

LETTING CHILDREN CHOOSE

-Submitted by CCIS of Northern Tier

Providing choices for children is a fundamental aspect of any high-quality early childhood curriculum. There are several reasons why giving children choices throughout the day is beneficial, even crucial to their development.

Providing children the opportunity to make choices gives them a feeling of control. All human beings need to feel as if they have control over themselves and their lives. When we offer children choices, we allow them to practice the skills of independence and responsibility, while still guarding their health and safety by controlling and monitoring their options.

Allowing children to choose builds a healthy self-esteem that grows when they successfully do things for themselves. Children can handle mistakes or failure with self-control and good humor when they feel good about themselves. A child who has a solid sense of self-worth can make a poor decision, evaluate it calmly, rethink the situation and make a different choice the next time.

Making their own decisions promotes cognitive development and teaches children how to problem solve. When given choices,

children stretch their minds and create new and unique combinations of ideas and materials. By being allowed to make some of their own decisions children learn how different decisions can yield differing outcomes. As well as, how to accept responsibility for the choices they make.

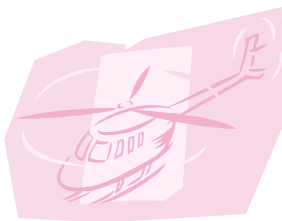
One benefit of offering children choices is the reduction of conflict. When adults direct a child's behavior most of the day, the child's natural desire to be independent is

thwarted and feelings of resentment or rebellion may arise. Children have no choice about going to school or child care. But if we respect each child's individual needs and interests at other times, we can provide them with the opportunities to choose what is best for themselves.

Children can feel committed to an activity they have chosen themselves. This will help teach the children persistence and task completion.



Children make choices all day long, whether adults want them to or not!



AVOID BEING A “HELICOPTER”

Many adults, parents and teachers alike, tend to supervise by “hovering” close to the children in their care. Like a **helicopter** they seem to ride on a cushion of air close to the children ready to swoop in with a suggestion or unsolicited hint whenever the child is faced with a decision.

The wise adult needs to understand that children must learn to make their own choices. The adult should hang back and give children the opportunity to succeed or fail on their own. Depending on the atmosphere of the situation (stifling or relaxed), children will choose to obey, ignore or defy rules and directions and determine for themselves whether to speak kindly or angrily to others. They decide whether school or child care is a good place to be. The task of the role model is to provide children with appropriate, healthful options then to step back and let them practice their decision making skills.



GO PLAY IN THE SUN



We all need sunlight daily to stay healthy!

Have you ever wondered why the flu is seasonal and seems to disappear during the summer months? One of the reasons could be that our vitamin D levels go up in the spring and summer from more frequent sun exposure.

Vitamin D is necessary for proper brain development, is known to prevent respiratory infections such as colds and flu and may reduce the risk for certain cancers and other diseases.

While too much sun can cause sunburn and skin damage, moderate sunshine is necessary and beneficial

to health. We all need adequate amounts of sunlight to stay healthy.

Try to get out in the sun for 20 minutes to a half hour each day, (or the time it takes the skin to turn slightly pink) without sunscreen which blocks vitamin D. This will help to build up your vitamin D levels.

The key is not to burn. If you or your child will be out in the sun for longer periods of time, wide-brimmed hats and natural fiber clothing that covers the skin are the safest, least toxic forms of sun protection.

-www.healthychild.com

EVERGREEN BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

CLUB LOCATIONS

OFFER

AFTERSCHOOL AND

SUMMER CLUB

ACTIVITIES IN THE

ELEMENTARY AND

HIGH SCHOOLS.

Indiana County's Evergreen Boys & Girls Club began in 2002 as an initiative of the Children's Advisory Commission in Indiana. The CAC was looking to respond to a need within the county for after-school programs for kids.

After much research and preparation, Evergreen opened its doors in 2005 at Purchase Line High School. "Our first summer we served over 100 youth", shared Executive Director Lauri Schiffbauer.

In 2006 EBGC expanded to include four additional locations, Homer Center Elementary and High school and Purchase Line North and South Elementary. To date over 1000 youth have been served.

They offer homework help, tutoring, recreational and educational programs.

For more information about Indiana's Evergreen Boys & Girls Club contact Breanne or Meghan at (724) 910 - 6042

4-H DAY CAMPS



"Meet the Plants" campers receive a free t-shirt.

The Indiana County 4-H program is sponsoring three day camps this summer. This year's camp theme is **"Meet The Plants"**. The camp program will focus on plant science and the importance of plants in our lives. Campers will do such things as conduct plant science experiments, taste various plant products, make crafts, eat snacks, meet new friends and most importantly have fun!

Campers should be ages 7 to 12. Cost is \$30 per camper, with some scholarship money available.

LOCATIONS:

Plumville - July 20 - 22 at the Plumville Presbyterian Church

Blairsville - July 27 - 29 at the United Presbyterian Church

Penn Run/Clymer area - August 10 - 12 at New Horizons Retreat Center
Contact Penn State Cooperative Extension at (724) 465-3880.



SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

At the end of the school year children can't wait to get out the door and forget about the year just past. The problem is when they return to school in September, teachers will expect them to remember principles and information from just a few months ago. School has been out of session for a month now, so how much knowledge has your school-ager retained?

The Center for Summer Learning, based at Johns Hopkins University, notes the following research results of "summer learning loss":

- ✿ All children experience this loss when not engaged in some type of educational program throughout the summer

- ✿ On average, children lose up to 2 months' worth of math skills over the summer

- ✿ Children not only lose skills that they've learned the past year, but many children also experience weight gain during this time

-www.childcareaware.org

Math skills seem to show the biggest decline with reading comprehension skills a close second. To help your child maintain their knowledge, plan activities where they will practice these skills. Take walks, bike rides or day trips where you can estimate the total distance you travel and distance per minute, half-hour or hour. Shop and cook together, practicing math skills while purchasing and then measuring ingredients. Develop a summer reading program setting a goal for the number of books your child will read. Travel to places mentioned in the books like parks or playgrounds. Visit the public library and participate in their summer reading program or organize a summer book swap followed by a picnic.



How many books will your child read this summer?

FUN BACKYARD ACTIVITIES

Scholastic Parent & Child
June/July 2010

Bursting Bags: What kid doesn't like to watch things explode? Here is a safe activity that will amuse your children and teach science at the same time.

Gather the following items: baking soda, vinegar, snack-size zip lock plastic bags, quart-size zip lock plastic bags, goggles or sunglasses, measuring cups and spoons. Now head outside to complete the activity. Add 1 Tbsp. of baking soda to a quart size bag. Add 1/2 cup vinegar to the snack-size bag and seal it. Place the small bag in the large one, seal the larger bag, and put on your safety glasses. Punch the vinegar bag inside the baking soda bag to break it open, and shake the bags to mix the substances. Once mixed lay aside and watch the bag puff up and pop.

Mixing the vinegar and soda creates a chemical reaction producing carbon dioxide. If more gas is produced than the bag can hold...KABOOM! Try it with varying amounts of vinegar (1/4 cup, 1/3 cup, etc.) to see the difference.

Super Bubbles: This activity involves the discovery of how bubbles react to clean vs. dirty surfaces.

Gather the following items: large bucket, 1/2 cup measure, liquid dishwashing detergent (Dawn works best; avoid using a soap with antibacterial properties), bubble wands, various articles of clothing.

In the bucket gently mix together 8 liters of warm water and 1/2 cup detergent. Use a bubble wand to create the bubbles. Put on clean gloves and bounce the bubbles off your hands! Then try bouncing them off your clothes.

Some fabrics work better than others, but if the clothes are clean, the bubbles will bounce. If they are dirty, the bubbles will pop. That's because oil and dirt particles break down the soap's film.

To make your bubbles last longer, add 1 Tbsp of glycerin.

ALL CHILDREN

SMILE IN THE

SAME

LANGUAGE

-UNKNOWN



What makes a bubble pop?