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Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Childcare for Young Children and Families; A Book of Photographs and Simple Text

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Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Childcare for
Young Children and Families;
A Book of Photographs and Simple Text
by
Pamela Wheeler-Civita

Mentor Sue Carbary

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree of Master of Science in Education/Master of Education
Bank Street College of Education
2005

Abstract

In this Independent Study to fulfill the requirements for my graduate degree at Bank Street College of Education, I am highlighting developmentally appropriate practice in childcare for infants and toddlers. In book format, I will cite aspects of good practice, using both simple text for young children, more in-depth text for adults, and black and white photographs to illustrate these points further. The rationale will cover my own personal history that lead me to believe that The Bank Street Family Center models developmentally appropriate practice. It also includes research to back my claims. All experiences supporting my ideas are solidly based in the practices of The Bank Street Family Center.

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Rationale for an Independent Study of Good Practice in Childcare for Young Children
and Families; A Book of Photographs and Simple Text

When I first began thinking about my final project at Bank Street College of Education, the Independent Study had always held a great deal of appeal for me. Someone had recommended that I simply do the Directed Essay that is offered, and I seriously considered it, wanting to have a structure already in place that I could follow. Creating an Independent Study would mean a self created structure and timeline, things which I have not always been good at. But at the core of much of the work that I have done at Bank Street, is the idea of self reflection and personal meaning. I knew that the essay would have no personal meaning for me, no matter how practical and available it might turn out to be.

My time at Bank Street has been long, and my graduation much anticipated. I have grown tremendously in many of my areas of self – as a parent, partner, teacher, individual, co-worker, employee, community member. This process has been difficult at times, but always rewarding. I felt I needed something that reflected some of the significant experiences I have had while in my tenure here.

After taking the graduate class Language, Literature, and Emergent Literacy (EDUC 564, at Bank Street College of Education) with Sal Vascellaro, I knew that creating some kind of book was of great interest to me. The questions then became – What would this book be about? Who would this book be for? Would I need illustrations? How would I do that? I'm a terrible illustrator, but I do like to use my camera to take pictures. So, could it be a book with photographs? What would I take pictures of? Who would I take pictures of? Would my story be fiction, or a true account of something?

I had written a book for my final project in Sal's class that could be called a historical fiction, and it was based very loosely on relatives from Europe, near the turn of the 20th century. Because I had spent so much time thinking of my characters as family members, I began to envision the book as a photo album. I remembered beautiful family albums with black thick pages, almost linen like. The warm sepia tones of the photos made the images of my family so much more poignant. They had been carefully glued into place with little black triangles on the corners of the photos, each thick black page separated by opaque tissue paper. The yellowed tissue paper had wavy patterns etched into it, lending even further to the image of life and movement within this family heirloom. For my project I used the Internet, and printed out public domain photos taken during the same time my story was occurring. Printed on beige thick stationery paper, they began to take on the quality of old photos, and along with a personal photo or two from my own collection, I pieced together this final project.

I was amazed at the heft and feel of this book. It felt and looked significant to me. I liked the story I had written to a certain degree, but I was fascinated by what I had been able to do with photo like images. My anxiety over illustration had been resolved, and I now saw that I could create images for my stories. After receiving positive feedback on this project from both Sal and my peers, I decided that when the time came, I would do a children's book for an Independent Study.

In the summer of 2004, as graduation became more of a reality, and I started to engage the idea of deadlines and graduate studies once again, I began to toss around some ideas for this book I was going to write. My family and I were very involved with our Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at the time, and I was growing concerned with the lack

of up to date curriculum and reading materials for the children of our congregation. None of the books I gleaned from the church shelves reflected the children in my community. The approach to topics as varied but sensitive as adoption and race and making friends were always couched in euphemistic phrases, and the illustrations were dated and nonrepresentational.

I contacted the publishing branch of the national UU association, and had a short but significant exchange with an editor there, encouraging me to get some ideas on paper, and send them out in book form to them. I was very motivated.

I quickly sent her some ideas, along with the idea of using black and white photographs to illustrate the books. I received some positive feedback and was encouraged to continue in a more concrete fashion. But, graduate school and my young family demanded my attention, and the idea of writing books to support Unitarian Universalist curriculum and values soon fell to the wayside. It wasn't until I began to make plans for my Independent Study that these ideas resurfaced.

I approached Sue Carbary to be my mentor for this final Independent Study. She agreed and we had our first meeting where I introduced to her the idea of creating children's books that reflected not only the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles, but books that reflected my church community. But even as the ideas became more solid in my head, they were still hard for me to grasp and commit myself to. I found myself avoiding the work, and when people asked me what my Independent Study was about, it always seemed so difficult to explain. I usually followed up any weak explanation with a shrug and a "Yeah, well, we'll see..." comment.

It's difficult to remember when my ideas for the Independent Study began to change. It could have been after a particularly rewarding day at work, or just some honest

reflection on what my Bank Street experiences have been... But the realization was that in order for this final chapter to prove meaningful to me, it really had to tie in with the Bank Street Family Center.

The Family Center is located on the first floor of the Bank Street building. It is an inclusion childcare facility, supporting the needs of young families who work and/or are in need of early intervention/preschool special education services. There are two rooms dedicated to the care and nurturing of children from the ages of 6 months to 3 or so years of age, and a preschool program which takes children from the ages of 3 to turning 5. I have worked in Room 2, a mixed age setting for the last 4 years. First as a student teacher, fulfilling my graduate and state teacher certification credits, then as an interim assistant teacher, then assistant teacher, interim head teacher, and currently as a co-teacher.

Initially overwhelmed by the amount of thought and planning and care that went into the daily routines of childcare at the Center, I soon allowed myself to move into it's nurturing rhythm, and by all accounts became a true dyed in the wool convert. Using child development as a structure and basis for good practice, the Family Center supports the family model by creating within it's classrooms a homelike environment. Teachers become primary caregivers, keeping a handful of children in mind, while still balancing and caring for the entire classroom. Through supervision and regular team meetings, teachers can improve on their own practice while still being active and progressive members of a team.

I would define "good practice" as one that follows the developmental lead of the children in the classroom. In R.A. Hirsh's Early Childhood Curriculum (2004), she states

that although national curriculum may change, or succumb to trend “the child's natural momentum for working through developmental stages has not... It is imperative to understand what is appropriate at each stage of development so we can produce the best crop possible” (p. 9). Teachers are keenly aware and growing in their knowledge of child and parent development, and this is what lends itself to good practice.

Because it is an inclusion setting, varied therapies are offered on site. These include speech/language, physical, occupational, special education, and play therapies. Whenever possible, therapies take place in the classroom, and include the community of differently developing children. No one child is singled out as having issues or of being different. When it becomes necessary to have therapies done in a separate space, whether it's an equipment issue, a distractibility issue, or whatever else, a child can sometimes have a friend join him or her. The therapies are usually viewed as special play times, where the children get one on one attention from adults who enjoy their time with their very young clients, as much as the kids enjoy their time with the therapists.

There are opportunities for teachers to view certain therapies, and then incorporate therapeutic techniques in the classroom for carryover and consistency, helping the children reach their full potential daily. Picture symbols are placed throughout the classroom to aide children who may have trouble with expressive language. It is sometimes easier to point to a picture of a juicebox, than it is to say “juicebox”. Teachers order snacks for the classroom that are crunchy or soft, depending on the needs of all the children, and on special requests from therapists that might be doing feeding therapy or oral motor work with children. Suggestions from occupational therapists can influence the types of manipulatives and sensory activities teachers will put out for the children to play with in the room. Physical therapists can attend team meetings and give teachers

pointers on how better to support children with motor planning issues within the classroom space. Without divulging confidential information, play therapy can inform teachers how better to serve families, and how to facilitate appropriate support for parents of young children with special needs.

I've always liked the Family Center's belief that all families are unique and are entitled to respect and openness, in regards to what they bring to the community's everchanging fabric. The families I've worked with have included single parents, kosher families, twins, gay dads, lesbian moms, divorced families, families of children with special needs, children with siblings, children with health concerns, bilingual families, families touched by adoption, two parent families, parents who travel a great deal, families that live in the city of New York and those that have a commute into the city, and families of a wide variety of racial make-up. There is not one family that I have come into contact with that wasn't unique or somehow special in their own way. And it is with this in mind that the Family Center serves all those families that walk through its doors.

Children as young as those who come to the Family Center are still family focused, and it is the responsibility of the teachers to support those family relationships. We have pictures mounted on the walls of children and their families. The photos serve as a warm reminder that moms and dads, grandparents and other significant adults will always come back for them. It is hard sometimes for the very young child to keep everyone she loves in mind, and so the pictures help to keep the images solid and ever present. As the children grow, they eventually become interested in other families, and are often found looking at the family pictures of their peers. Each diverse family make-up introduces the very youngest children to the richness of variety, and normalizes for them a unit of family they might otherwise not know. The dramatic play in the classroom

begins to reflect what the children are seeing, and often times I have heard "There can be two mommies in our family" or "Today there will only be one mommy, but we can have two daddies and two babies".

In the youngest mixed age classrooms, there is a primary care model set up. In an article for *Young Children* (March 2000), J. Bernhardt describes the primary care model in this way, "As the care of infants and toddlers outside the home has increased over the last three decades, the term primary caregiving has evolved to describe a model or system of caring for children in groups... In the primary caregiving model, each caregiver or teacher within a larger group is assigned primary responsibility for a specific group of children... this does not mean the caregiver cares exclusively for the same... children everyday; rather, that she has principal responsibility for the few children in her direct care" (p. 74).

In a July 1996 article for *Young Children*, H. Raikes attempts to explain a young child's process of attachment, and the benefits of secure attachment to both the child's parents and teachers. She states "The essence of the attachment paradigm is that infants form affectional bonds with their caregivers and that these affectional bonds create a sense of trust, secure base, and positive expectation in the infants. The sense of trust supports the infant's explorations of the world and becomes the basis for the next stage of emotional development centered around autonomy. Numerous studies show that infants with secure attachments to their *mothers and fathers* are at an advantage for acquiring competencies in language and in cognitive, social, and emotional development... Now, evidence suggests that secure attachments with *teachers and caregivers*... also offer advantages for infant development" (p. 59).

Young children connect more readily and successfully with one primary person.

In the classroom the teachers mirror this developmental step by assigning children to specific teachers. All teachers have responsibility for all the children in the classroom, but it is the primary teacher who acts as a grounding and solid beacon for the child in his or her care. Your primary child is one that you keep in mind throughout the day. Your decisions and actions reflect what you think is best for your primary child. At the beginning of the school year, your primary child depends on you for his or her diapering and toileting, napping support, company at meal time, and as a traveling companion for outings. As the year progresses, and the child grows in comfort and is more able to recognize and embrace the routine of the classroom, there is more flexibility with whom the child goes to the potty with or on outing with. The hope is that with a solid relationship in the classroom, the child can fully explore his growing world, secure that someone is there for him, and ever present.

In my work as a primary teacher, I view myself, not as a substitute parent, but as a bridge for the child. A bridge that transports the child back to her parent at the end of the day, supporting her solidly throughout her experience of longing for her grown-up. For no matter how much fun a child has in program, or how much she loves her primary, she is always missing and wanting to be with her parent. The parent, too, is usually aching to hold his child, and often times can feel disconnected and guilty for not being a part of the child's daily experiences. It is then my responsibility to keep the parent informed, through daily notes and regular conversations. Teachers and parents must work together to make the child's time at the Center meaningful and as stress free as possible. I am the one who helps the child and parent maintain the fragile yet vital bond they have together; to minimize the disruption a work day can create, and to help the child feel that she is merely waiting, and not forgotten. Parents always come back, and the process the child

and parent work through to come to this realization is often peppered with bumps and scrapes, but is always rewarding.

It is this most unique aspect of primary care that has kept me at the Family Center for four years. It is what has made childcare more than changing diapers and Ring-Around-the-Rosie. It is the yearly connections I make with families, as we all grow together, to give the best to the child, and to support the families into becoming the kind of family they want to be. The work is emotional, always challenging and rewarding. The children, too, find deep relationships at the Center, and how they learn to relate to teachers and to one another, is reflected in their connections with family.

But our time at the Center is not endless, and we do take the month of August off. Any time away from the Center is called having Home Days, and we talk about these often. As we move towards this summer break, we begin to help the children prepare for this major transition. Not only is it time away from school routine and friends, but it is the opening of another door for many children. Some may return in September, but some children may be moving on to the preschool classroom. Others may be going to a different program entirely, going on vacation, or staying at home. During our circle times, and even throughout the day, we talk with the children about what their family plans are for the summer and beyond. We make calendars and cross off the days as we draw closer to saying good-bye. We bring books into the classroom that reflect the process of saying good-bye, or going on vacation, or to a different school. But most importantly, we make good-bye books.

Good-bye books are like photo albums that reflect on the year the child has had

while at the Center. Primary teachers usually create a simple text, telling what the photos are about, and documenting the growth of the child, and the many changes that have occurred over the course of the year. Books are then contact papered or laminated, so that they can be taken home, and looked at over and over again. Parents have often reported to teachers, that the good-bye books become treasured and favorite things. Who doesn't like to read about oneself, while looking at pictures of much loved friends and activities? Some of the same thinking that goes into the posting of family pictures in the classroom is behind the making of the good-bye books. The handmade books help children to bridge their way back to the classroom, enabling them to remember where they spent some of their growing time.

The books are completed about a week before the end of program, and are then placed on the book shelf. All other books are removed, so that efforts can be concentrated on helping children to transition into their many home days, and beyond. On the child's last day, they take their own good-bye book home with them, a loving token and hopefully helpful memento.

When I decided to make a book that reflected on my time at the Center, I was of course reminded of the good-bye books. The process of saying good-bye that the children go through at the end of a program year, very much parallels the experience I am having of saying good-bye to graduate school. Regardless of where I may end up working in the coming years, my time will be structured in a very a different way. My moments of reflection will not always be motivated by required assignments. I will not always have an opportunity to compare theory and practice, in a way that my classes and work have provided for me. I will be a different person to some extent, once I graduate. I won't be a

student anymore; not in the structured and traditional meaning of the word. My evenings, at least, will be a bit freer, and I wonder if I will take the time to think so hard and read so much about young children. I hope I do.

I hope to communicate all of the good things I am coming away with to anyone who reads my book. I not only want readers to walk away with an understanding of how good I feel about the Center, but to walk away with some information and knowledge that enables them to make a good choice in regards to childcare for their own family.

After I had finished my advisement/student teaching year at the college and at the Family Center, I began the arduous task of looking for a job. I live 45 miles north of New York City, so I began to look into becoming a childcare teacher closer to home. In short, I was appalled at what was offered in my own neighborhood. Over crowded classrooms, very high staff turn over, developmentally inappropriate curriculum for very young children, lack of primary care, uninviting environments, sanctions from the state of New York, inability to maintain basic standards, stressed out children, no support for parents, poor pay, an unbalanced interest in keeping the center clean at the expense of caring for the children, lack of staff development, poorly trained and educated teachers, no special needs accommodations... the list is endless. I quickly returned to what I considered the safe haven of the Family Center, to discover that a colleague was going to be on maternity leave, and did I want to a job? So began my tenure at the Family Center.

But the memories of job hunting in my own neighborhood, and comments from friends who had no understanding of what it was I was doing in the city, kept me thinking about the need for good childcare in my own neighborhood. I live in a community where there are many two income families. Often one parent commutes into the city and

childcare is needed for the very youngest family members. In my school district there is a childcare facility that is housed in an elementary school building, providing both before school and after school care for elementary aged kids. Both my children attended, and we all found it to be an exceptional and wonderful place. But it was expensive, and space was limited, and where did it leave families whose children were not elementary school aged?

In talking to families in my neighborhood who used local childcare places, I discovered that many of them did not realize the many options that were out there for them to demand, and that they were entitled to. Often times, because parents had far commutes, they needed centers that opened up early in the morning, and that would continue caring for the children well into the evening. Parents were often quick to overlook any problems with the facilities if the hours were accomodating. Although a legitimate concern and one not to be ignored, I began to wonder why centers couldn't offer accomodating hours and good practice? When I tried to explain to a friend what it was I did during my work days she responded "I guess... as long as you're not wasting your life away changing diapers."

So, one of the hopes or goals I have is that if this book were to find it's way 45 miles north of the city, into the sights of people in my community, that it would inform them and open them up to what a childcare center could look like.

A book that greatly influenced the format I have chosen for my book is Lesley Koplow's book (1991) Tanya and the Tobo Man. In it Koplow tells the story of a young girl whose mother seeks out the support of a play therapist for her young daughter who is experiencing nightmares, and is carrying the burden of deep emotional wounds. The

children's story is simple and accompanied by beautiful illustrations, and always on the right side of the book. On the left hand side of the book, are pages dedicated to adults who might be seeking out information on play therapy for their child. I found the book helpful, and imagined that it could be a useful tool for families who might not know how to begin talking about play therapy.

In my book, I have decided to follow a similar format. On the right hand side of the book, I have tried to keep the language of the children's text simple and straightforward, and this is where I placed black and white photos as illustrations. The left side pages are dedicated to the adult reading with the child, explaining in greater detail what is being seen and said. Initially I tried to cram as much information as possible on each page, trying to cover every topic of major importance to me; especially those concerning gay and lesbian parenting, primary care, and adoption. But there is just too much to cover, and in the end, I hope that the pictures reflecting diversity and good practice will inform the readers sufficiently.

At the end of the story, I hope that the bibliography and glossary could be used by families and professionals as a resource guide, giving more information to those who might be seeking it. I want the book to introduce the idea of childcare to a young child who might be entering it for the first time, or transitioning back into it after time away (like a summer break of home days). I also want the book to be a way for parents to begin talking to their children about childcare. I want it to be an opportunity for parents to feel they can seek out and demand quality care for their children. I want parents to feel that who they are must be taken into account and respected by any and all childcare staff they come into contact with, and that their relationships with their children will be supported and respected. Childcare centers have a responsibility to families, to help and

support them and the values they hope to instill in their children. Centers can inform parents of what is developmentally appropriate, and should be able to offer support and information if the developmental timeline of their child has been disrupted. I hope that childcare professionals see things in my book that they would like to introduce into their own classrooms.

Teachers and staff at centers should have opportunities to learn and be informed of new and better practices. They should be given regular times to meet and come together as a team to discuss the needs of the children and families in their classrooms. Things like primary care, administrative support, supportive and appropriate benefits, to name a few things, all contribute to staff satisfaction, low staff turn over rates, and good practice. And parents should be aware of all these things, as well.

No center is perfect, and the Bank Street model is not for everyone. I certainly don't think the Bank Street Family Center should be or could be duplicated exactly in every childcare center. It just wouldn't work. What is important though, is that both parents and professionals recognize good practice and are willing to introduce it, employ it, and maintain it in the centers where they are.

In a sense, this Independent Study is *my* good-bye book. A bridge to help *me* enter the next transition and phase of my life. A tool to help me remember all of the people I have spent so much significant and meaningful time with. I am leaving much behind, as far as structure and physicality goes. But it is hoped, that I am taking much more with me. An integrated and now instinctual sense of good practice. A solid foundation of information on infant, child, and parent development. Working knowledge

of what it takes to be an active community member and good team member. A better understanding of my own parenting; where I come from, and what I bring to the classroom, as well as what I bring into my own relationships with family. I believe that I am a better person overall, for my experiences both at the Bank Street College of Education and the Bank Street Family Center. More specifically, a better parent, partner, and teacher.

Going to Childcare

Photos and Text by:
Pamela Wheeler-Civita

How to Use This Book

Maybe you are a parent who is placing your child in group childcare for the first time, or in a new center that you haven't been to before. Maybe you've been away on break or vacation, and must begin to talk with your child about returning to childcare. Perhaps you're a professional who is curious about what group childcare could look like, and are interested in bringing aspects of good practice into your classroom. Maybe you're looking for a book that will help you explain the experience of childcare to the young children in your care. Whoever you might be, I hope you find this book helpful.

On the right hand side of the book you will find text that is appropriate for young children, accompanied by some photos to help illustrate what's being said. On the left hand side of the book you will find text geared towards adults, explaining in greater detail what is being seen and read.

At the back of the book you will find a glossary of words to better dissect and introduce language that might be unfamiliar to you. You will also find a bibliography and resource guide to further your search for information on good practice in group childcare.

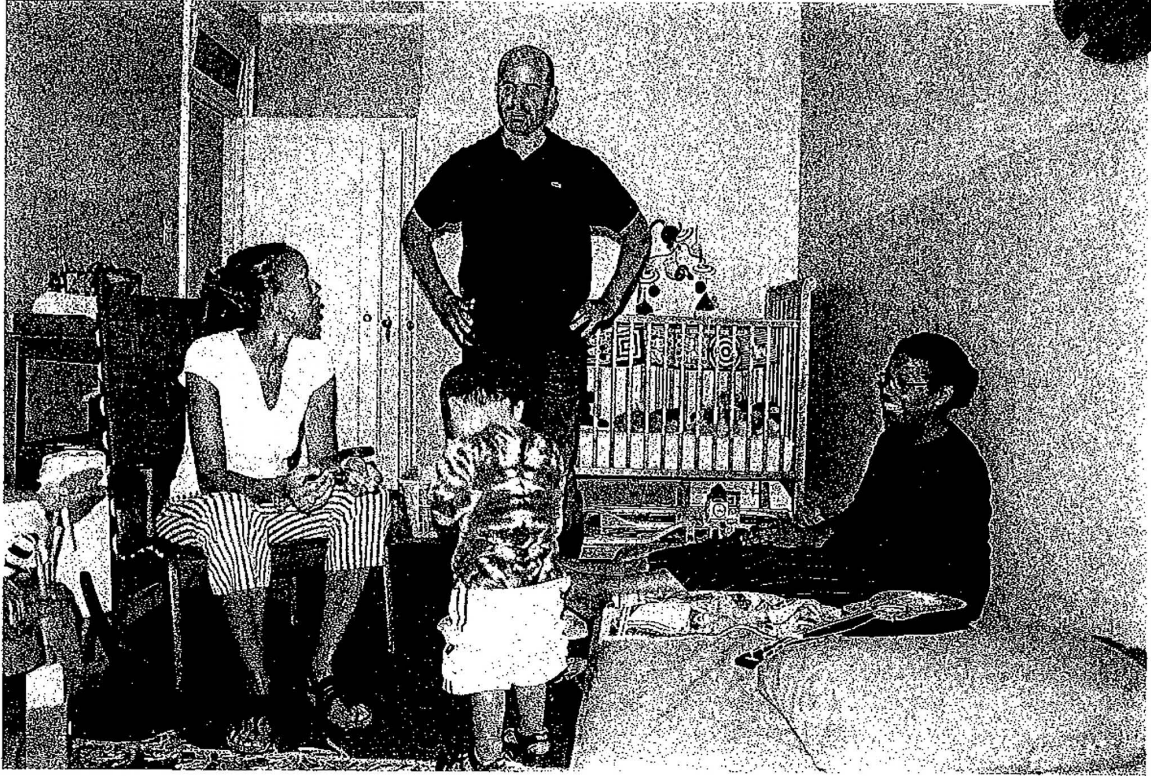
This particular group childcare model might not be for everyone, and this book is certainly peppered with my own opinions of what I believe to be good practice. I hope that if you can't agree with everything you see and read, that you do find aspects of what I cover in this book helpful, and that you feel free to incorporate them into your search for childcare that meets your needs. I hope that if you are a professional reading this book, you will find things that you would like to bring into your classroom, making your time with young children more meaningful.



Home visits, where teachers from your childcare center come to visit you and your child in your home, can be an integral part of good practice. They are never meant to place value or judgment on your home, but rather to see your child in his or her most familiar environment. This allows your child to meet the teacher (sometimes for the first time) with you, and in a secure place.

Once your child comes to school, he or she will already have a friend, a familiar face to make contact with. Home visits also provide you with opportunities to ask questions, share important things about your child, and for you to get to know some of the individuals who will be taking care of your child while he or she is away from you.



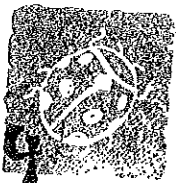


Before school starts, my new teacher comes to visit us. Now we won't be strangers when I go to school.



Phase-in should be part of every young childcare experience. Some centers have a set schedule that allows children to visit in ever increasing increments of time with parents. Eventually, the child says a good-bye to the adult, who leaves, but stays nearby, in case they are needed. The goal is to ease the child into being at the center without the parent. Some centers are flexible and are able to work out individual schedules with families. Ongoing conversations with your childcare providers are important to make this major transition to group care work.

Phase-in allows parents to see their children in care, and what teachers are able to provide in the classroom. It is usually during phase-in when you will have a chance to meet all of the teachers that will be in your child's room, other families and children, and any administrators and support staff that are in the center.





I'm feeling a little worried about starting school. You and I will have short visits to school at first. We meet more teachers, new friends, and see all the toys at the center. Now I'm not so afraid. How do you feel?



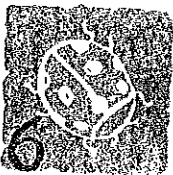
Your child works on good-bye her entire time in childcare. Really, for very young children, it is their whole curriculum. Sensitive and responsive teachers will help you and your child create a plan to say good-bye. This is where your child should be able to depend on her primary teacher.

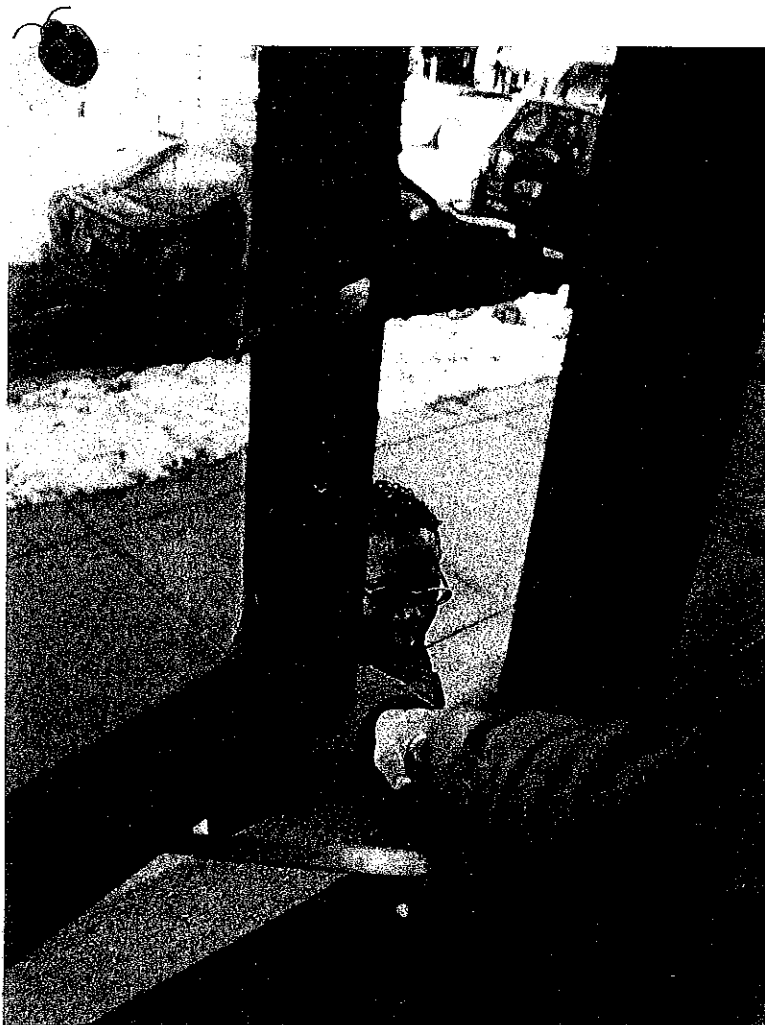
The primary teacher is the one your child can connect with while you are away. He or she is the one you touch base with at the end of each day, too. It is far easier for a young child to connect with one significant teacher in the classroom, than several. All the teachers in the room are responsible for meeting the needs of all the children in their care, but it is your child's primary teacher that will help her bridge the gap between home and school, and who will emotionally support her as she waits for you to return.

An easy and seemingly nonchalant good-bye from your child doesn't necessarily mean she is not missing you, and conversely, a difficult and tearful good-bye doesn't mean your child will not be able to engage in the activities of the day, or with peers.

Your child will think about you throughout her day. What supports do the teachers have in place to help your child with this experience?

Saying good-bye is hard for parents, too, and you should never feel silly about missing your child during the day. Some parents have guilt about leaving their children in childcare. It is important that you feel confident with the people you leave your child with.

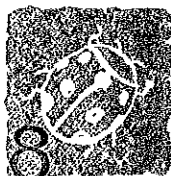




Then you will go to work, and I will go to school. We have to say
good-bye. My teachers will take care of me while you are away.
You will always come back.

Dramatic play can help children gain a feeling of control over their world. They don't have a choice about going into childcare, but they do have choice in what they can make dolls do, and accommodating and playful teachers, too.

Will your child have opportunities to re-enact his day? How do teachers handle these intense feelings that children can have? How will you know what kind of day your child had? Do the teachers do daily or weekly reports? Will you get a call if your child is having a hard time only? What if he has a good day?

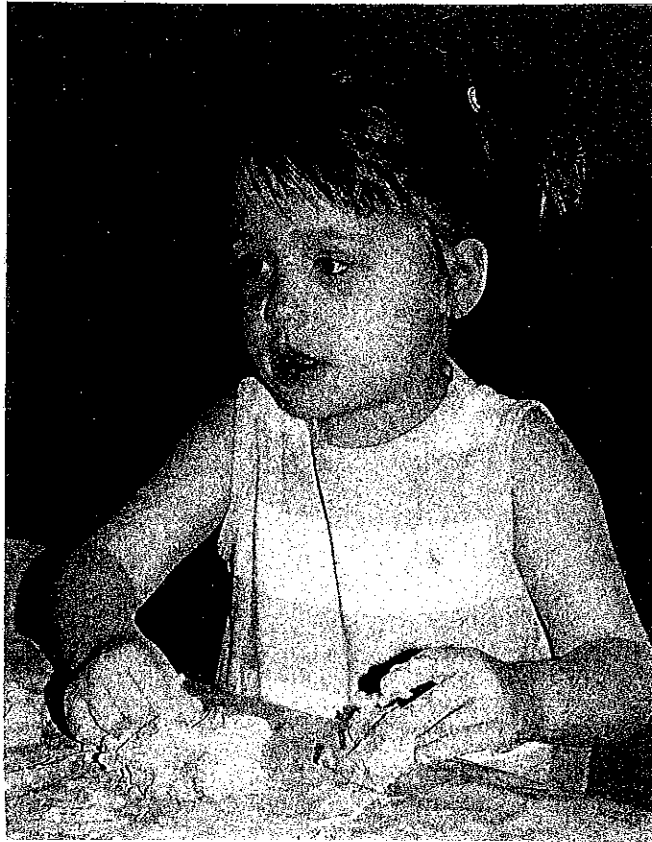




I like to play with dolls. I cook food, and put them to bed. I pretend to go to work, just like you.

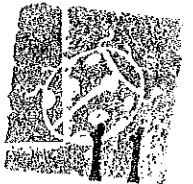


Children learn by doing. Young children are sensory learners, and need their bodies to explore their environments. Using all of their senses, they discover things and problem solve. Are the activities the teachers offer in the classroom varied and exciting? Are they always the same? How does your child's teacher feel about messy play? How do you feel about it?





At school I like to work with paints, and other messy things.



Water play is one of the most popular things young children play with. Will your child have opportunities to do so? Sand feels so different. Will your child have a chance to play in all kinds of different areas, and with all kinds of different things? What sorts of things are being added to the water and sand areas, if any? How are the teachers in the room talking about these things? Do you feel they could encourage your child to explore to her full potential?





I like to splash in water. I also like to dig in the sand.



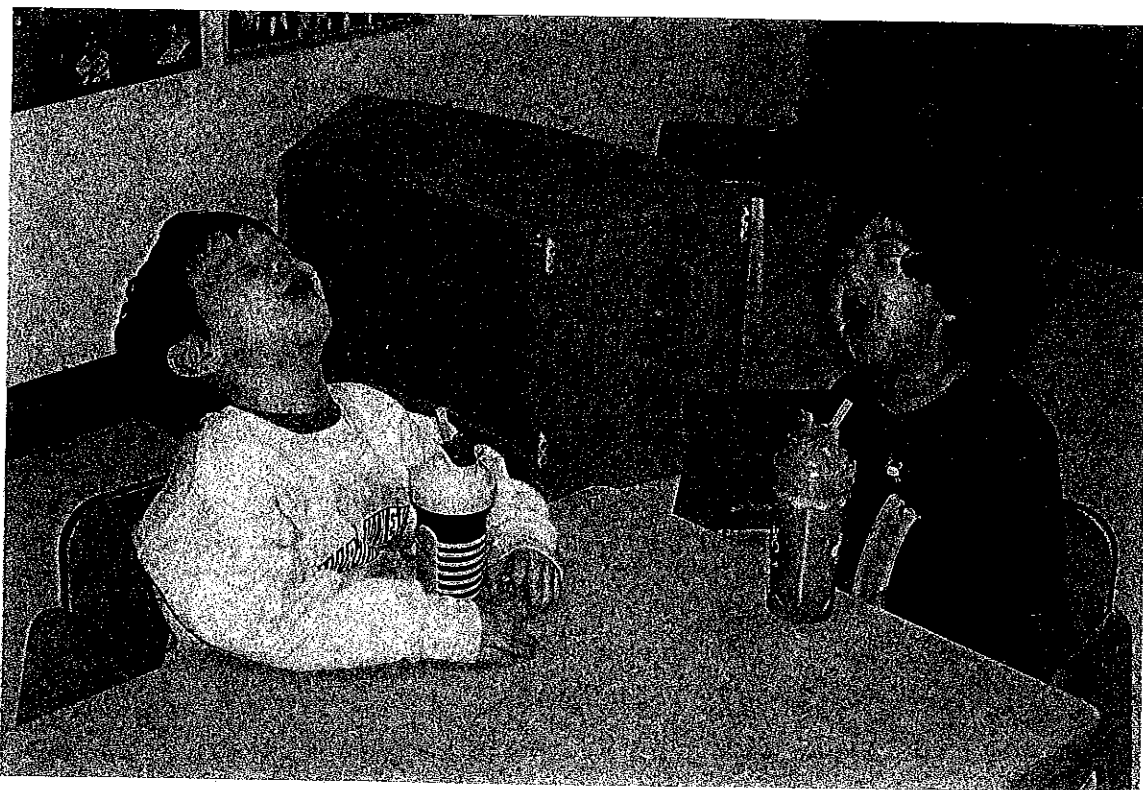
Block building is such a vital play activity, and all children should have a chance to engage in it at some point during their time in childcare. It offers social opportunities as well as individual expression. The heft and weight of wooden blocks feels good to the muscles and joints of young kids. Even infants can explore the properties of wooden blocks with a teacher nearby, and in a designated safe area. Lining up blocks, taking them off the shelf, and putting them back on can provide order for a young child who feels powerless. Building towers or other vertical structures lends a feeling of accomplishment to young children. Open ended play materials, like blocks, can help to stretch the imaginations of young children, allowing them to create whatever they see or want to experience.





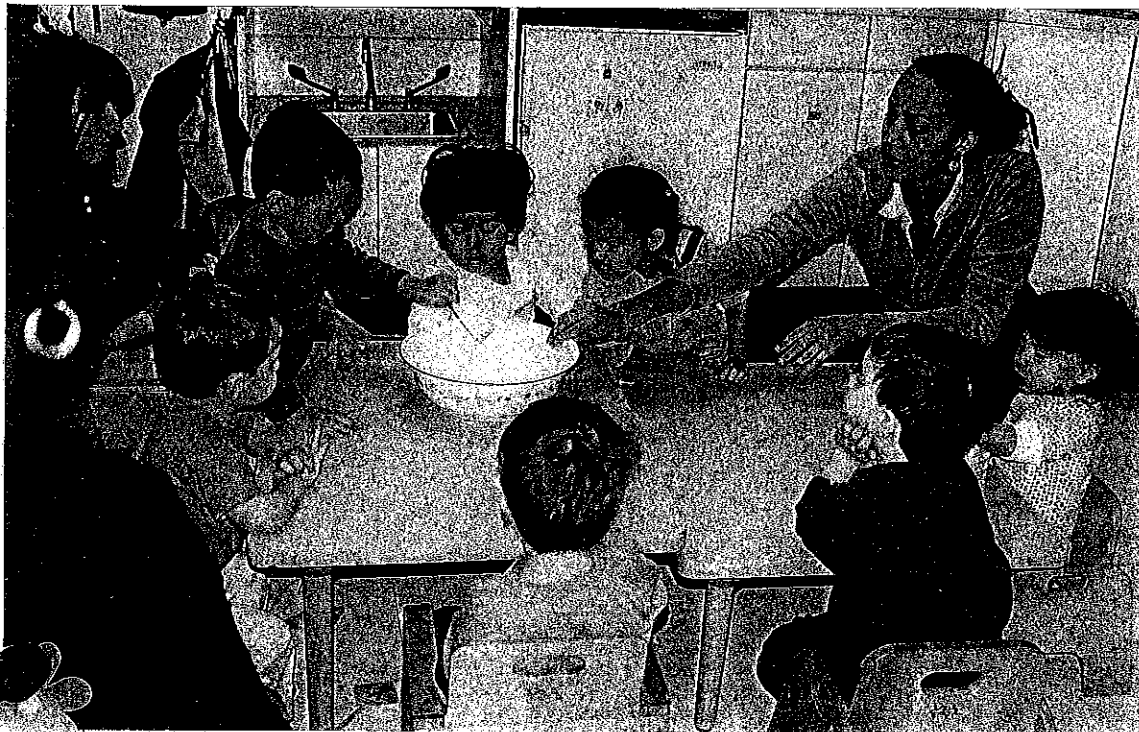
I like to build with the blocks. What am I going to make?





Time together with other children engenders feelings of community and shared experience. Cooking healthy foods together not only nourishes the body, but the spirit as well. What opportunities for shared experiences and meals will your child have?





I learn from my friends, and they learn from me.





Inclusion programs are a wonderful way for children of all abilities to come together and receive the support and care they need. It is thought that typically developing children can model developmentally appropriate behaviors for children who might be struggling to meet their milestones. It's also a great chance to normalize all sorts of different developmental issues, and for both adults and children to see that people are unique. Each child grows and develops on his or her own developmental timeline, and a good inclusion program can support that model.





I like to visit other rooms and play with other teachers, too. I'm getting so strong!

11/9

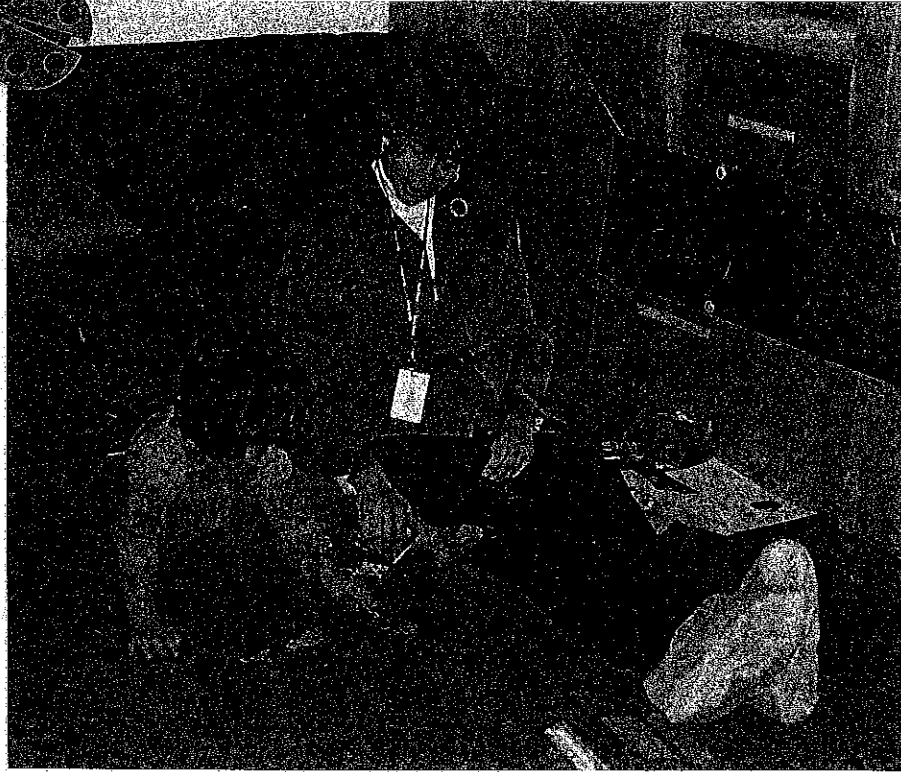
11/10



If your child were to need special services, such as speech therapy or occupational therapy, would your center be able to accommodate this? If so, how? Would your child be pulled out of the classroom, or would she be allowed to stay in the classroom? Would the therapist be able to do peer group work, or would your child only be able to do individual sessions? What is it you are looking for, as a parent with a child in need of services?

If your child is not in need of services, how would you feel about children in your child's classroom who do? It's an important question to ask yourself, since your child may be spending quite a bit of time with children who are all developmentally very different.

2016

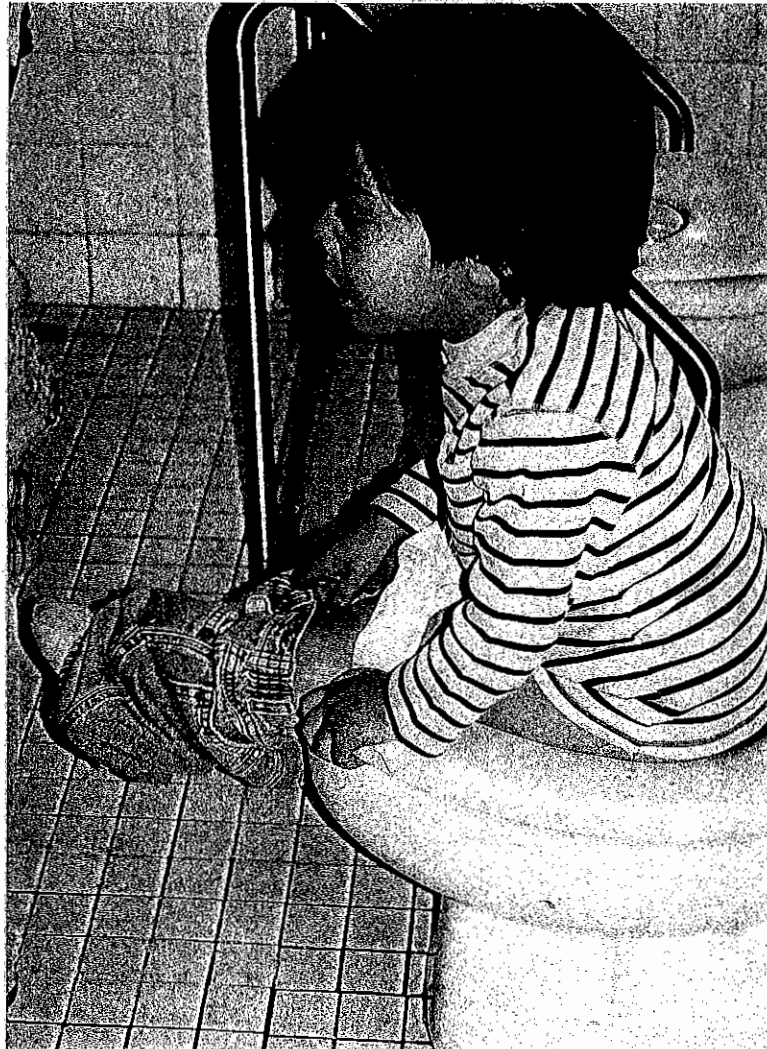


I love to chat with friends and grown-ups. We do puzzles and tell stories together.



What does the diaper changing area in your child's classroom look like? Where is it? Will you have to supply diapers and wipes? How will you know when the supplies need to be replenished? Will your child have a special spot that is just for him? Where will you put all of his personal things?

Does the center your child will be going to have a toileting policy? If your toddler is not ready for the toilet, how will teachers accommodate him? How will they support you and your child in your potty training efforts?



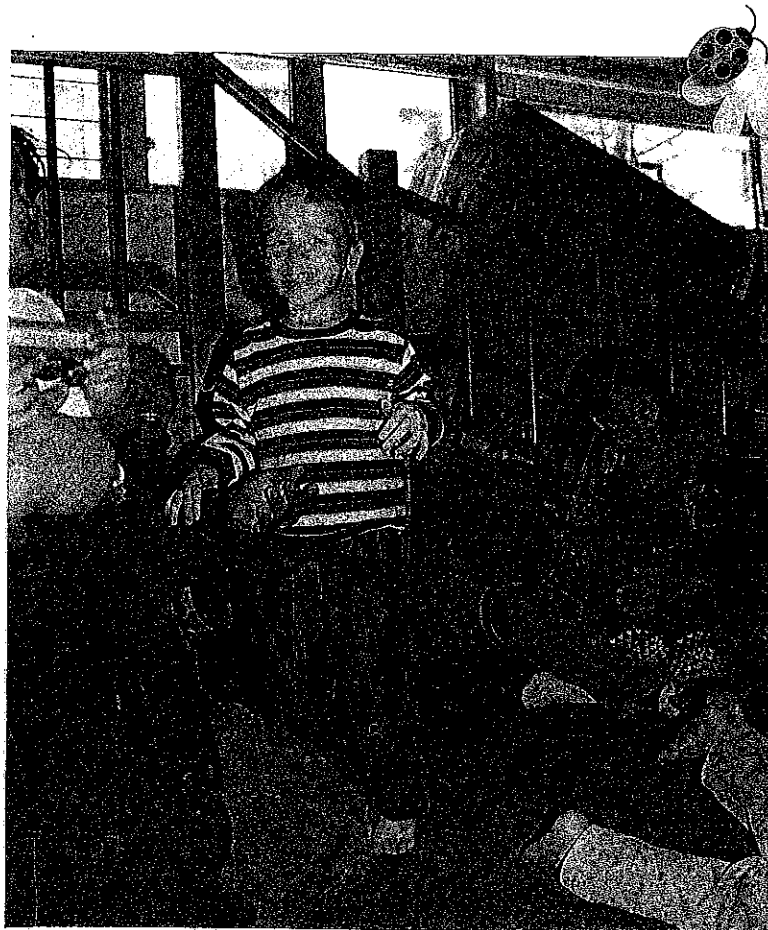


My teachers take care of me. They change my diaper. When I am ready to use the potty, they will bring me to the bathroom, too.

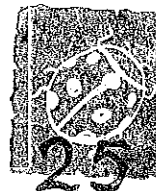


Circle is the time when the community comes together to touch base, maybe have some gross motor fun, and get an idea about what might be coming next. Some centers call it rug time, or circle time, or meeting time. It's all about helping young children transition to the next part of their day. It is not always necessary for very young children to sit and attend to a story, or discussion the teachers might be having. Singing, dancing, finger play, might also happen during this group time. What does circle time look like in your child's room?

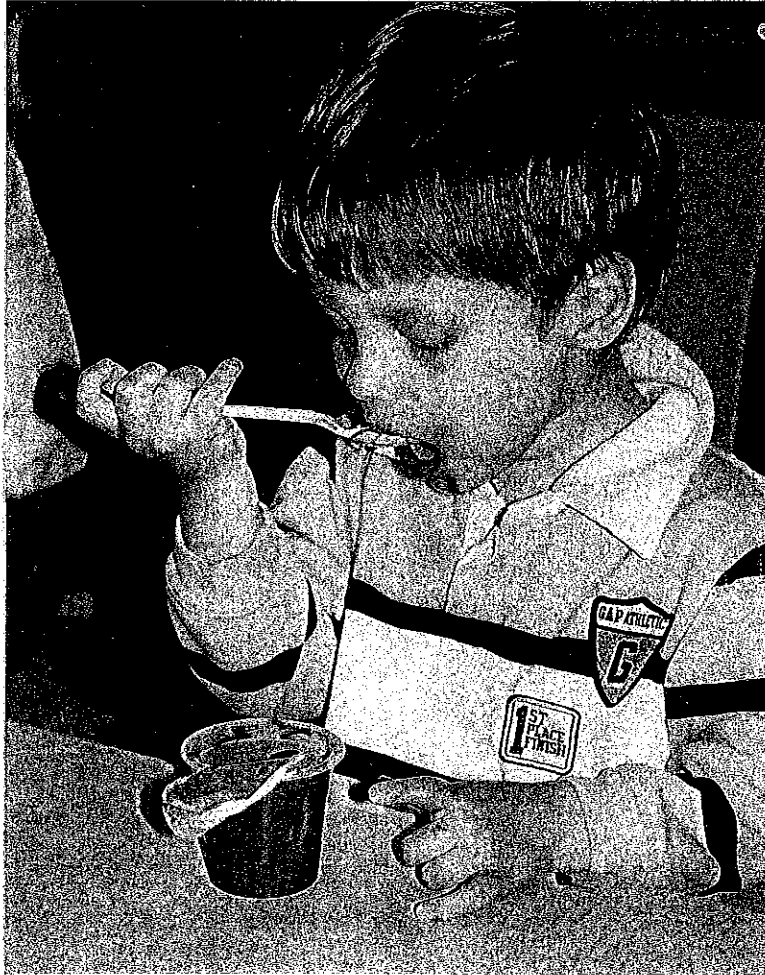




Soon it will be time to clean up, go to circle, and have snack. I like to sing and move my body during circle. Then I like to hear the teacher say "Go wash your hands and eat your snack!"



Snack time is an important part of the classroom routine. It is a chance for young children to replenish their energy, come together as a group, and wait for the next transition. Sometimes teachers will ask families to bring a snack in to share with all of your child's friends. This is a nice way for you and your family to share a little bit of home in the classroom.





We sit and eat together for snack. Sometimes it's a friend's birthday, and we all share a special treat!



Outing can be difficult for some children. It means leaving the place where they last said good-bye to you. But often times, children look forward to explore outside of their classroom. It could be as simple as visiting another classroom, walking out into the neighborhood, taking advantage of another indoor play space, or staying in the classroom, to work on something special in a smaller group with one teacher.



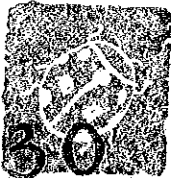
28



When snack time is done, we go on outing. I put my shoes on and hold a teacher's hand.



How does your center feel about outdoor play? How do you feel about it? Is there a place for you to store your child's weather appropriate gear? Does your child have to go outside?



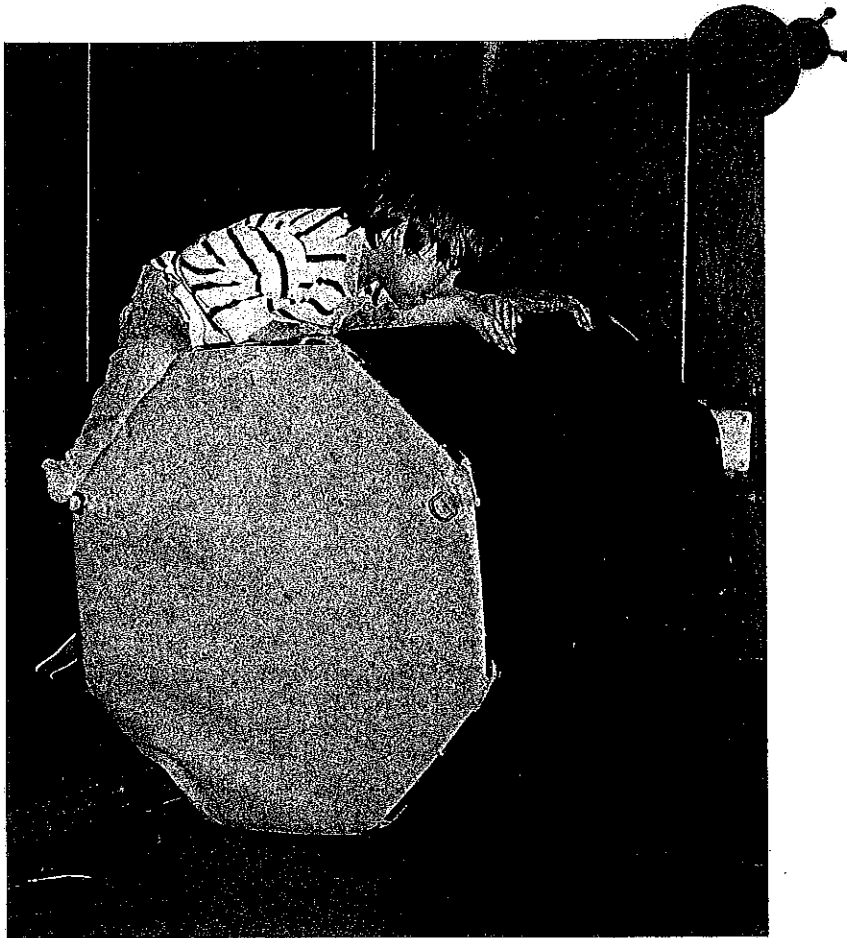


I like to go to the playground to play.



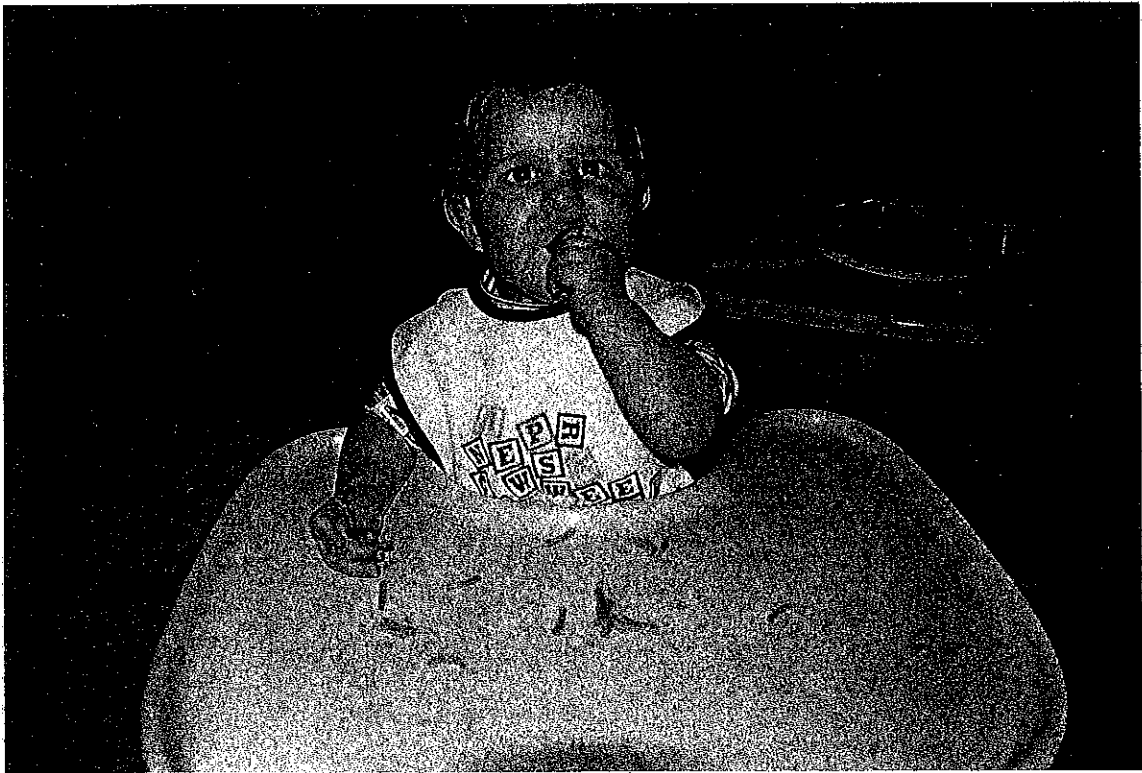
What contingencies does your center have in place for foul weather? How do they accommodate gross motor play indoors?





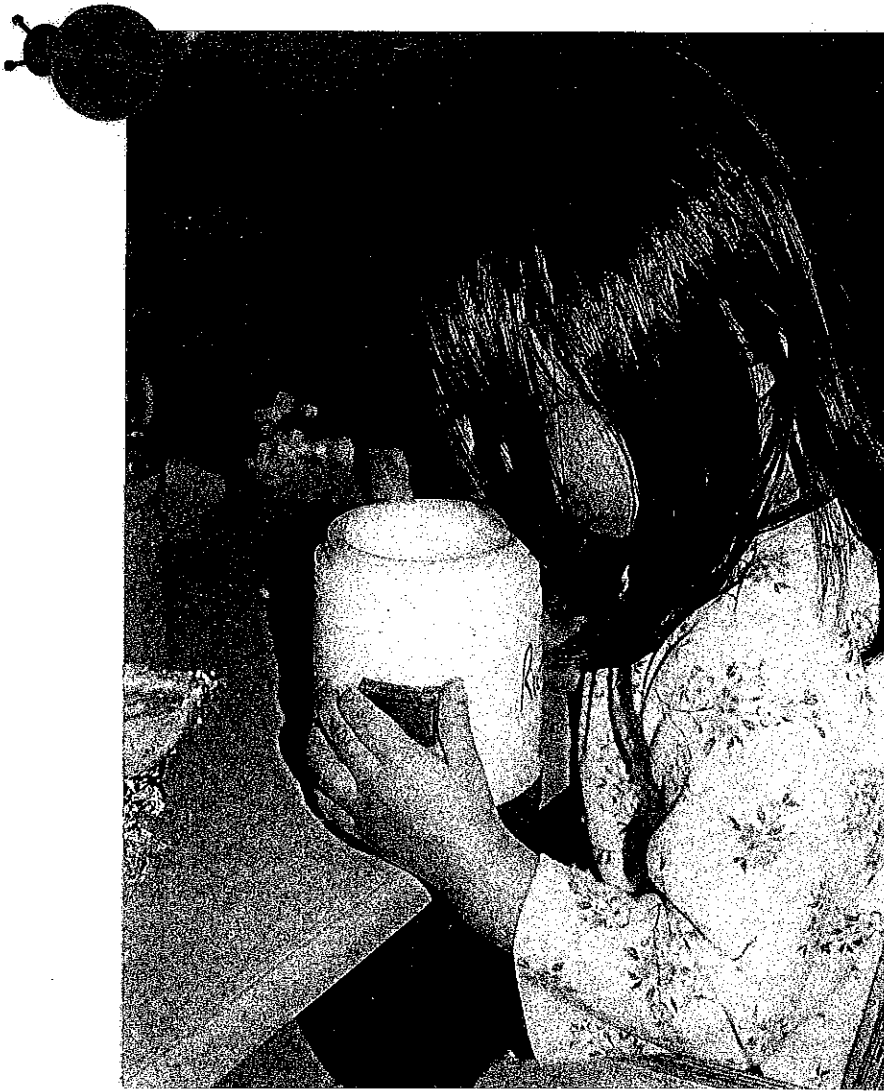
Sometimes it is too wet or cold outside. Then we stay indoors to play.



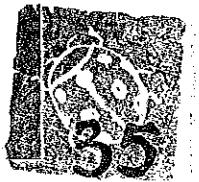


Does your center provide lunch for your child? If not, packing a lunch is a little like sending a piece of home to school in a lunch box. Foods with familiar smells and tastes can remind your child of the care you always provide for her, and be a comfort to her in childcare. Shared meal times provide opportunity for your child to try other kinds of dishes. Time at the table with friends is time to chat; social experiences that are scaffolded by responsive teachers provide many opportunities for language growth and development.





When outing is done, we come back and eat lunch. I like to peek inside my thermos to see what you have packed for me.

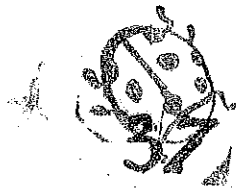


Will the center allow you to visit your child when you can? Have a discussion with the teachers to find out what times are better to visit than others. Have the teachers give you honest feedback on how your child manages your visits. Are they helpful, or are they just too difficult? As children grow and change, these visits may need to change, too. What once may have been seen as just another good-bye, may now be viewed by your child as a helpful refueling.

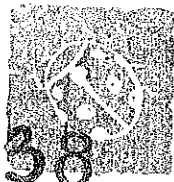
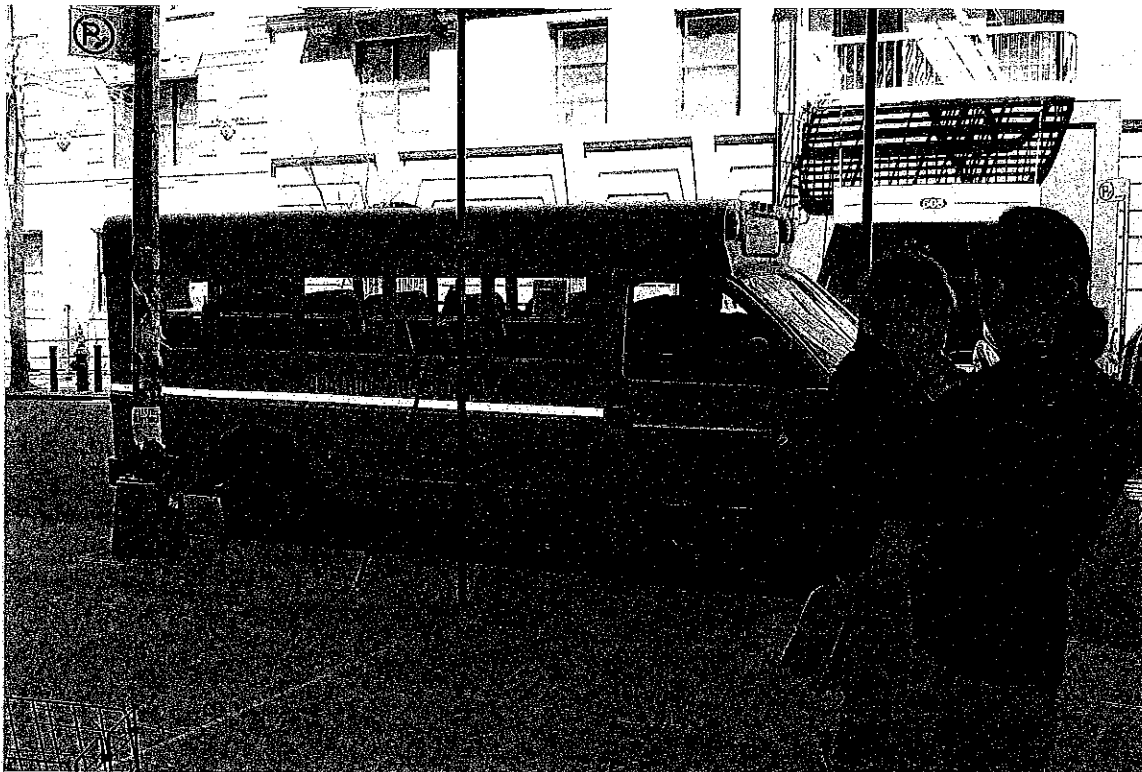




Sometimes you come to have lunch with me. I love that!



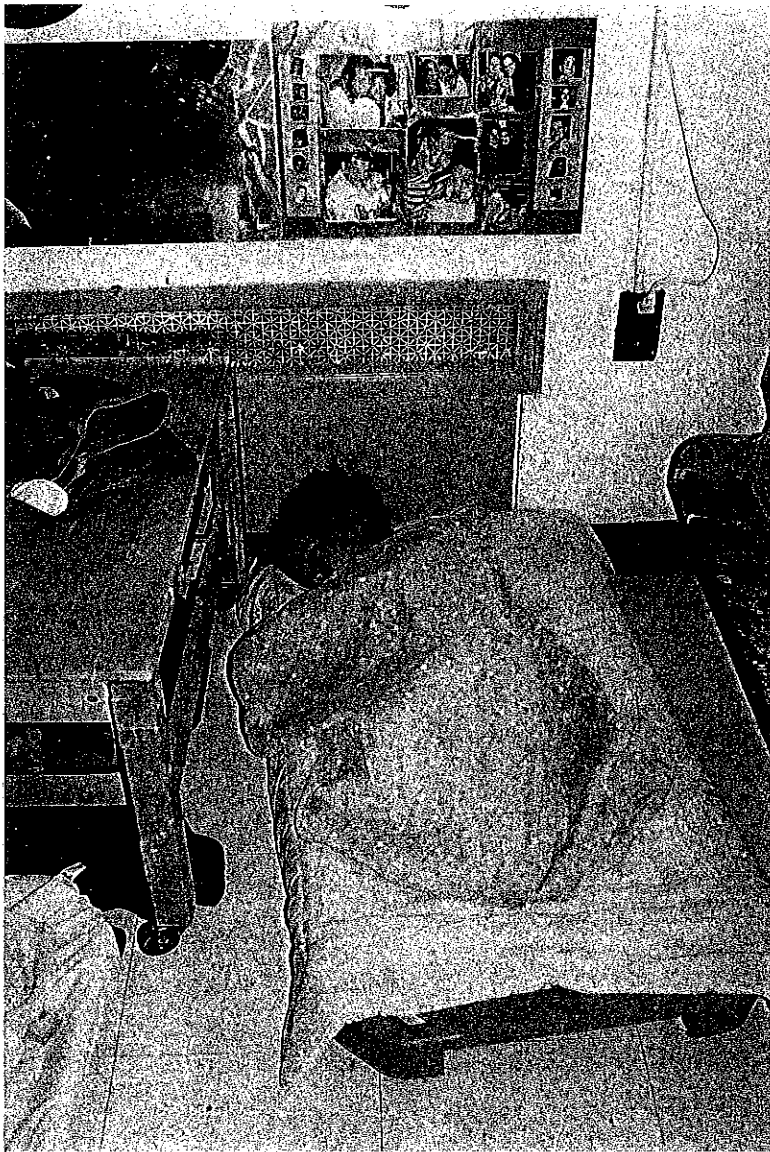
Does the center have a varied schedule? A half day program? Can the center provide transportation? Will your child be picked up by someone other than yourself?





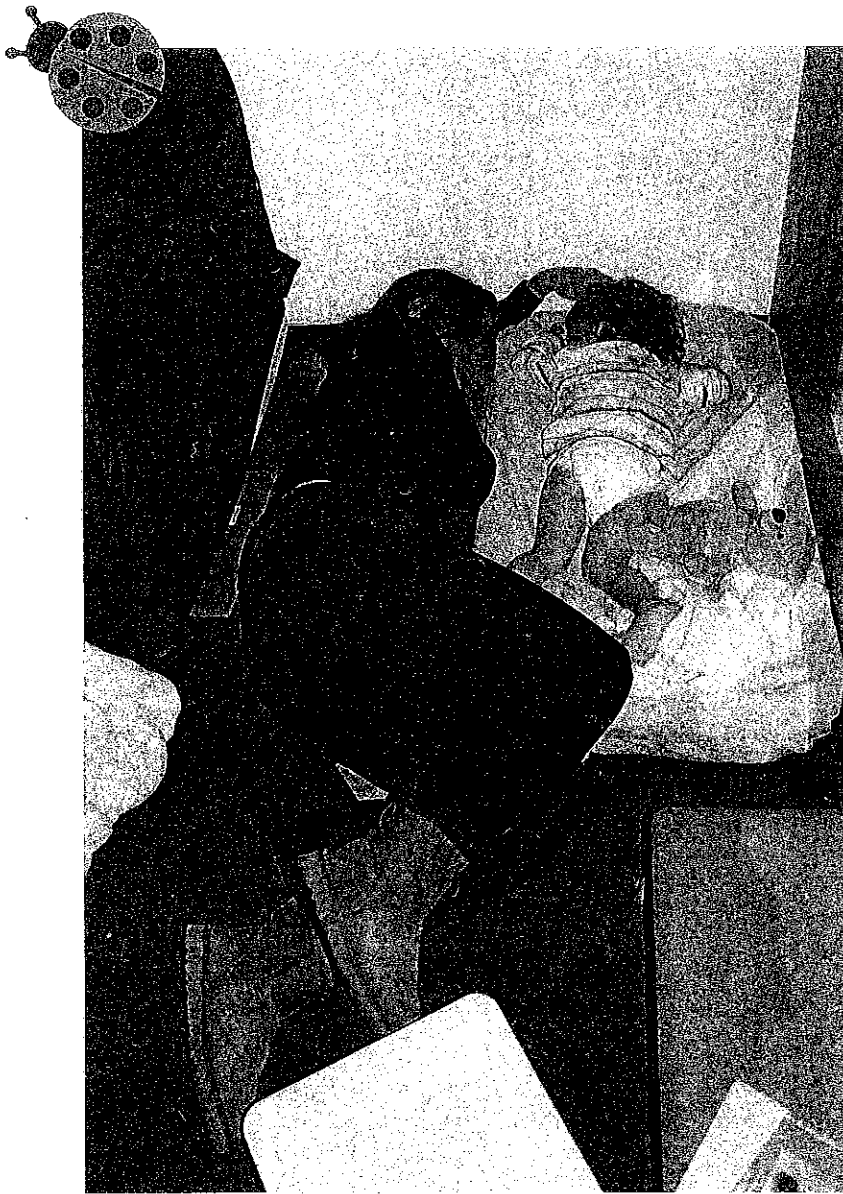
After lunch, some friends go home, and some friends stay for nap.



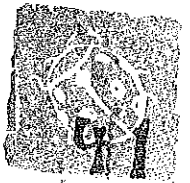


A center that is sensitive to the emotional needs of very young children, will have family photos posted in the room. You are your child's world, but it can sometimes be hard to keep an image of you in mind during a busy day. Allowing children to touch base with a photo of you, reminds him that you will come back, and that you are always present in his life. The photos must be visible and accessible for the child, and he must be allowed to view them when he needs to. Sometimes carrying a picture of you around with him is a concrete way to keep you close.





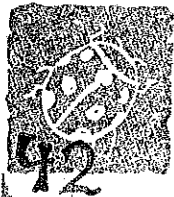
It can be hard to fall asleep. My teacher helps me to feel cozy. Sometimes we look at pictures of you and our family, and that helps.



Discussing with the teachers your home sleeping arrangements will be helpful. Each family does it differently. How does your child fall asleep at home? Where does she sleep? Does she have a particular toy she takes to bed with her? A blanket? Bottle? Pacifier? Where will your child sleep at school?

Going to sleep is like another good-bye, and for children who are growing in their awareness of environment and routine, falling asleep can be a scary thing. What happens to my body when I am asleep? Are my grown-ups still taking care of me when I am asleep? Who will be there when I wake up? When I wake up, will I still be at school?

How are the teachers able to support your child during this important daytime transition? How do they feel about your child's particular needs?



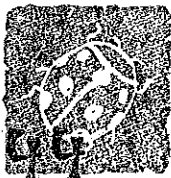
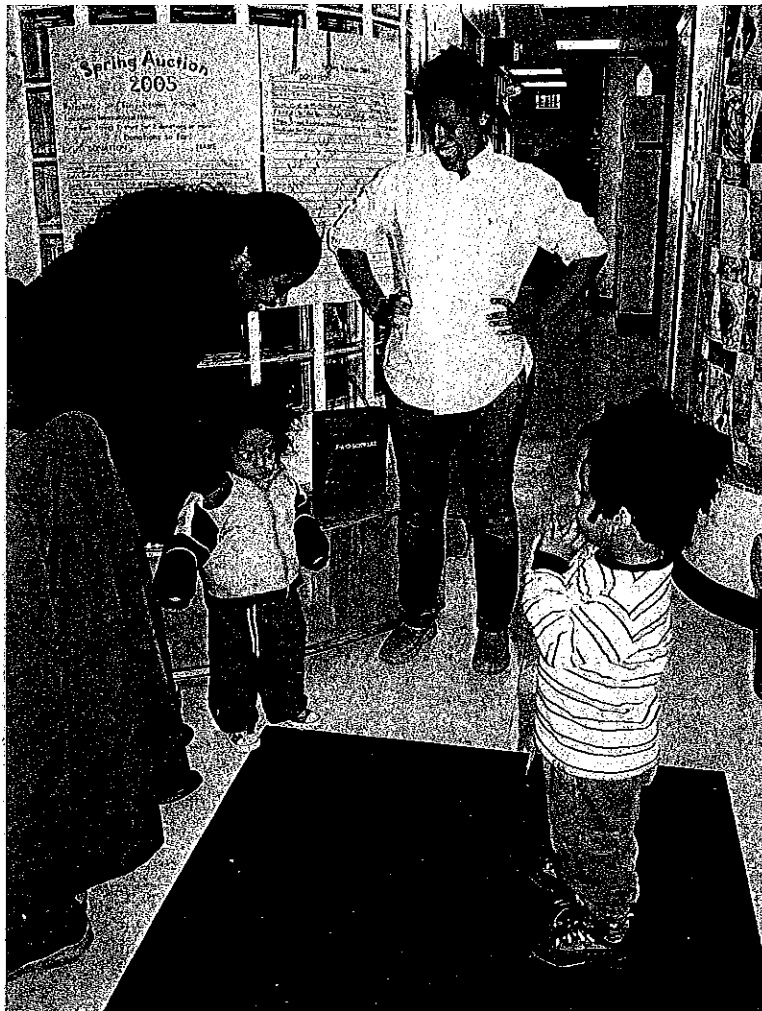


When I wake up, there is always a teacher there. I'm ready to eat snack again and play some more.



Most centers follow an afternoon routine that looks a lot like the morning routine. Free play, snack, perhaps another circle, and outing. But the big difference is children are now anticipating your return.

A day that was about saying good-bye, although still thinking about that, has now become an afternoon and evening of waiting to say hello. Emotions may rise again, and teachers must remain supportive and responsive, as anxiety may be slightly piqued.



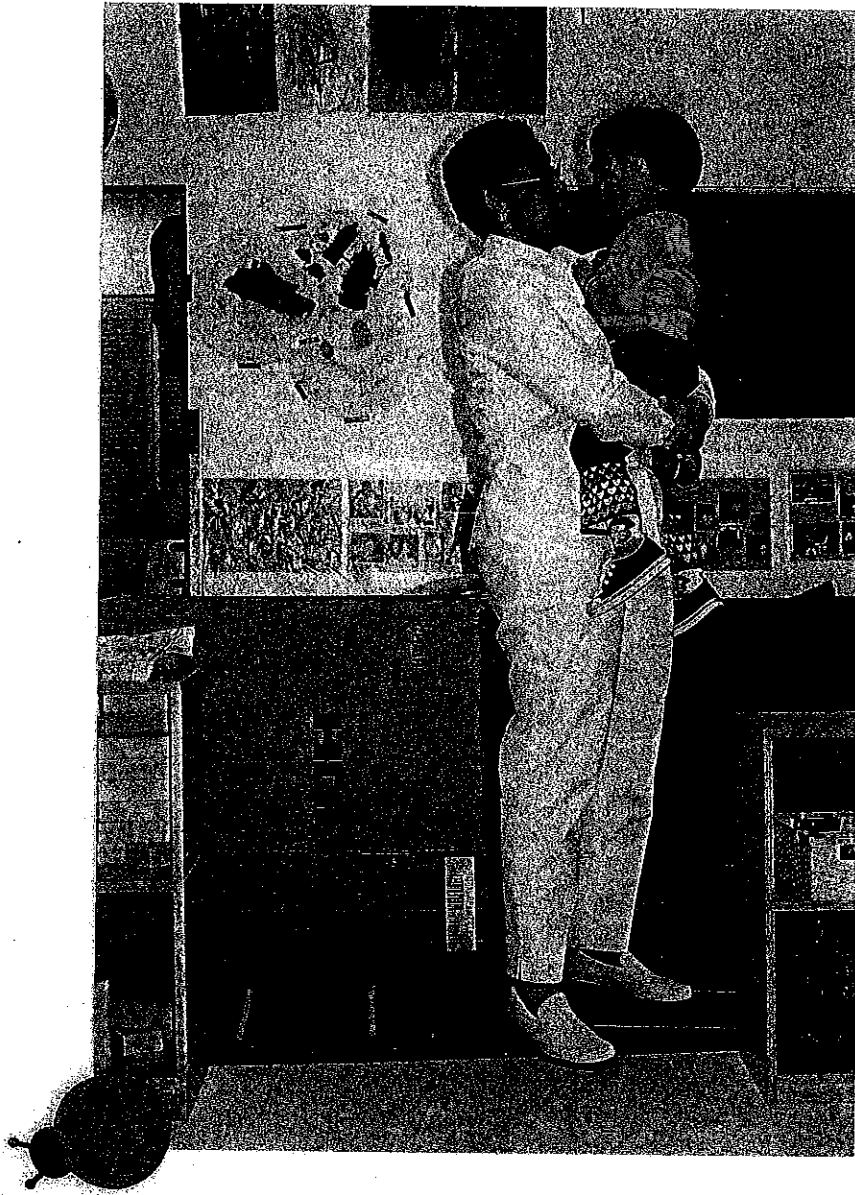


Soon it will be time to go home. I start to wait and wait for you to come pick me up.



It might be hard, after a long day at work, to come to the center to pick up your child, and find that she seems angry and distant. She may even appear sad; crying and clinging to you. It's important to remember that young children have a whole range of emotions, and that all must be viewed and supported. Acknowledging all feelings will validate your child's experience. Phrases like "I think you're angry with me that I went to work, and you had to stay at school" go a long way in helping your child process her sometimes overwhelming feelings. And it's okay to let your child know that you were missing her, too. "I thought about you all day, and I missed you, too" help a child to see that all people have a wide range of feelings, and that it's all okay.

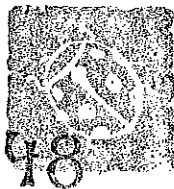
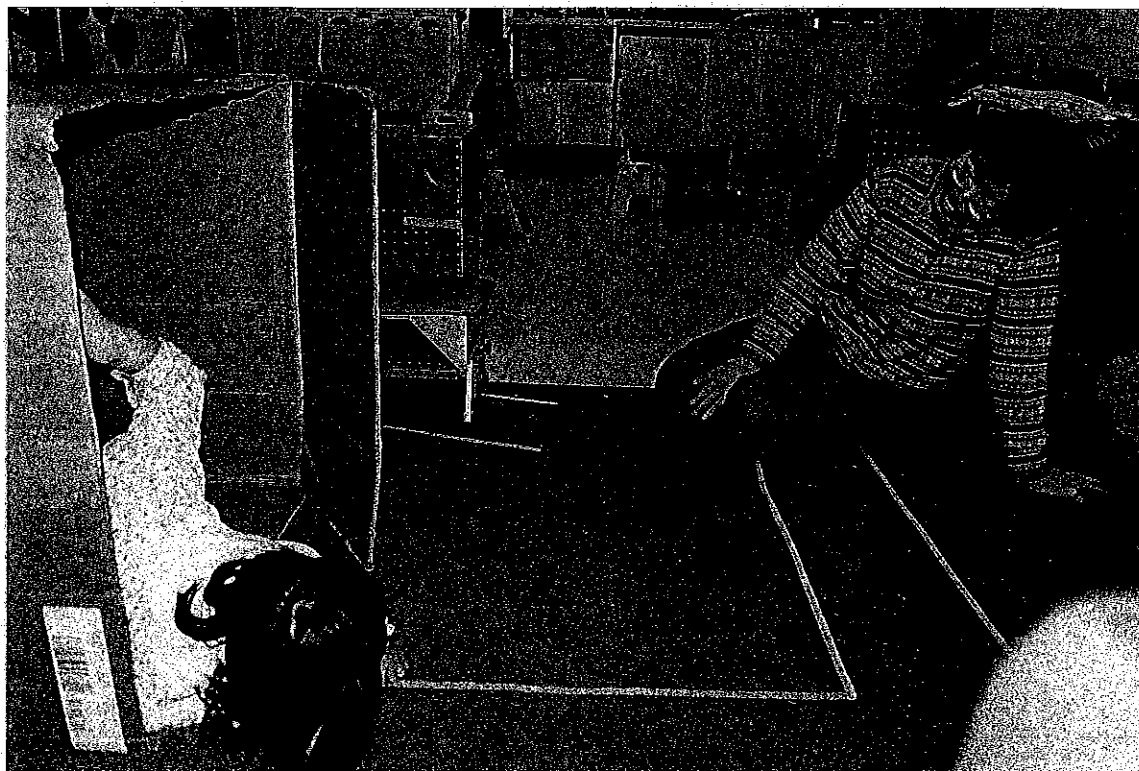


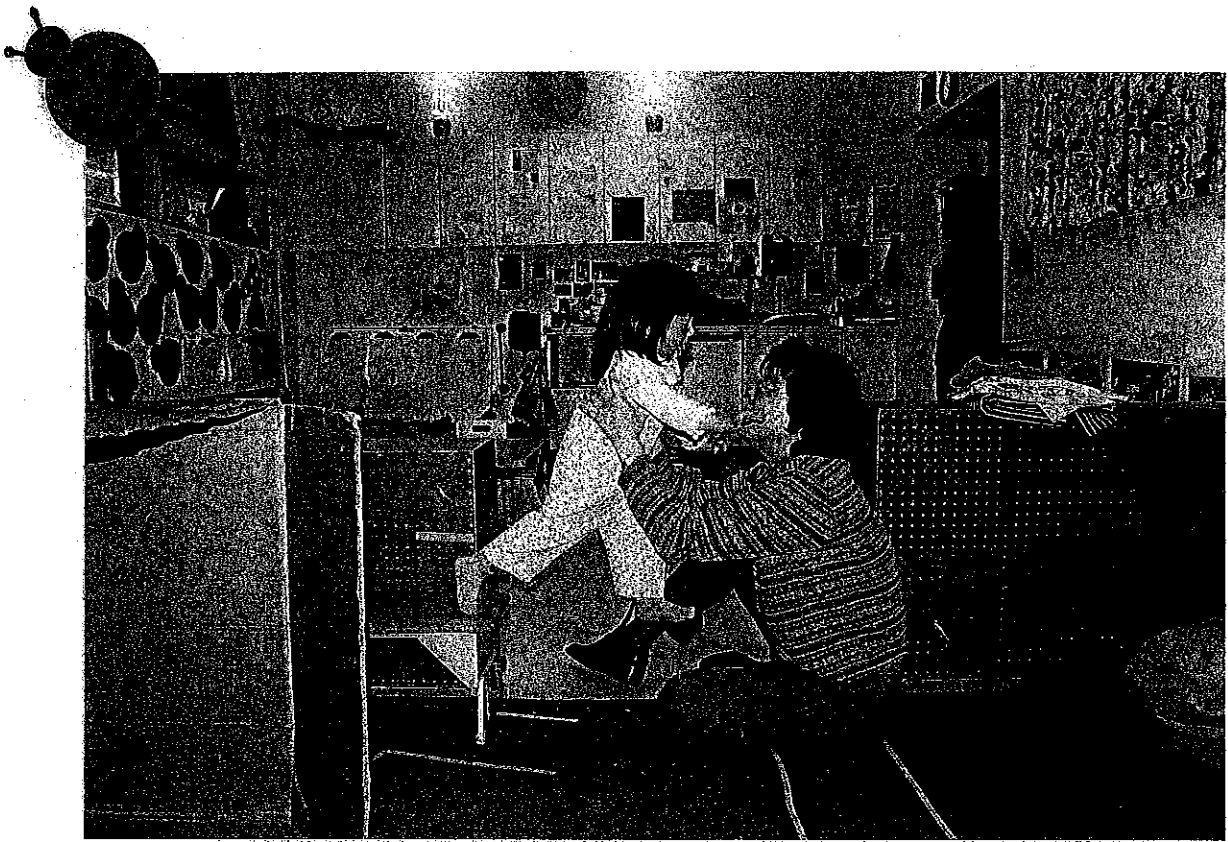


Sometimes I cry when you pick me up. I want you to know that I've been waiting all day for you, and it was hard work!



Routines are important to establish with pick-ups. Maybe you always go home a special way. Or, maybe, you can help your child to anticipate a fun bath time together. Pick-up may not always be the best time to touch base with your child's teacher; talk with the teacher about setting up a phone conference or other time that works for the two of you, if you have anything on your mind you'd like to discuss. Daily notes documenting your child's day can go a long way in helping you navigate possible feelings of not being a part of your child's routine away from home.



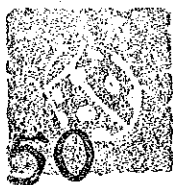


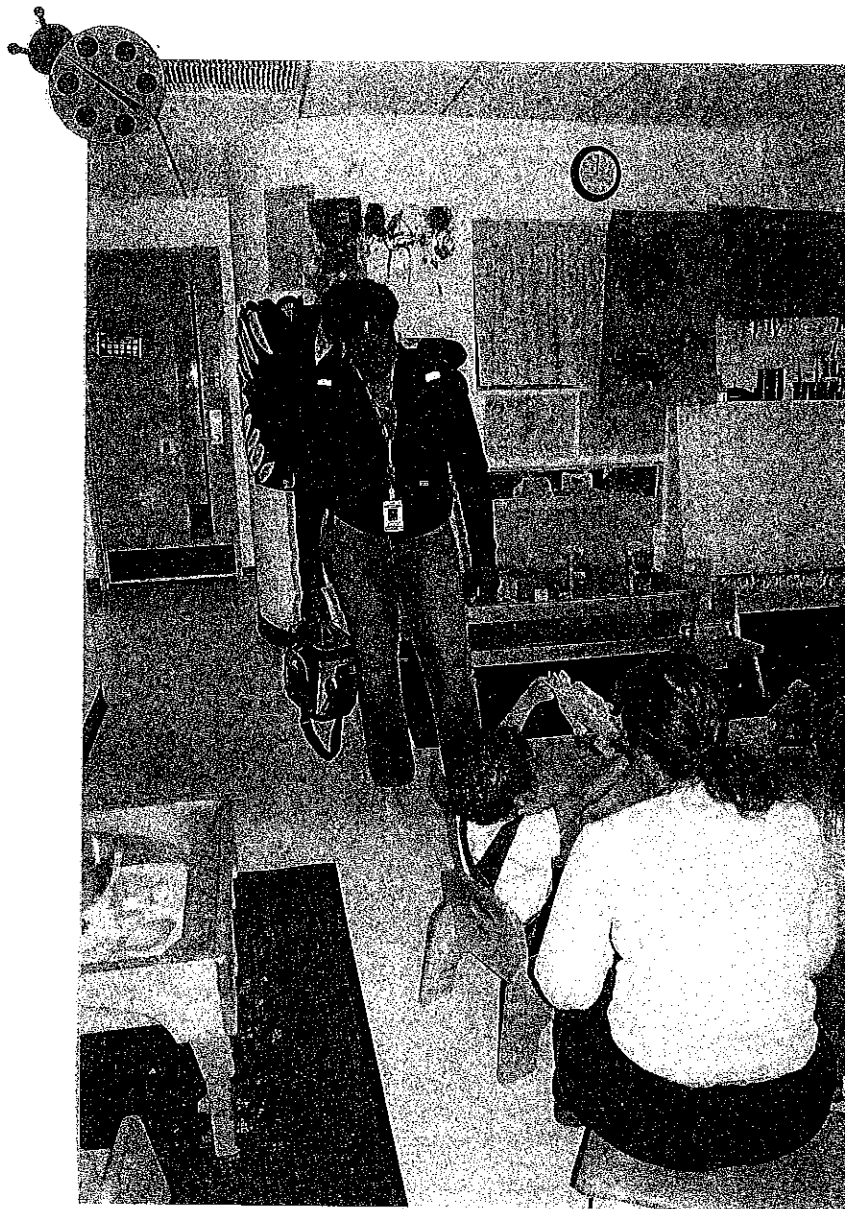
But most of the time I am really excited to see you. "Stop talking!"
I shout. I am ready to go home!



Classroom routine is important, not only for your child's feelings of well being, but so that you know what is happening for your child, as well. Knowing what your child is doing, helps you to talk with him about his day, and enables him to feel like you are still a part of his experiences.

Routine, regular attendance, consistency, and anticipating with your child what comes next, will help him to learn that you will always come back for him when your work day is done.

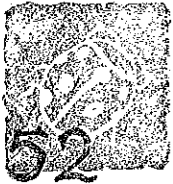
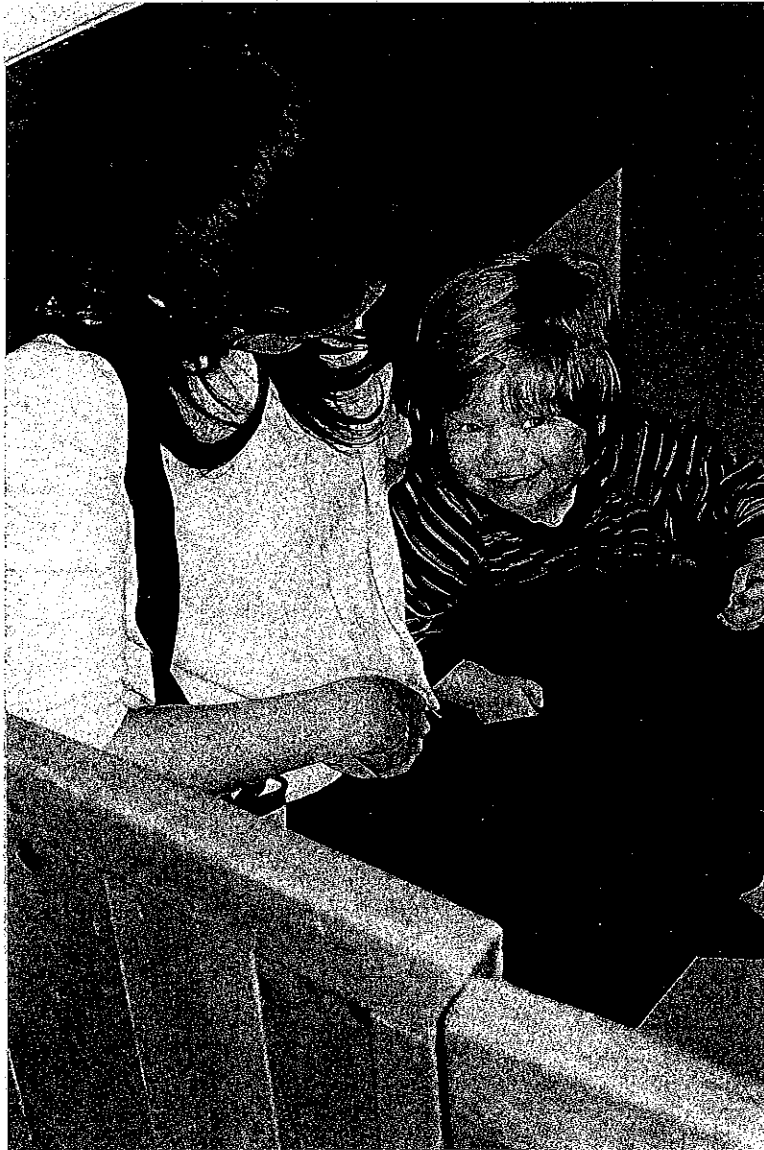


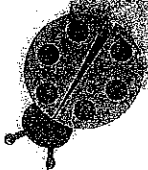
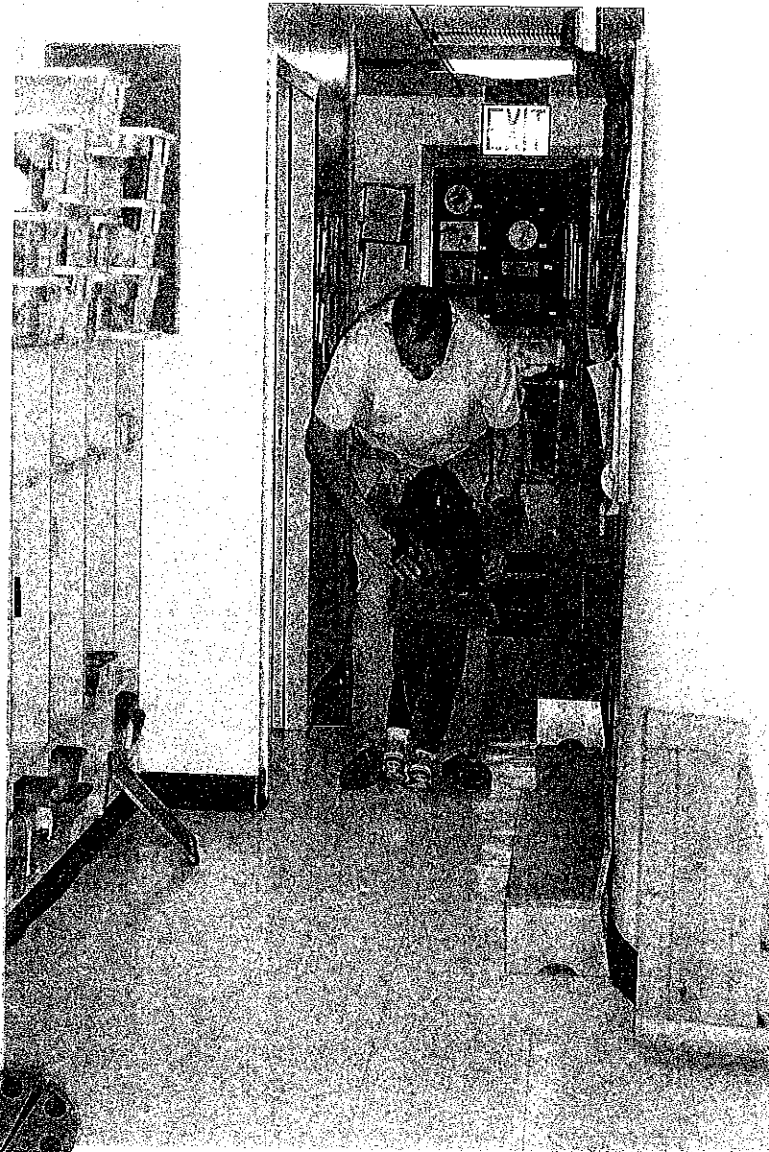


I will come back to school again. You will go to work, and I will come back to school. I will play, and eat, have fun and sleep, and wait for you to come back.



And you always do!





And you always do!





Glossary

Childcare – I prefer “childcare” over “daycare”, because it is a child and not a day that is being cared for by the adult. For the purposes of this book, childcare will refer to the center or place you send your child to, when you or a family member cannot care for your child.

Curriculum – the work a child does in the classroom. For very young children, their social and emotional work is what is most important. As you begin your search for group care, it will be important to know what your center emphasizes as their classroom curriculum, and recognizing if their philosophy is one you can agree with.

Developmentally appropriate (responsive) practice – teachers who use knowledge of child and parent development in their work with families. Someone who is familiar and accepting of all developmental behaviors in both children and adults can better provide responsive and responsible care, attending appropriately to the needs of families.

Developmental timeline – a way of gauging the developmental milestones a child is reaching towards. Each child has his or her own timeline they are following. But sometimes useful information can be gained by observing other children, and taking note of where your child's peers are at.

Dramatic Play – play that may mirror everyday activities; sometimes called pretend play. For example, children who play “house” or “going shopping”. Dramatic play may also include super hero play, firefighter play, or school play. Dramatic play is often a child's way of gaining a sense of self and control in situations where they otherwise have no power. Many children play “going to the doctor” after visiting their own doctor. Scary experiences can be modified and processed during dramatic play, and joyful experiences can be relived.

Fine motor play – being able to use the body in more defined or small ways. For example, coloring, playdough play, using fingers to play with smaller toys (keys in locks, pegs in holes, etc.).

Gross motor play – being able to use the body in large ways. For example, running, climbing, jumping, etc. Typically developing children like and need to use their whole bodies.



Home Visits – a chance for the teachers who will be caring for your child to see your child in his or her home environment. The better the teachers know who your child is, the better they can care for him or her.

Inclusion – classrooms, centers, or schools that include children of varying developmental ability. This includes abilities in all developmental domains; cognitive, social and emotional, motor, and speech.

Occupational therapy – professional service provided to children who need support in the areas of fine motor development and/or sensory integration.

Outing – a small group trip with a teacher, to explore another area outside of the classroom.

Phase-In – a slow introduction to group care for parents, child, and teachers. A gradual transition is often a little easier than engaging a program full time and immediately.

Physical therapy – professional service provided to children who need support in the area of gross motor development.

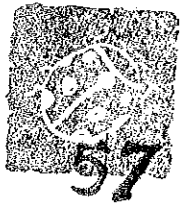
Play therapy – professional service to support children and families when appropriate milestones are not being reached; usually in the areas of social and emotional growth, and cognitive development.

Primary care – a model of group care that enables a young child to form a positive, strong, and emotional bond with a particular teacher; a teacher who can reciprocate and support this attention from the child, forming a healthy relationship. The process mirrors the one between a child and his or her home primary caregiver (usually the parent), but it in no way should usurp or undermine the parent/child relationship. Good primary care supports the whole family, not just the child.

Sensory integration (therapy) – a way of providing support to children who struggle with self regulation. These children are often described as “going from 0 to 60”, with little provocation. Children with sensory disorder (or dysfunction) usually cannot tolerate transitions, change, or they have extreme reactions to otherwise minor inconveniences (tag in the shirt, seam in the sock, food textures, etc.). They are easily over stimulated, or seem extremely understimulated. These children are prevented from developing to their full potential by their inability to regulate their experiences of the world. Often times intervention in this area can be provided by an occupational therapist.

Sensory (learners) – you have many senses; taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing. But you also have the sense of where you are in the space, which keeps you from bumping into furniture and other people, etc. Young children learn by doing and experiencing as much as possible. It's important for your child's center to accommodate these developmental needs. Textures, smells, colors, soft and hard surfaces, soothing music, mushy, sandy, wet, and dry – these are all things your child should come into contact with through out the day.

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Bibliography

Books:

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www.zerotothree.org

A national guide for parents and professionals who deal with children from the ages of birth to three years of age. The web site and journal (which you can subscribe to) cover a full range of topics, including issues in childcare, parent and child attachment, typical and atypical development in young children. Strongly recommended.





Appendix A

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Appendix B

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- Raikes, H. (1996). A secure base for babies: Applying attachment concepts to the infant care setting. *Young Children*, 51 (1), 58-67.

Subj: Approval of Proposal for the use of Human Participants Commence Form
Date: 2/1/2005 6:31:13 PM Eastern Standard Time
From:
To:

To: Pamela Wheeler-Civita and Sue Carbury

From: Richard Feldman, Chairperson
Integrative Master's Project Committee

Date: February 2, 2005

Re: Approval for Independent Study Commence for Involving Human Participants Form.

I have reviewed your proposal and your plans to attain agreement from parents for themselves and their children for the use of photographs in your Study. You have met the requirements for the IRRB guidelines.

You are in a particularly sensitive arena since children in any of the school settings spend many years here. Care about the privacy of individuals is an important aspect of our work as professional members of a community. I believe you have provided sufficient safeguards under the circumstances.

I have signed the form. Please pick it up outside my door (648). Take it to the Business Office to pay the registration fee and then to the Registrar to complete the process.

Sunday, February 06, 2005