

Welcome to the Region 6 Infant-Toddler Resource Center (ITRC) Newsletter!



July 2014

Issue 3

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

In this issue:

- ◇ How can we Help You?
- ◇ The Environment Rating Scale: checking for quality!
- ◇ Spotlight on new regulations
- ◇ Sensory play: sand, water, and more!
- ◇ About the ITRC
- ◇ Specialists contact info



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** (see article below) 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
- ◆ Information for providers and parents by phone or email on issues concerning best practices for infants and toddlers
- ◆ Program start-up assistance

What are the Environment Rating Scales?

- * The ITERS (Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale) assesses quality in infant/toddler classrooms in child care centers. The FCCERS (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale) assesses quality in family child care homes.
- * Through a systematic approach, a caregiver can rate the quality of her/his setting. When an Infant-Toddler Specialist uses the tool, she will observe in the program for a few hours in order to complete the scale. She will return at a later time to discuss findings. Together, the caregiver and specialist will draft a list of goals for change, to improve the overall program-the materials available, language and interactions, and/or attendance to healthy practices.
- * Using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) means free assistance to make your program even better! Contact a specialist today (contact information is on page 4) to ask her about an "ERS"!

Spotlight on Regulations:

Family communication

New Family and Group Family regulations were approved and went into effect May 1, 2014.

417 and 416.15(b)(22)i through iv: “The program must give the parent, **at time of admission of the child**, a written policy statement including but not limited to:

- ◇ Responsibilities of the program;
- ◇ Responsibilities of the parent;
- ◇ Policies of the program regarding admission and disenrollment policies;
- ◇ How parents will be notified of accidents, serious incidents and injuries;
- ◇ The plan for behavior management;
- ◇ The evacuation plan;
- ◇ The program activities;
- ◇ Summary of the program’s health policies;
- ◇ Actions the program will take if child is not picked up as scheduled;
- ◇ Meal arrangements
- ◇ Instructional materials on the available procedures if they suspect their child has been abused or maltreated
- ◇ How to access the regulations
- ◇ Contact information for the Office including Child Care Complaint Line
- ◇ Transportation policy; and,
- ◇ As applicable, written notification that there is a firearm, shotgun, rifle or ammunition on the premises

We all know that to be successful a child care business must maintain excellent communication with the families of the children in care. The new regulation above mandates that a significant amount of information be shared with families- some of this may be new! Perhaps a program has never had a family handbook, or just directs families to its website.

The information above can be shared in a variety of ways, from a handbook, to forms given at admission. A signed statement from the parent/guardian that she/he received each item is recommended, to ensure that everyone is on “the same page”.

For caregivers, teachers, children, and their families, communication is the key to great relationships, a sound program, and professional success!

Always remember:

Human connections shape the neural connections
from which the mind emerges.



So Much Learning With Sensory Play

Children construct their own knowledge in response to their experiences. Children learn many things on their own without the intervention of older children or adults.

Children are intrinsically motivated to learn and do not need rewards from adults to motivate learning.

-Jean Piaget



Sometimes teachers think children learn only when teachers are telling, doing, instructing, referencing, or leading. But it's clear that when the right materials are present, children's natural drive to learn and explore takes off at a quick pace!

Sensory play provides learning opportunities in every domain: language, motor, cognitive, and social-emotional. From birth, children have learned about their world by smelling, touching, tasting, hearing, and seeing. Each time the senses are used, neural pathways in the brain called "synapses" are strengthened.

So, let children explore sand, water, and other scoop-able and moldable materials such as dirt, cloud dough, "quick sand", goop, non-toxic pet bedding, shredded paper, gravel, and play-doh.

Children will learn –

words such as wet, dry, smooth, sieve, crinkly, textured

that different items react differently to touch and pressure

that adding colored water to a substance may give the whole substance an entirely new hue

the concept of object permanence is tested and upheld as small animals or worms disappear into the dirt

Children will use their fine motor skills

to roll, push, and squeeze squishy play-doh, or silky cloud dough.

to use child-sized tweezers lets them pinch and peck at objects hiding in the sand or other material

strengthen their hand-eye coordination as they pour water from a cup into a narrow funnel or tube.

Children will develop social-emotional skills and learning dispositions –

curiosity

persistence

confidence

planning

self-control

cooperation

social language

(continued on page 4)



The Region 6 ITRC

The NY State Infant-Toddler Resource Centers (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.



(continued from page 3)

Messy sensory play is full of crucial learning opportunities. So dust off the sand-table, get out some sturdy small plastic bins suitable, or break out the garden hose.

Watch as children purposefully and painstakingly figure out how to transfer materials from a bucket to a pipe, speak excitedly about the colored bubbles swirling in the water, and gain skill at sharing space around the sensory table, often with the minor assistance of an attentive adult close by.

Young children whose lack of judgment leads them to throw sand or spray water at others are reminded of the need for care and consideration, and given second, third, and fourth “chances”, in order to build those critical skills of self-restraint, which will serve them well throughout life.

Consider the ages and developmental needs of the children in your care, and witness the connections the children will make by “learning in the sand”!

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

Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
235 North Main Street, Suite 11
Spring Valley, NY 10977
gwenb@rocklandchildcare.org
Tel: (845) 425-0009 x. 613

Rosemarie Lawton

Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster

Child Care Council of Dutchess/Putnam, Inc.
70 Overocker Road
Poughkeepsie, NY
rlawton@childcaredutchess.org
Tel: (845) 473-4141 x.217

Miriam Kerness (Coordinator)

Westchester

Child Care Council of Westchester
313 Central park Avenue, Ste. 4
Scarsdale, NY 10583
miriamk@cccwny.org
Tel: (914) 761-3456 x. 134