

Chatham Child Care News

Monthly Newsletter

July 2001

An Act of Civil Disobedience And Other Matters Pertaining to the New Education Building

By Cesanne Berry, Head Teacher of the Durham Early School, with documentation provided by Kate Parker, Durham Early School Teacher*

Where are the orange survey ribbons?" I asked the Durham Early School staff when I arrived on the playground late on the morning of Friday, January 19. Since the tree removal crew would be working next week, I was fairly upset to see that all of the ribbons had been removed from the designated trees. It has been a long two-and-a-half years (or twelve, depending on when you want to start counting!) and I certainly didn't want anything to interfere with construction. Kate Parker, one of the teachers of the 3- and 4-year-old group, took one look at my shocked and angry face, and quickly said, "Before you jump to conclusions, can you just wait until I've typed up documentation about this incident so that you can read about the process, and then we'll talk?" Fortunately, documenting children's conversations is something we do frequently at Durham Early School.

Kate and the children were exploring the upper playground area, which had been recently fenced off for the construction project. Excerpts from her notes follow below:

There was a great deal of interest in the wire and the large poles lying nearby. It was apparent that we hadn't really prepared ourselves or the kids for the actual construction and what it meant for our outdoor space. We talked about the fact that there were going to be construction supplies on our playground, and that we wouldn't be able to touch them, play with them, kick them, swing with them, or other such things, because they weren't ours to play with, and because there might be some things about the supplies that make them unsafe in our use. So they moved away from the wire, put the poles down, and became very aware of the orange ribbons around the trees. Five or six children started running from tree to tree counting them, until we realized that 12 trees from our playground were going to be cut down to make room for the school and the construction.

Twelve trees. Three children started using sticks, talking about how they could cut the trees down, and then, saying that they didn't want the trees to be cut, worked for a long time breaking the orange ribbons around the trees. By the time they were done, four others had joined them, and together they removed the ribbons from 11 of the 12 trees. (I didn't let them climb over the wood pile to get to the biggest tree). At the end, they all exclaimed, "We did it!"

The whole process was a dilemma for me. I didn't stop them from doing it, but I thought about it. While I was wondering about the mid version of vandalism that they were engaged in, I knew it to be, in the end, harmless. I don't want them to get in trouble for destroying something that isn't theirs, or ruining work that isn't theirs, but the capacity that these children exhibited in taking possession of the trees on their playground was something that, in that moment, I defined as a good thing. So I let their activity continue. I collected the ribbons from them as they pulled them off, while letting them own the power of trying to make an impact on their world.

We all know that the trees are coming down, and can make room for it in our heads because it's a necessary action before the school can be built. As adults, we are capable of this reasoning: that sometimes something we don't want to happen has to before the next good part can come. I don't mean to imply that these kids can't reason that out, but the presence of good in their thoughts, actions and words made it possible for me to allow them this bit of environmental protestation. I was also impressed by their problem-solving and perseverance in breaking the ribbon!

Later, at Meeting for Drawing, Kate asked the children to draw something about the episode that occurred earlier in the morning and to dictate their stories and feelings to her. I've selected a few of the 18 students' work to share. Mostly, I've kept their stories intact, but shortened when necessary.

This is the branchy stuff at top. This is a hole in the tree where a little owl lives. Why I don't want them to die is that I don't want the owl to fall down and get hurt.

I like to climb a tree. This is me, and the curly, curly, leaves at the top, and the roots are at the bottom. This tree is too strong, and so nobody can cut it down. My fingers are holding on to the tree while I climb on it.

This is the top of the tree and leaves all the way down. There is bark all over, protecting the tree. I keep thinking that when they cut the tree down the hole is going to be deep, deep, deep, so we could fall.

I don't like that trees get cut down because they make paper and good food for us to eat. That's why I hate when they die.

This is the trunk and this is the leaves. I don't want them to cut it down because they make oxygen. That's it.

How do they make oxygen? *By breathing out they breathe out the stuff we need and we breathe out the stuff they need.*

How do trees breathe? *By the branches.*

Can you add a drawing that shows how trees breathe? *Yeah.*

Noah came back later with his drawing. This is how he described it:

This is the branch and it goes through a tube and it mixes in here (circle) and when it's done mixing it goes to the part that has a hole in it and then it comes out.

These are the leaves and the branches and they're blooming and this is the way top and this is the tree. And that's it.

You know the trees are getting cut down, right? *[Nods] How do you feel about that? Good. Why? 'Cause I think they might make a tree lump for us to stand on. A tree lump? Yeah.*

That's my tree, with lots of branches. I think the ones on the playground are going to be dead.

What do you think about that? *The most good thing is that maybe we can touch the tops when they come down.*

This is the tree and all of those branches are empty and those leaves were falling off the tree to the ground. That's the dirt and those are the roots under the dirt. That's all.

Can I ask you a question? Yeah. You know that the trees are getting cut down, right? *[Nods.] How do you feel about that? Good. How come? Because I want a new school to come in.*

**Durham Early School, a part of Carolina Friends School, serves children ages 3-6. This article is reprinted with permission from the Spring 2001 edition of We & Thee, a publication of CFS.*



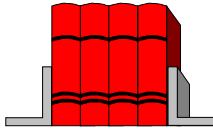
Subsidy News

July 2001

The time is approaching for our annual subsidy provider meetings. These meetings are usually held in July. Please watch your mail for information about provider meetings. One change that we will talk about at our meetings is holiday/vacation times for providers. In the past you have been limited to 10 specific days off each year which could be paid for with subsidy funds. It has been brought to our attention that this created problems for some providers. As a result, we have created a new plan in which you will be able to select the 10 holidays you want to take each year. This will need to be selected in advance, and the number of days off we can pay for will still be limited to a maximum of 10 days per service year (June –May). If you don't want to select your own holidays, you can continue to be paid for the same 10 holidays as before. Once you make your selection of holidays, you will not be able to make changes more than twice per year. You will also have a 30 day notice period for changes. Interim changes can only be approved if you have sufficient days of your ten day allowance left. This new plan will allow more flexibility as you schedule days to close your home or center. It will allow you to close for several days at the time. This is a good time to start thinking about what days you want to be closed during this service year (June 2001-May 2002), so you will be ready when it is time to sign up for your holidays. Please try to be mindful of the needs of parents and children you serve, as well as your staff as you make your selections.



CHILD CARE NETWORKS RESOURCE LIBRARY
FEATURE OF THE MONTH



This month's feature: **"The Carrot Seed" by Ruth Krauss.**

"When you're very young there are some things that you just know. You couldn't possibly explain it to anybody, but that doesn't matter because anything they said wouldn't make any difference anyway. You just know, that's all. The Carrot Seed, having to do with a little boy and his personal carrot seed, is a very refreshing book all around. It will be completely understandable to the young, quite unanswerable to adults, and deeply satisfying to both." (Quote from the book jacket.)

Our Resource Library is available to Chatham County child care providers. To check out items, call Brenda Foxx at 542-6644, extension 16 or Marilyn Grubbs at extension 21. We may be able to deliver items if you have trouble coming to pick them up.

Items in the Resource Library were purchased with funding from the Chatham County Partnership for Children.



CPR or First Aid classes are taught by Sue Morrow, RN, monthly at Child Care Networks. Here is the upcoming schedule:

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| • July 17 | First Aid | \$15* |
| • August 8 | CPR | \$22* |
| • September 13 | CPR | \$22* |
| • October 2 | CPR | \$22* |

**Classes are \$3 for programs on contract with CCN to upgrade their quality. (This reduced fee is funded by the Chatham County Partnership for Children).*

All classes begin at 6:00 p.m. at our office, 117 E. Salisbury Street in Pittsboro. **Call Brenda Foxx to register for classes. Register early, since classes fill up quickly.**

YOU COULD WIN ONE OF THESE PRIZES!!!

- \$1500 of Kaplan playground equipment
- \$1000 of early childhood books and supplies
- \$900 personal computer
- NC beach weekend
- Meals, lodging, registration for the NAEYC national conference
- \$200 of early childhood books
- \$100 WalMart gift certificate

Just return the survey you received from Child Care Services Association along with the blue raffle ticket! Family child care providers received a green survey, directors a yellow survey, and teachers a cream colored survey.

CHATHAM CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION

The Chatham Caregivers Association meets once a month, usually on the third Thursday. They rotate among various locations, with everyone contributing their favorite snacks.

For more information call Linda Elkins at 898-4133 or Karen Martin at 542-1801 (work) or 542-0084 (home).

CPR AND FIRST AID

Meal Time

We ask that you serve meals at the time you have scheduled on your agreement. If the time is different from when you are actually serving meals, please call

your case manager. Monitoring visits are scheduled around meal time.

USDA Personnel Visiting Day Care Homes

Personnel from the United States Department of Agriculture will continue their reviews of child care homes through August 31, 2001. The names of the individuals from USDA who will be completing the reviews are:

Calvin Thompson	Tom McClure
Gloria Holley	Bill Fornes
Ann Stanholm	

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 542-6644, ext. 13. If I am not in the office, please leave a message. I will return your call within the same working day. I am not always in the office, but I check voice mail several times within the office hours.

Pat Alston
Administrative Manager

- Pat Alston

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is operated in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture policy. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 2050-9410 or call (202) 720-5964.

CHATHAM CHILD CARE NEWS is a resource publication for caregivers, parents, and other persons interested in child care. It is published monthly by Child Care Networks. Suggestions, information, and articles are welcomed and printed as space permits. Mail information to:

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or call (919) 542-6644, extension 21.

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Monitoring Visits

We will be monitoring during the summer months as we always do. Yet, we also know that your children are out of school, and it is vacation time for you and your family. So we know that through the summer you will be taking days off or a week off. If you are going to close your child care home for a day or more, please let your case manager know. We are asking that providers in Chatham and Lee County call Rhonda Lee and in Orange County call Marianne Nicholson.

Have a safe and fun summer.



A Child Care Resource & Referral Agency
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