



Mailing Address: 46 Hogarth Ave. Toronto ON, M4K 1K1  
Located at Eastern Commerce Collegiate at 16 Phin Ave. M4J 3T2

www.creativepreschool.ca  
Phone/Fax: 416-465-3865

---

## End of the School Year 2009 - 2010 – What have we observed?

By Georgia Bowen, ECE

Our teachers keep a journal recalling the interests and activities the children experience throughout the year. In reading through the weekly recall sheets it is very interesting to see how it makes a developmental picture.

### Social Emotional

In the beginning of the school year children played on their own, observed others and a few played with a friend or in a group. How an individual interacts is usually determined by emotional comfort, developmental level, social experience and developing social language skills. Most of the children have become confident, comfortable, independent and trusting of teachers and the school environment. Most have moved on from non-interactive parallel play to interactive play with their peers. The children that were relying on adults for most of their interactions have for the most part transferred to interacting with their peers. The older children are able to seek out a friend and invite them to play. The children are becoming assertive, defiant, testing limits and seeking control among peers and adults.

With social play there will arise more conflicts that have to be dealt with. Some children need assistance with conflict resolution and are assisted with this by teachers and parents. Some of the older children are managing to work out their conflicts by themselves using problem solving techniques they've learned in the classroom. We are seeing groups of at least three and four children playing together. They are interested in dramatic and large block play which is the main social area on the carpet. Some children have become experts in acknowledging feelings, negotiating and problem-solving, "Can I have a turn when you're finished, or "Stop, I don't like that!"

### Emerging Curriculum

Following an emerging curriculum approach, we have observed the children's interests which in the beginning appeared disorganized and "all over the place". This year we've permitted much more movement of materials, mixing rocks, corks, shells, blocks, trucks, bears and babies! We encouraged interests to run their course and if children wanted the train tracks out for 3 weeks we helped to sustain and enrich their interest by adding blocks, figures, ramps, bridges, tunnels, measuring tape, dress-up and vocabulary to what they were doing. With sustained interest and experience they gained confidence working with the materials which in turn gave them social confidence working as part of a group.

### Creative Representation

This area involves children physically playing a role, figures or dolls representing roles, painting or drawing figures that represent roles, words that represent figures in a role and finally stories about figures in a role.

Artwork is becoming representational, children realize their painting, gluing and drawings are beginning to look like or represent objects, people, animals, etc. They want their work to be acknowledged and teachers are writing sentences and labeling their work. Some children are able to print the letters of their names and want to practice writing. Most can recognize letters, shapes and colours. The "writing table" has become very popular. Art activities are determined by the children mixing paint and glue as needed and choosing the materials that interest them. We are starting to see 3 dimensional gluing as well which is always a challenge.

Babies have been an interest all year. We've had rocket ships with astronauts and babies, as well as restaurants, picnics and grocery stores with babies. As the year progressed we've had group construction projects with hard hats and babies. We've grouped, sorted and classified wild animals, farm animals, dinosaurs and sea creatures into families with babies. We had houses, boats, castles, trains, pirate ships, airplanes and doctor's or veterinarian's offices with babies. Guess what? We had many families who've had babies born this year.

### Circle Time:

We are now reading longer stories with extended vocabulary and more complex story lines. By this point in the year the children are able to enjoy longer circle times and willingly express their ideas and take turns in the group setting.

#### Music with Lisa:

Along with singing songs, the children have also been learning solfege this year (do-re-mi). They began the year not necessarily understanding "steady beat", to now playing a steady beat while singing, as well as echoing quarter and eighth-note rhythms and doing circle and folk dances.

#### Physical

**Fine Motor:** The children are able to handle advanced fine motor and manipulative activities: many piece puzzles, lacing, cutting with scissors, using various tools, small construction activities and developing writing skills. The children's self help skills have also progressed as they dress and undress themselves, use the washroom independently and eat snack and lunch on their own.

**Gross Motor:** Large muscles are exercised in group construction activities as well as outdoor play. We've grown to enjoy both the climber at Phin Park as well as the front yard on Phin Avenue.

#### Group Construction and Dramatic Play

Carpet activities involve group building, role play and problem solving. The noise level can be quite high, but there is mutual teaching and sharing of ideas. Favourite construction sets include large and small wood blocks, train tracks, Lego, Duplo, Mobilo, Magneto train, Wedgits, Grandotes, Tinker Toys, Twisters and Magnets. Individual children are greatly admired for their construction abilities and are learning to allow others to use their ideas.

#### Sensory

The children have experimented with sand, soil, rice, water, ice, snow, bread dough, play dough, fresh herbs and more.

#### Cognitive

Developing math, language and thinking skills are part of every activity in the classroom. We see children doing addition, subtraction, multiplication and division during free activities or verbally quizzing each other. Young Explorers have been chanting times tables and working out how many tens are in 60. How many fives are in 10. How many tens are in 100. They are very excited to discover where their new knowledge can take them.

#### In summary:

What you observe at the end of the year is an overview of how the brain develops. Young children don't think or act in an orderly fashion. They really are "all over the place". Their thoughts and actions are disorganized until they begin to make connections between objects, ideas and experiences while physically acting upon their environment. Every thing is hands on, manipulated, sorted and classified as they continually input information into the brain. A recognizable rhythm with a drum develops over time. Eventually children realize the parts of their body include a head, torso, arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet and toes. You begin to see patterns develop in their play, creative representation, language and problem solving. Interestingly enough, children seem to choose the area they need to work on. We see cautious children placing themselves in the most active part of the room when we might expect them to stay in the quiet corners. We adults may think their child should avoid challenges or conflicts but in fact, the children place themselves right in the midst of conflicts and puzzle their way through.

Entries from the end of May in the recall sheets:

#### The East Room

Teachers: Fany, Wendy, alternating Lisa, Rawia and Vanessa

The East Room preschool children want to be with each other and have been working on building their social skills to be able to play together in a peaceful, respectful and cooperative manner. We have been providing continuity of activities but still with great choice, so that the children may have as much opportunity as possible to develop and practice their social skills. The development that has occurred over the year for ALL of the children has been amazing. They are actively doing puzzles, construction, painting and gluing, role playing, fine motor activities, math, language and all while learning to hold their own in a very busy group. It can be very loud but the children are negotiating and problem solving as they work together.

#### The West Room

Teachers: Alison, Zainobia, alternating Lisa, Rawia and Vanessa

The West Room children are developing skills in turn-taking and self-regulation. These are important skills to learn and manage when you are playing with others, building in the large block area, playing in the house/drama area or using the large garage and cars. These are the areas where we have seen growth and development over the year. Collecting, observing and organizing skills are becoming more evident. The children are also challenging themselves by doing complex multi-layer puzzles, re-telling stories and developing fine motor skills with construction activities and at the writing table.

Young Explorers

Teachers: Alison, Fany, Lisa, Rawia, Vanessa, Wendy and A.K.

The afternoon kindergarten Young Explorers continue to look for opportunities to engage with their peers. Social interaction is the prime interest for many of the children. Art activities have drawn their interest more lately. The magnets and imaginary play continue to engage them. We placed the Brio trains on multi-level tables in different shapes which provided an interesting challenge figuring out how to connect the train tracks between the tables. The children added small blocks to build up areas in order to connect the tracks, as well as long cardboard troughs to create bridges. It was fun to watch them problem solve together. We've worked on kindergarten concepts in creative ways which supports their morning kindergarten learning and exposes them to exploring their social and physical environment as they bounce ideas off each other.

The After School Club for JK through Grade Three

Teachers: Rawia, Vanessa and Lisa

After a full day of structured and teacher directed learning children need time to relax and socialize in an open and adaptable environment. The schedule our afternoon takes follows the children's lead but always includes time for physical and gross motor play. We attempt to provide the children with a comfortable and home like environment. Our mixed age grouping allows the children to learn from each other. Planning for the After School Program is very much a group effort. Often it occurs daily when we convene for our afternoon snack and is based on the children's inclination and mood. We ask the children what they plan to do and what they might need in order to carry out their plan. We feel this more democratic method of programming allows the children to feel more in control of their free time and allows them to learn to manage that time. The children are currently interested in soccer, skipping ropes and using the writing table which gets incorporated into their dramatic play. Conflict resolution as we acknowledge feelings and learning problem solving skills still plays a major role in this age group. The children are interested in puzzles, games like Rush Hour and simple card games like Crazy Eights.

Finally, children need opportunities to make choices, directly experience the world around them and make connections which all lead to genuine understanding. We can share their wonder as they begin to make order of what they see and do.

We teachers sincerely appreciate the parents who participate in our classrooms and volunteer on our parent board of directors, helping us to make order of what *we* see and do.