Planning a Summer Camp Program

By Julie Yamada with Katie Keener

I sat down with Katie Keener, Director for Pacific Union College Discoveryland Children’s Center in St. Helena, to talk to her about some ideas she has used to plan a summer camp for children ages 2-6.

Julie: What was the feedback you heard from the parents? From the children?

Katie: The parents loved that we planned things that were still structured but also had the laidback summer fun feel to it. They also liked that each week was a different theme because the children were excited and talking to their parents about what they were learning, anticipating what the next week would bring.

The children were engaged because they were excited about what was going to happen next. During the week, we tried to listen to what the children were talking about that was relevant to the theme. We incorporated those interests into the week as well. They enjoyed learning new words. For example, in cooking camp we chose foods that were fun to say such as: we are going to Africa and we are going to cook a plantain. Then we’d talk about how it is like a banana and about the similarities and differences.

Julie: How did you attract children and families from the community to attend the summer program? Did you find that parents would enroll their child for the fall after they attended the summer program?

Katie: We used flyers that we posted at the library and in stores and shops in town. We connected to families whose children had attended Discoveryland for preschool and let them know that we were able to enroll children up to entry to first grade. We got the current families excited and they helped spread the word about summer camps. Since we allowed families in the community a choice of enrolling for only a week, this seemed to encourage them to attend and try our program. Eventually, they enrolled for the rest of the summer and the school year.

Julie: Do you have any advice for Directors and Teachers about planning a summer camp program?

Katie: I had all the teachers help plan the themes and this helped to have their personalities incorporated into the planning and themes. It was not one teacher planning the camps. They all helped with ideas and each teacher set up an activity for the children to participate in outside.

(Continued on page 2)
Summer Program

Continued

Katie:  Pick themes that you as a teacher are excited about and ones that can also be positive to create a different environment for the summer, such as setting up your classroom differently or moving the classroom outside.  Provide different options for families like enrollment choices that are week-long camps versus enrolling for the whole summer. Start promoting your summer camp program early.  When planning your themes, always be thinking of who you can bring into the classroom to share about your theme other than the usual teacher. Remember, summer is fun! You need to be flexible to change how you run your program so it enables the children to experience a different form of learning through play.

Katie Keener is a graduate of Pacific Union College.  She has worked at Discoveryland in St. Helena for eight years with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and Pre-K.  She was the Assistant Director for four years before recently becoming the Director.

Ooey Gooey Mud!

By Julie Yamada

If you could close your eyes and remember what it was like to be a child spending an afternoon outside in the mud on a warm day, would you remember the gooey feeling as you picked it up and it oozed through your fingers or did you combine your mud with leaves and such to make a mud pie to serve at your “dinner party”?  Imagine the joy as children squish through the mud or dig up mud and fill containers.  It would keep them busy for hours! Children’s understanding of and respect for the natural world is enhanced significantly through opportunities to dig in the dirt, pick dandelions, wipe the dew off leaves, chase squirrels around a tree, or watch birds congregate on a telephone wire (Rivkin & Schein, 2014). We tend to worry about the mess and how much time it will take to clean the children, forgetting about the importance of play. It is vital to remember that play is learning and to think about what the children are learning during their mud play. There are so many sensory experiences that open up a world of creativity:

- **Touch**: is the mud too gooey? Should they add more leaves or dry dirt?
- **Smell**: plant some herbs nearby to allow for picking and adding to a mud pie.
- **Taste**: well, I think that older children would know better, but a two-year-old would definitely give it a try if not supervised.
- **Sight**: children can decide how big or small and what shape their mud pie should be or see how runny the mud is and decide to add more dry dirt.

Playing in the mud can help children learn so many skills such as language by providing the opportunity to accomplish, communicate, conserve, cooperate, create, count, facilitate, differentiate (size, shape, amount, color), discover, explore, express, converse, initiate, and be gleeful (Zavitzkovsky, 2003). As teachers, we can help children develop a love of nature by observing and sharing children’s outdoor interests and building on what they know or feel (Rivkin & Schein, 2014). We can support their love of mud by joining in and celebrating World Forum “International Mud Day” on June 29, 2014, or have your own mud day or mud week. The possibilities are endless! What should you do to get ready? Talk with the rest of the staff, parents and especially the children to get ready for the fun. Have parents bring extra clothes and have a plan for set up and clean up. Supplies that would come in handy for the fun: clean dirt, water, an area or large container to put the mud in, pans, large boxes for stoves, cake pans, cookie cutters, large and small mixing bowls, plates, spoons, measuring cups, herbs, eatable flowers, trucks, shovels, large pails filled with soapy water and rinse water and towels for drying the supplies.

There are several fun books to read to the children during mud week:

- **Mud** by Mary Lyn Ray
- **Mud Pie Annie** by Sue Buchanan and Dana Shafer
- **Brothers are for Making Mud Pies (Lift the Flap)** Harriet Ziefert and Chris L. Demarest
- **Mud Pies and Other Recipes** by Marjorie Winslow and Erik Blegvad
- **Mud Book: How to Make Pies and Cakes** by John Cage and Lois Long

If you choose to have a “mud day,” we would love to see your pictures and share them in our next newsletter. Just e-mail them to cheryl@puconline.org. Also check out the World Forum Mud Day webpage at www.WorldForumFoundation.org/mudday.

References


Moore and Wong
**Hooked for the Summer**

*By Christine Gillan Byrne*

It's been a while, but as a director for Kiddie Kollege on the Union College campus in Lincoln, Nebraska, we had a few tricks up our sleeve for summer time enrollment.

First of all, our Pre-Kindergarten graduation did not occur until August, just before the public school district started classes. That helped us maintain a full pre-k class all summer, along with some of their older siblings and friends!

Summer was especially busy with weekly field trips, special snack menus, guest speakers and activities and community service projects. However, the number one "hook" that we had was the Union College swimming pool! Every morning, we walked up to 30 kids to the pool for swimming lessons. You can imagine the chaos of changing clothes, shoes, towels, swimming suits, etc. but, parents signed up their children and paid the additional fee and our summer programs were busting with kids!

Another incentive for parents was that we brought Vacation Bible School to our early childhood program. Typically, we elongated the VBS program into a two week session. It gave the children and teachers a nice break from the regular lesson planning while at the same time forcing them into mega-creativity mode!

And if all that wasn’t enough, we always had at least one teacher who would work on helping various groups of children to earn Little Lamb, Eager Beaver, Busy Bee and Sunbeam pins and patches. The curriculum was easy to follow and kept the study of nature and God in the forefront every day.

So, now that I’m a stay-at-home mom, guess what I’m doing this summer? Yep! Our little group of home-schooled friends have been working on earning Eager Beaver and Busy Bee pins and patches!

See? The fun never ends!

---

**Sun Safety**

*By Julie Yamada*

Sun safety is important to promote in early childhood centers to teachers and parents. Our skin is so sensitive and it is important to plan ahead before heading outside on a warm sunny day or even an overcast day to play. Children especially need to have an adult help them learn about sun safety so that they are aware of what they need to do to prevent sunburns. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, affecting one in five Americans (Rivkin & Schein, 2014).

Early Childhood Professionals can do five things to help protect children:

1. Model routine use of effective sunscreen with low toxicity
2. Provide shady outdoor places to play
3. Provide or ask parents to provide hats and clothes that shade children’s bodies
4. Have children wear sunglasses that filter out radiation
5. Teach children, families, and staff about sun protection.

(Rivkin & Schein, 2014)

When considering sunscreen application at school, it is important to check with your state regulations to make sure it is not considered a medication and regulated during school hours. If this is the case, then you will need to be creative in providing adequate shady play areas outside. Work with parents to provide appropriate sun safety clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants and broad-brimmed hats for outside play.

If your state allows sunscreen to be used at school, then it would be important to develop guidelines for using sunscreen in your center or school. Some important things to consider when developing guidelines are:

- Develop a policy about whether sunscreen is supplied by the program or by families.
- Provide a release form to families that explains how your program uses sunscreen, request information about potential allergies to it, and get written permission from families to provide sunscreen to their child.
- Select broad-spectrum sunscreen (protects against UVA and UVB rays) with a factor of SPF 30 or ask families to provide it.
- Apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of skin.
- Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before children go out, even on cloudy days. (Rivkin & Schein, 2014)

Resources on sun safety:

- [www.sunsafetyforkids.org](http://www.sunsafetyforkids.org)
- Curriculum resources – [www.epa.gov/sunwise/necoming.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/necoming.html) - [http://sunsafe.dartmouth.edu](http://sunsafe.dartmouth.edu)
- [www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/CYC-ParentsBrochure.org](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/CYC-ParentsBrochure.org)

References


The NAD is offering this webinar again. Help! I’m a Parent is a helpful resource for the parents you serve. Date to come soon! Stay tuned for more information.
Supporting Each Other
By ACCN Board

The Adventist Child Care Network represents your experience as an early childhood educator in the North American Division. By sharing your stories, you can encourage other members. Each issue will feature these articles of growth areas and successes to help enhance all early childhood programs.

Please consider sending us an item you’d like to share with other ECEC programs around the North American Division. Let’s stay connected across this wide territory!

To submit an item, e-mail copy and pictures (have parents sign a photo release form) to: cheryld@puconline.org.

To view previous issues of the newsletter: http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/adventist-child-care-network-home

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

The Purposes of ACCN:

1. To affirm, encourage and empower all engaged in the weekday ministry to young children.
2. To encourage the continued professional growth of early childhood professionals and to provide opportunities for their professional and spiritual growth.
3. To provide networking opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist Child Development professionals.
4. To foster unity between all areas of child development within the Adventist Church.
5. To encourage the incorporation of Early Childhood Education in the nurture and outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
6. To foster working relationships with the world church, unions, conferences, local churches, and schools.
7. To encourage surveys and research in the area of Child Development and Early Childhood Education in cooperation with the North American Division.
8. To counsel with the North American Division and General Conference in the development and review of programs and strategies for Child Development.
9. To provide guidance and resources to training organizations, colleges, and universities.
10. To advocate the hiring of Early Childhood specialists at all organizational levels of the Adventist Church.
11. To develop working relationships with other Early Childhood Education organizations.
12. To encourage child care centers to obtain national accreditation.

The Adventist Child Care Network seeks to provide support and nurture for Seventh-day Adventist child care providers and to reach out with information and encouragement to churches and individuals who are starting a child care center.

Through this newsletter we seek to facilitate and develop a communication network among Seventh-day Adventist Early Childhood Education and Care professionals.

Published quarterly through the generosity of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Education.

For more information:
Telephone: 805-413-7342
Fax: 805-413-7319
http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org/adventist-child-care-network-home

Copyright 2014
Adventist Child Care Network

Join ACCN