

Fall Newsletter | 2021

South Windsor Child Development Center

Director's Corner

Welcome Fall!

A big welcome to all of our returning and new families. We are so honored that you have chosen SWCDC as your child's early education program. Our mission is to provide the highest quality child care and early education in a safe, diverse environment based on mutual respect and trust where all children and families feel welcomed. We sincerely hope that we will meet and exceed your expectations of a program of quality for your family.

Family-Teacher Conferences

As we dive into our fall session, each classroom will be completing their first rounds of family-teacher conferences (see Dates to Remember page for your child's week). This is the perfect time for our families and teachers to exchange information pertaining to your child's overall development, discuss their strengths, work on goals we would like to set and develop a plan on how to get there.

In this Issue

Director's Corner	pg.1
Curriculum Policy	pg.2-3
Introducing Our New Logo	pg.4
Hummingbirds	pg.5
Importance of Exploring Loose Parts in Early Childhood	
Dragonflies	pg.6
Encouraging Risk Taking with Young Children	
Bumblebees	pg.7
The Independent Three Year Old	
Butterflies	pg.8
Supporting Children through Conflict Resolution	
Fireflies	pg.9
Practicing a Positive Drop off Routine	
Blue Jays	pg.10
Developing Fine Motor	
Dates to Remember	pg.11



Curriculum Philosophy Statement

At South Windsor Child Development Center we believe that children learn best through play. Through play children actively learn by manipulating materials and exploring new concepts rather than through only teacher-directed activities. Play based activities also give the children the opportunity to increase their skills in learning to work together cooperatively, listen, follow directions, and make friends. We have selected curricula for our center's developmental age groups (18 months through 5 years) that allow us to differentiate instruction to accommodate children's unique interests, abilities, and needs.

SWCDC recognizes that our society is becoming increasingly diverse, and that learning is most meaningful for children when they are able to relate to it. Therefore, we strive to incorporate family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language into our daily curriculum.



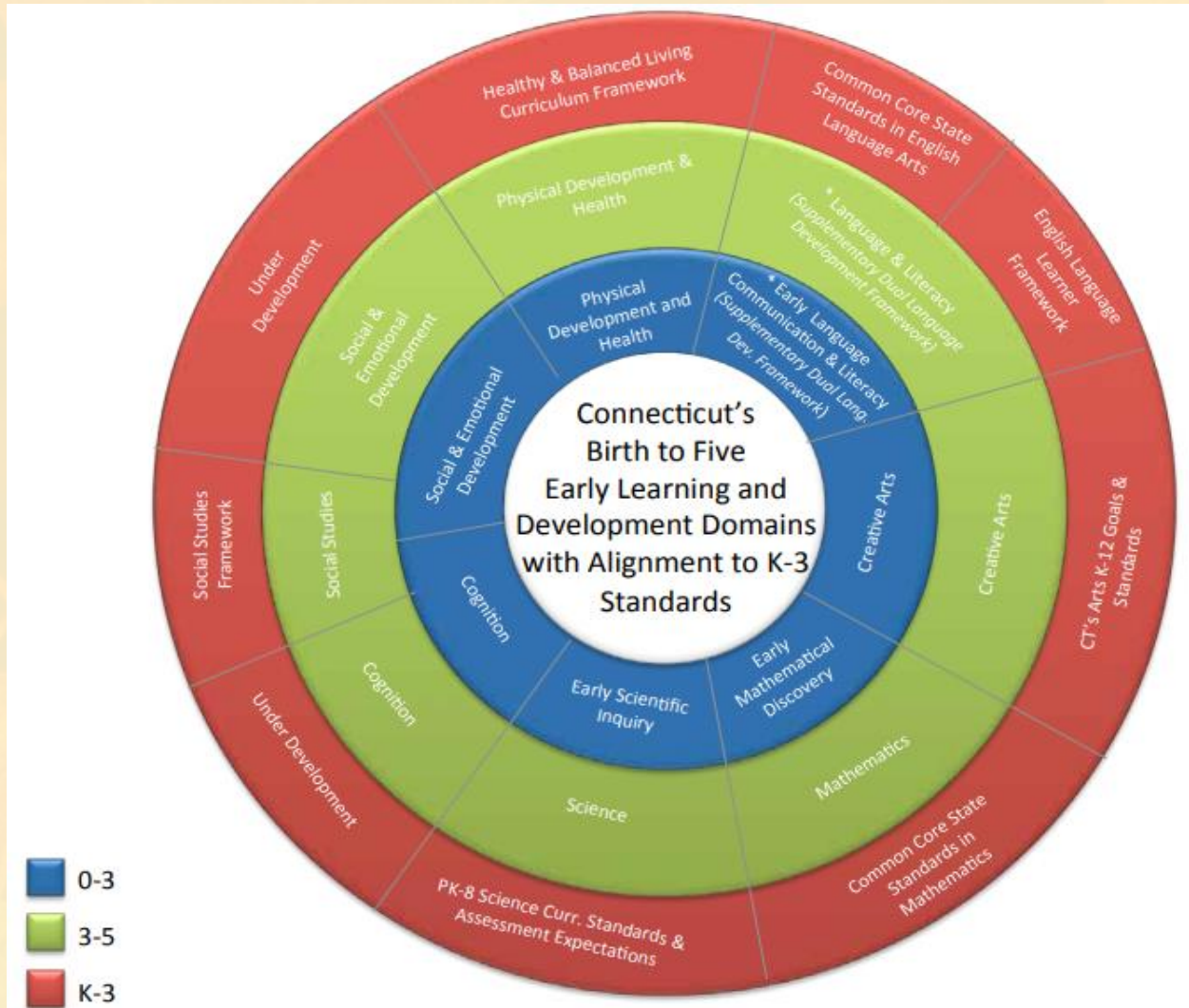
Curriculum Tools

At SWCDC, our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of individual children and the classroom as a whole. Our educators intentionally plan rich learning experiences, using **Emergent Curriculum**, which is responsive to children's interests and builds on their prior knowledge. Goals for learning are developed based on **The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS)**, which are statements describing what young children from birth to age five should know and be able to do. Our educators encourage children to be critical thinkers and creative, flexible learners by supporting play based on inquiry and active exploration.



The CT ELDS set standards for children's learning in cognition, social and emotional development, physical development and health, language and literacy, creative arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The domain wheel within the CT ELDS provides a crosswalk to the Connecticut Core standards for children in kindergarten through third grade. CPCF is an open-ended framework which enables teachers to integrate developmental skills across various content areas. For example, one of the developmental skills is the ability to count to twenty. Teachers will plan activities that allow children to practice this skill in dramatic play, blocks, science, and literacy areas.

Connecticut's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Domains



It is evident that children will work on common preschool skills such as identifying shapes, letters and numbers, but the preschool experience is so much more. Not

only will your children acquire and develop various skills for a good educational foundation, but we hope to help create a love for learning that will last a lifetime.

What's New at SWCDC? Our Logo!



South Windsor Child Development Center

We are excited to share the new SWCDC logo! Thank you to Ms. Tamika for all of her hard work on incorporating some of SWCDC's values and beliefs into a visual representation of our Program!

- Open book - symbol for learning and knowledge
- Tree - represents growth and pays tribute to the importance of nature and how we incorporate it into our curriculum and environment
- Coloring of the tree - represents diversity (various shades of brown)
- ABC apples - represents early education in a fun and playful way

Questions, Comments or Concerns? Stop by to Meet with Rebecca!

We all know too well how hard it can be to schedule time for discussions, no matter how important they may be. Please know that you can reach out to me at any point throughout the school year to schedule a phone call, face-to-face meeting or even a video call - whichever is most convenient for you!

In addition, please feel free to stop by when you see me in my office. My office hours are typically 8:00am-4:30pm however I am available to schedule meetings later in the evening when requested.

Did you know that you can reach out to your child's classroom teachers for additional meetings too? You don't have to wait until conference time and we can offer face-to-face, phone calls and video calls as well.

"No school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children's best interests" - Dorothy H Cohen

Hummingbirds

Importance of Exploring Loose Parts in Early Childhood

What are loose parts?

The importance and use of loose parts in early childhood development has been a growing discussion in recent years. This topic has led to educators and families alike seeking alternative solutions to deter young children away from electronics and technology. Many who work with young children, including parents and families, are interested in learning more about loose parts, but are uncertain of where to begin.



Loose parts are defined as either natural or man-made objects which can be manipulated, moved, controlled and used in various ways during play. They allow for open-ended exploration with no set outcome for how to engage or play with them.

A few examples of each category are listed in the chart below:

Natural	Man-made
Seashells Acorns Pinecones Sticks Seeds Leaves Feathers Moss Sand	Bottle caps Screws, nuts and bolts Recycled materials- Boxes, toilet paper rolls, lids Buttons Ribbon Plastic lids Marbles Legos Fabric

Why use loose parts?



The utilization of loose parts builds children's self-confidence and independence. As there is no particular set outcome, there is no chance for a child to make a mistake or to be wrong. They also force children to think outside the box and be creative in how they choose to use the materials. For example, a simple stick could become; a magic wand, a writing device, a spoon, a rocket ship, a snake or a paintbrush! But if you give a child a plastic spoon they know its intended use is to be a spoon. Loose parts also help facilitate critical thinking, spatial awareness and other early mathematical skills!

Dragonflies

Encouraging Risk Taking with Young Children



Knowing when to give children more independence and when to set limits can be very challenging. We live in a culture that often protects children from risks, but it raises the question, is it always the most beneficial choice in the long term? Risk taking is very beneficial for young children and their understanding of the world around them. Risk taking and risk taking environments can build a child's confidence

and teach them valuable life skills that will follow them into their later years. These opportunities help children understand themselves better and their capabilities. When risk is encouraged, it helps adults see where children may be lacking in their growth and development.

Two important questions to ask yourself when deciding if an experience or an activity is appropriate for young children are, "what's the worst thing that can happen?" and "what's the best thing that can happen?" Often adults base our decision on fear rather than reality. Sometimes asking ourselves these two questions can help us to be more objective to the idea of risk taking. There are exceptions and an activity for one child may not be appropriate for another child. It's important to consider each individual child's level of skills.

Assess the child's environment and ask yourself, is it a safe space to take risks? Always consider your living and learning space, the community you live in and the digital environment. Another thing to consider when assessing an environment is, does it allow too much freedom? Too much freedom can lead to children feeling unprepared for challenges they may take on or face. It is important to break down activities by steps and/or strategies together. Having those meaningful conversations can really be helpful to bridge the gap between too little and too much freedom.

Here at SWCDC we highly encourage risk taking in the children's day to day interactions and experiences. Risk taking allows the children to try new things, make mistakes, and solve new and exciting problems within a safe space to do so. It allows them to discover more about themselves and encourages them to think and be creative. When we give children the opportunity to take on risky play, we solidify a strong foundation within them to build on into adulthood.



References:

<https://youtu.be/FeJPLOHJNMA>

Bumblebees

The Independent Three Year Old



As three year olds grow and learn more about the world, their need for independence starts to grow with them. Many children have the urge to complete tasks from start to finish on their own and many adults have the urge to finish the task for them in order to get out the door quicker. As you start to see children taking on tasks independently, take a step back and allow them to work through the frustrations that may occur. As children learn to take on tasks independently, their large and small gross motor skills begin to grow, their sense of pride for what they have accomplished begins to flourish, and they start to gain confidence in exploring new things that they haven't tried before.

What we do here at school:

- We break tasks into small and achievable steps.
- The children get choices in order to feel in control of the situation. (e.g. "Do you want to draw on the blue paper or the green paper?")
- After taking on new tasks, we encourage the children to first attempt before asking for help. For example, we encourage them to attempt to put on their jacket first before we step in and model new ways such as "flip, flop over the top".
- We support children in multiple ways while using the bathroom. Some of these steps include encouraging children to pull down/up their own pants, using a stool for them to reach the "potty", encouraging them to flush and talking them through how to wipe.
- We encourage the children to take responsibility for their belongings and accountability for their actions when they have a goal in mind that they set out to accomplish.

What you can do at home:

- Give them time and allow opportunities to do simple tasks on their own. The more time they have, the more confidence they have in completing the task.
- In the bathroom, encourage your children to independently take on tasks such as changing their clothes, pulling their pants up or down and flushing.
- Give them alternate ways of accomplishing a task. If standing up to put the backpack on seems to be a struggle, have them sit down with the backpack behind them.
- Offer choices: which outfit do you want to wear today, the red one or the blue one?
- Respect your child as a person and understand that they are capable of more than we may think.

Giving these opportunities for children to do things for themselves is important, but not always possible in the busyness of the world today. When you have the time to commit to giving direction and you are able to work towards completing a task, be sure to encourage these moments as they arise. Begin with tasks that are simple and children show interest in, such as independently putting on a jacket or shoes.

Remember to give lots of praise for trying on their own. Taking the time to invest in teaching and encouraging independent skills is beneficial to you and your child. When enhancing children's independence, adults can foster greater organization skills as well as independence. When given the opportunities to independently accomplish a task in our presence, children are more apt to want to tackle new challenges given to them when we are not around.



Butterflies

Supporting Children through Conflict Resolution

In the early childhood years, children learn best through play and social interactions. Research has shown there are many benefits for children to have social interactions with their peers. According to an article from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) website, some areas of development that children exercise through play are cognitive skills, physical abilities, new vocabulary, social skills, and literacy skills. For example, when children play together in the dramatic play area they practice cognitive skills by problem solving with their peers (e.g. counting money) and they practice literacy skills by pretending to create a menu for a restaurant.

As children learn to play together, there will inevitably be a few conflicts that arise. Problem solving is a process that needs to be supported and practiced as it takes time to develop. Practicing these skills will also help children develop their receptive and expressive language; thus, helping them participate in and understand conversations. While in our care, there are some steps we follow to help them navigate conflict.

1. Pause! Give the children a chance to solve the conflict on their own. Sometimes no adult assistance is needed but still acknowledge how they were able to work out their problem.
2. When assistance is needed, start by helping them identify their feelings.
3. Next, give each child a chance to state what the problem is. Allowing each child to identify the problem in their own words will help them understand that the goal is to solve the conflict. After each child has shared, it is important to restate and clarify the problem.
4. Last, give each child a chance to suggest a solution. If they have trouble, you can give them suggestions.

The age and play level of each child will determine how much assistance the adult should provide. Younger children may need to be provided with examples and for the adult to share what they observed. As children gain experience with more practice and language, they may only need the adult to be present while the children work to resolve the conflict independently.

It is important to remember that play and learning go hand-in-hand. An article from the NAEYC website describes this perfectly when stating "They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them like a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab."



Fireflies



Practicing a Positive Drop off Routine

With the end of “drop off at the door” comes a new routine for drop offs. Whether you are starting or returning to SWCDC, below are some tips and tricks for developing a positive drop off routine to help keep the Monday Blues at bay.

Prepping before a school day:

- Work to keep your morning routine as consistent as possible. You know your child best; they might like a special job of carrying their lunchbox from the car in the morning.
- Have conversations about school. When discussing school in front of your child, work to keep the language positive. Talk about the playground, specific toys or friends that are waiting for them, and even wave to the school if you are driving by.
- Refer to the lesson plan provided by your classroom teachers to help ease uncertainty and

create anticipation. Check for a special activity to get them excited or chat about the lesson topic for extended learning at home. (e.g. “Looks like tomorrow you will be thinking about apples! We have some apples here. Let’s taste them, and then we can tell your teacher about our taste test when we get there.”)

- Reflect with your child(ren) about their Google photo album and ask questions about their activities at school.
- With your child, run through the steps for drop off. For example; “First, we are going to get to school. Next, we are going to wave hi to Ms. Rebecca. Then, we will find our classroom, wash hands and see your teacher. Last, we are going to wave goodbye.”

Upon Arrival at school:

- Stay positive when entering the classroom, talking with the classroom teachers and working through your child’s anxiety. If they see their caregiver feeling positive about school, it can help them understand that school is a safe and fun place to go. For instance: you can ask your teachers about their weekends, anything pertinent to their day, or your weekend.
- Share some talking points with your teachers such as; what you did over the

weekend, going to a fair, going apple picking, any celebrations, news about your pet(s), visiting relatives, etc. This can be a great transition tool for your teacher to use to start a conversation with your child as you leave.

- An option to try when arriving at school is giving a specific job to your child, such as allowing them to bring a note to their teacher or similar task.

“Goodbye” means Goodbye:

- Work to say goodbye once. It can prolong the drop-off process with multiple chances to say goodbye. This can be confusing to your child as they will not know when you actually are going to depart. Your child may be upset as you are leaving, but we will make sure they are comforted and you can always check-in to see how they are doing throughout the day.



Developing Fine Motor



Fine motor is the skill of coordination of small muscles, involving the synchronization of hands and fingers with the eyes. Developing this skill is important because it helps advance eye-hand coordination, improve finger control, and helps children learn how to manipulate objects. Little hands need to develop dexterity and strength in order to carry out specific tasks.

This skill is supported in the classroom as developing a child's pencil grasp is a learning progression within our curriculum. We guide and offer support to achieve a 3 point grasp which allows for more control of writing tools. This control helps children to copy simple forms or geometric shapes as well as writing letters and numbers. Children are also strengthening and refining their fine motor skills through play, during every day routines (e.g. manipulating zippers and buttons, signing-in in the morning, and feeding themselves), and also during teacher-led activities. During teacher-led activities and child initiated activities (free play), teachers will plan different exercises that help with the development of these small muscles while also strengthening eye-hand coordination. Some

examples include building with blocks, manipulating puzzles, using playdough, digging in sand, and cutting with scissors. By providing these experiences, it ensures that children are practicing these skills on a daily basis.

There are many ways you can support your child's fine motor development at home. Encourage your child to dress themselves independently in order to practice their zipping and buttoning. Allow them the opportunity to help with appropriate tasks in the kitchen to strengthen their fine motor skills (mixing, cutting, pouring, etc.). All of these activities, play and manipulation of objects, will allow children to develop their small muscles and build the steps to learning to draw, color, and eventually write.



References:

<https://penfieldbuildingblocks.org/developmental-milestones/importance-fine-motor-skill-development/>

Important Dates to Remember

October

- 11 No Part Day Preschool (Indigenous Peoples Day)
- 11-15 Family-Teacher Conferences (Fireflies)
- 18-22 Family-Teacher Conferences (Dragonflies)
- 19 & 20 Picture Days
- 25-29 Family-Teacher Conferences (Hummingbirds)



November

- 1-5 Family-Teacher Conferences (Butterflies)
- 2 American Flatbread Fundraiser
- 2 No Part Day Preschool (Public School Professional Development)
- 4 No Part Day Preschool (Diwali)
- 8-19 Family-Teacher Conferences (Bumblebees & Blue Jays)
- 22-24 Sharing Snack
- 25 & 26 Center Closed (Thanksgiving)



December

- 22 & 23 Children's Winter Celebration
- 24-31 No Part Day Preschool
- 24 Center Closed (Christmas Eve/Christmas)
- 31 Center Closed (New Year's Eve/New Year's)

