

Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.
The C.A.T. Weeks 6-9

Week 5: Valuing Documentation (these came in late)

When a child gets their mom to close her eyes and leads her to the wall with the artwork from the day you realize documentation is important. It's just a shame it takes the child to lead them, most parents don't look around. Time? Busy? Hurry?

The children enjoy taking part in making posters together – even if it's the teacher writing their ideas down. This way they are taking part in the documentation.

Week 6: Well Being

We have had a few new children join our class. Drawing from their own experiences of being the "new kid" some of the children take it upon themselves to show the new child around the classroom and the outside play area. They sit with them when we come inside and talk to them about our routine and what to expect next. Nice to see children helping children. They are so proud.

As we had a new child start with us, Rhiannon, helped our new child Sarah out at the play park so that she knew what the rules of the playground were and helped her to settle in. Children develop a sense of others and children build respectful and responsive relationships.

Children develop a sense of others: while at the super play park, Nolan fell and scraped his arm and he came to ask me for a band aid. Jaxon came running up to him to ask what happened and asked if he needed help and if he was okay. Thanks for being so caring Jaxon.

Physical Health – because of the expertise of our chef-the children are able to try a variety of foods. The children will comment about their snacks/lunches "you're the best cook", we've had parents ask for the recipes.

Children take responsibility for personal care when SPS give the children lots of time and encouragement to get ready for an outing. Each child can put on their own snow pants, boots, jackets, hats and mittens with very little help.

Children develop a sense of play when our JPS go for a nature walk around the neighbourhood or visit a local pet store. At the pet store they saw one of our children's aunts.

Today was show and share day, the children were encouraged to bring an item from home that starts with the letter "A". This not only helps the children with letter recognition but it also creates a connection between the centre and home. They love to share their home items with their friends and tell stories that go along with them. I.e. Everett brought in his monkey named "Alex". He went on about how his Grandpa

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bought Alex for him at which point the other children offered stories of what their Grampa/grampy/ Opa got for them and the same thing occurred when he said that Alex sleeps with him every night. That sent the children on a tangent about bedtime and we compared nighttime self care routines. Lots of great socializing was had.

Maddox was very excited that he got to go to the zoo with his Aunt and sister on the weekend. He brought in a map of the zoo to show to his friends. We set out the jungle animal puzzles and monkey stacking tabletop toys to harness his interest and encouraged conversations with his friends. During circle time we read stories and sang songs about the zoo and monkeys (which he said was his favourite animal that he saw (5 Little Monkey and We're going to the Zoo). The children learn and absorb more when the information is pertinent to them and things are child lead. As well as it gave Maddox a sense of pride of self to be the knowledgeable one and to be able to teach his friends.

Our after school children walk over to our centre from school, accompanied by two teachers, one leading and one behind. We have over 20 children; most days they walk along the busy sidewalk with buses and vans picking up other after school children from other centres. I always walk at the end of the line so that I can see if the children walk safely. For those who have trouble following the rules I ask them to have a seat at my table so I can discuss why they are there. I've often talked about acting silly and falling into the street under the wheels of a vehicle. One day a boy from another centre was running toward his drive, being chased by another and he slipped and fell in front of the school bus (bus was not moving). I heard one of our kindergarten girls who was walking a little ahead of me say to her partner "see Anne said that could happen" Needless to say, I hope to have very few children, if any, sitting at my table after that incident.

A kindergarten boy, who has trouble following rules, says to me "Anne do I have to sit at the table? I said no you are doing fine. He had wandered off the sidewalk near the snow bank. He wasn't quite sure how far he could go without breaking a rule. Sometimes he has said to me that someone hasn't made the right choice when he observes a child breaking the rule. Awareness of self and others.

Well Being – Physical health and Children take Responsibility for Personal Care

And Children develop a sense of self and sense of others:

Early in the year, I used to insist that the children especially the kindergarten go to the washroom upon arriving from school and before going outside. As the year progresses, I monitored how many took it upon themselves to monitor their own bathroom habits. Many came to tell me they were fine without going. I took them at their word and most didn't need to come back inside. Still a few had to go to the bathroom not long after going out. Now I leave it up to the children to monitor their own bathroom habits. I still see some go before going out.

Outside the boys like to play soccer; their idea of playing soccer was different than mine. At first the game would go pretty good, then there would be crying, complaining and

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hitting. I would be the go to - we talked about the rules, fair play, penalties, etc. Usually, I had other children become spectators and we watched them talk about how the soccer game was going, rules etc. Sometimes, I would have to stop the game and have them do other types of play. This game has been going on every day, sometimes pretty good. Most of the players now take responsibility for their actions and accept time out. This didn't come easy. One day Jaxon took himself out of the game. I asked why, he said I didn't want to fight with Charles. This was tremendous growth for this boy. During this time of playing soccer the boys and girls learned much about themselves and others.

Objective Belonging – three of our friends were absent when our boys and girls visited their homes so we made a special trip on our new Unicorn bus to the homes of our three friends to photograph them in front of their homes. They are so proud of their homes and to show it to all their friends. As well they are able to experience their first outing on the new bus, very exciting. All this has helped to create a sense of place as they identify their personal landmarks. They make connections between the centre, home and the community.

Promoting well being- children explore body and movement. A child requests a specific game in the gym where by she can take a leadership role, helping her to develop a sense of self. This game involves listening, then running as well as understanding spatial relationships as they run and move away from each other in the gym.

Week 7: Play and Playfulness

Children created a McDonald's drive thru in the kitchen centre with a McDonald Gift Card and their inspiration. Lots of fun to be had.

Outside in the nature park the children will often put me in jail. They will come up to me and make up some story about what I have done that is illegal, pretend to put hand cuffs on me, take me to the bench where I have to sit. Then they tell me not to escape and walk away knowing that I am going to run away and they will have to chase me. Great fun is had and lots of pretend play is had.

-Dizzy play – take pleasure being on the edge- running and hauling me to jail

-Imagination/creativity – create imaginary scenarios, flexible/fluid thinking

-Playful Exploration/problem solving- tests limits as they put me into jail

Children discuss what to do next, why I am in jail and what they are going to do to me.

Dizzy Play- children will rough house in the snow but are respectful of each other as they play as to not hurt themselves.

As we do not have mine craft at the centre, some of our children have been creating their own version using paper, markers and scissors. Children develop disposition for flexible and fluid thinking.

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Winter has provided many snow piles and spring has provided mud and water. One day at the Super Play Park. I found three boys making a drain from a snow pile down a hill to a puddle. They worked together, each in different places along the drain. They kept walking back and forth along the drain discussing how they could make the water go faster. One decided they needed more water, one ran toward the garbage to retrieve a container and then to a puddle for water. Interesting to observe the way the boys worked trying to solve the problem. Ages 6 and 7

Testing limits – Charles and Eliot were trying to climb up the play structure. Eliot being the braver of the two went first to show Charles how to do it. Charles was then challenged to try and do the same. He completed the climb but then sat for quite some time at the top not really ready to attempt the climb down. I stopped to talk to him to assure him if he needed help just yell. Charles didn't have to prove to Eliot that he could do it, as Eliot was long gone. As I continued to watch, Charles proceeded to get down on his own, the way Eliot showed him as I moved away. I saw him climb back up. Ages 5 and 6

Today's snack was apples and cheese, which of course sent the children into a full chorus of "apples and bananas". We love to be silly and sing songs that help us with repetition, rhyming and word enunciation. "I like to eat- apples and baneenees!" Always sends the children into fits of giggles.

We went for a parade walk with our musical shakers that we made. What a great time singing/laughing/dancing/jumping just being silly.

We moved the tables and chairs, had a dance. The children brought in their own CD's (music they liked) to share. What a great time we had dancing with the streamers. (They made the streamers). Another great Day!

We went for a puddle-jumping walk today so much fun!!

During gym class I made a little obstacle course. The children had an opportunity to explore new objects and explore new ways of using the equipment and there was lots of laughter. They were sharing ideas how to use the skip it. Fun was had

The boys wanted to take the gym mat and have a wrestling competition and they planned out the order they would go in. After a lot of problem solving they were ready to start. I was a little nervous at first. I set some guidelines for them to follow for their safety, they had so much fun. I enjoyed listening to them laugh while they were enjoying their dizzy play.

Two friends learned about the properties of objects as they explored in the sand table. They experienced the texture of the sand, its colour; its weight as they scooped it with their hands, scoops, shovels. They learned how much they needed to fill containers and how to use the sieve. They learned that different sizes containers required different

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amounts of sand. They discovered dinosaur bones of different shapes in the sand, using their imaginations to determine which body parts they represented.

Children invent symbols and develop systems of representations. I prepared a batch of bright yellow play dough using yellow tempera powder. Three girls used the play dough to create shoes, people birthday cakes with candles, sunflowers, all the while naming their creations, giving suggestions to each other, explaining their creations to each other, happily focusing. It was a joy to watch and listen.

Week 8: Communication and Literacies

On Thursday we had mini lemon tarts for dessert and the look of excitement on Innis's face was priceless. He began bouncing his index and middle finger on the top of his tart pretending that they were legs and the tart was a trampoline. "Look guys, it's so bouncy!" he shouted. "Bouncy, bouncy, bouncy he said bouncing his fingers on his tart giggling. This use of playful verbal and nonverbal gesture communication encouraged the other children to do the same. It also encouraged the use of other silly and descriptive words." Squishy" Sticky", "goosey"! This experience allowed the children the opportunity to form relationships through communicative practices

Children form relationships through communicative practices.

While creating with yellow play dough, boys and girls enjoyed talking with Taylor, our student from Oulton's. She is working on her practicum. They informed her of their plans and naming of their creations as they rolled, patted and shaped their creations. Taylor commented to them as they worked. She is establishing positive relationships with them.

Children explore a variety of sign systems: In the gym boys and girls moved to music as they listened to the directions on the CD for moving their body parts. They love this exercise.

Children learn conventions of language- to encourage familiarity and enjoyment of our library books, children are able to select favourite books and to sit and look through these at their leisure. They often enjoy showing illustrations from the books to each other and talking about what is happening on the pages.

Charles has made a costume. He likes to dress up and have fun. Charles says he is Iron Man. He has fun with his friends. Charles says he has worked very hard.

Children like to laugh and tease. We have fun exchanging silly conversations – One boy comes with different jackets and hats. One day just after Christmas he appeared with a new outfit with all the snow and faces and bodies covered up, I couldn't find Ayden as I was doing body checks. So I said to the other teacher I can't find Ayden and a little voice said here I am Anne. Ayden, I said, I didn't know you. From then on it's been a joke

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between us when he shows up in a new outfit. Such fun! I heard him say to his Grandmother "Anne didn't know me today..."

Some of the children like to play games, like cards or matching pictures as games of memory. They often ask me to play and often I pretend I don't remember the rules or what to do next. They love to tell what to do and what not to do. This helps the new players as well... I always let the children own the game. They are very good at expressing themselves and controlling the playing. Lots of laughs and fun.

Oliver's story – Oliver wanted to start his story with once upon a time a boy named Xander made Oliver some armour from paper. Oliver pretends to be a war machine. He fights bad guys and helps people. His name is Middleman and he lives in New York – This come from Xander who continued the story. He (Middleman) lives in a mansion when he is not at war. He has a family, a wife, a son and a daughter. They know about his secret life, his wife is not happy because he might get killed.

On a rainy day several boys were cutting out arm bands and chest covers and one boy had something taped to his legs. I sat down with them to watch the colouring and taping. The following are stories the boys told me. Bradley's story: the armour cut from a large piece of paper was for his chest and his mark is metal. All were coloured a bright red. He says he is Iron Man but his real name is Tony Stark, emphasising the "K". The blue circle on his chest of armour represents Iron man's heart which shines from within. Iron man acts in movie adventures saving and helping all people who are in danger.

This picture was drawn by Ethan in UAS (see figure A). Ethan has just recently begun to visit the Art table so I was very interested in seeing his creation. The picture was well organized and you could see he was proud of his work. Ethan has a clear loud voice when it comes to his peers but for him to speak to adults (teachers) he has a difficult time. But since I have been with Ethan he told me about his picture. As I pointed to each symbol or character he told me his story. His face beamed when I told him how much I liked his picture. Erin took the Picture.

The children are learning about dog/cats/pets in our classroom. We asked them to bring in pictures of their pet to share with the class. One of the boys decided to take his picture and use it as the front cover for his book. He wrote about and drew pictures of his dogs and family and was very proud to show us his book.

The children will often go to the art centre and build a computer. They get out paper and tape it together. A keyboard gets drawn with all of the letters and numbers. Sometimes they draw a picture on the "screen" and sometimes they leave it blank. They also draw and cut out their very own "cell phone"

When learning about different topics, we try hard to make sure that we learn poems and put it in print on the wall for the children to refer to. We teach them songs and always have lots of books to read about the subject we are learning about.

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For the last week we've been focusing on music, movement. They brought in their own CD's to share (express their music interest) they love freeze dance, so I added a STOP GO SLOW sign to include communication and literacy. We read/sang the book "If you go into the woods tonight" They thought I was pretty neat to sing a story.

Show and Share: The children love to show what they brought in/we have the other children ask question where/when/what about their item. Encourage vocabulary during a game of follow the leader at gym I had some of our little friends be the leader, it gave them a chance to be in control and come up with their own movement ideas.

Early morning arrivals are great for chatting. It's quiet and the children enjoy that one on one or small group time chats. This is the same for the end of the day.

Week 9: Diversity and Social Responsibility

One day this week we were in circle and singing "I am a pizza" going along with our restaurant theme and when we got to the part where it switches to French one of our friends said "français". Exciting (he speaks French at home with his mother). We then talked about what other languages the children know. They were really interested in each other. It is so neat to see the other children's reaction when they hear that their friends can speak in a different language, other than English.

Children learn to be responsible and responsive members of the community:
Rayfe brought his new puppy, 8 week old Robot (a bulldog) to introduce to his classmates. The boys and girls were so excited and interested in getting to know him – touching him, patting him gently, following his every move. We talked about this importance of respecting his needs, his space and allowing him to explore. M.G.

Sustainable futures:

Boys and girls created two separate train stations organizing setting up of train tracks in different directions to accommodate the various rail cars. They made decisions about the direction of their play, negotiating space, roles, working out problems. They moved into an imaginary world where they could take possession of that world. Train travel is a necessary mode of transportation where people and products move from place to place in our country. M.G.

On Earth Day we talked about the importance of being responsible and keeping our home clean. We went to our favorite neighborhood park and picked up litter.

Caleb suddenly came down with a fever and was very ill. While waiting for his grandmother to come pick him up, he laid in our "Quiet box" with his special blanket. At first, all the children started poking their heads in the box – giggling. I brought the 4 children off to the side and asked them if they had ever been sick before. They all said

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yes. I asked what they liked/made them feel better. Some said soup, some said their Mommies. I tried to explain that Caleb felt very sick right now and he had no soup or Mommy for him at daycare to make him feel better. I explained that until Caleb's nanny came to pick him up what was going to make him feel better was quiet and to be left alone. The 4 children that had originally been "pestering" Caleb then turned into his mini-nurses. One of them gently tucked his blanket around him and the others gently remaindered the noisy children "Shhh, Caleb's not feeling well". They also kept the other children from going into the box and bothering him.

At Easter we asked the children how they celebrated this holiday. It was interesting how different their responses were. Some spent time with grandparents and had family dinner with turkey/or ham. Some children had large family egg hunts, some didn't. Some received toys, others received only candy. Some children stayed home, other travelled and went away for the weekend.

Figure A: Communication and Literacies

This is a computer game with a man shooting zombies. He can't let the zombies get close. The three hearts in the top left corner represent the number of lives that the man has.

