



Newsletter

Preschool, Daycare, ASC

650 Carter Road, Bowen Island, BC, V0N 1G0 (604) 947-9626

www.bowenchildrenscentre.ca

February 2012

Executive Functions in Early Human Development

Last week I attended a talk by Dr. Adele Diamond, a professor of developmental cognitive neuroscience. She was speaking about *executive functions* and their importance in early human development. Her talk was titled, "Nourishing the Body, Spirit and Mind: How to Improve Self Control, Creativity and Problem-Solving in Children". When we look at what we really want for our children...happiness, a degree of success in life and to be good human beings – compassionate, empathetic, kind - how do we get there? What are the important skills and tools that we should be fostering while we guide children during their early years? According to Dr. Diamond, the development of executive functions are of paramount importance (more important for school readiness than are IQ, entry level reading or math). Executive functions are also critical for job success, marital harmony, and are critical skills for cognitive, social and psychological development, as well as mental and physical health. They are necessary for success in school and in life. So what exactly are executive functions and how do we foster their development? The three core executive functions are:

- *Cognitive flexibility* – being able to switch thought patterns and see things in a new light. The ability to close one door and allow

another one to open and not get stuck in the past

- *Inhibitory control* – self-control and discipline
- *Working memory* – problem solving, reasoning, planning

In order for children to flourish and to develop these necessary executive functions, we, as parents and teachers, need to:

- 1) Relax
- 2) Have faith
- 3) Listen
- 4) Be kind
- 5) Play

For children...

Mood is a factor that plays an important part in learning. If we are happy, we are more creative; if we find joy in learning, we learn better.

Good Social skills that help children to succeed in a group of peers. Children need to feel part of the whole, learn to collaborate, cooperate and help each other.

"Our brains work better when we are not feeling lonely or socially isolated" (Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection - 2008)

Physical fitness is another necessary component for developing strong executive functions. Our brain and body are interrelated and our brains work better when our bodies are physically fit.

Educational programs where the academic component is not outweighed by the creative, playful and social. In fact, a program where educators understand the

benefits of play, physical activity and joy will foster the development of executive functions.

"For our children to be successful learners and achieve the academic success of which they are capable, children need to feel joyful, be in a supportive community they can count on, and their bodies need to be physically healthy." For much more on Dr. Diamond's research and findings go to:

<http://dalailamacentre.org/sites/dalailamacentre.org/files/u28/Dalai%20Lama%20Center%20talk.pdf>

Love to discuss this with any of you who are interested! Ann

Gaming Funding... well, for those of you who keep current in the news you will know that Premier Christy Clark reinstated the gaming funds. She added 15 million back to the pot and over the next month or so we will find out what that means to BCC. Whether we will receive 100% of what we lost is not yet clear, so stay tuned...

Preschool registration for the 2012-13 year starts in February.

Returning children: week of Feb 20th for Daycare
Siblings: week of the 27th
Open House for all island registration on March 3rd, 10-12 am
Please note that there will be a small increase in fees this year as they have not been raised (even by cost of living) for four years, so the fees for September will be:
two days/ week class: \$173.25 or an increase of 5% (\$2.06/week)
three days/week class: \$257.25, an increase of 5% (\$3.06/week)

You are still getting a wonderful educational experience for \$8.66/hour!

Dates to remember from
January to June 2012

- Feb. 22nd -library Day
- Feb 20th -24th Early registration for next year programs
- Feb 28th -Vision screening
- March 12th-16th - Spring break vacation – preschool closed
- April 6th and April 9th – BCC closed for Good Friday and Easter Monday
- May 21st - BCC closed for Victoria Day
- June 22nd - last day of Preschool

PreSchool

Preschool Teacher's Cell

604-317-1761

Class Reps

M/W/F am:

Amelia Smolar (604-947-0822)

M/W/F pm:

Carrie Thiel (604-809-9284)

T/Th:

Rachel Phillips (778-322-4961)



Tray is building the Moon out of Paper Mache!



Lucas painting the space Rocket!

What's happening...

January has been a very busy month. The children came back to preschool in the New Year full of energy and ready to learn about Space and our Solar System. It has been wonderful to see how their interest sparked so many questions and initiated so many projects related to this subject. Every day they embark on a new adventure.

cardboard boxes and lots of tape and paint they created one. They also added a few old computer keyboards for the controls and made space suits with "bubble wrap". There have been many trips to the Moon and planets like Venus, Mars and Jupiter. They had to be



Finn's Alien!



Saran and Hayden designing their Space Rockets!

After creating mini Rocket ships out of cardboard tubes, they decided they needed their own Rocket ship in the classroom. So with a couple of huge

careful not to get too close to the Sun because it is "too hot there". I have a feeling that we will be travelling through space for a bit longer so, please feel free to come and join us in one of our adventures if you have a bit of free time.



Joshua painting his 2 headed Alien!

Vision Screening

Vancouver Coastal Health will offer vision screening to all three year old children at the preschool on February 28th during regular class time. The children's vision will be measured by using a matching

game that the child plays with the screener wearing special glasses. After screening, parents of children that require follow up will be notified and encouraged to visit an optometrist.



Rowen and Makayla ready for take-off with baby Zap!

Valentine's Day

February 14th is Valentine's Day. This is a great opportunity to talk about those people we love and how to be thoughtful of our family and friends. We will be doing a special activity in the classroom to celebrate this day, but we kindly ask parents *not to bring valentines* to the preschool. We hope you understand that with almost 50 children in the program and many different views on Valentine's Day the task of exchanging Valentines at school is very challenging and, often, there are hurt feelings unnecessarily in children so young.



Bethen leading the Chinese new year dragon parade around the classroom!

Early registration for returning preschool children

If you have a child currently attending preschool you can register for next year's classes from February 20th -24th. You will be given a registration form for the 2012-2013 preschool year. Please return it to us with a non refundable cheque for \$50 and this will guarantee a spot for your child in next year's program.



William, Obi and Jakob looking at the Solar System!

Spring break

This year spring break is March 12th-16th. The preschool will be closed that week. If you need extra care for your child, please contact the Daycare at 604 947 9628.



William hard at work!



Ty taping the sun rays on the sun!



Robert building a Crater in the sandbox!

Dates to Remember

Dates to remember for January to June 2012

March 12th – 16th Preschool
Spring Break - Daycare remains
"at your service". Please book
early as spaces fill up quickly!

March 12th – March 25th ASC
Spring Break

April 6th and April 9th – BCC
closed for Good Friday and Easter
Monday

May 21st - BCC closed for Victoria
Day

June 22nd - last day of Preschool

June 28th - last day for ASC

Safe Spaces

Continuing with our Safe Spaces curriculum the children are already showing us that they understand the language and lessons of creating a safe environment for everyone. You may hear your child say that another was "friendly" towards them, or that the teacher was pleased that they were able to ride "safely" on the bikes. This new language is quickly becoming a normal part of the children's vocabulary.

This week we have introduced something called "The Friendly Jar". The jar is used as a special way of rejoicing in a good deed and rewarding the child who was thoughtful or kind towards another. For some children this comes more naturally, while for others attention must be brought to specific events that display empathy in order for the child to learn to feel good when they put someone else's feelings first. This is no easy feat when they naturally are going through a very ego-

Community Daycare

Daycare #

604-947-9628

BCC Office: 604-947-9626



centric time in their lives!

A teacher and a child write down together accounts of friendly deeds or actions on a slip of paper. The paper is then dropped into "The Friendly Jar" and read aloud for all to hear, appreciate, and hopefully inspire more good deeds, empathy and acts of kindness.



The Magical Man – What a wonderful experience it is for everyone, to bring young and old together...The following speaks to the value of relationships, the importance of community, and the impact of seemingly small actions.

Some of you may know our neighbour down the lane, and some of you may not, but your children sure do. Ask your child and they will tell you of our almost daily visitor...Bob Bates. For those of you who have not yet met Bob, let me tell you a bit about him. He looks like a whimsical character out of Lord of the Rings, with a big gray beard and sparkling eyes. He has been a Bowen resident for years and years and the children delight in chatting with him over the fence on his daily commute to his artist's workshop in the cove. Over Christmas I'm sure some of the children believed him to be Santa Clause himself!



Enjoying Snow Days

That white stuff has made for lots of fun and creativity this January. After days of playing with snow and ice we even brought paint outdoors and turned the snow into a rainbow of colours.



Music with Kate

Although only with us on a part-time basis BCC is excited to welcome the pink-haired musician and teacher, Kate Reid to our staff team. Kate is a natural at connecting with children and they are captivated when she brings out her guitar for a sing-a-long.

Way to Go with the Wholesome Lunches!

Ever curious if your child is enjoying or even eating much of their lunch while at daycare? Yes, they are! We would like to let all parents know that you are doing a great job packing healthy and delicious lunches for your children. The daycare staff often comment on what healthy eaters our Bowen babies are and marvel at some of the lunches packed.

The lunch hour is always filled with happy faces enjoying a variety of healthy foods with apple sauce, cheese, raw veggies and dip, hummus, yogurt, nuts, and cheese being some of the most popular items. Other ideas that the daycare staff give a thumbs up to are any foods that are high in vitamins, calcium, iron, and protein and of course low in sugars. Try nut/seed butters,

bean salad, bean salsa, tzadziki with raw veggies, veggie burgers, soups, and wraps (banana and peanut butter is simple to make!) for some different ideas.



Welcome Newcomers!

BCC would like to send out a welcome! Bienvenido! Benzene! to all the new children and their families who have joined us this new year. Finn, Madeline, Raymond, Cohen, Marek, Rhory and Oskar are some of our newest friends who are settling in wonderfully in the daycare classroom.



Feel free to speak with the daycare staff about which children your child gets along particularly well with, or what child might be a good match for a play-date. Play-dates make for meaningful connections outside of the daycare for children *and* parents and we would be glad to help. You are welcome to leave a note on cubbies with your contact info:)



Valentine's Day Request

Happy Valentine's Day to all, and let the cinnamon hearts flow! We ask that you please refrain from bringing valentine cards for the children's cubbies. This, unfortunately, stirs up competitive behaviour in regard to how many valentines they have received, and some of those who receive fewer valentines are left confused and saddened. This defeats the whole celebration of love and thoughtfulness that is Valentine's day.



Dates to Remember

Dates to remember for January to June 2012

Feb 14th – celebrating
Valentine's day at ASC

Feb 16th & 17th - BICS
closed for pro "D" – ASC
closed

Feb 20th – Field trip

March 12th – March 25th
ASC Spring Break

April 6th and April 9th – BCC
closed for Good Friday and
Easter Monday

May 21st - BCC closed for
Victoria Day

June 22nd - last day of
Preschool

June 28th - last day for ASC

The After School Club (ASC)

After School Club Cell
604-908-6056

*Big kudos to **Sadie Wall** who
made pancakes for all the kids
and did the dishes too!!*



January's field trip to the library was a great success. We voyaged down the road in stormy weather and, Tina, our fabulous librarian, educated us on the *junior novel section* and *how to research material*. We also discussed *fiction* and *non fiction*. The kids were really good listeners and seemed to take it all in and then proceeded to find books to borrow. Thank you to Malia and Savory's Dad, Edwin, who was kind enough to transport our books back to BICS while we enjoyed hot chocolate at the Snug, a fitting treat before we hoofed it back up the hill. We have some new equipment at the ASC that the children are really enjoying – table tennis (some good matches



happening and Sharon is teaching them the rudiments of the game) and some pink Lego that seems to encourage the girls to try out their building skills alongside the boys!



February's Field Trip

February's field trip will be to the post office! A *Permission to Go on the field trip* form will be at the After School Club for you to sign. Post Mistress Cheryl Evans has offered to give us a *behind the scene* tour and we may have some items to send off ourselves ... so check your mailboxes!

- Leave BICS at 4:15pm
- Tour Post Office 4:30pm
- Return to BICS 5:15pm



January was a full and busy month and it seems to have just sped by. We can hardly believe February is upon us... We (Bonita and Sharon) have been working on team building skills with a focus on skills that we need in the real world. We do this through group activities including cooking, making play-dough and giving kids the opportunity to be responsible for snack, set up and clean up, etc.

