

A Newsletter from your Technical Assistance Center, PCA-NJ

Baby, it's Cold Outside!



When the winter weather in the northeast is frigid, there is usually no rush to head outdoors. However, **Let's Move!** recommends that preschool children have 120 minutes of daily active play and toddlers have at least 60 minutes. Included within these total active play times, toddlers and preschoolers should have 30 minutes of vigorous physical activity (ECERS-3). Infants should have short periods of tummy time throughout the day. Meeting these guidelines can sometimes be challenging, especially when the frigid weather limits our time outside. However, with a little intentional planning, teachers can work towards meeting these goals even during the teeth-chattering months to come.

Large group time is a part of most early childhood programs and is an excellent opportunity to incorporate gross motor activities that help children to burn off excess energy and to focus on their tasks throughout the day.

Consider incorporating some of the following into your large group times:

- Act out stories with children. For example, as the teacher reads *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See* by Bill Martin Jr. & Eric Carle, let the children act out the animal movements in the story.
- Use large group time for movement and music. While listening to music, young children can play games like the Freeze Dance; engage in stomping, clapping, and snapping or even simply dance “freestyle.”
- Use masking tape to create different lines, grids, or patterns on the floor for children to hop over, jump in, and skip around. Keep games simple, with few rules, if any at all. Leave the tape out for the whole day and see if it inspires children to create games.
- Don't be afraid to completely rearrange the classroom to create extra space to accommodate children's need for vigorous activity. Bring out the hula hoops, mats, balls, balance beam, etc. No equipment? No problem! Make creative obstacle courses or provide enough space for jumping jacks and jogging in place. Remember that even in small spaces, teachers can still plan for gross motor activities that target gross motor skills, such as: balance, walking on a line skipping, hopping and jumping.
- When all else fails, just count to five and exercise! A few simple exercises or stretches done in repetitions of five can completely wake up sleepy children (and teachers too) and transform grumpy moods into happy ones that last the rest of the day!

In addition to incorporating movement into large group time, movement can also easily be integrated into transitions, math and literacy activities and choice/center/work time. Check out this quick video for more ideas on keeping children active throughout the day:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeWX6HOBzyl>



Putting on Coats? A Daunting Task!

It can be tempting to keep children inside when the process of putting on the various mountains of coats, hats, gloves and boots can be a lengthy and daunting process. However, a few minutes outdoors on a cold winter day not only keeps the winter blues away but also keeps the germs at bay.

Starting the reinforcement of classroom routines early in the school year makes “getting ready to go outside” feel less like a “coat management process.” Take time to review step-by-step procedures with children on how to put on a coat. Posting photos of the process can also help address ECERS-3 standard 10.7.3. The ability to put on one’s own coat helps to foster self-help and independence, which also lends to ECERS-3 standard 10.7.2. Also, by encouraging a child to button buttons and zipper zippers, you’re addressing ECERS-3 standard 17.5.3. These experiences are also excellent opportunities to develop and deepen relationships by working one-on-one with the child.

The many benefits of outdoor play during cold winter days far outweigh any excuses we drum up to stay indoors. Even if your time outside is short and you only go for a quick walk, we are showing children that fresh air and exercise are priority and we are helping them set the foundation for lifelong healthy habits. There are more movement options outdoors than there are indoors. Giving children an opportunity to discover, run, twist and duck sets the stage for children to feel energized, focused, and ready to learn.

Click here to get moving: [Winter Wonderland Outdoors](#) & [Cold Weather Fun](#)

Tip: Do the overhead flip:

Place the open coat or sweater face-up on the floor in front of the child. The neck or hood should be nearest to his body. Have him kneel down, put his arms through the sleeves, and then stand up and raise them toward the ceiling. This will flip the coat over his head onto his back. As teachers guide the child through this process they can say with the child,

“arm, arm, FLIP!”

Here is a great website for time saving techniques when going outside:

<http://www.kindergartenworks.com/classroom-organization/winter-gear-teacher-tips/>

ECERS-3 Standards: 10.7.3, 10.7.2, 17.5.3

Center Spotlight: MMO Programs, Essex County



At a recent site visit with MMO Programs in Montclair, NJ, Technical Assistance Specialist, La’Keisha Ciprian and Sr. Technical Assistance Specialist, Kim Leary, discussed the various ways staff keep children engaged with gross motor activities while indoors and outdoors. According to Executive Director Corrine Harney, the children enjoy walking tours in the labyrinth at the church next door and in the Avis Campbell Gardens where they spend time talking about nature. She also shared that they enjoy “Yoga-Rati,” a fun combination of Yoga and Karate, on Monday afternoons, in addition to spending time daily in their playground.

Assistant Director, Melissa Pentecost talked about how the teachers tap into their creativity, especially during inclement weather, to keep children excited and moving. Their students enjoy playing freeze dance, stretching and reaching as they explore the soft climbers, and even acting out stories they’ve read.

ECERS-3 Standards: 6.5.4, 22.5.2, 22.5.3

Outdoor Experiences Matter



The onset of winter weather also brings new outdoor experiences to explore. Make sure your children have the proper weather attire and consider trying the following:

- On the rainy days, do a little puddle stomping.
- On snowy days, let the children jump, explore, build and play in the snow. Use the snow as a canvas for children to create pictures using spray bottles filled with watered down paint.
- On winter days, take a short walk and encourage children to find something they want to bring back to the classroom to investigate a little further. This can springboard into an entire study that leads to many days of engaged winter time exploration.



Winter Safety Tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm. Please feel free to excerpt these tips or use them in their entirety for any print or broadcast story, with acknowledgment of source.



What to Wear

- Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget warm boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.

The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions.

Hypothermia

- Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to colder temperatures. It often happens when a youngster is playing outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing or when clothes get wet. It can occur more quickly in children than in adults.
- As hypothermia sets in, the child may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. Speech may become slurred and body temperature will decline in more severe cases.

If you suspect your child is hypothermic, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, take the child indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap him in blankets or warm clothes.

Frostbite

- Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. At the same time, the child may complain that his/her skin burns or has become numb.
 - If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts of her body in warm (not hot) water. 104° Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.
 - Do not rub the frozen areas.
 - After a few minutes, dry and cover the child with clothing or blankets. Give him/her something warm to drink.
 - If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your doctor.
- Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up.



Source:

American Academy of Pediatrics. "Winter Safety Tips." (2016): <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Winter-Safety-Tips.aspx>

Need to Know!

Save the date for these upcoming opportunities...

Webinars, *Open to all GNJK programs*

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
12/15/16	1pm-1:45pm	Family and Community Engagement	The Women's Center, GNJK Technical Assistance Center-Southern Region Alexandria Sked	Explore the meaning of family and community engagement as it relates to the GNJK Standards. Learn how to create opportunities for meaningful engagements that not only meet standard requirements, but will also support you and your teaching staff along the way! Registration Link: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/

GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLCs), *County Specific*

Date	Time	Location	County
1/19/17	1pm—3pm	Child Care Resources of Monmouth County	Monmouth
1/25/17	1:30pm-3:30pm	DCF Training Academy, New Brunswick	Middlesex, Somerset
12/3/16	1pm-3pm	Child Care Connection, Trenton	Mercer



Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey™

PCA-NJ operates a broad range of preventative services designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties. ***PCA-NJ programs include:***

- ◆ Grow NJ Kids TAC
- ◆ Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Human Trafficking Prevention
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Essex Pregnancy & Parenting Connection
- ◆ Parent Linking Program
- ◆ Parent Education & Technical Assistance
- ◆ Enough Abuse
- ◆ The Period of Purple Crying

Needs Assessment Survey

Please help us cater to YOUR needs by completing our Needs Assessment survey. Follow this link and share your thoughts about PLCs.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gnjkneedsassessment>



Training

Click on the link provided below to view all currently offered professional development opportunities specifically designed for GNJK centers.

[Trainings](#)

Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

www.preventchildabusenj.org/programs/growtac