

May 2010

# Child Development Centre

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## From My Window...

### Greetings from Alayne

The sun is out, the snow is gone, and surely summer is on the way. It has been a busy year here at the Child Development Centre. We have had over 300 new referrals in Whitehorse and the communities since the end of August....no wonder we feel busy. We are winding down with less than 2 months until summer break and this means some children will be making the transition into Kindergarten. Over 50 children and their families are participating in the transition process this year, and although we are excited to see them take this next step, we will miss them all.

In addition to our Therapeutic Preschool program, therapists have also been busy running two other groups: Chatter Bugs, a group for children with speech and language delays, and Jumpin' Jigglers, a group for children with motor delays. In addition to a load of fun, both groups have given therapists the opportunity to provide hands on intervention to a larger number of children.

Trips to the communities are continuing right through to June. For our newest travel

schedule please visit our website at [cdcyukon.ca](http://cdcyukon.ca).

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 10th at noon here at CDC. Mark the date on your calendar and come and join us if you can. If you are interested in serving on the board please give us a call at 456-8182.

We have been working on a parent survey that we hope to have ready for later this month. We are looking for feedback on how we are doing and thank you in advance for taking the time to fill one out. Our door is always open if you'd rather pop in and talk to us directly.

We would also like to make some changes to our playground, such as re-staining the wood, and are looking for anyone skilled in carpentry who would like to volunteer some time to help us out. We would also welcome donations to help with this project.

That's it for now....I hope you continue to enjoy the longer days and warm sun.

Alayne



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## Comings & Goings...

*“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”*

*Forest E. Witcraft*

Things have slowed down over the past few months but a few people have come and gone. After a number of years as our front line person, Ashley Salé has moved to a new job. We miss her and wish her the best of luck. In saying that, we welcomed Jenny Hierlihy who started as our Administrative Assistant in January. We also said good bye to one of our program assistants, Lori Fraser, who finished with us in December,

and Ashley Griffiths, who left to wait the arrival of her twins. Jan Wood finished at the end of March, and after working with her for the last 17 years, we know she will be dearly missed. Cat O'Donovan joined our staff to help fill in until June. Janine Aberson, who had just left on maternity leave at our last publication, welcomed a new baby girl, Peyton. Congratulations to Janine and her family.



## Parents Corner...

I was recently asked to write a parent article about the CDC and it made me think how much the CDC has helped my family over the past few years. It took me a while to remember the first time we had contact with CDC, but then it all came back to me.

My husband and I just had our second daughter, Sarah, on December 14, 2007, and she was diagnosed with Achondroplasia dwarfism. As some of you may know, the first few months of this 'new world' can be a bit overwhelming and foggy.



What do I do? Where do I go? Why are you doing that to my child? What do I do next? Do you know what you are doing.... because I don't. These are the types of questions I would find myself asking .

It was after a recent trip to BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) that I was instructed to have someone follow Sarah and her progress. "OK," I said, "and who would that person be?" Thankfully I have an older child and I was familiar with some of the programs that are available to us. Through trial and error of trying to find someone that could help me follow Sarah's progress, I stumbled upon a very soft spoken, gentle, and kind-hearted sole named Amy at the CDC.

Someone with Sarah's condition doesn't come around very often; we have learned that this is a learning process for everyone in the city of

Whitehorse - and in Vancouver for that matter. Amy and I would meet after every trip that Sarah and I would take to BCCH. We would collaborate on what was discussed and suggested by the doctors at BCCH. We would try to figure out what professionals would need to get involved at CDC or in the city of Whitehorse. Amy would research Sarah's form of dwarfism and find out what the requirements were and what other professionals did in Sarah's situation and set up a program for her. With great questions, advice, and suggestions, the CDC was very proactive in Sarah's case and would always seem to be one step ahead. As time went on, Sarah was introduced to a new team: Kyla, Sheila, Karen, and Lisa, again with all the qualifications your child would ever need.

The Child Development Center has helped us with

physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and supportive seating devices for Sarah. They have also helped with supplying a supportive child care worker for Sarah's first year in daycare, then a part time worker as she has developed and become more independent - not to mention all the moral support for us parents! They have suggestions on all situations, and if they don't know the answer, they will find it.

I personally don't know where I would be without the CDC. They are professional, knowledgeable, and genuinely nice. Thank you for playing a huge part in my child's life.

A sincere thank-you from the Cave family.

## From the Mouths of Kids...

Kid: “know what”

Adult: “no, tell me!”

Kid: “in the summer I’m going to shave”

Adult: “oh really?”

Kid: “yah, to get my summer hair”

During one session with a child, we were building block towers then kicking them down.

The child wanted to surprise me with his tower so he had me cover my eyes while he built. Then it was my turn to build while he closed his eyes...but when I looked up not only did he have his eyes closed, he was sitting the cross legged lotus-like position with

his thumb and finger making a circle chanting “ommmm.” I guess Leona’s relaxation techniques really do work!



## Let’s Get Moving!

Did you know that the average Canadian spends 3-5 hours a day in front of the TV?

Or that 2009 Active Health Kids report found that only 13% of Canada’s kids are getting the recommended 90 minutes of activity a day?

So how can we help our kids increase their active time and decrease their sedentary time?

- go for a bike or walk after dinner
- put on music and dance
- do yoga...or animal yoga
- kick/chase/throw a ball
- roll down a hill with your kids
- make an obstacle course - inside or outside
- and model active, healthy behavior



Remember that being active has many health benefits for children including preventing disease, increasing self esteem, and doing better in school.

[www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)

*“A three year old child is a being who gets almost as much fun out of a fifty-six dollar set of swings as it does out of finding a small green worm.”*

*Bill Vaughan*

## No More Diapers



It probably seems like just yesterday that you changed your child's first diaper and now you're wondering if it's time to start potty training. There is no magic age at which children are ready to start learning how to use the potty. Some start as early as 18 months, and others are not ready before the age of 3 or even 4. Starting before a child is truly ready is likely going to make the process longer than if you wait until your child shows the following signs of readiness:

### Physical Signs:

- Urinates a fair amount at one time
- Has regular, well formed bowel movements at relatively predictable times
- Has "dry" periods of at least 3-4 hours
- Is able to get to the washroom on time
- Is able to sit on a toilet or potty alone without falling off or in

### Behavioural Signs:

- Can sit quietly in one position for 2-5 minutes
- Can pull his pants up and down
- Dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty diaper
- Shows interest in others' bathroom habits
- Gives a verbal or physical sign when having a bowel movement
- Demonstrates a desire for independence
- Takes pride in his accomplishments

- Is in a generally cooperative stage, not an oppositional one

### Cognitive Signs:

- Can follow simple instructions
- Understands the value of putting things where they belong
- Has language for toileting and body parts
- Understands the physical signs that mean he has to go and can
- tells you before it happens

### Helpful Hints for success:

- Use the same words consistently for toileting and body parts
- Set a small footstool at the base of the toilet so he can use it to get on and off the potty, as well as for assistance to push against it during bowel movements
- Flushing can be scary! It may take longer to flush bowel movements
- Have your child watch other family members use the toilet
- Sometimes sitting on a potty wearing diapers or a pull-up helps
- Praise your child for success and any attempts. Be specific—for example, "Good work Jimmy! You peed in the potty."
- Pick 2-3 days when you are home with your child and are able to focus on



toilet learning

- Accept that accidents will occur. Be calm and involve your child in cleaning up and changing soiled clothing.
- Be clear about whose agenda this is. If after several days of struggling or if your child becomes resistant, stop the process and wait a month or so before trying again.

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*"Starting before a child is truly ready is likely going to make the process longer than if you wait until your child shows the following signs..."*

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## Research Ramblings

By Leona Corniere, Registered Psychologist

### Should Texting be Banned While Parenting?

Recently while stopped at a red light in my vehicle, I noticed a mother sitting on a bench with her young child beside her. The child was attempting to get the mother's attention by poking her on the arm and pulling on her sweater. The mother, who was in the process of texting, did not respond to the child. This observation got me thinking about the influx of new technology and how it might be impacting child development and family interactions. My curiosity led me to further reading on this topic. Here is what I learned:

Should texting be banned while parenting? – this is a question asked by E. Schwarz, psychiatrist and author of the book, *Kids, Parents, and Technology: An Instruction Manual for Young Families*. Dr. Schwarz suggests that the impact of technology on kids and families can be just as destructive as traffic accidents. He says that child development and family life can be weakened by technology. His book provides guidance for parents of children from infancy through eight years. The book's goal is to help parents guide their children towards beneficial and positive uses of the Internet, videogames, smart phones, and other electronic media. He says, "As they grow, they will form better habits than

today's media-soaked teens, 1/5 of whom now get as much as nineteen hours of media daily. By applying sound child-rearing and family support principles, parents can create balanced media plans that lead youngsters to the values and orientation they will need to succeed in an increasingly media-rich world."

"The BlackBerry gives me freedom, for sure," a mom confided, "but I sometimes wonder how bad it is that I answer the call when I'm with my kids." Turns out, this mother's child covered up her mom's screen, mid-text, saying something like, "If you're not going to be with me, don't be with me. But if you are going to be with me, please be with me, and put this thing away." R. Tobey, director of Calm and Sense Therapy, a counseling service, says, "I think a mom needs to be honest and ask herself, 'How important is this message and how important is it that it get answered right now?'"

A recently released Kaiser Family Foundation study showed that older children are engaged with the media as much as eight hours a day; only 1/3 of families limit media, but even when parents do set rules, media consumption by kids drops by only 1/3.

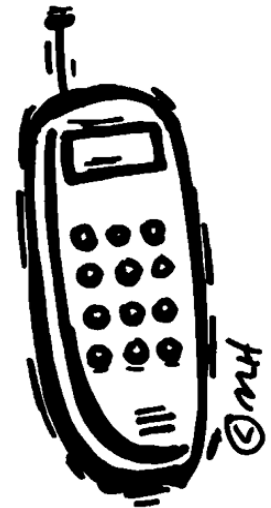
Texting and using cell phones while driving causes many traffic accidents of which children are often the helpless passengers.

"When it comes to gadgets like cell phones and computers, some kids and adults don't seem to consider their gadget behaviour rude," said P.M. Forni, co-founder of Johns Hopkins University's Civility Initiative. "We're seeing behavior that you never would have seen before—" he said. "students getting up in the middle of class to answer their phones, texting during class, students watching TV on their laptops during lectures."

Joy Weaver, whose Dallas-based Protocol Enterprises offers etiquette classes for all ages, said parents should begin establishing rules and expectations early on about cell phones and computer use. Monitor usage closely with the help of available applications and programs. Sending a consistent message to children is crucial. "You can't have two sets of rules," she said. "If you don't want your children to text at the dinner table you need to ignore your own phone or excuse yourself from the table, too."

Larry Rosen brings his expertise as both a research psychologist and father together in a new book, *Me, MySpace, and I*. He provides insight and excellent guidance.

Nancy E. Willard, author of *Cyber-Safe Kids, Cyber-Savvy Teens: Helping Young People Learn to Make Safe and Responsible Choices Online*.



## Team Updates

### Carmacks

The Carmacks team has been very busy with community activities this year. Recently we were invited to participate in the Community Health Fair. Lots of people stopped by our display to chat. We enjoyed the opportunity to talk about the Child Development Centre's involvement in Carmacks. Our display also had a special treat—children received a book and play dough.

Things have also been busy at the Carmacks Child Care Centre, as well as the K4 class. This year we were able

to hire Estelle Nieman as a program assistant to provide support to the K4 classroom.

### Jumpin' Jigglers

After a lot of discussion and planning, the Child Development Centre (and especially the OTs and PTs) are excited to report that we just finished a very successful eight-week-long motor group – Jumpin' Jigglers.

If you've been around CDC for a while you know that we often run small groups for children, but what you may not know is

that it has been over 15 years since we've run a motor group.

This year's group was led by Christel Bartczak, Physiotherapist, and Kyla Fraser, Occupational Therapist, with Claudia Alge working as the program assistant.

Six children were given the opportunity to practice their gross motor (big moving) and fine motor (cutting, drawing, etc.) skills through a wide variety of fun and challenging activities. They pretended they were gorillas doing yoga and wheel barrows carrying a load; they

participated in sensory experiences while playing with the rice and water tables, and they challenged their fine motor skills by making crafts and using tongs to pass out the snack items.

We are extremely excited about the success of this group and look forward to offering more motor based groups in the future!

## Outreach Team Travel Schedule

### May

10-12	Old Crow
10-12	Dawson City
11-13	Ross River & Faro
18	Carcross
18	Haines Junction
25-27	Beaver Creek
31 - June 3	Watson Lake

### June

1	Carcross
1	Carmacks
8	Haines Junction
10	Teslin



## Staff Spotlight...Kate Buerge



Kate moved from New York to Canada in 1973 and has been pleased to call Canada her home since that time. After living in northern B.C. for 11 years, she & Jim moved to the Yukon in 1984. Kate was a teacher by profession but, when they arrived in the Yukon, she thought it was time to do something different. After a few short term jobs, Kate was hired as a Family Support Worker. This opportunity to work closely with children AND their families was something Kate found to be very rewarding, and a 'natural fit' for her.

A few years later, Kate came to the Child Development Centre. It was September 1989, the same year that the Centre settled into its then new

location at 1000 Lewes Blvd, and Kate was hired as one of the new preschool teachers.

After 3 years in that position, Kate divided her time between the home based toddler program and being Coordinator of the Preschool Programs.

When Kate's personal life took her to a farm in Tagish in September 1996, she decided to go to a half time position and gave up the role as Program Coordinator.

Since that time Kate has worked as a Developmental Therapist and has traveled to the communities of Faro, Ross River, Old Crow, Carmacks and Carcross. Kate has seen many changes at the CDC and has faced numerous

challenges and opportunities for personal growth.

After 20 years, Kate still loves what she does and values every relationship she has formed with families, children and co-workers.

Kate lives at Marsh Lake with Jim, her husband of 32 years. She is a mom, a grandma & even a great grandma - best of all, much of the family still resides in the north! When Kate is not busy making the all natural soap that she sells year round, she can be found 'playing' with wool and other natural fibers - whether it be spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing or felting.

## Staff Spotlight...Jenny Hierlihy



Jenny was born and raised in Whitehorse and after visiting many Canadian cities—for vacations and for college, she decided that the Yukon is where she wanted to settle down.

Jenny began her working career as a cashier at Food Fair at the age of fifteen and stayed there until she was twenty when she left to attend Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta to study Geography. She returned to Whitehorse after a year thinking Calgary was a nice place to visit but not to live, and returned to Food Fair.

After awhile, she decided to take a Pharmacy Technician

course and after completing that, started working at Shoppers Drug Mart where she met Tavis, who she married in 2006.

Now a few years later, Jenny is the mother of a little girl who will turn three in August, and she is also expecting her second child in early July.

After a whirlwind couple of years—getting married, becoming a mom, and going back to school to take Office Administration at Yukon College, she has found her way to the Child Development Centre as the

new Administrative Assistant. She is extremely happy to spend her days here because she gets to interact with children and their families on a daily basis, and watch the children grow in so many ways.

In her free time, Jenny enjoys relaxing quietly at home with her own family, taking her dog Angus for long walks in the trails in Riverdale, and reading.

## Upcoming Events



Our Annual General meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, June 10th at noon at the Child Development Centre**. If you're interested in serving on the board, please call Alayne at 456-8188, or drop by. Snacks will be provided.

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### **HOLD THIS DATE!**

FASD Symposium—September 28 & 29, 2010 in Whitehorse.  
Watch for registration packages in May 2010.

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## **Brains & Partnerships**

**Conversations & Collaboration Towards Healthy Human Development**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**May 26—27, 2010**

This event aims to address questions such as:

- Why do the earliest times of a person's life directly affect their lifelong health, learning, and behavior?
- What are we doing well in the Yukon in government, community, and citizen investment?
- What could we change to bring about programs and services that are more effective?

For more information:

Please email [kswales@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:kswales@yukoncollege.yk.ca) (preferable) or call 668-8794.

The event is **FREE**. Venue and schedule will depend on interest. All people who are interested will be placed on a list to ensure that you receive registration and venue details (tba) in the coming weeks.