

Quality Quarterly

Winter 2024.Issue #1

Welcome to the Winter Edition of Quality Quarterly 2024!

The Quality & Capacity Building (QCB) unit of Toronto Children's Services welcomes you into the New Year with the Winter edition of the Quality Quarterly newsletter!

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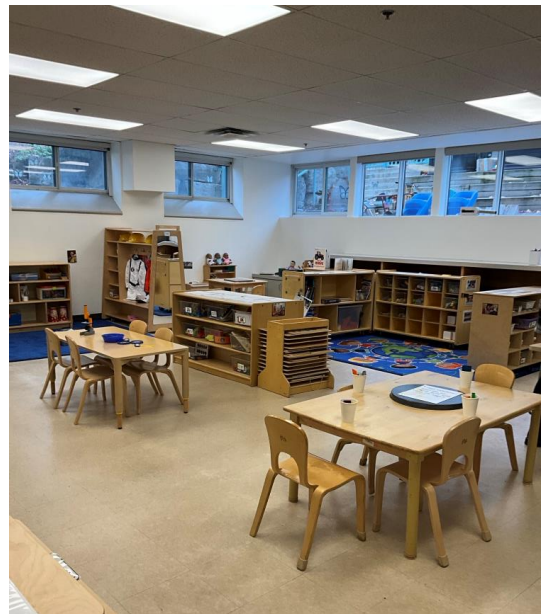
Community of Practice: Simulation Room for Learning

Throughout 2023, the team of Training Coordinators invited the community of Educators to the Simulation Room for Learning (SIM Room) located in the basement of Malvern Early Learning and Child Care Centre. This space was transformed into an Infant, Toddler, Preschool and, Before and After School space that exceeds expectations in

accordance with the Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI).

This has been a truly unique and informative experience for the community to take a fresh perspective on the AQI expectations. Members of the early learning community had the opportunity to ask questions, take pictures and learn from the QCB team and other educators.

Feedback from the sector has been positive and has helped the Training Coordinators direct their focus to meeting the needs of the early learning community.



Community of Practice: Simulation Room for Learning

Here are some direct quotes from the feedback survey:

"The setting of the classroom is amazing. It separates into different areas with abundant materials. The training is flexible, all of us are free to explore everywhere."

"I learned that having an excessive amount of materials doesn't mean it is the best. The SIM room was very organized and children-focused."

"It was very hands-on. Great visuals for educators to get a better sense of educational settings."

In 2024, we will continue to rotate through all age groups. Registration can be found on [City Wide Training](#).

Toronto Public Health Updates

Toronto Public Health (TPH) has updated all of their information sheets for child care centres to reflect the date January 2024. These can be found [here](#). Information sheets that have two pages requires both to be posted.

Hand Washing

When clean, running water is available, wash hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly. In child care centres, children and staff should use a sink that is dedicated for the purpose of hand hygiene. Assist and supervise children when performing hand washing.

Follow these steps for perfectly clean hands:

1. Wet hands.
2. Apply soap. Child care centres must use liquid soap from a dispenser.
3. Lather for 15 seconds. Rub between fingers, fingertips, underneath nails, wrists, palms, and back of hands.
4. Rinse well under running water.
5. Dry hands well with a disposable paper towel or an air dryer.
6. Turn taps off with the disposable paper towel. This will prevent hands from being contaminated.

Stop the spread of germs - Clean your hands!
Everyone should practice hand hygiene...

- When they arrive at the child care centre, before entry into any room, and before they go home
- After using the washroom or after a diaper change
- After coming in from outdoors
- Before and after eating, before drinking
- Before and after handling animals, pet cages or other pet objects
- After covering a cough, sneeze or blowing their nose
- Before and after sensory play activities
- Before and after touching their eyes, nose or mouth
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Whenever in doubt

In addition, child care staff should practice hand hygiene...

- Before and after preparing, handling or serving food, preparing bottles or feeding children
- Before and after giving medication or applying ointment or lotion
- After changing diapers, assisting children to use the toilet or using the washroom
- After contact with broken skin or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, spit, vomit, blood, oil or open sores), even if gloves were worn
- Before and after glove use
- After cleaning, handling garbage or contact with contaminated surfaces

toronto.ca/health | Toronto Public Health

Two Dimensional vs. Three Dimensional Art

When young children create visual art, they explore and experiment with the properties of materials. Classic examples of developmentally appropriate art opportunities for children include drawing with crayons, painting at an easel, or creating a paper collage. These types of art experiences give children the opportunity to explore in two dimensions of space through

lines, shapes, and colours. Also, we can refer to these styles of art as two-dimensional (2-D) art.



Ferncliff Daycare School-Age Program

In addition to 2-D art, planning for three-dimensional (3-D) art projects is an excellent way for children to use their imagination in a way that goes beyond a flat piece of paper. Adding a third dimension of physical space allows children to explore with length, width, and depth. Working in three dimensions provides new challenges for young artists. For example, trying to balance the objects in their creations, and problem-solve how to attach materials.



*McKee McKids Enrichment Centre-
Preschool Room*

3D art materials can be found in nature, in your recycling bin or at home. The only items to be mindful of not using, as per [Toronto Public Health IPAC](#) recommendations are; egg cartons, used meat trays and toilet paper rolls.

Differentiating between 2D and 3D materials can get tricky. Below is a simple list of materials

you may find on your art shelf and how to sort them.

3D Material	2D Material
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cardboard boxes• Paper towel rolls• Wooden cubes• Nature items (twigs, shells, pinecones)• Plastic containers (cups, fruit packaging)• Corks• Beads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper (envelopes, construction paper, textured paper, plates)• Styrofoam shapes/letters• Stickers• Coffee filters• Popsicle sticks• Puffy Paint

Meaningful Observations

A typical day for any Educator seems to have a never-ending to-do list. With everything ranging from accident reports to daily charts, to observations, and program plans, it's not easy being an educator.

Understandably, it's common to get caught up in completing a task for the purpose of completing it, that we forget why we're doing it in the first place! One task we'll discuss in this article is observations.



What makes a meaningful observation?

Observations should be an objective and detailed description of what the child being observed is doing and saying. The who, what, when, and where. An observation should use descriptive language and avoid any assumptions, like what a child might be thinking or feeling.

Documenting meaningful observations have the potential to:

- Help educators become aware of children's interests and skills
- Help an educator better understand why a child might be displaying certain behaviors.
- Identify and support a child with extra support needs
- Better understand the child overall
- Allow educators to practice documentation skills

It allows for intention-based program planning grounded in what has been observed and results in increasing the educator's ability to scaffold learning at both the group and individual level. Observations are also a meaningful way to engage and share with families, as we learn more about the community surrounding each child.

"Observation is a vital component of pedagogical practice. While it can be viewed as a passive activity, observation involves much more than simply watching children and writing down what they are doing or expressing. Actively observing children allows you to identify individual and group needs and interests to inspire the pedagogical approach."

- College of Early Childhood Educators - Practice Guideline: Pedagogical Practice - July 2020

Reflecting on Gross Motor Development

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and play a primary role in social and emotional well-being.

“Research suggests children’s well-being and mental health is declining and regular physical activity and engaging with the outdoors could potentially improve health, well-being, and education outcomes. The cognitive benefits of contact with nature have also been identified, including improved concentration, awareness, reasoning, creativity, imagination and cognitive functioning” (Marchant et al, 2019). Regardless of season, both indoor and outdoor environments should be intentionally planned to promote gross motor skill development.



Infants need to have daily ‘tummy time’ to develop their muscles for sitting and crawling. While stroller walks are great for fresh air, they do not promote gross motor development! Keep activities simple in the winter months for infants as it may be difficult to have full mobility in a snowsuit. Some ways of engaging infants in the snow may be something as simple as creating a path for them to walk/crawl through. Paths can be adapted to be longer, have more added turns or slopes of different elevations for older infants to maneuver up and down.

Utilize materials you may already have and extend the experience outdoors. For example, “hiding” large reflective loose parts or sensory balls in the snow for infants to crawl towards and reach for. Tunnels used for indoor gross motor can also be brought outdoors with some snow added for a different experience.



Toddlers have the most rapid growth in gross motor development. Look for opportunities to scaffold next steps in a safe and supportive environment. This is fundamental to their growing confidence and independence. What materials are accessible to support walking, running, jumping, hopping, balancing, bending, spinning, turning, twisting, pushing and pulling?

Toddlers love obstacles! Educators can easily create an obstacle course with materials like crates, tunnels, stepping stones, hoops, cones, blankets, slides, tires, ladders, and furniture. Spending time in nature is an excellent way for toddlers to explore natural obstacle courses; moving under or over tree branches and stumps, jumping over puddles or patches of grass.

Older children engage in more complex weight bearing skills to develop upper arm strength, mobility, control, coordination, and balance. This could be by hanging from climbing equipment or lifting and manipulating large, heavy, or awkward objects. Ensure to have a variety of objects children can lift, transport, and organize on their own. In the winter months, if snow is available, encourage working together to construct something. This could be shoveling snow into a hill to sled down, building a snow family, or a fort.

When planning gross motor activities, ask yourself; how can you intentionally target the children's specific interests, and use them to promote challenging and fun planned activities? Are you aware of each child's physical developmental level? Are you providing them with enough risk in a supervised and controlled environment?



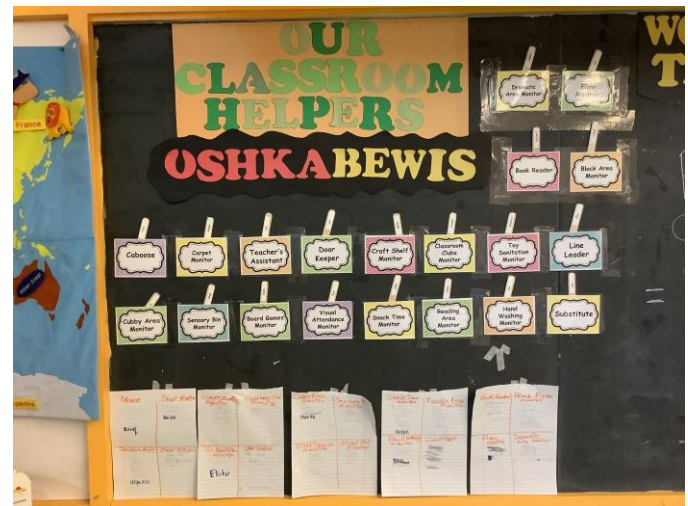
The accessibility of a variety of materials will support children in using their creativity and competitive nature to explore, build social skills, and further develop gross motor skills. How can you guide the outdoor experience, to ensure it remains an inclusive and fun opportunity for all children?

Spotlight on Quality

Would you like to nominate an exceptional educator, program, or centre to be featured in "Spotlight on Quality?" Join and send stories to the Supporting and Celebrating Quality Facebook page, and photos to QualityAssurance@toronto.ca



Demonstration of Leadership Opportunities



Dundas KG Enrichment Program SA Room 215

Recognition of Indigenous Values



Dundas KG Enrichment Program, SA Room 216

Celebration of Lunar New Year



Centro Clinton Day Care Centre - KG Room 211

Celebration of Martin Luther King Day



Centro Clinton Day Care Centre - SA Room 106

Learning Experience for Black History Month



East Scarb. Child Care Centre- East Scarb. Boys and Girls Club- Preschool Room