



What's New in Special Needs Resourcing

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Community Living Cambridge



Developmental Services Access Centre



Elmira District Community Living



Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES

I trust everyone is back in the swing of things after the holidays! Have a great month and watch out for Cupid!

This month, I am pleased to feature information related to the importance of physical activity. This is provided as a result of one of the CCSNRP's latest endeavours to level the playing field for preschool children in ELCC in Waterloo Region.

Kinesiology Services are now available across the region for children in licensed child care programs across the Region. Some of you have already received service from Brad Simpson, Kinesiologist, regarding the needs of a particular child or regarding Physical Health Promotion for all children and staff in the ELCC setting.

The Important Role of Child Care Centres in Providing Physical Activity

(By Brad Simpson BSc Kin, CEP (Manager of KW Habilitation Services Dept. of Kin)

The importance of day care centres providing opportunities for physical activity has been well documented in the literature. Activity levels in preschool children have been strongly linked to the BMI (Body Mass Index) of their father. Those who had a father with a lower BMI tended to have higher activity level. Aside from that fact, early positive attitude toward exercise was cited as a strong influence in sustaining higher activity levels when children grow to be adults. In one particular study, it was noted that participation in a day care program had a strong influence over the child's activity level. More than 50% of the



SNAP Fast Facts

DID YOU KNOW...

- Kinesiology is the science of human movement?
- Kinesiology services are now available in ELCC programs across the Region of Waterloo and not just Kitchener/Waterloo?

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With the opportunities available to positively affect the activity levels of children, it is imperative to optimize these opportunities in order to positively influence their development and impact on their health in the future.

We, as providers, must not be complacent with merely providing the facilities and the programming for physical development. It is important for us to observe how activity takes place and what type and level of activity is taking place to ensure every child is developing optimally and has a quality program.

Informal observations throughout an activity time will provide you with information you can use to adjust your program. Reviewing which children are active throughout a session on the playground may bring some surprising results. You may find that indeed all children are active for a reasonable percentage of the time. You may also find that what you thought was a busy playground is only 30% of the children being active all the time while the rest are more inactive than you suspect. Various research studies have reported that many children are not as active on the playground as we imagine. Classifying activity into four simple categories can enable you to better analyze the situation on your playground, in your gym, or generally throughout your day.



If we can agree on the definition of physical activity being “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscle that results in a substantial increase over the resting energy expenditure” (Bouchard and Shephard, 1994), then we will use it to describe activity in two different levels.

- 1) Sedentary is when the child stays pretty much in the same area or changes activity very seldom. The activities chosen require little movement or exertion, and there is no change in heart rate, breathing or heat production.
- 2) Moderate physical activity is defined as a person who is exercising but is not exerting themselves. You will see a slight rise in heart rate and rate of breathing, but you won't be sweating. Activities such as a brisk walk, hiking, bike riding on easy terrain, shooting a few baskets, playing on playground equipment, hopscotch, t-ball, 4-square, and tether ball are good examples of moderate physical activity.
- 3) Vigorous physical activity is happening when your heart is beating fast, your breathing rate has increased significantly and you are probably sweating. Running, jogging, biking on hilly terrain, games such as tag, jumping rope, and competitive games like basketball, ball hockey or soccer, are all typically classified as vigorous physical activity.
- 4) Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) is activity that is more demanding than moderate activity and somewhat less than vigorous activity. Research is still being carried out with regards to acceptable levels of activity, but the general consensus for children aged 3 to 5 is that they should accumulate 60 minutes of MVPA per day.

This level of activity is essential to maintain health and to promote healthy development. One reputable study indicated that children in their study were engaged in this level of activity less than 3% of the time and were sedentary more than 80% of the observed time.

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As part of the activity levels, the following two types of activity are recommended:

A) *Muscle strengthening activities* are recommended as part of activity at least three days a week. These include activities such as climbing, tug of war, swinging on monkey bars, etc.

B) *Bone strengthening activities* are also recommended at least three days a week. Jumping rope, running and skipping are activities that are beneficial to building strong bones.

The next time you are out on the playground or gym, take a look around and observe each child at various intervals throughout the time you are there. Where would you place them in the continuum of *Sedentary; Moderate Physical Activity; Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity; or Vigorous Physical Activity*. Bring along a class list and jot down some notes as you go through the day. This should give you a reasonable idea of who is active and how active your group really is.

Another perspective on evaluating activity levels of your class is to look around the playground or gym and look at the opportunities for the children to participate at different levels of physical activity. Using the four levels of activity, how would you classify your equipment and the activities you provide? Picture the children playing typically at each piece of equipment or activity and decide what level of activity they would be playing at. At the end of the day, you should have a reasonable idea of whether or not you have covered the essential levels of activity. If you find any gaps in activity level, appropriate activities for your age group can be added to provide a well rounded program.

In reviewing the literature of how our current lifestyle is impacting negatively on our health, it is reassuring to know that we, as service providers to preschool children, are able to have significant influence over a generation of people who can learn better habits and live healthier lives. Let's be diligent and not let this opportunity slip through our hands.

As always, if you feel that you need some assistance in evaluating your equipment and / or program, feel free to make a referral to me and I would be happy to assist you. (519)-884-8080ext.230

For more information on the Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Partnership or to make a referral to the Child Care Special Needs Access Point please contact:

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Upcoming Professional Development Events

2010 Conference for Early Learning and Child Care— March 19 & 20th at Conestoga College— some spaces left!
Log onto www.kidslincares.com— don't be disappointed— register today!

12th Annual CHANGE Early Learning and Child Care Conference 2010
April 9 and 10 at Best Western Brant Park Inn in Brantford
Sponsored by the OEYC:Brant
oeycbrant@execulink.com
519-759-3833 or 1-888-332-4453

Current Research- Links

Article: Evidence lacking for special autism diets, says report. This Canadian Press article, "Evidence Lacking for Special Autism Diets, Says Report," comments on the findings by an expert panel on digestive problems and children with autism. The article can be accessed at:

http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5jY-K_JVNepAXK0PenEUkAknDWyA

Article: Autism Occurs in 1 out of 100 Children in the USA

Information on the Centre for Disease Control's latest estimates concerning autism— read the article at

<http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/familyhealth/children'shealth/article/741569--autism-occurs-in-1-out-of-110-children-in-the-u-s>