

Play and Childhood Obesity

Message from the Director

How many of you remember spending a rainy Saturday playing under a tent made of sheets and sofa cushions? This was a fort as we fought the bad guys, a castle where we were the knights defending the realm, or a playhouse for tea parties. It did not take much to put this together and our imaginations carried us far away. When is the last time you saw kids turn off the television or computer and engage in this type of play?

This issue of the Skillman Center's newsletter focuses on how we as adults can encourage children to participate in physical activity and imaginative play. We have included suggestions for games and other activities as well as recipes for healthy meals and web pages where you can find more information.

A hot topic in the news today is the obesity of Americans; an issue that is integrally tied to physical activity and play by children. A report released by the Surgeon General in 2001 stated:

"In 1999, an estimated 61 percent of U.S. adults were overweight, along with 13 percent of children and adolescents. Obesity among adults has doubled since 1980, while overweight among adolescents has tripled. Only 3 percent of



The ever popular hide-out: a table and a sheet.

all Americans meet at least four of the five federal Food Guide Pyramid recommendations for the intake of grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats. And less than one-third of Americans meet the federal recommendations to engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days a week, while 40 percent of adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all."¹

These statistics are alarming not only for adults but for the examples set for children. How can we expect this next generation to be healthy and productive if this is how they see us living? For example, when did "supersize" become a part of our everyday vocabulary?

We hope this newsletter provides some food for thought (please pardon the pun). As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

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¹ http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/news/pressreleases/pr_obesity.htm

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The Urban Child Advocate
 The practical guide to urban children's issues from the Skillman Center for Children

Mission Statement

The Skillman Center for Children acts as a catalyst of change for urban children, youth and families while contributing significantly to the preparation of professionals, the capacity of community organizations, and the generation and dissemination of research-based information and analyses that inform both practice and public policy.

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Childhood Obesity: It's More Than the Extra Weight

We all know what it feels like to put on that pair of jeans that are just a mite too tight. It only takes a few extra pounds on a child to make their clothes feel uncomfortable, to restrict movement and to have their enthusiasm for physical activity plummet. When a kid slows down, weight gain speeds up.

One study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (2001) calls obesity in children an "epidemic." According to the study: the number of overweight African-American or Hispanic children more than doubled in 12 years; the number of overweight white children also climbed 50 percent; by 1998, nearly 22 percent of African-American children ages 4 to 12 were overweight along with 22 percent of Hispanic children and 12 percent of white children. (<http://jama.ama-assn.org/>)

Children may begin gaining unnecessary weight between the ages of three and seven years. By then, they are spending a great deal of time sitting behind a desk at school. After school, they might play video/computer games or watch several hours of television. They may also be eating fast food three to six times per week (the national average). These habits can easily lead to overweight or chubby kids.

Children of this age may not participate in much physical activity (especially as many schools have cut physical education from their curriculum). When overweight children do exert themselves during active play, they are likely to become short of breath, overheated and sweat profusely. At this point, kids may begin to feel inadequate at physical activity/sports. They may participate less adding to an even more sedentary lifestyle and leading to even more weight gain.

There are serious ramifications for children who are not eating properly, exercising enough, or getting enough fruits and vegetables in their diet. An overweight child is more likely to suffer from asthma, high blood pressure, orthopedic complications, gallstones, sleep apnea, and Type 2 diabetes than a child of normal weight. Obese girls tend to begin puberty early, even before the age of 10, which can lead to endocrine problems in adulthood.¹

¹Laine, Kristen. (2003). A Heavy Burden: With childhood obesity on the rise, learn how you and your community can help children adopt better habits. www.healthwell.com/delicious-online/d_backs/Jun_03/obesity.cfm

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Taking on the Media: A Report from Britain



A watchdog group that monitors Britain's food and health is looking at proposals that would restrict ads targeting children and youth. This will have major ramifications for companies such as McDonalds, Coca-Cola, and Pepsico that are fighting against regulations on several fronts. This debate is a signal that obesity, a big worry here in the U.S., is a key issue in much of Europe as well.

The Food Standards Agency, an independent group set up by British Parliament in 2000, will bring obesity recommendations to the government. Issues they are considering include a ban on food advertisements targeting preschool-age children, banning the use of cartoon characters or children's television stars in advertisements aimed at children, and requiring healthier options in vending machines at publicly funded venues. Some of these regulations might even dictate whether Coca-Cola can sponsor certain sports teams. These types of marketing restrictions are already in place in other parts of Europe. For example, since 1991, Sweden has had a ban on television advertising directed toward kids under the age of 12. ¹

This is an interesting idea – what would U.S. television look like if there were no more commercials for fast food or computer games? More importantly, what would be the impact on the health and well-being of our kids?

¹ Leith, Keith (2003). British to fight obesity in kids: Proposals include curbing TV ads aimed at children, raising concerns for firms like Coca-Cola. www.ajc.com/business/content/business/coke/1103/12obesity.html

Did you know?

A CDC study in 2000 found that 49.9 percent of school districts across the country have signed contracts with soft-drink makers.

Michigan's Position on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports

The Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports has issued a report advancing regular physical activity as being essential for the mental and physical health of every child and teenager in our state. Data indicate that one of every two children in Michigan today is likely to die prematurely from preventable cardiovascular disease or preventable cancer. Two major contributors to chronic disease - sedentary lifestyle and excess weight - are becoming more prevalent with each passing year. There is no doubt that positive exercise habits formed in childhood frequently carry over into adulthood and may

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Did you know?

U.S. children ages 2 to 18 currently spend an average of 38 hours a week in front of televisions, video games, and computers. This is a full workweek of hours not spent outside or in other physical activity.

Almost 1,000 commercials air every Saturday morning and two-thirds of cartoon-show ads promote high-calorie foods.

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help reduce death and illness from chronic disease. Below are but a few of the recommendations from the Council:¹

Exercise Recommendations

- ◆ While many types of physical activity are beneficial, a significant portion of exercise time should be spent in aerobic activities utilizing large muscle groups, where heart rate and breathing rate are elevated.
- ◆ In addition to traditional sports and games, lifetime activities such as walking, jogging,



swimming, cycling, and skating should be emphasized so every child can learn to enjoy and successfully perform the exercise, regardless of his or her initial ability level.

- ◆ Parents should serve as role models and be encouraged to incorporate enjoyable physical activity into the lives of all family members. It is particularly important for family members to support each others' efforts in exercise and sports activities.
- ◆ Parents should monitor the time their children spend watching television, playing video games, and using the computer. If children are spending substantial portions of their leisure time in passive sedentary activity, parents should intervene.

Recommendations for Schools

- ◆ Each school child in Michigan should have at least 30 minutes of physical activity as an integral part of the school day.
- ◆ School physical education pro-

Did you know?

Only one state, Illinois, requires daily physical education for students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

grams should emphasize personal and social skills such as cooperation, best effort, and following directions.

- ◆ Teachers and school administrators in health-related fitness programs should keep current with recent research findings so they may design appropriate programs and communicate effectively with their students.

Recommendation for Communities

- ◆ Communities are encouraged to develop and support programs that promote physical activities for children, including after-school programs, youth sports leagues, recreation centers, etc.



Recommendation for Health Professions

- ◆ Health and medical professionals should join with educators and parents to give children a unified, clear message that physical activity is essential for health.

Risk Factors for Michigan Residents²

- ◆ Michigan's adult population is more likely to smoke, have elevated serum cholesterol, and have high blood pressure compared to the U.S. as a whole.
- ◆ 34 percent of Michigan adults are overweight - more than in any other state.
- ◆ 56 percent of Michigan adults report being physically inactive. It is estimated that almost 35 percent of chronic heart disease can be attrib-



¹ See www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/vipf/KidText.htm for the full report.
² *ibid*

uted to physical inactivity. Nationally, this translates to \$5.7 billion in unnecessary health care costs from lack of physical activity.

When considering Michigan children, the risk profiles for chronic disease development are no better. Consider the following:

- ◆ One third of Michigan school children are overweight. In fact, they are among the heaviest in the nation. For example, a typical 17-year-old child is 7 pounds heavier than the national average.
- ◆ One of five African-American girls, one of six African-American boys, and one of twelve Caucasian children have significantly elevated resting blood pressures.
- ◆ 2 to 4 percent of Michigan school children have “severely high” blood pressure, compared to a national average of 1 percent.
- ◆ 39 percent of Michigan children have elevated cholesterol levels compared to a national average of 25 percent.

Given the association between physical activity habits and cardiovascular disease risk factor profiles, the impact of physical inactivity among children on the health of the citizens of Michigan is enormous.

GO PLAY!

Looking for a place to find a sports team or other active recreational activities in

Detroit? Go to

www.detroitkids.org

This is the Skillman Center’s Web site that lists over 2,000 programs providing help and activities in Detroit for kids.

Exercise Ideas for Kids

Adults can make simple changes that will contribute to a child’s level of activity (and won’t hurt participating adults either!). Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Whenever you are shopping with a child, park at the far end of the lot and walk to the store. When shopping for groceries, have the child push the shopping cart, then both of you can return it to the store when you are finished.

- ◆ Go ahead and allow the child to watch his or her favorite television show on one condition – they have to stand up, dance or move around for the duration of each commercial.
- ◆ If a teenager is always on the telephone, tell them they can talk as long as they walk – just walking around the house will help increase their activity level. If they sit down, the conversation is over!
- ◆ Consider planting a garden – it can just be a small plot of vegetables and/or flowers. Ask children to help plant, weed and water the garden.



These may seem like insignificant activities but they do burn calories. Sitting only uses 30-50 calories per hour, while standing burns twice that much at 60-110 calories per hour. Walking slowly burns 120-200 calories per hour. Even shaking the salad dressing or beating eggs will use more energy than being a couch potato.¹

¹See Southern, Melinda, von Almen, Kristian & Schumacher, Heidi (2003). Trim kids. www.trim-kids.com for further suggestions.

Do You Know What Kids Are Eating for School Lunch?

The national school lunch program was signed into law in 1946 when too many young men during World War II failed their physicals due to malnutrition. The program provides low-cost or free lunches to more than 26 million children each school day. In 1998, the program was expanded to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after-school programs. The

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program is administered at the federal level. At the state level, state education agencies operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

Many of us remember those school lunches of mystery meat, mushy peas and cartons of milk (much of which ended up in the trash can). These lunches are still around, but in middle and high schools around the country, students are given the choice of bypassing the lunch lady and heading for the à la carte line where they can build their own meals. The traditional lunch line might include turkey with a salad and vegetable side, but

these other options allow students to pick a big cookie with potato chips or select nachos as an entrée with candy for dessert.

Although the federal school lunch program sets the standards for nutrition in school lunches, the recent à la carte meals are not under this jurisdiction.

In 2000, a nationwide survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, discovered that more than 20 percent of schools sell McDonald's hamburgers, Pizza Hut pizzas, or other brand-name fast foods. A second survey of California high schools, also done in 2000, found that 95 percent sold à la carte fast foods, including many items from Taco Bell, Subway, and other big-name franchises.¹

In theory, serving healthy lunches should be easy since federal regulations dictate calories and nutrients and the USDA provides 20 percent of school lunch food. The reality, however, is that enforcement of the rules is spotty, and critics complain that farm products the government buys for schools cater more to agricultural interests than healthy meal-planning. Even federal studies show most lunches have too much fat, and this is after the USDA overhauled the program in 1994 and limited fat to 30 percent of a lunch's calories. As of 2001, almost 75 percent of all schools still do not meet the new limit.²

¹Woolston, Chris (2003). School lunches: Invasion of the body fatteners. <http://www.ahealthyme.com/topic/schoollunch>

Although it is much easier to let children purchase a school lunch than pack one, adults do need to at least be aware of what is being served at lunch. More importantly, what are kids eating regardless of what is being offered? Choices are fine, but options should be healthy, not ones that encourage poor eating habits.

²See www.cnn.com/2003/EDUCATION/12/11/school.lunch.ap/

Healthy Eating Suggestions¹

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends the following:

- ◆ Follow the Dietary Guidelines for healthy eating (www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines).
- ◆ Guide your family's choices rather than dictate foods.
- ◆ Encourage children to eat when hungry and to eat slowly.
- ◆ Eat meals together as a family as often as possible.
- ◆ Carefully cut down on the amount of fat and calories in your family's diet.
- ◆ Don't place your child on a restrictive diet.
- ◆ Avoid the use of food as a reward or withholding food as punishment.
- ◆ Children should be encouraged to drink water and to limit intake of beverages with added sugars, such as soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, and sports drinks.
- ◆ Plan for healthy snacks. Stock the refrigerator with fat-free or low-fat milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables instead of soft drinks or snacks that are high in fat, calories, or added sugars and low in essential nutrients.
- ◆ Aim to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- ◆ Discourage eating meals or snacks while watching television.
- ◆ Eating a healthy breakfast is a good way to start the day and may be important in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.



¹See www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm

Other supportive suggestions from the Surgeon General include:

- ◆ Let the child know he or she is loved and appreciated whatever his or her weight. An overweight child probably knows better than anyone else that he or she has a weight problem. Overweight children need support, acceptance, and encouragement from their parents.
- ◆ Focus on children's health and positive qualities, not a child's weight.
- ◆ Try not to make children feel different if they are overweight but focus on gradually changing the family's physical activity and eating habits.
- ◆ Be a good role model for children. If children see adults enjoying healthy foods and physical activity, they are more likely to do the same now and for the rest of their lives.
- ◆ Realize that an appropriate goal for many overweight children is to maintain their current weight while growing normally in height.²

²See www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm

Recipes for Kids¹

These recipes were developed for overweight kids, but everyone should enjoy them.

Oven-Fried Chicken

Chicken breasts, skin removed
Salt or salt substitute and pepper to taste
1 cup egg substitute
Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
Non-fat butter-flavored spray

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Season the chicken breasts. Dip the chicken breasts into the egg substitute and roll in the bread crumbs (re-dip and roll in the breadcrumbs again for a thicker crust). Spray with the butter-flavored spray and place on a cookie sheet or baking pan. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes.

Nutritional Analysis:

1 chicken breast: 3 - 4 protein units, ½ carbohydrate unit (145 calories, 5 grams fat)

¹Southern, Melinda, von Almen, Kristian & Schumacher, Heidi (2001). Trim kids. HarperResource. www.trim-kids.com/

Quesadillas

Tortillas (wheat are better)
Reduced-fat cheese
(shredded)
Liquid non-fat
butter-flavored pump
spray
Salsa
Fat-free sour cream



Spray a tortilla with liquid non-fat butter-flavored spray and sprinkle with the shredded cheese. Top with another tortilla. Lightly spray the outside of the tortillas with the liquid non-fat butter-flavored spray. Grill or pan-fry (in a non-stick frying pan) the tortillas for about 3 minutes on each side (until the cheese is melted). Cut into quarters and serve with salsa and fat-free sour cream. Other quesadilla filling options include: chopped tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, sautéed vegetables and/or grilled chicken pieces.

Nutritional Analysis:

1 quesadilla = 200 calories, 2-5 grams fat (2 carbohydrates, 1 protein)

Yogurt Fruit Dip

1 package (8 ounces) fat-free cream cheese, softened
1 cup vanilla-flavored, low-fat yogurt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind or lemon juice
2 Tablespoons honey or 8 packets artificial sweetener

In a mixing bowl, beat together all ingredients smooth. Chill before serving. Serve with your favorite pieces of fruit.

Nutritional Analysis: Per 2 Tablespoons: 35 calories, 1 gram fat

Frozen Grapes

Fresh grapes (your favorite kind)

Wash the grapes well. Pick the grapes off of the stems and place in a freezer bag. Place in the freezer to enjoy as a quick frozen snack.

Nutritional Analysis: ½ cup = 80 calories (1 carbohydrate)

Ask the Urban Families Program: Obesity in Children¹

The incidence of obesity in children and adolescents has nearly doubled over the past two decades. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, an estimated 15 percent of children and adolescents, age 6 to 19 years, are overweight. These data are of notable concern because overweight adolescents are at increased risk to become overweight adults. The following are a few questions and answers about obesity and children:

Q: Can obesity begin in infancy?



A: Yes, habits and food addictions of children begin with the eating habits of their family. A dietary intake survey conducted by Gerber (a manufacturer of baby food), found that many infants and toddlers have energy intakes (food) that exceed their needed nourishment by as much as 20 to 30 percent, with high-calorie low-nutritional foods such as sweetened beverages, French fries, candy or dessert, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, and salty snacks entering their diets as early as 19 months. Gerber discovered that **the most commonly consumed vegetable for toddlers age 15 months to 2 years of age was French fries!** A quarter or more of these children surveyed did not eat any other fruits or vegetables.



Q: How do parents/caregivers know if a child is overweight, or is at risk of becoming overweight?

A: If there is concern about your child's weight, the first thing a parent/caregiver should do is talk with the child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian if the child is enrolled in a health center program. Work with them to determine the healthiest weight goal for your child's age.

As part of a healthy weight program, parents and caregivers can help children reach and maintain wellness goals by making healthy changes at home. Healthy eating and physical activity do not become habits overnight. It takes time and effort to make them part of a daily routine.



¹ Adapted from *If your child is overweight: A guide for parents*. American Dietetic Association (2003).

Selected Videos about the Prevention of Childhood Obesity available in the Resource Center.

See page 21 for information about borrowing materials from the Resource Center.

Being Active as a Family

United Learning, 15 minutes, *GV 443 .B44 2002*

Emphasizes activity for the whole family to inspire children to make physical activity a part of a healthy lifestyle.

Fit for a King: The Smart Kid's Guide to Food and Fun

American Academy of Pediatrics, *RJ 206 .F57 1997*

This program helps youngsters, ages 8 to 11, and their parents understand the role of nutrition and regular physical activity in a healthy lifestyle.

Raising Healthy Children: A Guide for African American Families

American Academy of Pediatrics, *GV 443 .R34 2003*

This 30-minute video includes a guidebook that offers information on seven steps to Raising Healthy Children: Eat Right, Get Moving, Maintain a Healthy Body Weight, See Your Doctor Regularly, Create a Healthy Environment, Nourish the Soul and Get Involved.

A Hand-out for Families:

Take the Healthy Habits Quiz to help identify areas where your family may want to make changes.

Healthy Habits Quiz:

Do you and your family...	Yes	No	Sometimes
Have regularly scheduled mealtimes at home?			
Eat meals together at least once a day?			
Plan snacks?			
Tailor portion sizes to each person's needs?			
Try to make mealtimes enjoyable?			
Avoid making everyone eat everything on their plate?			
Make meals last more than fifteen minutes?			
Eat only in designated areas of the house?			
Avoid using food to punish or reward?			
Enjoy physical activities together once or twice a week?			

"Yes" = 2 points

"Sometimes" = 1 point

"No" = 0 points

Your total score is

If your total score is:

20-22 Your family is on the right track. Use this guide for additional healthy eating and physical activity ideas.

13-19 Your family is doing well, but could work on areas where you answered "no"/"sometimes."

12 or lower This guide should be very helpful as you try to help your child reach a healthy weight.

Adapted from 2003 American Dietetic Association. "If Your Child is Overweight: A Guide for Parents, 2nd Ed."

Set Healthy Realistic Goals

When you and your family make step-by-step changes and set realistic goals, you are more likely to succeed in reaching them. It's best to set goals for healthy eating and physical activity that apply to the entire family. Change that will be permanent always takes time. Even after you've incorporated more healthy foods and physical activity into your family's routine, it will take time to notice a change in you child's weight.

Here are a few goal-setting tips:

- ◆ Parents must take the lead in setting goals and changing longtime habits.
- ◆ Decide on two or three specific, small changes in eating or physical activity at a time.
- ◆ Keeping a daily food and activity log is a good way to keep track of healthy eating and physical activity goals. Each day, try to write down everything your child eats and drinks and how much time is spent doing physical activities. If your child is old enough, he or she can keep the log on his or her own. Focus on accomplishments, not failures.
- ◆ Don't expect perfection. If your goal is to take a family walk four days a week, and you miss a day, that's okay. What's important is that you are making a healthy change.
- ◆ When your family has turned a healthy change into a habit, it's time for a reward! Do not reward yourselves with food. Reward yourselves with a fun physical activity, such as bowling, roller skating, or riding bikes together.



Adapted from Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids: A Nutrition and Activity Guide for Parents. For the American Dietetic Association's "Wellpoint", see www.wellpoint.com

Imaginary Friends, Tea Parties and Landing on Mars in a Cardboard Ship

Play is integral to childhood. Through play, children create their own worlds, make their own decisions, and develop their identity. Neuroscientists believe play is not only necessary for emotional and physical health, but also contributes to the love of learning. Just think of play as the brain's scaffold for development – a vehicle for increasing neural structures.¹

Play contributes to cognitive development because it allows children to practice new skills and gain new experiences while uniting body, mind and spirit. Play activities enable children to transform reality into symbolic representations, consolidate previous learning, and develop creativity and aesthetic appreciation. Importantly, children learn to love to learn through play, and can learn without the stress of having to achieve.²

Thus, play can build physical, cognitive and social skills while contributing to emotional well-being. Children can learn to live with everyday experiences through play, and play therapy can be used to master emotional traumas.³

There are several benefits of children playing at “pretend”:

- ◆ Make believe friends help children realize that the thoughts and feelings happening inside them might be shared by others.
- ◆ Their make believe friends help children practice social skills and can help them feel more secure when they are nervous about a new situation.
- ◆ By pretending with other children, they are learning to work together and to deal with conflict.

- ◆ Pretend play involves making stories and learning how a story fits together that will help them when they begin to read.
- ◆ Pretend play, the development of receptive and the expressive use of language, and the use of mental representation all happen at the same time.

¹Isenberg, Joan Packer & Quisenberry, Nancy. (2002). Play: Essential for All Children. Position Paper for the Association for Childhood Education International.

²Strickland, Eric (2000). The power of play! Scholastic Early Childhood Today. 14 (6), 36-43.

³Cohen, Tsivia (2003). What happens when kids pretend. www.chchildrensmuseum.org/pretend.cfm

⁴Bergen, Doris (2001) Pretend play and young children's development. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Childhood Education

Moving from Monkey Bars to Mudpies: Rethinking the Playground

By Jean Vortkamp

When I drive in Detroit and see empty lots, I imagine them fenced in with a couple of staff people in there and children everywhere creating their own little worlds, giving them control over their own environment and the time to dream up a future that they often lack in sometimes violent, child unfriendly neighborhoods.



When most adults think about what a playground should look like, they think of their childhood experiences with swings and some monkey bars. However, these only promote the gross motor skills of children - strength, balance and coordination. While these skills are important, there is another type of playground that can give kids things that will help build their physical strength, enhance cognitive development and help them build social skills ... the **Adventure Playground**.

I learned about this kind of playground by accident through our neighborhood's children's community garden. The adults and older teens were intent on having a beautiful and perfect final product of a learning garden. But the kids had a different idea. They enjoyed constantly changing it. One day there would be a pond where the day before there was a planned flower bed. The garden was never neat and tidy. It looked like a giant mess of flowers, vegetables, fruit and piles of dirt. When we would get a load of dirt, the pile became things. At one point a pile had become a burial ground for a bee. The kids came up with the idea to have a funeral for "brother bee", and imitated their parents at funerals. They went around and all said things they would miss about the bee and "fake cried".

I discovered that for kids, learning was about the process of exploring and changing - not ending up with a completed project. They wanted a place to themselves that they could change without asking a grown-up. One day I stumbled upon the idea of an adventure playground, which is exactly what the kids I was working with kept changing the garden into. Here is a quote from some playground builders who use the natural landscape:



"...over the years we've asked for information from over 2,000 children, and sure enough, they don't like typical playgrounds. What they *do* like are all the things *we* used to like when *we* were kids: playing in the leaves, climbing trees, looking for bugs, climbing on rocks, and making forts. But one of the most significant findings is that kids also want their playgrounds to provide a place for quiet reflection. They like listening to the wind and watching things grow and change. They like building and inventing things, exploring and discovering, playing in the dirt, playing in the rain, and socializing...." ¹

Adventure playgrounds are basically fields filled with piles of dirt, stone, sand and wood. Maybe there are natural features such as trees and big rocks. It is staffed the whole time it is open. Kids can use hammers and nails to build things. There is a water source for making mud. Some have live farm animals or places where kids can make fires and cook their own food. Everything is temporary and changeable. A true child's kingdom is a rare place in this country - not fabricated for them to buy things and not regulated so they are forced to enjoy specific things in a specific way.



Advantages of an Adventure Playground

- ◆ Provides supervision for young people and positive youth/adult interaction.
- ◆ Promotes functional, constructive, dramatic, and group play.
- ◆ Provides a variety of experiences, graduated challenges and flexible materials. In short, it is developmentally appropriate for all the children that go because they are all designing their own playground, every day!
- ◆ Lower start up cost.
- ◆ Surprisingly, no more liability than in a "regular" playground.²

Challenges of an Adventure Playground

- ◆ Adults might think it unsightly (although nothing a privacy fence couldn't hide).
- ◆ Cost of the privacy fence.
- ◆ Cost of the staffing and training.
- ◆ More money into the design than a "regular" playground.
- ◆ Convincing people that kids really like these better.

For more information go to <http://home.c2i.net/swan/index.htm> or www.bdja.org/oli/index.html

¹ <http://www.naturalplaygrounds.com/kidstalkaboutplay.html>

² Johnson, Christie and Yawkey, (1987) Play and Early Childhood Development. p202

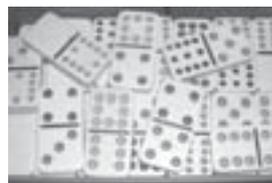


Setting the Stage: A Check List for Getting Ready to Play

Access to space and freedom to play are important for children, but so are hands-on resources. These can be as simple as having paper and crayons ready, a stack of boxes, or a bag of old clothes or fabric that they can dive into. Supervision by adults should allow for safety, but not “crimp”

their style. Here are a few questions you should ask before setting the stage for play:

- Can the kids choose what they want to do?
- Are there things that are movable and can become many things (i.e., boxes, big pieces of fabric, pieces of wood)?
- Is there an open area on the floor or grass where children can play? ¹
- Are you providing long, uninterrupted periods of play for them? This needs to be more than a 15 minute commercial break. Kids need lots of time to develop complex stories and tell them over and over.
- Are all fun adults nearby, ones who are willing to let kids lead, act goofy and follow their own imaginations? Are they willing to “watch over” when the time comes? Are adults aware of when they need to intervene, in particular, when the kids are “stuck” and need some suggestions?
- Are meddling adults who want to control this time kept at a safe distance away from the kids? Are they prevented from wrecking the play time mood?
- Do you have some dress up clothes (this can simply be a box of old fabric)?
- Are there some puppets available (some old socks and a marker will do)?
- Can you put together a box of assorted things such as a broken phone, some chalk, an old baby doll, some plates?
- Are they wearing their play clothes? They need to be free, not worried about getting in trouble because of their outfit.
- Is play free from an adult-set schedule?
- Are there simple rules about behavior and enforcement for those?
- Is the play free from competition or any sort of judgment?
- Is there some system of conflict resolution in place? Have the kids been taught how to resolve the issues themselves?
- Are there simple safety rules about the materials?
- If it is a game with rules, are the rules spelled out clearly before beginning? For example, rules for jump rope or the card game UNO may vary for kids depending on how they were taught to play.



Ask the Urban Families Program: Boundaries and Play

Q: An important question for adults to ask about playing with their children is, how can I play with my child and also teach them about boundaries and setting limits?

A: Setting limits is a necessary and important part of life with children and that includes play between parent and child. Having parents establish boundaries provides the child with feelings of emotional security and physical safety. Boundaries provide predictability and help the child learn self-responsibility and self-control. Children do not feel safe or valued in a relationship without boundaries. Limits are part of the whole structure of discipline a parent establishes with their child and should be well thought out in advance, i.e., what is acceptable or not acceptable behavior in our family? Getting the child to take boundaries seriously also seems to create empathy for the feelings of others and teaches the child to respect the rights and needs of others.

¹Strickland, Eric (2000). The power of play! Scholastic Early Childhood Today. 14 (6), 36-43.

Parents may begin by setting time limits. “We can play until dinner is ready”, or “Let’s see how many games we can get in before it’s time for your bath.” When it’s time to stop and the child isn’t ready to end the play, the parent can ask their child to remember what was said when they began. The parent may need to say, “I know you’re not ready to stop now, but that’s the rule. If you can show me how well you remember the rule this time, maybe next time we can play 5 minutes longer.” It may take several times before the child is able to willingly observe the limit, but it is a learning process and consistency is important.

The same thing holds true when the play is more physical. The behaviors and relationships that emerge in the child’s play are VERY important to the growth of the child, therefore, positive interactions should be encouraged. However, the parent is the rule maker, the teacher and the guide. A child cannot learn self-control until an opportunity to exercise self-control arises. Therefore, parents should be clear and firm about what is allowed and when to stop. It shouldn’t be surprising if the child wants to have their own way – don’t we all! But the consistently enforced rule must be, “This is the way parents and children or adults and children play in our family. You may play differently with other children, but this is the appropriate playing behavior with me.”



HARAPPA

“Harappa, a Japanese word, means ‘field’ where there is grass and flowers but nothing else. It usually implies a large place. Kids can play catch, play tag, or have a picnic, whatever they want. In Osaka, there are few ‘harappa’ left. I think it is very important for kids to have just a large place such as ‘harappa’ where they can create how to play there. Maybe an amusement park is fun, but they can’t be creative.” - Emiko Sanada, teacher, Osaka, Japan.

GAME CORNER

Coming up with games for kids is not that difficult – some of the games adults played as kids are just as much fun today as they were then. Here’s an old favorite:

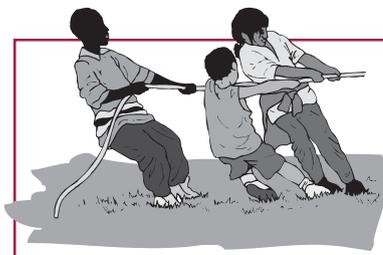
Ghosts in the Graveyard (A combination of tag and hide and go seek)

The kids cover their eyes and count to ten while one kid hides. All the kids go to look for the one who is hiding. When that kid is spotted, the other kids yell: GHOST IN THE GRAVEYARD and all the kids have to get back to Glue (a.k.a Ghoul or Safety) before the kid who was hiding catches them. Whoever is caught now becomes “It.” This game is best played at dusk, but is still a lot of fun during the day. Here’s an idea – put this newsletter down right now, gather the kids and you be “It” first to show them how the game is played if they do not already know how (plus you show the kids you know how to have fun too!).

Here’s a game from Guyana, South America, contributed by Treena Dundas.

Water Works

Start with two teams with equal number of players. Draw a line with chalk to mark the boundaries for each team. Decide how many rounds you want to play. Each team goes to an opposite corner where they cannot hear the other team. Then each team agrees on a pantomime activity (picking apples, rapping, etc.) Team 1 goes up to Team 2’s line and says to Team 2, “Good morning, good morning, we are here to build the waterworks”. Team 2 says ‘Good morning and begin’. Team 1 does their pantomimes until Team 2 guesses what they are doing. When Team 2 guesses correctly, Team 1 runs to its area behind the chalk line with Team 2 chasing them. Anyone caught becomes a member of the other team. Then the teams switch roles and they play again until they have played the number of rounds decided at the beginning of the game. The team with the most players at the end is the winner.



Selected Books and Videos about Play from the Resource Center



See page 21 for information about borrowing materials from the Resource Center.

Books

104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, And Coping Skills by Alanna Jones GV 1203 .J76 1998

365 Days of Creative Play: For Children 2 Years & Up by Sheila Ellison & Judith Gray
GV 1203 .E363 1995

All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders GV 1203 .A41 1998



Baby Days: Activities, Ideas, and Games for Enjoying Daily Life with a Child Under Three by Barbara Rowley HQ 774 .R68 2000

Baby Minds: Brain-Building Games Your Baby Will Love by Linda P. Acredolo HQ 774 .A27 2000

The Big Book of Stress-Relief Games: Quick, Fun Activities for Feeling Better by Robert Epstein HF 5548.85 .E66 2000

Childhood's Domain: Play and Place in Child Development by Robin C. Moore HQ 782 .M65 1990

Energizers and Icebreakers: For All Ages and Stages by Elizabeth S. Foster-Harrison HM 134 .F67 1989

Everybody Wins!: 150 Non-Competitive Games for Kids by Cynthia MacGregor
GV 1203 .M31 1998

Games to Play with Toddlers by Jackie Silberg GV 1203 .S537 1993

The Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside
by Mary S. Rivkin GV 191.63 .R58 1995

Green Fun : Plants As Play by Marianne Gjersvik TT 160 .G54 1997

Growing up Reading: Learning to Read through Creative Play
by Jill Frankel Hauser LB 1139.5 .R43 H38 1993

Hands Around the World: 365 Creative Ways to Build Cultural Awareness & Global Respect by Susan Milord LB 1537 .M55 1992

Helping Young Children Develop Through Play: A Practical Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers by Janet K. Sawyers & Cosby S. Rogers. HQ 782 .S36 1988



How to Play with Kids: A Powerful Field-Tested Nuts & Bolts Condensed Guide to Unleash and Improve Your "Kid-Relating" by Jim Therrell GV 443 .T437 1992

The Incredible Indoor Games Book by Bob Gregson GV 1229 .G74 1982

Juba This and Juba That: 100 African-American Games for Children by Darlene Powell Hopson GV 1204.82 .H66 1996

Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book: Activities from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood for Parents & Child Care Providers LB 1140.2 .M52 1991

Mud, Sand, and Water by Dorothy M. Hill LB 1027 .H42 1977

The Multicultural Game Book by Louise Orlando GV 1201 .O75 1993

Natural Learning: The Life History of an Environmental Schoolyard: Creating Environments for Rediscovering Nature's Way of Teaching by Robin C. Moore & Herb H. Wong LB 3251 .M56 1997



The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book: 133 Group Projects, Games, and Activities by Bob Gregson GV 1201 .G815 1984

The Picture Rulebook of Kids' Games by Roxanne Henderson GV 1201.42 .B76 1996

Play and Early Childhood Development by James E. Johnson HQ 782 .J83 1987

Play in the Lives of Children by Cosby S. Rogers HQ 782 .R63 1998

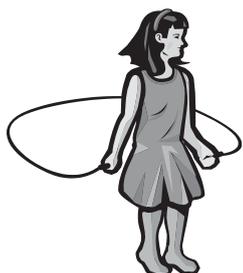
Playing, Living, Learning: A Worldwide Perspective on Children's Opportunities to Play by Cor Westland & Jane Knight HQ 782 .W47 1982

Play It!: Over 150 Great Games for Youth Groups edited by Wayne Rice and Mike Yanconelli GV 1201 .P53 2000

Play Therapy with Children in Crisis: Individual Group, and Family Treatment edited by Nancy Boyd Webb RJ 505 .P6 P56 1999

The Plug-In Drug : Television, Computers, and Family Life by Marie Winn HQ 784 .T4 W49 2002

Ready-To-Use Activities for Before and After School Programs by Verna Stassevitch GV 1203 .R37 1989



The Right Stuff for Children Birth to 8: Selecting Play Materials to Support Development by Martha Bronson LB 1140.35 .B76 1995

The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book by Terry Orlick GV 1201 .O72 1982

Team-Building Activities for Every Group by Alanna Jones GV 1203 .J77 1999

(Continued - Books and Videos about Play from the Resource Center)

What To Do When “There’s Nothing To Do”: 601 Tested Play Ideas for Young Children

GV 1203 .B674 1968

Who’s Calling the Shots: How to Respond Effectively to Children’s Fascination with War Play and War Toys by Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Diane E. Levin. *LB 1137 .C3 1990*

Win-Win Games for All Ages: Cooperative Activities for Building Social Skills by Josette Luvmour *GV 1203 L89 2002*

Your Child at Play: Two to Three Years by Marilyn M. Segal *HQ 767.9 .S43 1998*

Your Child at Play: Three to Five Years by Marilyn M. Segal *HQ 767.9 .S431 1998*

Your Child at Play: Five to Eight Years by Marilyn M. Segal *HQ 767.9 .S43 2000*

Videos

Age-Appropriate Play: The First Four Years

Injoy Productions, 2002, *HQ 782.A53 2002*

1: The First 12 Months (24 min.), 2: Twelve to 24 months (15:48), 3: Two and Three-year-olds (17:21)

This series helps parents to: promote learning and other developmental skills through play; provide safe, interesting and appropriate learning environments; and recognize developmental milestones.

The Essentials of Play Leadership with “Mr. Play”

1991, 24 minutes, *GV 181.4 .E7 1991*

Jim Therrell, executive director of the Professional Play Leaders Association and author of the book “How to Play with Kids”, explains and demonstrates the “creative play leadership process” with school age children.

Fun, Fast & Easy: A Player’s Dozen Of The Best Proven School Age Activities

1996, 28 minutes, *GV 443 .F86 1997*

Hands-on demonstration of school-age activities for all ages and group sizes.

Safe, Active Play: A Guide To Avoiding Play Area Hazards

1997, 34 minutes, *GV 424 .S35 1997*

Video plus 70-page training manual to help caregivers identify and avoid the most common causes of serious injuries during active play. The 12 hazards identified are based on a list by the National Playground Safety Institute. Describes each of the hazards and suggests how to avoid them, while also maintaining the quality of active play. Reviews playground safety by comparing effective and safe playground equipment with dangerous designs.

Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready: Video Workshop, Birth to Age 5

1992, 30 minutes, *HQ 782 .S56 1992*

Discover the joy of using homemade play activities. See how to save, recycle and make free toys that teach basic skills. This video workshop is based on the book of the same title, written by a retired kindergarten teacher. It is a money-saving preschool resource which shows parents & caregivers what they can do with everyday materials to teach basic readiness skills that are necessary for a child to achieve success in school.

No Excuse for Boredom: Web Sites Full of Active Games

The following links can be found on the Skillman Center's Web site on the links page.

- ◆ Go to the **Detroit Public Library Children's Library** –there are lots of games books. Search online at www.detroit.lib.mi.us/childrens_library/
- ◆ **Child and Youth Health** www.cyh.com/cyh/parentopics/usr_index0.stm?topic_id=146 An article about teaching children about rules and games-includes dealing with cheating.
- ◆ **Children's Folk Games** www.geocities.com/childrenfolklore/
This is a Web site done by students from around the world. They are simple games and seem like a fun way to get to know many cultures.
- ◆ **Deep Fun** www.deepfun.com A great Web site full of crazy games.
- ◆ **Eldrbarry's Group Games** www.eldrbarry.net/vbs/gamedex.htm
List of games for church groups and other youth programs.
- ◆ **Firebird Trust Games** www.firebirdtrust.sagenet.co.uk/allgames/games
Lots of games-some great quick ones to teach kids for independent play.
- ◆ **Games Kids Play** www.gameskidsplay.net/
A giant collection of outdoor games including jump rope rhymes.
- ◆ **Germantown Academy Multicultural Games** www.ga.k12.pa.us/academics/MS/6th/MCGAMES/Directory.htm Games from around the world, some requiring equipment and some requiring none.
- ◆ **Improv Games** www.humanpingpongball.com/
Improv games and acting starters for groups.
- ◆ **Junkyard Sports** www.junkyardsports.com
How to make up games with junk.
- ◆ **PBS Kids: Zoom** www.pbskids.org/zoom/games/
Quick explanations of games submitted by children.
- ◆ **Party Games** <http://party-games.zaual.ru/kids-games.html>
Games that are great for indoors.
- ◆ **Playground Games Directory** www.llanddulas.conwy.sch.uk/Directory.htm
Outdoor games from around the world with easy explanations and photos.
- ◆ **Streetplay** www.streetplay.com/thegames/ Look under girl power for jacks, hop scotch, jump rope etc.



Play and Public Policy, What's Missing?

In Ireland, the Department of Health and Children has recognized the importance of investing time, energy and money into developing policies that promote play and recreation at the local level. Although adults led the process, thousands of children throughout the country provided valuable feedback. In a nutshell, kids told the adults that they just “want to enjoy being children as much as possible.” The biggest issue identified by young people was that there were not enough facilities in towns, villages and cities – not enough alternatives to the pub, street corner or amusement arcade. As a result of this input, Ireland's National Children's Strategy is focused on pulling together and coordinating all the activities for children currently in place. Children's ideas will be taken into account when local authorities develop county plans – consideration is now given to the impact of planning decisions, traffic, and environmental issues on young people.¹

There is a lesson to be learned here – why can't the United States embrace play as an important policy issue? If children are brought into the decision-making process, this would contribute to their sense of

(Continued on page 18) **17**

community and allow them to understand they can realize their full potential through participation. Today's children are truly tomorrow's communities. Supporting them now will build better futures for tomorrow.

What follows is an example of how three questions about play and the use of space can be asked from various perspectives. We tend to look at the symptoms thinking we are seeing the root of a problem. The voices of children and adults often differ in the assessment of an issue as well in the way that they analyze and present solutions. We have a blank form on our Web site under our Newsletter heading (www.skillmancenter.culma.wayne.edu). Please take the opportunity to sit down with some kids and see how they would look at the issue of play and access to space within their neighborhoods.

¹ See <http://www.doh.ie/pressroom/pr20010504.html>

Issue	Kids are playing basketball in the street	Kids are not leaving their street and they are never on their bikes.	Adults are concerned about liability issues with kids.
How youth perceive the issues	My parents won't let me go up to the park. Me and my friends don't get along with the kids at the park. I don't want to walk up to the park. It is too far away. The grass isn't mowed. There is broken glass everywhere. There are too many little kids there. There are too many big kids there.	The kids on the next block jump people. My mom won't let me off the street with my bike. The main street is too crazy to cross.	Adults around here don't care about kids. They will always complain about stuff that kids do - or that kids are doing nothing. We want to get off the street and do stuff, but no adults are taking us.
How adults perceive the issues	Kids are obstructing traffic in the street. They broke my car window with that basketball. Why don't they go play in the backyard? My kids can't go to that park. They have to stay on the block where I can see them. That park is always full of kids who are negative influences on my kids. I don't know who is at that park and I am not about to find out and my kids are not going.	Why do these kids never leave this block? These kids should be participating in positive activities instead of just hanging out. I can't let my kids off the block- their bikes will be stolen. Its not safe to be riding around in this neighborhood.	I don't want to deal with other people's children. I may get sued. We wanted to get a grant, but we could not apply because our group had no insurance. We can't take the teen group out for an adventure trip. We cannot afford the rider on the insurance and I don't want to risk the whole group's future on this trip.
Questions to ask	Is there a nearby basketball court that is cared for? Is the park perceived as safe? Clean? Are there neighborhood clean-ups? Has anyone called the park department to get it cleaned up? Are there adults at the park with their kids? Are there adults near the park who kids can turn to for help? Who peeks out the window if things sound strange outside? Will they go help or get help? If they call for help, will it come? Are there activities for younger and older kids?	Do the police respond to bike theft calls? Are cases actively pursued and the thieves punished? Are the adults who steal children's bicycles ever caught and punished? Do adults take bike rides with the kids to ward off the bike thieves?	Where do groups get insurance money? What percentage of a group's budget is insurance? Does the insurance really help them out when they have an accident or are sued? If not, then really the public donates money to charitable institutions. In cases where they are sued then donations are used for the litigation process-not for children.
Possible solutions	Have the recreation department or a community group staff the park. Have separate times and activities for the older and the younger kids. Generate a list of rules for behavior at the park. Get adults to exercise there. Add a bike rack to the park so kids don't have to walk. Bring a mobile basketball court to the street.	Have an official department deal with bike theft-it wouldn't have to be a police officer, just a liaison. Register bikes again. Start a public campaign against bike theft. Provide low cost bicycles and helmets at bike fairs. Start an insurance fund for the bicycles they get at the fairs (and a higher cost one for fancy bicycles). Provide free locks/chains and signs with instructions on how to properly lock them up.	Put restrictions on cases that involve youth groups and volunteers and insurance caps on companies providing insurance to youth groups. Maybe have something like a Michigan Basic homeowner insurance, but for youth groups. Or exempt them if they decide to get licensed (like police checking employees, first aid classes, etc.)

Book Reviews: Play and the Media

Do television shows, movies, computer games and other media have a negative impact on children's social, emotional and physical health? Two books from the Resource Center with differing viewpoints on this question are reviewed below.

Killing Monsters – Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make – Believe Violence by Gerard Jones (2002), Basic Books.



Review by Elaine Manning

I chose to read this book because scary movies and Stephen King books appealed to me so much when I was a teenager and I have concerns about the level of anger that teenagers exhibit today.

The author says that he was once a troubled youth, with no interests or direction, whose parents didn't communicate very well with him or with each other. He developed a passion and excitement for comic books that eventually led to his career as a comic book and screenwriter (his credits include Batman, Spider-Man and Pokemon). His creations have also been turned into video games and cartoon series. He is the founder of Media Power for Children, and serves on the advisory board of the Comparative Media Studies Program at M.I.T.

This book is about what aggressive fantasies mean to young people and what roles they play in personal development in the American culture. While conducting his research, the author discovered "mostly young people using fantasies of combat in order to feel stronger, to access their emotions, to take control of their anxieties, to calm themselves down in the face of real violence, to fight their way through emotional challenges and lift themselves to new developmental levels." He advocates that adults should have open discussions with children about their interest in violent entertainment and how it relates to their lives as opposed to telling them that this is wrong.

The author also contends that "many things, including the Bible, the Constitution, the Beatles and obsessions with TV actresses have inspired some people to violence, but we don't condemn

those influences as harmful because we understand them better." Jones says that what is lacking is an understanding of aggressive fantasies.

Whether you agree with him or not, I do recommend the book. It offers another perspective for someone who is struggling to understand some of the images that young people associate with these days.

Remote Control Childhood?: Combating the Hazards of Media Culture by Diane E. Levin (1998), National Association for the Education of Young Children.



Review by Linda Stone

As one of the founding members of the group Teachers for Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE), Levin began a campaign to help teachers and parents combat the effects of media violence and media culture on children. This book is one of the outcomes of that campaign.

Levin begins in Part One by defining the problem of the media culture in the United States, and detailing some of the effects on children. For instance, children spend an average of 35 hours a week in front of a TV or playing video games. She suggests this "screen time" causes more aggressive behavior and contributes to the desensitization of children to the effects of violence and the suffering of others. Levin argues that media culture negatively affects how children act, what they buy, how they feel about the adults in their life, and how they feel about themselves.

Part Two is directed at teachers to help them work with children in the classroom to combat the effects of media culture. Levin offers numer-

(Continued on page 20)

ous strategies, activities and visual aids for teachers to use to teach children to become aware of the media culture and to become more responsible consumers. She also offers ideas for more meaningful play that does not center around television or movie characters, and encourages children to use their imagination.

Part Three provides strategies for parents, schools and others in the community to work together or individually to counteract the negatives of the media culture. There are activities for teachers to get parents involved, activities for parents to use at home, and suggestions for working within the community to reduce the prevalence of negative media on children's lives.

Overall, this book is a treatise on the increasing problem of violence in American culture, its promotion through the media we are exposed to daily, and specifically the negative effects on children and how to counteract those effects. I recommend this book especially for teachers and also parents.

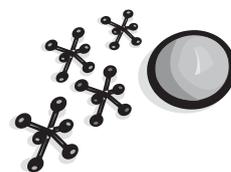
Free Workshops on Youth Activity Design: Play, Art and Science

Skillman Center staff member Jean Vortkamp will offer a series of workshops for adults working with children in after-school, summer or community programs. Jean brings over eight years of experience from the Front Porch, an on-the-street program for children and youth. The workshops will be held from 9 am - 11:30 am in the training room at the Skillman Center (100 E. Palmer). There is no fee for the workshops, but space is limited. Please call (313) 872-7119 to reserve your place.

I Wanna Play

Thursday, April 22nd

Attendees will learn about children's development and the importance of play. Examples of various types of games will be provided including board games, acting out games, pretend games, group games, sitting still and playing games and "walking to" games. Jean will also talk about teenagers and play - yes they do want to do more than play basketball!



Can We Do A Science Experiment?

Thursday, April 29th

The workshop is for adults who are not scientists, but want to learn about simple science programming for children. Topics included are science experiments (good books, Web resources, where you can find good stuff), field trips, and how gardening can help teach science.



Get Me In Some Play Clothes and Let Me Paint

Thursday, May 6th

The workshop will look at the developmental and therapeutic value of art. Projects will demonstrate arts versus crafts, creativity versus "do what I do", and engaging boys in art. Jean will provide suggestions for art field trips and where you can find the best materials (plus what you don't need to spend money on!).



Invention At Play Exhibit

June - August 2004

Cranbrook Institute of Science

The exhibit focuses on the similarities between the way children and adults play and the creative processes used by innovators in science and technology.

For more information go to
www.inventionatplay.org/exhibit.html

The Skillman Center for Children Resource Center is a collection of books and videos focused on issues related to urban children and families. Anyone in the community is welcome to join the Resource Center and borrow materials free of charge.

Do you know someone or a group of people who would benefit from the information, materials and assistance available in the Resource Center? Angie would be happy to schedule a time to introduce new people to the Resource Center. Feel free to give her a call at (313) 872-7113.



Resource Center Patrons of the Season

"We love the Resource Center. It's very useful for our program because we work with girls between the ages of 9 and 15 and we are able to get relevant, up-to-date videos and books that help us implement our program."

Nicole Almond-Williams and Angelique Rawls, Male / Female Responsibility Program, Detroit Urban League

New Staff

Welcome Linda Stone!

Linda graduated from the Masters in Library and Information Science Program at Wayne State University in December. She eventually hopes to work as a Media Specialist in a school library, and pass on her love of reading to children of all ages. For now, she is enjoying being a part of the Skillman Center family and working in the Resource Center. In her free time, she likes to read, garden, weave, walk, or generally do any kind of activity that takes her outside.



Video Previews

Our video previews continue to be popular events. Patrons join us over the lunch hour to watch short clips from several videos in our collection. The previews are great opportunities to find out more about our videos and to network with others doing similar work. Upcoming 2004 video previews include:

- ◆ **Fatherhood - March 25th**
- ◆ **Teen Parenting - May 27th**

Call (313) 872-7166 to register



Free Web Workshops!

Angie Martin-Schwarze, Resource Center Coordinator, is teaching four Web-based workshops (each is offered twice). These are hands-on workshops, and participants will use a computer for each session. The topics offered are:

Web-based Grant and Funding Information

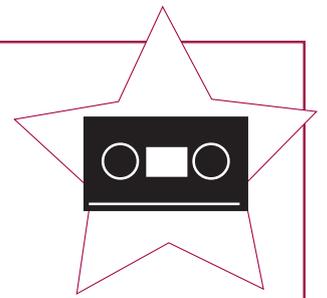
Tuesday, April 13th, 2pm - 5pm or Thursday, April 15th, 9am - Noon, at the WSU Purdy/Kresge Library

Family Support Resources on the Web

Tuesday, May 18th, 2pm - 5 pm or Thursday, May 20th, 9am - Noon, at the David Adamany Undergraduate Library on the Wayne State University Campus.

There is no fee for the workshops, but seating is limited so be sure to call ahead for your reservation: (313) 872-7166.

New Videos in the Resource Center



Due to the positive feedback from our Sex Education Video Preview on February 4, the following videos have been added to the collection:

AIDS Update: The Latest Facts about HIV and AIDS Grades: 7-12

This program reviews the latest new information on HIV, explains precautionary measures that help to lower the risks of HIV infection and answers other frequently asked questions. The FDA recently approved a rapid HIV diagnostic test kit that provides extremely accurate results in minutes. The program explains the new test to teens and provides crucial details on what it means if the test comes back positive. The Teacher's Resource Book includes activities to help students consider whether their own behaviors are putting them at risk of infection, and provides fact sheets to remind students of the dangers of this deadly virus. (28 minutes)

Dating for Real Series

This three-part video series and print curriculum uses pop-culture imagery, documentary interviews and entertaining acted-out dramas to inform youth about the elements of healthy relationships, violence and abuse in relationships, and other important factors affecting dating couples. Young people from very diverse backgrounds discuss real-life dating experiences and how old gender stereotypes are giving way to new expectations for equality and mutual respect. (20 minutes each)

Take Charge: Resisting Sexual Pressure Grades: 8 - 12

This video-and-print package is a comprehensive primer directed at showing teenagers how to respond to the pressure to have sex. Listening to real kids in dating situations, this video reviews a variety of common sexual pressure scenes and offers effective ways for young people to set their own limits and stick to them. A psychologist provides insight into how young girls often make the mistake of using sex as a tool to boost their self-esteem, instead of learning the real skills of valuing themselves and setting their own comfortable limits. (30 minutes)

Teen Relationships and Sexual Pressure

This video presents a Christian, biblical perspective on sex and reveals to teens the reasons for premarital abstinence. It focuses not only on the physical but also on the emotional and relational benefits from living a pure life awaiting marriage. Jason Evert and Ellen Marie share real-life stories from teens with whom they have dealt. By following God's design for sexuality, the teens realize they are developing healthy relationships and becoming fulfilled. This video helps teens understand why chastity is beneficial and gives them tools to live out this conviction. (65 minutes)

Other New Videos:

Women and Depression

In this program, two women and their families describe their own experiences with depression, and the ways they have found to live with it. (29 minutes)

Spectrum of Autism

In this video, we share in the experiences of several families who have struggled to love and care for children who fall at various points on the spectrum of autism. (34 minutes)

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

This video tells the stories of three grandparents who have taken on sole responsibility for raising their children's children. This investigation exposes some of the difficulties surrounding this growing phenomenon. Mostly older, single women, the grandparents may face issues that are enormously complex emotionally as well as financially. (23 minutes)

Free Family Support Workshops from the Urban Families Program

The following workshops will be held in the Urban Families Program Training room located at 100 E. Palmer (each workshop will be offered twice). There is no fee to participate, but enrollment is limited so call the Skillman Center to register at your earliest convenience: (313) 872-7166.

Effective Facilitation of Court-Mandated Parent Education Groups

Tuesday, March 9th or Thursday, March 11th

9am to Noon

Techniques using adult learning theory and methods will be demonstrated. Participants will gain insights into how to facilitate parenting groups. Particular attention will be paid to the specific dynamics encountered in working with court-mandated parents.



Training for Supervisors of Paraprofessionals

Monday, April 5th or Wednesday, April 7th

9am to Noon

This workshop for supervisors will focus on a) what it means to be a paraprofessional, b) what their role usual role is within an agency/organization, and c) the specific challenges of supervising paraprofessionals.

www.detroitkids.org

**A listing of over 2,000 programs
that provide help and activities
for Detroit kids.**

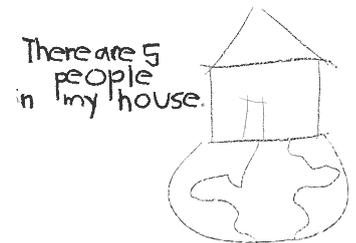
All in one place.

What makes this Skillman Center for Children Web site so exciting is that the information can easily be sorted by type of activity or service (help), geographic location (for the entire city or specific areas), and by age. Information in each record includes: name of agency/organization sponsoring the activity or service, address, telephone number, Web site (if they have one), fee (if there is one or not) and gender served (girls or boys only or no restriction).

We are adding new records every day and updating on a regular and consistent basis. There is no fee for including information so if you know of other programs that might be missing, please contact us. We appreciate any feedback you might have. Simply email detroitkids@wayne.edu or call either Jean Vortkamp (313) 872-7119 or Trenea Dundas (313) 872-7107 and they will be more than willing to take information from you.

From a child's Perspective

The Skillman Center, in partnership with the Center for Urban Studies, is continuing its From a Child's Perspective, Detroit Metropolitan Census 2000 Fact Sheets Series. The three most recent fact sheets are:



- ◆ **Asian Children and Families in the Tri-County Area**
- ◆ **Hispanic Children and Families in the Tri-County Area**
- ◆ **Arab, Chaldean, and Middle-Eastern Children and Families in the Tri-County Area**

A limited number of printed copies are available. You can request a copy by calling the Skillman Center at (313) 872-7166. The reports are posted on both Center's Web sites: www.skillmancenter.culma.wayne.edu and www.cus.wayne.edu. Be sure and check the Web sites for past reports that can be readily downloaded.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Free Workshops:

Family Support Training

Effective Facilitation of Court-Mandated Parent Education

Groups - March 9 or 11

Training for Supervisors of Paraprofessionals - April 5 or 7



Web-Based Training

Web-based Grant and Funding Information - April 13 or 15

Family Support Resources on the Web - May 18 or 20



Youth Activities Design Workshops

I Wanna Play - April 22

Can We Do A Science Experiment? - April 29

Get Me In Some Play Clothes and Let Me Paint - May 6



Details on registering for the workshops are inside and on our Web site under **Upcoming Events**: www.skillmancenter.culma.wayne.edu

Conference:

Children's Bridge

Promoting the Well-Being of Children and Youth in Urban America

April 22 and 23, 2004

At the Community Arts Building at WSU

You are invited to this Wayne State University conference to explore issues affecting children's well-being, especially in Metro Detroit, and to develop an action plan to improve the lives of children. The conference will include a plenary session featuring nationally renowned speakers as well as concurrent sessions on violence/abuse and trauma, literacy and school readiness, obesity and health, intergenerational involvement in children's development and much more. Call (313) 577-5071 to register.

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF URBAN, LABOR
AND METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

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