

Discover and Grow

A newsletter for Naugatuck's early childhood community

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Visit us on the Web at www.naugatuckdiscovery.org

A-B-See it! Visual cues smooth transitions

The children in Jill Mahoney's care always know who's in the lead.

On Monday, they follow MacKenzie. On Tuesday, they follow Emma, and so on.

Mahoney has been a home-based childcare provider in Naugatuck for 15 years. She relies on a colorful weekly "helper chart" and regular day of the week assignments to help set and maintain smooth routines for the children in her care.

"I find that keeping a constant and regular schedule works best for them," she said.

Her colorful "weekly helper chart" is the same every week. Posted where everyone can see, the chart helps children remember whom to follow as line leader, circle time leader and helper every day.

"Keeping the helper assignments the same each week also helps them learn the days of the week," Mahoney adds.

The staff at Naugatuck Day Care on Carroll Street also rely heavily on visual cues for routines and activities of all kinds, according to Joy Chrzanowski, director.

Chrzanowski and her staff are always on the lookout for new and useful signs, posters and pictures they can use at the center.

For example, an easy to follow, step by step poster near the center's sinks reminds children of the important steps for proper hand-washing.

Another set of pictures guides children on the steps they need to calm themselves down: sit down, take three deep breaths, count to 10, and so on.

The staff at Naugatuck Day Care also rely on visual cues to help children transition from one activity to another.

"Before cleaning up to move from one activity to another, we give them a five-

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Discover all we can do together

Volume 2, Issue 1

March/April 2007

Naugatuck Discovery is taking its monthly committee meetings "on the road." To host a Discovery meeting at your program or center, please call Amanda to arrange a convenient date and time. Call (203) 729-1564 ext. 10.

Help parents appreciate the value of play

When a child care provider spends time playing with an infant or a toddler at eye-level on the floor, she or he supports the child's motor skill development

The provider also strengthens the child's social development through eye contact and engagement.

Providing opportunities for engaging and responsive play is one of the most important things young children need every day, according to Beryl Yudkin with the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership.

Like academic learning, play happens in stages.

For example, children often move from isolated play as infants and toddlers to parallel play and interactive play as preschoolers.

"Each one builds on the other," Yudkin said.

Yudkin urges providers to help parents

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March Meeting
Learn more about Naugatuck Discovery at the next Discovery Committee Meeting
6 p.m.
Thursday March 28
Naugatuck Day Care
27 Carroll St.

New members are always welcome.



A-B-See it: Visual cues

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minute warning by switching the lights off and on," Chrzanowski said.

The consistent use of a visual reminder signals that a new activity is about to begin and it is almost time to clean up.

"It prepares them better for moving on to something else," she said.

For visual cues and social story graphics, visit these Web sites:

www.setbc.org/#top

Special Education Technology
British Columbia (Canada)

Click on Picture Sets.

www.csefel.uiuc.edu/

Center on the Social and
Emotional Foundations of
Early Learning. Click on Re-
sources, then Practical
Strategies

www.do2learn.com

Do 2 Learn

"The fact that they don't understand how much time 'five minutes' really is, doesn't matter. They simply know and understand that in a short of amount of time, 'I have to be done' and 'I have to be OK with moving on to something new.'"

Visual cues also can help control noise levels, particularly in larger programs.

The staff at Naugatuck Day Care is about to launch a visual cue based on traffic signal colors: red-yellow-green. Using colored paper, teachers will display a green "GO" circle when noise levels are low and appropriate; a yellow "CAUTION" circle if the noise begins to escalate and red, or "STOP," as an

immediate signal for quiet when it gets too noisy.

"When it gets too loud in the room, this will avoid the teachers adding to the noise by talking over the children," Chrzanowski said.

Play is a child's work

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recognize that play really is a child's "work."

One of the most important things early care providers can do is to help parents appreciate the importance of play.

Play is vitally important for every domain of a child's growth and development: physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively, Yudkin said.

"Unless they develop the skills of play, children will find it hard to achieve subsequent levels of development," she said.

Many parents focus on the academic aspects of early childhood experiences and don't recognize the importance of play. They may

overlook the importance of play in their child's preschool or childcare program.

"Many programs have handbooks or manuals," Yudkin said.

The program handbook or manual is an ideal place to discuss how play fits into the goals and philosophy of a childcare program, she said.

Effective intake surveys identify family strengths

Thoughtful intake surveys can help early childhood providers develop responsive and effective programs to support the growth and development of children in their care.

"A good intake survey will help you develop a family profile. It will help you identify and recognize not only areas that need strengthening, but also strengths that the family itself may not realize it has," said Janice Mons, director for the Naugatuck Early Childhood Development Center.

"Sometimes families have no idea about the strengths that they have and can share with other families in the program."

Mons recommends that intake surveys include the following core components:

- Health information: birth history, hospitalizations, health concerns, medications.
- Physical social and psychological development.
- Behavioral concerns, social service and special needs.
- Emergency contact information, including up to date cell phone numbers.
- Cultural information.

Join Naugatuck Discovery today!

The Naugatuck Discovery Committee is a volunteer committee of residents, parents, educators and early care providers. We meet monthly to plan and implement community-based initiatives to raise awareness and support for quality early care and education for all Naugatuck children, birth to age 8.

Share your ideas, experience and vision!

Call Amanda Hunyadi, 203/729-1564 ext. 10.