



UEY News

Cumberland



March, 2007

The Magic of Play

Can you remember a magical day in your childhood – a day when the sun shone endlessly, you were with friends, and there was nothing on your mind except delight in your freedom to play?

Play is so common that we tend to forget how important it is for early child development. Each kind of play contributes to a child's learning.

Playing in the water and in the sand helps to develop math skills and logic. Rough and tumble play, which may be especially important for boys, helps

to develop physical and social skills. Pretend play helps communication, turn-taking, and social problem solving.

So now that you are a parent, how can you make sure that your youngster gets enough of this magic called "Play"?

Jane Hewes, in "Let the Children Play: Nature's Answer to Early Learning", offers some guidelines:

- Provide long uninterrupted periods (45-60 minutes) for spontaneous play.
- Provide a variety of

materials (blocks, mud, paint, dress-up clothes, balls) and spaces for play.

- Take an interest in children's play and join in if invited.
- Let children play for their own purposes.
- Set the stage, set aside the time— make sure young children play just for the sake of playing.

Magic happens for your child when you value play.



Library Programs for Preschoolers

- *Once Upon a Time*, Wednesdays 10-11, ages 0-3 with parent.
- *Preschool Storytime*, Wednesdays 1:30-2:00, ages 3-5. Free, but register at 667-2549. Starts April 11.
- "Three Easter Bunnies Gruff" puppet show, Thursday, April 5, 10:30-11:00, up to 7 years.

Browsing on the Net? Check out these sites:

- © www.paguide.com for physical activity ideas and charts.
- © www.investinkids.ca for information about children's development.

Did you know?

Learning to read begins at birth. Dr. Alyson Shaw, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, has asked Canadian doctors to encourage parents to read, talk, and sing with their children. She states that "reading



aloud to children and interacting with them from birth is important for success in reading". By reading and talking with young children, parents help to develop language and listening skills. Children with these

skills have fewer difficulties learning to read at school. Dr. Shaw notes that early reading is also "a critical health issue" since when children read well, they usually have fewer health problems as adults.

Cumberland Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a community research study.
www.cumberlanduey.ca

The Understanding the Early Years initiative is funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. For further information, visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca

Question and Answer

Dear Mr. Q and A:

My child's friends all have expensive toys that I can't afford. What can I do? Al Broke

Dear Mr. Broke:

Your house is already full of toys waiting to happen:

- Kitchen tools (spoons, pots, plastic bowls, dish towels and sponges to bang, sort, play cooking, help Mommy and Daddy.)
- Empty boxes (food boxes for playing store, shoe boxes for stacking and knocking down and putting things in, big boxes for

sitting in or for playing car or boat or train.)

- Empty plastic bottles (make a



bowling game, decorate, use as

fancy towers for a box castle.)

- Empty plastic containers (for sand, mud and water play; for sorting and stacking and keeping things in.)
- Old clothing (coats, shoes, hats, gloves, jewellery, and handbags for costumes and pretending; mittens and gloves for making puppets.)
- Old greeting cards, magazines and junk mail (to tear, cut, paste, talk about, make fridge art.)

(Ideas taken from *Nobody's Perfect* books used at Maggie's Place)

A Favourite Poem from Dennis Lee's book, "Alligator Stew"



Silverly,
Silverly,
Over the Trees,
The moon drifts by
on a
Runaway Breeze.

Dozily,
Dozily,
Deep in her bed,
A little girl
Dreams with the
Moon in her head.



Things to Do ...

Now that spring is on its way, even though there are a few snowflakes left in the forecast, it is time to think about growing . Take a walk outdoors with your child. Look for bits of green grass, buds on trees and bushes, pussy willows, maybe even dandelions.

Try a windowsill garden. You and your child can talk about what you might

grow. Buy some seeds or get some from Grandpa. Grass, beans, radishes and nasturtiums are easy. Fill some containers (used coffee cups, yogurt tubs, styrofoam cups) with soil. Take time to play in the mud.

Tending the plants will show your child how necessary sunlight and water are for growth.

Taking a cutting from a houseplant

and rooting it in water(in a clear container) lets your child discover roots and their role in growing. And, the new plant makes a great gift.

