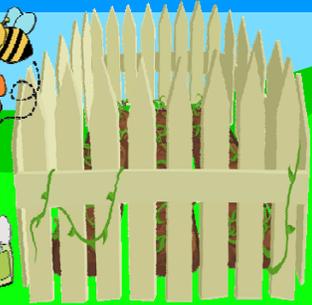


News for the Nurturing Child Care Professional

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ADHD, What is it?

Volume 9, Issue 2

Children with ADHD are just like every other child in this world, and they need to be treated as such. ADHD is the acronym for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Notice that ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is not a disability, rather a disorder that affects the child's ability to pay attention and stay focused on tasks for sustained amounts of time. Children with ADHD should be treated accordingly and everyone involved with raising the child should understand that some of the behaviors that they see are not the result of the child misbehaving. The behaviors cannot be controlled so caregivers- must understand this and be patient when disciplining children with the disorder.



The first part of ADHD is the attention deficit. This part of the disorder means that the child usually has trouble paying attention to any one thing for a long period of time. If the child enjoys what he or she is doing than they will stay on task longer, but the amount of time is much less than children without the disorder. The attention deficit can also be noticed when the child seems to be so easily distracted by common things in their environment. Parents and teachers need to know that they need to provide a low stimulus environment for the child if they are really focused on having the child learn. This does occur for all children at sometimes but children with ADHD suffer from this many times each day and this behavior continues for an extended period of the child's life.

The second part of ADHD is the hyperactivity. This can often be the most difficult thing to deal with because the child just seems to be unable to sit still or do anything other than being extremely active. The biggest sign of hyperactivity is the constant need to be moving, especially during activities that the child truly enjoys. Children that are hyperactive simply cannot control what their brain is telling them to do, so you must be patient and understand this fact.

The best way to treat children with ADHD is by providing them with a very consistent schedule and a living environment that does not create too many distractions. You need to learn what the child loves to do or play and focus much of your child's attention toward that love that they have. As time goes on you should try to explore new opportunities for your child. Some medical professionals also recommend specific drugs that can help to combat the ADHD tendencies that many children have. Putting a child on medication is a big step, so make sure that you are comfortable with the idea and remember to always do what is best for your child.



For more information on this or other Kids Mental Health issues please visit

<http://www.kidsmentalhealth.org/children-with-adhd/>



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**FAMILY &
CONSUMER
SCIENCES** 
Creating Healthy & Sustainable Families

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What Does it Mean to Care?

Child Care vs. Preschool?

A parent approached me a couple years ago and explained in an apologetic tone that she was pulling her daughter out of our accredited campus child care center to put her in a “real school”. Yes, “real school” is what she said. I mustered up all my professionalism, put aside my pride and proceeded to inquire about her decision. We had a good conversation. She explained that although she loved our program for her toddler and appreciated how happy her daughter was learning through play, she wanted her to have a different experience as a preschooler. She chose a neighborhood preschool where there was an academic curriculum to help her prepare for kindergarten. The parent and I talked about all the names of programs we hear in our field—nursery school, preschool, daycare, and child care—and how confusing they can be. We talked about what it means to be ready for kindergarten and about the pressure kids and parents feel. We talked about the difference between academic skills and intellectual growth. The parent did proceed to enroll her daughter in the nursery school but within a couple months she was back with us; and we were happy to have her back. I was thankful for this dialog, and I have had many similar talks throughout my career. It was interesting to me that the parent viewed our center as providing great care to her child but she did not initially see us as educational even



though all of our teachers have degrees in education. Despite the fact that we articulate our goals, post our curriculum, document each child’s progress in portfolios, provide screening, assessment, and parent teacher conferences this parent did not see us as a “real school”. I know that the way early childhood is viewed in our society is complicated. However, I wondered if part the reason we may not be seen as educational is because we do such a good job caring for children. We help children separate from their parents, hold children on our laps when they need to be held, sit on the floor to teach, and turn our classrooms into home-like environments. These things are seen as something other than, often less than, teaching and learning.

The Inseparability of Early Education and Care

This conversation about the difference between preschool and child-care always leads us to what is at the heart of the issue—the insepara-

bility of early education and care. There is a misperception in our society that child care and early learning are two different things based on the view that child care is custodial and preschool is educational. What we know is that high quality, responsive, intellectually stimulating programs are doing the same thing—simultaneously caring for and educating young children.

Here are some things that can happen when we try to artificially separate early education and care.

- When child care is viewed as custodial work, the caring acts such as helping children gain confidence in toileting, dressing, and meals are devalued. Child care teachers may not be given the respect, support, or professional development to raise standards or to view themselves as teachers. They may feel disenfranchised and adopt the custodial view of their work; they supervise children, keep them safe and clean, but are not empowered to see each moment as an opportunity for learning and teaching.
- When preschools are viewed as an extension of the “big school” it results in push-down pressure. In an effort to show that young children are getting ready for kindergarten, the curriculum may include worksheets or seat work that is better suited for older children. Preschool teachers adopt an elementary school teacher view of themselves and feel most comfortable in roles such as reading stories to groups of children or teaching the alphabet. They may not recognize the powerful connection between caring and teaching. Children may be rushed through daily living activities to get to what is perceived as teaching activities such as circle time. Children are screened for enrollment readiness and may be excluded if they are not fully potty-trained.

In Defense of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood teachers have long taken a defensive stance about our role and how we are viewed in society and in education. We learn to prove ourselves as educators. Show me children digging in the sand box and I can articulate all the ways the children are engaged in scientific thinking and symbolic representation, not to mention developing their motor and spatial skills, and practicing language and conversation that will allow them to be confident readers and writers one day.

When I worked as an early interventionist, I was able to link all the IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals to the domains of learning and to the

state standards to show how children learn through play. We have needed to make the case that we are not babysitters. I worry, however, that in the intention to shine light on the importance of education for the youngest members of our society; we have pushed aside the *care* of young children.

We are Not Babysitters

Babysitting is an odd term, it’s true, but I’ve been thinking that by talking about what we are NOT, we have contributed to the view that caring for children is other than educational. I understand the reason for saying, *we are not babysitters*, but I also recognize that someone who is called a babysitter might just be someone very important in the life of a child. I’ve been thinking that maybe as we have defended our important work we have in some ways contributed to the false dichotomy between early education and care. We don’t want to be associated with babysitters because we are professionals. We have certificates, degrees, and licenses and we want to separate ourselves from the view that anybody can do this work. As Kimberlee Kiehl explains in her piece *Rethinking Early Education (2013)*, “Instead of thinking that what these good parents, good teachers, and good nannies do every day are things that should be shared with all of us . . . we do the reverse and think that anyone can do this work.” Instead of working to separate ourselves, perhaps we can better support parents and caregivers and everyone who spends their days with young children by acknowledging that being with children in all the average every day moments is important work. We can validate that the things that come naturally while caring for children, such as singing lullabies and bouncing children on our knees, are educational. We can endorse the fact that the responsive care that children need, from feeding to diapering to bathing, is honorable work. We can enter into a true partnership with families and caregivers when our programs embrace caring for children and lift the acts of care to a new level.



Continued on Page 8.

Let's Talk! Encouraging Children's Language Skills

Learning to talk happens naturally and normally for most children. Talking is learned without traditional "studying". By age 3, most children are talking very well. However, children master grammar and social rules over a period of time. Non-verbal or unspoken aspects of talking with others also are learned over time. Non-verbal "language" includes eye contact, gestures, body posture, as well the "tones" in a person's voice that have meaning.

Children learn to communicate by interacting with their parents, families and other people in their lives. It's the back and forth of talking with others that helps children not only talk, but learn how to use language socially. We all speak and use language because we need something or want to share something. By helping children to speak well you are also growing their social skills.



Building Conversation Skills

How should parents and child care providers support children's learning about talking? The most important thing parents can do is talk to their baby. Just talk. Share what you are doing, what you are seeing, and how you feel. It is important for your baby to hear language. Talk and assume that your baby does understand. Talking with your child opens up the inborn capacity for language learning, and helps to grow the parent-child bond.

There are several ways to encourage language. Focus on what is familiar for children. You can talk about:

- **Daily Routines:** Everyday life is full of "new" words and things for young children. Talk about your child's daily activities: what she is doing; the food she is eating, how the food is prepared and the utensils to use, the clothes she is wearing, the kind of transportation being used.
- **Stories (and Movies):** Talk about the characters in a story you are reading: who are they, what they are doing, why they are doing anything. Pick out any words that may be new to your child. Language and reading go hand in hand, so take this opportunity to encourage reading skills as well.
- **Trips/Outings:** Outings are always great for talking. If you go to a nature park, talk about the trees and flowers. Talk while at the grocery store about the foods you are choosing.

Words to Talk By

Talking involves using words - a lot of them. Parents and other adults naturally use simple, basic words when talking to children. They use words that are familiar to children - words that refer to things in their environment and that are important in their lives.

Children's language skills grow quickly in the early years. They learn the words they hear, the words that are spoken to them. By the time children are 3, they have a vocabulary of nearly 1,000 words.

When talking to your infant, toddler or preschooler, use words that describe things, how they look, feel, taste, and smell. Use "feeling" words to help children to talk about their everyday experiences. Keep it simple. This list is only a small sampling to get you thinking about how you can help increase your child's growing language and conversation skills.

Ways to Promote Language Skills

Child care providers and teachers learn a lot of the following strategies as part of their training to work with young children. These simple strategies take place in conversations and will help with building language skills. You don't really have to always focus on how you are talking with your child, but keep these tips in mind and use them when you can. It will soon become second nature.

Infants

- Talk to your baby when holding him, feeding him, changing him. ("Are you hungry? Okay, time for milk.")
- Narrate what you are doing in your daily routines. ("We are taking a walk in the park." "Into your car seat, you go.")
- Talk in short sentences and use short phrases. ("Roll the ball." "A pretty blue bird.")
- Use pauses and stretch or emphasize words. ("See the moonkeey.")
- Respond to your baby's sounds and attempts to talk. ("Are you cooing? Well, hello to you too!")
- Read to your baby. (Read books especially for babies/infants that focus on basic words, including shapes, colors, sounds.)

Toddlers

- Play games that involve turn-taking. (Play games such as rolling a ball back and forth to each other. "I roll it to you. You roll it to me." "I had a turn. Now it's your turn.")
- Build your child's vocabulary during normal conversations. ("That's a big house." "It's a big house with a chimney on top.")

- Help your child know words to talk about and describe feelings and emotions. ("You seem sad." "Are you sad because it is time to stop playing?")
- Give simple one or two word instructions. ("Give me your bowl." "Wash your hands.")
- Match your child's speech in length and complexity. ("Drink?" "Drink juice?")
- Respond to your toddler's communication and stay on topic. (Whatever your toddler talks about, follow her lead. See where the "conversation" can go.)
- Read to your toddler and have your toddler join in. (As you read books for toddlers, have your toddler turn the page and ask questions such as "What does the cow say?")



Preschoolers

- Respond to and have conversations with your preschooler. (Preschoolers love to ask questions - answer them. Ask your own? "What do you see?" "Do you think that rock is heavy?")
- Talk about what your child is doing and what you're doing. Ask questions that extend their thinking. ("What kind of picture are you drawing?" "You're doing a good job of cleaning up." "What do you think will happen next in the story?")
- Practice taking turns in conversations. ("What did you do at the park today?" "Wow... do you like to go high on the swings? I like going really high.")
- Read with your preschooler. Involve your preschooler as you are reading. (As you read with your preschooler, ask your preschooler to guess what will happen next? Ask your preschooler why a character did something in the story. Not only will you encourage conversation, but you are also stimulating analytical thinking.)

So talk to your baby. Have great conversations with your toddler and preschooler. By doing so you are supporting their language skills, their social skills and their thinking skills. Everything in your baby's growth is connected. But the best thing about talking with your child is developing the bond that you will always have with one another.

The Daily Parent is prepared by NACCRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

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Signs Child Care Providers May Notice that Indicate Toilet Learning Readiness

Learning to use the toilet is an important milestone for young children. Child care providers and parents need to work together to decide when a toddler is ready to learn how to use the toilet. Here are some things child care providers should keep in mind as toddlers approach this important milestone:

- **Toilet learning is a process.** Many parents and child care providers get impatient for the child to give up diapers and use the toilet. Be patient — learning to use the toilet happens differently for each child. No two children are ready at the same age.
- **Learning to use the toilet is easiest when children are physically and emotionally ready.** This usually happens between the ages of 2 and 3 years. Girls usually gain physical control over their bowel and bladder muscles before boys do. On the average, most girls are potty-trained by age 2½, and most boys around the age of 3. Don't be alarmed if a child doesn't follow this pattern closely. Individual children mature physically at different rates. Some children are not good at using the toilet until well after their third birthday.
- **The secret to toileting success is patience and timing.** Emotional readiness is important. Many bright, normal, and healthy

3-year-olds may not be interested in learning to use the toilet. Learning new things is a full-time job for most toddlers. Toilet learning may not be as important as learning to climb, jump, run, and talk. A toddler who resists toilet learning now may be ready in three to six months and then often learns almost overnight.

Share information with the parents. Decide together if their child is ready to begin toilet learning. It is important not to push children before they are ready. Work with parents to make the process consistent with what is happening at home. Reassure parents who are getting frustrated because they think their child is not learning quickly enough.

Signs of Toilet Learning Readiness

When you and parents are trying to decide whether a toddler is ready to begin the toilet learning process, pay attention to the following signs. Children may be ready if they:

- Show interest in using the toilet
- Can walk, sit down, and stand up independently
- Stay dry for at least two hours at a time while awake
- Wake up with a dry diaper after a nap

- Can follow simple instructions
- Can use basic words to tell you when they need to use the toilet

Helping children learn to use the toilet is an important developmental milestone that requires cooperation and consistency from parents and child care providers. Talk with parents, and develop a plan to guide their child through this important process.

For More Information



For more information about toilet learning, take a look at the following eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care articles:

- [Bathroom Safety in Child Care](#)
- [Creating Safe and Appropriate Diapering, Toileting, and Hand Washing Areas in Child Care](#)
- [Helping Children with Toilet Learning in Child Care](#)
- [Preventing the Spread of Germs During Toileting](#)

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Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED)

Fathers/Families who read or tell stories to their kids make a difference that no one else can. Taking the time to read to your kids shows how much you care. Kids whose fathers are caring and involved enjoy school, friends and outside activities more than other kids and they grow up to be confident and successful adults. Your kids are fun people! The more time you spend with them, the more fun you have. And you both end up with great memories that last a lifetime. FRED is a 4 week literacy program.

To find out how you can be a part of FRED, contact your local county agent:

Alexis Cordova
501 Palmer
Liberty, TX 77575
936-334-3230
ancordova@ag.tamu.edu

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Ladd Hight
ladd.hight@ag.tamu.edu

936-334-3230
Call for Details!!!

The Beginnings of Literacy:

Enhancing Literacy Experiences in Infants and Toddlers

Children learn language as they listen to the sounds of their world. Even though infants are unable to talk, they are learning by listening to the sounds around them. Infants are naturally most in tune to the sound frequency of the human voice. They need to hear parents, caregivers, and others talking. They learn language through the use of descriptive language around them. Scientific research supports the idea that reading, speaking and singing to babies is crucial to the brain development.

Visual stimulation is also important during the first few months when the infants are forming their understandings of what they are seeing. Reading to and with children for as little as 15-20 minutes per day from an early age contributes to positive brain developments.

Snuggle with them on your lap and let them point to pictures as you tell them a story. Read to them as they are engaged in other floor activities. Use your own words to describe the pictures and the story if the printed text is too complicated.

Use a variety of means to expose infants to language. Short stories, picture books, picture cards, magazine pictures.

Cut pictures from magazines and place them behind a Plexiglas display board that is attached to the wall near where the child is playing or resting. Change the pictures on a regular basis. Hang picture mobiles above the diaper changing stations.

Talk to/with the child. You can vocalize both sides of the conversation. Make a habit of describing your actions to the babies. Describe your emotions and the child's emotions and feelings.

Talk to/with the child

- Have a conversation with your child.
- Monologue - Tell the child what you are doing as you are doing it.
- Tell the child about the sounds he hears.
- Point and talk about pictures and items as the child plays.
- During routine times of eating, bathing, or changing talk to the child about what they are doing.
- Enjoy the time with the child.

Music

- Play a wide variety of music in the environment.
- Sing with the music
- Hum
- Provide shakers, bells, and rattles for both you and the child to experience.

Finger Plays

- The Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Five Little Monkeys
- Where is Thumbkin?
- This Old Man



Nursery Rhymes

- Little Miss Muffet
- Hey, Diddle, Diddle
- Mary Had a Little Lamb
- Little Bo-Peep
- Humpty Dumpty
- Jack and Jill
- Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
- Peas Porridge Hot



Books

- **Good Night Moon** by Margaret Wise Brown
- **The Three Bears** by Robert Southey (and retold by many others)
- **Chicka Chicka Boom Boom** by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- **The Gingerbread Boy** by Paul Galdone
- **Three Little Pigs** by Joseph Jacobs (and re-told by many others)
- **Corduroy** by Don Freeman
- **Pat the Bunny** by Dorothy Kunhardt
- **Go, Dog, Go** by P.D. Eastman
- **Baby Faces** by Dorling Kindersley Publishing



Music/Song

- Old McDonald had a Farm
- Rain, Rain Go Away
- Pop! Goes the Weasel
- Ring Around the Rosy
- The Mulberry Bush
- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Head and Shoulders
- Teddy Bear
- Good Night Ladies
- Hush, Little Baby

Melinda Miller, Diana Nabors, Helen Berg
Sam Houston State University 2015

Fun and Simple One Year Old Activities

1. Spiders Web Discovery Basket

This easy to prepare Discovery Basket is perfect for busy fingers and inquisitive minds.



2. Pipe Cleaner Drop

This simple play can be easily achieved using an old tin formula can or bottle with holes in the lid.



3. Toilet Paper Roll Drop
Simply tape a toilet paper roll to the wall and provide your toddler with some wooden blocks, pom poms, cut up straws or bottle lids. If it fits through the tube then it is perfect for this activity!



4. Newspaper Floor Play
My little one loves nothing more than ripping up paper and making a fantastic mess and noise! If your toddler is similar then this Newspaper Gross Motor activity is a perfect energy buster!



5. Simple Train Tunnel

Use an old tube or piece of cardboard as a tunnel for trains and cars!



6. Homemade Drum Kit
Tap into your toddlers' inner musician with this simple Homemade Drum Kit (you might need some earplugs for your own sanity though.....)



7. Discovery Baskets
Discovery baskets are an awesome tool for children of all ages. They encourage imagination and a good discovery basket can stimulate all of the senses.



8. Pasta Scoop Sensory Bin
This simple Sensory Bin is reasonably tidy and is super simple to prepare.



For more information on these activities and to find more ideas please visit <http://thetraindriverswife.com/2015/02/22/10-simple-and-fun-one-year-old-activities/>



SAVE THE DATE

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Child Care Conference

Announcing the Multi-county Child Care Collaborative's annual spring provider training at the Lamar Institute of Technology Multi-purpose Building. Registration information will be sent the first week in March.

APRIL 9, 2016

7 Clock hours; CEUs available***Fee: \$25(includes lunch)**

**For more information contact: Alexis Cordova: ancordova@ag.tamu.edu
(936)334-3230**



Multi-County Child Care Collaborative

A group of professionals that represent agencies & institutions compassionate about quality child care.



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What Can One Person Do to Prevent Child Abuse?

• Change Yourself

Ask yourself how you are doing as a parent. Vow to learn one new thing about being a parent by reading or talking to other parents. Respect your family members. Use a courteous tone of voice with them. Learn to apologize to your children when you are wrong. Make time to play together. Praise children and teens for being good, for doing the little things that are so easy to take for granted. Tell your children "I love you" more often. Violence teaches violence. Forget about hitting your kids.

• Change Your Community

Reach out to neighbors or relatives with children. Offer to baby-sit to give them a much-needed break. Don't wait for someone else to do it...take action! Arrange for a speaker on child abuse to come to PTA or adult Sunday school class. Volunteer time in a child crisis shelter, parenting support program, drug prevention/treatment program, or shelter for the homeless.

• Change the World

Write a letter to your elected representatives and let them know it is your choice that they act to support parent education and child abuse prevention. Register to vote and use your vote to reflect your concern for children. Child abuse prevention organizations are only as strong as their members. Join the Prevent Child Abuse Texas...for it shouldn't hurt to be a child.



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pcatx@PreventChildAbuseTexas.org
www.PreventChildAbuseTexas.org



Have you ever wondered what is for dinner after a long day of work, errands, or afterschool activities?

We know we could drive through another fast-food restaurant to save time, but is that meal meeting the nutritional needs of your family?

The Dinner Tonight program was developed to provide busy families with quick, healthy, cost effective recipes that taste great. Not only does the Dinner Tonight program provide recipes, it also gives you weekly video demonstrations on cooking tips and techniques, nutrition topics, menu planning basics and information on healthy living.

Our goal for the Dinner Tonight program is to improve the health and wellness of Texans through nutrition education. We are so excited to help you get you started on preparing your dinner tonight.

Visit to dinnertontight.tamu.edu sign up for weekly emails, info on recipes, cooking schools and more!



Fun Ways to Teach Kids About Healthy Food Choices

Help kids learn about the importance of healthy, natural foods by making it a game.

When I grab my stethoscope in the morning for a day of seeing typical kids, I know without looking at the appointment list that I'll be viewing the consequences of big portion sizes, over processed snacks and sweets and a lack of veggies. It's not one meal or snack that's the problem. It's the pattern. Slowly, the BMI creep up. Blood sugar and blood pressure begin their silent rise. Most of the other rapidly increasing conditions in kids, such as asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and diabetes, also have links to how children eat. It would be great if schools taught Good Food 101 along with language, math and science, but you can't count on that. The flip side of the coin is that you can teach your kids about real food and smart portions through fun games and visual examples.

Try app-y meals

Fooducate (free; itunes.com) is a mobile app that lets you scan any food with a bar code to get a quick letter grade for how real and healthy it is. It turns the search for healthy eats into a kid-friendly point-and-shoot video game.



Practice pace

Slowing the pace to at least 30 seconds from start-of-bite to start-of-bite gives the body a chance to send and receive fullness signals after eating just the right amount.

Play "punch buggy" for processed foods

There's a reason manufacturers use kid-friendly characters to sell their stuff: It works! In one study, kids were as likely to choose broccoli as a chocolate bar if there was an Elmo sticker on the broccoli. But you can teach kids to recognize marketing tricks. In my family, we play a new version of the "punch buggy" game. In the original, you tapped a compatriot if you were the first to spot a particular type of car or license plate. In our version, you snap your fingers if you're the first to notice a food ad trying to appeal to kids. Common strategies include the use of cartoon characters and bright colors on the packaging.



Ask "Who's your mama?"

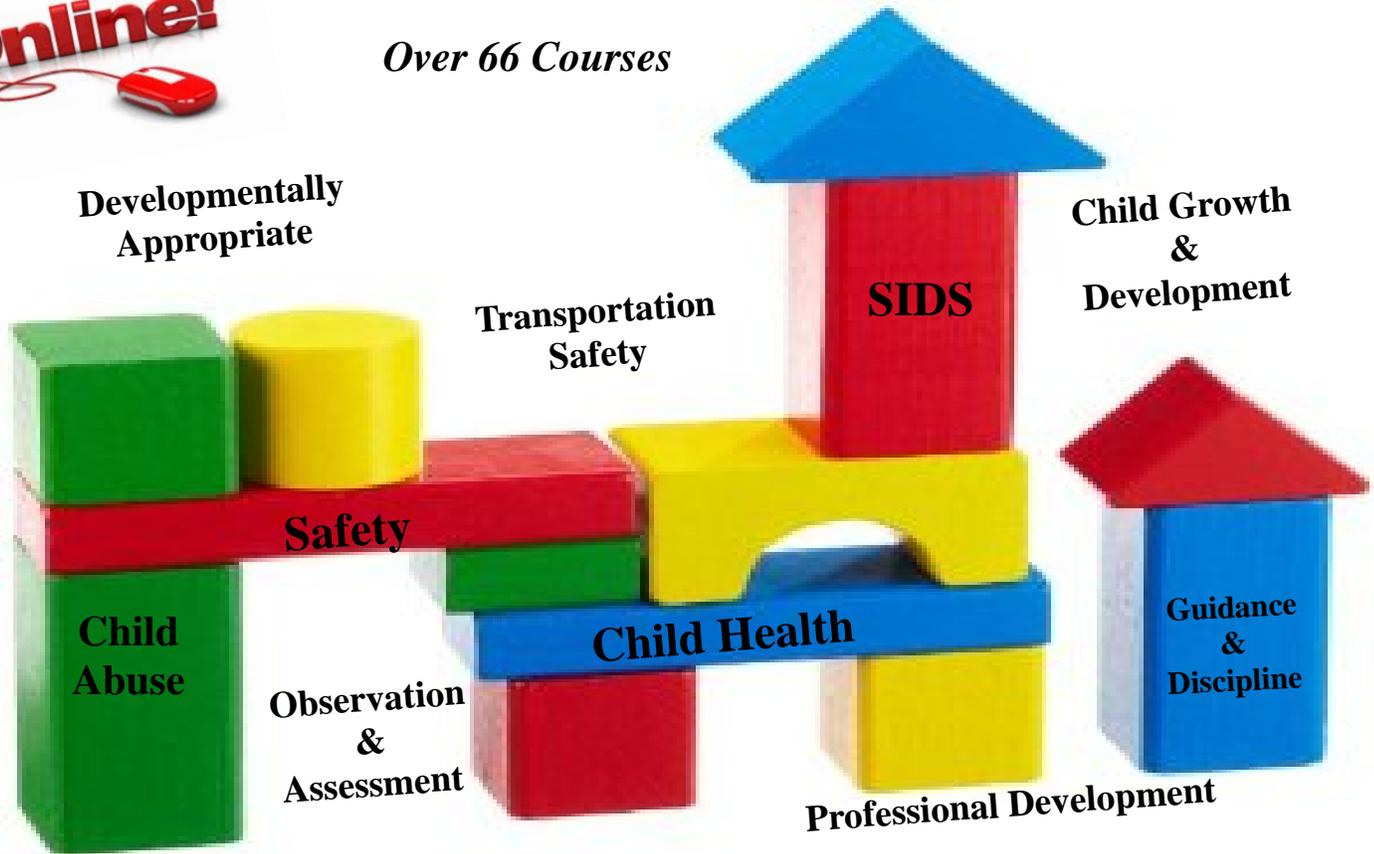
Your fridge and pantry are full of props for playing "Who's your mama?" Take turns choosing food items and asking where they come from. Apples come from trees. Milk comes from cows. Carrots grow in the ground. If it's got a simple family tree, it's real food. But if you choose something that uses ingredients like dextrose, gelatin, calcium carbonate, Blue 1 and Red 40, then the answer is "factory."

Alan Greene, M.D. is a pediatrician and the author of the best-selling *Raising Baby Green*. He lives in Danville, CA.



Child Care Courses (childcare.tamu.edu)

Over 66 Courses



What Does It Mean to Care? Continued...

What Does Caring Look Like?

Anne is a colleague of mine who taught toddlers for many years. She was one of those people who could create a respectful atmosphere that was palpable. As I watched her work with toddlers, I often wondered, how does she do it? I looked for clues. The effectiveness and the beauty of her teaching were revealed in the way she cared. She listened. She took the time to teach the toddlers to set the table for snack and wash the dishes. Every conversation at the cubbies and on the changing table was an opportunity to connect and engage. In her classroom you got the message that there was no hierarchy of importance between activities such as helping a child put on his coat or teaching a child a new word. Teaching and caring were the same. When Anne was getting ready to retire, she reflected upon her career and what she had created. She told me about her husband who was retired from a successful career as an artist—a sculptor, in fact. She explained, “His art is visible. It’s tangible and it will last and be seen by others for years to come while the art of teaching is just as real, but it is invisible.” Anne’s comments make me think of the educators of Reggio Emilia and the idea of making learning visible. I’ve wondered, how do we make caring visible? We know that relationships are at the heart of quality early education, but if we go even deeper and ask ourselves how we form those relationships with young

children, we see the acts of caring. We see teachers rocking children to sleep, holding hands, feeding children, zipping jackets, wiping noses, and changing diapers. It is through caring that children come to trust us and believe in their own capacity for learning. Do we allow time for caring or do we rush children through tasks that are perceived as custodial? Do we sing, talk with, and listen to children while we care for them? Or do we treat care with drudgery? What are the core competencies of care?

- Are educators sitting with children at meal time to create family style meals or are they pre-plating meals, hovering over children’s heads and treating meals like a chore?
- Are teachers seeking eye contact with children, sitting on the floor and speaking in guiding tones or are they calling out instructions from across the room?
- Are we allowing children to move freely to the bathroom and sink to wash their hands or use the toilet as needed or are we making children stand in lines?
- Are we creating environments that promote self-care, self-comfort, and self-regulation where children have the time to make real choices and learn to “do it myself”?
- Do we allow children to experience the honor of care by caring for plants or

animals or by caring for one another?

Caring is Teaching

I believe that providing excellent care for young children requires us to refine the attitudes, dispositions, and skills that are necessary to be an effective, intentional teacher. To care well, we break tasks into steps and scaffold our support from least to most. We make judgments about what individual children need and seek the balance of providing just the right support to develop the child’s independence. To care for children well we need to practice observing, listening, being present, and following the child’s lead. Within a practice of caring we become artful teachers. Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers are amazing and capable beings but they are also vulnerable. They are at a stage of life when they depend upon our care. Caring and early education cannot be separated. Whether we care for children well, or not so well, children are learning. What are we teaching by the way we care? What does caring look like? How do we talk about its value? What does it mean to care?

References:

Kiehl, Kimberlee. [Rethinking Early Education and Why It Matters](#). *Education Week*. (2014, May 26).
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