Welcoming the New Year — 2018!

Happy New Year to each one of you! I hope your holiday season was filled with the blessing of being with family and friends and reflecting on JESUS’ love for you!

The holidays always go by too fast and here we are again back into our routine of juggling work & family and finding, however brief, a moment to take time to just breathe!

Whatever your goals are for 2018, I pray that you will be blessed with the PEACE that comes from Jesus, love, joy & laughter! When troubles or sorrows arise trust in the Healer of all—Jesus!

Over the past year and a half I a visited most of our ECEC programs in the NPUC. I look forward to continuing my visiting.

The NAD Teachers Convention in August 6-9, now includes our ECEC directors. From our Union, we will have 16 ECEC Directors participate. Your Conference ECEC Liaison has compiled a list of attendees.

Many of you took advantage of our NPUC discount for CREATION Kids Curriculum. Have you had time to look at it and implement some of this curriculum into your current daily plans? I would love to hear how its going.

It is my prayer for you, as you minister to the children in your care each day, that you will be as blessed as they are to have you in their lives. You are a truly valuable member of the NPUC Educational team. Thank you for serving and sharing of yourself each day!

Smiles & blessings to you! Golda
Loose Parts: A Start-up Guide
Sally Haughey and Nicole Hill

Loose parts offer children infinite play opportunities influencing them in ever-changing ways. The immense benefits of offering loose parts exploration is critical to development of the next generation. Loose parts allow children to do the thinking instead of the manufactured toy that has set directions. This is beneficial because it reaches such a deep cognitive level of thinking, problem solving, and persisting.

“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.” Loris Malaguzzi

The beautiful piece about loose parts is no matter the age, children can explore with the same materials and use them in different ways suitable for their age development. Loose parts also promote a wide variety of play behaviors, including social play, dramatic play, constructive play, symbolic play, and even games with rules, when children make up their own games with the materials.

Children learn math and science as they experiment with sand, water, buckets, and stacking materials along with truly any open ended material. Loose parts open the enormous possibilities for children to truly become the critical thinkers they’re destined to be.

After understanding the vast need for loose parts, many people ask, “Where do I begin?” You begin by looking around at your current collection of materials and sorting them by textures. All these types of textures provide rich opportunities for children as all of them can be infused within every area of the classroom.

These types of loose parts are all recyclable and easy to obtain materials that make this even more powerful for teachers, parents, and children.

The seven types of loose parts are:
- Nature Based
- Wood Reuse
- Plastic
- Metal
- Ceramic/Glass
- Fabric/Ribbon
- Packaging

6 Places to Find Loose Parts:
1. Thrift Stores
2. Garage Sales
3. Businesses
4. Families
5. Walks with Children
6. Recycled Home Goods

In the traditional classroom materials we see primarily plastic and bright colors. The visual processing system is the main system being used as we see the dominance of high frequency colors. Traditional educational methods are visual and auditory heavy. In the Reggio-Inspired classroom there is a diversity of materials with not only a visual feast but also a strong offering of the tactile. The tactile processing system interprets information through the touch receptors in the skin. Research has shown a strong connection between the emotional center of the brain and the tactile system.

Through touch, a child learns about the world...weight, size, temperature, texture. It is here where young children begin to develop their sense of pleasure and pain. Considering this—what is a bright colored plastic environment providing a child? It is the difference between a Happy Meal from McD and an organic meal rich in vegetables.
Loose Parts: A start-up Guide

Three Easy Next Steps:

1. Look at the 7 types of loose parts and make a list of what you already have for each category.
2. Pick 3 to 5 loose parts you would like to add to your existing collection.
3. Send home a letter to families asking if they have any of those loose parts.

Resources:
www.fairydustteaching.com
Beautiful Stuff: Learning with Found Materials—by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini
Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children—by Lisa Daly and Miriam Beloglovsky
Loose Parts 2: Inspiring Play with infants and Toddlers—by Lisa Daly and Miriam Beloglovsky
The Undred languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation—by Carolyn Edwards and Lella Gandini

The Imagination Tree

Let's build a snowflake!

With cold & flu season upon us, I have listed the Center for Disease Control and Prevention signs & symptoms to help in keeping our programs healthy this Winter!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs &amp; Symptoms</th>
<th>Influenza</th>
<th>Cold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symptom onset</td>
<td>Abrupt</td>
<td>Gradual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Usual; lasts 3-4 days</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aches</td>
<td>Usual; often severe</td>
<td>Slight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chills</td>
<td>Fairly common</td>
<td>Uncommon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue, weakness</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffy nose</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest discomfort, cough</td>
<td>Common; can be severe</td>
<td>Mild to moderate; hacking cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the emergency warning signs of flu sickness?

In children
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:
- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal
Preschool Programs for 3 year-olds — Two Years are Better Than One

Dr. Stacey Fox, University of Western Australia

Effective and high-quality preschool programs for 3 year-olds are developmentally appropriate and designed around the way 3 year-olds learn best.

Three year-old children learn through exploration and inquiry, free and guided play, rich engagement and conversation with educators, opportunities to practice and master new skills, and positive relationships with peers and educators.

The kinds of learning that matters for 3 year-olds are:

- Making friends, getting on with peers, learning to collaborate and play with others
- Exploring new ideas, asking questions, growing independence in problem-solving, becoming confident and curious learners
- Talking about and managing their emotions, developing their memory, learning to focus on activities
- Becoming confident communicators, developing early numeracy

A preschool program for 3 year-olds should not be a ‘pushed down’ curriculum or ‘sped up’ learning experience, and should not simply replicate the 4 year-old preschool program.

Consistent with Australia’s Early Year Learning Framework, some of the ways a preschool program can be developmentally appropriate for 3 year-olds include:

- Support for learning that gives children the opportunity for new and emerging skills to be practiced and mastered with the support and encouragement of educators
- Shared activities in smaller groups, that help children learn to work together and don’t place unfair demands on 3 year-olds’ listening skills
- Recognizing that 3 year-olds’ are still developing ability to wait, be patient and share with others
- Learning experiences designed around the attention span of 3 year-olds, including planning activities that will capture children’s interest, sustain their attention, and build their ability to focus over time
- Supporting 3 year-olds’ flourishing language and building their confidence as communicators through responsive conversation
- Exploring basic numeracy concepts such as counting, sorting, classifying, comparing and patterns
- Play-based exploration of basic science concepts, asking questions, learning
- Supported by questioning, hypothesizing and scaffolding children’s everyday experiences
- Outdoor play that helps 3 year-olds to progressively develop new skills, build their strength, confidence and coordination

“The best way to learn how to become a competent 4-year-old learner is to embrace the joys and wonders of being a 3 year-old. We shouldn’t be tempted to rush children through any parts of their childhood as it will not improve outcomes.” —Dr. Anne Kennedy