

KIDBIZ NEWSLETTER
MARCH2009

A Newsletter For Early Childhood & Child Care Professionals

Brought to you by:
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In this issue:

1. Supporting a Child's Curiosity
2. Tips and Tricks
3. KIDBIZ Blog
4. In The News
5. This Month's Sale Item
6. Upcoming Events

I don't know about you, but this is the time of year that me and the kids would open the door, look outside, for the first time since Winter moved in, think "Wow. Look out there! Let's go check it out!" After being cooped up inside during all those cold months, even though we'd head outside to sled and build snowmen, we didn't travel far or stay out long. But, now that it's warm, we want to stay out longer. And because the scene outside has changed from white to brown with buds of green popping up, we want to see what else is changing. We are curious. We can't wait to get out there and explore! This natural curiosity drives children to learn and grow, and the more we encourage it the better! This month's article provides you some specific activities to accomplish this, they are a preview of dozens more that will be in my new book, "Teaching the 3 C's: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy." But we can't wait until November to get these kids exploring! So I decided to share some with you now – enjoy and have fun!

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

SUPPORTING A CHILD'S CURIOSITY

Children are naturally curious, so to be sure this sense of exploration doesn't get lost in your day, give them lots of opportunities to follow their own questions and be exposed to new things, people and experiences that build their interest. By supporting a strong curiosity, parents and teachers are giving children the

tools to construct their own learning, to make it more meaningful and to have more success in school. Curiosity activities support a wide variety of state standard developmental areas as children engage all of their senses, use creativity, and build a foundation for problem solving. Including activities that support a child's natural curiosity in your daily curriculum creates a bridge between knowledge and fun, making your day not only developmentally successful, but a time for pure enjoyment for both you and the children!

Storyteller Fun

Professional storytellers make even the simplest stories come alive! Either take a field trip to visit one, or invite them to your classroom. In addition to having them tell a story, have the children prepare questions to ask them about what they do and how they learned to do it. After this visit, have the children choose one of their favorite stories and do a storytelling session on it for the group! *Activity supports curiosity through story and encourages creativity as children learn a variety of ways to tell a story.*

Exploring the Sound of: Paper!

Give children a sheet of paper, it can be any kind: construction, newspaper, typing paper, poster board, tissue paper. Ask them to play with it and see how many different sounds they can make with it. They can crumble it. Rip it. Tap it against itself. Blow on it or wave it. Let them try to see if they can come up with something new you haven't discovered yet! *Activity supports curiosity through the exploration of possibilities through the senses and also supports creativity through functional freedom, using paper for something other than drawing on it.*

Newspaper Names

Give the children a story cut from a page of a newspaper and a highlighter marker. Ask the children to look closely at the words on their page and highlight all the letters they can find from their name. Gets children to be more curious about the written word in other forms, such as the newspaper they see their parents read. *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of possibilities as children discover new forms of the written word.*

Story Mixer

Read two different storybooks to the children. Make a list of the characters from one story and the setting and plot from another story. Then, mix the two together! With the children, write a new story using the characters from one put into the setting and plot situation of the other. Would the characters act differently than in the original story? What would they do? How would they react to the problem? Would it change the ending? Rewrite the story together. Have the children draw new illustrations to go with it and create a new class book! *Activity supports creativity by exploring the possibilities in a story when small changes are made as children experiment and wonder; activity also supports creativity through stimulus freedom.*

Recipe Cards

Provide each child a copy of a recipe. Create them using a standard sheet of paper, and draw (or use photos of) the ingredients for the recipe, also writing the name of the ingredient next to it. Or, you can draw it on a large chalkboard or dry erase board. Also include the measurements such as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, 1 Cup, 2 teaspoons, etc. Don't abbreviate, write out the entire word. Go over the recipe with the children, helping them to "read" it on their own. When making the recipes, use one they may have some familiarity with, such as chocolate chip cookies. Add a couple of ingredients in the recipe that do not belong, such as 2 cups pickles, or 1 cup bacon. After reading all of the ingredients talk with the children about what may be wrong in the recipe. Have them point the items out and read them. Talk about the measurement amounts as well and if they seem correct. You can put in a few that will need to be changed, such as 1 cup salt or 5 bags chocolate chips. (Although they may vote to leave in that much chocolate!) After the discussion regarding reading the recipe and understanding it thoroughly, transfer it to hands on learning by making the cookies. Encourage children to find the ingredients by reading the labels of items in the cupboard and sizes marked on measuring tools. *Activity supports curiosity through experimentation with ingredients in a recipe.*

Explorer Kit

Every good explorer needs the right tools for discovery! Provide a few of these kits in your Discovery Area, and create extras for taking outside as well. Include in the outside bags: compass and binoculars. Make the Kit using either a belly-pack carrier, a small shoulder bag, or metal lunch box. Preferably in a camouflage design! Make it fun for them to dress up as real explorers and they'll be more excited about trying out the Discovery Area!

Contents to include:

Magnifying glass – several types/sizes

Stethoscope

Tweezers

Small plastic clear jars.

Petri dishes

Magnet

Small notepad and pencil

Small plastic jar of water and eye dropper (to observe how item changes when wet)

Small cloth for drying object

Handheld tape recorder to tape sounds made with object

Color Paddles

Prism

Small Flashlight

Safety Goggles

An explorer's kit supports curiosity by giving children the tools they need to explore their world, experiment and wonder.

Me and My Shadow

On a driveway, or paved playground area, in the morning of a sunny day have children stand and create a body shadow of themselves. Use sidewalk chalk to trace the figure. Let the children use sidewalk chalk to finish the drawing by adding eyes, hair, clothes, etc. Then, a couple of hours later have them return to the spot to see if they can repeat the shadow. The sun will have moved and now their shadow will have moved too! Let them trace another outline. Continue this throughout the day to see just where the shadow travels to! *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of our world, the sun and its shadows and the turning of the earth and our place in it all.*

Smelly Day for a Walk!

Take a walk outside with the children and stop at intervals to close your eyes and smell. Have the children do this as well and see what types of smells they can discover. Stop often to smell things such as flowers, tree bark, mud, someone's garbage, a puddle, a dog pen, etc. Make a list of the smells so when you return inside you can discuss them again. *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of the outdoors, heightening awareness of our sense of smell.*

TIPS AND 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!

Get 101 Tips and Tricks to save you time and money!

Visit www.patriciadischler.com.

KIDBIZ BLOG

The KIDBIZ Blog is a place where I can share all the great articles and information I have access to and think you should have access to as well! If you've found a great article or website that you think should be shared with others in our field, send it to me so I can post it and pass it on!

This week's article is on observing children by the President of the Montessori Foundation, check it out!

Visit: <http://kidbiz.blogspot.com>

IN THE NEWS

Have you made plans for the NAFCC Annual Conference yet? If not – do it today! I just received confirmation that I will be presenting my new training there on the pre-conference day – “From Babysitter to Business Owner Train the Trainer Course.” Those of you who present trainings to providers, R&R staff and other mentors, will receive training on how to present the topics covered in my book, along with a free copies of lecture outlines, handouts, and my new power point CD to use when you present the workshops yourself! This training kit will be sold for \$250 and you get it FREE! I can't be in everywhere, but this information is something I believe every provider needs to learn, so I'm ready to teach others how to help me spread the word on professionalism! Visit www.nafcc.org today to register!

THIS MONTH'S SALE ITEMS

March Sale Item: KIDBIZ Teleseminar Set – 50% Off!

A set of 6 audio training CD's, complete with handouts and training certificates totaling 6.5 hours of training! Get a jump start on your yearly training in the comfort of your own home. Trainings included are: Marketing & Interviews, From Braggers to Biters, Professional Image, Your Space/My Space, Holiday Tips and Tricks, and Creating a Parent Handbook. Regular price for set: \$120. **Sale Price \$60.**

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

This is my annual sale in preparation for Birthmothers Day in May so you can get the book in time to give a gift to the Birthmother in your life on this special day. It shares both research and advice along with my personal story of placing my son for adoption in 1985. The story covers the building of a relationship between his adoptive parents and myself, from his birth through his high school graduation. Fantastic for everyone whose life has been touched by adoption and a "good cry" for anyone who loves a great story with happy endings! Regular Price: \$16.95. **Sale Price: \$12.71.**

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11, 2009

Milwaukee, WI

Lutheran Social Services Adoptive Parent Training

Trusting in Strangers for the Sake of a Child

For more information contact: Carrie Pedersen carrie.pedersen@lsswis.org

March 14, 2009

Chicago Area Families For Adoption

Lisle, Illinois

Benedictine University

Workshops: *Trusting in a Stranger for the Sake of a Child*

Teaching Respect, Understanding and Love in Adoption

For more information visit: www.caffa.org/2009conference

April 3, 2009

Provider Appreciation Dinner

Community Child Care Connection, Inc.

Springfield, Illinois

Keynote: *Crazy for Kids!*

For more information visit: www.cccconnect.org

April 4, 2009
Professionalism Conference
Community Child Care Connection, Inc.
Springfield, Illinois
Keynote: *Building Partnerships*
Workshops: *Parent's Can't Hear Me!*
From Braggers to Biters
For more information visit: www.cccconnect.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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Author, *From Babysitter to Business Owner, Because I Loved You, Tips and Tricks* and *The Patty Cake Kids & The Lost Imagination Cap*.
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