

INSIDE

CAYC

WELCOME

Wayne Eastman
Editor, Inside CAYC

Welcome to Inside CAYC's new look. CAYC is a national organization specifically concerned with the well-being of children. We hope that our newsletter's new format will reflect our organization's goal. We plan to include columns that are informative and at times 'hard hitting'.

This and future issues of newsletter will include the following columns: Perspective - a commentary on an area of interest germane to all CAYC members; Provincial Reflections - a provincial issue with a national interest; Student's View - an opportunity for post-secondary students to express their opinions; From Coast to Coast - a brief update of provincial happenings; Calendar of Events - a list of upcoming conferences; and Book/Toy/Software Review - each issue will review either a new book, toy or software package.

Readers will notice that most of the columns in this edition are written by CAYC directors. However, for future issues CAYC members are invited to send submissions to the editor for consideration.

The health of care givers is crucial to the well-being of children. Consequently, you will find a copy of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Health Active Living in your mail-out.

If you have any comments or concerns germane to Inside CAYC, please address this correspondence to:

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P E R S P E C T I V E -
Encouraging Creativity
Elizabeth Munroe
President, CAYC

A colleague of mine, who has taught from grade 2 to grade 12, recently made the comment that from her observations the longer children are in school the fewer opportunities they have to be creative. "And the depressing aspect is, creativity is probably one of the most important traits that we should be encouraging in our students."

Creativity does not only refer to the ability to create unique pieces of art. Creativity refers to the process of bringing an original idea into existence. This might be an idea in math, science, storytelling, conflict resolution - even an improvement on a recipe, as well as an innovative piece of music or a fabulous clay sculpture. On a personal level, a community level, and a global level, the need for creative, original ideas is ongoing. In the present and in the future, as our planet is more and more stressed by human existence, we need creative solutions to both common and as yet unforeseen problems. As Howard Gardner suggests, a major goal in our education system should be to support the development of people with "What if? What else?" approach to issues.

CAYC believes that all those who live and work with young children should encourage the development of

creativity. How might this be accomplished when many of us are in environments where the mandated curriculum and institutional expectations make it a challenge to "loosen up"? Others of us are in environments where we have much more personal say in the program that we offer to children, but we still get caught up in a "teacher-directed" approach! For all of us, a review of the factors that are thought to encourage creativity might be the boost we need to make some changes so that the children in our classes have opportunities to develop and express original ideas. As you work with children this year, I encourage you (as I remind myself) to consider the following:

- ★ Creativity flourishes in low-risk classroom environments. Creativity does not flourish under the tensions of competition, evaluation, or rewards.
- ★ Creativity flourishes when children have the freedom to explore ideas and materials. This requires time, the invitation to choose materials, the opportunity to fail and try again and to mess around without producing a finished product.
- ★ Creativity flourishes when the materials offered are open-ended (offering many possibilities) rather than close-ended (there is only one way to use the material or to complete the task)
- ★ Creativity flourishes in conversations when there are opportunities for divergent thinking (many possible answers) rather than convergent thinking (limited correct responses).
- ★ Creativity flourishes when children are encouraged to express their ideas through a variety of media.

- ★ Creativity flourishes when children are encouraged to problem-solve and their solutions are respected and acted upon by the adults in their environment.

Here's wishing you a wonderful, surprise-filled year with your students!

PROVINCIAL REFLECTIONS - The 'New' Ontario Curriculum for Kindergarten Una Villiers Provincial Director, Ontario

I was very disappointed with the Ministry of Education and Training's recently released Kindergarten Program Policy. I find it does not give recognition to the range of abilities of young children or respect the best practices of Ontario kindergarten teachers. Many Boards of Education across the province (including the Toronto Board of Education) have already developed more inclusive, comprehensive guidelines which it appears, the Ministry of Education and Training has elected to ignore. The new policy is minimal at best and erosive at its worst.

Many of the examples provided for the expectations for five-year olds are not inclusive and the expectations are unrealistic given the experiential backgrounds of the children of Ontario. For example, children are expected to:

- Investigate and describe familiar geographic features in their area - e.g. ponds, fields, woods, lakes. Are the examples pertinent to urban children?
- Describe some aspects of visual art forms from a variety of cultures - e.g. European paintings, Inuit sculptures and African masks. Is this a shallow attempt to anti-racist education?
- Use pictures, sculptures, and collages to represent ideas - e.g. select pictures of happy faces for a

collage. How does this relate and honor the developmental stages of children's picture making?

- Use language patterns (e.g. word order) and sound patterns (e.g. rhyme) to identify words and to predict the next word. Is this realistic given the varied linguistic backgrounds of many of the children of Ontario?

In our view an important opportunity has been lost! These minimal examples diminish the curriculum, ignore current research and fail to validate the best practices of kindergarten teachers in Ontario. It would have been wonderful for the Ministry to take a stand on such critical issues as class size, educational assistants, teacher training, appropriate equipment and acceptable teaching practice. Why did they choose to ignore and fail to recognize the importance of current practice based on internationally accepted research? We would have highlighted the following:

- Science and Technology: A Structures Program - developed by Dr. Otto Weininger in collaboration with Toronto teachers
- Early Literacy research - the work of Donald Graves, Brian Cambourne
- Multiple Intelligence research - Howard Gardner
- What Makes Exemplary Kindergarten Programs Effective? Dr. Carl Corter
- Anti Bias Curriculum Guidelines
- The Importance of Early Brain Development in Young Children - Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Dan Offord
- Centrality of the Arts - The Reggio Emilia Approach.

Sadly, this document has forgotten about the unique nature of the young child and his or her joy in learning. What happened to the curiosity, imagination, creativity and problem solving that are so intrinsic to the life of the young child? The new document also fails to recognize the time-honored work of kindergarten leaders of the past. Piaget, Bruner, Montessori, Alice Yardley are but a few.

Such concepts as the importance of play are given superficial mention by

the Ministry. Play, the cornerstone of young children's learning, is only mentioned in three short paragraphs. Where is the validation for such critical learning experiences as sand and water, building, writing and drawing, music and dramatic play? Other important experiences such as exposure to quality literature, music and movement are also given little priority. It is our fear that this isolated skills and knowledge based document might give license for individuals to practice reductionism learning through the exclusive use of such strategies as copying, stencils, colouring sheets, dictated stories, role learning, and pre-cut art work prepared by adults for the children to merely decorate.

My colleagues and I feel confident that, despite these minimal expectations, excellent teachers will continue to provide richer more authentic experiences for their children, even though the Ministry appears to expect much less in terms of program. The ministry has assured the public that this policy will ensure consistency across the province. How is that possible when the document, although entitled Kindergarten Program, addresses only the "Whats" and not the "Hows"?

The Ontario Government announced that this policy is the first since the nineteen forties to be introduced in the province. It is important for the tax-paying public to realize that this latest release is but one of the many policies financed, developed and subsequently shelved by all three political parties in their respective years of power.

Recently it has been noted that this government has released a report on "Readiness to Learn". Before the Premier begins to consider the readiness of young children across Ontario to learn, we would advise that he, together with concerned advocates for children like the Canadian Association for young Children (CAYC), first consider how "WE CAN MAKE SCHOOLS READY FOR ALL CHILDREN TO LEARN." A group of non-partisan individuals, with a depth of experience and with

no political agenda, would be happy to consult with the Premier regarding the complex nature of "readiness."

In conclusion, the 'new' Ontario curriculum for Kindergarten places responsibility on the shoulders of teachers and local school boards to deliver a consistent program that has yet to be defined by the government. How then does this contribute to consistency for young children across the province?

STUDENT'S VIEW - From Academics to the Real World

**Linda Chadderton
Recent Graduate
College of the North
Atlantic**

I had always loved working with children, so when I made a career change and decided to return to college to pursue an Early Childhood Education diploma no one was surprised. I did, however, have to overcome the opinions of some (usually older individuals) "that a babysitting course" was a potential waste of time - that it was all common sense anyway.

I eagerly began the fall semester of the two-year Early Childhood Education program at the College of the North Atlantic. I walked into the designated classroom and right away the female domination was evident - out of twenty-five class members only two were males.

The first semester went by quickly. I did my first fieldwork placement at a local, privately owned group daycare centre - my first taste of daycare realities.

The second semester began and, through the normal course of attrition we had lost a few classmates. We were, however, disappointed that our two male classmates didn't return.

I had the summer to recuperate and I returned to the third semester, a newlywed, with bittersweet eagerness. Once again the work load was difficult and the instructors' expectations were naturally higher.

My third field work placement was done at the College's model daycare. Here there was also the little added stress of being able to be observed at any given time by the instructors from the center's observation booth. I found the thought of being observed, and potentially criticized, somewhat unnerving because dealing with children had always come so naturally for me. How could I be doing it wrong?

By the fourth semester I was eager for the course to be finished. I knew I had already learned a lot and this semester only served to further train and prepare us for the work force.

Graduation day finally arrived and I was both surprised and elated to have won the President's Award for Academic Excellence. My two years were complete. Now it was time to put the textbook knowledge, class lectures, and training to good use. I soon learned, however, that sometimes all the training in the world can't prepare you for some of the dilemmas you must face when you're actually working.

I have now opened my own family daycare. It was in doing this that I drew on my E. C. E. training the most for the major things like the daycare layout and design, the program curriculum and so on; as well as the simpler details such as colour coding cups, plates and towels for each child.

In hindsight, am I glad I did the course? Yes, definitely. Looking back I know now that all the class lectures, resource file compiling, term papers, assignments, observation data and so on weren't requested as the attempt of the instructors to drive us students insane (as we thought from time to time). But it was to teach us, to prepare us, to make us remember - and that it did.

I know now that when you decide on a career as an Early Childhood Educator that you must be prepared to look after the whole child and not just one aspect. You start your day prepared to wipe a runny nose, mend a scraped knee (and ego, too), aid with toileting, sing songs, read books, build block towers, sail toy boats, be a good listener and, most of all, a friend..

FROM COAST TO COAST

**President's Message
Elizabeth Munroe
President, CAYC**

It's September - a time when many of us are embarking on a new season of working with and for young children. We have high aspirations of increased success in all our endeavours; we have detailed plans and goals; we have endless preparation tasks and committee meetings - and, hopefully, we also have some personal resolutions regarding our own well-being. In this regard, I hope that you find the Guide to Healthy Active Living, included with this newsletter, is useful.

As President of CAYC, I am constantly evaluating the manner in which we meet the needs of you, our members. I believe that several initiatives that we are currently working on, nationally, will be of help and support to you. For example, we are developing a second position statement on play. This new brochure will focus specifically on the value of play for school-aged children. We expect that this statement will help you to justify and explain your programming decisions for school-aged children. Please remember that, as with the first position statement that we published on the value of play, multiple copies of the brochures are available at minimal cost.

I hope to meet many of you at our Silver Anniversary Conference in Montreal, October 15 and 16. This promises to be an exciting and

significant event in the history of CAYC. Although your provincial and national directors will be busy taking part in board meetings throughout most of the weekend, we will be attending part of the conference. Please make a point of introducing yourself to us. We want to know who you are and what your thoughts are regarding the future direction of CAYC. Also, don't miss our Annual General Meeting on Sunday, October 17!

NOVA SCOTIA

Elinor Thompson Provincial Director

We are pleased to see on our latest membership list that we have doubled our numbers in Nova Scotia. Our increase resulted chiefly from our conference held last October. We have recently distributed our 25th anniversary pins to all our members.

In August our Truro CAYC members will be taking part in several picnic gatherings of early childhood groups of that area. In October we hope to have a number of our members at the National Conference in Montreal and there we will be introducing our Year 2000 Nova Scotia director for CAYC.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Wayne Eastman Provincial Director

Summer is usually a time of hibernation for most organizations and this reality is evident with CAYC Newfoundland and Labrador. However, this hiatus is merely temporary with plans already in place for the fall. The first initiative will commence early in September when a CAYC 'orientation' session will be given to all new early childhood students in the province's public college. Furthermore, there are plans in the works for at least one fall workshop. CAYC NF members will be informed of this workshop either

through e-mail or snail mail.

Provincial members are invited to participate in a teleconference partly planned for October or November. Stay tuned for further details. Please contact me with any concerns, announcements, etc. Bye for now.

MANITOBA

Margaret Smith Provincial Director

Phones have been ringing and meetings are being held to plan the Fall slate of workshops, although these have not been finalized at the time of printing. Several members who have not to date been as active have taken a keen interest in this process, so it looks like we shall have a good line-up. Please watch your bulletin boards and the Fall newsletter for further details.

The letter-writing campaign in the Spring got stalled due to the Federal Government's announcements on monies to families in poverty. The letters sent by your director to various persons in governmental positions have received replies with both positive and negative results. We shall keep you posted with the progress of these and other involvements in the campaign against child poverty.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Pam Whitty Provincial Director

The UNB Parenting for a Literate Community - which directly and indirectly involved many members of the New Brunswick chapter of the CAYC - has mailed out 150 packages of its materials to Atlantic Area Family Resource Centres and Early Intervention Centres in New Brunswick. These materials were developed as part of a Health Canada project and are intended for use in literacy programmes for preschool children and their parents. Here is our website address if you would like further information on how

we developed the project, its aims, principles and the resulting materials and training program.

[Http://cspace.unb.ca/edfac/ecc/plc](http://cspace.unb.ca/edfac/ecc/plc)

In terms of provincial connections, in the past few months these have taken place through print. Mollie Fry, the previous NB director, has taken on the task of keeping NB members informed on Poverty 2000 and the National Campaign to eradicate child poverty. I have sent out a brief report on the Regina meeting, the October conference and enclosures on the potential upcoming "Children's Budget." Lastly, the most recent newsletter which is put out by the UNB Early childhood Centre (all of us are members of the CAYC) contained a piece on the CAYC. By the end of August all NB members will be contacted in person for suggestions on how we might increase our membership - what focus our NB work might take.

ONTARIO

Una Villiers Provincial Director

CAYC Ontario is happy to announce that our spring 99 event, was both exciting and successful. Our own David Booth and Larry Swartz were a dynamic duo in their presentation entitled Young Children, Books and Their Stories. They shared their inspiring ideas in their own renowned style, complete with infectious humor and enthusiasm. Again, they delighted and ignited a committed group of CAYC Ontario advocates for young children and did so "gratus" I might add.

With the redirection of Early Childhood consultants and resources across the province, coupled with the introduction of a disappointing new province - wide Kindergarten Program Policy, these CAYC events are so important as we struggle to support and provide networking opportunities for our dedicated Early Childhood Personnel across the province.

I look forward to our fall event which is currently in the planning stages. I hope that many caring Ontarians will discover us and join our enthusiastic, committed CAYC group.

ALBERTA

Judy Wainwright Provincial Director

Alberta's first annual children's forum, October 5th and 6th in Edmonton, is an opportunity to ensure all Alberta children are safe, well-cared for, successful at learning, and healthy. Day One is for all Albertans interested in improving the lives of children. Day Two, 300 delegates will work in facilitated discussion groups to develop action steps. The result will be measurable outcomes that improve the lives of children in the next century. CAYC Alberta hopes to participate in this forum and applauds the Alberta government for inviting all interested people to attend. CAYC is busy with the final arrangements for our joint conference with AAYC "Putting the Pieces Together," September 25, 1999. We are very pleased with the response so far.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Larry Railton Provincial Director

CAYC British Columbia held a successful dance with Susan and Cameron Stuarts' group No Mean Feet. We will be planning another dance in the spring. Jenny Chapman and Sue Fraser will be presented with the Friends of Children awards at Thetis Island this September.

The membership continues to grow in British Columbia. Welcome to all new members.

SASKATCHEWAN

Mary Cronin Provincial Director

In the past few months the members of the Regina chapter of CAYC in Saskatchewan have done a lot of soul searching. Although we have been busy in advocacy work and in organizing events, our numbers continued to decline. We were very disappointed when low enrollment forced us to cancel our annual Spring Conference. Happily even the darkest cloud has had a brighter lining: we have been forced to examine our mission as an organization. We have decided to sharpen the focus of our work on behalf of children. For the present, we will highlight the preschool years. CAYC Saskatchewan will offer support and in-service to preschool teachers, especially those working in community schools.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

25th
'Putting the Pieces Together'. Sponsored by CAYC Alberta and the Alberta Association for Young Children, Mount Royal College, Calgary, Alberta.

25th
CAYC's 25TH Anniversary, Fall Coffee Party, Regina School Board Office.

OCTOBER

1st - 3rd
Mother and Education Issues and Directions for Maternal Pedagogy, Brock University, St. Catherine's, Ontario

15th - 16th
CAYC National 25th Anniversary Conference, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

NOVEMBER

10th - 13th
The annual conference of The National Association for the Education of Young Children, New Orleans.

20th
National Child Day: celebrate children, families and teachers.

25th - 27th
'Linking Research to Practice - Second Canadian Forum' hosted by the Canadian Child Care Federation, Ottawa, Ontario.

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Pam Whitty

Sometimes, I Can Be Anything: Power, Gender and Identity in a Primary Classroom by Karen Gallas. (Teacher's College Press, 1997)

Karen Gallas is a primary one-two teacher and researcher in the Boston area. She is perhaps best known in early childhood circles for an earlier book *The Languages of Learning: How Children Talk, Write, Dance, Draw and Sing Their Understanding of the World* (1994). In this more recent book *Sometimes I Can Be Anything*, Gallas examines relationships of power, gender and identity as they are played out amongst the six and seven year old children she teaches. She takes us into her classroom and makes us privy to her mindful observations. She knows how deeply embedded children are in the social worlds they bring to school, and in this book Gallas takes on Anne Haas Dyson's notions of permeable curriculum and makes gender the focal lens. We go with her into the world of her children - Michael and Mollie, Germaine and Charles being just a few of the children with whom Gallas shared two years of classroom living.

Gallas examines gender as a form of performance. In her text she plays with the metaphor of performance - literally and metaphorically. She elaborates upon classroom incidents where some boys claim the public space and some girls claim the

private as sources of power. However, she also works at getting beneath these stereotypic uses of power by the different sexes. And she takes great care to write to the interrelatedness of race, gender and class.

In her closing chapter "Dreamin' of How it could Be," Gallas demonstrates how the scripting of plays and their subsequent performance by the children for their families and friends provides children with opportunities to create and try on different roles. Although the idea of scripting plays is not new in the realm of early childhood, Gallas does provide examples and theorizes about scripting, performance and gender with the insights of a classroom researcher.

"As their teacher, I marveled that they had traveled beyond the "banking" approach to power that I spoke of in Chapter Three, where every social manoeuver is oriented towards dominance of the classroom discourse toward a communal or affiliative kind of power where their goal was to break down their separation from the other by using their own foibles as vehicles. These performances came to represent more than a different kind of bid for notoriety; they were characterized by a desire to experiment with the point of view of the other. Boys are made into girls, girls become boys; small forays are made into unscripted terrain where the "roles" of girls and boys are called into question." (P. 131)

Besides being a careful observer of children, Gallas is a careful observer of self. She examines her actions and non-actions as a teacher in relation to aspects of race, class and gender. There were many times when I did not agree with her. I could feel the discomfort in my body when my teacher-self wanted to step into a situation that Gallas's researcher self allowed to unfold. Gallas makes herself vulnerable on the page and creates lots of room for critical conversations between herself and

the reader. And for me that is the beauty of her writing. She invites us into her classroom and through the power of her written works, we have an inside view of the struggles and triumphs of one teacher and the children with whom she spends two years.

I found myself thinking about the curricular how and what of respecting children and the cultured identities they bring to us. I thought about the pedagogical power of looping - staying with children two years in a row. I thought about the powerful insights that teacher-researchers bring to the educational field. And finally Gallas reminded me of our responsibility to open up the teaching

profession so that as a profession we include teachers who are representative of all of our children. Gallas' work is always interesting. Her ethnographic approach as a teacher-researcher is one that makes her work readable, informative and accessible. The teachers I work with here at the University of New Brunswick - at both the undergraduate and graduate level - appreciate Gallas's careful observations and interpretations of children's learning. We don't always with her or each other, for that matter, but, what a gift she offers us - she connects us directly to children and she makes us think and re-think our responsibilities to the children, ourselves and the profession.

CAYC NATIONAL 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec

OCTOBER 15TH AND 16TH, 1999

CELEBRATING ALL YOUNG CHILDREN and their ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

***Some of the topics to be covered will be
Reggio Emilia Approach, Projects, Documentation, Music, Art,
Kindergarten Science,
Active Living for Young Children***

Conference will have speakers coming from across Canada and the United States. Among them are Dr. David Booth, U of Toronto, Dr. Dale and Dr. Jeanne Goldhaber of U of Vermont, Dr. Sylvia Chard of U of Alberta, staff from Loyalist College, Belleville, members of CAYC Board of Directors such as Judy Wainwright of Alberta, Dr. Mary Cronin of Saskatchewan, Dr. Wayne Eastman of Newfoundland, just to name a few, and a host of others. Barbara Coloroso, international speaker and author, will be the keynote speaker for the conference.

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NOTE:

The Annual General meeting of CAYC will be held Sunday, October 17 at St. Andrew's School, 151 Hillside, Westmount, Quebec at 10 a.m.