



## “A” IS FOR ART

*Family Day’s approach to art focuses on active learning*

Pablo Picasso used to say, “Every child is an artist.” He was right, of course: when children are given the materials and the opportunity, their imaginations will soar to great heights.

While most children won’t create viable masterpieces like Picasso, involving them in the creative arts *will* provide them with benefits that are considerably more valuable.

At Family Day, we recognize the importance of art to child advancement; that is why each of our child care centres and home child care programs is equipped with everything needed to help children reach their potential.

“All of our children are involved in active learning,” says Lisa Shortall, Manager of Training at Family Day. “This aligns with the Ontario Government’s ‘How Does Learning Happen?’ document.”

Active learning is a method of educating that aims to directly involve children in the learning process. In the context of art, it means children are free to be actively involved in their own creativity. Art at Family Day is viewed as a process: there are no pre-cut shapes or craft kits. Children combine, transform and manipulate materials to represent their own interpretation of art.

Yet, while the creating is left to the children, staff members plan daily by systematically organizing resources. Dedicated art spaces are set up, materials are organized, and everything – from glue to paint – is put in separate bins.

### **A Variety of Benefits**

Of course, it’s not just about the crayon drawer or the glitter chest. “Parents might be surprised at how much their children are learning through art,” says Shortall.

According to HighScope’s *Arts Smart* by Ann Epstein, the creative arts serve several purposes in preschool education: they put young children in touch with their own senses, thoughts and feelings; they allow children to express themselves in many ways; and they challenge children’s ideas and help them make sense of the world around them.

The arts also contribute to child development in a variety of other ways, including: physical development (hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills); cognitive development (naming objects and examining shapes); social development (learning to share and being responsible for cleanup); and emotional development (risk taking and self-esteem).

“We see a variety of benefits from art,” says Linda Saad, Program Consultant at Family Day. “Because art is always available and the children are always supported, we really see gains in children’s confidence, initiative and exploration.”

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### Further Learning

Art can help children in other areas of learning. These include: math skills (children count, and learn about size and shapes); language development (children talk about art and learn new vocabulary); decision-making (art strengthens problem-solving and critical-thinking skills); and visual learning (various tasks help develop visual-spatial skills).

Family Day further encourages art education by bringing art outside of the centre or home program setting. For instance, children go on field trips to places like the Royal Ontario Museum to learn about art and architecture, and are often given sketch books on field trips so they can record what they see.

Children in our programs are also encouraged to bring materials in from outside to use in art projects. It helps them make associations with nature and build connections they can see.

### Art and Health

Saad notes that art also provides a calming atmosphere for children. Art as a creative outlet can relieve children’s stress and help them work through things in their lives they may not be able to verbalize.

And regardless of their level of artistic ability, children will gain self-confidence and feelings of success as they enjoy artistic activities.

From the physiological paybacks to the developmental benefits, art at Family Day provides children with everything they need to engage in active learning – and grow in the process.

Says Shortall: “It’s not just paint on paper – there is a lot more going on there.”



### Message from Joan Arruda, CEO



The process of creativity is a very personal one for children. As an RECE, I have always enjoyed observing children create in whatever medium they are working. Messy

play and the role of experimentation are so important to learning (and, of course, building the next big creation). As adults, we need to remember to give children space and time during this process.

While the main thrust of this edition of FOCUS speaks to children’s creation, I am going to take a leap and talk about organizational creativity and innovation.

This year, Family Day is celebrating 165 years of service to the community; we are also launching our new strategic plan, which is steeped in the language of innovation. This new plan will launch us into the next five years as we explore and research new areas of service and programs, ensure we recruit the best and brightest staff, and create an environment that will allow our teams to be innovative and creative.

I hope our families will support us as we move forward to enhance and improve services and programs across the agency. During this process we will explore, adapt and make sense of what we learn in an effort to come up with the best programs possible for those who use our services.

Please visit our website ([www.familydaycare.com](http://www.familydaycare.com)) to see to see our Strategic Plan – our newest creation.





# Dodging winter woes

*Canadian winters can be harsh – and oh, so cold.*

*So when the thermometer dips, keep the kids safe with the following tips:*

**Layer up** Put several layers of clothing on your child and make sure the head, neck and hands are covered. Dress babies and young children in one more layer than an adult would wear.

**Beware of clothing hazards** Scarves and hood strings can strangle smaller children, so use other clothing to keep them warm.

**Use sunscreen** Children and adults can still get sunburn in the winter. Sun can reflect off of the snow, so apply sunscreen.

**Install alarms** More household fires happen during the winter, so make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Don't forget to check the batteries to see if they need changing.

**Get equipped** Children should always wear professionally-fitted helmets when snowboarding, skiing, sledding or playing ice hockey.

**Prevent nosebleeds** If your child suffers from minor winter nosebleeds, use a cold air humidifier in their room. Saline nose drops can help keep the nose moist.

**Stay hydrated** In drier winter air kids lose more water through their breath, so make sure they drink plenty of liquids.

*Source: Save the Children/American Academy of Pediatrics*



*From left to right: Disa Kauk of ThinkLink Graphics recorded the event in a beautiful graphic; Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, spoke at the event; Event participants Don Giesbrecht (CCCF), Pat Thompson (Atkinson Foundation), Joan Arruda (CEO, Family Day), Hugh MacPhie (MacPhie & Associates), Allyson Hewitt (@MaRS), David Mousavi (Chair of Board, Family Day)*

## Event shines light on innovation

Family Day's 165th anniversary celebration, held on September 22 at the Toronto Reference Library, was a great success.

The event brought together staff, partners and

guests from our sector for breakfast and a morning of inspiring words from speakers such as Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, and Don Giesbrecht, CEO of the Canadian Child Care Federation.

Guests were also treated to an engaging conversation on innovation and change from a panel comprised of Hugh MacPhie (MacPhie & Associates), Allyson Hewitt (@MaRS) and Pat Thompson (Atkinson Foundation).

Family Day captured the morning on video, in photographs, and via a graphic artist, and will share these at two celebratory events later this year for staff members who were unable to attend the fall event.



## Family Day Celebrates Staff

While Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day *should* be every day, it was officially celebrated province-wide on October 26. To celebrate, Family Day hosted a pizza lunch for all of our RECEs, in partnership with CUPE 2563, and gave out some sweet treats. We are so proud of our staff and the important role they play in so many people's lives!

## GET READY TO ROLL

Dust off your bowling shoes and get ready for the 6th annual Bowling for Family Day. Next year's event will take place on Saturday, April 22, 2017 at two locations: Markham Bowl and Brunswick Zone Mississauga.

*Stay tuned for more information in the months to come.*



## Staff members scale CN Tower

It was a tough climb on an early morning, but eight bold Family Day staff members scaled all 1,776 steps of the CN Tower at the annual CN Tower Climb for United Way on October 22. Congratulations to the climbers who got up in the wee hours to participate in this event.



**FAMILY DAY**



United Way  
Member Agency

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### Our Programs

- Licensed Home Child Care
- Child Care Centres
- School Age Programs
- Resource Programs
- Ontario Early Years Centres in Toronto East, York Region and the Region of Peel

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*For countless families, Family Day is the only way!*