

# The Region 6 Infant-Toddler Resource Center Newsletter



April 2014

Issue 2

Serving parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers in  
Ulster, Dutchess, Putnam,  
Orange, Sullivan, Rockland, and Westchester

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*In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.*

*-Aristotle*

## **Infants, Toddlers, and the Great Outdoors!**

Parental objections, claims of “no time” due to individual routines, fears of children getting dirty, or hurt....These are just a few of the obstacles to infant-toddler caregivers in centers and family child care homes getting outside. However when we look at the “up” side to outdoor time, it’s clear that we must make it happen.

### **Brain development:**

Young children soak up every sound, smell, and experience they have. Their job is to make sense of how the world works. Brain development depends on their environments and the interactions they are a part of. More experiences equals more synaptic connections (connections between brain cells)!

### **Social skills:**

Children learn to play with one another through taking turns down the slide and bubble chasing. When caregivers model gentle treatment of plants, animals, and flowers, this also helps the development of empathy.

### **Motor skills:**

Large (gross) motor development happens through ball play, jumping, running, and hopping through a home-made obstacle course. Small (fine) motor skills (which in a few more years will help with pencil grasp!) are strengthened through digging in the dirt, grasping containers to dump and natural objects to fill, and scribbling with chalk on the sidewalk or wall.

### **Language skills:**

*How does the wind feel?*

*I wonder where the sun is today? (cue “Mr. Golden Sun”!)*

*You’re jumping so high you might touch the sky!*

Infants and toddlers learn language when those around them speak about what’s important and interests **them**-what they’re doing, feeling, and experiencing. The always-novel things that occur outside provide ample basis for acquiring new words, and having enjoyable exchanges with peers and adults.

### **Cognitive skills:**

Children learn cause and effect when they see wet sand clumping; they learn spatial awareness as a ball comes toward them, and then leaves into the hands or lap of a peer... Colors, shapes, sizes exist in nature; learning about them happens naturally when we experience the great outdoors!

So, explain to parents when they enroll, just how outdoor play will benefit their child. Find the time, and let the learning and exploration begin!

## How can we help you?

- ◆ On-site coaching in regulated center and family-based child care programs serving infants and toddlers on issues such as room arrangement, positive discipline, marketing, child development, and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)
- ◆ Collaboration with OCFS to build quality in regulated programs
- ◆ Use of the Environment Rating Scales and other valid, research-based tools to assess and improve quality of care
- ◆ Tailored coaching for program's specific challenges
- ◆ Information and on-site support
- ◆ Low-cost training (see schedule)
- ◆ Information for providers and parents by phone or email on issues concerning best practices for infants

## GET YOUR TRAINING!

### Upcoming trainings through the Infant-Toddler Resource Center:

#### Preparing for Quality Stars: Relationships

Date: April 3, 2014 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Sullivan County Child Care, Inc.,  
7 Community Lane, Liberty

Call: 845-292-7166 ext. 305 to register

Cost: \$10

#### Hitting, Biting, and Kicking, Oh My! Understanding Toddler Behaviors

Date: April 3, 2014 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Family of Woodstock, CCC of Ulster,  
39 John Street, Kingston

Call: 845-679-2485 to register

Cost: \$10

#### When all You Hear is "No!": Understanding and Caring for Toddlers

Date: May 22, 2014 6:30-9:00pm

Location: Yorktown Community Center,  
1974 Commerce St., Yorktown Heights

Call: 914-761-3456 ext. 113 to register

Cost: \$10

## Spotlight on Regulations: Sleep!

New Family and Group-family regulations were approved and go into effect May 1, 2014. A few are summarized below, along with comments in italics:

**417 and 416.7(j):** "Children may not sleep or nap in car seats, baby swings, strollers, infant seats or bouncy seats. Should a child fall asleep in one of these devices, he or she must be moved to a crib/cot or other approved sleeping surface."

**417 and 416.11 (c)2:** "Daily health checks ...will be documented."

*Especially in light of these regulations, we (the Region 6 ITRC) recommend that if a child arrives at a program asleep, he/she should be woken. A daily health check can not be properly done when a child is asleep, as it can't be determined whether or not the child is conscious, in pain, or acting typically.*

**417 and 416.7 (t):** "Children unable to sleep during nap time may not be confined to sleeping surface (cot, crib, etc.) but instead must be offered a supervised place for quiet play."

*Since children who cannot sleep can't be made to stay on mats or cots, caregivers should plan ahead, deciding which quiet materials should be made available and where those children will gather while others sleep. Some suggestions: crayons and plain paper, puzzles, books, manipulatives, dolls, stuffed animals, easy mazes and word searches for older children.*



Contact your local CCCR or licensor or registrar for more information on changes to regulations. **The new regulations can be located here:**

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/mail/legal/Regulatory/final/>

## Infant-Toddler Curriculum

*“...The curriculum (for infants and toddlers) occurs naturally during the two main activities of the day: caregiving and free play. These are when children encounter and solve problems. The basis of the curriculum is interaction – with people (adults and peers) and with objects.”*

### Considerations when designing curriculum:

**Infancy has three stages.** Between birth and age three, a child goes through three distinct developmental stages: young infant, mobile infant, and toddler. The type of care and experiences given should change when the child's stage changes and should also take into consideration transitions between stages.

**Infants learn holistically.** Infants do not experience social, emotional, intellectual, language, and physical learning separately. Adults are most helpful to the young child when they interact in ways that reflect an understanding of the fact that the child is learning from the whole experience, not just the part of the experience that the adult gives attention.

**Relationships are primary for development.** The infant is dependent on close, caring, ongoing relationships for positive physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Infants develop best when they are sure of having trusted caregivers who can read their cues and respond to their needs.

**Infants are developing their first sense of self through contact with others.** An infant or toddler learns most of how he or she thinks and feels by imitating and incorporating the behaviors of those who care for her or him—how they first see themselves, how they think they should function, how they expect others to function in relation to them.

**Home culture is an important part of a child's developing identity.** Because an infant's sense of self is such a crucial part of a child's make-up, early care must ensure that links with family, home culture, and home language are a central part of program policy.

*(Continued on page 4)*



**“Good programs for children from birth to age 3 are distinctly different from all other types of programs – they are NOT a scaled-down version of a good pre-school.”**

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8*, by the National Association for The Education of Young Children. (Website)

## The Region 6 ITRC

The NY State Infant-Toddler Resource Center (ITRC) have been working to improve care for infants and toddlers in the lower Hudson Valley since 2003. That is when funds were set aside for an annual contract to establish Infant-Toddler Resource Centers in the seven Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regions in New York, coordinated through the Early Care and Learning Council.

Our goal is to support parents and care providers to provide high quality care, by sharing research-based information, providing on-site coaching, and delivering informative, interactive trainings throughout the region.



## How to reach us:

Infant-Toddler Specialists are located in the Westchester, Rockland, and Dutchess-Putnam Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCRRs) and serve all 7 counties of OCFS Region 6.

### Gwen Brown Murray

#### **Rockland, Orange, Sullivan Counties**

Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.  
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### Rosemarie Lawton

#### **Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster Counties**

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### Miriam Kerness (Coordinator)

#### **Westchester County**

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**Infants are active, self-motivated learners.** Environments and activities that keep motivation, experimentation, and curiosity alive must be constructed to facilitate the infant learning process.

**Infants are not all alike—they are individuals with unique temperaments.** Because of these differences, staff needs to individualize and adapt to each child.

**Language skills and habits develop early.** The development of language is particularly crucial during the infant-toddler period. Quality care provides many opportunities for infants to engage in meaningful, experience-based communication with their caregivers, and have their communications acknowledged and encouraged.

**Environments are powerful.** Infants and toddlers are strongly influenced by the environments and routines they experience each day. This is particularly true for very young infants who cannot move themselves from one environment to another. The physical environment, group size, daily schedules, plans, and routines must foster the establishment of small intimate groups in which relationships with trusted caregivers can develop.

**Adults exhibit strong emotions and opinions when entrusted with the care of infants.** Parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers often experience heightened emotions about how to care for infants and toddlers. Strategies for dealing with conflicts that may emerge between parents and staff must be considered by each program.