



Child-Care Chatter

News and Information for Early Childhood Professionals

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

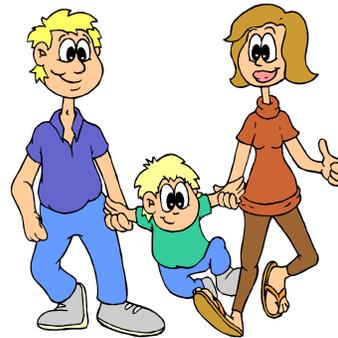
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One of the most important aspects of being a great teacher and/or child care provider is learning to work in a successful, positive manner with the parents of the children in your care. Experts tell us that parents are the single most powerful influence in a child's life, so we need them as our partners if we are going to experience optimum success with their child.

With that in mind, it is helpful to remember certain guidelines when dealing with parents:

1. First impressions are important! Smile, look them in the eye, call them by name, shake their hand and thank them for sharing their child with you.

2. Begin and end conversations with parents on a positive note. Make a point of sandwiching any negative news about their child between positive statements.
3. Use tact when describing their child. Be careful not to use "hot" words like *thief* or *liar*. There is a gentler way to describe these deceitful behaviors.
4. Listen more than you talk!
5. Communicate often and well. Don't wait until there is bad news about their child. Parents are much more likely to try to work in a supportive manner with their child's teacher when they receive frequent and



positive messages about their child.

Always be sensitive to the fact that the parents of the children in your care have entrusted you with their greatest treasure. Work hard to be worthy of that privilege, and let them know you want what is best for their child.

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So Long, Tommy

There were lots of tears that day at Kidz Academy. Tommy, the pet turtle, was leaving forever, and all of the children were sad to see him go. Tommy's state health officials and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warned that he was a danger to the children in the center.

It's not that Tommy was a bad turtle. It's just that he and his reptile cousins, snakes and lizards, carry

the *Salmonella* bacteria. These bacteria, which are transmitted in the animal's feces, can cause serious problems, including diarrhea, fever and stomach pain, for elderly people and children under the age of five.

So, if you find that you simply cannot part with your pet reptile, at least follow the safety precautions offered by the CDC and other concerned organizations.

1. After any contact with the animal or a surface or object touched by the animal, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and running water.
2. Never allow your pet to roam around freely.
3. Keep the pet out of the kitchen or any other food preparation area.
4. Never use kitchen or bathroom sinks to bathe the animal or to wash its dishes, cages or aquarium.

The Lighter Side

On the first day of school, a kindergarten teacher told her class, "Raise your hand if you have to go to the bathroom."

A little voice from the back of the room asked, "How will that help?"



A Matter of N-etiquette



E-mail is quickly becoming the communication method of choice between many parents and teachers/caregivers. It is fast, efficient and always available, but this very same convenience may be responsible for serious lapses in communication etiquette—or in this case n-etiquette.

Think about it. Would you send a note home with a student that was written on jelly-stained paper or contained misspelled words? Would you take a note that a parent sent to you and stick it in your “to do” box for several days before responding? Of course not. Such behaviors would reflect badly on your professionalism, and so do poorly written and untimely e-mails. We’ve compiled a few

n-etiquette rules that may help you use e-mail more effectively.

1. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Not only will your message make a better impression, but it is more likely to convey the message you mean to send.
2. Be concise and to the point. E-mail messages are harder to read than printed messages, so don’t make them longer than necessary.
3. Read the message before you send it. Check your grammar, spelling and the content of the message.
4. Answer quickly. Rule of thumb is that you should respond to an e-mail within 24 hours. If you don’t have an immediate answer to a

question, e-mail back and tell them that you will get an answer to them as soon as possible.

5. Be careful with attachments. Sending a large photo file—even if it contains an adorable picture of their child—can take a very long time to download. When sending attachments, be sure to scan them for viruses and compress them as much as possible.
6. Avoid writing in CAPITALS. Messages written in capital letters seem to be SHOUTING AT THE RECIPIENT.

(See Jimmie’s Journal for more N-etiquette ideas.)

Are They Ready For Kindergarten?

Readiness for school is very important to a child’s future success. When considering where children should be on the developmental scale by kindergarten, here are a few vital readiness skills to consider:

- Children should be able to communicate verbally their needs, wants and thoughts.
- They should be able to demonstrate self-help skills like dressing themselves.
- While letter recognition, knowl-

edge of animals and sounds, and concepts such as large and small, up and down are important, it is more important for a child to be socially, emotionally and physically ready to tackle the pressures of school.

Carole’s Corner



“I’m sleepy! I’m tired!” These are phrases I often hear in my classroom, and they fre-

quently ring through child care centers as well.

Teachers and child care providers have a responsibility to let parents know when their children seem to

need more sleep than they are getting. Billy and Susie cannot realize their full potential, or even enjoy their day, if they are too sleepy and tired to attend to what is going on around them.

Proper nourishment also plays a key role in a child’s learning experiences. Parents and teachers need to remember that children are often just as affected by what they do not eat as they are

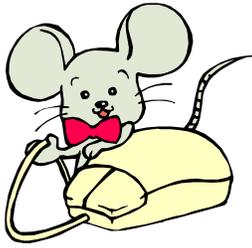
by what they do eat.

Children who do not eat a balanced, healthy diet do not function well and will often be lethargic and apathetic in the classroom.

Without seeming pushy or judgmental, be sure to emphasize to your children’s parents the importance of proper rest and nourishment. Let them know that you want what is best for their child in every way.

Jimmie's Journal

Need more information about some of our articles? Well, here are some sites you might find interesting.



SALMONELLA: www.cdc.gov/healthypets/animals/reptiles.htm and www.peteducation.com.

ROTAVIRUS: www.cdc.gov/nip/pr/pr_rotavirus_Feb2006.htm and http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/rotavirus.html.

You can also get a copy of the 2006 Immunization Schedule by going to www.cdc.gov and typing the words "childhood immunization schedule 2006" in the search field.

N-ETIQUETTE: www.emailreplies.com.

PARENTS: www.naeyc.org/ece/1999/02.asp.

New Immunization Recommended to CDC

In February 2006 the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that three doses of a new vaccine for rotavirus should be given to all babies under 32 weeks old. The CDC and the Secretary of Health and Human Services are expected to accept the recommendation and add the vaccine to the recommended immunization schedule.

Rotavirus, which is the most common cause of severe diarrhea in children, can be spread by contact with toys or other objects infected by sick children or by contaminated food or water. By the age of five, almost all children have been infected by rotavirus. Some of these infections are relatively mild, but the virus

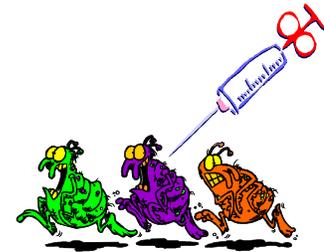
sends about 250,000 children to emergency rooms annually. And, 40 to 60 children die each year, primarily from severe dehydration, after contracting rotavirus.

The newly recommended vaccine has met with mixed reactions from parents, some of whom are reluctant for their children to take it until it is more fully tested. Until we have an effective and widely accepted vaccine for rotavirus, however, knowledge about the virus and some basic practices are our best defense.

Signs and Symptoms: fever, nausea and vomiting, often followed by abdominal cramps and frequent, watery diarrhea.

Incubation: 2 to 3 days.

Duration: fever and vomiting will stop in 2 to 3 days, but diarrhea may last up to 9 days.



Contagiousness: very contagious. Can be spread by an infected person before they show symptoms.

Prevention:

- wash your hands and children's hands after diaper changes and trips to the bathroom,
- thoroughly clean toys and other objects children may put in their mouths,
- do not allow an infected child return to school until the diarrhea is completely resolved.

SOURCES: CDC Press Release, February 21, 2006, and <http://kidshealth.org>.

What's New at MB&A?

NEW STATE: We are very excited to announce that the state of Tennessee has approved our courses for distribution. That brings the total number of states in which MB&A's courses are accepted to eight.

RELEASE 3.1, which contains a total

of 13 courses, is now available. This release adds *AD/HD* and *Children in the Classroom Community*. If you need copies, give us a call at 1-877-655-7139, and we'll send you as many as you need. Additional courses will be released later this year.

NEW PAYMENT OPTION: In response to your requests, we have added the option of paying for courses with the American Express card. Payment pages will be updated to reflect this option in future releases, but you may use it now.



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PRESCHOOL: Investment in the Community's Future

Community leaders constantly tout their efforts to bring new businesses and jobs into the community, but they fail to acknowledge the importance of a quality workforce to attract new enterprises. The reality is that early childhood development is good for economic development.

According to Art Rolnick, research director for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, "Public dollars spent on children pay off." Some of these payoffs come in the form of future savings. For instance, a child who attends preschool is less likely to need additional state spending because of learning problems or a run in with the law. This same child is more likely to be a productive worker that attracts new business.

If we want a quality workforce that attracts new, well-paying jobs to our communities, we must stop looking at

the money we invest in preschool education as simply a "nice thing to do." We have to look at it as an investment in the future.

A long-term study found that children who attended preschool grew into

more productive and better paid adults than their peers who did not have the benefit of preschool. Below are some of the findings.

SOURCE: "Early Investments," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Feb. 26, 2006.

	<u>Preschoolers</u>	<u>Non-preschoolers</u>
Arrested five times or more	7%	35%
Employment rate	71%	59%
Average monthly earnings, age 27	\$1,219	\$766
Homeownership rate	36%	13%
Receiving public assistance, age 27	15%	32%

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Rand Corp.
