

play + parenting

FRP Canada



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Making Your Centre a Healthy Environment for Children

When you plan the space for your family resource program, you think about how to make it childproof so that children can play safely. You make lists of materials and equipment that you'll stock it with to stimulate children's learning and development. You want to show parents how they can do some of the same things at home. It's just as important to think about the purchases you make in terms of the safety of the chemicals people in your centre will be exposed to, particularly those little people.

Canadian Environmental Law Association. Entitled "Buying Safer Products for your Child Care Centre," it included information that will be useful to family resource programs as well.

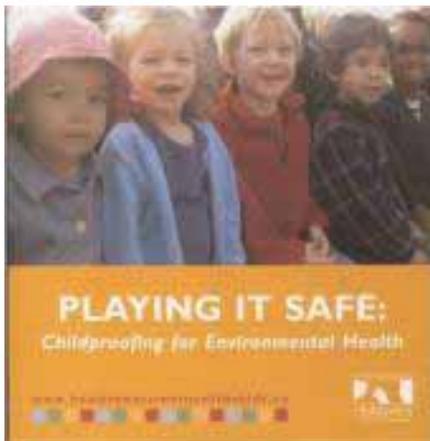
Children are at greater risk

Any place where children spend time needs to pay special attention to chemicals in the environment. Because children's bodies are growing and changing, they are especially vulnerable. Also, relative to their size, children take in more air, food and liquid than adults do. Because they touch more surfaces and frequently put their hands in

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their mouth, they are more exposed to contaminants in dust and soil.

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The Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) recently presented a tele conference briefing on this subject in conjunction with the Canadian Child Care Federation and the

Certification program for Canadian Family Educators New Member on Certification Committee

Leslie Hauck is the Parent Educator at the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association in Nova Scotia. Since 2006, she has been able to add the letters CCFE after her name, letters which designate her as a "Certified Canadian Family Educator." She has recently joined the group of eight CCFEs who meet in committees several times a year to discuss applications for certification or recertification. "I think family education is so

important," says Leslie. "especially today when family life has changed so much and is so busy. It is the norm for both parents to be employed outside the home. I see lots of parents who don't feel very confident in their parenting knowledge, skills and habits."

Leslie was one of the founders the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association (ESFRA) when it

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FRP Canada's Mission
National leadership that supports a vibrant network of family resource agencies.



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parents matter
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www.welcomehere.ca



**FRP CANADA
CONFERENCE
APRIL 26-29, 2011**

Omni Mont-Royal Hotel,
Montreal, QC

Early Learning, and a whole lot more!

Celebrate spring 2011 in Montreal.

Between the networking reception on Tuesday evening and the lively panel discussion on Friday morning, the conference will offer workshops in French and English, thought-provoking keynote presentations and time to connect with colleagues. Keep an eye on www.frp.ca/conferencemontreal.

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Toys

Some toys contain chemicals that may be harmful to children. Avoid toys painted with paint containing lead. Children may put these in their mouth, and lead is toxic to the brain. Lead has also been identified in metal objects like inexpensive play jewellery. Watch for objects that feel heavy for their size.

Other dangerous chemicals are the phthalates found in some plastics. They are used to make soft plastics, like those in many inflatable water toys. Look for phthalate-free and PVC-free toys. Check the Health Canada Consumer Product Safety Website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/index-eng.php) for regular updates and subscribe to the e-mail list by writing cpsn-subscribe-request@list.hc-sc.gc.ca.

Arts and crafts materials

Avoid craft materials in powder form that can easily disperse in the air and be breathed in. Even if you mix powders when children aren't present, they can deposit themselves on surfaces that children may touch later. Be aware that "non-toxic" doesn't necessarily mean the same thing as "intended for use by children." The "AP" seal from the American Arts and Creative Materials Institute gives some assurance of safety.

Soaps and cleaning products

Proper handwashing with plain soap and water removes most germs. Antibacterial hand soaps are not necessary. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used when you can't get to a sink. For disinfection of surfaces, follow the procedures required by your local public health authority. For regular cleaning, use a product

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Facilitator's Tip

Studies of the effectiveness of parent education show that longer programs have more effect. (*What Works for Whom? Promising Practices in Parenting Education*, Betsy Mann, FRP Canada, 2007). But many centres find that parents hesitate to sign up for a lengthy program. Here is a suggestion for dealing with this challenge:

"We offer a program that is designed to last six weeks, but it was hard getting enough parents to register. Now we advertise three weeks. After the second meeting, we tell people that another three weeks are possible. It's rare that people don't sign up for the extra weeks."

- Facilitator, Esso Family Math program, Ontario Early Years Centre, Ottawa

CCFE Committee member, continued from page 1

started 16 years ago as a small community-based organization. It has since expanded to cover the largely rural area from Dartmouth along the shore to Ship Harbour. ESFRA meets the needs of families through a number of programs, including interactive playgroups, new parent groups, parent education workshops, a toy lending library and one-on-one support. The organization first focussed on early childhood development, but more recently, it has extended its services, including home visiting, to families with children up to the age of 16.

"In our organization, I work closely with early childhood educators, for instance those who deliver the

Hanen Centre's *You Make the Difference* program," Leslie continues. "It is a blend of helping parents learn on their own while the children are engaged in another room where the educators model skills to use with the children, and then filming the parents practising with their children." Leslie offers programs like *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen*, *Siblings Without Rivalry* and *How to Stop Struggling With Your Teen*, while other staff members deliver *Kids Have Stress Too!* and other excellent programs for parents and kids.

"Ideally, everyone in Nova Scotia would have a family resource program within 30 minutes drive

from their home," says Leslie. "And every program should have a family educator position, preferably a CCFE. It is a logical place for someone with these qualifications to work in order to serve families." Concerning her new role, she adds, "I think the CCFE designation is an important few letters to have after my name, and I'm happy to 'pay back' by serving as the Maritime member on the recertification committee!"

To learn more about the qualifications required to receive the CCFE designation and the process of application, go to www.parentsmatter.ca/CCFE. □

Healthy Environments, continued from page 3

with the fewest hazard symbols. Plain, unscented soap or detergent will usually do the job. The fact that a product is “natural,” like tea tree or lavender oil, doesn’t necessarily mean it can be used with children.

Dishes

What kind of dishes do you use to serve children their snack? Many centres opt for plastic because it is not breakable, but do you know what type of plastic your dishes are made of? The Canadian Partnership for Children’s Health and Environment (CPCHE) recommends using glass, lead-free ceramic or stainless steel for dishes and food storage containers, if possible. If you choose plastic, the recommendation is for polypropylene (#5). Plastic dishes should never be warmed in a microwave, and hot food should not be stored in plastic.

Furnishings

If you are considering replacing your flooring, look for a smooth, hard surface. Avoid vinyl flooring because of its potential for containing PVC and phthalates. Many sleeping mats are also covered with vinyl. If you use them, air them outdoors for several days before bringing them indoors, and then cover them with a washable fabric.

Be a model

The recommendations of the CPCHE are aimed principally at child care centres where young, growing children may spend much of their time. Children may spend only short periods in your family resource centre, but the products that you use also send a message to parents. They may well see the purchases you make as a recommendation and endorsement of products that they should also use with their children. This is a chance for you to educate parents about good choices concerning the chemicals in their home environment.

More information

This article touches on only a few points that are covered in depth in documents published by the CPCHE. In particular, a two-page fact sheet entitled “Playing It Safe: Buying Products for the Child Care Centre” was the basis for this article. Other titles include “Playing It Safe: Childproofing for Environmental Health” (aimed at parents) and “Advancing Environmental Health in Child Care Settings” (aimed at practitioners and public health inspectors). All of these documents can be downloaded from www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca . □

Staff Picks

Director of Operations Jill Heckman
“Staff Picks” is a regular column in which a member of FRP Canada’s staff recommends a publication from the many that the association has published.



Have you ever wondered about the studies often quoted to prove the value of early childhood programs?

One of these is the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. This program is renowned for its achievement of extraordinary savings in public expenditures and success in children’s long-term social or educational attainment.

An article in Volume 2 of *Perspectives in Family Support*, published by FRP Canada in Winter 2006, made an important point about this well-known program. In “**Family Support: An Essential Component for Effective Preschool Programs**” authors Valora Washington and her collaborators argue that similar results will *not* be assured if new early learning programs neglect the family support components that were an essential part of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project and similar demonstration projects. They conclude: “As standards for preschool are enhanced, family support must be built into program requirements, expectations for teachers and state regulations. In this way, we give children the best chance for a more productive future.”

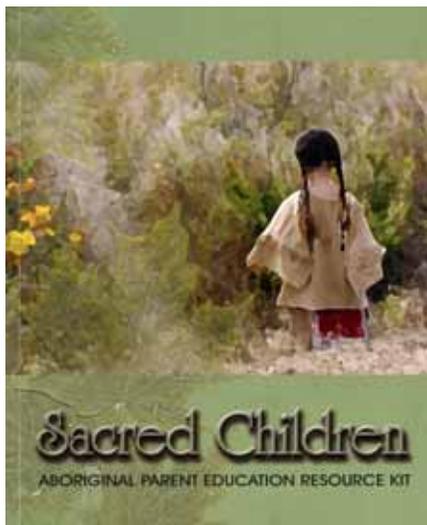


This article makes a persuasive argument about the importance of family support components in early learning programs. FRP Canada will soon be releasing a position paper on the topic of development and early learning programs. Watch for it. □

Printed copies of *Perspectives*, Vol. 2 are out of stock, but this article is available online. The quickest way to find it is to type “essential component” into the search box of www.frp.ca, then click on the PDF link for that document.

Resources for Aboriginal Parents and Caregivers

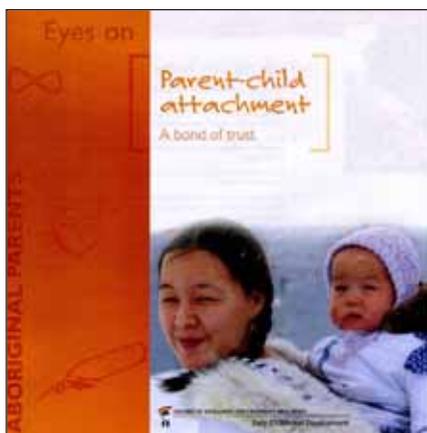
Parent Education Resource Kit



Sacred Children is a parenting course developed by the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute in 2008. It centres on issues related to children aged six to 12. Themes include self-esteem, communication, nutrition, discipline and bullying. Each topic area can be used alone or combined into a multi-week program. The program focuses on parents' strengths and is based on the values and traditions surrounding Aboriginal parenting. It was developed through discussions with Elders, traditional advisors, families, and organizations from across Canada.

The complete hard copy kit (full-colour booklet outlining all five topic areas, bilingual DVD outlining the program topics, bilingual CD with the 5 topic fact sheets and printable facilitator's guide) is currently out of stock. However, the booklets, handouts and facilitator's guide, in English and French, can be downloaded directly from <http://shop.preventioninstitute.sk.ca>. Click on "Parenting education" then on "Aboriginal Parenting Project." □

The *Sacred Children* resource kits, including DVDs and CDs, were originally distributed free. The first edition of 5000 copies "flew off the shelves," in the words of Pam Barker, Communications Coordinator for the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute. The Institute is currently **seeking funding to expand and reprint the program**. If you would be interested in receiving a complete kit, send an e-mail to Pam at pbarker@preventioninstitute.sk.ca. Your request can help convince potential funders that the community needs and wants this program.

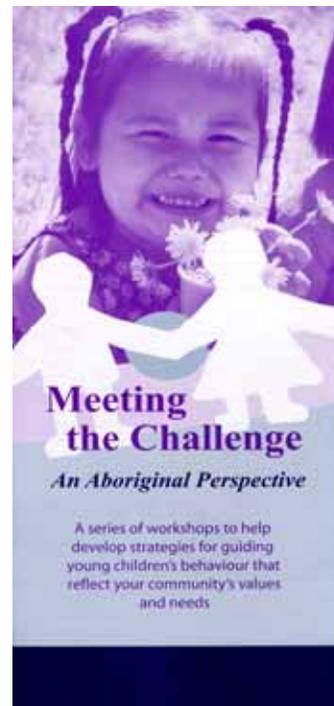


Parent Child Attachment

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development has published a series of brightly illustrated folders for parents with key messages drawn from information in its online encyclopedia. This folder for aboriginal parents contains the same text as a previous one on attachment; the photos and quotations have been changed.

www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/key-messages-list.html

An Aboriginal Perspective on Guiding Children's Behaviour



The Canadian Child Care Federation has produced a training resource that expands on its best-selling publication *Meeting the Challenge* and approaches guiding young children's behaviour from the perspective of Aboriginal values and needs. A CD-ROM contains materials for workshops on six topics: facilitator notes, activities, handouts and video clips. The video clips show early childhood experts from First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. The material can be used in community workshops with adults who care for young children, including staff training in child care services. CD-ROMs are free, but there is a \$15 charge for shipping and handling. Order from the CCCF e-store at www.cccf-fcsge.ca. □

TAKE A LOOK!



Online Resources from Invest In Kids

Invest In Kids posts resource for both parents and professionals on its Website. Parents can see short **videoclips** that demonstrate the use of the Comfort, Play & Teach® approach to healthy development. Parents can see how to integrate the approach into daily activities like bathing, getting dressed, reading and doing creative activities with their infant, toddler or preschooler. www.investinkids.ca/parents/comfort-play-teach/videos.aspx.

Professionals will find resources at www.investinkids.ca/professionals.aspx. The postings here are regularly updated. Currently, you will find a variety of **tip sheets** that you can download and share with parents.. **Summer activity** titles include:

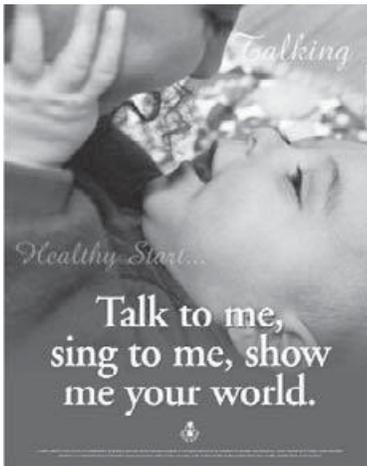
- Adventures Close to Home
- Resting and Relaxing with Your Child
- Supporting Your Child's Physical Development
- Learning Through Play
- Summer Safety



On this same site, professionals can click on the link to a four-minute video podcast that will add a new tool to their **strategies when working with families**.

Greg Lubimiv, B.S.W., M.S.W., C.A.C.P.T.S demonstrates how he uses the well-known board game Snakes and Ladders to help children and caregivers address common life issues through storytelling. For more information about other resources Greg Lubimiv uses in his work at the Phoenix Centre for children's mental health, go to www.lubimiv.ca. □

Prenatal and Postnatal Posters for Your Centre



You may have seen these black and white posters with their simple, powerful messages. They are in family resource centres, child care centres, hospitals, clinics and prenatal programs all over Canada. If you serve families who are expecting a baby or nurturing an infant, you can order a series of images for your own walls.

The 18" by 24" posters are produced by Healthy Start for Mom & Me, a prenatal and postnatal outreach

program in Winnipeg, funded by the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Public Health Agency of Canada) and Healthy Baby (Healthy Child Manitoba). There are two series, one with nine posters with key messages about physical and emotional health in pregnancy and one with 11 posters about nurturing and nutrition in infancy. They are available in English and French.

The people in the photos represent several cultural groups and are not professional models but former participants in the program. This gives them special meaning to practitioners at Healthy Start for Mom & Me like Gail Wylie who says, "We look at them and remember the families and their children." □

Special Offer

You can view both series of posters at www.hsmm.ca/wp (Click on POSTERS). The list price is \$50 per series plus shipping.

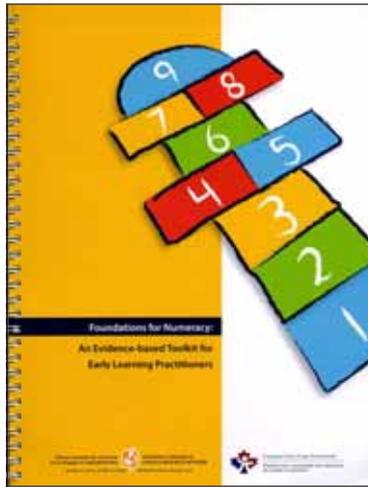
Thanks to funding from the Lawson Foundation, FRP Canada is able to offer its members a **one-time opportunity** to purchase one or both series at a **special price of \$25 per series**, plus shipping. You will receive a special order form by e-mail. Revenue from sales to FRP Canada members will support sessions for newcomer parents at Healthy Start for Mom & Me.

TAKE A LOOK!

Foundations for Numeracy: An Evidence-based Toolkit

A new publication provides early learning practitioners with practical tools to lay the foundations of numeracy in young children (up to age five). A second volume of the toolkit is intended for elementary school teachers. Published by the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, both volumes include a research summary of the evidence about how and when children develop their numeracy abilities.

An interesting finding is that “Children’s mathematics ability at the beginning of kindergarten is a strong predictor of later academic success, even stronger than their early reading ability.” (p. 13). Of course, their abilities when they begin kindergarten depend to a great extent on the experiences they have already had with numbers and quantities. This publication makes it clear that, contrary to what many believe, ability in mathematics does not depend on special talent. Studies with very young infants show that they are already paying attention to expressions of quantity in their environment. Adults can

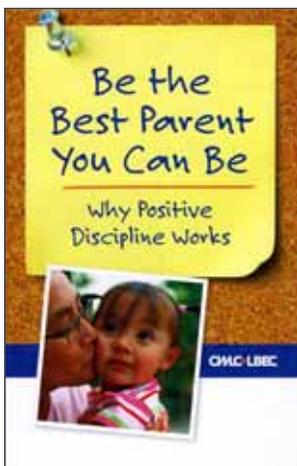


build on this awareness to encourage mathematical thinking in toddlers and preschoolers. It is important to note that this can be done simply, in the course of everyday activities. It is not necessary to sit very young children down to do “activity sheets.” Children can also learn concepts of counting and sequencing through creative play, active movement and games.

Chapters of this toolkit inform practitioners on how to create a math-rich environment and suggest examples of age-appropriate activities to do with groups of children. There are also lists of children’s books and online and print resources.

The publication costs \$25 per volume, \$40 for the set, plus taxes and shipping. For information, e-mail cmorriset@cccf-fcsge.ca. Two resource sheets, “Math with Kids is Fun!” and “Ages & Stages of Numeracy Development,” are included in the kit for distribution to parents and may also be downloaded separately at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca. □

Positive Discipline Pamphlet



A recent pamphlet from the Child Welfare League of Canada helps parents understand the reasons to choose positive discipline methods instead of punishment to guide the behaviour of their children, from toddlers to teens. It offers practical tips on how to prevent misbehaviour and how to respond when it happens. As the pamphlet says, “Discipline teaches. Punishment hurts.” Respect, Responsibility and Response are the three principles on which this parenting guide is based.

The 16-page pamphlet is easy to read and is available in print in seven languages: English, French, Cree, Punjabi, Mandarin, Spanish and Arabic. They can be ordered in bundles of 50 or a 100 and are free. Shipping and postage costs will be charged. Pamphlets may also be downloaded in PDF format from www.cwlc.ca/en/projects/ppes. Additional languages available electronically are Ojibwe, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Russian.

For more information, call 613-235-4412 or write info@cwlc.ca. □

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

The resources on the sites listed below may be downloaded for free and used in your programs, either for staff development or for distribution to participants. If you have come across similar useful resources on the Internet, share them with your colleagues by letting us know at info@frp.ca. We will publish the information in future issues of *Play and Parenting*.

Information for Pregnant Newcomers



The Best Start Resource Centre has released "Giving Birth in a New Land - A guide for women new to Canada and their families." This 36-page booklet is intended to inform newcomer women who are pregnant and plan to deliver their baby in Ontario about what they can expect to encounter. It is not

meant to be a complete guide to pregnancy. It includes information on local practices related to the prenatal and postnatal periods, as well as lists of services and resources and how to access them. It can be downloaded in PDF format in English, French and eight other languages at http://beststart.org/resources/rep_health/index.html. It is also available for purchase using the order form on the Website.

This booklet follows up on the service provider manual "Giving Birth in a New Land – Strategies for Service Providers Working with Newcomers" which is also available from the same Website.

Baby's Communication Checklist

The Hearing Foundation of Canada has published "Baby's Communication Checklist" which allows you to monitor your baby's communication progress. It is available in both English and French and can be downloaded from www.hearingfoundation.ca/cms/en/ChildrenYouth/BabysCommunicationCalendar.aspx?menuid=107

If parents would like the checklist in a keepsake format in which they can insert a picture of their own child, they can contact info@hearingfoundation.ca or call 1-866-432-7968 (416-364-4060 in the Toronto area).



The same Website provides information about noisy toys and protecting children's hearing. www.hearingfoundation.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 16–20, "Brain Development and Learning: Making Sense of the Science," Vancouver, B.C. www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/bdl.html

September 29–October 1, "Health & Wellbeing in Children, Youth, and Adults with Developmental Disabilities," Vancouver, B.C. www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Developmental_Disabilities.html

October 4–6, "Early Childhood: A Journey of Change," Enoch, Alberta. Alberta Early Years Conference 2010. www.albertaearlyyears.ca

October 25–October 27, 9th International Looking After Children Conference, "Youth in Mind. Beyond Risk: the developmental needs," Montreal, Quebec. Centres Jeunesse du Québec. www.acjq.qc.ca

November 17–20, "Sharing Our Stories, Finding Our Voices," Toronto. Family Supports Institute of Ontario. www.fsio.ca

November 25–26, "Birthing the World - Best Practices in Perinatal Care," Quebec City, Quebec. Quebec Association for Public Health. www.enfanterlemonde.com

TRAINING

September 30–October 1, Facilitator training workshop for the parenting course **Right from the Start**. Hincks Dellcrest Centre - Gail Appel Institute in Toronto, Ontario. www.hincksdellcrest.org under "training and consultation"

November 10, "Growing Up in a New Land, Strategies for **Service Providers Working with Young Newcomer Children**". Evening Webinar, 7–9 pm for educators and child care providers of children aged six and under. Best Start Resource Centre. www.beststart.org/events/detail/growingup_webinar_2010/growingup.html