



News From The E.I. Program

CRITERION-STONEHAM EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

8F Henshaw St, Woburn, MA 01801, 781-935-3855

NEWS FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Happy New Year ! This past year has seen many program improvements as well as staff changes. We welcomed five new staff at the end of the summer, each experienced and dedicated. Our staff continues to be our greatest strength, despite the inevitable changes we face each year.

Program improvements included new groups offered at our center and an expanded PAC calendar. This year we added additional Sibling groups and Transition groups. We expanded our infant/baby groups and started a weekly Saturday playgroup.

Our PAC has developed a schedule of monthly discussion groups, based on topics of interest identified by our parents. An email list is now up and running, and will provide an efficient way to share information (like this newsletter) with parents and notify them of upcoming events. Our thanks to Kris Levine, who has accomplished all of this, and more, through her singular efforts. I hope some of you will think about contacting her and offering her your support as we continue to develop programs and activities of interest to parents.

ANNUAL WINTER OPEN HOUSE

Just a reminder that our annual winter Open House will be held on **Saturday February 12, 2005** from 10am - 12pm. It will be at our Center in Woburn located at 8F Henshaw Street. This PAC sponsored event is always fun with craft activities, music, and food. If you plan on joining us, please call and **RSVP by February 4th to Kris Levine at 781.224.5642**. Please leave a voice mail with your name and the number of children and adults that will be attending. Hope to see you there!!

Thank You, Thank You, Thank you

Once again we would like to thank the Stoneham High School students for their generous gifts to our families at Christmas. The students raise money during the Fall through various projects. In December, they arrive at our site with boxes and boxes of beautifully wrapped gifts, purchased especially for each member of a family. This year they provided gifts for 20 families. We are all very grateful for the commitment and generosity of these wonderful students.

NEWS FROM THE PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)

Kris Levine

Greetings and Happy New Year from the Parents' Advisory Council (PAC)! The PAC acts as a liaison between parents and EI, as a support network for parents, and as facilitators for events and workshops. As a parent with a child in EI, you are considered a member of the PAC. Please feel free to join us at any of our informal PAC meetings or at an upcoming Discussion. If you are interested in receiving email notifications of what is going on at EI, please give your name, your child's name, the date that they turn 3 and your email address to your service coordinator. The following is the schedule of events through June 2005. **(Call the center to let the secretary know if you will be coming and if you will need childcare)**

Date	Time	Event
Tue Feb 8	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Feb 16	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Feb 16	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	*Discipline Discussion
Tue Mar 8	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Mar 16	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Mar 16	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	*Speech Discussion
Tue Apr 12	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Apr 13	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed Apr 13	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	*Stress Management Discussion
Tue May 10	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed May 18	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed May 18	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	*Infant Massage Discussion
Tue June 14	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed June 15	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Parents' Group Meeting with PAC
Wed June 15	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	*Discussion TBD

Our January Discussion was on Potty Training, facilitated by Loretta McQuade, LICSW. We shared strategies and frustrations as well as some laughs and giggles. Handouts are available- just ask your service coordinator. "Super Nanny" is unavailable for our February Discussion, but I'm sure Loretta will have some great strategies to share on discipline. Hope to see you at one of these meetings.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES/APRIL RECESS

We will be closed on Presidents' Day -Feb 21st BUT the program is open for the rest of that week.

We are closed for April Recess : April 18th -22nd

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Sick Child Policy: Cold and flu season is here. We are trying to minimize the spread of infections in our groups, so please keep children home even when they are mildly ill, but especially when they have the following: thick nasal discharge, frequent cough, fever, diarrhea.

Snow Day Policy: Please call our center to find out if groups are cancelled. **When you hear our general greeting, press 1.** We usually follow the Stoneham School schedule with some exceptions. If Stoneham closes for the day, we will cancel our morning groups.

We do not cancel our afternoon groups automatically. We make that decision mid-morning. This policy does not apply to Home Visits- those decisions are made directly by the family and their home visitor.

MIDWINTER AQUATICS GROUP

We will be starting another 10-week session of Aquatics on April 6th. For more information call Mercy, at ext. 70

LUNCH BUNCH FEEDING GROUP

If there is enough interest, we will offer a parent-toddler group with an emphasis on feeding. Parents will attend with their child and bring a lunch or snack to eat in group. The group will meet for 4-5 weeks in March, during lunch time, either on Tuesday or Wednesday. We still need to work out the details. Loretta Dwyer-McQuade, LICSW (ext.33) and Ellen Chen, MS, RN (ext 81) will facilitate the group. Please call them if you are interested.

BOUNCING BUDDIES

Bouncing Buddies is a monthly Saturday Morning Playgroup from 10:00-11:30 a.m. at our Early Intervention center in Woburn. It is run in conjunction with the North Suburban Family Network, and provides an opportunity for a shorter length, less structured playtime than our weekly playgroups. There is a brief circle time, followed by a snack and art project, in addition to free play opportunities in one of our classrooms, the gross motor room and on toddler-sized ride on toys. To sign up for one of the dates above, contact **Nancy Porter at 781.935.3855, ext. 48.**

There are spaces remaining at this time for all dates and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to families participating for the first time.

Upcoming dates are **February 5, March 5, and April 9.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Turning Three Workshops

Be on the lookout for our Turning Three workshops in March. This will be a two-night program as follows:

PART I will address the federal and state laws, timelines in the IEP process, eligibility for special needs services and TEAM meetings. **PART II** will provide an opportunity for follow-up discussions with former EI families who have gone through this process .

Resource Fair

Feb 8th 4-7 pm at American Civic Center, Wakefield.

Information on camps, recreation, family support and services will be available. Sponsored by EMARC and local school PACs. For more information call Judy Santa Maria at 781.942.4888 ex 4022.

Annual Conference

**Federation for Children w/ Special Needs
Mar 12th at the World Trade Center in Boston**

The conference will include workshops on a variety of topics including fostering friendships and enhancing communication. For more information call 800.331.0688 or visit www.fcsn.org

Early Intervention

Information and Resources

The **Parent Perspective Newsletter** is a free publication produced six times a year through funding from DPH. It is a parent driven project aimed at informing and supporting families in Early Intervention. Copies of the newsletter are available at our center, but you can add yourself to their mailing list by calling 877.353.4757 or by email to : eiplp@yahoo.com

Golf Tournament /Casino Night

Back in September 2004 the friends and family of Samantha Gibbs held the **3rd Annual Samantha's Harvest Charity Golf Tournament**. The event was started to raise money and awareness for several organizations including the Mass. Down Syndrome Congress, RISE Preschool in Reading, Children's Hospital, and our own EI Program. The Gibbs family has generously donated \$2,000 to our program this year. We are always grateful for their support and will use the funds for new equipment and supplies to benefit all of our families in Early Intervention. On **March 19, 2005** they will be hosting a **Casino Night at the Newton Marriot**. For more information, please call Rob and Lisa Gibbs at **781.354.0544** or log on to www.samanthasharvest.org

FUNKY FUN INDOOR PLAY IDEAS

by Carol Murray

(Carol is a Developmental Specialist in our EI program)

Colored ice cubes in the bath tub

Put a drop of food coloring in each section of an ice-cube tray and make colored ice. Let your child play with it in the bathtub – watch it melt, watch it make colors – magic!

Tent Play

Throw a king sized quilt or sheet over the dining room table and play underneath. Bring along flashlight or two. Pull out the sleeping bags and have a pretend camping adventure or pack a special snack in a backpack and surprise your child with an indoor picnic under the table/tent.

White and fluffy – sensory play

Fill a plastic container with dry potato flakes (the type for making instant mashed potatoes). This stuff is light and fluffy, and easy to clean up. Put the container on a towel or tablecloth in the middle of the kitchen floor. Let kids sit on floor and scoop and pour with spoons and measuring cups. Bring in the toy dump trucks and bulldozers and push the pretend snow around. (Other sensory textures to explore: rice, lentils, oats)

If I had a hammer....

A big piece of Styrofoam and a few golf tees and a toy hammer can entertain a toddler to no end. Help kids poke the golf tees (pretend nails) into the Styrofoam and hammer, hammer, hammer.

Pack it up!

Toddlers love totes and carrying things around from place to place. Add a suitcase or purse or a lunch box to the playroom. Let your child fill it up with toys and carry it around. Unpack it and pack it up again. (Along this same idea, you can use recycled gift bags. Children like to tote around the ones with the nifty little handles on them).

In a Box

Line up a few medium sized boxes. Pretend it's a train. Let kids climb in and out, take turns being the engineer, offer pretend tickets, dream up a favorite destination and take a trip! Or, Play post office: cut a slot in the box and let kids slip catalogs and junk mail through it as they pretend to be the mail carrier.

Tower of Fruit Loops ...

This activity is a little tricky and requires some fine motor concentration, so it will be best for older two-year-olds, those who are almost three. Stick a long piece of uncooked thick spaghetti into a little piece of clay or playdough so that it is standing up on the table (the clay acts as a base and the hard spaghetti stands up like a flag pole). Have fun and practice fine motor skills while lacing fruit loops or cheerios onto the strand of spaghetti so that they form a colorful stack/tower.

Home Made Play dough is especially comforting and soft when it's warm!

1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt, 1 cup water, 1 Tablespoon cooking oil, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, food coloring (optional). Mix and cook over medium heat until ingredients form a sticky ball. Cool on waxed paper or tin foil. Punch and poke and squeeze while warm.

LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS

An excerpt from the booklet:

"Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth"

Everyday experiences are great opportunities for learning. You can teach about shapes by cutting cheese into triangles and squares, or about textures as you play outside and feel the grass, rocks, and if you can stand it, mud and dirt. You don't need to buy expensive toys. Often what children like best are household items such as pots and pans, wooden spoons and plastic containers.- Children also learn about making friends and getting along with others as you take a walk and talk with neighbors. They learn about self-control when they have to wait their turn to go down the slide at the playground. They build self-confidence when they're able to feed themselves.

TV plays a limited role in learning. Although children may learn some concepts from educational programming and enjoy watching these shows, research tells us that children learn best from interactive, hands-on experiences- touching, feeling, manipulating, problem-solving- with people they care about. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV for children under 2. If you do choose to allow your child to watch, here are some suggested guidelines:

Watch with your child. Make TV watching an interactive experience. Dance and sing together. "Extend the learning" by talking about what he's viewing and connecting it to the real world. If the show deals with the theme of sharing, point out how this comes up for the child in his daily life. If he's learning about colors, talk about the different color houses you see as you take a walk.

Don't use TV/Video to put your child to sleep. This makes it hard for him to learn to fall asleep on his own. Instead, establish a bedtime routine that includes soothing activities such as reading and singing softly to him before you put him down.

Limit viewing time. A 30-60 minute-a-day limit for any "screen time" (meaning time spent in front of a TV or computer screen) is reasonable for 2-3 year olds.

This booklet and other resources are available at: www.zerotothree.org/schoolreadiness
ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit promoting the healthy development of babies and toddlers

THE PAINTING

By Helen E. Buckley
(Helen Buckley is an associate professor of English at SUNY-Oswego, and the author of children's books)

Once a little boy was going to paint a picture
He put the paper on the easel,
And he looked at all the jars of color
In front of him.
"What are you going to paint?" asked the teacher
"The sky," said the little boy.
"I'm going to paint the sky."
"Good" said the teacher,
"Do you have enough blue paint?"
And he took up the blue brush
And made a wide band across the top of the paper.
"There," he said. "There is the blue sky."
And he looked around for the teacher,
But she was gone.

Then the little boy looked out the window
To see if his sky looked like the real one.
And it did.
But was the sky ALWAYS blue?
The little boy put down the blue brush
And thought about the sky.
"Sometimes," he thought, "Just before night,
The sky is pink-and a little purple."
So he took up the pink brush
And then the purple,
And pretty soon there was a sunset on his paper.

Then the little boy remembered winter,
And how the sky looks when the snow comes down.
So he took up the white brush
And made soft snowflakes over all
The blue and the pink and the purple sky.
And some of the snowflakes melted
To make more colors, and the little boy felt happy
Like he always did when the snow came down
In the wintertime.
And just as he was about to put down his brush
And be finished, he remembered a day in summer
When the sky grew dark.
And he remembered that he had been a little scared
And he had run to tell his mother about it.

So now he took up the black brush
And painted great storm clouds
With flashes of red and orange lightning
Streaking through them.
It's thundering, too" said the little boy softly to himself
"Boom! Boom! Boom! And the wind is blowing!"
And he made the rain come down- hard rain-
In long green lines across the sky,
And all the colors ran together in rainbows
At the bottom of the page.

"Now I will make the sun shine."
Said the little boy to himself.
And he made a big, round sun in the middle of the paper

But the painting was so wet,
And there were so many colors in it,
That the yellow sun turned brown in the sky.
But the little boy didn't care-
His picture was finished
And it was just the way he wanted it.

He looked around for the teacher,
And pretty soon she was there
Standing by the easel and looking at all the colors:
All the blue and pink and the purple;
All the white and black:
All the red and orange and green;
And the yellow that had turned brown.
The teacher looked at all the wet and dripping colors
Which had run together
In the snow and the wind and the rain
Of the little boy's painting.

And she said: "My goodness!"
I thought you were going to make the sky."
"I did," said the little boy
"I made all of the skies I know about"
And he took his picture off the easel
And put it carefully away to dry.