Greetings from the Child Care Project! It’s gray outside my window again. It’s frosty now, but it gives every appearance of melting as the day progresses. I can’t see a single patch of snow from here. Although I’d prefer another few weeks of snow (no sense in arriving at mud season early), I haven’t noticed that the children mind much. They have been as busy outside as ever. Even with the swings down for the winter and the sledding hill closed due to ice, they have kept themselves busy. I’ve paused to think about what children learn in the winter, snow or not.

What a science lesson this winter has been in the physical properties of matter:

- Wet sand freezes: dry sand is dusty.
- Ice is slippery. It is less slippery if you put sand on it; more slippery if you put snow on it.
- Sleds slide on ice and snow, but not on dirt and grass.

It’s been a good winter for studying math, too:

- There are more children than sleds.
- The big shovels move more snow more quickly than the smaller ones.
- The red sleds are longer than the purple sleds and hold more people.

Social studies, too:

- We wear different clothes in different weather.
- We need rules to stay safe on the sledding hill.
- Some jobs are related to the season: plowing the driveway is a winter job.

Whether you are one or four or grown up, there’s always something to learn. What are you learning this winter? Check out the line-up of workshops in this newsletter to keep on learning.

Best wishes,
CCP Training Opportunities

March 2012

1 Professionalism & Program Management, Part 2: Professionalism (Level II)
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium F, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 9:00 pm
This four-part Level II module focuses on professional development, personal wellness and topics related to child care program operation. Participants will be informed about the Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder, Vermont’s Bright Futures Information Systems, and technical assistance and resources available through Vermont’s Northern Lights Career Development Center, as well as the Child Development Associate credential. See page 7 of the Child Care Project’s 2011-2012 Training Calendar (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ccp/providers/training_calendar11-12corrected.pdf) for Level II description. Register for parts 1 and 2, or part 3, or part 4, or enroll in the entire series.

In part 2, we will continue exploring the topic of professionalism started last week. Attendance on February 23 required to attend tonight. Presenter: Lori Harris, M.S., Director, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Child Care Center

VT Core Knowledge Area: 5
NH Core Knowledge Area: 1
CDA Subject Areas: 5, 6

8 Professionalism & Program Management, Part 3: Program Management (Level II)
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium F, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 9:00 pm
See full description under March 1. Register for parts 1 and 2, or part 3, or part 4, or enroll in the entire series.

How do I collect information about my child care program and use it to assess how my program is operating and to guide future planning? Why is a budget important? What tools are available to assess program quality? What are STARS and BFIS? Providers will gain knowledge around developing and evaluating program goals; planning a program budget; participating in Vermont’s STARS and other quality rating programs; and utilizing Vermont’s Bright Futures Information Systems (BFIS) and Vermont’s Northern Lights Career Development Center website and materials. Presenter: Lori Harris, M.S., Director, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Child Care Center

VT Core Knowledge Area: 5
NH Core Knowledge Area: 1
CDA Subject Areas: 1, 2, 3

3 Mother Goose Cares About Social Studies, Part 2 of 3
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Offered in collaboration with Vermont Center for the Book and funded in part by the Henderson Foundation, this FREE, college-level training for early childhood professionals explores social studies concepts. Very simply, social studies is the study of people and how they live. Children are natural social studies researchers and begin to understand the world by learning about themselves, their families, friends, and the local and global community. This literature-based program integrates the standards for social studies and language and literacy into the everyday experience in an early childhood setting. Series underway- attendance on all three Saturdays, February 18, March 3 and March 17 is required (snow date March 31). Presenter: Jennifer Wolfe, M.S., Educational Consultant

VT Core Knowledge Area: 3
NH Core Knowledge Area: 3
CDA Subject Areas: 1, 2, 3

13 Advanced Never Too Early: Peaceable Stories, Part 1 of 2 (Level II)
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm
This early literacy training is open to family child care providers and center staff who have previously completed a two-part Never Too Early series; priority is given to participants from prior program years. Join us
for an opportunity to deepen your knowledge of early literacy gained from previous trainings as well as from experience. This two-part training will focus on socio-emotional development. Building on the Never Too Early foundation, providers will learn how to use children’s literature to nurture empathy, compassion, cooperative play and effective communication – emotional literacy – as they nurture early literacy. Participants will receive a Peaceable Stories resource manual and gift books for their program.

See page 7 of the Child Care Project’s 2011-2012 Training Calendar (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ccp/providers/training_calendar11-12corrected.pdf) for Level II description. The Vermont Humanities Council sponsors this training with support from A.D. Henderson Foundation. Attendance on both Tuesdays, March 13 and 20 is required. Presenter: Judy Witters, M.Ed. & M.F.A., Three Apple Storyteller & Vermont Arts Council Touring Artist

15 Professionalism & Program Management, Part 4: What is the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential? (Level II)

This four-part Level II module focuses on professional development, personal wellness and topics related to child care program operation. Participants will be informed about the Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder, Vermont’s Bright Futures Information Systems, and technical assistance and resources available through Vermont’s Northern Lights Career Development Center, as well as the Child Development Associate credential. See page 7 of the Child Care Project’s 2011-2012 Training Calendar (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ccp/providers/training_calendar11-12corrected.pdf) for Level II description. Register for parts 1 and 2, or part 3, or part 4, or enroll in the entire series.

What is the CDA? What is the professional value of achieving the CDA credential and how does it align with the professional development system in Vermont? This training will inform both early childhood professionals interested in earning the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and professionals who support, train and advise the early childhood workforce. As a result of this training, participants will have a full understanding of the components, process and available resources related to achieving the CDA credential. Presenter: Lori Harris, M.S., Director, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Child Care Center

VT Core Knowledge Area: 5
NH Core Knowledge Area: 1
CDA Subject Areas: 5, 6

17 Mother Goose Cares About Social Studies, Part 3 of 3

Offered in collaboration with Vermont Center for the Book and funded in part by the Henderson Foundation, this FREE, college-level training for early childhood professionals explores social studies concepts. Very simply, social studies is the study of people and how they live. Children are natural social studies researchers and begin to understand the world by learning about themselves, their families, friends, and the local and global community. This literature-based program integrates the standards for social studies and language and literacy into the everyday experience in an early childhood setting. Series underway - attendance on all three Saturdays, February 18, March 3 and March 17 is required (snow date March 31). Presenter: Jennifer Wolfe, M.S., Educational Consultant

VT Core Knowledge Area: 3
NH Core Knowledge Area: 3
CDA Subject Areas: 1, 2, 3

March & April 2012
March 2012

24 Resources for Rich Curriculum

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Early educators are creative folk. Every day we use the low cost resources around us to support and encourage children’s learning. Join Heather Duhamel to think about ways to further layer curriculum using the resources we all have in our programs. Literacy and numeracy concepts linked to the VT Early Learning Standards will be highlighted as we together explore ways to grow and develop NEW resources and still have a few quarters in our pockets. Come be inspired! Presenter: Heather Duhamel, Child Development Specialist, Early Childhood Professional Discovery Vermont
VT Core Knowledge Area: 3 • NH Core Knowledge Area: 3 • CDA Subject Areas: 1, 2

April 2012

3 Budgeting: How to Make Sense of It All

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Do the words revenue and expense make your brain hurt? Join us for a two-hour training designed to help you build a budget with the least amount of pain possible. Cindy Daniels from the VT Community Loan Fund’s Project SUCCESS will explain why budgeting is so important and how to make sense of the process. Come learn how to budget to “break-even,” build a budget for your VT STARS application and explore options to make your business profitable. Take away practical skills useful for maintaining a home budget, as well. NH and VT, home- and center-based providers are welcome. Presenter: Cindy Daniels, Business Development Specialist, Project SUCCESS, VT Community Loan Fund
VT Core Knowledge Area: 5
NH Core Knowledge Area: 1
CDA Subject Area: 5

5 Principles of Child Development, Part 1 of 4 (Level II)

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 6:00 - 9:00 pm
This four-part Level II module focuses on the relationship between child development and the learning environment. Throughout the series, participants will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to: use child development theory and research to identify the essential components of inclusive early childhood (birth to 5 years) learning environments; create inclusive learning environments that are responsive to the needs, strengths and interests of children; understand and recognize the typical and atypical development of young children; use space, interactions, schedules and materials to construct an environment that encourages play, exploration and learning; describe how children acquire knowledge through play, interactions and documentation; use observation and documentation to create and adapt the learning environment; use the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) as a guide for curriculum and program planning; and identify community resources that offer support to children with developmental and or health challenges. See page 7 of the Child Care Project's 2011-2012 Training Calendar (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ccp/providers/training_calendar11-12corrected.pdf) for Level II description. Attendance on all four Thursdays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26 is required for successful completion. Presenter: Robbin LaRue, M. Ed., Certified Human Behavioral Consultant and Behavior Specialist
VT Core Knowledge Areas: 1, 3
NH Core Knowledge Areas: 2, 8
CDA Subject Areas: 3, 4

12 Principles of Child Development, Part 2 of 4 (Level II)

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:00 - 9:00 pm
See full description under April 5. Attendance on all four Thursdays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26 is required for successful completion. Presenter: Robbin LaRue, M. Ed., Certified Human Behavioral Consultant and Behavior Specialist
Child Care Project Annual Early Childhood Conference

This year's keynote speaker at the Child Care Project’s annual day-long conference for early care and education professionals will be Lisa Murphy presenting, *What If Today Was Their Only Day?*. As the Ooey Gooey Lady®, Lisa presents to audiences across the country on various topics related to early childhood education, specifically how to be more play-based in the classroom. A highly sought after keynoter for educational conferences, she uses humor and real life anecdotes to reach and engage her audiences. We’re thrilled that she’ll be joining us!

Morning and afternoon workshop choices will include: *The Importance of Early Experiences: How playing IS Kindergarten readiness* with Lisa Murphy, *Beyond the "Like" Button: Preparing Early Childhood Educators for a Social Media World* with Matt and Michael Harrington, *Making Collage: So Much More Than Cutting and Pasting* with Sarah Sprague, and a speech and language development training with a presenter to be announced.

Conference fee of $35 includes keynote address and two training sessions (6 training hours total), as well as continental breakfast, afternoon snack and door prizes. Lunch is on your own this year. Pre-registration by mail is required; no phone sign-ups accepted. The second week of March conference brochures, with registration form, will be mailed and available on our website: www.dartmouth.edu/~ccp/providers/.

Growing Readers: Literacy through a Garden

Come explore how you can enrich your children's lives with gardens and use the garden at your program as a means of promoting literacy throughout the summer. Valuable information on establishing plans that make gardens more thematic will be shared, and fun experiments and projects that connect to gardening will be highlighted. The primary focus of the session will be on exploring sample garden themed literature. Participants will engage in several literature-based experiences connected to these books and then will be guided in planning their own set of activities with core books of interest. Programs should already have a garden established or plans to bring gardening to their site. This program will not discuss "how to" start and maintain gardens, rather how to enrich on-site or community garden experiences through various literature centered activities. *Focus will be on working with children 5-12 years of age, though providers of all ages are welcome.* Presenter: Matt Hajdun, 4th/5th Grade Teacher, Champlain Elementary School

Principles of Child Development, Part 3 of 4 (Level II)

See full description under April 5. *Attendance on all four Thursdays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26 is required for successful completion.* Presenter: Robbin LaRue, M. Ed., Certified Human Behavioral Consultant and Behavior Specialist

Principles of Child Development, Part 4 of 4 (Level II)

See full description under April 5. *Attendance on all four Thursdays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26 is required for successful completion.* Presenter: Robbin LaRue, M. Ed., Certified Human Behavioral Consultant and Behavior Specialist

VT Core Knowledge Area: 3
NH Core Knowledge Area: 3
CDA Subject Area: 2
Coming up in May…

8 Hammer, Saw, Drill: Woodworking with Children
Green Mountain Children’s Center- Hartford Campus, White River Junction, VT • 6:00 - 8:00 pm • Presenter: Jennie Harriman, M.F.A., M.A.

15 The Legacy of Early Shame
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Gail Sharpe

17 Helping Children Develop Healthy Sleep Patterns
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Scott Noyes

22 So Easy, Even a Baby Can Do It: Math with Infants
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Fuller Board Room, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Sharon Adams, M.S.

24 Why So Mad? Part 1 of 2: Understanding the Roots of Aggressive Behavior in Young Children
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Cynthia R. Dale, Ph.D.

31 Why So Mad? Part 2 of 2: Preventing and Responding to Aggressive Behavior in Young Children
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Cynthia R. Dale, Ph.D.

and in June…

2 Natural Outdoor Playspaces
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Child Care Center, Lebanon, NH • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm • Presenter: Lori Harris, M.S.

5 Food and Environmental Allergies in Children
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center-Auditorium E, Lebanon, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Lynn Feenan, R.N., M.S., AE-C

7 Carrots over Cookies? Making Healthy Foods Enticing
Dartmouth College Child Care Center- Grizzly Room, Hanover, NH • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • Presenter: Marla Ianello, M.S.

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR ALL CCP TRAINING…

(603) 646-3233 • (800) 323-5446 child.care.project@dartmouth.edu

Registration is accepted beginning on the first of the month prior to each class, i.e., sign-up for all April classes opens March 1.

Register for May classes beginning April 1, and for June classes beginning May 1.

If plans change and you cannot attend a workshop for which you have registered, please call.

Contact us now to sign up for March and April CCP training listed in this newsletter.

The Child Care Project does not offer training in July or August, so please plan accordingly!
Other Training Opportunities

CPR & First Aid Trainings
Most classes require pre-registration and pre-payment; many are space limited and could be canceled in the event of low enrollment. Call the individual site for more information or to register.

American Red Cross
Local classes currently under reorganization; none scheduled in March or April. Private classes may be arranged at your center or home for groups of 6 or more by calling Angela at (802) 660-9130.

New London Hospital
Heartsaver Adult, Child & Infant CPR/AED Recertification: March 9 at 4:00 pm or March 20 at 9:00 am or March 20 at 6:00 pm or April 11 at 6:00 pm. $20. Weber Room, 273 County Road in New London, NH. American Heart Association classes. www.newlondonhospital.org/events/courses_classes_schedule or (603) 526-5501.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center- Women’s Health Resource Center
First Aid: March 17, 9:00 am-1:00 pm. $55. Heartsaver Adult, Child & Infant CPR Certification: March 21 or April 19, 6:00-9:00 pm. $55. On the Mall (9 Hanover Street) in Lebanon, NH. American Heart Association classes. Scholarships available. http://patients.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/womens_resource_ctr/all_whrc_classes.html or (603) 650-2600.

You may also find a class by phoning your local fire station or ambulance service - many times they have trained staff willing to teach CPR and/or first aid - or your community recreation department.

VT Basic Specialized Child Care Services Training
Specialized Child Care Services (SCCS) encompasses VT subsidized child care for children eligible under one of the following service needs: 1) Protective Services - for a child who has been a victim of abuse or neglect and child care is part of a plan to support the child, thus reducing the risk of future abuse/neglect; 2) Family Support - for a child in a family experiencing significant stress where child care is part of a larger family plan to address specific issues; 3) Special Need - for a child in child care with a special physical or developmental need.

Providers must attend a 6-hour Basic SCCS Training prior to signing the "Provider Agreement, Part 3" and being granted SCCS status enabling them to care for children with a SCCS need. Basic SCCS training is offered annually in the fall through the Child Care Project. Other upcoming options includes:

March 3, 8:30 am-3:30 pm in Newport, VT. Call Ines Abdelnour at (802) 334-4072 to register.

March 3, 8:30 am-3:30 pm in Lyndon, VT. Call (802) 748-1992 to register.

March 5 & 12, 6:00-9:00 pm in St. Albans, VT. Call Michelle Trayah at (802) 393-6599 to register.

April 2 & 4, 6:00-9:00 pm in Bennington, VT. Call Sharron Harrington at (802) 447-6938 to register. ($10)

April 10 & 17, 6:00-9:00 pm in Rutland, VT. Call Rosie Piontek at (802) 747-0033 to register. ($10 fee)

VT Essential Maintenance Practices for the Stabilization of Lead Paint
Owners of child care facilities (including family child care homes) built before 1978 are required to attend this training once and perform lead paint stabilization procedures annually. To reserve a seat at one of the following VT Department of Health approved FREE Essential Maintenance Practices trainings, call (800) 290-0527. For more info, visit LeadSafeVermont at www.leadsafevermont.org/html/landlords.html.

March 1 from 5:00-9:00 pm at City Hall in Burlington, VT.

March 20 from 5:00-9:00 pm at Howard Dean Education Center in Springfield, VT.
7th Annual Vermont Jump$ tart Conference
This year’s VT Jump$ tart Conference, titled “Common Sense- a Personal Finance Conference for Teachers and Parents” will be held on March 15 from 8:15 am-3:15 pm at the Sheraton Hotel in South Burlington, VT. For $35 you will be able to take three workshops of your choice, receive five hours of continuing education credit, have a delicious lunch and best of all, hear keynote speaker Murray Banks. The VT Jump$ tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization with a number of individuals, organizations and businesses who have joined together to improve the personal financial literacy of VT’s youth. The goal of this conference is to help teachers and parents gain confidence in their own financial knowledge and skills. Visit http://gmunitedway.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/2012-jumpstart-conf-brochure.pdf for more information.

Building Blocks for Literacy®
This 3-credit undergraduate course gives early childhood professionals research-based strategies to develop important early literacy skills essential for children learning to read. Based on recommendations from the National Research Council and the outcomes of the 2008 National Early Literacy Panel, the Stern Center’s Building Blocks course includes theoretical information, concrete strategies and practical activities to support professionals as they build the emergent literacy skills of three- to five-year-olds.

The course will meet on March 15, 22 and 29, April 5, 12 and 26, May 3 and 10 from 5:30-8:30 pm at Kinney Pike in White River Junction, VT. Cost is $525 for the course. Participants have the choice of receiving 45 hours of professional development or 3 undergraduate college credits through Union Institute and University for an additional $390. Scholarships are available (funded through the A.D. Henderson Foundation) for early care and education providers working in VT registered family child care homes or licensed center programs. Contact Brenda Buzzell at bbuzzell@sterncenter.org for more information or visit www.sterncenter.org/news-events/calendar/details?event_id=859.

MassAEYC Spring Conference
“Children: Our Link to the Future” is the title of the annual MA Association for the Education of Young Children Spring Conference planned for March 16-17 at the Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center in Westford, MA. Keynote speakers, Dr. Diane Craft and Vincent (Paul V. Nunes), will combine their knowledge of music and physical activity to help us develop strategies to deal with the childhood obesity epidemic. Fees vary based on membership and desired attendance. All registration must be done online. Visit www.massaeyc.com/events.html for more information, including a full conference brochure, and to register. With questions, contact the MassAEYC office at ail us at massaeyc@yahoo.com or (978) 654-6053.

Day of Training - Empowering Children and Caregivers to Play, Explore and Discover
Sponsored in collaboration by Easter Seals NH Manchester, Easter Seals NH Bow and Keene Child Care Resource and Referral, national author and speaker Jeff Johnson will present, "Finding Your Smile Again" and "Babies in the Rain" on March 24 from 8:30 am-3:15 pm at St. Paul's School in Concord, NH. Cost is $55 and includes a light morning snack and lunch. Contact Maureen or Alexandra at (800) 870-8728 for more information or to register.

20th Annual VT Kindergarten Conference
The VT Department of Education and the Early Childhood PreK-3 Program at the University of Vermont invite all to participate in the 20th annual Kindergarten Conference on March 30 at the Hilton Hotel in Burlington, VT. As one of the founders of the VT Kindergarten Conference, Jim Squires will present the keynote: “Great Moments in Kindergarten.” Conference brochure and online registration are at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html#kid_.com. For more information, contact Shirley Rawson at shirley.rawson@state.vt.us or (802) 828-5128.

2012 VT Sexual Violence Summit: Hope for the Future
Our House of Central VT, Inc. is offering this day-long conference on April 11 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee VT. The summit will explore the topic of sexual violence; 15 different workshops will examine current best
practices when working with victims of sexual violence, as well as, prevention strategies, and what the future holds for serving victims and survivors in Vermont more effectively. Continuing Education Credits will be provided. Law enforcement, advocates, child protection workers, clinicians, educators and community members are all welcome. Cost is $75. Visit http://2012svsummit.eventbrite.com to register (due by April 1). Contact Will Roberts at willr@ourhouse-vt.org or (802) 476-8825 or Kerrie Greig at kerrieg@ourhouse-vt.org or (802) 476-8825 for more information.

18th Annual NHAECY Spring Conference

April 14-15 are the dates of this year’s “Hand in Hand: Together We’re Better” annual NH Association for the Education of Young Children Spring Conference to be held at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, NH. Dan Hodgins and Jeanine Fitzgerald are featured keynote speakers. Fees vary based on membership and desired attendance. Visit www.nhaecyc.org for more information, including a full conference brochure, and to register. With questions, email springconference@nhaecyc.org or call (888) 225-4884.

Environment Rating Scale Assessors Training

For early care and education professionals interested in becoming independent assessors trained in the Environment Rating Scale (ERS), the VT Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) is sponsoring training April 16-18, provided by the author of ERS, Thelma Harmes and her team in South Burlington, VT at the Holiday Inn. Free of charge, this training is funded through the VT Child Development Division. A limited number of spaces are available for people who are interested in participating in one full day of ERS training followed by two full days of reliability training using the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale. People who participate in the training will have committed to attending the entire three days, and providing a certain number of assessments for STARS. STARS assessors receive a stipend for each assessment completed. Special overnight rates are available at the Holiday Inn for the duration of the training. For additional information and to request an application to participate, email stars@mjccvt.org or call (802) 398-2037.

NH Child Care Resource & Referral Network Statewide Conference

Save the date - May 19 - for a day of advanced early childhood professional development. You are invited to spend the day with Scott Noyes or Kathy Sosny who will be presenting, “Putting the Pieces Together: Connecting Theory & Practice” at the Inter-Lakes High School in Meredith NH. For more information contact Cathy at Family School Connections, cparadis@claremont.k12.nh.us or (877) 212-7267.

Local College ECE Courses: Evenings & Online

Community College of Vermont
Upper Valley campus, 145 Billings Farm Road, Wilder, VT
(802) 295-8822 • www.ccv.edu

Spring semester in session through May 4.
Summer semester runs May 29-August 17.

River Valley Community College
1 College Drive, Claremont, NH
(603) 542-7744 x411 • www.rivervalley.edu

Spring semester in session through May 10.
Summer semester runs May 29-August 17.

Granite State College
24 Airport Road, West Lebanon, NH
27 Pleasant Street, Claremont, NH
(603) 542-3841 • www.granite.edu

Winter term in session through March 30.
Spring term runs April 7-June 29; register now.
(All 4-credit courses)

Online:
• EDU 510 Foundations of Education
• EDU 550 Foundations of Early Childhood Educ.
• EDU 553 Creative Arts in Early Childhood Educ.
• EDU 600 Math & Science in Early Childhood Educ.
• ENG 555 Children’s Literature
• PSY 508 Child Development
Local ECE Professional Support Networks

**Upper Valley Child Care Association**

*For:* All Upper Valley child care center directors, administrators, family child care providers and early childhood professionals from both NH and VT

*Meets:* 2nd Tuesday of each month, 1:00-3:00 pm at Franklin Pierce University in West Lebanon, NH

*Upcoming presentations:*  
- Marcy Meyer and Julie McConnell from the NH Community Loan Fund will speak about the *Individual Development Account Program* at March 13 meeting

*For more information, contact:* Jeff Robbins at Dartmouth College Child Care Center, (603) 646-6610 or jeff.robbins@dartmouth.edu

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**Central Vermont Early Care & Education Network**

*For:* All child care providers around Braintree, Brookfield, Randolph, Bethel, Royalton, Chelsea, Corinth and Tunbridge

*Meets:* 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30 pm at various locations around the Randolph, VT area

*For more information, contact:* Pam White at (802) 728-9587 or pld2plw@comcast.net

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**Connections**

*For:* All Orange County, VT early educators and child care providers, home- and center-based

*Meets:* 1st Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8:30 pm at Bradford Elementary School in Bradford, VT

*Upcoming training:*  
- Jackie Sprague on *anti-bias behaviors* at March 6 meeting. For more information and to sign up, contact Meri Saladino at (802) 222-4236.

*For more information, contact:* Meri Saladino at (802) 222-4236 or n.whitevt@gmail.com

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**VT Center for Afterschool Excellence Regional Group**

*For:* All people working in Orange/Northern Windsor afterschool programs, including community-based organizations, school-based programs and family child care homes

*Meeting:* Next meeting date(s) to be determined. Visit http://vtafterschool.wordpress.com for details.

*For more information, contact:* Dana Anderson at (802) 767-4632 x3140 or daanderson@wnwsu.org

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**Free Resources for NH Child Care Providers**

Are you a NH child care provider… frustrated by children who bite; annoyed by children who hit, push or bully other children; upset by children who swear or use offensive behaviors; confused by children who don’t fit in; discouraged by strategies that just aren’t working? Help is just a phone call away… call the Preschool Technical Assistance Network (PTAN) toll-free at (888) 584-8200.

PTAN’s *Child Care Inclusion Program* is committed to helping child care programs throughout NH, family- and center-based, work successfully with young children with challenging behaviors and other special needs. PTAN’s free services, available to all NH child care providers, include phone consultation in the privacy of your program; email updates; on-site training and consultation from experts in your region. Funded by Child Development Bureau, Division for Children, Youth and Families, NH DHHS. For more info, visit http://ptan.seresc.net.
Notes of Interest

**Congratulations**
Kudos to the following providers for their impressive achievements and dedication to the field of early care and education. Thank you and keep up the excellent work!

- **Jodi Mohn**, Babble-On Day Care, White River Junction, VT: Northern Lights Career Development Center Level II certificate
- **Jennifer Hamblin**, 4 Corner’s Children Center, Hartland 4 Corners, VT: Northern Lights Career Development Center Level III-A certificate
- **Sheila Bedi**, Creative Spirit Children Center, West Fairlee, VT: Northern Lights Career Development Center Level III-B certificate

**VT STARS Support Project**
Thanks to a grant from the VT Children’s Trust Fund, the Orange County Parent Child Center (OCPCC) is offering a comprehensive assistance project for VT registered family home providers and licensed early childhood centers and afterschool programs interested in beginning the STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System) process or in pursuing higher recognition status.

STARS is VT’s quality recognition system for child care, preschool and afterschool programs. Programs that participate in STARS are stepping ahead - going above and beyond state regulations. Only 24% of early childhood programs in Orange County hold a current STARS quality rating. Understanding how difficult it can be for programs and their staff to access the resources needed to implement a quality rating and improvement process and the subsequent steps associated with it, OCPCC wants to help and hopes to close that gap. To learn more, visit www.orangecountypcc.org/events/stars-support-project or contact Emily Marshia at emily@orangecountypcc.org or (888) 685-2264.

**VT Online Training Survey**
Northern Lights Career Development Center (NLCDC) has been asked by the VT Child Development Division to define how online training will be approved and verified in VT’s early childhood and afterschool professional development system. Having talked to professionals in Vermont and nationally, NLCDC has created an approval process and eight draft criteria for approval of organizations that offer online training (not for college credit - they already can verify and approve on-line coursework that is for college credit). VT providers are invited to visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/onlinecriteriareview to take a short survey to share your thoughts. For more information, visit http://northernlightscdc.org/2012/counting-online-training/.

**Early Childhood Day at VT the Legislature**
This 18th annual event planned for **March 14** from 9:00 am-2:30 pm at Capitol Plaza Hotel and Vermont State House in Montpelier, VT is co-hosted by Kids Are Priority One Coalition and Building Bright Futures Council, with generous support of The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children, the Turrell Fund and the A.D. Henderson Foundation. All Vermonters are invited to join early care, health and education professionals, parents and employers to meet with legislators about innovative state and community approaches for meeting the needs of infants and toddlers, through service delivery, financing and policy; share family, professional and workplace stories; and be inspired by a keynote address from the Hon. Barbara O’Brien, PhD. To learn more the event, contact Kelly Ault, ECDL Coordinator, Kids Are Priority One Coalition at kault1@earthlink.net or (802) 272-0795.

Registration fee of $27 includes breakfast, lunch and agenda activities, and is due March 5. Register now at www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1008987. If you have registration questions, contact James Woodard at ecdl@jameswoodardconsulting.com or (802) 310-2125 during business hours.

**Building Bright Futures Fund**
The Building Bright Futures Fund, created in 2002, assists new and existing child care and youth programs to expand the supply and improve the quality of care available to VT families. The Fund is a grant resource that when blended with other financing sources enables programs to start, relocate, expand or improve their
physical facility and accessibility. Administered by the VT Community Loan Fund (VCLF), the program is funded with revenue generated from the sale of specialty child care licenses plates, appropriations by the VT Legislature and contributions from the general public. Applications for the 2012 Building Bright Futures Fund Grant are being accepted through March 19 at 3:00 pm. For more information and/or an application, contact Maria Lamberti, Loan Coordinator for Child Care Programs, at maria@vclf.org or (802) 224-9141.

IDA - Matched Savings through NH Community Loan Fund

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are special, matched savings accounts that help people with limited incomes save to buy a home or car, to start or expand a business, or to pay for college or technical school.

The NH Community Loan Fund provides IDAs through a statewide network of community partner organizations. NH IDA program participants deposit between $25 and $200 each month into their IDA savings accounts – up to a maximum $2,000 – and the IDA program contributes three times that amount. Someone who has saved the maximum will end up with a total of $8,000 – their $2,000 in personal savings plus $6,000 in match. You must meet certain requirements to participate in the IDA program. You must earn some income, but have limited earnings and net worth, and be willing to attend financial trainings. For more information, contact Kerry Cook at kcook@communityloanfund.org or (603) 224-6669 x253.

Week of the Young Child

NAEYC, the National Association of the Education of Young Children, has designated April 22-28 as the 2012 Week of the Young Child (WOYC). The theme of the week is Early Years Are Learning Years®. The WOYC is held annually throughout the country to honor young children and to thank teachers and all those who make a difference in young children’s lives. It is a time to recognize the importance of early learning and early literacy and to celebrate the teachers and policies that bring early childhood education to young children. Visit www.naeyc.org/woyc for more information and suggestions for celebrating.

NH Celebration of Early Childhood & Afterschool Professionals

On April 24, from 4:30-7:00 pm in Concord, NH, the NH Child Development Bureau is celebrating the work of NH early childhood and afterschool professionals. Shannon Rudisill, Associate Director of the Office of Child Care Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will present the keynote address. The evening will include refreshments, awarding of Early Childhood and Afterschool Credentials, Mary Stuart Gile awards, Gwen and Henry Morgan awards, Strengthening Families awards and Rising Star award, plus recognition of accredited child care programs, Licensed Plus programs and Strengthening Families centers. For more information, contact Jessica Sugrue at jessica.sugrue@dhhs.state.nh.us or (603)271-4206.

Free VINS Pass Offer

Interested in taking a field trip or even a weekend outing with your own family? Thanks to funding provided by VT Starting Points, the Child Care Project has a free pass to the Vermont Institute of Natural Science’s (VINS) Nature Center located a quarter of a mile west of the Quechee Gorge at 6565 Woodstock Road (Route 4) in Quechee, VT. The pass allows entrance to one adult and up to five children over age 2 (children under age 2 are welcome, but are always free and not included in the count) for a day. Contact us at (603) 646-3233 or child.care.project@dartmouth.edu with a specific date request and we will mail or email out a pass for that day.

VINS is a nonprofit organization, whose mission is to motivate individuals and communities to care for the environment through education, research and avian wildlife rehabilitation. Their priority is making high-quality, compelling and fun environmental education programs and learning opportunities accessible to more people and communities. For more information about the Nature Center, including driving directions, visit www.vinsweb.org or call (802) 359-5000. VINS is open year round, seven days a week; seasonal hours through April 15 are 10:00 am-4:00 pm, April 16-June 17 are 10:00 am-5:00 pm.
Biting behavior in young children is a cause of concern for parents and child caregivers. Although little empirical research focuses specifically on this topic, a variety of practical resources offer some guidance to parents and caregivers.

Why do young children bite?
Literature suggests that biting may be a normal developmental phase for infants and toddlers, with virtually no long-lasting developmental significance. Once a child turns 3 years old, however, biting may indicate other behavioral problems, especially if the biting incidents are frequent. Because of the developmental nature of most biting, experts stress that biting is not something to blame on the child, parents or teachers.

Infants
For infants, developmental theorists suggest that biting is probably a form of exploration--infants use their mouths to explore because it is one of the most developed parts of their bodies. Biting in infants may also be a primitive form of communication; it is likely that the infant does not connect biting to pain experienced by others. Infants also are impulsive and lack self-control; some babies may bite simply because something is there to bite; others bite when they are excited or over-stimulated (e.g., music stimulates the infant, who then bites because s/he is so happy and excited). The literature that concludes that infants bite because they want to smell and touch objects, experiment with cause and effect, or relieve teething pain, suggests offering infants who are teething chew toys, frozen bagels or other safe items.

Toddlers
Theorists believe that, as with infants, biting in toddlers between 12 and 36 months old is a form of communication (i.e., to communicate frustration while learning social, language and self-control skills). Toddlers seldom plan ahead, but rather see and act on what they are experiencing at the moment. Toddlers do not have the language necessary to control a situation, or their attempts at communication are not understood or respected. Biting becomes a powerful way to communicate with and control others and the environment. Biting demonstrates autonomy and is a quick way to get a toy or attention. Many toddlers display extreme ranges of emotions, both happy and sad, and they lack labels for communicating these emotions. Too many challenges (from activities that are too difficult), demands, wants and obstacles can anger and frustrate toddlers and may lead to biting. Many toddlers do not yet understand sharing or that touch can hurt, and they need to learn other ways to communicate besides biting.

Child caregivers have noted that toddlers may also bite when they experience a stressful event, a particularly distressing lack of routine or inadequate adult interaction. Research suggests toddlers may be more apt to bite if they have not interacted with adults for more than 5 minutes. Other toddlers may bite as a self-defense strategy, or they may simply be imitating other toddlers who bite.

Preschoolers
Occasional or rare biting from preschoolers may occur for some of the same reasons as it does for infants and toddlers--to exert control over a situation, for attention, as a self-defense strategy, or out of extreme frustration and anger. Frequent biting after a child turns 3, however, may indicate other behavior problems, because by that time many children have the communication skills necessary to relate their needs without biting. It is speculated that biting may also be caused by sensory integration dysfunction in a small number of young children, suggesting that developmental screening for preschoolers may be useful to identify children with tactile dysfunction. (These children may respond negatively to touch sensations, becoming anxious, hostile or aggressive. They may be under- or over-responsive to touch, or react negatively when others are close. Light touches from behind may be particularly distressing, leading, in some situations, to biting.)

Incidence of biting behaviors
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) estimates that 1 out of 10 toddlers/2-year-olds engages in biting behaviors. In one study of a large (224 children) early childhood center, it was determined that 347 bites occurred during the study year. Seventy-two bites were attributed to infants, 195 to toddlers, and 80 to preschoolers. The highest incidence of biting behavior occurred in September, and male toddlers initiated most episodes. No demographic characteristic predicted children who were bitten vs. those not bitten other than number of days of enrollment (newer children were more likely to be bitten).

What to do when biting occurs
No research was located for this report that evaluated different strategies for handling biting incidents, but the literature does present some practical ideas and strategies for dealing with a biting child offered by experts, child caregivers and parents.

Respond immediately
Infants may not yet understand the difference between biting a toy and biting a person, so a repeated message in an honest tone of voice that conveys pain (saying *Ouch, that hurt me!*).
can help teach infants age 4 months and older not to bite others. The literature strongly suggests that caregivers and parents not bite the child back as a punishment or to show the child how it feels to be bitten. Biting back communicates to the child that violence is acceptable. Because theorists think that biting may be related to the child’s developmental stage, punishment in general is not advised either at home or in child care. Instead, experts recommend focusing attention on the victim, shielding the victim from the biter, initiating first aid measures as necessary and consoling the victim.

Some research suggests that biters who have reached age 2 or older may benefit from assisting in the first aid process. The biter can assist the victim by demonstrating “gentle touching,” having the biter rub the victim’s arm and generally assisting with taking care of the victim to teach nurturing behavior (without letting these activities become a game). Other sources recommend that biters should be removed from the situation without dramatic movements, attention or an emotional response that could provide negative reinforcement to the biter. Parents and caregivers can tell the biter that biting is not OK, I can’t let you hurt your friends, etc. Toddlers in particular may not understand time-out, but caregivers need to make sure that the biter is not near other children until s/he has calmed down and can be redirected to other play.

**Stress communication skills**

Research suggests that emphasis be placed on teaching biters to develop and use their expressive communication skills instead of biting, so that they can learn to use words to express their feelings. Good caregivers consistently promote the child’s use of language to enhance cognitive development, and some experts believe that promoting children’s language development is also helpful to reduce biting behaviors. For example, if another child is taking a toy away from a child who has a history of biting, caregivers can teach the potential biter to say stop, mine, etc., and tell the child We don’t bite people, we bite food or It hurts when you bite. Some suggest that using positive language to tell the child to touch gently rather than don’t hit/bite can be helpful. They also suggest that caregivers can help children verbalize their feelings by saying You look angry, Peter. Tell Amy to stop pulling, you don’t like that. Caregivers and parents should try to be specific with their language. Instead of saying Stop being mean to Peter, for example, they can say Peter is angry because you are taking his truck. Experts also recommend consistently teaching the child to say no to other children rather than biting.

**Examine context**

Experts recommend that efforts be made to examine the pattern of biting incidents to determine if factors such as crowding, over-stimulation, lack of toys, lack of attention or supervision, or other factors seem to precede biting episodes. Researchers suggest that caregivers become adept at observing the child’s physical state and noticing whether factors such as new teeth or other kinds of pain on a given day seem to be associated with increased biting episodes. Caregivers might think about whether children bite when their bowels are irregular, when they are hungry or when they are sleepy. Some experts believe that emotions and stress inducers such as a new baby in the house may also be associated with an increase in biting episodes for individual children.

**Create positive physical and learning environments**

If caregivers determine that a child is biting more than once a day for more than a week, experts suggest that it is probably time to develop a plan to decrease the biting. They recommend attempting to break the cycle by varying activities and the child’s schedule. Some suggest that it may help to break up the density of the toddlers in the room to enhance program quality (one group goes outside, another stays in the room, etc.). Experts suggest tracking these changes so that there is a written record that can help to determine the context of the biting incidents and to show the results of interventions.

NAEYC suggest that attempting to maintain a consistent routine, developing and maintaining rituals, and finding effective ways of calming children after energetic activity or during transition times (using calming music, relaxed/calming physical contact, etc.) may serve to relieve the conditions that lead to biting episodes. It also recommends avoiding grouping biters and previous victims together to the extent possible.

Several experts suggest that caregivers examine the center environment and try to minimize congestion and confusion, competition for toys and adult attention, frustration, and boredom. Young children do better in small groups, according to these experts, so spreading out activities and staff may help reduce undesirable behaviors. They also suggest the following strategies for caregivers:

- Be aware of the children’s favorite toys and educational materials and duplicate these (because sharing is not always in the toddler’s behavioral repertoire!).
- Provide a variety of options and motor/sensory choices (e.g., make the toys and climbing structures challenging but not so frustrating that the children become angry or bored). Adjust the schedule so that the children eat and nap when they are beginning to get hungry and tired rather when these conditions become extreme.
- Find ways to strengthen the sense of security/stability in the environment.
- Maintain a consistent routine that minimizes surprises.
- Ensure prime times with the child’s favorite primary caregiver.
- Create warm/cozy places to be.
- Avoid unnecessary staffing changes.
- Develop/maintain group rituals.

Other environmental factors to consider include: creating a balance of open and closed spaces so that the children may move about freely but also feel protected and not feel overwhelmed; keeping counters and shelves low so that the children are always kept in sight; carefully choosing colors
Caregivers need to understand why children bite and the range of developmental issues that arise when toddlers are in group care. They should understand that very young children really are not developmentally ready to share, and that toddlers communicate physically before they are ready to use language. Because their social conscience and expressive communication skills are limited, toddlers may tend to shove, push and bite. Properly trained caregivers will be able to engage in positive guidance to show the children in their care how to play safely and to be considerate of others. Caregivers also must become adept at mediating disputes. They should anticipate problem situations and stay alert. If a particular child has difficulty in transitions, for example, the caregiver should stay close to the child and praise positive behavior, especially for children who bite. Caregivers can teach children age-appropriate ways to control themselves, which will encourage confidence and serve to guide children who bite toward self-control and away from biting. NAEYC suggests that the key to successful management of biting is understanding—for kids and adults alike. Staff need to recognize that biting is as normal and natural as toileting and tantrums, yet accept their responsibility to provide and maintain a safe environment.

Educate caregivers

When a rash of biting incidents occurs in a center, the following steps should be taken:

- Meet with the director and room staff.
- Chart every occurrence and indicate location, time, participant behaviors, etc.
- Evaluate the immediate staff response to ensure appropriateness (comforting bitten child and treating injury, providing a cool, firm disapproving response to the biter that does not inadvertently reinforce the behavior).
- Determine the context of the biting incidents: analyze, chart and profile.
- Shadow children who have a biting tendency—anticipate biting situations and teach non-biting responses, adapting the program as necessary. Staff might shadow a severe biter for 2 weeks to prevent the behavior, because there is some evidence that if staff can prevent biting during this time period, the behavior will dissipate.
- Shadow children who tend to be bitten and anticipate potential biting situations; teach children who get bitten responses that will minimize the chance of their becoming victims.
- Consider early transition to another room for children who bite frequently, because the older children are better able to defend themselves.
- Extreme biting epidemics may require extra help from a consultant, parent educator or counselor, especially if the behavior occurs daily or persists.

Plan for biting epidemics

When a rash of biting incidents occurs in a center, the following steps should be taken:

- Meet with the director and room staff.
- Chart every occurrence and indicate location, time, participant behaviors, etc.
- Evaluate the immediate staff response to ensure appropriateness (comforting bitten child and treating injury, providing a cool, firm disapproving response to the biter that does not inadvertently reinforce the behavior).
- Determine the context of the biting incidents: analyze, chart and profile.
- Shadow children who have a biting tendency—anticipate biting situations and teach non-biting responses, adapting the program as necessary. Staff might shadow a severe biter for 2 weeks to prevent the behavior, because there is some evidence that if staff can prevent biting during this time period, the behavior will dissipate.
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- Consider early transition to another room for children who bite frequently, because the older children are better able to defend themselves.
- Extreme biting epidemics may require extra help from a consultant, parent educator or counselor, especially if the behavior occurs daily or persists.

Parent communication

Much of the literature that is focused on issues related to biting also addresses communicating with and involving parents. Most experts stress confidentiality; they recommend that teachers or directors NOT reveal the identity of the child who is biting to parents of other children. Instead, experts suggest that child caregivers assure the parents that they are aware of the problem and are working toward solutions, but that all children are capable of having problems with biting. Parents should know that biting is a normal occurrence for many children in group care situations, particularly when they are in the toddler stage. It is also recommended that parents be apprised of the possibility of biting incidents occurring in child care facilities during the initial intake process, or when infants are making the transition into the toddler room.

Apologizing to family members is not an effective strategy, because an apology implies that there is a foolproof way to prevent the incidents. Instead, relate to the parents what is being done to insure the safety of all of the children. And focus on what first aid treatments are used when incidents occur and what else is being done for children who are bitten.

NAEYC recommends that caregivers try to determine whether biting is occurring at home. Breaking the biting pattern will be difficult in an early childhood center if biting is allowed to occur at home without the same formal interventions being applied at the center. Teach parents to offer choices so that the child is given power and control at least a few times a day. Caregivers can keep parents informed about their child’s favorite toy, what happened in the school day, etc. Overall, experts note that it is essential to maintain positive relationships with parents during biting outbreaks, to keep parents informed of the strategies being employed, to empathize with parents of both biters and victims regarding their feelings of helplessness related to the safety of their children, and to communicate to parents the staff training and intervention efforts that are occurring to remedy the problem.

Conclusion

Understanding the developmental factors that contribute to biting behavior can help parents and caregivers make environmental or programmatic changes as necessary to minimize the behavior; caregivers need to provide accurate information to parents. Guidance to children who bite should be provided with the goal of helping children develop inner control of their feelings and actions. A quick and consistent response at home and in the center can help children who bite learn to express their feelings in words so that they can become better able to control their behavior.

Source: http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html (adapted version)
Web Resources on Biting (from http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html)
- Play Right—Don’t Bite! http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/biting.htm
- Biting in the Child Care Setting http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/healthandsafety/bitingen060604_adr.pdf
- Biting Must Never Be Permitted http://www.kidsgrowth.com/resources/articledetail.cfm?id=244

- Facts for Families: Fighting and Biting http://aacap.org/page.ww?name=Fighting+and+Biting&section=Facts+for+Families
- Handling Challenging Behaviors in Child Care: Aggression and Anger in Young Children http://illinoisearlylearning.org/chat/hemmeter/trans.htm

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**Handout #1**
Collecting Information About Biting Incidences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of incident</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biter(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victim(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location in the classroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While playing with what toys/materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who else was near?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was the teacher doing?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of teacher in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention or goal of biting, if apparent</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extenuating circumstances, such as substitute teacher, ill child, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Handout #1 (continued)**

Teacher’s response to the situation:

Parent’s response to the situation:

Biting child’s response to the situation:

Bitten child’s response to the situation:

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Bake a March Lion and a Lamb

On one level, bread dough is a lot like play dough. Both are soft and pliable, and both can be shaped, pulled, twisted and squished into monsters and animals. But unlike play dough, bread dough fills your house (or center) with wonderful smells as it’s baking—and produces fresh warm loaves perfect for spreading with butter. It’s no wonder baking bread with kids is always a roaring success, especially when the weather is blustery. Explain how March comes in with stormy weather, like a lion, and goes out with mild, warm days, like a lamb while the kids craft a March lion and lamb using a garlic press to make the fierce mane and woolly fleece.

Preparing the Dough

**Ingredients**

1 1/4-oz. package yeast  
1/2 cup lukewarm water  
1 teaspoon plus 1/4 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons butter  
1 1/2 cups milk  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 cups whole wheat flour  
3 1/2 to 4 cups all-purpose flour  
1 egg (for egg wash)  
Poppy seeds  
Raisins

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve the yeast in the lukewarm water. Stir in 1 teaspoon of the sugar and let it sit for 5 minutes, or until bubbles begin to form. In a saucepan, melt the butter. Add the milk and heat until just warm. Pour this mixture into the yeast mixture along with the remaining sugar and the salt. Next, add both flours, 1 cup at a time, until the dough feels stiff.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 10 minutes, or until smooth and elastic. Place the dough in a buttered bowl, cover and let rise until doubled in bulk, about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Once the dough has risen, punch it down.

_TIP_: Kids love the process of kneading. Ask them to press the dough with their palms, fold it back and repeat. Explain that kneading develops the gluten in the flour, a protein substance that makes the dough stretch and produces a soft-textured bread.

Making the Lion

To make the lion, break off a large clump of the dough and shape it into the body. Place it on a greased baking sheet. Next, use smaller pieces of dough to shape the head, legs (with the hind leg slightly bent) and a long, thin tail. Place a small ball of dough in a garlic press and squeeze out strands for the mane and tail tuft. Finally, add a raisin eye.

Making the Lamb

To make the lamb, shape another large clump of dough into an oval for the body. Place it on a separate greased baking sheet. Add a small head with two ears, spindly legs and a fluffy tail. Cover the legs and part of the face with poppy seeds. Finally, squeeze dough through a garlic press for the lamb’s wool and pile it all over the lamb’s body. Add a raisin eye.

_TIP_: If you have any dough left over, let the kids shape it into other furry creatures.

Baking the Bread

Cover the animals with plastic wrap and let them rise until doubled in bulk. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Beat the egg with 1 tablespoon of water to create an egg wash, then use a pastry brush to “paint” it on the lion and lamb, being careful not to flatten the animals’ features in the process.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the bread sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom. Serve warm with butter and jam. Makes 2 to 4 lions or lambs, depending on their size.

Child Care Project Newsletter
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