

Newsletter

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CROW Comments

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www.crowoeyc.com

**Children's Resources on
Wheels (CROW)
programs include :**

**Ontario Early Years
Centre**

**Licensed Home Child
Care**

CROW is dedicated to supporting and strengthening childcare, family life, child development and community links in Lanark County

We Believe:
That programs and services for families should be open to everyone

Happy New Year!

Thinking about making New Year's resolutions around parenting? We are offering several parenting workshops including a new series – Positive Discipline.

Positive Discipline comes to Lanark County. Look for this new workshop series beginning in February.

Positive Discipline is an approach to parenting that teaches children and guides their behavior, while respecting their rights to healthy development, protection from violence and participation in their learning. Positive discipline is based in research on children's healthy development and effective parenting, and founded on child rights principles.

Positive discipline is not permissive parenting and is not about punishment. It is about long term solutions that develop children's own self-discipline and their life long skills. Positive discipline is about teaching nonviolence, empathy, self-respect, human rights and respect for others.

Check out the new Parent Education Calendar on our website at www.crowoeyc.com

We are looking for a person to join our CROW board. If you are interested please contact Sue Cavanagh at edcrow@bellnet.ca

Note: The time for the Monday playgroup in Almonte at Holy Name of Mary School has been changed to 9 a.m.—noon.

Please Note: Playgroups will be cancelled when school buses are cancelled. Playgroup cancellations will be posted on our facebook page and announced on Jack FM, Majic 100 and Lake 88 radio stations.





Toy Selection



Choosing appropriate toys for children is an important responsibility for a childcare provider.

Choosing appropriate toys for children is an important responsibility for a childcare provider. Despite the great number of toys available to children in their homes, as well as in childcare settings, many toys are inappropriate or even dangerous for young children. The need for open-ended opportunities is great since toys provided to young children support play, an essential element in child development. Adults who recall their play memories often tell of long periods of free play, open-ended materials, and play uncontrolled by constant adult intervention. Clearly, most children today do not have these opportunities. Mass marketing often controls what is available in the market, and the influence of movies and TV is immense. Increasingly, movies and network programming come with toys attached. Violence and competition are common themes, with a strong affect on the quality of play the child experiences.

Consumerism is also evident in toy quality. Toys have a planned obsolescence; they are consumed, used up, so other toys can take their place.

A major concern for all early childhood professionals has to be the development appropriateness of the toys. What type of toy is appropriate for the child's age and stage of development? The recommended ages on toy packages may have very little to do with the age or developmental level at which the toys are appropriate. The buyer must beware and determine appropriateness on his or her own.

Another major concern is safety. What adult hasn't been

tempted to choose a toy for an advanced two year old by looking in the toy section for much older children? The adult may not have realized that small parts that are a choking hazard for the 2 year old may have determined the age recommendation instead of the cognitive development level. Even the size of the pieces if the toy breaks must be considered. Depend on reputable toy manufacturers and distributors with great customer service. Finally, playability can determine if the toy purchase is worthwhile. When a child can approach a toy at a number of different levels and with open-ended results, that child is able to experience a feeling of success; self-esteem is enhanced; and the time the child engages in play increase. Playability is clearly a much better determiner of appropriateness than the name of the movie shown on the package. Toy selection for young children is a complex issue for everyone involved in the care and education of young children. The following guidelines will help make the process a little easier.

1. The toy is developmentally appropriate. Challenging but not frustrating; has the appropriate level of complexity.
2. The toy can be approached from a variety of levels. The toy has a variety of developmental stages addressed and has a lack of "functional fix- edness".
3. Toy is safe for intended age group. Toy passes choke test, has no sharp edges, no danger of suf-

focation and eye danger is considered.

4. Toy is durable and intended for extended use. Toy will not soon break or become useless. Toy has play value for more than a few weeks or months.
5. Toy is appealing to children—colour, shape, style best for age.
6. Toy is appropriate for intended use in home daycare. The size is appropriate for available space. It can work for needed number of children and is durable enough for expected use.
7. Toy is appropriate for both indoor and outdoor use. Flexibility offers increased play value. It is waterproof or easy to clean.
8. Play opportunities are open-ended. It stimulates divergent thinking. It has more than one right answer or method of use.
9. Toy is multicultural. It will contribute to a variety of ethnic groups represented by classroom toys and is free of stereotypes (e.g. teepee for Native Americans)
10. Toy is usable by both boys and girls. Colours don't dictate use by single sex and does not dictate a certain role.
11. Toy is nonviolent in nature.
12. Price of toy reflects its value. Resulting play and durability are worth the investment.
13. Addition of toy will add variety to existing play setting. All developmental areas (physical, cognitive, emotional and social) are supported by group of toys present.
14. Similar play and value cannot be achieved by provider made toy.

—adapted from
www.earlychildhoodnews.com





Literacy Page

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the early literacy skills that researchers say is important for children to have in order to learn to read. The more vocabulary children have the easier it will be for them to understand what they are reading.

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things, feelings, concepts, and ideas.

Books:

- Books with words not used in daily conversation.
- True books use different words than those used in stories.
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- Explain an unfamiliar word; do not replace it with a familiar one.
- When a word has more than one meaning, talk about the different meanings.
- Pick out a word from a book, rhyme or song. For an unfamiliar word, explain it. For a familiar word, think of a new word that has

a similar meaning.

- Add descriptive words or more information than is in the book.
- Encourage your child to talk about the pictures. Add information and ideas to what he says.
- Use words to describe what characters in the book might be feeling, even if those words are not used in the book.
- Use words to describe ideas in the story even if those words are not used in the book.
- Use specific words instead of words like it, here, there.
- Your child learns and remembers by having words and books repeated. Be patient as you re-read the same story over and over or answer the same questions over and over.



Research tell us:

Children's books have three times more rare words than we use in conversation.

—adapted from www.ala.org/everychild





Parenting Page

Thriving in the new year

For many of us, January means the holiday excitement is over and it's back to the regular routines of life. We've celebrated, maybe eaten a little too much, been in touch with family and friends, and here we are, played out looking at the new year before us. Some people look forward with anticipation and some are working to gather up the energy and resources just to get through the day. What is it about some people that they seem to bounce back from whatever happens in their life and continue to thrive with a positive outlook?

The term for it is resiliency, the ability to meet everyday challenges and obstacles and feel like you can handle them and carry on. Bounce Back and Thrive, one of our programs offered at CROW, says, "Daily life as a parent of young children can be so busy and so full of demands that sometimes we feel like we are running on empty." Resiliency skills give us fuel and a map for steering through these obstacles.

The skills identified with resiliency include:

Identifying the strengths you already have. Are you caring, creative, loyal, practical, organized or determined? There are many, many strengths we have that we don't notice or appreciate that help us in our everyday lives. When we look for them and name them we begin to own them.

The three R's are the core of the program. Relax, re-think and respond. We want to respond to situations not react. This is a three step process. Stop and be aware you're about to react. Calm yourself down with breathing, counting or a self-imposed time out. There are many techniques. Re-think the situation. Is there another way to look at this? Is there something going on that I've missed? Am I in a thinking rut (an old pattern), that's not going to lead to a helpful situation?

Identifying the stressors in our life, those from outside and our internal ones, and how we deal with them. Many inside pressures come from negative thinking and unrealistic expectations we have about ourselves and our abilities. Catching our negative thoughts, using positive self-talk and rethinking the situation, helps to deal with some of this stress.

Understanding the link between our thoughts and reactions. There is a situation (whining child) that leads to a thought (he's doing this on purpose) which leads to an emotion (frustration, anger etc.) that ends in a reaction (yelling at child). When we catch those automatic thoughts and rethink them (he's hungry and tired, he's not trying to push my buttons) we change the emotion (calmer understanding) and the reaction (feeding or

soothing the child). The thought is often so automatic we don't even realise that we're having it. With awareness and practice, it becomes easier to "catch that thought" and change the outcome of a situation.

Identifying thinking habits and ruts that we often don't even know are there. Hidden beliefs that come from how we were parented and from our past experiences cause certain thinking patterns. We may blame ourselves for all our troubles or put that blame on others instead. We might think that nothing will ever change. It will always be this way. These thinking ruts make it hard to look for options when we're trying to solve problems. They make us think we should do this or shouldn't do that. When we are aware of these ruts our thinking becomes more flexible. We have more options. We can choose with awareness.

Practicing these resiliency skills will help you deal with parenting challenges and life in general. Join us for the next Bounce Back and Thrive course for more information. Check out our workshop calendar at www.crowoeyc.com

-by Jane Paul, Parent Education Coordinator

When dealing with children's behaviour we want to respond to situations not react.





CROW

Children's Resources on Wheels

Parenting Page

Make-Believe Play

A toddler lifts an empty plastic cup to her lips and pretends to drink. A little one pretends to read a book to a circle of stuffed toys. A 3 year old lines up empty food boxes on a table where a friend pretends to be the grocery store cashier. A 6 year old organizes younger siblings into various roles for acting out a visit to the zoo. These scenes are all examples of make-believe play, an activity that builds children's skills for thinking, feeling, behaving and getting along with others.

Learning how to act in the world

From the simple imitative play of the 1 year old to the complex scenarios imagined by a 6 year old, make-believe play helps children take their place in the social world and supports their later learning in school. Here are some benefits that experts point to:

- children can **practise how they are expected to act** in different situations, for instance, how to behave at the grocery store.
- when they need to adjust their behaviour to the imagined situation, they learn to **control their impulses**.
- they **learn and practise new words** and new sentences, appropriate to different situations.
- in make-believe, children can often **express their feelings** and find ways to deal with them.
- children's **creativity and imagination** grow when they invent their own stories.
- when children pretend, one thing can represent something else. For instance, a rectangular block becomes a telephone. This is the beginning of **symbolic thinking**, an ability fundamental to literacy and nu-

meracy since letters and numbers are symbols of real world objects.

- children **practise their planning and problem-solving skills** as they develop more complex scenarios. They must set up the situation, find or make props and negotiate any conflicts that may arise among the players.
- when children play a role, they learn to see things from another person's point of view. This is the beginning of **empathy**. It also builds **social awareness**. Children who can imagine what their classmates are thinking and feeling do better in a kindergarten classroom.

Fewer opportunities

It seems children today have fewer opportunities to develop their make-believe abilities, compared to past generations. They spend more time at an earlier age in adult-directed settings or being passively entertained in front of a screen. Instead of playing with older children who have higher-level skills in pretending, children spend most of their time in groups with others their own age.

Adult support

Since play with older siblings happens less often, parents and caregivers can become "play mentors" to foster children's play abilities and bring them the benefits of make-believe play.

- start with **simple demonstrations of pretending**, somewhere around the age of 14 months. Stir an imaginary sauce in an empty pot, serve it up on plates for you and your child and pretend to eat it. Say "this is yummy!" and smack your lips with

pleasure. When your child understands the game, he may want to feed the dish to a baby doll or stuffed toy.

- suggest a game that **imitates an activity you often do**. "Let's pretend we're going on the bus to see Grandma." Line up some chairs to make the bus. At first, you can pretend to be the bus driver. Change your voice and say, "ticket please". You can put a cap on and hold a pot lid like a steering wheel. When your child is older, she can be the bus driver and use a bus driver voice.

- You can also **act out excursions**, ones you have already done (like a visit to the museum) and ones you want to prepare your child for (like a visit to the dentist).

Props, like hats, shirts, toy phones can enrich make-believe play. Very young children may need realistic props, but as children's imagination and symbolic thinking develop, they can turn anything into what they need for their story. A cardboard carton can be a spaceship one day and a bear's cave the next.

- With experience, children can take over the play and need adults less and less. Your role becomes simply to **supervise for safety** and to **help them if they get stuck** in conflicts.

So turn off the TV, provide a few props and lots of free time and let your children's imagination soar, knowing make-believe play lays a firm foundation for their social and academic success.

—adapted from
www.parentsmatter.ca

Make-Believe play helps children take their place in the social world.



Songs, fingerplays and crafts

Submitted by Janet Wheeler Lackey

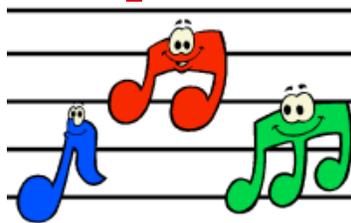
Snowball Painting

Fill 2 nylon socks with dry beans and let the children dip them into white paint. Then they can either drop them or bounce them onto light blue construction paper which is on the table or on the floor. The resulting splat resembles a snowball.

Finger Skating

Cover your table with a plastic tablecloth. You need 2 pieces of tin foil about 12 inches in length to tape to the tablecloth. Make sure you overlap the two pieces of foil. Pour 3-4 small blobs of white paint on the foil and let the children go finger skating. Enjoy this sensory experience.

Messy Play craft ideas.



Tidy Up, Tidy Up

Tidy up, tidy up
Put the toys away
Tidy up, tidy up
We're finished for the today
Oh tidy up, tidy up
Put the toys away
And we'll get them out again
The next time that we play.

Bubblegum

Short Version:

Sticky, sticky bubblegum, bubblegum, bubblegum
Sticky, sticky bubblegum, sticking your hands to your head.
Un-stick, pull!

Repeat using other body parts: hands together, gum to nose, gum to shoe etc.

At the end of the song take out the bubblegum, wrap it in a wrapper and put it the trash can.

Long version:

Reach into your pockets and pretend to pull out your bubblegum. Pretend to unwrap it, put it in your mouth, chew it and blow a huge bubble. Bigger, bigger, bigger, ready, it's going to POP!



Playgroups

Please Note: The hours for the Monday playgroup in Almonte at Holy Name of Mary School has been changed to 9 a.m—noon.

Day	Location	Time	Staff	Dates
Monday	Almonte - Holy Name of Mary School	9:00 am—noon	Linda	January 6, 13, 20, 27
Monday	Carleton Place—Carambeck Community Centre	10:00—11:30 am	Issie	January 6, 13, 20, 27
Monday	Smith Falls - Duncan J. Schouler School	10:00—11:30 am	Andrea	January 6, 13, 20, 27
Monday	Perth—Dance Studio	9:30—11:30 am	Cindy	January 6, 13, 20, 27
Tuesday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am -noon	Linda	January 7, 14, 21, 28
Tuesday	Almonte - Holy Name of Mary School evening	6—7:30 pm	Linda	January 7, 14, 21, 28
Tuesday	Carleton Place - Arena, 75 Neelin Street	10:00 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 7, 14, 21, 28
Tuesday	Montague — Rosedale Hall	9:30 - 11:30 am	Andrea	January 7, 14, 21, 28
Tuesday	Smith Falls - OEYC	9:00-12:00 noon	Lori	January 7, 14, 21, 28
Wednesday	Almonte - Holy Name of Mary School	9:00 am—2:30pm	Linda	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Carambeck Community Centre	10:00 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Lanark—Maple Grove School	9:30—11:30 am	Andrea	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Perth—Perth Library	10:00—11:30 am	Cindy	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Smiths Falls - Trinity United Church	9:30 - noon	Lori	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Smiths Falls—OEYC	9—noon	Parent run	January 8, 15, 22, 29
Thursday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am—2:30pm	Linda	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Thursday	Carleton Place - Arena	10:00 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Thursday	Lanark—Maple Grove	9:30—11:30 am	Andrea	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Thursday	Perth - Perth Library	10:00 - 11:30 am	Cindy	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Thursday	Smiths Falls - Trinity United Church	9:30 - noon	Lori	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Friday	Smiths Falls - OEYC	9:00—11:00 am	Parent Run	January 10, 17, 24, 31





CROW

Children's Resources on Wheels

Workshops

Workshop—Pre-registration is necessary— call OEYC ext 300	Date	Time	Location
Gym Jam	January 21	6—7 p.m.	Maple Grove School, Lanark
Kids Have Stress Too	January 27	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Carleton Place, location to be determined
If it looks like a duck and it quacks like a duck , why is it not a duck? Managing extreme behaviours WITHOUT a diagnosis	February 10	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Chimo Elementary School, Smiths Falls
Family Science—3 session workshop	Feb. 11, 18, 25	6—7:30 p.m.	Duncan J. Schoular School, Smiths Falls

Staff Directory

Ontario Early Years Centre	Ext	Licensed Home Child Care	Ext
Diane Bennett, Executive Assistant	313	Kelli Cassidy, Director	309
Kathy Boelsma, Early Literacy Specialist	312	Sherry Harder, Accounting & Admin Support	301
Emily Cassell, Data Analysis Coordinator	316	Janice LePage, Home Visitor	306
Sue Cavanagh, Executive Director	303		
Linda Cybulski, Playgroup Facilitator	304	Lanark County Child Care Programs	
Jan Forsythe, Finance Manager	302	Licensed Home Child Care offers home based care throughout Lanark County for children 6 weeks - 12 years.	
Cindy Goodfellow, Playgroup Facilitator	307	Caregivers Needed	
Janet Wheeler Lackey, Resource	311	We are currently taking applications throughout Lanark County. Contact us for more information http://www.crowoeyc.com/childcare/providerpage.html	
Linda Lalonde, Reception/Office Manager	300		
Issie Mullen, Playgroup Facilitator	311		
Jane Paul, Parent Education Coordinator	305		
Andrea Snyder, Playgroup Facilitator	318		
Lori Wintle, Playgroup Facilitator	310		



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