



Healthy Child Care NEWSLETTER



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Meltdown Madness Management

By Kathy Harris, DHSS Section for Child Care Regulation

“One minute I was rushing around, getting lunch in hungry bellies and rolling through my day. Then, it happened: that change in the atmosphere like thunder clouds rolling in. I knew today’s meltdown was on its way...”

Anonymous Caregiver

For some children, thunderous meltdowns are rare. For others, they are engraved in the daily schedule. So, what is a caregiver to do? What answers are out there to conquer the meltdown challenge?

Unfortunately, there is no secret antidote that works in every situation. There are, however, many ideas to explore and help with challenging meltdowns.

If you work with a child that experiences several meltdowns a day, one of the first items on your “to-do” list is observation. Take brief notes that include day of the week, time, activity, and other information observed when a meltdown erupts. Look for clues such as fatigue, hunger, or over-stimulation. This is going to take extra time and yes, it might feel that you don’t have any extra to give. However, when you factor in the time spent dealing with meltdowns, figuring out how to prevent them will pay off in the long run. Take notes and then spend time looking for clues. If you observe a pattern, brainstorm ways break it up. For example, if over-stimulation is a trigger, schedule a quiet break.

Not only should you take time to observe, but also to talk with the child about his meltdowns. If the child can



verbalize, pick a time when he is not upset. Ask him about frustrating experiences. For example, you might say, “It seems that when you play with blocks, you get very upset and end up crying. Can we figure out how to make this better?” He might surprise you and say something you didn’t think of. For example, maybe the rug in the block area is not flat and his blocks fall over, upsetting him. Listen carefully to what he says about his triggers. He might not be able to tell you why he gets upset, but the conversation is still a time when you can reassure him you care and you are there to help.

Once you’ve talked about meltdown triggers, develop a plan. Ask the child, “What can you do to calm yourself? How can I help you?” He might say that he needs a minute to listen to music with headphones; or needs time in a rocking chair. Write down what he says and have the necessary props accessible and ready.

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Each child is unique and what works with one might not be successful with another. Keep a collection of calming ideas handy as prompts. Here are a few ideas worth trying...

- Sit in front of the child. Breathe in through your nose slowly, taking 4 seconds. Wait 1-2 seconds. Exhale slowly through your mouth, again taking about 4 seconds. Breathe in an exaggerated fashion so the child will take note. It is amazing how contagious deep breathing is!
- Blowing bubbles uses the same breathing method as described above. Allow an upset child to blow bubbles.
- Have the child hold out one hand. The fingers are “candles.” Count out all five “candles” and then together, blow out each “candle.”
- Give the child a pinwheel to blow. This also utilizes deep breathing techniques that help calm.
- Sticky hands: Have a child pretend that their hands are “sticky” and press the palms of his hands together for 10 seconds. Release and wiggle fingers. Repeat.
- Make a “calm box” available with silly putty, stress balls, rain sticks, sensory gel pads, glitter jars, etc.
- Set out child-size rocking chairs. Rocking is a soothing, calming activity.
- Create a Zen garden using sand and food-grade lavender oil. Add miniature rakes.
- Hold regularly scheduled yoga sessions to teach children relaxation techniques.
- Ask each child to bring a filled photo album from home. Allowing time to look at familiar pictures can help redirect and calm.
- Design an audio station set up with headphones, music and audio books.

Above all, don't give up! Meltdowns are not pleasant for anyone involved and, with patience, can be diminished. Stay open and alert to new ideas and be flexible. Your efforts will benefit all!

New Year...New Professional Development Plan

Submitted by Stephanie Chandler, DHSS Section for Child Care Regulation

With the New Year, it is also time for a new Professional Development Plan. January is an excellent time to reflect on where you are as a professional and to set goals for where you want to go. As a child care provider, do you look at the required annual 12 clock hours of training as an item to simply be checked off the list or do you view it as a personal challenge to grow in the profession? Regardless of what you have done in the past, now is the perfect time to move forward in a positive direction.

According to Duke University's Human Resources, “A professional development plan documents the goals, required skill and competency development, and objectives a staff member will need to accomplish in order to support continuous improvement and career development.”

The first thing to do is to set specific and measurable professional goals. Decide where you want to be as an early childhood professional. Consider what it will take to achieve your goal and set a deadline for yourself to review your success. Next, and often the most difficult task, is to do an honest self-assessment. Take time to reflect how you perform your duties and consider what areas you would like to develop further. Now that you know where you currently are and where you would like to go, the rest will easily fall into place!

Make a personal plan and dedicate your annual training to support your plan. For greater accountability, consider sharing this plan with a colleague, friend or family member. Look for training that will support your growth in the area(s) you have identified. You might also look for articles and/or books to read to further increase your knowledge. Completing training throughout the year rather than all at the beginning or end of the year will help with your retention and execution of the new things you learn.

Clock hour training should be more than just repeating the same free and easy trainings year after year so that you can check off a box. If you have fallen into this pattern, breaking the cycle is as easy as making the decision to do so. As an early childhood professional, you are in charge of your own professional growth so make 2018 a year to accomplish your goals.

Helpful links for clock hour training:

- **Section for Child Care Regulation**
<http://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/index.php>
- **Missouri Workshop Calendar**
<http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org>
- **OPEN Initiative**
<https://www.openinitiative.org>



Painting preschool playgrounds for Movement

by Barbara Keen, DHSS Bureau of Community Health and Wellness

Painted playground designs are an inexpensive way to encourage children to be physically active on your playground and they don't have the safety restrictions that go along with climbing equipment and swings. As a child, do you remember drawing hopscotch games on the sidewalk with chalk? Now you can paint hopscotch and other designs on a hard surface for long lasting fun. Children can learn letters, numbers, colors, shapes, pathways and sequences while they play. They have fun as they practice agility, stretching, balance, eye/foot coordination and locomotor movement skills.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Community Health and Wellness has a variety

of stencils available for loan to child care facilities. These reusable stencils can be delivered to your community along with instructions for using them. You provide the paint and people to do the painting. Child care centers have found painting day to be a great volunteer event. Consider asking for help from families, scout troops or other community service organizations. Everything you need to know about borrowing stencils can be found at www.health.mo.gov/playgroundstencils. The first step is to complete and submit a stencil request form. Then a little patience may be needed as the stencils have to be delivered by staff traveling to your area. Painting needs to be done when the weather is mild, but winter is a good time to get your name on the list.

Examples of stencil designs along with ideas for ways to use them:

Shape Swirl

- Walk, tiptoe or march along the swirly line from end to end.
- Toss bean bags into the shapes. Paint the shapes different colors and toss a colored bean bags onto the same color shape.
- Stand on one leg and balance inside a shape.
- Run in place, jump, hop, touch toes or squat on a shape.
- As skills improve, have children do two things at a time like march in place and clap their hands.



Rocket Hopscotch

- Children practice balance and coordination as they alternate hopping on one foot and jumping on two feet.
- Toss a beanbag into a square. Hop to that square. Bend over to pick up the beanbag and repeat.
- Children can pretend they are taking a rocket ship to the moon and back.



Tackling TOUGH Conversations

by Lisa Eberle-Mayse, United 4 Children

We know that something’s “just not right.” Maybe an infant seems a little slow to walk... or a preschooler is having a hard time talking... or a school-age child seems to always be fighting on the playground. We want to work with the families of the children we care for—but how do we start these “difficult conversations?”

First, we remind ourselves that children are the most important part of a parent’s life, and that their attachment to them is powerful and emotional. This means that we approach any concerns about a child with professionalism, respect and relationship, and shared concern and responsibility.

Professionalism

- Check your expectations. Review developmental milestones to make sure any concerns you have are accurate. Remember that some variations in development are typical.
- Gather objective information by observing the child over a period of time, and at different times of day. Write your observations down so that you can reflect on them later:
 - o Do you see changes over time?
 - o Do you see patterns of behavior?
 - o What is the impact on the child?
 - o What is the impact on other children?
 - o What is the impact on the teacher? (In other words—Is this the child’s problem, or MY problem?)
- Remember the importance of understanding the family’s unique culture. What matters in this family may be different from what matters to ME.

Respect and Relationship

- “I have to know that you care, before I care what you know.” Start from day one with a commitment to building strong relationships with ALL of your families. Get to know a child’s unique strengths, challenges, likes, dislikes and take the time to share this knowledge with the child’s parents on a daily basis. Don’t forget to comment on the strengths of the parents too!

- When it’s time to “have the conversation,” schedule time! Don’t try to tackle sensitive topics in a hurry while parents are dropping off or picking up.
- ASK whether the family has any concerns—and don’t assume they’re not telling the truth if they say, “He never does that at home!” Sometimes children really are different between home and school.
- Share your observations and concerns in an objective, specific, non-judgmental manner.
- Have someone take notes, and set a time to check back in to see how things are going.
- If you are asking the family to seek additional resources (an evaluation, or therapy), be prepared with specific referral information to give them.

Shared Concern and Responsibility

Perhaps the most important thing to remember in having these tough talks, is that in the end we—teachers and families—have a shared interest—their child! Families need to know that we are here to work WITH and FOR them to make sure their child is the best they can be. It might sound something like this...

“Ann and Bob, you know how much I love Angie! Nobody can climb higher on the monkey bars than she can, and when she laughs—oh! The world laughs with her! We’ve been working hard to help her make friends—especially on the playground, but she’s really struggling-- and I need your help. Is there a good time for us to get together to talk?”

It can certainly be challenging to help families face issues that arise with their children, but doing so with professionalism and respect can deepen our relationships with parents, and strengthen our commitment to ensuring children reach their highest potential.

Rules of Engagement: How, and Why, to Build Strong Connections with the Parents in Your Program

by Allela Fendler, United 4 Children.

Parent engagement is a crucial component of quality, early childhood care. Children have better outcomes when families and providers work together, and parents are actively involved in their children's early childhood experience. Supporting parents in this manner also lays the groundwork for their sustained involvement in their children's education.

Like with so much in life, and definitely early childhood, it comes down to relationships. There are no short-cuts, no panacea, no magic wand (if only!). We must take the time (can be 3-6 months) to build trust and cultivate genuine relationships with families, but there are strategies which, if practiced consistently, will help you support your families and build those effective relationships.

Five Tips:

- 1 Recognize what parents are doing well. Adults need reinforcement too. When you see them, bear those things in mind, because they'll perceive it, not only from your words, but also tone, body language, facial expression. They'll feel it, and be more likely to respond positively.
- 2 Recognize what children do well and share it every time you see their parents. How depressing would it be if every time you got a few minutes with your supervisor, all she ever told you was what was wrong? Parents need to hear the positive too, to be uplifted. The more you pour in, the more they have to give to their child, and more responsive and involved they'll be with you and your program.
- 3 Find your lighthearted spark. A little levity can lighten even the toughest days. Parents can feel like they are constantly being judged, and feel hopeless. Help parents understand the world is forgiving--you are forgiving. We can live and learn, share a laugh, and move on.
- 4 Know where to find help. Maintain a handy, but discreet, list of resources for your families. Engage such discussions with candor, sensitivity, and the utmost confidentiality. A nondescript three ring binder works well, separated into common sections: clothing and supplies, rental assistance, counseling, home visiting services, adult-Ed services, more as needed.
- 5 Know how and when to help yourself. If you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of others. If you can't model best practices for parents, you can't support them--so support yourself, first. Seriously.



Early childhood educators balance countless professional responsibilities, and effective parent engagement and support might seem yet another task, piled atop the already towering list. But when authentically embraced, it will in fact lighten the load, make life easier, reduce the number of difficult moments with parents, and provide credibility and cooperation when such moments do arise. We are in this together, and supporting parents provides a more successful experience for them, for you, and most importantly, the children we serve.



Save the Date!

Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education



AN INTENTIONAL JOURNEY

PREPARING CHILDREN, FAMILIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FOR SUCCESS



Save the Date for Conference on the Young Years!

Join us on March 8-10, 2018, at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach for three action-packed days of professional development on an intentional journey preparing children, families, schools and communities for success! This year's keynote and featured speakers are powerful, engaging and nationally recognized experts in the field of early childhood including, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria.



Dr. Navsaria, is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and is director of the MD-MPH program there.

Dr. Navsaria is committed to understanding how basic science can translate into busy primary care settings via population health concepts and policy initiatives. He aims to educate the next generation of health care providers in realizing how their professional roles include being involved in larger concepts of social policy and how they may affect the cognitive development of children.

During the conference, Dr. Navsaria will be addressing how early experiences elevate everything—early brain development and the future of society, and screen time—a discussion of children, screens and learning

[Click here for conference registration information!](#)

Making a Difference Together

by Robin Zellers, Child Care Aware® of Missouri

While most fell back with daylight savings, Child Care Aware® of Missouri has fallen forward...fallen forward into rapid onward and upward change. Some of our change is about us working together with our partners to find ways to improve the Missouri Workshop Calendar to make it more user friendly. We are also having conversations about how to improve our training for child care professionals and identifying additional training and leadership development we would like to offer. As all of us partner together to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families we encourage you to find ways in which you can expand your learning, how you can gain more applicable knowledge as you care, influence and teach young children, and how overall you can excel in your career and personal development journey.

We encourage you to check into the following resources:

Missouri Workshop Calendar, many trainings are FREE, trainings include CCDF Health and Safety trainings, and several trainings are offered online, on-demand for easy access - <http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org/>.

NAEYC Power to the Profession - <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/initiatives/profession/overview>

Show Me Child Care Resources – an online portal that includes a variety of resources and discounts for child care programs and teachers including health care discounts, cell phone service discounts, and discounts on supplies for the facility and for teachers. Email help@showmeresource.org for more information.

T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI Scholarship - <http://teach-missouri.org/>

Child Care Aware® of Missouri is on a progressive path to become our best yet so that we make an even bigger difference for young children and their families in addition to early childhood educators and the child care businesses they work within and/or own and operate. We hope you will begin or continue your development journey along with us!



Recalls

Unsafe Products, and How to Obtain Recall Information

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent federal regulatory agency that works to reduce the risk of injuries and deaths from consumer products. The CPSC issues approximately 300 product recalls each year, including many products found in child care settings. Many consumers do not know about the recalls and continue to use potentially unsafe products. As a result, used products may be lent or given to a charity, relatives or neighbors or sold at garage sales or secondhand stores. You can help by not accepting, buying, lending or selling recalled products. You can contact the CPSC to find out whether products have been recalled and, if so, what you should do with them. If you have products that you wish to donate or sell and you have lost the original packaging, contact the CPSC for product information. It is the responsibility of child care providers to ensure that recalled products are not in use in their facilities.

The CPSC's toll-free hotline is available at 800.638.2772. The hearing impaired can call 800.638.8270. Information also is available on the CPSC website at: www.cpsc.gov.

This quarter we are highlighting a product that has recently been recalled and is commonly found in child care facilities.

IKEA Reannounces Recall of MALM and Other Models of Chests and Dressers Due to Serious Tip-over Hazard; 8th Child Fatality Reported

Recall date: November 21, 2017

Recall number: 18-040

Recall Summary

Name of product:

Children's and adult chests and dressers



Hazard:

The recalled chests and dressers are unstable if they are not properly anchored to the wall, posing serious tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in injuries or death to children.

Remedy:

Refund/repair

<https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2018/IKEA-Reannounces-Recall-of-MALM-and-Other-Models-of-Chests-and-Dressers-Due-to-Serious-Tip-over-Hazard>

Toys“R”Us Recalls Clay Craft Kits Due to Risk of Mold Exposure; Sold at Babies“R”Us and Toys“R”Us

Recall date: November 29, 2017

Recall number: 18-045

Recall Summary

Name of product:

Clay craft kits

Hazard:

Mold can be present in the clay, posing a risk of respiratory or other infections in individuals with compromised immune systems, damaged lungs or an allergy to mold.

Remedy:

Refund



Path of EGRESS

by Greg Dickens, Division of Fire Safety

As the temperatures continue to change, we must remain vigilant on fire safety. Emergency plans and evacuation drills must be evaluated and updated on a constant basis. Among the ever evolving safety concerns, the path of egress must remain one of our highest priorities.

As you plan on exiting a building, most common thoughts revolve around the exterior doors. Exterior doors are a primary component of the egress pathway; however, it is only a single piece of the trifecta. The components of an egress pathway are: the exit access, exit and exit discharge. Each of the three components relies on each other and must work together for a successful evacuation plan.

The egress access is the clear space that leads to the exterior doors. This piece is easily seen from the inside of the building, but often overlooked. Many times people inadvertently place objects in this pathway that will inhibit or obstruct quick and easy access to the exits. Brooms, bags, and boxes are often found in the path of egress due to the thinking “oh I will only be a second’ This may be true, but how many times are these items forgotten about or removed much later in the day? During an emergency, the smallest obstacle can cause major issues. The best piece of advice is to be aware of your surrounding and keep all paths to the exits as clear and clutter free as possible.

The exit doors are also often seen, but never utilized. Most buildings have a few dedicated doorways that everyone uses. These doors are well used and due to this are the easiest to open and pass through. Once a door sits unused for a length of time, they tend to not work as freely as when used on a regular basis. Doors, latching mechanisms, and locks will bind

or stick causing more pressure to be necessary to open the door. I have witnessed a door that required multiple attempts to open with the last one being a very stout “shoulder block” to finally get the door to open. As with paths of egress, simple steps in preventative maintenance will go a long way. Check on and open emergency exits monthly or more often if necessary. The easiest way to do this is to utilize these doors during your monthly fire drills to ensure proper operation during emergency situations.

The final portion of the egress pathway is also the most overlooked and least maintained. This is the exit discharge. The exit discharge is the portion outside the exit doors that leads to the public way. Many times the exit discharge is blocked or obstructed by toys, containers, and weather. Keeping toys and containers near the building makes perfect sense for reducing theft, however, the pathway must be maintained for a quick and easy exit. The aforementioned weather also comes into play in this portion of the egress. That dreaded four letter word...SNOW, must be cleared to ensure the door will be able to be opened when the time comes. Snow drifts up against the door, melts, refreezes, and seems like concrete when trying to remove it. Snow and ice must be removed in a timely manner and often to ensure the safety of occupants as they make their way to the designated meeting place. With a little preparation and planning, this task is much easier than it sounds.

As with anything, practice makes perfect, so to ensure the best possible execution of your emergency evacuation plan, practice, practice, practice. If change in your current egress pathway is needed, be the change you want to see.

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This publication provides topical information regarding young children who are cared for in child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care or to provide them with the web address: health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/newsletters.php so they can print their own copy.

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Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Section for Child Care Regulation, P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO, 65102, 573.751.2450. Hearing- and speech-impaired citizens can dial 711. EEO/AAP services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

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