

INcare

... inclusive practices in child care

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Learning Through Animal Connections



Having animals visit child care centres is both a fun experience and a great learning opportunity for children.

Jennifer Boone, Resource Teacher at Chinguacousy Learn.Play.Care. Child Care Centre, certainly knows the far reaching benefits of interactions between children and animals. As well as being a Resource Teacher Jennifer is also a Certified Dog Trainer from Animal Behavioural College.

In the spring of 2012, Jennifer developed a program called *Learning Through Animal Connections* for children enrolled in the Region of Peel's Learn.Play.Care. Child Care Centres. This program teaches children how to take care of, be safe around and play with dogs. Children learn that dogs need to be cared for and loved by humans. Teaching this to children helps to build children's self confidence and

empathy skills.

The program consists of four sessions where children are encouraged to ask questions and to interact with the dogs through feeding, grooming and exercise activities. These opportunities support children's learning and development helping them to understand the importance of caring for animals as well as their role when caring for others and has also allowed the children to become more comfortable and confident with dogs.

The *Learning Through Animal Connections* program has been well received within the Region of Peel's Learn.Play.Care. Centres by children, staff and parents. As children learn more about these friendly animals and how to care for them, it helps create a safe and friendly environment for everyone in the community.

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Snoezelen Rooms

Snoezelen (pronounced SNOOZ-eh-len) comes from the Dutch words, “*snufflen*” to explore/sniff around and “*doezelen*” to doze. Jan Hulsegge and Ad Verheul, therapists created this approach in Holland in the 1970’s. Their idea was to provide a relaxing atmosphere while stimulating the four main senses: touch, sight, sound and smell.



Snoezelen Rooms have become more widely used in the last ten years and have shown positive effects for individuals that participate in this unique sensory experience.

A Snoezelen Room is a therapeutic room designed for individuals with sensory, cognitive and physical disabilities. Snoezelen Rooms provide children and adults with a unique multi-sensory experience. Rooms or small spaces use specialized equipment and materials, including lights, music, gentle vibrations, textures and aromatherapy. Rooms are specifically engineered and designed for individuals of all ages and abilities. It is an opportunity for one to stimulate their individual sensory needs while allowing time to relax.

The Snoezelen approach is now used worldwide in a variety of settings. They are used in child care centres, schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, nursing homes and other public and private facilities.

Holland Bloorview, Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto, Ontario opened Canada’s first Snoezelen Room in 1992. Since then more community facilities, including a swimming pool, have been created and opened across Ontario.

Peel Region is very fortunate to have a Snoezelen Room in the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness facility in Bolton.

To learn more about a Snoezelen Rooms please contact Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness at 905-857-3313 or 1-800-621-1287 or visit www.hollandbloorview.ca/.../Community_Snoezelen_Rooms.pdf

PEP-Start

(Prevention, Early Identification, Program)

PEP-Start clinics provide services to families with children from birth to five years of age. These drop-in clinics provide consultations for children who have not been referred for special services, such as a diagnosis, assessment or are already receiving services.

Parents and staff at community child care centres can refer children to the clinic by contacting the PEP-Start Coordinator directly or families can drop into any clinic date or location and sign in to see any number of professionals. During a visit to the clinic, families have an opportunity to consult with professionals from community agencies with a focus on speech and language development, parenting/behaviour, preschool development, infant and toddler development, and general health and nutrition. Referrals for further consultation or assessment are made when necessary.

PEP-Start Clinics are offered monthly throughout the year. Clinic locations rotate throughout various Ontario Early Years Centres and Readiness Centres within Peel Region. For those unable to attend a clinic, PEP-Start Outreach Services are available for one-on-one consultations.

PEP-Start clinics are available thanks to:

- Brampton Caledon Community Living
- Child Development Resource Connection Peel
- Community Living Mississauga
- ErinoakKids
- Infant and Child Development Services Peel
- Ontario Early Years Centres in Peel
- Peel Children’s Centre
- The Region of Peel’s Health and Human Services departments

For further information about the program or to view upcoming dates and locations visit:

www.cdrcp.com/pep/pep-start-clinics or contact

the PEP-Start Coordinator, Pat Dyment, at 905-568-8897 or pat@pepstartpeel.com

Importance and Proper Use of Visual Schedules

Visual schedules are important requirements for a high quality early learning and child care program as identified in the Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) and Children's Operating Criteria Guidelines.

Schedules provide predictability and structure to children's daily routines and unlike spoken words visual schedules provide constant information for children, allowing them a longer processing time and highlighting important events.

Although individual learning styles vary, all children seem to understand and remember information better when they both see and hear it. This is even more significant for children with special needs, who may require more supports to understand information.

Using visual schedules and sequences helps children master the tasks they need to gain independence in. A visual schedule helps children understand what is currently happening, what is coming up next (the sequence of events) and what happens when they are finished. Visual schedules made with photographs, symbols or words can be used to organize and structure daily activities. Generally, picture-based schedules work best for young children and non-readers, while word-based schedules work for children who read. The goal is to create a visual system that helps children learn to do the task independently.

Since schedules represent events, they may need to be gradually introduced based on the child's skill level starting with:

- Real objects
- Real miniature objects
- Colour photographs
- Black and white photographs
- Written words

Some examples of visual schedules:

- Daily routine
- Bathroom routines
- Dressing/undressing
- Planning/recalling
- First/then

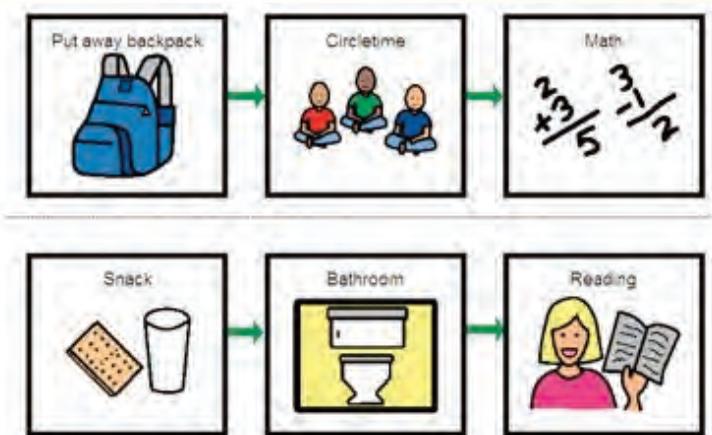
It is important to keep using the schedule after the child understands each of the steps because it provides a permanent reminder of the routine or sequence. Something to think about....imagine that all the data is suddenly wiped

from your smart phone and the type of anxiety it may cause. This may be the same for a child who suddenly has a visual schedule removed from their environment.

Source:

Practical Classroom Strategies: Provincial Child Care Support Program. PQA—Preschool Program Quality Assessment—Second Edition Children's Services Operating Criteria guidelines—Preschool section 2012

Morning Schedule



How To Find Private Services For Your Child

Are you looking for an occupational therapist (OT), speech and language pathologist (SLP) or physiotherapist (PT) services for your child?

Information and resources can be found on the following websites:

College of Occupational Therapist of Ontario
www.coto.org/ot/source/Members/publicregister.cfm

The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
<https://www.osla.on.ca/en/childirectory>

The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
<http://publicregister.collegept.org/PublicServices/Start.aspx>

Always remember to look into your benefits with your employer as you may have extended health coverage plans that can help with the cost of these services.

Downs Syndrome Awareness of Peel www.dsap.ca

Autism Ontario

www.autismontario.com/client/aso/ao.nsf/peel/peelhome

Brain Injury Association of Peel and Halton

www.biaph.com

Cystic Fibrosis Canada

www.cfpeel.org

Learning Disabilities Association Peel

www.ldapeel.com/id15.html

Peel FASD Parent Support Group Mississauga

www.fasdontario.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

www.cmhapeel.ca

Epilepsy Halton-Peel

www.epilepsyhaltonpeel.org

Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

www.cnck.org

CNIB Halton/Peel Office

www.cnib.ca/en/ontario/resources/

Voice for Hearing Impaired Children

www.voicefordeafkids.com

Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

OAFCCD

www.oafccd.com

Family Services of Peel

www.fspeel.org

“A child’s life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark”

Robert A. Heinlein

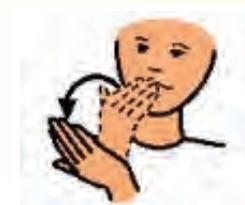
Sign Language Benefits All Children

Sign language is no longer simply seen as a method of communication for those in the Deaf community. Teachers and caregivers of young children are discovering the benefits of using sign language to support learning and development with all children. Sign language provides a way for children who are not yet able to communicate vocally to express themselves in social interactions.

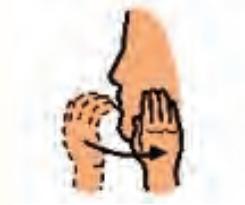
(Always remember American Sign Language should be used in conjunction with verbal language)



School - The sign for school uses loose flat hands. You lower your dominant hand onto your base hand twice as if clapping.



Thank You - The sign for thank you is made by starting with the fingers of your dominant hand near your lips. Your hand should be held flat. Move your hand forward and a bit down in the direction of the person you are thanking. Smile (so they'll know you mean it).



Home - The sign for home is made by bringing your fingers and thumb together and touching your cheek at the side of your mouth. Then move your hand an inch or two toward your ear and touch your cheek again.

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas, stories or questions, we'd love to hear them.
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