

FAMILY DAY CARE NEWSLETTER



NATIONAL FDC CONFERENCE

Family Day Care Australia's tri-annual conference was held in Hobart in May. It was a stimulating and varied conference with many excellent workshops and speakers.

One of the most interesting was on the importance of early brain development called "What You Teach Me Birth to Five". (Presented by Pam Schiller)

It showed that there are periods in a child's life when they develop essential abilities and if they miss the opportunity they will always have a problem in that area. The first 2 years are the most important, it is the time when all their social, emotional and thinking skills begin. The brain is wiring pathways for all the skills needed for life. Infants use 60% of their kilojoule intake for brain activity. Adults use 20%. The description that Pam Schiller used was building super highways that will last for ever compared to dirt roads that are always in need of maintenance and can't cope with the traffic. Making the most of the window of opportunity is essential.

By the time they are 14 months old they will have learned to trust the adults in their life. If they don't have this trust developed (by being fed and comforted and loved and talked to) it leads to such stress that they will have trouble learning all the skills they need. Speech will be affected, leading to reading difficulties. Relationships will be difficult for their entire life. Impulse control and problem solving will fail to develop.

For a child to learn a new skill they need to have at least six repetitions in 30 days. If that child is stressed, the stress hormone, cortisol, acts like a broom and sweeps away new learning, making it much harder to learn.

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

WINDOW	WIRING OPPORTUNITY	GREATEST ENHANCEMENT
Emotional intelligence Trust Impulse control	0-48 months 0-14 months 16-48 months	4 years to puberty
Social development Attachment Independence Co-operation	0-48 months 0-12 months 12-24 months 24-48 months	4 years to puberty
Thinking skills Cause and effect Problem solving	0-48 months 0-16 months 16-48 months	4 years to puberty
Motor development	0-24 months	2 years to puberty
Vision	0-24 months	2 years to puberty
Reading foundation skills Early sounds Vocabulary	0-24 months 4-8 months 0-24 months	2 years-7 years 8 months – 10 years 2-5 years

This chart shows the critical time for this learning and the time when children are best able to develop the skills.

The close relationships that children develop with their Carer in Family Day Care is a wonderful way to ensure that children develop attachments and trust that will minimise stress and maximise brain wiring.

SWINE FLU

There is a lot of talk about Swine Flu at the moment and the Health Department is taking it very seriously.

It is possible that there will be restrictions on public gatherings and we may have to suspend Playsessions. It is really IMPORTANT that sick children DO NOT COME INTO CARE. Carers must send sick children home.

Please make sure that we all do everything we can to avoid the spread of flu and all the other winter ills and chills that are around. If we have to close the service it will be so much more difficult for everyone.

The following is from a fact sheet distributed by NSW Health Emergency:

Controlling the Spread of Infection

As carers of young children, child care centres usually already have excellent infection control practices in place. When attempting to control the spread of influenza, the same steps that are normally taken should be followed.

If any child develops influenza like symptoms, separate them from the other children and contact their parents immediately to pick them up from the service and to keep them home until they are well. The parents can call their GP for further advice.

With winter approaching, staff and children need to be encouraged to continue to take appropriate precautions: cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash hands regularly, including after contact with soiled tissues, after blowing their nose or coughing, before eating, and after going to the toilet or changing a nappy. If staff or children are sick with an influenza-like illness, they should be advised to stay at home and limit contact with other people to avoid infecting them.

If a children's service notices an unusually high number of absences due to illness, particularly influenza-like-illnesses, or has a confirmed case of a child, family member, or staff member contracting the influenza, they should notify their local public health unit immediately.

A FUN OUTING

Recently many of the Playsessions attended an interactive cultural musical event.

"Ghana Have Some Fun" was the name of the act.. the performer talked about Africa, about the animals and then sang some songs. The children were able to play the instruments and participate in the musical activities. It was great fun.

