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March Newsletter

Spring is a time where we are all feeling a bit drained, when you are stuck inside with a big group of children the long winter can take a lot out of you! Get that shot in the arm you need to refocus and get excited about making a difference in their lives - this month's article talks about two books that can do just that! Take some time to get yourself back on track and check out these books!

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

MISEDUCATION: Preschoolers At Risk

One of the top books that shaped the profession of early childhood for readers of Exchange magazine was reportedly "The Hurried Child" by David Elkind. Back in 1988, when I took my first early childhood teacher course at a local technical college, I was asked by our instructor to read "Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk" also by David Elkind. And the book changed my life, and most certainly shaped how I contributed to the profession of early childhood.

After seeing the recent poll by Exchange, I decided to dig out, and dust off, my beloved copy of "Miseducation" and give it another read. The book was published in 1987. While reading most older resource books leaves me with a "We've come so far!" feeling, the opposite was true this time as the first page, just as it did years earlier, grabbed me from the get go. Here is an excerpt from this page:

"All across the country, educational programs intended for school-aged children are being appropriated for the education of young children. In some states (for example, New York, Connecticut, and Illinois) educational administrators are advocating that children enter school at age four. Many kindergartens, and nursery school programs have become pre-kindergartens. Moreover, many of these kindergartens have introduced curricula, including work papers, once reserved for first-grade children. And in books addressed to parents a number of writers are encouraging parents to teach infants and young children reading, math and science.

When we instruct children in academic subjects, or in swimming, gymnastics, or ballet, at too early an age, we mis-educate them; we put them at risk for short-term stress and long-term personality damage for no useful purpose. There is no evidence that such early instruction has lasting benefits, and considerable evidence that it can do lasting harm"

In reading this, a few things come to mind. First, I realize that the "pre-kindergarten" he refers to is now more than a trend, but an established fact that 4K programs exist and are here to stay. Second, with the coming of the computer age and internet the websites and products aimed at convincing parents to teach reading, math and science, (and many other topics) during infancy has skyrocketed to the thousands. A Google search of "teach+your+infant+to+read" produces 341,000 results! Next, where he brings sports into the discussion, I am reminded of my own children's beginnings to the sports world when coaches and parents informed me that most kids have been on teams since they were two, so my 10-12 year old would probably be behind the others in competitions. Who said anything about competing? My daughters just thought swimming would be fun.

Finally, he brings up the research and how it is being ignored by those creating these programs. Here is where I finally feel a sigh of relief that our society is able to learn from their mistakes - a little. Due to the work and writings of Elkind, and other maverick educators and researchers like him, a generation of teachers who read his books vowed to make changes in our field. Like many others, I read his book in complete agreement and made a commitment to stand up for children. Programs began to change. The worksheets started to be replaced with learning centers and projects. The focus for the 4K programs turned from the 3 R's to socialization. And the research supported these changes as positive for child outcomes. But we're not out of the woods yet.

There are still many, many, programs holding on to old philosophies. There are still millions of parents who believe pushing academics early will benefit their children. There are legislators who devalue the importance of play, field trips, outside physical activity, the arts, an

other inherent social activity and create policy that steals it from our children. There is much still to do.

I would like to urge my readers to go to their library or book stores, (or maybe your own book shelf) and pick up one of David Elkind's books to read. Maybe that's the shot in the arm we all need to get re-energized, re-focused, and down right adamant about protecting childhood! Then share when you learn. Write a newsletter article for your daycare parents. Talk about it at a professional association meeting. Call or write a legislator and share what you've learned and what you know about the children in your care.

I believe Elkind's books did accomplish changing the view of many educators. Now it's our turn to change the view of the rest of society. The next generation depends on it.

Tips & Tricks

Spring cleaning is a great time to look at how your space is organized, here's a few tips to make it easier to do what you do and find what you need!

-Use expandable laundry drying racks to hang wet art projects to dry. Use clothespins to hold them onto the rods and place rack on sheets of newspaper to protect your floor. In the summer, place it outside for faster drying. When finished, fold it up and slip it under a couch for storage.

-Use a diaper stacker to store children's extra clothes, or bedding. It keeps them neat and separated and you can store it in a closet until needed.

-Color code items for each child. For example, Billy has a blue tippy cup/baby bottle, blue pacifier, blue circle/carpet square for group time, blue blankets for nap, blue cot, blue water bottle on fieldtrips and blue folder for his information. You will get to know the kids colors and it will make getting them the right item go much faster than looking for their written name.

-Store small items like google eyes, beads, toothpicks or pasta in spice jars. Get a spice caddy that spins and holds four sides of jars. It will be easy to find the items and takes up much less space than a separate bin for each tiny item.

-Disposable food containers are an inexpensive alternative for storage. They come in many sizes, most are clear (best choice so you can avoid having to label) and stack nicely, saving space.

-To organize your construction paper, use the stacking files used for desktops. Put two colors on each shelf and on top of each color place a folder to hold the small pieces of the same color. No more digging in a big box of scraps! And since they are separated by the shelves, you won't knock down the whole stack by taking the color that's on the bottom!

In The News

Redleaf Academy Webinars

Redleaf is putting together Webinars featuring their authors and other leaders in the field of early childhood to bring you quality webinars you can access from your computer. They are offered in variety of time slots to help you fit it into your schedule and get your training hours from the comfort of your home. I will be doing one each month, typically the 2nd Tuesday, at 1:00 Central Time with a new topic each month. Other presenters are Jeff Johnson, Chris Cross, and many other friends and colleagues from the field. You can sign up for the webinars and see what times/topics work for you at: <http://www.redleafpress.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=499>. Hope to see you next month in my session!

New Tool and Resource for Reporting Injuries or Hazards Posed by Consumer Products

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has launched an important new tool and resource: SaferProducts.gov is an online database to report injuries or hazards posed by consumer products. As reports are collected, they will be made available online so the database can be searched for specific products or classes of products. Learn more at: <http://SaferProducts.gov>.

Preventing Childhood Obesity

Do you want fun ways to promote physical activity, and healthy eating? Come learn why fitness is important for children, explore lifelong benefits of active play, exchange indoor and outdoor fitness

activities, and discover how to promote healthy eating and integrate nutrition education into early childhood curriculum. Learn about available outcome-based resources, including those for Spanish-speaking families. Dr. Charlotte Hendricks and other nationally known speakers will present a full-day workshop at the NHSA Annual Conference, April 5, in Kansas City, MO. To register, visit www.nhsa.org.

Great Video Resources

Check out the video resources available at: www.292baby.org/video_on_demand.htm. The Childhood Obesity videos were created with the help of Diana Webb, NAFCC Treasurer!

Celebrating Failures

My new blog is finally up and I'm getting the hang of it - follow along as I journey through new experiences, failures and successes, and try to find the lesson in each. <http://celebratefailures.blogspot.com/> The blog is dedicated to my Dad, who's philosophy was: "A mistake is only a mistake until you've learned from it, then it's a lesson."

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: www.nafcc.org and I'll see you there!

Monthly Sale Items

March Sale Item: KIDBIZ Trainers Guide: Professionalism for Staff - \$20 Off!

Great training materials for you to use in strengthening your staff's professionalism and commitment to children and their careers! Includes a copy of "From Babysitter to Business Owner", a Power Point presentation, a complete lecture, and handouts for your staff.
Regular Price: \$75 Sale Price: \$55

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

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

Speaking Events

March 26, 2011
CCR&R Full Day Training: *From Babysitter to Business Owner*
Carterville, Illinois
For more information call: 618-985-5986

April 1 & 2, 2011
Family Child Care Association of New York State Annual Conference
Albany, New York
Keynote: *Crazy for Kids!*
Workshops: *Your Space/Their Space, Parents Can't Hear Me, Teaching the 3 Cs, and NAFCC Accreditation*
For more information visit: www.fccanys.org

April 8 & 9, 2011
Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference
Indianapolis, Indiana
Workshops: *Creating Inspirational Child Care Environments, Tips & Tricks*
Half Day Training: *Teaching the 3 Cs*
For more information visit: www.iaeyc.org

April 14, 2011
Summa Associates Provider Training

Phoenix, Arizona
Training: *Parents Can't Hear Me!*
For more information call 480-921-2266.

April 16, 2011
Association for Supportive Child Care Conference
Laughlin, Arizona
Morning Session: *From Babysitter to Business Owner*
Lunch Keynote: *Crazy for Kids*
Afternoon Session: *Teaching the 3 Cs*
For more information visit: www.asccaz.org

April 29 & 30, 2011
Wisconsin Family Child Care Association Annual Conference
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Workshops: *Policies & More, Your Space/Their Space*
For more information visit: www.wisconsinfamilychildcare.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 www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php.

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