

Newsletter October 2002

Calendar

October

- 26 Queen's Alumni Giddy-Up Gala
- 29 Coffee Morning with Kimberly Eckert
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- 30 Halloween Party – MWF ECS Class – Parents are invited to join us in the classroom at 11:00 for a special activity. Don't forget to bring your camera.
- 31 Halloween Party – T Th ECS Class – Parents are invited to join us in the classroom at 11:00 for a special activity. Don't forget to bring your camera.
- 31 Discovery Toys "Fun Raiser" Begins

November

- 6, 7, 8 Discovery Toys Display
- 11 Remembrance Day – No School
- 12 The Prep Program's Annual General Meeting
- 15 Last day to submit Discovery Toy orders
- 23 Afternoon Workshop with Kimberly Eckert: The Emotional Journey of Parenting a Child with Special Needs 1:00 – 3:30 pm
- 30 Early Learning Secret Santa Saturday for Dads, Uncles or Grandfathers – Watch your mailbox for details.

December

- 6 Class cancelled in lieu of Secret Santa
- 7 ECS Secret Santa Saturday for Dads, Uncles or Grandfathers – Watch your mailbox for details.

19 Last Day for Tuesday/Thursday ECS before Winter Break

20 Last Day for Monday/Wednesday/Friday ECS before Winter Break

Classroom News

News from the Classroom

Welcome to the 2002-2003 ECS year at PREP! This year we are excited to have three year old and four year old programs with 10 students enrolled in each class. A big “Hello” to all new and returning students. We look forward to a fun and exciting year working with all of the children and their families.

“Getting to Know You, Getting to Know Me” was our theme for September. Several familiar songs and activities were incorporated to ensure success as the children settled back into class. We heard a growing number of little voices joining in with the old favourites, “Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes” and “The Wheels on the Bus”. The children are getting to know each others names through a variety of songs and activities. They are also learning names for basic face and body parts as we get to know more about ourselves and others. Our theme shifts to “Fall Fun and Halloween” in October. We’ve had some messy fun playing in the leaves and cooking play dough. With the second busy month of school almost over, we’re happy to see the children settling into the classroom routines. Check out the songs included with this newsletter to practice at home.

What’s Ahead in the Classroom?

Gym Time at Free House Dance Studio is new this year. Once a week the children will be working on their gross motor and play skills. The dance studio gives us the opportunity to crawl, run and play in a large unobstructed area. The studio has mirrors along one wall which will help with perceptual development. The studio is booked for a 9 week session.

Lines of Communication

In order to keep the lines of communication open, we encourage parents to speak to us in confidence with questions, comments (hopefully positive), suggestions and concerns. Staff members check their phone messages and e-mails on a daily basis if you are not able to speak to them in person. General questions can be directed to Kim Doig, ECS Coordinator. Specific therapy-related questions should be directed to your child’s speech language therapist or occupational therapist (OT). Barb Tien, Executive Director is also available to discuss confidential concerns with you.

Staff	Extension	e-mail
Kim Doig – ECS Coordinator	117	kim@prepprog.org

Lorraine Sykes- SLP	123	lorraine@prepprog.org
Lyda Helme – SLP	116	lyda@prepprog.org
Danette Rowley – OT	109	danette@prepprog.org
Nicole Guillemaud - SLA	115	nicole@prepprog.org
Bonnie Moschopedis – TA	121	bonnie@prepprog.org
Barb Tien – Executive Director	103	barb@prepprog.org
ECS Classroom	108	
ECS Office	107	

Kimberly Eckert, Chartered Psychologist can be contacted directly at 230-2959 or through referral from the ECS staff.

Healthy Kids at School

Students do not benefit from coming to school ill. They lack energy, take little interest or pleasure in activities, and they expose students and staff to the same illness. Students with a high fever, runny nose, persistent cough or unexplained rash should **visit the doctor first** to ensure that their condition is not contagious. In the event of illness, one general precaution to follow is to wait until your child is sleeping, eating and drinking normally before considering a return to school. **As always, we appreciate parents letting us know when their child is going to be absent from class.**

At PREP we understand that runny noses are often a fact of life and are the end result of colds and flu. If your child is feeling well and is not contagious, a runny nose can be taken care of with lots of tissues and washing hand

Language Group

What a “*wonderfall* ” *start* we had in Language Group getting to know each other and learning new and exciting activities! Over the session, parents and children were introduced to structured learning activities in a variety of developmental play centers.

This year Kate, Jordan, Leslie, Hayley, James and Sammy along with their parents, will learn and play together on Thursdays, while Gabrielle, Mackenzie, Kristen, Rylen, and Julia and their parents will do so on Fridays. Barb and Lyda, speech language therapists, and Annamarie, Early Learning Coordinator will lead children and parents each morning. Danette, occupational therapist, will be on hand to talk and teach fine motor and gross motor activities.

Our first theme for this session was “All About Me”. As we learned to sit and attend in circle times, students sang favorite songs, imitated new actions, learned body parts and key classroom vocabulary. During playtime, we explored textures in the feely table,

learned to finger paint, experimented with shape sorters and cause & effect toys, and had great fun on the climber.

As our first session draws to a close we move into Halloween. At circle time the children wait with anticipation for the pumpkins to fall off of the wall as they blow. Watch for ooy gooy activities, yummy food, and great fun during our Halloween Party.

Dates to Remember: Thursday October 24, Friday October 25 – NO CLASSES
Thursday October 31, November 1 – Halloween Party (siblings are invited to join us) Remember to dress up!
Saturday November 23 – Emotional Journey of Parenting Workshop

Learning Through Play

Learning Through Play is in full force. We have a small, but mighty group of four boys. Welcome to David, Musab, Joshua , Connor and their parents.

During circle time the “guys” are showing us their eagerness to learn. Its great to see their little faces beaming and hands clapping as the familiar routine begins. Joshua and Musab are even beginning to crawl away from mom and dad to reach for the bubbles and toys, while David and Connor look on with anticipation for the next activity.

Welcome to Jody Lynn Roll, who has been hired to assist Annamarie in the classroom while the parents are busy in their discussion group.

We look forward to an exciting year!

Dates to Remember:

Discovery Toy Fun Raiser – November 6, 7, 8
Emotional Journey of Parenting (with Kimberly Eckert) – Saturday November 23
Last Day of Session 1 – Tuesday November 26

Feature Story- The Journey of Acceptance – Barb Tien

The Journey of Acceptance

**Submitted by: Barbara A. Tien, B.Sc.
Executive Director
The PREP Program**

At a recent charity function – that dedicated funds to our program for children with Down syndrome – I introduced a young man named Matt, who has Down syndrome, to a couple who have a 2-year-old daughter. I explained to Matt that this couple’s daughter also had Down syndrome and his face lit up as he responded, “Cool.” By the reaction on the parents’ faces it was obvious that this was the first time they had heard this accepting word used in connection with their daughter. There was no sign of pity or dismay on this young man’s

face, just a big smile. The parents turned to smile at each other and I think they thought Matt was pretty “cool” too.

The journey of acceptance varies considerably in length for each family who has a child with a disability. Some parents may inaccurately believe that to accept the disability is to perhaps “give up.” Others may be leaning to acceptance of their child’s disability but simply do not have the emotional resources needed to reach a consensus with their spouse, relatives or friends. Sadly, in some families the disability is simply not talked about at all. There is an unspoken agreement to not open old wounds and discuss what happened at the child’s birth. The fear may be that a Pandora’s box of emotions will be opened and the negative emotions of hurt, anger and blame that emerged at the birth of their child will surface again.

To this day, the mother of a 10-year-old boy cannot forgive her mother-in-law for not holding her child once in his first three months. It wasn’t until a family wedding that she held her grandchild in her lap for the first time because it was expected for a group picture. The event has never been discussed with her mother-in-law, overriding emotions have created a wall and today the paternal grandparents have only a superficial relationship with their grandson.

Until a family, together as a family, deals with their emotions and experiences – positive and negative – true acceptance of their child and his or her disability may not occur. The journey may be long, at times arduous, but never unrewarding. It may differ greatly for each parent and some may never reach the destination. There are obstacles that are unique to individuals and families that will not go away despite the best of intentions and effort. It does not mean that the child is unloved, just that the parents cannot accept the fact that their child is disabled.

Our observations over the past 14 years at PREP indicate that the stronger the family support network, the greater probability of parental acceptance at an early age. These parents are ones who have immediate family in the city who make the effort to share in the care giving, come to observe the child’s programs, and attend special events (e.g.: Christmas concert) with the family. Their physical presence is a comfort and relief to parents and their keen interest is a welcome affirmation that they are accepting of the child’s disability. Parents without immediate family are encouraged to invite friends to join them in their journey of discovery and acceptance. To discover one has the capacity for unconditional love is an incredible learning journey in itself!

At each step in the journey to acceptance, parents are encouraged to pause and give thanks for the support of immediate family, extended family and family friends. They are also reminded to take some time to refresh themselves, as parents, for the never-ending role of advocacy. For only through teaching others can parents facilitate the acceptance of their child in home, school and community life.

A mother went home in tears from the school one day because the administration had refused to approve her request that her daughter stay for lunch. Sitting at home, she just couldn’t tolerate the thought of another “fight.” Much to her surprise she received a phone call later in the afternoon from the principal. Her daughter’s teacher and education assistant had gone to the office to appeal the decision on her behalf. The principal was calling to apologize and request her attendance at a meeting to discuss the support

that would be needed. This time the mother cried tears of joy because, for the first time, someone else had taken on the job of advocating for her daughter.

Young families are encouraged to consider the following strategies that will assist them in their journey to acceptance of their child's disability:

1) Learn all you can about the disability so you can educate others. Learning comes from reading, research and reasoning with others in a similar situation. Join a local support group to meet others facing the same challenges and looking forward to the same celebrations. Subscribe to newsletters that provide topical information on your child's disability. Surf the Internet to learn from others in distant places.

A family from Saskatchewan regularly visits The PREP Program in Calgary to reassure themselves that their daughter is progressing well. The daughter is the only child with Down syndrome in their small community and they lack the fellowship of other families and a comparison point to peers the same age. They took the initiative to create an innovative support system.

2) Sign up for the same community activities you would have signed siblings up for at the same age (e.g.: playgroup, church nursery, pop-and-tot swim).

Parents tell me that the "first time is the hardest." They are nervous about the process of enrolling, wondering whether or not they should say their child has Down syndrome, and feeling anxious about the reception they will receive on their first visit. In the vast majority of instances, they and their child receive a warm welcome and their fears are allayed.

3) The following message is primarily to moms: Share the load with your spouse and other family members. The child with special needs is often smaller and weaker in the first few years. Moms tend to take on the dominant care giving role and dads get to do the fun stuff with the other siblings. In some cases, Mom will take the child with her and leave the other children at home with dad or the babysitter. This in turn may create significant separation problems for the child when it comes time for preschool or other community activities. Let others have the wonderful opportunity to bond with your child and allow yourself some time on your own. You need and deserve it!

One mom recently reported to me that family members are happy to take her oldest daughter for play dates but are very reluctant to baby-sit her son who has Down syndrome. She can appreciate their reluctance with her intellect, but on an emotional level is deeply hurt. This mom realizes that she has lots of teaching to do in her own family.

4) Do as you say. Children learn what they live. If siblings see the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles modeling acceptance of the disability, they too will learn to treat their brother or sister with acceptance. Likewise, if the child with a disability is treated with the same acceptance as his siblings, he too will learn to accept himself.

As one young girl said so aptly, "The reason I like Aunt Karen the best is because she treats us all the same." At the young age of 6 years, she has already noticed that most of the aunts and uncles treated her sister with Down syndrome differently. If anything, she was a bit jealous of the attention her sister tended to get at family get-togethers and upset that her sister – in

*her opinion – gets away with “murder.” In this case, Mom was reminded to speak to the family about what was acceptable behaviour for **all** her children and asks for the family’s understanding and assistance.*

5) Seek professional help for family members. Whether to a minister, psychologist, school counselor or physician, there may come a time when a family member needs to talk to someone outside the immediate family. Parents hopefully will welcome the support others can bring to siblings.

A young teen became increasingly withdrawn at school. The teacher alerted the guidance counselor and she made the point of taking him for coffee. She congratulated him on the birth of his little sister, letting him know that she was aware the baby has Down syndrome. It turned out that he was worried because already there seemed to be an expectation from adult family members that, as the eldest in the family, it was going to be his responsibility to “look after her” once his parents were gone. He loves his little sister but was looking forward to leaving home and having the freedom to make his own choices. The counselor encouraged him to share his concerns with his parents after which his mom very tactfully reminded extended family members that his life is his to lead.

Emily Perl Kingsley has a wonderful story entitled “Welcome to Holland” that she uses to try and help people understand what the experience of having a child with a disability is all about. The idea of the story is to describe parents who think they are going to “Italy” but the plane lands in “Holland.”

“But everyone you know is coming and going from Italy, and they’re all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say yes, that’s where I was supposed to go. That’s what I had planned. And the pain of that will never, ever, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning the fact you didn’t get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.” Taken from “Welcome to Holland” by Emily Perl Kingsley.

In closing, when the journey becomes overwhelming and you can’t see the “tulips” or the “windmills,” turn to family, friends or professionals to help you accept that the Down syndrome won’t go away, but your child will always need a loving family who is accepting of the very special, the very lovely person he or she is.

“Welcome to Holland” posters, approved by Emily Perl Kingsley, are available to purchase from The PREP Program @ 2004-12 Ave NW Calgary, Alta. Phone: 282-5011 Email: office@prepprog.org

Bits and Pieces

New Playground

There is now a beautiful, new, child friendly playground located in the park next to PREP. Parents and staff from PREP along with volunteer students from William Aberhart

High School represented PREP and worked together with volunteers from the Briar Hill Community to help create this wonderful playground for the students at PREP and the children of the community. Thank you to all the people who gave up their Sunday and /or Monday to brave the cold weather and help make the playground a reality! The ECS classes are enjoying the new playground.

Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

AADL provides coverage for incontinent supplies for children who are 3 years of age or older and who have:

- severe incontinent delay (at least 2-3 diapers / day)
- a valid Provincial Health Care Number
- documentation stating they have Down syndrome (i.e. PREP IPP)

AADL is located at 4020 Bowness Road NW. Parents can bring documentation and meet with the authorizer who is on duty from 8:00 – 4:30 (closed between 11:45 – 1:00), no appointment is necessary. Coverage for supplies is on a cost share basis with AADL paying 75% and the client paying 25%. The quantity provided depends on need and authorization is determined with parent input.

Internet Websites to Try at Home

The secret's out! Several parents have asked where to find the computer activities we have been using in class. Check these early learning websites for ideas.

www.intellitools.com

www.setbc.org

www.childfun.com

www.shareware.com

www.sbcss.k12.ca

www.donjohnston.com

www.softtouch.com

Annual General Meeting

The Prep Program's Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday, November 12 at 7:30 pm at the Woodridge PREP Centre. Please get involved and show your support for the Society by attending this important meeting.

Upcoming Workshops and Classroom Events
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Coffee Mornings with Kimberly Eckert, Chartered Psychologist – Tuesday October 29 and Wednesday October 30, 2002

Join Kimberly at the first coffee mornings of the school year. Kimberly will discuss and answer your questions about toileting, separation, and behavior. These informative sessions will have an informal, interactive format, so bring your questions and concerns!

Halloween Parties in ECS – October 30 and 31

The ECS classes will be celebrating Halloween with a costume parade, special crafts, and special treats. Children are encouraged to come to school dressed in a costume. Parents, please come join us at 11:00 am for some special fun and memories.

The Emotional Journey of Parenting a Child with Special Needs – Saturday November 23, 2002 from 1:00 to 3:30 pm at PREP

Empowering parents with knowledge and strategies is the key to building a growing, learning and loving family. Parents and family members are invited to join Kimberly in an open and frank discussion regarding the many challenges and celebrations involved in parenting a child with special needs. Kimberly will help parents understand the grieving process and resolve the pain that is often a barrier to true acceptance of their child's special needs.

Check Out the PREP Resource Library
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The PREP resource library, located in the ECS office, is open to parents to browse through and take out a book or two for a week or two. It is important for parents to be aware of developmental milestones in order to confidently predict the “next step” for their child. The following books are parent friendly and will help you in setting realistic expectations in all areas of child development.

Kid's Are Worth It

(1994) By Barbara Coloroso. One of the most difficult challenges in parenting is discipline. On every page this book offers solid, practical advice for parents of children from toddlers to teenagers, that shows how to utilize the very stuff of family life – chores, mealtime, bedtime, allowances, and more - to create a home environment in which your kids can develop their own sense of inner discipline.

Infant and Toddler Experiences

(1999) By Fran Hast and Ann Hollyfield. The authors have assembled a guide to making the most of caregiving interactions with children. The book offers a wide range of activities that focus on curiosity, connection and coordination. Each experience offers children the chance to choose their own approaches to tasks that promote their development.

Songs to Enjoy Practicing at Home

Hello Everybody

Hello everybody, I see you
I see you, I see you
Hello everybody, I see you,
I see you at school.

Open Them, Shut Them

Open them, shut them, give a little clap (x2)
Open them, shut them, lay them in your lap.

Head and Shoulders

Head and shoulders, knees and toes
Knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
Eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

Clap Clap Hands

Clap clap hands
1 2 3
Now I pat them
On my knees.
Roll them, roll them
To the sky,
Clap clap hands
And away they fly!

All the Leaves Are Falling Down

(Tune of "London Bridge")

All the leaves are falling down,
Falling down, falling down.
All the leaves are falling down,
Down, down to the ground.

Put Your Hands on Your ...

(Tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

Put your hands on your head, on your head,
Put your hands on your head, on your head,
Put your hands on your head,
Put your hands on your head,
Put your hands on your head, on your head.

Use various body parts and objects ...example:

Apple on your nose
Pumpkin on your feet etc.

Action Song

(Tune of "Row Your Boat")

Clap, clap, clap your hands,
Slowly as can be.
Clap, clap, clap your hands,
Do it now with me!

Next 3 verses:

Stomp your feet
Pat your tummy
Rub your knees
(or child's choice)

Mary Wore a Red Dress

Mary wore a red dress, a red dress, a red dress,
Mary wore a red dress,
When she came to school.
(substitute child's name, colour name and clothing item)

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
Round and round, round and round,
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All through the town.

The horn (beep, beep, beep)
The doors (open and shut)
The babies (waa, waa, waa)
The mommies (shh, shh, shh)

Eency Weency Spider

The eency, weency spider went up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,
And the eency, weency spider
Went up the spout again.

Mr. Sun

Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun,
Please shine down on me.
Oh, Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun,
Hiding behind the trees ...Boo!
These little children are asking you,
To please come out so they can play with you.
Oh, Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun,
Please shine down on me.

Halloween Songs

Oh Who Can Find the ____?

(Tune of "Have You Ever Seen a Lassie")

Oh, who can find the pumpkin, the pumpkin, the pumpkin?
Oh, who can find the pumpkin, look here on the floor.
(pumpkin, bat, cat, spider, ghost, witch)

Pumpkin Chant

Six little pumpkins sitting on the wall,
Along came the wind ... (blow)
And made one fall.

Body Parts Game

(Tune of "Frere Jacques")

Touch an arm, touch an arm.
Make it wave, make it wave.
Wave it up and down,
Wave it all around,
Make it wave, all around.

Touch a leg, touch a leg.

Make it swing, make it swing.
Swing it up and down,
Swing it all around,
Make it swing, all around.

Touch your head, touch your head.
Make it nod, make it nod.
Nod it up and down,
Nod it all around,
Make it nod, all around.