

## Designing for Miracles

### Carrie Melsom

How do you make friends with a baby? With a toddler? How do you support, sustain and nurture relationships in busy group care settings? We know so much about the critical importance of attachment and responsive caregiving for child development and well being yet we struggle to put policies and practices in place that will ensure that nurturing these relationships is a core value against which other program goals are checked. It is surprising how often early childhood educators will attend professional development opportunities designed for infant and toddler caregivers and state that it is too hard, or inconvenient, for their program to use relationship based models such as continuity of care, primary caregiving or individualized routines.

Ultimately this is a leadership issue. These types of practices require commitment and intentional supports on a program wide level. In the article *Babies on Board!* in the September 2012 issue of *Young Children*, Mary McMullen and Peggy Apple highlight the responsibility of the director and administration in

creating a relationship based program. They go on to describe *continuity of care* as the practice of keeping a group of infants, toddlers and their teaching team together over a period of years and *primary caregiving* as the practice of assigning a teacher to a small group of babies and their families (McMullen & Apple, 2012: p.44).

Our youngest children and their families deserve our

very best efforts, our creativity and our willingness to explore and consider new possibilities for staffing and grouping that recognize this critically important aspect of our care environments.



*"Children are miracles. Believing that every child is a miracle can transform the way we design for children's care."*  
(Anita Rui Olds, 2001)

You are invited to join workshop facilitator Shari Ridgewell on February 12 to investigate

the *Babies on Board!* article. You will find additional resources about this topic in the Resource Centre.

## A Message from the Director

Dear ECE Colleagues,

In mid-February I will be travelling to New Zealand for *Inspire*, a Conference and Study Tour with Margie Carter. It's very exciting and we've already been prepping hard—Margie has been e-mailing articles weekly. My four year old great nephew, who lives in New Zealand, recently shared his collection of learning stories with me. They truly are inspiring. I look forward to learning more about *Te Whāriki*, New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum framework. Look for blog posts about my adventures on the NSCECE website [www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca).

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### Inside this issue:

- *Infant Room Curriculum Story*
- *Toddler Room Curriculum Story*
- *In the Resource Centre*

*A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education*

**Please circulate and post  
this newsletter!**

**E-mail: [info@nscece.ca](mailto:info@nscece.ca)  
to be added to our e-mail list or  
visit our website at  
[www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)**

# An Infant Room Curriculum Story

**Jennifer LeBrun, Juanita Comeau and Jessica Eaton are the infant teaching team at NSCECE Akerley Child Care Centre. This story reflects how curriculum emerges in their classroom.**

During free play, the children in our Infant Room were showing an interest in climbing and crawling by standing and crawling across a table.



Akerley Child Care Centre runs an emergent program so the teachers jumped in and supported the children's interest in a safe way. By holding the children's hands as they stood on

the table and offering support while the children climbed off of the table, we gave the children an opportunity to safely climb. Another teacher got a large sheet which the children helped spread over the



table. Some children continued to pull the sheet off of the table while others crawled under the table. Instead of allowing our plan to end here we encouraged the crawling and climbing to move to our loft where a large blanket was stretched across the top (corner to corner). The children assisted the teachers in trying to tape/tie the



blanket to the loft to create a tent to crawl under/through. The sheet continued to fall and the children continued to climb and crawl.



One of the teachers got the tunnel, thinking that maybe the tunnel spread up the ramp and across the loft would

encourage the crawling and climbing that the children were interested in. Hurray it worked! The children climbed inside the tunnel up the ramp and slid down on their bums all while turn taking and problem solving with one another. Amazing to see these skills develop between children who are this young. During this activity the

children were able to build on many different skills such as, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, social and language development just to name a few!

Allowing the children to explore their environment in new and interesting ways based on a specific interest is what emergent curriculum is all about.

For us it's about being in the moment with our infants; being able to foster their needs to encourage future growth and development and meet individual developmental milestones through developmentally appropriate play.



## A Curriculum Path in the Toddler Room

**Rita Bali, Sumaira Mansoor, and Pam Snow are toddler teachers at NSCECE Leeds Street Child Care Centre and Karen Patterson is Assistant Director. This story describes a curriculum path that started in September and continues today.**

On September 19 Sumaira brought an empty pizza box from home. She set it up in our classroom in the household area. The children showed great interest in the pizza box. She brought more empty containers such as milk cartons, yogurt containers, juice boxes, egg cartons, play fruits, food and a play cash register. Karen brought the play money from the pre-school room, she also suggested that we could use the grocery store canopy instead of a table. The household area of our

classroom was suddenly changed into a grocery store! Everybody wanted to be the cashier at the checkout. We encouraged children to take turns. They were buying various items and paying with money. Our toddlers were engaged in the grocery

store play for several days.

This interest led to the following activities:

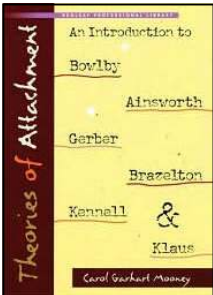
*"A staff person at the store let us help stack pineapples."*

1. A bus trip to Super-store where a small group of our toddlers wished to buy a pumpkin, corn, carrots, snow boots, dog food, toys.....So we bought pumpkin, carrots and corn. They paid a cashier and took the receipt and change back. A staff person at the store let us help stack the pineapples.

(Continued on page 4)

# In the Resource Centre

*The Resource Centre has many learning materials and books available to support you in your work with infants and toddlers. You can look for membership information and check out our on-line toy inventory at [www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca).*

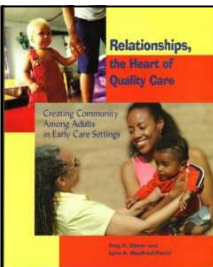


## Theories of Attachment (155.4 MOO)

A clearly written and easy to understand description of major theories of attachment and how these theories intersect with practice in early childhood settings.

## Nurture Through Nature (375.7 WA-N)

A beautiful pictorial provocation for early childhood programs by Claire Warden who is presenting in Nova Scotia at the provincial conference in June.

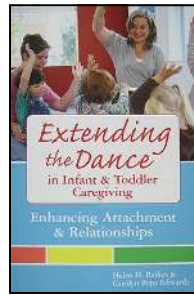
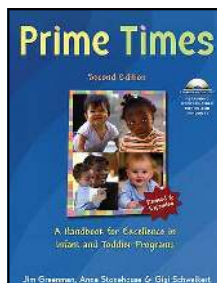


## Relationships the Heart of Quality Care (302 BA)

A useful book that describes the value of nurturing relationships for everyone in the centre. It also outlines policies and strategies that support relationship based care and learning environments.

## Prime Times (375.7 GR)

This classic by Jim Greenman acknowledges the complexities of providing quality care for our youngest children and also offers a wealth of information, forms and resources on a CD.

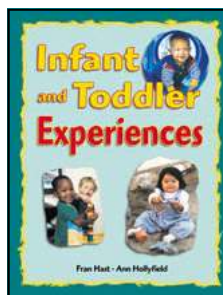
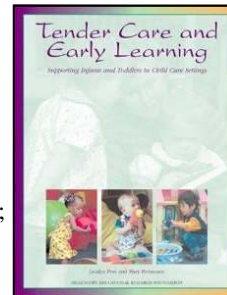


## Extending the Dance in Infant & Toddler Caregiving (375.7 RA)

A primer for developing the policies and practices of a relationship based program. It includes a cultural and historical context for relationship based care.

## Tender Care and Early Learning (375.7 PO)

This book shares the High/Scope approach to infant and toddler care. It includes sections on active learning and the key experiences; establishing routines; the environment and supportive interactions.



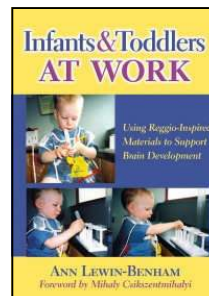
## Infant and Toddler Experiences & More Infant & Toddler Experiences (375.7 HAS)

These books clearly differentiate between activities and open-ended experiences. Based on a solid philosophical foundation the books

include tips, guidelines and things to think about.

## Infants and Toddlers at Work: Using Reggio-Inspired Materials to Support Brain Development (375.7 LE)

This book outlines how experiences with basic materials like paint, clay, and paper are key for learning. Even our very youngest children benefit from opportunities to explore and use these materials.



## Resource Centre Discussion & Support Groups



### All Together Now! Inclusion Support Group

We meet 9:00—11:00 AM on the last Thursday of each month at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. Join colleagues for facilitated discussion about issues relating to inclusive early learning programs. Share strategies, insights, and challenges as part of a learning community.

### The Leading Edge: A Discussion Group for Administrators

A discussion and support group for people who have a leadership role in an early childhood program. This facilitated group meets 10:00—Noon, the second Thursday of each month in the NSCECE Resource Centre.

### For more information:

Call Carrie Melsom

423-7114 Ext. 227

*Resource Centre services are offered with support from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Education Training Initiative.*



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Justin MacKenzie NSCECE Admissions Officer on a photo shoot with two NSCECE students at one of the our Lab Schools (Spring 2012).

*At the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education, we provide an opportunity for students to study and gain experience in Early Childhood Education through a diverse range of courses and practical settings.*

*We are proud to lay a foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that NSCECE graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.*



**Join the crowd—become a member today!**

Take advantage of the many services provided with a NSCECE Resource Centre membership

**Resources for the early childhood community**



To download an Information Brochure or Membership Form visit [www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)

E-mail: [resourcecentre@nscece.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@nscece.ca)

Tel: (902) 423-7114 ext. 227



## A Curriculum Path in the Toddler Room

(Continued from page 2)

2. A large group in which we shared our goodies with the rest of their peers. We explored the color, texture and smell of the vegetables. This was followed by a discussion about where the vegetables grow and why they have dirt on them.



3. Next morning our toddlers washed the pumpkin with scrub brushes in our water table.

4. Pam took a small group to our vegetable

garden in the playground. The children picked vegetables and ate them for afternoon snack.

5. Pam extended the children's interest in vegetables by introducing a print making activity.

6. Sumaira extended the interest to a cooking and healthy eating activity. A large group of toddlers sat at the table, peeled the corn we bought and put it in a pot. We added water to the pot and two older toddlers helped take it to the kitchen to cook. We ate this corn with our lunch.

7. To extend on pumpkin cleaning, Rita set out the pumpkin and paints on the table. Our toddlers painted the pumpkin.

8. Finally we were curious about what was inside the pumpkin so we cut it open and scooped out the seeds.

9. We wrote a thank you note to the staff who let the toddlers help stack the pineapples on the shelf at the Superstore. The

children put stickers on it and signed the note by scribbling.



10. We took a small group to the Superstore and delivered the thank you note and a Silent Auction Letter to the store Manager. She generously donated a \$25 gift card.

11. This time, our toddlers wanted to buy some celery. We bought it and used it in a science activity.

We are looking forward to seeing where the celery takes us!