



KEEPING IN TOUCH

Childminding Monitoring Advisory and Support Project

Volume 2 Issue 3

Parent Meetings that Work for Parents!

At the LINC Childminding conference held last November in Toronto, supervisors from around the province participated in a brainstorming session to share experiences and ideas. One of the discussion topics was Planning Effective Parent Meetings.

It was agreed that parent meetings can often be difficult because of differing language levels and languages spoken. Parents can often be reluctant to attend meetings because it takes away from their time in the adult classroom and they want to

focus on learning English which is a key to helping their family move ahead.

Given the challenges why are parent meetings important or necessary?

LINC programs have an important role to play with newcomer parents. We are often the first source of information about the neighborhood, the community, and being a parent in Canada. As a result, we have a unique opportunity to provide support and reassurance for our families during this time of transition.

Settling into the new community presents many challenges. Extended families are often not in Canada to offer support, and making new relationships takes time, especially with a language barrier. Parents have differing perceptions on caring for children and have many adjustments to make to feel comfortable in their new home.

Parents also come with differing expectations about what our programs can and cannot offer. Many parents come having been through a myriad of changes, and al-

though the center is a reprieve of safety and warmth, it also brings with it, rules which have to be understood.



The parent meeting is a way to share information, answer questions, and open a dialogue. Not only will a parent meeting support LINC families by providing useful information, it will also build a stronger relationship between the home and the community.

10 STEPS TO PLANNING EFFECTIVE PARENT MEETINGS

With all the challenges involved how do you plan a successful parenting meeting? A rule of thumb for successful meetings is 80 percent preparation and 20 percent execution.

Try to:

1. Create an environment that feels comfortable for the parents.
2. Be clear on your objec-

tives. Why are you having a meeting and what do you want to achieve?

3. Keep the communication appropriate to the many language levels.

4. Keep the time frames reasonable and the content varied.

5. Provide information that can help families adjust in their new communities.

6. Always consult with the LINC Coordinator and if appropriate the instructors to let them know the why, where and when of the meeting.

7. Give parents time to talk to each other and to share questions and concerns.

8. Plan a time that works for the whole program.

9. Use visual aids or demonstrate your information to help you get your ideas across.

10. Always be sensitive and responsive to the diverse cultures of the families in your program!

(Thanks to the LINC Childcare Supervisors for providing these ideas!)

What's New?

LITERACY AND MOVEMENT PURCHASES

The resources you selected from the Literacy and Movement purchases is now being distributed. There are two different companies supplying the selected items so items may arrive in two or more shipments depending on your selection. The first package which includes a program planning book, some Robert Munsch and Eric Carle books should have arrived by now. If you have not received all of your selections by October 15th please call us so we can track it down.

CONFERENCE 2004 UPDATE

The conference organizers have sent out the registration packages. The theme this year is Storytelling ... *"The Stories We Bring"*. The conference organizers have put together what should be an educational and fun-filled two day experience.

Please read your packages carefully and be sure to sign up for the special session on the Reading and Parents Program. This session is mandatory and participants will leave with not only excellent program ideas but some great resources for their programs.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

We are hosting more workshops in different parts of the province. Please contact Donna Miller at the CMAS office to find out more about these workshops.

SOME INFORMATION FROM THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY! SIDS AWARENESS MONTH

October is SIDS Awareness Month. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) occurs when an otherwise healthy infant under a year old dies suddenly and unexpectedly.

While no one knows how to prevent SIDS, there are important things that you can do to reduce the risk.

The following website can help in keeping your baby safe:

www.caringforkids.cps.ca/babies/BackToSleep.htm

National Family Week October 4-10

This year's theme for National Family Week is *Healthy Families: Active Together*. Take some time to get out and get active with your family! For information about healthy active living, visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca/healthy/healthyactive.htm, and for great ideas on celebrating NFW, see www.familyservicecanada.org/nfw/2004/index_e.html.

CHICKENPOX! GET THE FACTS

Chickenpox is a common childhood infection that is usually mild in children, but can be dangerous for people in high-risk categories. It can spread very quickly and easily through the air.

Caring for Kids has several documents for parents about chickenpox.

For general information and facts about chickenpox, visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization/ChickenPoxFacts.htm.

To find out when your child should stay home from school or child care, visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization/ChickenpoxStayHome.htm

For information on the chickenpox vaccine see www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization/GettingyourShots.htm.

"KEEPING IN TOUCH"

from CMAS
17 Fairmeadow Avenue,
Ste 211
Toronto, ON, M2P 1W6

phone 416-395-5027
fax 416-395-5190
email cmas@look.ca

Who are the CMAS Consultants? This issue... Melissa Hays

Melissa Hays is our CMAS consultant working out of Ottawa and for the Ottawa programs.

She has over 20 years of experience in the childcare field. Eight of those as a Co-ordinator of LINC Childminding and prior to that as a Coordinator of NLOC.

Melissa has an Ontario Teachers Certificate and previously worked as a Kindergarten Teacher. Melissa has been with CMAS from the start up

working as a consultant for programs in both Ottawa and Toronto. She has also researched and reported on: *"Blended Programs and the Impact on LINC Childminding"* and *"Evaluation of CMAS: Year One"*.

Melissa researches and writes most articles for the Keeping In Touch put out by CMAS and contributes to the development of numerous support documents for programs.

