

# Smile Maker



## FALL IS IN THE AIR

BY: TRACEY SMITH— PRESIDENT

Fall is in the air. I love this season and all that it brings with it. I love the cool crisp air (especially when the sun is still shining) and the color of the changing leaves. I love the flavor of pumpkin everything! Yes, I'm one of those crazy pumpkin lovers. I could make a whole list of things that bring me happiness in the Fall. And how about acorns? The kids in my classroom had so much fun with a basket of acorns! I had lots of acorns, tongs, plastic jars and bottles and a table. It was interesting for me to observe how much exploration was taking place with these few items. They were sorting, measuring, manipulating, counting, cracking, filling, pincer grasping and creating sounds. I'm sure they were doing more than that but that's what currently comes to mind. We did not talk about acorns. I did not invite anyone to the acorn table. They were simply exploring, engaged and learning. It was a great reminder that *sometimes* I don't need to put so much effort into extensive activities. *Sometimes* it's good to keep things simple. I hope to see you at our November workshop. Happy teaching!

I'M A SCARY  
SCARECROW.  
RAGGEDY AND  
WORN.

I WEAR A HAT AND  
A SHIRT THAT'S  
TORN.

WHEN THE CROWS  
COME, I WAVE AND  
SHOUT.

"AWAY FROM MY  
GARDEN! GET ON  
OUT!"





## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY-

### EXPLAINING WHAT CHILDREN LEARN DURING PRESCHOOL PLAY TO PARENTS

We've often heard it said that preschool play IS a child's work. Many Parents see their children playing at school in your centers and will ask, "When do they learn?" As teachers, you **know** they are learning during this free choice time and you have a great opportunity to explain that learning to parents!

Let's look at how preschool play helps children in all areas of development:

#### **Fine Motor Development**

The fine motor development of children's small muscles in their fingers and hands are essential to success in activities such as cutting, writing, tying their own shoes and more. Play provides child-directed activities to work on fine motor development as they lace beads, manipulate play dough, dress dolls in the housekeeping center and lace or button dress up clothes in dramatic play.

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*Children do learn through preschool play. They learn skills that will last a lifetime!*

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#### **Gross Motor Development**

The development of children's larger muscles are important for their success in participating in classroom activities that require body control such as walking from one classroom to another, up and down stairs, running, throwing balls, climbing play structures and more. Gross motor activities such as using a parachute, tossing balls, games that include jumping and stopping and then starting again help children to develop their large muscle groups and learn to control them.

#### **Social- Emotional Development**

Becoming part of a large group is pretty new for most preschoolers and it is harder than we sometimes give them credit for! Preschool play is the most natural way for children to navigate through this area! They learn how to become a family in the housekeeping area, or work together to build a house with other children who like using blocks as much as they do. When they choose to play in an area that interests them, talking and cooperating with their peers becomes easier because they all have a common interest in that play area.

#### **Language Development**

Children use their language skills, problems solving skills and more while playing. They can use their language skills to explain to others about their ideas. They can use their imaginations and creativity. Play allows children to think freely without an adult directed focus.

Academic learning can also happen during play when the activities available are planned in advance by teachers. For example, in your Math Center, you might place a muffin tin (numbering each tine 1-12), a bowl of colored poms and plastic tongs.

The children will pretend they are cooking as they use the tongs to place the correct number of poms in each tin. This activity is helping to develop their fine motor skills ( using the tongs), intellectual (cognitive) skills due to the number recognition, one-to-one correspondence as they count each pom and gross motor skills when they carry and balance the muffin tin over to the housekeeping area to bake the pom muffins in the oven.

In addition, they will be using their language skills to tell the other children what they are cooking, who they are cooking for, and other details of the baking extravaganza! Child-directed learning at its best!



*FINE MOTOR FINGER PAINTING*

## **FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES**

### **Should / Wrist:**

1. Marble Roll
2. Sweeping
3. Hammering Nails
4. Streamers
5. Fishing Poles

### **Wrist/Hand:**

1. Glue Art
2. Eye Droppers
3. Spray Bottles
4. Sponge Squeeze
5. Tongs
6. Shaking Dice
7. Toss Bean Bags
8. Stamp Art

### **Hands/ Fingers**

1. Q-tip Painting
2. Dot Pictures
3. Tooth Pick Shapes
4. Cooked Noodle Shapes
5. Keyboards
6. Sorting
7. Lacing
8. Beading
9. Clothes Pins

### **Drawing/Writing**

1. Sand Writing
2. Bag of Paint (2-3 Table Spoons)
3. Shaving Cream
4. Leaf Rubbings
5. Tracing Shapes

Fine motor skills are essential for performing everyday skills like cutting, self care tasks, and pencil skills. Without the ability to complete these every day tasks, a child's self esteem can suffer and their academic performance is compromised. They are also unable to develop appropriate independence in life skills such as getting dressed and feed themselves.

Fine motor skill difficulties can present as:

\*Avoidance and/ or disinterest

\*Physical activity making sit down tasks of no interest

\*No interest in pencil skills

\*Refusal to use stylus with the iPad.



# WINTER ACTIVITIES

## **What's in the Stocking?**

Fill a Christmas stocking with four or five small toys. Let the children reach into the stocking and try to identify one of the toys by touch before pulling it out of the stocking. Add new items to continue the game.

## **Snow Ball Play**

**Let the children go outside and make two snowballs. Place each snowball in a paper cup. Then place one cup outside and one cup inside. Together, observe the two snowballs, and discuss what is happening to them. Ask, "Why is the snow melting inside but not outside?"**

**Use large index cards to make a set of five counting cards. Draw one dot on the first card, two dots on the second card, and so on. Lay the cards on the table and set out 15 cotton balls (snow balls). Have the children practice counting by placing the snowballs on the dots on each card.**

## **Heart Play**

Cut large heart shapes out of construction paper and tape them to the floor around the room. Then turn on some music and have the children hop from heart to heart.

Cut two identical placemat-size rectangles out of clear self-stick paper. Remove the backing from one of the rectangles. Have the children arrange their valentines with pink, red, and white paper onto the sticky side of the rectangle. Remove the backing from the second rectangle and carefully place it sticky side down over the decorated rectangle. Trim off any overhanging edges. The children now have a fun placemat by recycling all their valentines.

# BABY IT'S (TOO) COLD OUTSIDE

*Gross Motor Games to play inside on those days when we can't get out to play!*

1. **Musical Hoops:** Use 5 or so Hula Hoops. Play music. When the music stops, find a hoop. Keep eliminating one hoop until one is left. All children must find a way to fit into the last hoop.
2. **Cup Bowling:** Use plastic cups. Let the children stack and build towers. Use any ball to bowl them down. You can also use 2 liter soda bottles as the pins.
3. **Bubble Wrap Dance Floor:** Tape bubble wrap to your floor. Let the children dance on it for some popping fun.
4. **Find Your Shoes Relay:** Have the children take off one shoe and place it in a pile on the opposite end of the room. Have the children pair up. Each child has to find their friend's shoe and help each other put them back on.
5. **Streamer Course:** Criss-cross streamers in your room to make it look almost like a web. The children must crawl under or through it to get from one side of the room to the other.
6. **Pool Noodle Fun:** Cut the pool noodles in half so they are short for our little ones. Children use the noodle to help each other get the beach ball to the other end of the room.
7. **Shape/Letter Walking:** Tape large shapes or letters to your floor for the children to walk on without "falling" off.
8. **Snowball Fight:** Use crumpled newspaper or old socks. Tape a line across the floor. Separate the children in 2 groups. The children will try to get all the snowballs to the other side. Yell "FREEZE" and have the children count how many snowballs are on their side.



*Having just discovered one of our children has had a very large boo boo we never knew about, this article caught my attention. I plan to do as the author recommends and put a Band-Aid on our kangaroo when I'm not trying to talk about something else, and let the conversations roll! -Ann Walton*

## The Boo Boo Curriculum

I am swamped with folders full of new standards, benchmarks, directives, and goals for early childhood educators. I try to keep all that urgent information in my somewhat cluttered mind as I set up the multipurpose room for eight sessions of music and movement experiences with our young children of different ages. So much to think about and plan for, with cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development components! I'm thinking about how to support the children's developing skills— language, listening, cooperative learning, spatial awareness, and more. *-Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld*

Today honors a classic theme for early learners—body parts. A favorite subject and a core focus!

Before I can welcome the group, the children gather around me as Andrew holds out a finger wrapped in a large, colorful Band-Aid.

“Mimi, I have a boo-boo,” he says as he thrusts his wounded finger toward me. I kiss it and try to begin our session.

In the next 15 minutes, every single child shows me and tells me about past, present, and future boo-boos. I kiss them all.

On this day, graduate students from a nearby university are observing the session. Taking notes on clipboards thick with comments, they watch open-mouthed as the discussion about boo-boos continues—it's unstoppable! They can't help but note that the children are wonderful listeners. They are interested in all the sharing of boo-boo experiences. The preschoolers cooperatively take turns and expand on Andrew's story about his boo-boo, offering more complex narratives:

“Once my grandma had a boo-boo on her knee, and she went to the hospital.”

“I had a boo-boo right here on my elbow, but it went away.”

“My dog had a boo-boo on his paw, and when he walked he kind of hopped, but it's okay now.”

“When I was a baby, my cousin said I had a boo-boo on my tummy. I had a tummy ache but the doctor made it go away.”

“Whenever I get a boo-boo, my dad kisses it.”

“We have to be careful not to bump into people because they can get boo-boos.”

“I had three boo-boos once. A boo-boo on my nose, a boo-boo on my arm, and a boo-boo on my leg. I got the three boo-boos from falling off my bike even though it had training wheels.”

“If you have a bad boo-boo, your mom calls the doctor.”

“Once my brother had a boo-boo in his mouth, but it was his new tooth.”

“The tooth fairy can fix boo-boos.”

The children go on and on. They demonstrate their skills— oral language, vocabulary use and comprehension, listening skills, spatial awareness, cooperation, empathy, numerical competency, and knowledge of the locations of body parts. Oh my, when I check my folder, heavy with early learning objectives, I grab my pen and check off most of the items! Emergent curriculum, whole language, and developmentally appropriate practices are demonstrated as we explore this fascinating topic.

You don't need to wait until an Andrew offers you his bandaged finger to start an exciting learning experience that meets every applicable early curriculum standard. Just tape a small Band-Aid on your own hand or on a beloved classroom puppet to begin this conversation. That alone will guarantee a delightful session of rich conversation and the delight of sharing a familiar subject beloved by young children: boo-boos.

***Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld has worked at the Leo Yassenoff Columbus Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Program since 1970, where she participates in many boo-boo conversations. She is the only educator who visits her former preschool children in nursing homes! Mimi's latest book is Still Teaching in The Key of Life, copublished by NAEYC and Redleaf Press.***

# GDCPTA

The Greater Detroit Cooperative Preschool Teacher's Association



## TA Fall Workshop

### Schoolcraft College

Friday November 6th

**Heather Lucas**

How Preschool can best prepare  
children for Kindergarten.

**Lisa Adams**

Developing Fine Motor Skills.  
It's all in a Name.

**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

November 6, 2015

TA Fall Workshop  
Schoolcraft College

November 21, 2015

Appelbaum Training Institute  
8am-3pm  
DoubleTree Hotel  
Detroit, MI  
Register @ [www.atiseminars.org](http://www.atiseminars.org)

March 3, 2016

TA Spring Workshop  
Schoolcraft College

March 31-April 2, 2016

MIAEYC  
Grand Rapids

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