

# Michigan Child Care Matters

Department  
of Human  
Services

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Infant Toddler Development

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

This is an exciting time for early childhood caregivers and educators in Michigan. People are talking about the importance of child care! There are discussions going on between providers, advocates and parents about what makes a high quality program. Licensing is an important step in the pursuit of quality care. The goal of licensing is to reduce the risk of harm to children. We do this by setting minimal standards for child care centers and family and group child care homes. Licensing consultants have a wealth of information on ways to help you meet rule requirements, and how you can go beyond the minimal standards.

As a child care professional, you know that learning occurs everyday with each child in your care. You are continually challenged to provide daily opportunities for children to grow and develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. The physical environment you provide to children on a daily basis, whether indoors or outdoors, is a critical component of the care you offer. Just as important are the relationships you develop with each child and parent. Together, these components help to define your unique child care program.

Programs that value staff development and training are often the same programs that have developmentally appropriate activities, warm and responsive caregivers, and positive relationships with parents. There is a great deal of research that correlates the education and training of caregivers to the healthy development of children in their care. There is also evidence to suggest highly trained caregivers tend to continue in child care employment, which impacts turnover. This, in turn, is important for children as they form attachments with caregivers. The Division of Child Day Care

Licensing is convinced that establishing minimum training requirements for all child care providers is the single most important thing we can do to improve the quality of child care in Michigan.

Look through this issue of Michigan Child Care Matters with an eye towards training. What articles are worth sharing with staff as part of your regular staff meetings? Is there some information that is important to send home with parents? Use our quarterly newsletter as a tool to regularly train your staff. With documentation, this training will count towards the annual training hours proposed in the new child care rules. ❖

Jim Sinnamon, Director  
Child Day Care Licensing Division

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Family Support Services  
Child Development and Care

and

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Office of Children and Adult Licensing  
Division of Child Day Care Licensing



This publication provides topical information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care, or to provide them with the web address so they may receive their own copy. Issue 43 and beyond are available on the Internet.

#### **EDITORIAL STAFF**

**Erika Bigelow**  
Licensing Consultant

**Mary Pat Jennings**  
Licensing Consultant

**Dalerie Jones**  
Licensing Consultant

**Judy Miller**  
Licensing Consultant

**Sandy Rademacher**  
Licensing Consultant

**Elaine Rauch**  
Licensing Consultant

**Sharon Schleicher**  
Licensing Consultant

**Jackie Sharkey**  
Licensing Consultant

**Kathleen Sinnamon**  
Area Manager

**Kathi Pioszak**  
Departmental Analyst  
Child Development &  
Care

## **PROGRAMMING FOR THE THREE-YEAR-OLD: THE CHILD IN TRANSITION**

BY CAROLE M. GRATES  
Primary Directions

The three-year-old is a child who is balancing precariously between the dependency of the toddler and the independence of the preschooler. He has a liking for and an interest in the same basic activities as the four-year-old. However, he lacks the refinement of many of the basic cognitive and physical abilities of the four-year-old. We often fail to see that this transitional age requires unique methods that are not necessarily successful with either toddlers or preschoolers. As a result, we integrate him, mentally and sometimes actually, with the four-year-olds in our programs, forgetting that he has only recently left the toddler stage and has just begun his journey into the preschool stage.

### **WHAT IS A THREE-YEAR-OLD LIKE?**

Some of the characteristics of this age level are:

- Moving toward control of large and small muscles
- Beginning to classify and see relationships, but not always having the right correlation
- Rapid language development
- Moving from parallel play to cooperative and symbolic play
- Sees himself as the center of the universe and cannot take another's point of view
- Views his possessions and toys as an extension of himself
- Has difficulty switching from the frame of viewing himself as an individual to the frame of seeing himself as a member of a group
- Moving away from dependence on the parent and toward dependence on other adults and ultimately, toward independence.

Setting up a responsive environment is the foundation of the total program for all children. It is especially important when programming for three-year-olds. An environment that meets the unique needs of this transitional child can be a catalyst for his successful transition into the preschool world.



## INDEPENDENCE-DEPENDENCE? WHICH WILL IT BE?

The three-year-old has probably entered the preschool with hesitant eagerness, anticipating the new experience that awaits him while having misgivings about separating from his parent. An environment that allows him to explore safely and at his own pace will enhance his anticipation while helping to allay his misgivings about the separation. This means having an environment rich in materials within well-defined areas or learning centers. It also means that the program allows a maximum amount of time for exploratory play that is self-selected and child initiated.

With rare exceptions, the only successful group activities for three-year-olds are those in which the child is a physically active participant. For example, using the flannel board to tell a familiar folk story such as Goldilocks in which the children can respond verbally will be more successful than asking children to listen quietly to an unfamiliar story.

Other appropriate group activities might include movement and music such as a rhythm band. However, the key in all group activities is to keep them brief, preferably 5 to 10 minutes, to accommodate their short attention spans.

One approach to group structuring for this age level is to schedule no formal group activities during the first month or two of the program. However, informal groups can happen throughout the day. An adult sitting on the floor with a book will soon have a group of children who have chosen to listen to a story. An adult with an autoharp in a corner of the room is an invitation to children to sing. An adult and one child starting a circle game will soon have enough others to play "Duck, Duck, Goose." The child will begin to see he can be a member of a group without having his individuality threatened. As the year progresses and more children are moving through the transition to preschooler, begin to have brief formal groups.



## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ADULT IN THIS THREE-YEAR-OLD PROGRAM?

The adult is critical to the successful transition of the child. First, the adult is a facilitator of play. She interacts on the child's level if intervention in play is essential. It is necessary to carefully assess when such interaction is beneficial and when it presents a hindrance to independence and exploration. It is also the adult's responsibility to rotate available materials and to encourage exploration of new or previously neglected materials.

The role of observer is equally important. The adult should be aware of the child who requires assistance while simultaneously noting the developmental needs of each child. As these needs change, the observant adults must provide appropriate materials that are responsive to the changes.

The most important element to remember when programming for the three-year-old is that he is just beginning the journey as a preschooler. Although he may appear to be very similar to a four-year-old, he has very different needs. An open environment that is enhanced by an extended exploratory play with the assistance of warm, observant adults is the best way to meet these needs. ❖

January 2005

**SUGGESTED PROGRAM COMMENTS**

<b>THREE YEAR OLDS</b>				
<b>LARGE MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SMALL MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
Balancing	Painting	Describing pictures (including those they have drawn)	Dramatic play	Matching, recognizing and naming colors, shapes and textures
Hopping	Building smaller things	Small group opportunities (short duration to speak and listen)	Songs	Putting things together
Playing Ball	Zippering	Assist children to verbalize feelings	Finger plays	Simple games
Riding Toys	Lacing	Dramatic play	Simple responsibilities (i.e., allowing them to experience cooperative effort)	Counting
Climbing	Tying	Simple rhymes and songs	Puppets	Listening to short stories
Sliding	Cutting	Sand and water play		
Building	Working with Play-Doh or clay	Use of felt board		
		Field Trips		

<b>FOUR YEAR OLDS</b>				
<b>LARGE MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SMALL MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
Balancing	Stringing beads	Telling stories on their own	Dramatic play	Matching letters in their names
Tumbling	Drawing	Field trips into neighborhoods	Puppets	Counting 1-10
Jumping	Coloring	Act out stories	Praise	Putting together and taking apart more complex objects
Throwing	Painting	Building with blocks	Assist children in setting limits for themselves in their activities	More color, shape, and texture recognition
Bouncing	Cutting	Sand and water play		
Riding	Putting things together			
Building	Taking things apart			
Climbing	Dressing			
Sliding	Table games			

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THREE TO FOUR YEAR OLD CHILDREN

*Erika Bigelow, Licensing Consultant  
Jackson County*

Beginning in infancy, children form attachments and relationships with adults in their lives. These relationships help children develop a sense of identity, increase understanding about their interactions with other people, and help them understand emotions, both theirs and those of other people. Research has found that children who experience positive attachments and relationships with parents and caregivers are more secure and confident. These children are also more able to have positive social-emotional development. In addition to relationships formed with adults, research has also found that the physical environment created by the caregiver influences social-emotional development of preschoolers.

Social development is the process of learning to develop and value relationships with other people. For three and four year old preschoolers, social development is the process of learning complex relationship skills, such as conflict resolution, and how to express their own opinion. Children at this age are able to enjoy relationships with other people.

Emotional development is the process in which children learn about emotions, about themselves, about other people and about their environment. Emotional development in preschoolers is demonstrated in how they understand their experiences and their environment, how they understand other's emotions, and how they understand their own emotions. Children at this developmental age are capable of feeling empathy for others.

Social-emotional development is the process of developing the capacity to do the following: regulate one's emotions; experience one's emotions; form close, secure relationships; and explore and learn from one's environment. Research has shown that children present certain behaviors when they are experiencing positive social-emotional development, and behaviors when positive social-emotional development is not occurring.

The following are examples of both types of behaviors:

### **Positive Development:**

- Play independently
- Share with others
- Show feelings for others
- Express feelings
- Enjoy books and games

### **Positive Development Not Occurring:**

- Either has little preference for, or is excessively dependent on, a parent
- Has a limited ability to express feelings
- Inappropriately expresses feelings
- Is not interested in the environment
- Is often sad or withdrawn
- Has inappropriate aggressive behavior
- Is inappropriately impulsive

Caregivers, in both homes and centers, need to be attentive to the social-emotional development of preschoolers. They also need to assist and guide children through this developmental process. Assistance and guidance can be given through the interactions the caregiver has with children. For example, the caregiver should provide consistency, should be responsive, and provide supportive care. The caregiver should also provide encouragement and support as children begin to explore and master new skills.

Assistance and guidance can also be manifested through the environment of the day care setting. For example, the environment should be language-rich. There should be a large supply of materials that encourage reading, listening, singing and talking. Research has shown that singing and music support self-expression, emotional well-being, communication, and cooperative play. Board books and picture books are available that address social-emotional themes for young children. Such books help children identify, understand and communicate their feelings. Materials that allow for exploration and mastery of new skills should be available for children.

(continued on page 14)

## OUTDOOR PLAY

From *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Chapter 16*



Outdoor play is essential for children's health and well being. The sense of peace and pleasure children experience when they take in fresh air, feel the warmth of the sun on their backs, and watch a butterfly land gently on a flower is immeasurable. What is very evident is how much children enjoy running,

jumping, climbing, and playing outdoors. The time children spend outdoors every day is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in the classroom. For teachers, the outdoors offers many ways to enrich the curriculum and support children's development and learning.

### WHAT CHILDREN LEARN OUTDOORS

When you think about children's time outdoors, you don't necessarily focus on its value for teaching academic content. Nevertheless, there are many ways to connect content, teaching, and learning outdoors. As you become knowledgeable about each of the components of literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology, you will find many ways to promote children's learning outdoors.

### LITERACY

Expand children's **vocabulary and language** by asking questions and encouraging them to describe what they see. Use a variety of adjectives when you observe with children: slimy, bright, bold, glowing, rough, furry, prickly, and so on.

Promote understanding of **books and other texts and literacy as a source of enjoyment** by including resource books such as guides to living things. Children can use them to find pictures of what they discover outdoors. Read stories such as *The Very Busy Spider* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Carle), *The Carrot Seed* (Ruth Krauss), *Miss Emma's Wild Garden* (Anna Grossnickle Hines), and *Where Once There was a Wood* or *In the Small, Small Pond* (Denise Fleming).

Teach children jump rope rhymes and clapping games to promote **phonological awareness**. Have them tune into the sounds and sights around them: how the horn on a car sounds vs. the horn on a truck or bus; identifying animal sounds-crickets, birds, mosquitoes, frogs, and dogs.

Teach children about **print and letters and words** by providing traffic signs for wheeled toys. Provide clipboards for children to record observations, cardboard to make signs to identify plants in the garden, or paper to leave a message for the custodian.

### MATHEMATICS

Promote **problem solving** by guiding children to find solutions to problems they encounter (e.g., What can we do to keep the balls from going over the fence?).

Teach **number concepts** by talking with children about how many seeds to plant, and helping them mark off the days until the seeds sprout. Use numbers and counting in games such as "Hide 'n' Seek," "Hopscotch," or "Mother, May I?" Reinforce one-to-one correspondence by having each child find a partner for an activity or a game such as "Squirrels and Trees."

Encourage children to explore **patterns and relationships** by noting the patterns on caterpillars, flowers, and leaves. Suggest making a design with the leaves or shells a child has collected. Play follow the leader and have children replicate a movement pattern such as jump, jump, clap, jump, jump, clap.

Emphasize concepts about **geometry and spatial relationships** by taking a shape walk, for example to find triangles or rectangles. Provide boxes, tubes, and other containers for children to use in building projects. When children are on the climbing equipment, use words to describe their position in space (e.g., under, over, inside, next to).

Expose children to **data collection, organization, and representation** by having them sort and classify the objects they find outdoors and making a graph where they can organize and compare the items in their collections.

## Outdoor Play (cont'd)

Nurture children's interest in **measurement and graphing** by including string and yardsticks so they can measure the plants in their garden or the distance between structures outdoors.

## SCIENCE

Guide children's development of **process skills** by posing questions such as: What would happen if . . . ? How can you find out? What did you learn? Encourage children to be good observers by showing them that you too are interested in finding out what is waiting for you each day outdoors.

Expose children to **physical science** concepts by offering them balls, ramps, tubes, water wheels, funnels, and sifters and by taking an interest in how they use these materials. Set up water tables or plastic pools so children can explore the properties of water.

Encourage children to explore **life science** by putting up bird feeders and keeping them stocked all winter; keeping pets outdoors if feasible and teaching children how to care for them; maintaining a worm farm; taking an interest in all forms of life outdoors.

Collect caterpillars and study their eating habits and their life cycle. Bring out a stethoscope so children can listen to their heartbeat after running around the yard.

Promote understanding of the **earth and environment** by learning about trees and plants in your outdoor area and planting a garden with children. Explore shadows: what makes them, how they move, how long they are. Encourage children to collect all sorts of rocks and compare them; examine dirt from different locations; measure puddles after a rain and see what happens to them; collect litter and recycle. Study the seasons and the changes that occur in each one.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Encourage learning about **spaces and geography** by talking about distances when you take a walk (e.g., which is further, the neighborhood park or the post office); providing paper and markers so children can draw their playground.

Explore concepts related to **people and how they live** when you take walks. Identify what stores are in your neighborhood and what different kinds of houses, or visit a construction site.

Make children aware of **people and the environment** by taking a trip to a nearby river, lake, or ocean to see how people use water in the environment and to find out about pollution. Plan a project to clean up litter around the school.

## THE ARTS

Promote growth in **dance and music** by encouraging children to use their bodies freely outdoors; bringing music outside so children can dance and move to the different beats; encourage children to move like different animals.

Nurture the **visual arts** by bringing paint, crayons, colored chalk, and other art materials outdoors. Encourage children to observe carefully and draw what they see—clouds in the sky, caterpillars, and a flower.

## TECHNOLOGY

Increase children's **awareness of people and technology** by talking about different tools and machines they see and use outdoors (e.g., trash trucks, pulleys, phone lines, walkie talkies, pipes and elbows, magnifying glasses, camera).

Provide **technology tools** for children to use outdoors such as binoculars, pulleys, microscopes, thermometers, magnifying glasses, cameras, and a digital camera if you have computers in your classroom.

From this sample list, you can see that the outdoor environment really does expand the opportunities for children to learn. We will build on these suggestions in the next section, where we describe in more detail the role of the teacher. ❖

This article can also be found at [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com).

This is an excerpt from *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 4th edition*.

## DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES FOR CHILDREN 3 - 4 YEARS OF AGE

BY END OF 3 YEARS	SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL	DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH WATCH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates adults and playmates</li> <li>• Spontaneously shows affection for familiar playmates</li> <li>• Can take turns in games</li> <li>• Understands concept of "mine" and "his/hers"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses affection openly</li> <li>• Expresses a wide range of emotions</li> <li>• By 3, separates easily from parents</li> <li>• Objects to major changes in routine</li> </ul>	<p>The developmental milestones give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if her development takes a slightly different course. Each child develops at her own pace. Do consult your pediatrician, however, if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs</li> <li>• Persistent drooling or very unclear speech</li> <li>• Inability to build a tower of more than four blocks</li> <li>• Difficulty manipulating small objects</li> <li>• Inability to copy a circle by age 3</li> <li>• Inability to communicate in short phrases</li> <li>• No involvement in "pretend" play</li> <li>• Failure to understand simple instructions</li> <li>• Little interest in other children</li> <li>• Extreme difficulty separating from mother</li> </ul>
BY END OF 4 YEARS	Social	Emotional	Developmental Health Watch
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in new experiences</li> <li>• Cooperates with other children</li> <li>• Plays "Mom" or "Dad"</li> <li>• Increasingly inventive in fantasy play</li> <li>• Dresses and undresses</li> <li>• Negotiates solutions to conflicts</li> <li>• More independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be "monsters"</li> <li>• Views self as a whole person involving body, mind and feelings</li> <li>• Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality</li> </ul>	<p>Because each child develops in his own particular manner, it's impossible to tell exactly when or how he'll perfect a given skill. The developmental milestones will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if his development takes a slightly different course. Alert your pediatrician, however, if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot throw a ball overhand</li> <li>• Cannot jump in place</li> <li>• Cannot ride a tricycle</li> <li>• Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers</li> <li>• Has difficulty scribbling</li> <li>• Cannot stack four blocks</li> <li>• Still clings or cries whenever his parents leave him</li> <li>• Shows no interest in interactive games</li> <li>• Ignores other children</li> <li>• Doesn't respond to people outside the family</li> <li>• Doesn't engage in fantasy play</li> <li>• Resists dressing, sleeping, using the toilet</li> <li>• Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset</li> <li>• Cannot copy a circle</li> <li>• Doesn't use sentences of more than three words</li> <li>• Doesn't use "me" and "you" appropriately</li> </ul>

Excerpted from *Caring for Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, Bantam 1999  
 American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Blvd, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; 847-434-4000.

Note: This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Many of the behaviors indicated here will happen earlier or later for individual children.

## DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES FOR CHILDREN 3 - 4 YEARS OF AGE

BY END OF 3 YEARS	MOVEMENT	HAND AND FINGER SKILLS	LANGUAGE	COGNITIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climbs well</li> <li>• Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet</li> <li>• Kicks ball</li> <li>• Runs easily</li> <li>• Pedals tricycle</li> <li>• Bends over easily without falling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes vertical, horizontal and circular strokes with pencil or crayon</li> <li>• Turns book pages one at a time</li> <li>• Builds a tower of more than six blocks</li> <li>• Holds a pencil in writing position</li> <li>• Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts</li> <li>• Turns rotating handles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows a two- or three-component command</li> <li>• Recognizes and identifies almost all common objects and pictures</li> <li>• Understands most sentences</li> <li>• Understands physical relationships ("on," "in," "under")</li> <li>• Uses four- and five-word sentences</li> <li>• Can say name, age and sex</li> <li>• Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)</li> <li>• Strangers can understand most of her words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes mechanical toys work</li> <li>• Matches an object in her hand or room to a picture in a book</li> <li>• Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people</li> <li>• Sorts objects by shape and color</li> <li>• Completes puzzles with three or four pieces</li> <li>• Understands concept of "two"</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds</li> <li>• Goes upstairs and downstairs without support</li> <li>• Kicks ball forward</li> <li>• Throws ball overhand</li> <li>• Catches bounced ball most of the time</li> <li>• Moves forward and backward with agility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies square shapes</li> <li>• Draws a person with two to four body parts</li> <li>• Uses scissors</li> <li>• Draws circles and squares</li> <li>• Begins to copy some capital letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the concepts of "same" and "different"</li> <li>• Has mastered some basic rules of grammar</li> <li>• Speaks in sentences of five to six words</li> <li>• Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand</li> <li>• Tells stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly names some colors</li> <li>• Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers</li> <li>• Approaches problems from a single point of view</li> <li>• Begins to have a clearer sense of time</li> <li>• Follows three-part commands</li> <li>• Recalls parts of a story</li> <li>• Understands the concept of same/different</li> <li>• Engages in fantasy play</li> </ul>	

Excerpted from *Caring for Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, Bantam 1999  
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Note: This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Many of the behaviors indicated here will happen earlier or later for individual children.

## TRANSITIONING FAMILIES FROM PRE-K TO K-12

*Judy Levine and Jacqueline Wood  
Education Consultants, Michigan Department of Education*

Transitioning to kindergarten is a big change in the lives of parents and their children. It is an ending of something familiar and a beginning of something more unknown with its own language, culture and procedures. It can be an exhilarating change as well as a frightening experience. For many families, it is perceived as the loss of early childhood—“My baby is all grown up.”

The process of transitioning children and their families should occur long before the child moves to kindergarten. We know that children and families adjust better to kindergarten when this occurs. We also know that the adjustment is easier when parents feel comfortable with the change and when schools and early childhood programs work together to reach out to them.

The key to successful transitions of families lies with the development of trust and positive attitudes between the programs. Therefore, the first step early childhood programs can take is to get to know what schools the children in the group will be attending. In many instances this will mean multiple schools including parochial and charter/academies. The early childhood staff will need to meet the kindergarten teaching staff, principals and other significant people in each of the schools.

The development of relationships can often occur more easily if the parties can collaborate on joint events, training or shared resources. At the same time, schools need to recognize that the children in early childhood programs are their potential customers. It is to their benefit if the children and families transition successfully into their schools.

Parents also need to take a role in the transition process. For them to transition smoothly, they have to recognize their own feelings about the transition. Since this is an ending for them and their child, they may feel sadness as well as excitement.

Parents need to say goodbye to the early childhood program while also being allowed to continue to

be connected to the early childhood staff, especially if they run into rough times. Parents also need to understand the differences between the early childhood program and the kindergarten programs. This means knowing the process for interacting in the new environment as well as who to go to, how to reach them and how to seek services. Finally, parents need to feel comfortable in sharing information about their child.

Early childhood programs and schools will also need to consider how they will reach the parents who work two jobs or night shift, cannot read, do not read/speak English, who had poor experiences in the K-12 system, or who have not come to prior events that have been offered.

So what are some successful strategies to take? There are four elements to consider when working towards successful transitions—building bridges between the early childhood program and the kindergarten; parents’ role as decision makers; communication to and from parents; and creating physical environments that foster smooth transitions. Here are some ideas you can do to make the transition a success.

### **If you are an early childhood program you can:**

- Set up a parent good-bye committee to plan an ending celebration. The committee can also visually create formal memories of the early childhood experience and display these memories in the classroom and at home.
- Create a visual record of the ending celebration providing photographs for families to take with them.



- Have last year's parents come back to share experiences.
- Connect families who are going to the same school/kindergarten classroom.
- Complete information sheets to share with the new teacher.
- Create "tip" sheets on how to volunteer, etc.
- Have a parent education meeting on the importance of parent involvement for future success.
- Provide information throughout the year for parents on concepts they can extend in the home setting.

### Kindergarten programs can:

- Have kindergarten teachers visit early childhood programs to meet with parents and answer questions.
- Set up a Parent Welcoming Committee of current kindergarten parents. This group can survey parents, assess policy language and written communication to make sure it addresses parent questions succinctly.
- Have a Parent Committee walk through of the school to assess and make recommendations on the environment's tone for new families.
- Ensure the entry and classroom is welcoming.
- Hold kindergarten open houses within the individual classes.
- All staff greet parents by name when they are in the building.
- Introduce key contact people in the building including the bus, crossing and playground staff.
- Host welcoming potluck dinner/breakfast for families with school staff and some of last year's parents.
- Provide parents with useful kindergarten information prior to the start of the year.
- Make initial individual parent contacts in person, such as home visits.
- Set up a system of parent mentors
- Have an initial conference for parent sharing.

### As parents you can:

- Serve on transition planning committees.
- Plan ending or welcoming celebrations.
- Survey parents as to the information they wish to know about kindergarten.
- Contact the new school to get information.
- Assess the environment's welcoming tone.
- Help arrange for speakers and trips related to kindergarten.
- Set up parent mentor or parent transition support groups.

Successful transitions may or may not mean doing more than you already do. It may involve dropping ineffective approaches and adding more effective ones. Remember, kindergarten transition sets the stage for each parent's future engagement in his/her child's education and this is critical to the child's future achievement in school. ❖



## SETTING UP THE PRESCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Jackie Sharkey, Licensing Consultant  
Macomb County

Setting up the preschool learning environment involves more than just the placement of equipment and play materials; it also includes the activities, time schedule and staff. It is important to be aware of the total environment that is created and the messages that it conveys. Often problems occur because contradictory messages are being sent out by the different components making up the environment. The teacher may be trying to prevent running and sliding with rules and words while the open floor space in the center of the room is inviting the children to run and slide. In another room, the physical environment may be well defined but the children may need more challenging activities, or they may need longer periods of unbroken time to become involved in the activities offered. Each area of the environment needs careful attention to allow for the maximum learning potential of each child.

The **physical environment** is a powerful means of communication. The room arrangement should give the behavioral message you want to convey. Things to include:

- Traffic patterns that allow for maximum movement without large open spaces
- Boundaries and play areas that are clearly defined by color, tape, texture, shelves, or tables
- Activity area sizes that encourage a maximum of 4 to 6 children at a time
- "Vacation spots" for children to go on an individual basis
- Complimentary areas that are adjacent. (Ex. art, easel, woodworking)
- Shelving and storage spaces that are clearly marked for easy return of toys and materials

The **materials and activities** provided within a classroom give children the opportunity to learn and explore. These should include:

- Literacy postings - words posted all over the walls, signs labeling objects, weather charts, and posters describing the children's activities
- Stable vs. rotated materials - (Ex. easel always available, media or surface can change).
- Many developmental areas - creative, large muscle, small muscle, cognitive, sensory, etc.
- Different involvement levels - self-selected/open-ended, self-selected/self-correcting, and teacher directed/exploratory



- Activities for wide skill ranges - more able children will be challenged but less able or younger children will not be frustrated
- Well-stocked art centers - easels, paper, chunky paintbrushes, crayons and clay available at all times during the day.

The **daily schedule** is important for both children and adults. Try the following:

- Exploration for a minimum of 1 ½ hours set early in the schedule or 45 minutes at a time in between more structured activities
- Active, quiet, large group, small group, and individual activities throughout the day
- Group times that include passive activities that last no more than 15 – 20 minutes (for children to practice important social skills, such as taking turns, listening to each other, sitting still, listening to stories, and singing songs)

The **adults** that work with children should be warm, supportive and responsive to children. Look for caregivers that do the following:

- Facilitate, observe, plan and support when intervening in play
- Prepare for the children before they arrive so full attention is on them
- Individualize when the need arises according to abilities
- Give every opportunity to children to learn self-help skills such as washing their own hands, cleaning up their own spills, picking up the toys, getting themselves dressed to go outside, etc.

**A well-planned classroom environment will provide safer surroundings, reduce behavior problems, and offer children a better opportunity to learn.❖**

## DISCIPLINE

Dalerie Jones, Licensing Consultant  
Wayne County

Discipline is a basic aspect of child development. Discipline is setting limits and correcting misbehavior. Discipline enhances a child's ability to function not only in society but also at home by helping them to develop self-control. Discipline develops an increasing degree of responsibility and maturity in children, as they grow older.

In dealing with pre-school and school-aged children effective discipline must be built on relationships. If children only maintain control or avoid negative behaviors out of fear of consequences, growth and learning are stifled. When a child and caregiver develop a positive relationship and the child really cares about what the caregiver thinks and has a desire to please, working with the child is simplified.

There are many discipline techniques that may be employed. However, the techniques to be used must be selected for the individual child and for the particular behavior.

The first step towards positive discipline is establishing rules for limit setting. Caregivers should have an established set of rules for children to follow. The child should have a clear understanding of the rules. The caregiver should also be consistent in rules and discipline or reward.

The second step toward positive discipline is to design the environment with age appropriate equipment. The daily lesson plan should include sufficient play equipment and engaging activities to diminish behavior problems.



The following forms of discipline are positive techniques which may be employed:

- **Positive reinforcement**  
Positive reinforcement provides recognition, encouragement, special attention, praise and reward. The most important aspect of this technique is that the caregiver is noticing and acknowledging when a child is doing something good.
- **Redirection**  
Redirection is a technique designed for preschool children that encourages them to perform desirable behaviors. Verbal redirection is a way to redirect a behavior by talking to a child. Verbal redirection helps children by empowering them to perform desirable behaviors.
- **Natural consequences**  
A natural consequence is one where the pain and discomfort is directly connected with the action. For example a caregiver may ask a child to clean up a mess that the child created.
- **Time Out**  
Time out should be used as a last resort. Time out consists of removing the child from the problem situation. It is a brief time to allow a child to get control of their behaviors. Once a child gains control of their behaviors they should be allowed to rejoin the group, and not be allowed to stay in time out for an extended period of time.

Children have to be taught discipline, and it should be a positive learning experience. As a caregiver, finding the most appropriate and effective discipline technique for each individual child does take time and practice. However, it does get easier as children learn to control their own behaviors. Remember to keep your expectations at reasonable levels so that children can meet them and develop self-confidence. ❖

(continued from page 5)

Caregivers play a vital role in the social-emotional development of preschool children through their relationship with the child and the environment they create. Caregivers need to provide preschoolers with support, nurturing, consistency and understanding. They need to provide an environment that is rich in language and that supports creativity and exploration. ❖

Resources:

National Association for the Young Children, "Singing as a Tool, Early Years Are Learning Years", Excerpted from Ringgenberg, Shelly, "Music as a Teaching Tool: Creating Story Songs", National Association for the Young Children ([www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org))

Great Books that Support Emotional Growth, Zero to Three ([www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org))

Michigan Department of Community Health, Division of Mental Health Services to Children and Families, "Social-Emotional Development in Young Children."

## Professional Development Opportunities

### Michigan 4-C Association

[www.mi4c.org](http://www.mi4c.org)

### October 22, 2005 - 16th Annual Child Care Resources

Early Childhood Conference  
KVCC Texas Township  
Kalamazoo , MI  
[robin@workfamilysolutions.com](mailto:robin@workfamilysolutions.com)

### December 07-10, 2005 - NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo

Washington , DC  
<http://www.naeyc.org>

### MSU extension

<http://fcs.msue.msu.edu>

### High Scope Conference and Training Opportunities

<http://highscope.org> or  
(734) 485-2000 ext. 234

### Michigan Association for the Education of the Young Child

[www.miaeyc.org](http://www.miaeyc.org)

## Consumer Product Safety Commission Infant/Child Product Recalls (not including toys)

The recalls below have been added since the last issue:

- **Graco Children's Products Recall of Toddler Beds**
- **Delta Enterprise Corp. Recall to Repair Portable Cribs**
- **Playtex Products Inc. Recall of Hip Hammock Child Carriers**
- **Big Save International Recall of Baby Walkers**

Details on these product recalls may be obtained on the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

## Resources: Preschool Development

Altman, R., Jump, Wiggle, Twirl, and Giggle,  
Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Brickmayer, J., Discipline Is Not a Dirty Word,  
Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Campbell, K., Art Across the Alphabet: Over 100  
Art Experiences that Enrich Early Literacy,  
Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Channing Bete Company, Your Child's Move to  
Kindergarten, Channing Bete, 1-800-628-7733,  
[www.channing-bete.com](http://www.channing-bete.com)

Charner, K., It's Great to Be Three: The  
Encyclopedia of Activities for Three-Year-Olds,  
Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Charner, K., It's Great to be Four: The  
Encyclopedia of Activities for Four-Year-Olds,  
Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Colker, L., The Cooking Book: Guide to  
Fostering Young Children's Learning and Delight,  
NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Colker, L., Koralek, D., Spotlight on Young  
Children and Science, NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460,  
[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Davison, F., Pelo, A., That's Not Fair! A  
Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young  
Children, Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)

Family Communications, Inc., What Do You Do  
with the Mad That You Feel?: Helping Young  
Children Manage Anger and Learn Self-Control,  
Zero to Three Press, 1-800-899-4301,  
[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

Helm, J., Katz, L., Young Investigators: The  
Project Approach in the Early Years, NAEYC, 1-  
800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Koralek, D., Spotlight on Young Children and  
Math, NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Reynolds, A., Wang, M., Walberg, H., Early  
Childhood Programs for a New Century,  
NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Rogers, F., The Mister Rogers Parenting Book:  
Helping to Understand Your Young Child,  
NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Schickedanz, J., Much More Than the ABC's:  
The Early Stages of Reading and Writing,  
NAEYC, 1-800-424-2460, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Schiller, P., Silberg, J., The Complete Book of  
Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and  
Chants, Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309,  
[www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org)



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**[www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)**

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 **Look under Rules and Statutes**

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