Enjoying Winter with Children

The long cold days of winter can take a toll on caregivers and children alike. We can all get bored and cranky if we are cooped up too much. Playing outside even for just a few minutes every day can help get rid of cabin fever and get the wiggles out. Here are some great benefits to outdoor play:

- The outdoor environment permits noise, movement, and great freedom for children.
- Outdoor play relieves stress and reduces anxiety.
- Physical activity increases physical strength and coordination.
- Physical movement increases self-confidence and competence is developed.
- Leadership skills are developed.
- Opportunities to play cooperatively, taking turns, share and solve problems with other children.
- Playing outdoors in cold weather does not cause illness in children. Colds, flu, and illness are caused by viruses and bacteria. Children confined in warm, closed rooms with several other children have greater exposure to germs causing sickness.
- Frequent exposure to fresh air, exercise, and sunshine (with sunscreen) increase children’s general fitness and resistance to infections (follow red air guidelines for when to keep children inside)
- During active play outdoors, the viruses and bacteria are dispersed into a larger, more mobile air space decreasing the risk of spreading to others.

Share these benefits with the parents of the children you care for and ask them to work with you in meeting a goal of playing this winter outdoors. They can help by bringing adequate warm clothes every day.

Two other important things to do to help you and your children stay healthy this winter are:

- Open windows after all the children have left for a few minutes allowing fresh air to circulate.
- Ensure that both you and the children are washing your hands regularly.  

Source: Michigan Child Care Matters Issue 70

Care About Childcare Course on Science – School Readiness Course 3 Mathematics and Science taught next on December 5, 7, 12 and 14, 2023. Participants will explore ways to engage preschoolers in mathematical thinking through hands-on games and real-life problem-solving. Participants will learn how to use children’s natural curiosity to create meaningful science experiences that help children make sense of the world.

Learn more about best practices on how to incorporate science into your program – Environment Rating Scales Best Practice Series- ERS Nature and Science course taught next on December 13, 2023. This class explores how to support children’s natural curiosity to explore and discover the natural world. Participants will learn how to use open-ended questions to support children as they engage in scientific inquiry during everyday interactions with their environment. Lastly, participants will learn best practices based on ERS recommendations for selecting quality nature/science materials.

To register for either of these courses log in to your CAC profile and go to the course calendar. If you have questions contact our office at 435-797-1552 or childcare.help@usu.edu.
Professional Development News

Training can help you reinforce best practices and learn new information. Please call our office if you need help registering for courses or would like assistance finding training that fits your needs. 435-797-1552 or childcare.help@usu.edu.

This quarter, our training sessions will be held online, which is ideal for the chilly winter months. You can save time by not having to drive and focus on improving your professional skills from the comfort of your home. Additionally, we will host a monthly in-person Provider Night at our office in Logan. This event is a great chance for you to meet and network with other professionals and receive further training. Please keep an eye on your emails for updates about these special nights.

February Training

Theory and Best Practice Course 3 Piaget and Brain Development 10-hour course: 3; 2/6, 13, 20, 27

Strong and Smart Physical and Intellectual Development 10-hour course: 2/1, 8, 15, 22

CCQS from Application to Award for Family Child Care Programs 2.5 hour course: 2/21

March Training

Understanding the Business of Family Childcare If you complete the course, you can receive the Family Child Care Business Essentials Suite which includes 7 books written by Tom Copeland including a Marketing Guide, Contracts & Policies and more (limited supply). 3/4, 11, 18

School Readiness Course 3 Mathematics and Science 10-hour course: 3 3/5, 12, 19, 26

Goal Setting for Lasting Change 4-hour course: 3/6, 13, 20, 27 from 6:30 -7:30 pm

Guidance and Emotional Wellness Course 3 Promoting Social Emotional Competence Course 10-hour course: 3/7, 14, 21, 28

The first of the year is a great time to review your emergency procedures, this class can help. Emergency Preparedness in Childcare Settings 5-hour course: January 8 and 9 from 7:00-9:30.

Upcoming Early Childhood Conferences:

UAEYC Annual Conference COME A.L.I.V.E. March 8-9, 2024 University of Utah https://uaeyc.org/utah-early-childhood-conf

23rd Annual Southern Utah Early Childhood Conference April 19-20, 2024 “Imagine a Universe where Every Child is a Star!” https://childcarehelp.org/

Save the date PFCCA Conference on Saturday, May 4, 2024 in Brigham City https://www.pfccca.org/

First Annual USU Early Childhood Inclusion Conference June 7-8, 2024 www.cac.usu.edu
Child Care Quality System (CCQS) Recognition

Two licensed centers achieved High Quality Plus Best Friends Child Development Center in Logan and Little Brigham Aggies in Brigham City!

Rosie’s Playhouse a licensed family child care program in Brigham City achieved High Quality!

Congratulations on these tremendous accomplishments!

CCQS is a journey of improvement, and even if your initial rating is not high quality, your participation is still making your program better. This enhances the experience for the children and families you serve. We see and appreciate your effort and commitment!

CCQS Spotlight: Top Star

Participating in the Top Star Program will give you points in your CCQS framework. Contact Allena Pierce apierce@brhd.org or Pam Chapman pchapman@brhd.org to find out more.

TOP Star: Teaching Obesity Prevention in Early Child Care is a Utah-based program developed in partnership with the Utah Department of Health and Human Services and local health departments. Early child care facilities and preschools, whether in-home or in commercial settings, may receive TOP Star endorsement after the providers complete an initial training and meet the criteria for healthy nutrition, physical activity, and breastfeeding practices.

Healthy eating habits lead to a lower risk of obesity and other chronic health problems in children and adults. Staff at TOP Star facilities are committed to providing quality childcare and creating environments that reinforce healthy lifestyle habits. TOP Star consultants aid with resources and education that can assist with improving quality of service, marketability and Career Ladder Credits, as well as providing skills to improve the personal health of staff.

Interested in learning about the path to quality with CCQS? Need assistance with understanding the framework and preparing for a certified rating? Applications are now being accepted! Feel free to reach out to our office at 435-797-1552 or send an email to childcare.help@usu.edu for more information.
Child Care Quality System (CCQS) Support for Family Child Care - Outdoor Winter Play for Children

Is outdoor play needed during the winter months?

- Outdoor play is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment; it also provides many health benefits. Outdoor play allows for physical activity that supports maintenance of a healthy weight and better nighttime sleep. Short exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of vitamin D that growing children require.
- Open spaces in outdoor areas encourage children to develop gross motor skills and fine motor play in ways that are difficult to duplicate indoors. Play areas should be fully enclosed and away from heavy traffic areas. In addition, infants should be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors.

How do I know when it’s too cold to go outside?

- Children need protection from adverse weather and its effects. Heat-induced illness and cold injury are preventable. Weather alert services are beneficial to childcare programs because they send out weather warning and watches. Caregivers should monitor weather-related conditions through several media outlets, including local e-mail and text messaging weather alerts. Caregivers should also monitor the air quality for safety.
- The National Weather Service (NWS) provides up-to-date weather information on all advisories and warnings. It also provides safety tips for caregivers to use as a tool in determining when weather conditions are comfortable for outdoor play. [https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat](https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat)
- Children should wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing. Outer garments, such as coats, should be tightly woven and be at least water repellent when rain or snow is present.
- Children should wear a hat, coat, and gloves/mittens kept snug at the wrist. There should be no hood and neck strings.
- Caregivers should check children’s extremities for normal color and warmth at least every 15 minutes.

Will children get sick from being outside in cold weather?

- Generally, infectious disease organisms are less concentrated in outdoor air than indoor air. The thought is often expressed that children are more likely to become sick if exposed to cold air; however, upper respiratory infections and flu are caused by viruses, and not exposure to cold air. These viruses spread easily during the winter when children are kept indoors in close proximity. The best protection against the spread of illness is regular and proper hand hygiene for children and caregivers as well as proper sanitation procedures during mealtimes and when there is any contact with bodily fluids.

References

1. Standards from *Caring for Our Children* Online Database. 3.1: Health Promotion in Child Care. 3.1. 3.2: Playing Outdoors
2. FCCERS-3, *Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale*. Pg 14: Weather Permitting means that there is no public health warning due to temperatures that are too high or too low, or active precipitation such as rain or snow. Scheduled outdoor times should be modified so children can go out if weather allows.

If you would like to learn more about how you can incorporate best practices into your program using CCQS and what incentives are available with this program contact our office at 435-797-1552 or childcare.help@usu.edu
Child Care Quality System (CCQS) Support For Centers
Preparing your staff for Environment Rating Scale Observations

CCQS can assist you in providing quality care to the families in your care. Utah’s CCQS promotes best practices in programs which includes providing the very best care for the wellbeing, learning and development for children.

There are many ways administration can support their staff when it comes time for yearly CCQS observations. Besides reviewing best practices as listed in the Environment Rating Scales, there are additional resources available. The following can be found under Provider Resources on the Care About Childcare Website:

- Have your staff complete the Environment Self-Assessment (ESA). The purpose of the ESA is for programs to evaluate the resources, practices, and learning environment in their program, as well as critically evaluate and celebrate their strengths and identify areas for growth. These assessments can identify topics to address during future staff trainings or educational needs.

- Review Utah’s Child Care Quality System: Program Guide for Providers and identify key elements that can attest to the importance of participating in CCQS, such as: “In Utah, 49 percent of children under six years old are in families where there is a need for child care. The research on early childhood development demonstrates the important contributions of child care providers to the healthy development of children while their parents are working. This research reveals that experiences in early childhood are the basis for success in adulthood. In these early years, child care programs help establish a foundation for later academic success. The quality of these programs directly impacts these important outcomes, with high-quality programs leading to positive cognitive, social and emotional development in children (Utah’s Child Care Quality System: Program Guide for Providers, pg. 6)”

- Set realistic goals with your staff. The Quality Observation Award can be earned by classrooms with an average observation score of 3.67 or higher with a minimum score of 4 in Language and Books (ITERS)/ Language and Literacy (ECERS) subscale and a minimum score of 4 on the Interactions subscale.

- Attend ERS Best Practice Series Courses. The Environment Rating Scales are research-based early childhood observation tools that examine a wide variety of areas that contribute to positive child development. Taught exclusively by Specialists who are reliable in the ERS tools, this series of courses aligns the tools with best practices on how children develop and learn. Utilize the information learned during these courses to model best practices for your staff in the classroom.

- Take time to show your staff the What to Expect During Your CCQS Observation video and encourage them to ask questions about the process. Can’t answer a particular question? Reach out to observations@utah.gov for further assistance.

If you would like to learn more about how you can incorporate best practices into your program using CCQS and what incentives are available with this process contact our office at 435-797-1552 or childcare.help@usu.edu
Benefit more from your CAC program profile!

Take greater advantage of the marketing benefits you can receive using your CAC program profile by following this simple checklist.

- Upload program photos. Parents want to know where their child will be spending their time and seeing program photos can create greater interest in your program. Keep these photos relevant to your program by uploading photos that include common play areas, both indoor and outdoor, and photos of common activities the children may participate in each day.

- Create a program message. Parents want to know about your program and what you can offer their child. Use this space to show off the wonderful things about your program and why parents should pick your program.

- List the correct days and times your program is open. Some families are looking for programs that may be open earlier or later in the day. If you are struggling to increase the number of children in your care, consider changing your program time to accommodate families that need either earlier morning drop-offs or later pick up times for their child.

- Keep your program page detailed with certain items of information such as the languages spoken, what schools the program serves or what meals you are offering.

- **Keep your program website up to date.** If your program is not up to date on certain information, such as your number of vacancies available, you could be losing the interest of parents looking for quick childcare solutions that also fit their needs.

**Additional Marketing Tips:**

Get connected through social media! Post about your program in local forums on Facebook or create story highlights on Instagram. Not only will those searching through social media see your posts, but it also opens the opportunity for family and friends to share your program.

Use the power of referrals! Offering families that are already in your service special referral bonuses can be a great idea when it comes to finding new families to work with. It not only benefits you as a provider but can benefit families you are currently serving too.

**Sign up for CAC virtual course Creating Good Childcare: Effective Program Management. Course dates are January 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th of 2024. This course can help you learn more about business management and legal issues.**
Parent and Provider Community Resource

Little Lambs Foundation for Kids

This nonprofit foundation supports low-income families by providing them with baby supplies and diapers on a monthly basis. They also provide children that are going through the foster-care system, with comfort kits.

Eligibility: income based following WIC income guidelines

Contact information:
littlelambsofutah.org
Little Lambs Foundation for Kids
1125 West 400 North Suite 200
Logan, UT 84321

SAVE THE DATE

USU First Early Childhood Inclusion Conference – Logan Utah
June 7-8, 2024
Keynotes on inclusion and positive behavior guidance and tons of breakout sessions!

Watch for more information coming soon.
Mental health services for child care providers

The Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (OSUMH) and the Office of Child Care (OCC) are partnering together to offer mental health services to qualified child care providers throughout Utah.

To see if you qualify, scan the QR code and complete the survey. You will then be contacted within 3 business days.
801-538-3939
ccmh@utah.gov
Behavioral Parent Training Group

The SCCE Behavioral Health Clinic at USU is offering group parent training sessions for parents of children ages 4-12. Parents can learn techniques for managing aggression, defiance, and other difficult behaviors at home during this weekly group session. The group will last for 8 sessions and different material will be covered each week.

Begins Tuesday, January 9th at 5:30pm

If interested, please contact 435-797-3401 to register.

Group will be held on the 3rd floor of the Sorenson Center.

Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services  
Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence  
UtahStateUniversity.
Exploring Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

As a practitioner caring for children, it is your responsibility to seek out and intentionally plan the best opportunities for children that support their overall well-being and healthy development. The practices that you use when you work with young children need to embrace the most current, effective approaches in learning and development: best practices, thoughtful teaching, quality practices, and Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). DAP comes from a deep history in early education, research, and what many describe as “good thinking.”

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), states, “Developmentally Appropriate Practice is informed by what we know from theory and literature about how children develop and learn.” In its Developmentally Appropriate Practice Key Messages of the Position Statement, NAEYC shares the following in defining DAP:

• Developmentally appropriate practice requires both meeting children where they are—which means that teachers must get to know them well—and enabling them to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable.

• All teaching practices should be appropriate to children’s age and developmental status, attuned to them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.

• Developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for children. Rather, it means ensuring that goals and experiences are suited to their learning and development and challenging enough to promote their progress and interest.

• Best practice is based on knowledge—not on assumptions—of how children learn and develop. The research base yields major principles in human development and learning. Those principles, along with evidence about curriculum and teaching effectiveness, form a solid basis for decision making in early care and education. (This position statement articulates 12 principles.)

Developmentally appropriate practice is a comprehensive educational perspective that supports optimal healthy development for every child. Developmentally appropriate practice embraces both continuity and change; continuity because it guides a tradition of quality early learning and change as it incorporates new research, knowledge, and science in regard to children’s development and learning.

Child development principles that inform DAP

1. All the domains of development are important.

2. Many aspects of children’s learning and development follow well-documented sequences.

3. Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child.

4. Development and learning result from a dynamic and continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience.

5. Early experiences have profound effects on a child’s development and learning, and there are optimal times for certain learning and development to occur.


7. Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive caregivers and peers.

8. Development and learning occur within and are influenced by social and cultural contexts.

9. Children learn in a variety of ways and are actively engaged in learning.

10. Play is a main way that children learn and develop self-regulation.

11. Development and learning occur when children are slightly challenged and through practice.

12. Children’s dispositions and behavior are shaped by experiences and affect their learning and development.
DAP: a decision making tool

You, as an early childhood professional who works with young children, are a decision-maker. You make decisions about the children in your program on a daily basis. Understanding DAP – its meaning and intentional practices – is essential in guiding the decisions you make. Developing the skills to make good decisions for children relies on building knowledge about individual children and child development principles combined with knowledge of effective early learning practices. These are the core considerations in developmentally appropriate practice.

Knowledge of individual children and child development principles

DAP is informed by three areas of knowledge that are critical components in making good decisions for children.

1. Child development appropriateness – child development follows general, sequential patterns and is interrelated across domains (cognitive, physical, social and emotional). Know and understand milestones and sequences of development in all domains and use child development information for planning and identifying activities, environments, experiences, and strategies (for large/small groups or individuals) to best promote growth and learning.

2. Individual appropriateness – each child is an individual and develops in her own, unique way. Know each child’s strengths, abilities, needs, challenges, interests, temperament, and approaches to learning. Know their individual skills, ideas and joys. This can be done through time spent together (conversations, etc.), Observation, assessment, work samples, documentation, and information from families and past teachers/programs.

3. Social and cultural appropriateness – all children grow within a culture. Know each child’s cultural and family background—his unique family, values, expectations, language, lifestyles, and beliefs. Show respect for cultures in the experiences you provide; make sure they are meaningful for each child/family. Children interpret everything through their own culture and teachers must consider this, along with overall child development and individual development, in all aspects of the learning program.

Knowledge of effective early learning practices

DAP focuses on five key areas of early learning practices:

- Creating a caring community of learners. Build positive and responsive relationships between children, staff, and families, both among groups and within the program, to create a community that supports all children as they develop and learn to their capacity in all domains.

- Teaching to enhance development and learning. Provide a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and plan experiences that meet individual needs, interests, and learning goals.

- Planning curriculum to achieve important goals. Develop a written curriculum that reflects developmental milestones and appropriate early learning goals for children and that supports individualized learning.

- Assessing children’s development and learning. Link assessment to curriculum and early learning standards and use authentic assessment methods to measure a child’s progress.

- Establishing reciprocal relationships with families. Work in partnership with families to learn about each child, to develop two-way communication, and to establish supportive relationships with all families.


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extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare