



Family Development

A Center for Excellence in Early Learning • Founded in 1985

Engaging Life Skills through Play – Spring 2016



Our Mission

Highest Quality Early Childhood Development through Honoring Relationships Rooted in Equity and Social Justice

At the heart of the Family Development Program's work is an image of a child who is powerful, curious and infinitely competent as an active, dynamic learner. We do everything in our power to keep this remarkable spark of learning alive.

Since our earliest beginnings, the Family Development Program has promoted a philosophy of child-centered learning, where teachers and parents are collaborators in supporting children's natural joy, passion for creative discovery, and a wonder of learning.

We believe that quality education for *every* child defines one of our greatest challenges as a society and as a citizenry. We believe that equity is every child's inalienable right. Our approach to our work is rooted in a deep, enduring respect for the cultural and family heritage that our youngest children know and love dearly.

We believe that our children need to be surrounded by *circles of support* that actively engage their families as full partners with early learning programs and schools. We need strong and trusted relationships with families to tackle the complex and very tough job of education. It's a huge responsibility to instill a lifelong love of learning – learning that nourishes and builds our citizenship, our communities, and quality of life that is shared by all.

The heartfelt understanding and nurturance of children with their families is what defines the Family Development Program.

by Lois Vermilya

The Family Development Program strives to see the power of children as active, imaginative, determined and highly capable young learners. For many years, we have been committed to the study of Reggio Emilia philosophy and practice that challenges us to think about children in new and often surprising ways. We have shared our insights inspired by Reggio through our last two journals (Spring 2014 and Spring 2015). This journal continues to celebrate children's joy in learning by examining how children learn, and more importantly the question: how can we keep their spark of learning alive?

This is the central question that drives Ellen Galinsky's ground-breaking work known as *Mind in the Making*, another important cornerstone of the Family Development Program's study. Ellen Galinsky has spent the past 13 years documenting essential findings from the explosion of early childhood research in neuroscience, developmental psychology, medicine, and education. Thanks to her commitment to young children and their families, we have dynamic opportunities to bridge research to practice. Her 2010 book, *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs* (HarperStudio, New York) guides all of us to examine how these life skills can be promoted through everyday moments and quality relationships with young children.

In this journal, the Family Development Program team has documented our insights about what Mind in the Making can mean for enriching children's learning through attentive and playful relationships with their families and other important adults in their lives. Each of the articles explores practical and fun ways that educators and families can intentionally be present with children as they explore their own questions and become actively engaged as self-directed little learners. We have grown to appreciate how each of the life skills reinforces the others and -- when taken together as a whole -- forge a foundation for children to learn and grow within the pure joy of learning that is so fundamental to Reggio philosophy as well.

Take some time to explore Mind in the Making themes and discover children's delight as they bring the essential skills to life through this year's journal articles for each life skill which include:

- **Life Skill #1 Focus and Self Control:** Let's Play! Using Games to Promote Concentration and Attention Skills in Children

- **Life Skill #2 Perspective-Taking:** I Think-You Think, I Feel-You Feel, We ALL Think and Feel
- **Life Skill #3 Communicating:** Playing Games: The Joy of Communicating with Children
- **Life Skill #4 Making Connections:** Meaning Makers - Children as Creative Connectors
- **Life Skill #5 Critical Thinking:** Questioning – Wondering – Problem-Solving
- **Life Skill #6 Taking On Challenges:** Make a Mistake and Learn from It
- **Life Skill #7 Self-Directed, Engaged Learning:** We Learn Together – Today and Always

You also have a chance to see how it all comes together with simple everyday stuff – that great learning material that is in all of our homes – through the Spanish/English insert that celebrates play and our Wemagination Resource Center.

- Reinventing “Recycled” Materials into Games

Perhaps the articles will tickle your adult funny bone enough to want to get down on the floor, get dirty yourself and get lost in the learning laboratory of rambunctious, thoughtful play. You have every opportunity to promote the life skills for yourself as an ever growing commitment to this creative process we call *learning*.

So... hug your children! Get out there and learn with them – learn from them! Discover what they’re pondering – and, what questions do *you* now have? More than anything: have a blast!

The Family Development Program publishes the *Family Development Journal* for those working with, working for, and raising children in New Mexico.

Editors: Teresa Sierra, Paula Steele

Contributing writers: Janelle Garcia Cole, Ybeth Iglesias, Dorothy Kerwin, Samuel Rodriguez, Paula Steele, Sylvia Velasco, Lois Vermilya

Insert: Kate Dixon, Rachel Overmier

Translations: Ybeth Iglesias

Designer: Jana Fothergill

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We see children’s eyes light up and we start to think: When was the last time I felt like that? It encourages us to go out and do the things that we need to do to have that sense again, that sense of newness and freshness that keeps us alive!

Dr. Patricia Kuhl, University of Washington, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, Mind in the Making Educator Modules, Families and Work Institute, NY, NY



Let's Play! Using Games to Promote Concentration and

by Janelle Garcia Cole

Growing up in a large family, I had ample time to play board games, card games, and to use my imagination while playing outside. I did not realize that those games were promoting concentration and attention skills. Children have played games for generations, and playing games is an important part of every child's development.

To see the expression on a child's face while playing games is beautiful. Have you ever sat back, watched and listened to children play games together? You might hear them say things such as, "Wait, it's my turn," "Yes! I did it," and "Let me try again." You might witness them monitor body language, read expressions, and wait patiently, which are clear examples of children developing attention and concentration skills.

The boys in this picture are playing chess, a game that requires focus, attention, and critical thinking. By focusing on the game, these boys are gaining skills that will serve them later in life.

Without self-control, children will struggle to develop attention skills. **Self Control** is the ability to control oneself, in particular one's emotions and desires or the expression of them in one's behavior, especially in difficult situations. Focus and self-control are developmental milestones for children. When we give children opportunities to practice focus and self-control, they develop a life-long skill.

When we think about all of our everyday activities we can become overwhelmed. Many families are



easily overcome by the constant demands of routines such as work, school, technology and more. Our attention is being pulled in many directions. When we are intentional and make time to think about how we self regulate, how we modify our behaviors so that needs are met, we can also think about how our children self regulate. Some children experience stress because of this busy world we live in. It is important for us to help our children with their concentration and attention skills so that they develop the ability to monitor themselves. Many studies have found that children who manage stress better are also able to better focus.

Using games to reinforce these skills is fun, easy, and worthwhile. Game night is a wonderful way to spend time with the family and help your children practice these skills. If you do not have board games, you can play games where you use physical movement, such as Simon Says. This is a wonderful game that encourages children to pay attention and listen carefully to the directions given. You might also consider playing I Spy in the car while driving. Children love looking for objects while in the car. This is another example of practicing these skills.

Here are some more ideas that promote attention and concentration:

Games for Babies

- Peek-a-Boo
- Playing in the mirror
- Patty Cake
- Songs with motion (Itsy Bitsy Spider)

Attention Skills in Children



Games for Two-year olds and up

- Go Fish (matching pictures)
- Hide and Seek

Games for Three and Four Year Olds

- Guessing games
- I Spy
- Puzzles
- Red light/green light
- Simon Says
- Musical chairs
- Board Games



- Sorting games with changing the rules
- Making up pretend stories
- Puzzles

Games for Five year olds and up

- Adding to the story
- Board Games
- Simon Says (change the rules to make it more difficult)
- Legos
- Puzzles

These are just a few ideas and examples, but the sky is the limit! Get creative and add to this list. Think back to your childhood. Do you have any family or traditional games you played and enjoyed? Share these with the children you work with or your own children. Make some popcorn and keep some yummy snacks nearby, have fun, and remember that the gains children make and the skills they develop while playing will benefit them throughout life. ♥

I Think-You Think, I Feel-You Feel, We ALL Think and Feel

by Ybeth Z. Iglesias

Children's ability to understand another person's thinking and feeling is fundamental for school, peer relations, employment, and life success. They adapt better to new schools and environments if they can understand and be reflective about the world around them. A child's understanding of what teachers and classmates want and expect from them will have an impact on their school experience. When a child is able to process the reasons and intentions behind an action, she is more likely to follow through and have a positive interaction. As an adult this skill is transferable to our work, our relationships with supervisors and coworkers, and an ever changing work environment. Children's understanding and empathy for those around them may lead to fewer conflicts, as they are able to see another's perspectives, intentions, and thus are less apt to make assumptions.



While children are BORN hardwired to sense their caregiver's emotions, they must be taught how to perceive what people are both thinking and feeling. From the first year on we can promote this by modeling behavior

and by acknowledging and responding to their expressions and feelings. When a child believes that his experiences and emotions are recognized and understood, he feels known and accepted. This is a powerful interaction for the child and creates opportunities for strong connections with others.



As children grow we can help develop the skill of taking another's perspective by talking about what is going on with others, what they might be thinking and what their emotions may be expressing. We also encourage the skill by sharing our own thoughts and feelings as they arise. Again the best way to teach this skill is by demonstrating and practicing it on a daily basis. Practice asking, "What would you think, feel or do under the same circumstance?"

Recognizing that children learn best through play and interactive activities is very important. They must be allowed to practice and develop the skill with our support and guidance. We should provide a safe place for them to learn and make mistakes.



Here are some ideas and games for helping promote this skill:



♥ Role model. Children learn by watching how we behave and react to the world around us. Adults serve as examples to the children in their lives. If while driving, a police officer forces you to take a detour from your usual route, you can say, “He must be thinking he has to keep safe and can not allow us to drive down the street.” Or in the park, when a child starts crying after falling at the end of the slide, we can say, “She must be scared and her bottom might be hurting.” Share how things make you feel. When someone is rude, share how you might be feeling mad or hurt. When something good happens, state that you are happy and joyful.



♥ Label cues of emotional expressions. An infant may sense someone is having an emotional response or is expressing a feeling but he needs help to know the words that go together with what a frown, pout, raised eyebrow, or open mouth means. As children get closer to two years old you can begin asking them what they think a facial expression means and what clues they had to reach this conclusion. An example maybe asking them what they think Grandma is thinking in the Christmas picture. We hope they say happy, because she is smiling.



♥ Listen to children’s thoughts, feelings, and questions. Adults acknowledging and responding to their thoughts and feelings demonstrate value and encourages self-worth.

♥ Encourage role-playing, such as playing house and doctor. This allows children to take someone else’s perspective. They can act out actions, thought processes and emotions. You can then ask them why they are doing certain things or what feelings the person may be feeling.



♥ Ask the child what she thinks a character in a book or story may be feeling after an event. Being able to think about what a character in a book is thinking and feeling assists with reading comprehension, and understanding cause and effect. ♥



Playing Games: The Joy of Communicating with Children

by Sylvia Velasco

Children are born to learn. The learning and development that take place within the first few years of life are truly amazing. As they strive to make sense of the world, young children demonstrate an interest in people by a desire to communicate with them and a capacity to learn language. Learning the skills of effective communication develops within relationships. The quality of the relationship with the important people in children's lives and their meaningful interactions greatly impact this development. Science offers strong evidence that it is these early experiences that literally shape the brain, forming the foundation for all future learning and success.



Children learn through play. Play is integral to their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Children at play concentrate and can remain focused for long periods of time. They practice foundational skills and learn concepts. They problem solve and connect ideas in ways that make sense to them. Through play they interact with others in social ways and learn to express and control emotions. In their efforts to communicate needs and express ideas they pay attention and listen as they attempt to understand perspectives of others.

Children enjoy playing games. Perhaps one of the best ways for us to share in the development of learning to communicate is to interact with children and experience the delight and joy of playing games. Games offer an opportunity to be present with children. Being fully present means you are attentive to the child and can be open to the things that a child is doing and saying. It is a frame of mind that allows us to be more intentional about how we interact and positively respond to children. Enjoying games with children lets them know you are interested in them and want to spend time with them.



Children learn communication skills through games. Having conversations with children, whether verbal or nonverbal, strengthens relationships and at the same time supports language awareness. Play experiences with games offer a structure for the back and forth communication where children learn the rhythm of listening and watching, responding and taking turns. Some general tips for promoting communication skills that also apply to playing games include:

- Position yourself at a child's level so that they can see your face. Young children are naturally fascinated by your eyes, your voice and your gestures.





- Talking to children should begin at birth (if not prenatally). Describe what is happening, (what you are doing or what the child is doing) the way a sports announcer might describe what she observes. “You are pulling yourself up with your strong arms!” “You seem really interested in that flower. You’re touching the petals with a gentle touch.”
- Avoid being distracted by anything or anyone else that would cause you to turn away while a child is talking or communicating nonverbally with you.
- Talk with children rather than at them or about them. “Didn’t we have fun at the park this morning? We saw birds hopping on the ground and heard the crows cawing in the trees. What do you remember?”
- Listen attentively - follow a child’s lead in having conversations.
- Use interesting words to develop vocabulary. “Lions eat a lot of meat. They have voracious appetites.”
- Rephrase or reword what a child has said rather than directly correcting and focusing on errors. Child: “I liked-ed it a lot.” Adult: “Yes, I can tell that you liked it immensely.”
- Expand upon their statements; add more information. “You liked it so much that you played the song over and over. It might be your favorite song of the day!”

So what games might we play when we want to focus on promoting the skills of effective communication? Well, don’t think you need to go out and purchase expensive games or equipment. While there are many excellent board games available for purchase that are very effective at getting children talking, let’s consider

some no cost or low cost possibilities.

1. Play imitation or copycat games. The game is initiated by one person creating a simple design with materials found in the home or perhaps dominoes or blocks. The other person must match or copy the design and then add one more item to the design which then leads to the next copycat. There are endless possibilities for developing rich vocabulary and introducing concepts such as sequencing and patterning.
2. Use toys and stuffed animals or dolls to have conversations with a child. Use high pitched voices and varied intonations to make a toy come alive and respond to your child.
3. Use finger plays and body movement along with nursery rhymes to interact with young children. Many families have traditions regarding play with children that may include lullabies for rocking and swaying or chants used for bouncing infants and toddlers on knees or laps.
4. Play ball. Any kind of ball play activity emphasizes cause and effect. Roll the ball or kick the ball and there is a response. Young children enjoy rolling a ball back and forth; this teaches the give and take of the social interaction. These ball games can become more complex as children grow and develop skills.



Children seem to pay more attention to people who laugh and are having fun. Use humor in your interactions. Enjoy being with and communicating with children. Playing games builds many skills and provides numerous learning opportunities, but perhaps the best thing of all is that it is a good way of communicating with children and letting them know they are loved. ♥

Meaning Makers: Children as Creative Connectors

by Paula Steele

When is a thumb more than a thumb?

– *When it's a pacifier.*

When is a block more than a block?

– *When it's a hamburger.*

When is a blanket more than a blanket?

– *When it's a fort.*

Children are born with the inherent ability to make meaning and connections. In the opening examples, we see evidence of children's minds at work, making connections. When we pay attention to their active imaginations, it helps us to know what they know.



Babies connect your eye gaze, smiles and coos, and responsiveness to their crying as messages of love and caring. They respond to your soothing voice when they are upset. These experiences are building the understandings that babies need to be able to respond to more elaborate information as they grow and develop.

In the first year of life, the most important way for your baby to develop the skill of making connections is your interactions with him. He may not speak yet, but he loves to hear you talk, laugh, and sing. He is connect-



ing your face, your voice and your arms, your touch, with language and learning. When baby's eye gaze follows your finger to look where you're pointing – there's a connection being made.



Toddlers with very little language are able to formulate a plan of action. You see it when 18 month old Avalon picks up a crayon and deliberately marks a paper. Look at the directed eye gaze and concentration in the photo. Just make sure you have lots of materials that provide her the option to manipulate. Consider tissue boxes as blocks, cotton balls and a variety of containers for dumping and filling. These are likely things you have easy access to. What else comes to mind?



The ability to connect ideas and information is basic to our understanding of the world. It involves recognizing like objects, seeing differences among things, and looking for relationships between things. It starts pretty basically. Young

toddlers are capable of sorting objects by likeness. Here is Avalon, sorting tea packets by color. Later on she will be able to sort in a more sophisticated manner – perhaps creating a pattern by color: yellow, green, red, red, blue; yellow, green, red, red, blue. No doubt you have lots of things at home or in the classroom that provide opportunities for sorting: toys, socks, crayons, leaves, cups, sticks...

Preschoolers, aged 3 and 4, have amazing capabilities to take an ordinary object and turn it into something else. They will transform a dramatic play area – and themselves – as they try on roles. This allows them to begin to figure out the skills that allow them to become ever



more independent, even as they rely on others.

Below is a series of photos taken of preschoolers around age 4, with different collections of items: keys, cement plugs,

and coins, among other things. Each made connections in their own way. Children at play with materials will quickly move from organizing to creative use and reuse of materials. Dominic thought to use a key to lock his



ear, while Jordan decided that he made a robot with the keys. Isabella organized coins into stacks. Deijah was just beginning the process of exploring the cement plugs. I wonder what was going to come of that... It's easy to gather collections of things. Once you and the children start, you'll come up with all sorts of ideas!



We can't forget the arts and the role they play in cognitive development. Whether music, drama, dance or drawing, painting, and sculpting, the arts provide children with several avenues in which to focus their attention. Sustained attention improves performance which then leads to increased motivation. Artistic pursuits encourage children to think

divergently. When we ask them to explain their thinking to us, we help them to organize their thoughts.

Yes, as capable as they are, children still need the adults in their lives to guide and coach and to act as role models. They need us to provide the materials that they can then transform in a variety of ways. They need us to provide exposure to the world of ideas, places, and stories so they are able to make connections among their many experiences. As they maneuver their way into developing ever more complex and abstract ways of encountering the world, they need us as sounding boards. And we need them to remind us to connect to the wonders of the world that we may be taking for granted. ♥



Questioning – Wondering – Problem-solving

by Paula Steele and Lois Vermilya

How can we pay closer attention to children’s critical thinking? What does this life skill look like for infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are actively exploring their world? Can we fully see young children as the disciplined scientists that they are – analyzing ideas, developing theories about what could happen, experimenting with strategies to figure out how things really work? Make some time to look closely at these photos of children as they... test spaces, ponder a caterpillar’s journey, inspect things close-up, and try to make sense of their world. How would you talk to each of them about what they are thinking? We’ve offered a few possibilities for conversation starters – you provide the rest!

Infants and Toddlers



What’s tickling your toes?



Tell me what you see.



What else could fit in there?

Preschoolers



You look really excited – tell me about it!



What are you wondering about?



**Observe the children in your life.
Find out what they are thinking!♥**



Make a Mistake and Learn from It

by Dorothy L. Kerwin

“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

Joshua J. Marine

As a baby learns to walk, she wiggles, she wobbles, and she often falls down. Then, she gets up and tries again, and again, and again. If one thinks about it, learning to walk is one of life’s greatest challenges. Instead of being an overwhelming obstacle, in most cases, it is a joyous journey. She is motivated and determined, surrounded by family and caretakers cheering her on for her efforts. They allow her to fall down in a safe environment, and lend a helping hand when needed. Before we know it the child is walking!



Life is full of stressful challenges. Finding healthy ways to deal with stress allows us to try new experiences and to continue trying even when things become difficult. This is an indispensable skill that will be used over and over again throughout our lives. Sometimes we have a tendency to jump in too soon instead of letting our little ones figure things out by themselves. We want to protect them, yet we also want them to learn resiliency. We need to allow them to make mistakes and learn from them. So how do we cultivate this skill in ourselves and promote it in our children?

How do you deal with stress? When someone cuts you off on the highway, do you take a deep breath and rec-



ognize that the driver might be dealing with something important that has distracted him or do you take it personally and curse under your breath, or worse? The children in our lives are paying attention to how we react to frustration. When we share with them how we deal with stress, we are giving them tools to deal with their own stress and frustrations.

How adults interact with children matters. Sometimes small changes in how we respond to them can result in big differences in how they see themselves. Stanford Professor of Psychology Carol Dweck has uncovered an interesting observation about what helps children want to take on challenges. She discovered that children who





were given specific praise for how hard they tried something tended to develop a Growth Mindset, i.e., the belief that one's abilities can be developed. This inspired them to want to try more difficult tasks. But when children were given praise for how smart they were, they developed a Fixed Mindset, i.e., the belief that either I am good at something or I am not. These children were afraid to make mistakes or appear stupid. As a result, they did not seek out new activities or skills, but instead continued with the activities in which they already felt comfortable.

Our natural inclination might be to say, "Good job! You did it. You are so smart." But when we tell a child what we noticed, it can make a big difference to his confidence. "You really tried hard to figure out where that puzzle piece belongs. I saw you place it one way and then flip it over and when you put it to the left, it fit right in. Your hard work paid off."

Just like the baby learning to walk, we learn to manage stress and conquer challenges by being in a supportive environment. Young children are trying to make sense of their world and it is caring adults who help guide their way by giving them strategies to deal with whatever they may encounter. We learn the most from our mistakes, but it is vital that children learn to search for the lesson within a mistake, rather than fixate on the failure. Growth comes from making a mistake and learning from it. ♥

Tips to help your children deal with stress and take on challenges:

- Talk about a storybook character's emotions and ask your children what they do when something similar happens to them.
- Tell stories of when you were little and what helped when you were frustrated.
- Use stress buster puppets to show children how to relax.
- Breathe like a dragon.
- Stretch like a pretzel.
- Get physical: Run. Jump. Swim. Dance.
- Create challenging obstacle courses.
- Practice strategies for calming when children are calm.
- Remind children of calming techniques when situations begin to escalate.
- Teach little ones how to deal with losing instead of letting them win while playing games.
- Notice and acknowledge when they work hard to figure something out.
- Let your children make mistakes.



We Learn Together – Today and Always

by *Samuel Rodriguez*

Recently my dear friend Danielle and her eight month old son Copal visited me. Their visit rekindled my sense of the beauty, complexity and also the simplicity of development and learning.

Spending time with them reminds me of the perspective of an eight month old and how fascinating the world is. As I opened the shades in our kitchen nook, Copal closely observed me. He looked at the draw string; he watched as the shade was drawn up. Copal seemed to be fascinated with the mechanics of the shade being raised, as his eyes danced back and forth between the draw string and shade. In my arms Copal was supported with a view of the front yard. He noticed the two black crows that danced there and looked with wonder as he sighed with pleasure. He seemed to notice the tall spikes of grass as they swayed in the wind. He reached eagerly towards the window as if he wanted to directly engage and explore in the environment he experienced from his view point.



Copal shares a beautiful relationship with his parents. He alerts his parents when he is uncomfortable, unsure, excited, curious, sad, happy, anxious and irritable, all without the use of words. Copal has an unspoken agreement with his parents and seems to understand that they watch over him and keep him safe. This very important agreement promotes a sense of security for Copal that empowers him to explore the world and be curious about his environment because it is a safe place with his parents' support.



Copal's parents place a ball slightly out of reach to promote his crawling. Mom knows the perfect distance the ball should be placed to keep Copal engaged, motivated and challenged. Danielle and Copal are highly attuned to one another. This attunement helps Danielle gauge the distance that works best for her son. Danielle is reflective about how she can sometimes intervene too quickly and disrupt Copal's efforts to figure things out on his own.

I had the opportunity see how Danielle lit up when she saw Copal competently crawl across the living room floor and how Copal basked in the delight of his mother. I wonder about how amazing it must have felt for Copal in that moment to be a participant in the experience of mutual delight with his mother. It is nice to see that Copal has a strong foundation for learning because of the relationship he has experienced with his parents.

I felt very fortunate to have this special moment with Copal. I truly had the opportunity to be with him. Our moment together enlightened me with gratitude for the great big world that we live in and how amazing it is. I am reminded about the value of slowing down so that I don't miss out on these occasions. This was just a moment in the very beginning of Copal's life mural. I have no doubt that his mural will intensify with rich color, shade, depth and detail as he experiences and learns more of the world.

Being With Me Moments support learning today and always

Grandpa and Mileena are washing dishes together. Grandpa asks Mileena to recount her day with simple



questions about what she ate and who she played with at preschool. Mileena shared a lot about her day including gripes about her older brother and that he has cavities because he doesn't brush his teeth properly. Grandpa was surprised with Mileena's expressiveness and capacity to remember what happened for her throughout the day. Dishwashing together creates an opportunity for cooperative play and working together and time for Grandpa to build on some of the experiences Mileena had by asking her how she felt about them. From the experience, Mileena felt that she was very helpful with the dishes and that Grandpa was very interested in her day, both promoting Mileena's self-worth and self-confidence. Our greatest learning occurs when we are in a relationship with someone.

Learning Together

Imagine the experience of a 5 year old crafting a pizza with his family for the first time and the learning experience that can be supported with the adventure. The child has a variety of sauces and toppings to choose from. It is an opportunity for the family to convert the kitchen into a pretend pizzeria where everyone takes on the role of chef. It is an opportunity for the child to recall toppings he likes or items he has never tried as he contemplates how he will apply his toppings to the crust. This experience will help the child explore new foods and understand the math and science involved in cooking. Making pizza is an opportunity for adult and child to embrace creativity and learn from one another in the shared experience, and enjoy it together. Don't underestimate the value of sitting at the kitchen table to share a meal and the valuable learning opportunities that come with the experience. ♥



Wemagination Resource Center

by Kate Dixon

The Family Development Program (FDP) has a valuable resource that you may not know about: Wemagination (the WE). This resource center is dedicated to the philosophy that *play* is essential to learning. Our warehouse and showroom house a variety of open-ended, hands-on recycle materials that engage imagination, creativity and problem-solving. When children are involved in play-based learning through the creative reuse of these materials, the result is the development of strong, capable and competent learners that will thrive in school as well as in life.

Families, early childhood educators, and community members may purchase a nominally priced mem-



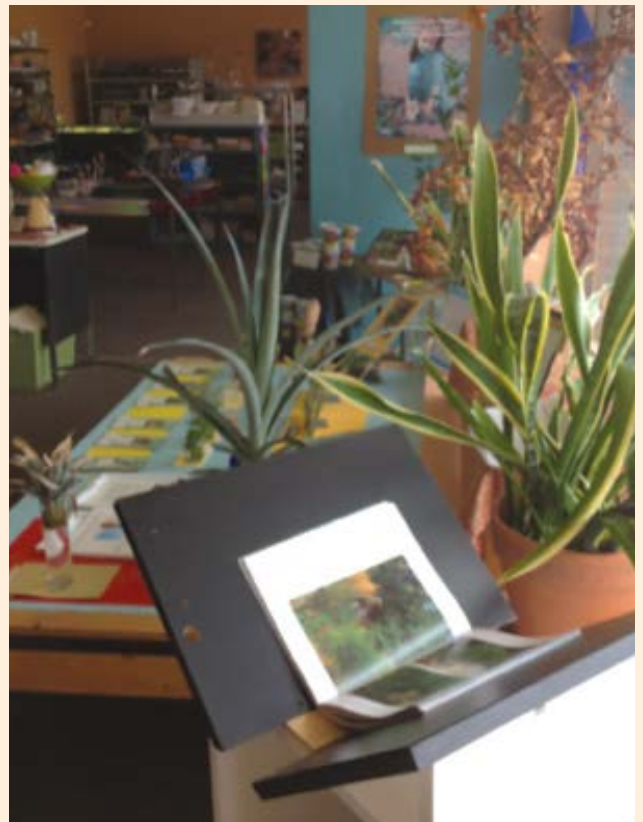
The WE is open to families and early childhood educators as a source for educational open-ended materials.



Experience the possibilities of recycled materials.

bership card that will provide access to the materials. FDP staff members are on site to support your exploration, selection, and use of materials. The WE, located in Albuquerque (4010 Copper NE), is open Wednesdays from 10am-6pm, Thursdays from 1-6pm, and the first Saturday of the month, 11am-3pm. If you would like more information about the WE, please call 505-277-5800.

Family Development Program also invites you to become a “Friend of the WE” as a volunteer. “Friends” assist us in expanding outreach to families, educators, and community members. Examples of volunteer opportunities include: locating new, recycled, or reuse materials to refresh our inventory; working with FDP staff in offering community-based play experiences; supporting WE staff members in arranging, organizing and displaying WE materials; increasing community awareness of the Wemagination Resource Center. If you would like to become a “Friend” of the WE or would like more information, please contact Kate Dixon at kadixon@unm.edu or 505-277-5601. ♥



The Center sparks your memories, imagination, and ignites curiosity!



Our spaces feel comfortable and inviting...like home.



Explore our showroom and warehouse.



Exciting learning environments stimulate ALL our senses.

*UNM Family Development Program
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001
<http://fdp.unm.edu>*

