

Smile Maker

Collaboration

By: Tracey Smith-President

I've been thinking a lot about collaboration. The dictionary defines collaboration as the action of working with someone to produce or create something. While some of you may be the only teacher at your school or in your classroom, there are others of us who are rejoicing over an assistant teacher, a co-teacher or colleagues down the hall. I was reading an article about the subject of collaborative teaching and the author states "creating a collaborative educational environment can build a community of caring individuals who are all working towards one common goal: Increasing the students' positive outcomes". I'm sure that's a goal for all of us as early childhood educators. We would all like to increase our students' positive outcomes! I don't know about you but I believe two heads are better than one and this is certainly true in my professional life as well as my personal life. It's helpful to learn from others, get another's perspective and brainstorm as a team. If you do not have a team to work within, consider our membership as your team. We all have a common goal for our students. In more ways than one, we are all in the same boat together and we're on your side. I encourage you to attend our workshops, complete our survey (soon to be sent to your email), ask questions, give input during chalk talk and check out our new website (<http://preschoolteachersassociation.weebly.com/about.html>). We would like to be a support to you. We hope you can attend our Learning Fair workshop Wednesday, August 24. Please tell other teachers in your area about our organization. We look forward to seeing you and collaborating together.



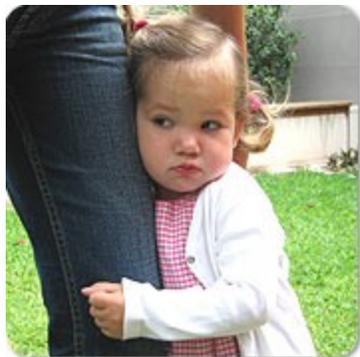
October is Popcorn Month !

Popcorn has had a long history in our country. Native Americans used it for food as well as for decorations in necklaces and headdresses. At the first Thanksgiving, they introduced popcorn to the Pilgrims. Have fun preparing and eating flavored popcorn. Can your children guess what makes popcorn pop? Inside each kernel is a tiny pocket of water. When the water becomes hot, it expands so much that it bursts open the hard outer shell.



Separation Anxiety Tips for Teachers

So, what's a preschool teacher to do? Here are 6 Tips!



1. Plan Ahead

Acknowledge YOUR feelings! When a child has extreme separation, how do YOU feel? Do you feel unsure of what to do? Sad or down that the child is reacting this way? After all, your classroom is AWESOME and SOOOO much fun!

If a child this anxious makes you anxious, you will most likely be ineffective in helping him or her transition. Talk with your co-teacher or assistants.

Who is better able to help the child transition? That person should be the primary receiver of children when they are dropped off. The rest of the staff needs to be attentive to all others in the group while the primary person receives the children who need the extra help.

2. Greet and Meet

Acknowledge PARENTS' feelings. There is nothing worse than dropping your child off for school and having them react with anxiety. The emotions of the parent can be apprehension, guilt frustration, anger and helplessness. Realize how difficult this is for them as well.

Greet each child and parent at drop off time. Assure them that you will help their child to settle in. Assure them that their child is NOT the first to react this way. Assure the parent that this is very common in preschool.

Tell parents about the "7 minute window". If their child is still this upset in 7 minutes, they will get a call.

3. Accept Child's Feelings

This is the big one. In an attempt to help children transition, many well intention comments or statements are made to the child which actually dismiss how they are truly feeling. Our comments and statements won't change a child's feelings.

Please avoid saying things like:

- "Don't cry! This is a happy preschool!"
- "Are those tears? You are a preschooler now! Preschoolers don't cry"
- "We are big kids now, not babies! Let's dry our tears and play!"

Use statements that will acknowledge how the child might feel.

- "You look sad this morning. Are you nervous about Mom leaving?" You can then explain what will happen after mom leaves and what they can do in the classroom.
- "Are you nervous about school?" You can tell them that you're a little nervous too, this is a brand new group of friends, and you can get to know everyone together.

4. Reassure

Once the parent has left, sit with the child, reassure them that their parent will be back later. Try to get them involved in an activity. If the child does not want to interact or get involved, accept that. Offer a quiet choice. If they are adamant and vocal that they do not want to play, really—accept that! Don't force play and interaction. They need to calm down from this anxiety. You can reassure them by saying "I understand you are still upset. When you feel up to it, you go right ahead and choose an activity."



5. Call or Text Them!

If a child has a tough time being dropped off, that is the vision the parent has in their head all day. Let them know that their child is doing fine. You can do this by texting them a picture of their child involved in play. (do not include other children in the pictures for confidentiality reasons).

You might also call the parent. Do not call in front of the child. Seriously, this will start it all over again.

Parents will not only love and appreciate this type of quick call, but will develop trust in you that you are concerned about their child.

6. Talk About It

Talk to both the children and to the parents!

WITH THE CHILDREN:

At Circle Time, talk about how they are feeling about school.

Perhaps do your first every group graph called HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY?

Talk to them about the new year and how it can be scary! Does anyone feel sad? Who feels happy? Who feels scared or afraid? Etc.

WITH THE PARENTS:

Be available at pick up time. Talk briefly about their transition. I suggest including a few brief items to EACH parent as they pick up:

- A. Use the child's name.
- B. State the amount of time it took for them to settle in.
- C. State a favorite activity.
- D. Give the parent an idea of what will happen the next day to help their child prepare on the next day of school.

LONGEVITY:

There is no clear cut answer for this. At the beginning of the school year, separation anxiety can last from one day to three weeks. it can go away and then return one or two months into the school year. Many times it returns after a school break or a vacation. In some children, it will return after a weekend.

In a half-day program where the children are in preschool either Tuesdays and Thursdays (for 3 year olds) or Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (for 4 year olds) it is common to see this anxiety for up to 3 weeks--and yes, DO let parents know that this can happen!

There will be a child now and again who does take a very long time. Consistency and working with the family will be key.



Fun for Fall !

Tips for
Parents:

Starting School



1. Visit school grounds so they are familiar to the child.
2. Help the child develop a daily routine such as going to bed early and dressing themselves.
3. Talk enthusiastically about what school will be like.
4. Discuss any fears about starting school.
5. Make starting school an exciting event by shopping for a new school bag.

September

Muddy Water:

Partially fill a clear jar with dirt and water. Stir the mixture. Observe what happens. Continue to watch the jar and discuss the changes that are occurring. Why is the dirt sinking to the bottom? What would happen if you stirred it up again?

October

Measuring a Pumpkin:

Set out a pumpkin. Let the children cut off a length of yarn that he or she thinks will fit around the pumpkin. Have them try wrapping the yarn around the pumpkin to see how well it fits. Measure and cut off a piece of yarn that fits around the pumpkin exactly. Let the children compare their yarn piece to the one that fits. Ask, "Is your yarn piece shorter or longer?"

November

What Am I Wearing?

At circle time, wrap a blanket around yourself. Ask the children to describe the clothes that you are wearing. This game helps sharpen their ability to make observations. Ask your assistants, parent helpers, or other children to take a turn covering their clothes with the blanket.





Transition Time Activities!

There are many transitional activities you can do during these predictable transition times!

Here are some to get you started!

On Our Way Outside! This could be sung to the tune of The Farmer in the Dell:

It's fun to play outside.
It's fun to play outside.
With all the other boys and girls
It's fun to play outside.

What's Missing? Bring 5 or 6 items with you. Show them to the children. They all close their eyes (or you cover the items with a paper towel!) and remove one item. The children open their eyes and as a group, say what's missing. Do this with 2 items, and then send a set amount of children to wash their hands. Continue playing the game until all the children have washed hands and had a turn.

Place these items in a clear, Ziploc baggie and write on the baggie "WHAT'S MISSING"

Moving from One Area to Another After mid-morning snack, the preschoolers walk through the hallway, then sit on the carpet for circle time. To help in the transition from A to B, throw a rope from the snack to the beginning of our classroom (appr. 10ft). Then tell the kids we're walking on the bridge over hot lava or a swamp filled with alligators. They really go along with balancing and getting to the other side without falling off the bridge. The carpet is the "safe" zone.

Tong Time! Purchase small tongs for clean up time. Instead of telling the kids to clean up, just turn off the lights and put out the basket of tongs. Once they each get a pair of tongs, start singing a favorite song while they use them to pick up the toys and put them away. This is great for fine motor and the children don't even realize they are cleaning and not playing!

Circle Time Transition Fun! For transitions or children struggling to sit still, use positional words and have the children stand up to act them out. Say "Shake your hands above you. Shake your hands behind you. Shake your hands under you. (that is their favorite). They love it and always laugh when we put our hands under us! Also have the children touch their body parts such as, "Touch your nose, elbow, ear" etc. Do this slow and fast as well and they think it is really silly!

Have the children jump up and down and count to a certain number. This helps to get the wiggles out while still learning important words as well as practice counting.

GDCPTA

The Greater Detroit Cooperative Preschool Teacher's Association



TA Learning Fair

Schoolcraft College

Wednesday August 24

Sandy Jewell, GSRP, Utica Schools

Simple solutions to help increase cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Learn how to identify and create culturally sensitive learning activities that foster a respectful classroom environment.

**Mieke Giles, Ypsilanti Cooperative
Preschool**

Come explore ways in which you can integrate the research-based philosophy of Maria Montessori into your cooperative preschool classroom.

Don't Forget to

Get the Word out about GDCPTA!

Our wonderful workshops can be counted towards the 16 clock hours of annual training required by licensing.

CALENDAR

August 24, 2016

TA Summer Learning Fair

November 4, 2016

TA Fall Workshop

March 2, 2017

TA Spring Workshop

MCECC

November 29-December 1,
2016

Royal Dearborn Hotel and
Convention Center

MIAEYC

April 20-22 2017

Grand Rapids, MI

The *Smile Maker* is your newsletter. If you have anything you would like to submit for our next issue please email it to the editor: renehult@yahoo.com.

The Greater Detroit Cooperative Preschool Teacher's Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, nation or ethnic origin.