

Cedar Room April 2021



Self-Help Skills

Self-help skills are worth the time and effort from both parents and educators. The secret to success is to give the children age-appropriate expectations and provide the appropriate support for them to be successful. In the Cedar Room, some children are more advanced in simple skills than others and this is OK. We take the time to model and offer opportunities for children to develop their self-help skills and give them ample time to work on these tasks. When children practice skill's, such as feeding and dressing themselves, they practice their large and fine motor skills, gain confidence in their ability to try new things and build their self-esteem and pride.

Some of the self-help skills we encourage the children to try are simple everyday tasks including:

Putting on and taking off shoes. This is usually one of the first skills we begin to work on when a child enters our room. Give your child extra time when starting this skill, be sure that the shoes are easy to slip on and take off and try not to buy shoes with laces but with Velcro so your child can do them up independently.

Zipping zippers. To give them help at the beginning start the zipper for them but show them how to hook the zipper together and have them pull it up. To help a child's small fingers grasp the zipper pull, you can add a key ring or a small toy to the end of the pull to give them something larger to grab.

Hygiene and toileting. When entering the washroom, we encourage children to pull their clothing down and up on their own but offer support when needed. Children learning to use the toilet, climb on and off the toilet seat with the help of a foot stool, and wash their hands independently when they are finished. Often there are a few reminder to wash hands and give a good scrub with soap. We are always ready to provide support and help if they need it.

Snack and lunch clean up. At mealtimes, we support our view of the children as competent by encouraging them to tidy their places. Preschoolers bring their dishes to the garbage, scrape their leftover food into the garbage and putt their plate in the dirty bin!

Daily Communication

We have now transitioned to posting our Emergent Curriculum Planning, observations, and messaging updates through the HiMama app.

Through out spring we will be spending some afternoons outside. When the weather is gorgeous, we will send out a quick e-mail and leave a yellow sign on the cubby door to let you know we are in the back playground.

If you need to contact us during the day, our room phone extension is #115. If you are picking up your child outside of our group's pickup time (3:30-3:45) and we are not at the door, please call to let us know you're here.

Coming Up This Month

April 1 – April Fools and Backwards Day

April 2 – Good Friday – Centre Closed

April 5 – Eater Party. Did the Easter Bunny Visit us?

April 16 – Green Day

April 30 – PJ Day

*Check out the blog at
www.thistleoaks.ca/blog*

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Children's Interests

Science Inquiry and Exploring the Outdoors – Now that the cold weather is gone, the children have been spending more and more of their outdoor time exploring the natural world around them. Their newly ungloved hands have been

Through this, we have also noticed an emerging trend science inquiry – Why does the tree have a hole? What made that loud sound? Why did the goose poop?

One of the ways we usually support this sort of emerging interest in questioning is by having a 'show and share', where children bring in a toy to show their friends, giving them the opportunity to be asked and give answers to questions they are experts on (What a self esteem boost!), however with the COVID-19 restrictions in play, we are hesitant to do this. Do you have any ideas on how we could still offer an opportunity like this while reducing the potential for transmission? If you have any ideas, please e-mail us!

Walks – Building from the children's interests in exploring the world around us, we have begun making forays off the Thistleoaks and CW property. These walks not only give the children an opportunity to explore new sights and sounds, but also helps them practice their self regulation skills by staying with a group, waiting at stop signs, and modulating behavior based on safety rules.

HDLH - Well-being and Self-Help Skills

Well-being addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as selfcare, sense of self, and self-regulation skills. – How Does Learning Happen, 2014

One of the hallmarks of the preschool years is an 'I can do it' attitude. Throughout their play, preschoolers begin setting goals for themselves and working towards them. These goals can be as simple as "I want to stack these blocks" or as complicated as "I want to draw a picture of a red dinosaur with lots of sharp teeth". Children are often proud of these accomplishments and this feeds into their sense of self through self esteem.

But what about when children struggle with self help skills? Many preschoolers have not developed their emotional self-regulations skills to the point where they're able to persist through several failed attempts, especially when they're not actually interested in (Compare one try to Velcro shoes to ten tries to stack a tower). When we see their frustration, our first instinct as adults is to remove that by helping them. But at what point does our help encroach on their sense of self and self esteem? Where is the line between them becoming overly frustrated and overly reliant?

One technique that can help with the development of these skills is Scaffolding - breaking the task down into several steps and offering support in the areas where they are needed. During each of these steps, preschoolers should be an active participant, meaning they have something to do, even if it's as simple as "Hold the Velcro while we pull and latch it together". Having a 'job' to do during each step makes it easier to gradually remove the scaffolding as they grow, becoming "You pull the Velcro then we latch it together" and then eventually "You pull and latch the Velcro".

When scaffolding a many stepped activity it's best to ensure your child is able to complete the final step independently, even from the get-go. This may mean adding a superfluous step such as "stomp your feet" to make sure the shoes are all the way on, but this helps them feel a sense of closure and success at the end of the experience, ending the task on a high note for their self concept and self esteem.