

Early Care & Education Insider

Nature — Support Children's Connection



Children and nature have always been connected. However, recent research suggests that children are exposed less and less to the world of nature. In our busy society, children are often on tight schedules of school, extracurricular activities and child care. Television and video games keep children indoors. Even when they are outdoors, the time often is structured and they're not free to explore on their own.

Children who interact with nature learn a wide range of valuable skills that will help them in school and life. Observation is an important key to all science and math skills. Children can develop their senses of touch, smell, sight and hearing in nature. They can learn about traits of natural objects, for example size, color and texture. Encourage children to look for change, one of the most important conditions scientists watch for.

Counting, measuring, weighing, estimating and comparing differences are other skills that children can learn when they are in nature. Offer younger children opportunities to judge 'more' or 'less,' 'larger' or 'smaller,' 'shorter' or 'taller.' Older children can begin to find out 'how long' or 'how far,' 'how much more' or 'how much less.'



Children can learn to sort, match and classify objects in nature. This is important in understanding how things work in the world. Children learn to classify objects by first noticing differences and similarities. Very young children can match identical items. Eventually, children learn to sort objects that are similar but not identical; for example, that different kinds of trees produce seeds that look different but all belong to the same group of items.

Another science skill that can be learned from nature is experimenting. This is the skill most commonly associated with science. From planting seeds to see how plants grow to seeing what makes ice melt, children benefit when they are allowed and encouraged to interact with nature.

Some of the other reasons that children's experiences with nature are important include developing a nurturing and caring attitude about plant and animal life, providing a sense of calm, enjoying visual images of beauty and encouraging physical activity.



Adults can encourage children's connection to nature by providing natural environments to experience and by supporting their interests. Nature also can be brought indoors with plants and collections of nature items such as stones, pinecones and leaves.

To give parents and caregivers information, tools, and inspiration to get their kids -and themselves - outside, the NWF has created www.greenhour.org, a Web site with family-friendly content. "It is a supportive virtual community where families can learn, explore, and share their outdoor experiences and backyard adventures. Although it may be challenging to make the time, both adults and children gain much when they spend time with nature.

DO YOU KNOW OR SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED? The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect reports that every 11 seconds an American child is reported abused or neglected; and every 2 hours a child or youth is murdered? **Remember:** "It is the responsibility of care providers to see to the protection of children — not to make a diagnosis of abuse or neglect. Reporting the suspicion of abuse is not a choice — it is a legal obligation."



The **MISSOURI CHILDREN'S DIVISION CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT HOTLINE UNIT 1-800-392-3738** accepts confidential reports of suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Any person may report. Effective August 28, 2004, Missouri law requires Mandated Reporters to identify themselves when making a report.

The **NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-4-A-CHILD®** is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Serving the United States, its territories, and Canada, the Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who, through interpreters, can provide assistance in 170 languages. For more information visit: www.childhelp.org

The **PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA HOTLINE 1-800-CHILDREN** is dedicated to building awareness, providing education and inspiring hope to everyone involved in the effort to prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children. For more information visit: www.preventchildabuse.org

What is child abuse? Although there are many formal and acceptable definitions of child abuse, the following is offered as a guide for information on child abuse and neglect. "Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature."

Are you a Registered Vendor providing childcare to children receiving DSS subsidy?

- Would you like to have monthly visits from an Early Care and Education Specialist?
- Are you interested in getting your state license?
- Find out how the ECE staff can assist you in taking this step and learn about start-up grants.
- Funding may also be available to help with the cost of licensing.

Contact Kathy Edwards, Director of Early Care and Education, at The Community Partnership.
Call (573)368-2849 or toll-free (888)541-4636 or
visit our website at www.thecommunitypartnership.org



OPEN INITIATIVE, PO Box 736, Columbia MO 65205
573-884-3373 or 877-782-0185
www.openinitiative.com

The OPEN Initiative is an "umbrella" organization under which many career development efforts occur. OPEN's primary focus is the development and implementation of a career development system for early childhood and school age/afterschool professionals.

Vision: Competent, reflective, and equitably compensated professionals will provide high quality early childhood and school age/afterschool education for Missouri's young children and youth.

Mission: To implement a career development system for Missouri's early childhood and school age/afterschool professionals.



Child Care Aware® of Missouri (formerly MOCCRRN Mid Missouri)
573-445-5437 or 800-243-9685 mo.childcareaware.org

Child Care Aware of Missouri strives to improve the quality of child care, pre-school and after-school/out-of-school-time programs across the state. **Child Care Aware®** regional agencies work with child care centers and homes to help them start new programs, obtain financial and technical assistance, access professional development opportunities, and information about regulations, zoning, and resource development.

January/February 2011 workshops (visit website for dates, cost, and registration details)

CACFP Child Care Center Orientation—Overview of how to operate the food program & manage CACFP paperwork. Attendance is required for new child care centers before their application is approved. Related topics: CACFP Child Care Center Infant Feeding Training; CACFP Child Care Center Menu Planning; and CACFP Child Care Center Eat Smart Guidelines.

Working Effectively with Young Children & Their Families: Helping Parents & Providers Understand Temperament—Introduces three primary temperament types (flexible, fearful, and feisty), and discusses "goodness of fit" between child and adult. Emphasis on strategies child care professionals use in individualizing their approach with children of each temperament type, as well as a discussion of attachment and its importance to children's healthy development.

Shift from Control to Connection—CMAEYC sponsored three-part series for home-based providers:

1. Shift from Control to Connection;
2. Shift from Feelings of Hopelessness to Success with Structure;
3. Shift from Seeing What is Wrong to Seeing Helpfulness



T.E.A.C.H. Missouri (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) is an educational scholarship opportunity for early childhood providers in licensed centers and family or group child care homes. It is part of a nationwide effort to increase quality in early childhood programs by increasing the educational qualifications of the teachers in the field. Missouri is one of 21 states offering this program.

The four components of the T.E.A.C.H. Missouri program are:

- Scholarship - T.E.A.C.H. Missouri pays a percentage of the cost of tuition and books
- Education - The T.E.A.C.H. Missouri contract year covers 9-15 credit hours over three consecutive semesters
- Compensation - Upon successful completion of coursework, scholarship recipients receive a \$300 bonus from T.E.A.C.H. Missouri with a possible \$300 bonus match or a 2% raise from the sponsoring employer depending on the scholarship level
- Commitment - Recipients pledge to complete 6 to 12 months of continued service to children at their sponsoring facility or in the field of early care after the educational year

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Come visit us on the Web!

www.thecommunitypartnership.org

Visit The Community Partnership's website and click on "Our Programs." The drop down box offers all of the Partnership's programs, including Early Care & Education and Educare. Discover what each program has to offer, find links to local resources, and visit the Trainings & Meetings link for a list of our upcoming meetings, educational workshops, and clock hours.

EDUCARE SUPPORT GROUP: Come enjoy networking time with other childcare providers who also understand that working with young children each day can be rewarding and challenging. We will discuss resources available to area childcare providers and you will be given the chance to share your ideas. Please join us for this opportunity.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: For additional information regarding each educational event listed below, please refer to the enclosed inserts (some are two sided) or visit us at: www.thecommunitypartnership.org. All Educare Support Groups and Educational Events will be held at in The Community Partnership's Board Room, 1101 Hauck Drive, Rolla, Missouri, unless otherwise stated on event flyer:

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS	DATE(s)	TIME	CLOCK HOURS
CPR Certification or CPR Renewal and First Aid — Registration & payment is required before date of training.	Sat., January 8, 2011	8:00 am — 4:00 pm	Yes
Subsidy Orientation Trainings — Pre-registration is required.	Wed., January 12, 2011 Wed., February 16, 2011 Wed., March 30, 2011	9:00 to Noon	0
Educare Support Group Meetings	Mon., January 10, 2011 Tue., February 15, 2011	6:00-6:30 pm and/ or 8:30-9:00 pm	0
Business Planning for Child Care, Youth, & Early Learning Professionals	Mon., January 10, 2011	6:30—8:30 pm	2
Growing Up Wild Workshop	Tue., February 15, 2011	6:30—8:30 pm	2
Music & Movement for Physical Fitness	Tue., March 22, 2011	6:30—8:30 pm	2