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Peaks Island Child Development Center - Newsletter : Jun/Jul 1978

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Survey

The Youth Services Survey, initiated by the Diocesan Relations Services Office for the Center was conducted last election day, June 13th. Thank you to all the volunteers. We had an excellent response which was favorable to the center. Teenagers and families came out as the groups most in need of improved services. After-school care was also seen as a very useful program. Jay McGovern from the Diocesan office is officially writing up the results which will be published in the Peaks Island Times. Hopefully, this will give us some back-up information to give to our funding sources as well as provide a good indication of what needs exist on the island. The Center board and staff are most willing to cooperate with other groups and individuals in finding ways to meet those needs.

Field Trips:

Our trip to WMGX Radio Station - by Beth Dinsmore, Alyssa Roberts, Steve Ambagis, John Willard, Teddy Reichman

"Yesterday we went to town. We talked on a tape recorder and listened to ourselves.

We went sleeping at George's office. We got some posters. We had an elevator ride. We walked on a bridge and saw some working men. After nap we came back. We listened to records. We ate cookies and cheese and peanut butter sandwiches and jelly sandwiches.

-the end."

Adam Wilson, Ramona Stoddard, Jason Brooks, Jessica Roberts and Tony Chiucholo all went to the Scarborough Saltmarsh on an Audubon Society Nature hike. We were
so excited to see a Great Blue Heron coming in for a landing. We also saw Snowy Egrets, and fished for tiny snails, shrimps, mummy fish, and tiny eels in the marsh ponds. Our guides showed us salt hay, bayberry bushes, and tiny plants used for pickles in the old days which tasted like soggy potato chips. It is really a fascinating place and we would recommend that you go there for a visit with your family if you have a chance. The marsh and Audubon Society station are located on Pine Point Road off Rt. 1 in Scarborough.

The future kindergartners, Steve Ambasis, Angel Davis, Beth Dinsmore, Gino Falconeri, Julie Pares, Alyssa Roberts, Travers Tuttle, John Willard, Tony Chiuchiolo all went to the "Big School" for a visit. Ann Clemons, the Principal and Mary Purvis, teacher, gave them a tour and told them what kindergarten would be like and then served a nice snack. We hope the first day of school will not seem so strange now that they have had a peek behind those big doors.

We had hoped to take the remaining children on a field trip to Little Diamond Playground but the boat scheduling is not in our favor. If anyone knows of a boat and captain who would like to give us a ride, please let us know.

Summer Staff

We would like to welcome Kim Edwards and Eugene Willard, our new CETA Youth workers for the summer. We hope that it will be as rewarding an experience for them as it is for us to have them.
Art Exhibit

Carol Day is giving us the pleasure and privilege of exhibiting her work here at the center the first week in July. Her exhibit is especially for the children but we know you will all enjoy it. Please make it a point to come in anytime except 12:30-2:30 naptime and see her beautiful craft. Bring your friends and neighbors, too. Carol will be showing the children just how she goes about making her creations.

Dental Health Week

Much to the chagrin of the staff, because this week was perfect beach weather, we had Dental Health Week June 26-30. Donna Gisetta from the Dental Health Office in City Hall came out on four days and presented a program for the children all about brushing teeth, and eating good foods. We had an oral exam clinic here Wednesday and you probably received a report on your child's teeth.

Family Day Care News

A few words from the day care home . . . my program is a very low key version of the day care program for the older children. I have tried to create learning experiences for the children here on the island by doing things such as walking in the woods, visiting the library, taking trips to the fire station, health center. A favorite with the children is going to Abe's and Feeney's stores to examine new vegetables they haven't seen before. We've only made one major excursion to the mainland to Gray Animal Farm which was a real big treat. Lack of transportation limits us from doing things like that.
more often but if a parent has a free day and transportation for 5 children and myself we would certainly be thrilled with the opportunity!

The children here at my day-care home have the advantage of being able to function in a home situation doing the things they normally do at their homes -- helping with dishes, weeding the garden, watching television, hammering, cooking, doing laundry, feeding the animals.

On rainy days we paint, cut, have water play, oatmeal play, do exercises, have marching bands, make paper airplanes... endless amounts of fun!

A closing request -- if anyone out there has any toys in good condition, preferably geared to 2-3 year olds, they would be greatly appreciated.

-- Angie Kelso

Board

There will be no board meeting July and August except for some committee work. Thanks to all the parents who contributed to the Supper for the Diocesan District I Advisory Board meeting which was held here on June 22nd. Congratulations to Liz Alves who was elected vice president of the District board at that meeting. We are very pleased that Liz was chosen and feel that with all the volunteer work she has put in for our Center and the District she certainly deserves the honor.

Staff Training

Kathy Wilson went to a children's art workshop this month and brought back lots of ideas on uses of color, self expression, etc.
We also did a staff exchange with St. Elizabeths, trading them Sally Green and Kathy Wilson for two of their staff. It was fun and interesting for everyone involved. Other centers have expressed an interest in exchanging staff also. It is a good way to exchange ideas and techniques and keeps us in touch with the Day Care Community.

Teachers & Teaching

Gig Finley wrote a paper for her intern course in Early Childhood Education this spring. We would like to share part of it with you as we feel it expresses well the philosophy of the Center.

"There are several traits that I would consider important for a pre-school teacher to have.

One of the things that I always like to see is a teacher that emphasizes positive or prescriptive behavior. Children hear so many negative things! (It just makes it easier for them to hear if you say "Chairs are for sitting on" rather than, "Don't stand on the chairs"-the latter phrase also doesn't provide them with an appropriate alternative to the negative behavior.)

Another thing the teacher should realize is that at this age, according to Piaget, and many other child experts--the child needs to actively manipulate the environment. A teacher should realize that in a good center a child is rarely told not to do something, because most of the dangers have been eliminated. Encouraging exploration will foster a sense of initiative and autonomy in the child (whereas doubt and guilt are fostered if exploration is not encouraged) according to Erickson. This is a time where the teacher should focus on building the child's confidence while allowing him to explore also. According to Erickson, this is a time where newly acquired motor and mental abilities during which the child needs to feel accomplishment at his own pace, to be recognized for his developing abilities in order for him to gain a sense of autonomy rather than doubt his abilities.

A good teacher would find time daily to point out and praise the children's accomplishments.
and explorations and encourage them further in their pursuits (Praising art work-block structures-climbing and running activities are all good examples.)

I guess that a teacher should have a working knowledge of the stages of development a child is going through to understand their needs and to better understand ways to respond to them.

I also think that the pre-school teacher should be able to set and enforce reasonable limits in a consistent manner allowing autonomy within these limits. Children need to know that there are certain ways of responding to people (hitting, kicking, biting) that I don't allow (calling for time away from people). For a while I would call for time-out for yelling also. Then, it was pointed out to me that I was allowing no vent for their anger. Now I allow yelling - I gave a little within my set boundary.

I also think that it is important to focus on the undesirable behavior and not to attack the personality of the child (Say, "What you did makes me angry" rather than, "You're a bad boy") As I pointed out in the earlier section, I remember how fragile my ego was when I was young - it doesn't take much for a child who is constantly told he is "bad" to begin to see himself as "bad" and act accordingly.

Of great importance, I think, is to remember that each child and each teacher are individuals. To be sensitive to your own and the child's individual temperaments and recognize that there is no "right way" of dealing with each child and situation just as there is no "right way" of dealing with adults. I allow myself to treat children according to their own needs and individual temperaments - I don't follow a set pattern of response to all children. I think that you cheat yourself and the child when you do this!

(For instance, I don't insist to Timmy that he has to go swimming when we go to the beach - but make him put on his suit anyway. I know that he is slow to warm up to new situations and that he might want to go into the water after we have been there awhile, insisting that he start off to go swimming, would only traumatize him.

I think that if I had to chose one quality most beneficial to a pre-school teacher it would be that of sensitivity; both to themselves and to
the children. To know your own limits and to know what you like and don't like, and to pick up such cues about the children that you work with. A teacher can easily learn if a child is progressing at a rate that is right for him just by remaining sensitive to him. Then, the teacher can pick up cues from child to offer new stimuli or expand stimulus the child is already exposed to—expanding the child's learning. The teacher can see that the environment is complex and varied enough to permit growth of learning and unrestricted enough to promote exploratory behavior.

I think that any method of teaching should remain flexible enough to adapt to the individual needs of both the teacher and the child. A sensitive teacher comes to know and appreciate these needs."

See you on the beach!