaccio, Early Childhood Consultant ~
Humber Child Care Consultation Services*

Written by Louise Zimanyi, Professor, Early Childhood Education ~ School of Health Sciences, Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

How to get the most out of playing outdoors and in nature:

- Walk the Talk! Go outside and explore!
- Slow down & notice nature in your playground, neighborhood, parks and gardens.
- Naturalize play spaces, with gardens, water, and sand!
- Engage families!
- Address fears and concerns (dirt and bugs).
- Assess risks and benefits
- Document experiences and connect play & learning to the curriculum.
- Learn Alongside! You don't have to be a nature expert - just have a curiosity/interest for play-based learning outdoors!
- Connect with families, community members, environmental groups who can support & provide professional development.

Page 1 & 2 References:

<http://natureforall.global/>

<https://www.evergreen.ca/whats-on/event/nature-play-childrens-garden/>

<http://childnature.ca/>

<https://healthsciences.humber.ca/programs/early-childhood-education/nature-partnerships-and-placements.html>

*Josie Iannaccio, Early Childhood Consultant ~ Humber Child Care Consultation Services
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STRATEGIES TO BEAT THE HEAT

Here comes the sun, let's get ready to have some fun!!! With summer just around the corner, it is important to be well equipped and ready to beat the heat. With hot sunny days in sight, it is a great time to review some helpful tips so that both you and the children stay safe, while enjoying the warmer, more humid days that are ahead.

How to recognize heat related illness:

According to Nationwide Children's www.nationwidechildrens.org, "there are several types and degrees of seriousness of heat-related illness. Each can be differentiated by various signs and symptoms" which includes the following:

- **Heat Cramps** - painful cramping of the muscles of the limbs and abdomen caused by excessive sweating (due to the depletion of salt and water from the body)
- **Heat Syncope** - weakness, fatigue, and fainting due to loss of salt and water
- **Heat Exhaustion** - cool and pale skin, headache, nausea, chills, weakness, unsteadiness, dizziness, rapid pulse, excessive thirst, and muscle cramps
- **Heat Stroke** - hot and dry skin, incoherent speech, disorientation, unconsciousness or coma, nausea, seizures, and rapid or irregular pulse. Heat stroke is the failure of the body's heat-control mechanism, which can cause other organ systems to shut down and cause a life-threatening emergency.

Keeping in mind these very important signs and symptoms, the next step to beating the heat, is being prepared. Before heading outside, always remember preparation is key. Two simple words that will help you with your preparation are, **hydration** and **protection**. *See next page...*

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!!!

According to information found in <https://familydoctor.org/hydration-why-its-so-important/> “Your body depends on water to survive. Every cell, tissue, and organ in your body needs water to work properly. For example, your body uses water to maintain its temperature, remove waste, and lubricate your joints. Water is needed for overall good health.” Recognizing signs of dehydration is important.

They include:

- Little or no urine.
- Urine that is darker than usual.
- Dry mouth.
- Sleepiness or fatigue.
- Extreme thirst.
- Headache.
- Confusion.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness.
- No tears when crying.



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So, remember before heading outside to spend some time in the sun, drink lots of water and continue to do so during and after play.

Protection:

Summertime is a wonderful time to get children outside to explore their environment and to keep active. Being protected during this time is important so that this can be done safely. According to <https://medbroadcast.com/channel/seasonal-health/sun-safety/sun-safety-quick-tips> some tips to promote protection from the sun includes the following:

- **Use sunscreen:** Apply sunscreen with SPF, or sun protection factor, of at least 30.
- **Use it everywhere:** Particularly on the head in frequently missed spots like the tips of ears, nose, and on the lips themselves.
- **Apply ahead of time and Reapply:** Remember to apply sunscreen 15 minutes before you go outside to allow time for the ingredients to penetrate the skin. Reapply sunscreen frequently and liberally, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Don't forget sunglasses:** Protect your eyes, overexposure to sunlight can cause both short-term and long-term damage to your eyes, including increasing your risk of getting cataracts.
- **Wear a hat:** Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your head, neck, and ears. These regions are most susceptible to sun damage.
- **Wear protective clothing:** Clothing is generally better at protecting you from the sun than sunscreen. Tightly woven clothing offers better sun protection.
- **Seek the shade and avoid the noonday sun:** Try to stay out of the sun between 11 am and 3 pm, and when the UV index is higher than 3. It is safer to be outside in the early morning or late afternoon.
- **Don't forget sun aftercare:** Moisturize your skin after sun exposure to replenish lost moisture.
- With all these tips and reminders practiced consistently, outdoor activities in the sun can be safe and fun for all.

Submitted by Nicole Livingstone, Child Care Consultant ~ Aisling Discoveries Child & Family Centre

BUILDING PHYSICAL LITERACY INTO OUR PROGRAMS

"Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life."

- The International Physical Literacy Association, May 2014

Physical activity should be a fun part of a child's life every day and is essential for healthy child development. Supporting and developing physical literacy requires more than just providing time in childcare to be physically active. It is conscious and purposeful play to build a child's physical competence. When a child feels competent, motivation to continue to engage in physical activity develops. When a child is motivated to engage in physical activity, their confidence in their abilities and with themselves blooms.

If we as educators can influence and develop physical literacy for our children, we are setting them on a trajectory in life that promotes long-term health, self-esteem, and enjoyment out of life.

According to *Sport For Life* (<http://sportforlife.ca/physical-literacy/>) there are three levels of physical literacy that correspond with developmental ages and stages.

1. **Active Start - 0-6 years:** All boys and girls need to be engaged in daily active play that is both structured (planned by staff) and unstructured. Through play and movement, children develop the foundational movement skills and learn how to link them together. Active play is key at this stage as it builds important connections within the brain, and between the brain and children's muscles. Build fun games and activities into as many parts of your programming (both indoors and outdoors) that focus on running, jumping, balancing, rolling and throwing introduce children to more complicated physical movement.



2. **FUNdamentals – 6-9 years:** Skill development during this period in the areas of agility, balance, coordination and speed set the stage for more advanced physical expression and sport-specific skills. This is the stage where children master movement skills, build strength and endurance and learn how to "read" the movement of others to make decisions during games. Continue to plan activities on a daily basis that involve throwing and catching, running. Avoid competitive games where the focus is on winning or attaining a score, and place emphasis on fun and participation. Exposure at this age to as many sports as possible.



3. **Learn To Train – 9-12 years:** Fine motor control and coordination refinement begin to develop and accelerate at this period. You will notice that children love to practice skills they have learned over and over and develop a sense of pride and enjoyment over seeing their own improvement. Providing opportunities in programming to support children practicing physical skills will enhance their self-esteem and confidence and we as their physical prowess. While it is still too early for specialization in sports, most children will begin to show a preference in one sport over another, however encourage a broad range of activities.



In programming for outdoor or gross motor play, plan fun and purposeful gross motor games that children can play that go beyond simply providing the equipment. As staff, be involved and model how to have fun engaging in these activities. The children who are more advanced in their physical literacy will automatically gravitate to this type of programming. For children who tend to shy away from physical activity, by you as their staff participating in the fun, and orchestrating games and activities that hit all levels of skill, will increase the likelihood that our children will seize these opportunities to participate, have fun, develop their abilities, and most importantly: have fun.



All information and photographs were taken directly from *Developing Physical Literacy: A Guide For Parents of Children Ages 0-12*. Canadian Sport Centres <http://physicalliteracy.ca/resources/> and through Sport For Life <http://sportforlife.ca/physical-literacy/>.

Submitted by Amanda Boyd, Special Needs Resource Consultant ~ The Etobicoke Children's Centre

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES FOR SUMMER PLANNING

Free Bee's:



1. **Fire Safety Public Education Services** – programs designed for preschoolers through grade 2. It presents fire safety messages using classroom lessons, activities and home connections at your location. Contact them at tfsPubEd@toronto.ca
<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/understanding-emergency-services/fire-safety-information-presentations-and-event-booths/>
2. **Evergreen Brick Works** – a place where the world can experience sustainable practices that enable flourishing cities of the future. Check out their Scavenger Hunt for two different age groups 3-6 yrs and 7-10 yrs. They offer a shuttle bus from Broadview subway station.
<https://www.evergreen.ca/evergreen-brick-works/>
3. **Graffiti Alley** – Over 1 kilometre of street art and murals located between Queen Street West and Richmond Street West from Spadina Avenue to Portland Street. A graffiti event called Style in Progress has taken over graffiti alley for a 24-hour period of legal painting, during the 2000's. Nowadays the alley is still frequently painted, but the artist should ask the permission to the building or shop owner.
https://localwiki.org/toronto/Graffiti_Alley
4. **Allan Gardens Conservatory** – indoor botanical garden features six greenhouses – two Tropical houses, the Cool temperate House – the Palm house – the Tropical Landscape house and the Aird House.
<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/parks-gardens-beaches/gardens-and-horticulture/conservatories/allan-gardens-conservatory/>
5. **Pizza Nova – Kids Pizza Making Workshops** – Give us a call, book a time and we'll show you how we make pizza the Pizza Nova way, either at your school or by bringing your class to a participating Pizza Nova store location. For further information regarding our educational demonstrations. Contact our School Lunch Co-ordinator Stephanie Skrypnyk at (416) 439-00-00 or 310-33-00 for full details and reservations.
6. **Don't forget about your local parks and libraries.** always great to explore your own community.



Items With a Cost:



1. **Ontario Science Centre** – offer discounted prices for schools and children.
www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/School/Visit/
2. **ROM – Royal Ontario Museum** - Hands-on and experiential learning for students from kindergarten to post-secondary.
<https://www.rom.on.ca/>
3. **SkyZone** – indoor trampoline park
<https://www.skyzone.com/ca-toronto>
4. **Cineplex Theaters** – offers school, team and social group screenings, education cinema, Monday franco-phone films – connect with them to find out more.
<https://www.cineplex.com/corporatesales/groupscreenings>
5. **Toronto Zoo** – offers school visits and programs from JK to grade 8.
<http://www.torontozoo.com/EducationAndCamps/SchoolPrograms/>

Activities that come to you:

6. **Mystic Drumz**
www.mysticdrumz.com
7. **Scientists in School**
<https://www.scientistsinschool.ca/>



CULTURAL GAMES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD



“Children around the world grow up in an unimaginable variety of environments. Although their homes, experiences and cultures may vary, a common denominator is that children everywhere love to play and entertain themselves. Some games are comparable, while others are unique to particular cultures.” Quoted from “**Traditional Children's Games in Australia**” by Dee Taylor.

Here are a few games you can play with your elementary level children:

- **Stuck in the Mud (Australia):** Stuck in the Mud emulates the game of freeze tag. Frozen players must remain frozen until a free player crawls between their feet, which are planted as if stuck in mud. All players are eventually frozen until only one free player remains.
- **European Dodgeball:** The reason it's called "European" dodgeball is because it is a mix of dodgeball and European handball. Game requires the two balls and small hockey nets. Same rules as dodgeball except there are small hockey nets used to get goals on. They are placed on each team's side or evenly spaced apart if you play in a circle. The object of the game is to reach a certain number of goals per team by throwing a ball into the net. In addition to trying to score points, you try to get the other team's members out. There are two ways to win: 1) Be the first team to reach the target number of points and 2) Get all of the other team's players out.
- **Vish Amrit (South Asia):** Vish means poison. Amrit means nectar. Vish Amrit is a game of poison and nectar, of good and bad, and is best played on a constricted playground such as a chath. One denner runs around catching people. Upon touching someone, the denner must yell "VISH!" which instantly freezes the helpless person, who has to stand still and hold the pose. His or her teammates must liberate them by touching them and yelling "AMRIT!" Of course, they must do this before the denner touches them and freezes them. The denner doles out poison, attempting to freeze the entire gaggle of screaming prey. Heroes exist who must resist capture, doling out nectar. The game ends when the denner freezes the lot.
- **Clapping Game (Nigeria):** Also known as Ten Ten. Players stand facing each other, clapping their hands and moving their legs to a rhythm. They must ensure they don't raise a leg directly facing the other opponent – which means it is OK for a player to raise a left leg when the other raises a right leg. Once a girl or boy raises the wrong leg, the other girl scores a point. Other hand-clapping games are also popular in Nigerian playgrounds - watch this group of children demonstrate one here.
- **Shadows (Ireland):** Players must stand on opponent's shadows in order to catch them - then they are the chaser. If you are being chased you can run to a shaded place where you have no shadow and then you are safe.
- **Daruma (Japan):** Players line up about 30 feet from a wall in a bid to reach it. The player who is "it" faces the wall and says "Daruma falls down" before turning around. If he sees someone moving that person is captured and has to come to the wall.
- **Corre, Corre La Guaraca (Chile):** Players sit in a circle while a person jogs around the circle with a handkerchief. The seated children are not allowed to watch and have to sing "Corre, Corre, la Guaraca who looks back will be bopped on his head!" Trying not to be felt, the runner drops the handkerchief on a child's back and runs. If he makes it around the circle before the player realizes that it's on her back, the seated player is out.
- **Keep the Ball / Lizeth Diarte (Mexico):** There is no limit on the number of players, split into two teams. It's played with your hands and sometimes with your feet. You play with a soft ball and decide the time of the game and the size of the field. The game starts when somebody throws the ball up to the sky. The player who catches the ball has to keep the ball for his team. He has to throw the ball to his partners and each person on the opposite team has to try to 'steal' the ball. You can't return the ball to the person who gives it to you. When the time is up, the team that has kept the ball wins.

MOST POPULAR CHILDHOOD GAMES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

In researching high and low and speaking with friends and colleagues from different cultures, I have discovered that there are many childhood games that are universally played across the world. Here is a list of the top 20. Some of them are known by different names, yet played in a similar way. Talk to the children in your care and find out if they have any other games to share and play them with your group.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ Blind Man's Bluff | ▪ Hand Clap Games | ▪ Jump Rope | ▪ Rock Paper Scissors |
| ▪ Capture the Flag | ▪ Hide and Seek | ▪ Marbles | ▪ Tag |
| ▪ Catch  | ▪ Hopscotch  | ▪ Musical Chairs  | ▪ Telephone  |
| ▪ Duck Duck Goose | ▪ Hot or Hold | ▪ Paper Airplanes | ▪ Tug of War |
| ▪ Freeze Dance | ▪ I Spy | ▪ Red Light Green Light | ▪ What Time is Mr. Wolf? |

Sheri Robb, Special Needs Resource Consultant ~ The Etobicoke Children's Centre

SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN CARE

Summer is always a special time for exploring and enjoying the outdoors, nature and your family. There are loads of free and almost free things to do in and around the city of Toronto.

This summer take your family to a free, family friendly, movie at any number of Toronto parks. The Toronto Outdoor Picture Show has expanded to include such parks and sites as; Fort York, Trinity Bellwoods Park, St. James, Liberty Village, Regent Park and Downsview Park to name a few. <https://www.topictureshow.com>

Check you areas fun guide for free summer camps in your area. These are City of Toronto Parks and Recreation programs. Many are free and vary in ages as well as focus. Some do have a minimal cost but it is always worth looking into for a fun week or more for your child. www.toronto.ca/data/parks/funguide.ca

Visit your local library for fun and free or minimal cost activities. Your local library will likely have Saturday events, Ready for Reading clubs and hobby and craft activities for children throughout the summer. www.torontopubliclibrary.ca

Our younger Torontonians need not be a concern to entertain. Below are a few suggestions to keep little hands engaged.

12 Quick and Easy Summer Activities for Toddlers:

- **Making Ice Cream in a Bag** – Busy Toddler
- **Plastic Kite Bags** – Munchkins and Moms
- **Summer Lego Ice Rescue** – Crafty Kids at Home
- **Giant Bubbles Recipe** – Learning and Exploring Through Play
- **Hammering Tees into Watermelons** – Mom Inspired Life
- **Water Bottle Fun** – The Tip Toe Fairy
- **Dirt Box** (a sandbox alternative) – Busy Toddler
- **Grab and Pull a Letter Load** – Growing Book by Book
- **Nature Cutting Tray** – Munchkins and Moms
- **Racing Cars with a Gutter** – Teaching Mama
- **DIY Cardboard Car Wash** – Non Toy Gifts
- **Make a Bubble Snake Blower** – Messy Little Monster



<https://nontoygifts.com/diy-cardboard-car-wash/>

Submitted by Pemola Pereira DaPonte, Resource Educator ~ Toronto Children's Services

WEBSITES

The following websites have lots of interesting ideas and resources:

City Wide Training Calendar ~
www.citywidetraining.ca

Connectability ~
www.connectability.ca

College of ECE ~
www.college-ece.ca

Earlychildhood News ~
www.earlychildhoodnews.com

How Does Learning Happen? ~
www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/EducatorsEn.pdf

Gerrard Resource Centre -
Ryerson University ~
www.ryerson.ca/ecs/grc/

The Hospital for Sick Children~
www.aboutkidshealth.ca/

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Here are some easy and inexpensive fun things you can do at your day care or at home with your family. These can be adapted for most ages and abilities.

8 Fun Summer Activities for Family Child Care Programs

Brenda Barron, June 27, 2018, <https://www.care.com>

- 1. Paint with Water Balloons:** Put some non-toxic, washable craft paint inside water balloons, fill them up with water and let the kids throw them onto poster boards in the grass. It's a bit messy, but the kids will end up with a splatter-paint keepsake to take home.
- 2. Ice Chalk:** All you need to do is: Whip up equal parts corn starch and water. Split it up into smaller batches, and then add in your favorite washable paint colors. Pour the mixtures into ice cube trays and freeze them. Note: do this prep the night before you intend on using the chalk. When it's time to play, pop the ice chalk out of the trays into a bowl and let the kids draw and experiment on the pavement. The colors get more vibrant as they melt.
- 3. Play in the Water:** It keeps the kids cool, and there isn't a lot of prep required. Pools and sprinklers are great, but they're not the only option. Water tables are a great way for children to cool off and splash around. When it comes to water play, however, just make sure to let the kids' parents know to pack a bathing suit, change of clothes and towel for those warm weather days.
- 4. Start a Garden:** Take the nice weather as an opportunity to teach kids about nature by letting them plant something and watch it grow. Gardening can be a fun daily project, and you could even rotate the responsibility of watering among the kids to give them each a chance at participating. Some easy growers are grass seeds, beans, and peas.
- 5. Rediscover the Sandbox:** If your child care program doesn't have one, it's a good idea to invest in one. Filling a sandbox with plenty of tools and toys will encourage the kids to be creative as they dig, pour and create designs. Just make sure to get one with a cover, so you can keep out rainwater and critters when the kids aren't playing in it.
- 6. Nature Explorers:** A simple walk around the yard boasts lots of fun activities like collecting rocks, playing I Spy and teaching the little ones about the different flowers.
- 7. Have an Indoor Picnic:** The weather won't always cooperate. So, for those rainy days (or total scorchers) it's a good idea to have indoor activities on tap. For instance, an indoor picnic can be a lovely way to simulate outside play. If you see a rainy day in the forecast, invite the kids to bring their favorite stuffed animal as their guest.
- 8. Start a Band:** Another idea for those rainy or sweltering days is to encourage a bit of noisy indoor fun by forming a band. Shapiro suggests collecting empty plastic bottles and filling them with dried rice to create maracas. "Or take elastic bands and an empty tissue box to make a guitar," she says. Get creative — the kids will love playing the instruments they helped make.

No matter what you have planned remember to be safe, carry and encourage drinking lots of water and wear sunscreen. The summer may be short but it can be intense. Take moments to get indoors in an air conditioned space or in the shade. Have a wonderful sun everyone!

*Submitted by Pemola Pereira DaPonte, Resource Educator ~
Toronto Children's Services*