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In this issue...

Welcome to *INcare*, a semi-annual newsletter about inclusion in Peel's Learn.Play.Care. child care centres. Our objective is to keep staff and families informed of inclusive practices within our Learn.Play.Care. centres with up to date research information, tips and techniques for use at home and at the child care centre.

This issue includes information on inclusive classrooms, Therapists, transitions, and American Sign Language.

Our goal is to provide the best possible service to our children and families. We would love to hear from you. If you have a story about inclusion, successful strategies or questions you would like answered please email us using the contact information on page 3!

What makes an inclusive classroom?

We all have different strengths, skills and talents that make us who we are – unique individuals who can bring something different to the table. It is important that we *recognize* how each of us learn and *adapt* our teaching styles to *teach* for success for every child.

As a child in elementary school, I remember walking past the "special needs" class and wondering "why do those kids need to be in there?" As I grew older I realized those children learned differently. "Slower" they used to say. As an adult I grew to realize we all learn differently. If you were to ask me to learn a new skill through auditory means I would learn more slowly BUT if you ask me to learn through hands-on or tactile learning I would probably grasp that new concept quickly and do quite well.

I sometimes wonder...as a child, if those children from my school days were included in my classroom, what else could I have learned from them?

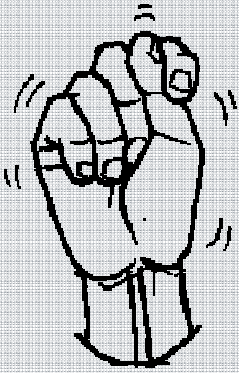
Maryann Novak R.ECE
Resource Teacher

How to sign "mommy"



Make the sign for "Mother" by placing the thumb of your dominant hand against your chin. Your hand should be open, in a "five shape."

How to sign "bathroom"



The sign for "bathroom" is made by forming your hand into the letter "t." The palm side is facing away from you. Shake your hand side to side a couple times. Some people use a twisting movement instead of the side to side shake. Either is fine.

Understand the Role of Classroom Visitors

As your child is transitioning to pre-school there is a possibility of new professionals being introduced to your family and child. Some of those professionals can include Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists but at times it can be challenging to tell what the difference is. This section of INcare will explain the difference between the two professionals and how they relate to your child.

An Occupational Therapist will work with your child to participate in activities to increase development in daily activities that occupy your child's time (i.e. self care and leisure). This can involve modifying activities or materials to suit the needs of your child. The goal of the Occupational Therapist is to increase the independence of your child. Another important role the Occupational Therapist plays is assessing the sensory needs of your child. For example, some children can be hypersensitive to touch, taste, or smell which may affect eating habits. The child may not like the texture of food in their mouth and this can make feeding time difficult. In a situation like this an Occupational Therapist can work with you to create tools to use with your child to make feeding time a little easier.

A Physiotherapist will work with families to educate on positioning and handling the child, teaching the child functional movement, stability, balance and gross motor skills. A Physiotherapist will work on increasing your child's range of motion through active or resistance exercise used to increase muscle strength and develop therapy that is meant to help your child reach the gross motor milestones with the most movement your child is capable of.

Abigail Ajodha
Student, Humber College

Considering Transitions...

Children in care experience transitions throughout their day. There are a variety of transitions that children experience in child care environments such as starting at a new child care centre, changing classrooms, changing teachers, moving throughout the daily routine or changing the clothing we wear as we go through the seasons. There are also very small transitions that we may not even consider, but may mean more change for a child who understands their world by their routines. Some of these transitions may include changing from one song to another during large group time, being asked to move from one activity to another, or even a peer leaving the classroom for a few minutes to use the washroom.

When we consider the impact of transitions on children we must consider a variety of questions such as;

- Is the activity or transition that we are asking the child to move to something that they will enjoy or not?
- Is the activity that we are asking them to leave, something that they are enjoying?
- Is the change something that the child anticipates?
- Does the child have fears or dislikes of the upcoming activities?

We must also consider the child's temperament, does the child have the ability to self sooth, and the child's likes and dislikes.

Once we have weighed all of these questions we can then begin to plan transitions with the children that we support in The Region of Peel's Learn.Play.Care. Child Care Centres.

Anisa Chernecki R. ECE
Resource Teacher

Why use American Sign Language?

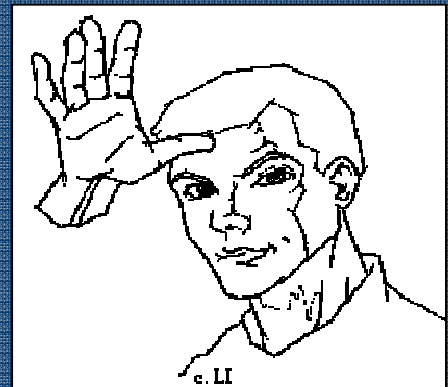
American Sign Language (ASL) is an official language that has been gaining popularity for use with hearing infants and children of all ages. Children who are exposed to ASL at an early age are better able to communicate their needs, resulting in less frustration for both adults and children. They also have enhanced coordination, fine motor and social skills. That being said, it is essential that verbal language be used in conjunction with the sign that is being taught.

A few simple rules when using ASL are:

1. Make sure you are in the child's line of sight and eye level so they are able to see you clearly.
2. Be consistent with the word you use. For instance if you call yourself "mommy" then always use that word. Initially your child may say "ma" – celebrate that and continue to say "mommy" until they are able to acquire the word completely.
3. Learning any language should always be fun! Try not to force or frustrate yourself or your child – The goal is to communicate effectively while you both enjoy a new skill and time with each other.

Maryann Novak R. ECE
Resource Teacher

How to sign "daddy"



Make the sign for "Father" by placing the thumb of your dominant hand against your forehead. Your hand should be open.

Resources

For successful transitions:

<http://connectability.ca/>

American Sign Language resources:

Aslpro.com

Lifeprint.com

Deafnetmd.org

Physical and Occupational Therapy:

http://www.brighttots.com/physical_therapy

<http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/what-is-occupational-therapy.html>

Paperback resources:

Ellen Yack, Paula Aquilla and Shirley Sutton. (2002) *Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration*. Therapy for children with Autism and other pervasive developmental disorders. Future Horizons: Toronto.

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas, stories or questions, we'd love to hear about it.....

Email:

Maryann.novak@peelregion.ca

Special Needs Services Offered by The Region of Peel include:

Child Care SNAP – Peel provides a single point of access to co-ordinated services that help children with special needs from birth to 6 years participate in licensed child care programs.

Contact: 905-791-7800 ext SNAP (7627)

Resource Teachers offer an inclusive early learning and child care program for children with special needs in each of our 12 Learn.Play.Care. Centres located throughout the Region of Peel. Resource Teachers are placed in each child care centre supporting children to fully participate in all aspects of the program. The Resource Teacher, in collaboration with parents, sets goals and plan for your child's individual special needs.

The Valley Infant-Parent Program (VIPP) is a therapeutic program that supports the development of a healthy attachment between parents and infants age 0-36 months. It is an intensive program designed to help strengthen the bond/relationship between parents and infants. The program is staffed by Resource Teachers from the Region of Peel Children's Services and children's mental health professionals from Peel Children's Centre.

Child care subsidy is a program offered by the Region of Peel that helps you to pay for licensed child care if you are the parent, foster parent or legal guardian of a child from birth to 12 years of age that lives with you. Subsidized care may be available in our 12 Learn.Play.Care. Centres or in over 450 other centres and home-based child care programs.

For more information, and general inquiries please call: 905-791-7800 or visit The Region of Peel Website: <http://www.peelregion.ca/children/>

Human Services Department, Children's Services Operations Division Guiding Principles of Inclusion. We Believe...

- ☞ An inclusive active learning environment supports all children's uniqueness, dignity and development.
- ☞ Children with special needs are first and foremost children, with the right to be included in all aspects of their community.
- ☞ Through using exemplary practices to focus on children's interests, strengths and needs, we can support all children's development.
- ☞ Partnerships between families and their support systems reflect involvement, input and ongoing collaboration from all participants.
- ☞ Diversity in all forms enriches communities to be better and more productive places to Learn.Play.Care.