

April Newsletter

With the royal wedding just a couple of days away, it's the perfect time to talk about Tea Parties! Tea Party Day was my favorite activity to do with the children (next to field trips) as it gave us lots of ways to practice our 3 Cs: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy! This month's article is an excerpt from the book I'm working on "Tea Parties Teach!"

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

Tea Parties Teach: It's not just for little girls anymore! At Patty Cake Preschool, my home child care business for 17 years, Friday was Tea Party Day. Unlike the stereotypical little girl party, the Patty Cake Preschool Tea Party was so much more! Tea Party day was about using your creativity and science skills as a baker, your imagination and small motor skills to create costumes and an interesting table, and your social skills to spend time with friends in a respectful, interesting and fun way. There was no gender requirement for any of these activities! You can implement this fun, interactive activity as well and see for yourself how it not only pulls everyone together, it touches on every aspect of a child's development along the way.

The best way to break through the stereotype of little girls dressed up as princesses at a lacy table full of flowered china is to do it without using any of these factors! Instead, try a tea party for animals (boys and girls dressed in animal costumes), sitting at a table covered with large paper leaves and wooden serving plates. Or a "Star" Tea Party where everyone dresses up as their favorite movie or pop star and you pretend it's the Academy Awards with a golden tablecloth and glistening white china and crystal glasses. If you choose a more traditional route, invite all the "Lords & Ladies" to the Tea, having the children dress in top hats and tails, flowered dresses with straw hats adorned with flowers, and maybe a crown or two! White gloves make it even more interesting. Go for the lace and flowered china for this one, and be sure to bake scones!

The point is, this is not your little girl's tea party. This is an EVENT. This is something that pulls the best out of all the children in your care and gets them sharing with each other. It's about polite conversations and talented bakers. It's about creative dress designers and exploring new tastes. The one thing it's not about is a stereotype.

Taking it one step further than including both boys and girls, the Tea Party is also an opportunity to explore other cultures. From food, to dress, to language, other cultures can easily be brought into the Tea Party, either in small bits, or as the main theme.

I often share in my workshops a discussion on adding multicultural activities and items into an early childhood program, and it centers around connecting it to the child. Children 3-6 years old have a very narrow view of their worlds,

developmentally. They can't quite grasp the idea of just how big our world is and how many people are in it. What they do know is their own family, neighborhood, and town. If you are looking to build a connection for them to something such as Chinese cuisine, African clothing, or South American music, it's a pretty big jump from their world to one of these. So what to do in order to be successful? Connect the dots. Rather than draw that line from, say Wisconsin to Africa, find someone or something that fills in the connecting dots.

For example, is there a family in your program with relatives in Africa? Does business with someone there? Has taken a vacation there? The children will be more open to this new information when it is connected to someone they already know. Say you have a family whose cousin has been working in Africa for a few years; a family member could come in and talk about their cousin. Show photos of the person, and their home. Then maybe the class could draw pictures of their favorite pieces of clothing and mail a letter to the cousin asking them to send in photos or drawings of their favorite pieces of clothing. Better yet, they send some fabric along too. Now the children can use the fabric to create some of their own designs that reflect what the cousin had sent. They are going to be much more connected to the new African clothing if it is something they have created, has come from a source they have a connection to, and is connected to something they already know, their own favorite clothing. This type of activity connects the dots, making the lesson stronger and more likely to have an impact for the children. Simply putting an African tunic into your dress up area does nothing more than add a "dress" in their eyes. It will have no meaning because it doesn't have a connection to "their world."

Using this type of philosophy, find the connections available to you to explore other places and people in our world. My very first Tea Party Day was in honor of my daughter's Grandfather who was visiting us from England. We did it very traditional, and he shared with us the many aspects of the custom that he practiced every day. It was so much fun for the children, and left such a lasting impression, that I decided to continue the practice. After 17 years, we've been able to explore and discover dozens of places and people, each time finding that connection between us and that big, bright world out there.

Once you've decided on a few main goals for your Tea Party, whether they are developmental goals or multi-cultural, you'll be able to spot the areas where you can enhance your plan with these activities, and this may affect your scheduling decisions. Just remember to keep it centered on the children, bringing out the best in them, and have fun along the way!

Tips & Tricks *Here's some more tips to help you plan a great tea party!*

Color Your World

Spice up any drink by simply adding a few drops of food coloring. Try purple milk at your next tea! Milk, white grape juice, apple juice, lemonade, tea, and many other drinks can easily become a new color.

Cross Country Connections

Find a teacher in another state - or country - and have your class and theirs become pen pals. They can exchange recipes and costume ideas for their tea parties, even send photos or videos. Then each class can try and duplicate the tea party the other class held.

Tea Party Themes

Choose a Food (Example: Strawberry Party)

New Student Welcome Tea

Meet the Director Tea

Special Guest Tea

Choose a Color

Animal Groups (Example: Farm Animal Tea, Jungle Animal Tea)

Season Celebration Tea

New Foods Tasting Tea

Choose a Shape (Example: Circle Tea, treats cut in circles, costumes with dots)

Swim Party Tea

Holiday Tea

Time Period Tea (Example: 1800's Tea, 50's Tea)

Tea Party Books

Fancy Nancy Tea Parties by Jane O'Connor, 2009, Harper, New York, NY.

Fun to read to children, discusses outfits and etiquette, and includes recipes and directions for party decorations.

Come To Tea: Fun Tea Party Themes, Recipes, Crafts, Games, Etiquette and More by Stephanie Dunnewind, 2003, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY.

Great book! Lots of activities, good recipes, crafts, games and decorations. Covers manners, hostess tips, and themed tea parties. Only down side is it was written for girls but don't let this discourage you, there are lots of activities in this book that ALL of the children will love!

Totally Tea-rific Tea Party Book: Teas to Taste, Treats to Bake and Crafts to Make from Around the World and Beyond by Tanya Napier, 2002, Barron's Educational Series. *Lots of great info on customs for teas from around the world! Recipes, activities, lots of fun facts and activities all the children will enjoy.*

Tea Party Websites

<http://www.teacakesandteddybears.com/teatrivia.htm>

<http://sippingtea.com/ideas.html>

www.teabirthdaypartyideas.com

www.teas2dine4.com/4childteas.html

www.lessonplanspage.com (Site search: "tea party.")

www.lessonplanet.com (Site search: tea party.)

In the News **NAFCC 2011 Conference**

Quest for Quality: Supporting Happy, Healthy Children

Come join me and all the nation's top experts in our field for high quality trainings, networking, and the opportunity to rejuvenate you and your career! We'll be at the beautiful Green Valley Ranch Resort Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada, July 21-23, 2011. Easy layaway plan available, check it out at: <http://www.nafcc.org/> and I'll see you there!

Monthly Sale Items

April Sale Item: Because I Loved You: A Birthmother's View of Open Adoption - 25% Off!

A combination memoir and resource guide to open adoption for adoptive parents, birthmothers, counselors, and anyone who is touched by adoption or believes in happy endings! In honor of my son's birthday in April, and the upcoming Birthmother's Day on May 7, I want to be sure everyone gets an opportunity to hear my story and help me to change the misconceptions about adoption and change the world for our children.

Regular Price: \$16.95 Sale Price: \$12.71

May Sale Item: 101 Tips & Tricks - \$2 Off!

This tips booklet is filled with 101 ideas for saving you time and money when working with children. Homemade toys, lots of activities, ways to keep things cleaner and more organized, how to work with parents, make books, and more! If you've ever attended my workshop on this topic, that's only about 30% of what's in the book, so get now to get dozens more of these great ideas!

Regular Price: \$8.00 Sale Price: \$6.00

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com or www.KIDBIZResources.com!

Speaking Events April 14, 2011

Phoenix, Arizona

Summa Associates Provider Training

6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

The Parents Can't Hear Me!

For more information call 480-921-2266

April 16, 2011

Laughlin, Nevada

ASCC Conference

Morning training: *From Babysitter to Business Owner*

Afternoon training: *Teaching the 3 Cs: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy*

For more information call: 928-453-5221

April 29, 2011

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Wisconsin Family Child Care Association 30th Annual State Conference
Workshop: *Policies and More: Creating a Parent Handbook*
For more information visit: <http://www.wisconsinfamilychildcare.org/>

April 30, 2011
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
WFCCA 30th Annual Conference
Workshop: *Your Space/Their Space*
For more information visit: www.wisconsinfamilychildcare.org

May 10, 2011
Merton, Wisconsin
Writer's Roundup
All day sessions with Merton school children K-8on becoming a writer.

May 21, 2011
Great Falls, Montana
Full Day Training: *Crazy for Kids, Teaching the 3 Cs, and Tips & Tricks*
For more information visit: www.css-mt.org

If you are a member of a group planning a training event and would like to book one of my keynotes or workshops, visit the Lecture page on my website and contact me for availability. Visit <http://www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php>. PERMISSION TO REPRINT: You may reprint any items from KIDBIZ Newsletter in your print or electronic publication, but please include the following paragraph:

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