



# Helping Hands

Offering a helping hand to School Readiness Providers  
A publication from Childcare Resource & Referral



## School-Agers Can Help Deanna Williams, Environmental Specialist

Episcopal Children's Services

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Now that school has started again, your school-age children are only with you for part of the day. There are ways to teach and entertain them while they are helping you. Science ideas are fun for children and the end product can work within your center or home for the other children in your care. I have included a couple of science projects to show you what I mean. After the school age students complete these projects you have

art supplies for all your children to use.  
(And a snack!)

### Giant Chalk Stick

- 2 Tbsp Powdered Tempura Paint
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water
- 3 Tbsp Plaster of Paris
- 1 sm. Waxed paper cup
- \*Mix paint and water in the cup. Slowly add Plaster of Paris while stirring until creamy. Set for 1 hour. Peel off cup.



### Soap Paint

- 1 cup Powdered Detergent
- 4 Tbsp Liquid Starch
- 1 Tbsp Powdered Tempura Paint
- \*Beat detergent and starch until peaks form. Add paint and mix well.

### Mexican Roll-ups

- 16 oz. cream cheese
- 1 large chopped tomato
- 4 oz. chopped green chilis
- 1 small can of corn
- 6-8 flour tortillas
- Jar of picante sauce
- \*Mix tomatoes, chilis and corn in cream cheese. Spread on the tortillas. Roll up and refrigerate. Slice and serve with the picante sauce.



## September is Read-a-New-Book Month!

Here are some suggestions:

- \*Guess How Much I Love You, Sam McBratney
- \*Mouse Paint, Ellen Stoll Walsh
- \*It Looked Like Spilt Milk, Charles G. Shaw
- \*Elmer, by David Mckee

[www.holidaysforeveryday.com](http://www.holidaysforeveryday.com)



## ATTENTION HH READERS...



If you have a question, comment, or concern you would like addressed in an upcoming issue of *Helping Hands*, please send an e-mail to: [hdunn@ecs4kids.org](mailto:hdunn@ecs4kids.org). We will do our best to find the answer, post the comment, and address the concern. Thanks! =)  
Heather Dunn,  
Editor,  
*Helping Hands*

# Word Walls are More than Clutter Peggy Daveline, Literacy Coach

A word wall is a systematically organized collection of words displayed in large letters on a wall or other large display place in the classroom. It is a tool designed to promote group learning. A word wall consists of words that young children frequently see when reading, and use when writing. Each week words are added to help children become familiar with print.

**Research:** Young children learn words best when vocabulary instruction is integrated into their classroom routines (Xue & Meisels, 2004). For print in classrooms to be useful, children must attend to and interact with it daily. Word Walls prove to be useful by encouraging children's active involvement in the learning process, rather than their passive reception of information (Shapiro & Kirby, 1998).



## The 5 Ws of Word Walls

**Who:** All preschool classrooms should have an interactive Word Wall.

**What:** For young learners, a Word Wall is an alphabetically arranged collection of words with pictures used as a resource to help children gain confidence and fluency in working with letters and words.

**When:** Word Walls should be used in all rooms every day, starting on the first day of school.

**Where:** Word Walls are most effective when they are placed at children's eye level, where the words can be easily seen and used by the children (near the whole-group area, teaching table, or writing center).

**Why:** We use Word Walls with young learners because they provide an interactive learning tool for teachers and children to use throughout each day. Word Walls:

- Encourage the introduction of new words.
- Show the importance of letters and words.
- Promote letter and sound recognition.
- Provide ongoing support for learners at differing levels.
- Develop independence in learning.
- Create authentic learning using words from stories being read.

Supply a familiar list of words that become part of children's speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies. There really are no set rules for how to set up word walls and you will find plenty of variations on the idea from classroom to classroom. The important thing is that children are exposed to a print rich environment that provides them with the tools they need to read and write more effectively.

## Fun Word Wall Activities:

### Rickety, Tickety Bumble Bee Chant:

Rickety, Tickety Bumble Bee

Go and find the letter B. or

Rickety, Tickety Bumble Bee

Go and find this sound for me BBBB!



**\*Use a small bird and bee for these activities and toss them to the children.**

### Word Bird: Tune: You are My Sunshine

My name is word bird.

My name is word bird,

And I know a lot of words.

Won't you help me

Find the word pig it starts with a P.

**Word Wall:** Tune: Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Here we go to the word wall.

The word wall, the word wall.

Here we go to the word wall,

To find the word "dog".

## What is Amblyopia? Stephanie McKelvey, Screening Specialist

Amblyopia is commonly referred to as lazy eye. Amblyopia is an eye condition that usually affects one of the eyes. If there is reduced vision in one eye then the brain does not acknowledge the weaker eye and will use the stronger eye instead. This continues to cause the weaker eye to become even weaker since it is used less often. Since the vision loss takes place in the brain, it is considered a neurological process. If amblyopia is not treated then it can cause a loss of vision.

Three percent of children under the age of six have lazy eye. It can be easily treated with glasses, vision therapy, drops, and/or patching. New research has shown that even children up to the age of seventeen can be successfully treated; however, the earlier it is detected the better the outcomes. The best way of diagnosing amblyopia is by using a special visual test and cannot be diagnosed by using the standard 20/20 letter charts. Encourage parents to have their children's vision checked and make sure the pediatrician is checking for amblyopia or "lazy eye".

### Normal Visual Development

#### 24 months to 36 months:

- Occasionally visually inspects without needing to touch (20-24 months)
- Smiles, facial brightening when views favorite objects and people (20-24 months)
- Likes to watch movement of wheels, egg beater, etc. (24-28 months)
- Watches own hand while scribbling (26-30 months)
- Visually explores and steers own walking and climbing (30-36 months)
- Watches and imitates other children (30-36 months)
- Can now begin to keep coloring on the paper (34-38 months)
- "Reads" pictures in books (34-38 months)

#### 40 months to 48 months:

- Brings head and eyes close to page of book while inspecting (40-44 months)
- Draws and names circle and cross on paper (40-44 months)
- Can close eyes on request, and may be able to wink one eye (46-50 months)

The full checklist is available at:

[http://www.children-special-needs.org/parenting/preschool/visual\\_child\\_development.html](http://www.children-special-needs.org/parenting/preschool/visual_child_development.html).

Information obtained from [www.lazyeye.org](http://www.lazyeye.org) and [http://www.children-special-needs.org/parenting/preschool/visual\\_child\\_development.html](http://www.children-special-needs.org/parenting/preschool/visual_child_development.html).

## A Personal Decision Karen Tate, Infant/Toddler Specialist

Please feel free to share the following article with parents:

Choosing whether to breastfeed or formula feed your baby is one of the first decisions expectant parents will make. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) joins other organizations such as the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Dietetic Association (ADA), and the World Health Organization (WHO) in recommending breastfeeding as the best for babies. Breastfeeding helps defend against infections, prevent allergies, and protect against a number of chronic conditions.

The AAP says babies should be breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months. Beyond that, the AAP encourages breastfeeding until at least 12 months, and longer if both the mother and baby are willing.

Although experts believe breast milk is the best nutritional choice for infants, breastfeeding may not be possible for all women. For many women, the decision to breastfeed or formula feed is based on their comfort level, lifestyle, and specific medical considerations that they might have.

For mothers who are unable to breastfeed, or who decide not to, infant formula is a good alternative. Some women feel guilty if they don't breastfeed. But if you feed your baby with a commercially prepared formula, be assured that your baby's nutritional needs will be met, and you'll still bond with your baby just fine. After all, whether with breast milk or formula, feeding is an important time of connection between mother and baby.

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/infants/breast\\_bottle\\_feeding.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/infants/breast_bottle_feeding.html)

## Children & Stress

Children feel the effects of adults stress.

## Consider these Suggestions in Your New School Days

- Begin the day with a short meditation with music and simple breathing exercises, and stretching
- Tai chi movements before transition- or from one activity to another
- Relaxation after lunchtime

Lie on floor slowly inhale and participate in visualization exercise taking an imaginary journey

## Why Relaxation & Calming Exercises?

- Higher concentration, greater task focus
- How to teach stress management skills to children for relaxation and relief from stress

**Stress impacts adversely on physical, psychological and emotional well being, social skills, and the ability to concentrate and learn.**

## Brain research:

- What looks like relatively small amounts of stress on a regular basis can permanently affect children's brain functioning, their ability to learn, problem solve and get along well with other children and adults
- Children under 4 often do not have the words to express their stress, fears, worries

## Children react to stress and change:

- Through aggression and withdrawal, attention seeking, disobedience, difficulty sleeping or eating, bed wetting, irritability, sadness or tearfulness, changes in toileting habits, bullying others and in physical symptoms

Adults often misinterpret stress as inappropriate behavior-

-If children are being dealt with as if they are misbehaving when they are exhibiting a stress reaction- their stress, or fear, or anxiety is not being recognized or managed

-They have to deal with the additional stress of being reprimanded, yelled at or punished- and they respond with more extreme acting out because they do not have words to express how they are feeling

- Relaxation sessions are not expensive, they cannot harm children, and they do not involve complicated behavior management or drug therapy
- We can look beyond the behaviors we experience in the classroom to their causes in children's lives, treat children with compassion and understanding, and teach techniques to reduce and manage their own stress

As early childhood professionals, we can have a positive impact on how children experience their world.

## VPK Today Ann Flipse, Environmental Specialist/VPK Monitor

Health is about the ability to function and live our lives fully, actively, energetically, and harmoniously.

Harmony and balance have always been central to well being.

-Real health is well being in all of these levels: Physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, interpersonal, social, and environmental.

-Beginning a program of relaxation is a way of nurturing children's spirits, helping them experience silence, cultivate an inborn sense of awe and wonder, care for the earth, practice peaceful resolution of conflict, be helpful and kind, and honor people of all races

### When children are relaxed and at peace with themselves:

-They are more open to developing positive relationships, enhancing the acceptance of others.

-They get the idea we are connected to all things, to other people, animals, & nature- and this extends to appreciation of all life forms.

### Things you can encourage in the classroom:

-Undertake acts of kindness: encourage and support each other in the classroom.

-Find worthy causes- enlist their help.

-Recognize children are our teachers- when we start really listening to children.

-Be creative: tell lots of stories~ make them up or read from children's books.

-Be real: share your emotions without burdening them.

-Be spontaneous: celebrate the wonders of the present moment.

-Bring children's attention to small miracles every day like a baby bird.

## ECS is Moving!!!



**EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES JACKSONVILLE OFFICE IS MOVING LOCATIONS!!!**

Beginning November 2, 2009, our new address will be:

Episcopal Children's Services

**8443 Baymeadows Road, Suite 1**

**Jacksonville, FL 32256**

All phone numbers will remain the same!



## Local Professional Development Opportunities (Training Calendar)

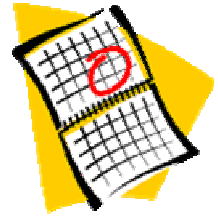
☺ **TEACHING FOR SUCCESS CONFERENCE:**

**AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE FOR NEW TEACHERS!- ALL COUNTIES**

10/3/2009 9:00am-3:00pm @ ECS Central

☺ **FLORIDA BIRTH TO THREE STANDARDS—NASSAU**

9/23/2009 12:00pm-2:00pm @ Yulee Full Service Center



To **register** for one of these great training opportunities, please follow the directions on our website: [www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org)

The website will also provide a complete list of trainings and descriptions offered each quarter.

\*For information on CDA Scholarships, please contact Linda Hockenberry at: [lhockenberry@ecs4kids.org](mailto:lhockenberry@ecs4kids.org)

### **Kara's Corner** Kara Owen, Manager of VPK Services

We hope everyone is having a great start to the 09-10 VPK program year! Please remember to submit the Informed Parental Consent for Delayed Enrollment Form for any children that did not physically attend on the first day of your program. These, and other VPK forms, can be found on our web site: [www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org).

#### **Important Update**

ECS has received notification that the proposed rules for the 80/20 Attendance Policy and 95% Advance Payment rules have been adopted. Advance payments will be calculated at 95% of the VPK hourly rate starting with the October Provider Advance Payment for providers that opted to receive advance payments for the 09-10 program year. While these rules have been adopted, we are still awaiting the final drafts from AWI/OEL. We are hoping this will be available sometime in September so that we can pass it along to you.

#### **Important Due Date**

Did your VPKS program end in August?

If so, remember that your Provider Verification Report (PVR) is due on or before September 30th!!! If ECS does not receive your PVR by this date then we will be withholding your final VPKS payment, no exceptions. (These reports are sent out to by the VPK Department once your August attendance rosters have been processed).

To ensure full compliance with OEL policy,

ALL final VPK payments will be actual checks, even if you normally receive direct deposit.

**VPK Department** \* 100 Bell Tel Way, Suite 100 \* Jacksonville, FL 32216

Toll Free: 1-800-238-3463 \* Fax: 904-726-1522

[vpkinfo@ecs4kids.org](mailto:vpkinfo@ecs4kids.org) \* [www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org)



## Warm Line 1-800-238-3463



Do you have a concern about the health, development, disability, and special needs of a child? If so call the Warm Line. The purpose of the warm line is to provide advice to child care personnel concerning strategies, curriculum, and environmental adaptations that allow a child to derive maximum benefit from the child care experience.