

A Message from the Editor

Meredith Lewis, Editor
Center for UPK

Universal Pre-K at Bank Street

What do you do for fun? Read a book? Go for a walk?

Get together with friends and explore a new place? Or return to an old favorite? Perhaps you engage in a hobby or a sport? You probably decided to pursue this “fun” activity because it was interesting and stimulating to you.

Children decide what they think is fun for the same reason. When they are not interrupted by adult ideas,



children immerse themselves in the possibility of discovery. They try to make sense of their world through interactions with materials, and through interactions with people. Have you ever

noticed children collecting leaves in the park? Or pretending to drive a fire truck in the block area? Or reenacting “dinner time” in the house area? It is through these activities that children learn. Teachers who provide them with opportunities to be involved in fun, meaningful activities are supporting children as they engage in cognitive and social explorations.

What does “fun” have to do with learning? Everything! You can find ways to creatively embed fun, laughter, and play throughout your children’s daily experiences. If I walk into your

classroom on any given day, what will I see and hear? More importantly, what feeling will stay with me after I leave? An inviting classroom will feel like a safe, warm, understanding place where children and adults alike share genuine experiences and are willing to take the risks necessary for learning, without fear of ridicule or shame. In fact, it is by making mistakes and finding ways to “fix” them that the most meaningful learning happens.

As you read this issue of NewsFlash, I hope the material in it will enable you to connect with some good ideas and ways to incorporate more humor into your daily schedule. Rediscover the “fun” to be had in your pre-k classroom—and do not hesitate to invite your students to help you. They are the experts, and I bet they will offer you some inspiring ideas!

Meredith



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Letter from the Director

María Beneján, Director
Center for UPK

Has “play” played an important role in my life? Absolutely! I remember how, as a child living in a tenement building in Brooklyn, I would round up my friends to play “school.” I would sit them on the stairs and give each one a small chalkboard. Although I was a very shy English language learner (and so spoke little if any English my first few years of school), my own “play school” was held in English and I was always the teacher. Little did I know that this “pretending” was giving me the opportunity to practice my English and hone my leadership



skills. I remember playing other childhood games, like Red Light, Green Light; Hop Scotch; and Brinca la Tabita. Did I learn something from these games? Was I learning valuable social, language, and cognitive skills as I played? Absolutely!

I still have vivid junior high school memories of volunteering in a kindergarten class as

a member of the sixth grade “Future Teachers Club.” And what I remember most is what great fun I had. I remember playing with the children in the house area and, with musical instruments in hand, marching around the room. I remember eagerly looking forward to going to the kindergarten class. Indeed, I remember being very emotionally moved as I played with some children who were English language learners, as I myself had been.

I remember such fun in eighth grade when one of my teachers would demonstrate, right in front of my very eyes, how a volcano blows up or an avalanche occurs. I would then go home and write scary stories with volcano and avalanche scenes in them (but my stories always had happy endings). I so remember “pretending” to be a reporter and reporting the news as if I were “live on the scene.”



I remember being emotionally connected and reporting on the Vietnam war because my older brother was there. Did all this “play” help me deal with and make sense of what was happening around me? You bet.

Did these experiences set the stage for the person I would become? Yes, indeed. It might be a little late to say this, but for all of those teachers who made learning fun, playful, and real for me—I thank you! Thank you for all the wonderful experiences! I am so grateful for those times and moments! I am also thankful for this issue of NewsFlash for reminding me that I have to put more fun in my life—that I have been too serious lately and need to remember to keep “fun and play” in my work and in my life. And that is what I wish for you, the reader, too. So sit back, enjoy, and have fun with the articles here.

María

Children’s Humor is FUNdamental to Pre-K Classrooms

Paul E. McGhee, PhD, President
The Laughter Remedy

When most people think of children, the first images that pop into their minds are of play, fun, and laughter. The main focus of adults’ daily routine is work, but children’s mission in life is to learn about the world and to have fun as they do. We are biologically predisposed to play when we are young, and it is in the context of play that young children learn the most about their world.

Teachers of young children have always been aware of the crucial importance of play for learning. Play contributes to key aspects of cognitive, social, and emotional development—especially in the preschool years. Much less attention, however, has been given to the role of *humor* in promoting developmental gains in these same three areas. The motivation to play and laugh is built into us as a species, so young children will be naturally interested in play and humor.

As you move up the scale from a simpler to a higher order of species, play becomes a more and more noticeable feature of animals’ behavior. This is especially true when the animal is young, and when the environment does not threaten it. Play provides a means of learning skills that will eventually be crucial for the animal’s survival. As higher-order species evolved, they inherited a general predisposition to play with any new capacities that evolved. So as humans developed more abstract symbolic capacities, it was only natural to play with them.

Humor is exactly this—a kind of symbolic play. It is built into us to derive pleasure and joy by playfully distorting the world as we know it—from turning reality on its ear. As our intellectual abilities grow throughout childhood, these abilities are reflected in the new forms of humor children are able to enjoy and create.

There is another form of humor, which uses a different dynamic to determine what is and is not funny. Freud called it “tendentious” humor, because it reflects emotional tendencies or issues we have toward the content of the humor. So a simple joke can be made funnier just by using content that is emotionally salient. That is why a joke poking fun at a person’s mishap might be particularly funny depending on the child’s stage of development. For instance, young children find words like “pee-pee,” “poopy” or “ka-ka” especially funny since they are just learning to control the functions indicated by these words. At a later time, jokes about sexuality or dating may be funny to them for the same reason.

It should also be noted that some of the benefits described in the following tables are of immediate value to the child’s development, while others may not appear to be so until the child leaves preschool to start kindergarten or first grade. Strengthening humor habits at the preschool level, however, helps assure that the later benefits will be achieved. ●

Intellectual Benefits

Remember that humor is a form of play—intellectual play, or play with ideas. While humor generally involves playing with what has already been learned, children also build new cognitive skills and learn a tremendous amount about their world while engaged in mental play. This knowledge and set of skills will support their performance in school—and in all other intellectual endeavors throughout childhood.

- Vocabulary Enrichment
- Improved Pre-Reading and Reading Skills
- General Cognitive Gains
- Increased Creativity

Social and Emotional Benefits

A good sense of humor has long been recognized as a powerful interpersonal skill. It is often referred to as a “social lubricant,” serving to make social interaction easier and more enjoyable. Children, as well as adults, benefit from learning to use humor in social settings.

- Facilitation of Social Interaction
- Increased Likableness
- Socially Acceptable Means of Expressing Anger
- Increased Joy and Happiness
- Heightened Self Esteem
- Tool for Coping with Life Stress

Paul McGhee is a developmental psychologist who has published five books on children’s humor and is internationally known for his own research on the development of humor in children. He is currently president of *The Laughter Remedy* in Wilmington, DE, and works full time as a professional speaker, offering keynotes and workshops on children’s humor to early childhood organizations. He may be reached at Haharemedy@del.net or 302-478-7500.

How Toddlers Make 'Sense' of Humor

Eleni Loizou, Lecturer
University of Cyprus

Young children under the age of two already have the ability to produce and appreciate humor. They express themselves in ways that show they possess the cognitive abilities to recognize and produce incongruities; that is, noticing and creating situations in which things do not “match” their expectation of what they know from prior interactions with the world. Children laugh at caregivers who make different-than-usual facial gestures, or who change the sound of their voice, or who pretend to be a baby crying. They don’t expect their caregiver to make this face or use this voice—it doesn’t make sense. Therefore, it is different and it is funny. Toddlers create their own incongruities, too, demonstrated by their abilities to do such things as use a bowl as a hat or wear a smock as a skirt. This is how they express their knowledge and test the world through humor.

When Katie runs to the bathroom and sits on the toilet with her panties on, she is looking to see how the caregiver responds. In this case, the caregiver follows her, sees her sitting on the toilet and smiles. Katie then looks at the caregiver, says “pee pees,” laughs, and runs out of the bathroom. This event shows that Katie understands that the toilet is used for “pee pees” but not when your clothes are on. The exchange of smiles reinforces this as a silly thing and supports Katie’s exploration with humor.

Young children also use humor as a way to empower themselves. They understand and know certain “rules.”

When they intentionally break or choose not to follow those rules, they do so with an expectation of a specific response from their caregivers. That response is a direct result of the event they have produced. Thus, violating the rules makes them feel like an important part of their social environment; so they laugh, and repeat their action.

In one case, Cassandra and Emily are sitting at the table having their snack. Cassandra extends her hand towards Emily. Emily understands this gesture and gives Cassandra one of her Cheerios, which Cassandra puts in her mouth. The caregiver looks at Cassandra and states the class rule—she must eat her strawberries and not Emily’s Cheerios. Cassandra looks at the caregiver, smiles, and extends her hand for another Cheerio. Her intention is to create a humorous event by redefining the rules. The caregiver’s response will help to reinforce Cassandra’s need to feel in control of this moment.

A flexible, play-based, and secure environment promotes the production and appreciation of humor. The caregiver’s role is key in preparing the environment as well as being part of the humorous activity children create. The caregiver’s responses are significant in supporting the toddler in understanding his/her discoveries. So, enjoy children’s actions and show it through your smiles and laughter. Do not be shy—be playful with the children and fellow caregivers! ●

Suggested Actions for Caregiving of Toddlers

Suggested Action

- Set up the classroom environment to provide opportunities for open-ended activities and material.
- Support children’s attempts at creating humor by guiding them to invite their peers and caregivers into their events.
- Be alert to children’s actions and use what they offer to guide them socially and cognitively.
- Be ready to switch roles, as a participant in children’s humorous events, and guide them towards the appropriate behaviors.

How to Support this Activity

- Bring a big empty box into the classroom and see what it becomes—perhaps place some animals inside and cover the open sides with scarves.
- When children make an attempt at being funny, for example, by creating a joke or making up their own words, encourage them to tell their new joke or to use their new words with you and their friends - and laugh together.
- When children look at you and actively break a rule, for example, a child who puts the sponge in her mouth with a big smile, smile with the child—and at the same time, inform her about the purpose of the sponge. Or refer her to another child to help inform her about the purpose of the sponge.
- When children are running down the hallway from their classroom, for example, and they turn their heads back with a knowing look and smile at you, smile back at them. Move towards them saying something about how they “tricked” you and then inform them about the importance of going back quietly and carefully.

How to Build More Humor into Your Preschool Center

Use this list as a starting point to generate your own ideas for humor activities in your center.

- 1) Cultivate a joking style of interaction with the children. If you've previously used a serious style, they may be puzzled at first. But they will quickly catch on that they can have fun with you. One caregiver established a joking relationship with her toddlers by saying, "Now I'm going to eat up all the lunch!" After some initial puzzlement, they quickly learned to say, "You're making a joke." Provide a clear signal indicating when you're being playful or serious. Be firm when it's time to stop playing.
- 2) Build opportunities for humor and fun into your own day. Do whatever is necessary to sustain a playful attitude yourself. This will make it easier to join in the spirit of the children's humor and fun.
- 3) Improve your humor skills to help insure that you can achieve a lighter interaction style with the children. [My book, *Health, Healing, and the Amuse System: Humor as Survival Training*, contains a Humor Skills Training Program that will help you build your humor skills. To order, call 800-228-0810.]
- 4) Create a humor corner—a place where humor is encouraged. This can include funny tapes and CDs, riddle books (older kids) and other funny books, funny dress-up clothes (including animal noses, masks, etc.). Funny books are especially important. Establish small reading groups. As the adult reads, kids can act out the funny part of the story.
- 5) Make up a funny story. An adult starts the story and children think of funny things that happen next.
- 6) Collect picture books which contain incongruous images. For group fun, make copies of these and show them to the children. Ask, "What's funny in this picture?"
- 7) Make up silly rhymes. Adults can provide the first line and the children can continue.
- 8) Animal pretend. Ask two children to have a conversation and pretend they are different animals. What would these two animals say to each other? How would they say it? Include activities such as walking across the floor like that animal and making the sound that animal makes.
- 9) With older children, play "What If." "What if people had two mouths instead of one? How would that make life different?" You can also ask specific questions, such as "What could you do so that both mouths didn't talk at once?" "What if people only had one leg? How would that change the way you run?" Etc.

Adapted from P. McGhee, *Understanding and Promoting the Development of Children's Humor*, Kendall/Hunt, 2002. To order, call 800-228-0810.

Developmental Changes in Preschool Children's Humor

The model of humor development presented here reflects Paul McGhee's integration of his research findings on children's humor over the past 40 years (as well as some from the 1930s). For each of the stages described below, keep in mind that the age norms listed are offered only as general guidelines. Some children enter a given stage much earlier than others do, although the age norms indicated do reflect an average age of onset. Most children continue to show the previous stage of humor long after the new form of humor first appears. Many will continue to show a given level of humor long past the end-point of the age norms shown here. The age ranges shown reflect the peak of humor associated with that stage.

For a complete description of each stage, as well as additional information about the benefits of humor, log onto the Center for Universal Pre-K's website at www.bankstreet.edu/upk/index.html.

- *Stage 0*: Laughter without Humor (First 6 months)
- *Stage 1*: Laughter at the Attachment Figure (6 to 12 or 15 months)
- *Stage 2*: Treating an Object as a Different Object (12 or 15 months to 3, 4 or 5 years)
- *Stage 3*: Misnaming Objects or Actions (2 to 3 or 4 years)
- *Stage 3a*: Opposites—A Special Case of Misnaming (2 to 3 or 4 years)
- *Stage 4a*: Playing With Word Sounds (not meanings) (3 to 5 years)
- *Stage 4b*: Nonsense Real-Word Combinations (3 to 5 years)
- *Stage 4c*: Distortion of Features of Objects, People, or Animals (3 to 5 years)
- *Pre-Riddle Stage* (transition period) (5 to 6 or 7 years)

Play is NOT a Four-letter Word!

Rick Ellis, New Perspectives Instructor
Bank Street College of Education

A newspaper article describes the construction of a new school in Atlanta and proudly touts that the school is being built without a playground. The decision has been made by the administration that recess is unimportant and that more time on tasks indoors will improve academic achievement.

There is a stigma in our culture, which intones, “If we play, we cannot learn.” All of us who are attentive to best practices in the field of early childhood know the opposite is actually true. Our doctrine, “The play *is* the work,” needs to be shouted from the rafters!

Research has shown the long-term effects of what happens if we do not allow the natural unfolding of children’s development to occur. *Lasting Differences*, by the High/Scope organization, as well as the research conducted by the Gesell Institute, tells us clearly that if we do not attend to the “need to play in the early years,” we will feel the impact in later years, as children become adults and assume leadership roles in society. Without play in the early years, we risk losing the opportunity to support children’s development of cognitive and interpersonal skills at a critical point in their growth. Recent findings from personnel agencies have shown a clear trend toward the waning of social qualities in the young, new graduates in the workforce today. While their academic grades are often acceptable or above, their social-personal skills are lacking. Are we drilling children towards an era of the “splintered personality”?

I recently visited a local preschool and observed three- and four-year-old children “in action.” They were gathered on their meeting rug, being asked to answer questions like, “Who is the president of the United States? How many planets are there in the solar system? How many seasons are there in the year? How many states are there in America?” I noticed the children rolling around the floor, clearly detached from this litany of questions. I then observed a kindergarten class where children were sitting in rows at their desks laboring over worksheets. When asked about the obvious absence of center areas, paints, and blocks, the teacher retorted, “We have *work* to do in here!”

Eda LeShan, author of more than thirty books for adults and children, counselor, educator, and playwright, described America’s “uncomfortableness with childhood in its natural state” many years ago. She outlined how children’s seemingly random explorations were regularly misunderstood as chaotic events, instead of the laboratories

of experimentation and discovery they really are. In order to respond effectively to children, she stated, we must first look at these youthful interactions with people and things alongside what we know about the developmental stages of childhood. When we make sense of these as accompanying behaviors, we can respond to the children’s intentions and make authentic connections to learning in meaningful ways. It is through play, not the absence thereof, that true learning happens.

What can we do as protectors of the child’s right to play? We can return to the role of child advocate and avoid the seduction of the assembly-line type of education being proposed by legislators. We can turn to parent education as a way of turn-keying the use of play as *the* teaching and learning medium. We can bolster our own professional knowledge base in order to argue *for* play by keeping current with the research, attending workshops and seminars, and sharpening our own skills at being super “kid-watchers.” We can devote ourselves to accepting only child-centered schooling, focused on the process of learning in developmentally appropriate settings. We can show that we are allies with young children and give them their chance to be who they deserve to be. ●

Have you ever observed children at play?

If you have, you could never doubt that valid learning is taking place. Treat yourself to the true test: Go to the beach this summer early in the morning when the families arrive, get yourself a comfortable place to “kid-watch,” and then sit back. You will be amazed at the endless hypotheses children make as they interact with sand, water, pails, and shovels. Then make yourself a mental list of all of the skills that are being grasped by them. Have you ever heard a child at the beach say, “I’m bored—there’s nothing to do?” Think about it!

Discovering My Inner Child

Cynthia Montoya, Head Teacher
Tolentine Zeiser Day Care Center

Once read, “If you’re not having fun, you’re not being the best teacher you can be.” As simple as that sounds, I often feel, as many teachers do, that I must be the “adult” and the role model in the classroom, and therefore can’t consider this option. I have found myself struggling between wanting to join in the children’s play and being the adult who controls their play. I would feel foolish and phony when I dramatized too much with the children. However, fun is contagious, and my inner child resurfaced without warning. Little did I know that something so incredible was about to happen for me and that for a little while, I could be a four-year-old again...

One day, a conflict in the house area needed my support. Three girls in the kitchen section were arguing over a post-it notepad. All three wanted to copy the numbers from the cash register onto this one notepad. I could have ended the dispute by taking the pad away and asking them to use other types of available paper. Part of me even wanted to recite the “Sharing Speech.” But something made me say, “Guess what? The coolest thing about this paper is that you can tear it off and it sticks to almost anything!” Instead of ending their play and focusing on the problem, we found a solution that everyone agreed upon. This approach encouraged the girls to use the paper together, and as a result, new ideas emerged.

On another occasion, a girl set the table for a big meal. When I asked her what she was doing, she said, “I’m having a dinner party and over here is the dance floor.” I asked if I could be invited to her dinner party. She nodded yes, and said she wanted all her friends to come, too. We talked about the different ways she could invite her friends, including phoning them and sending invitations. She decided to send invitations. She asked me to write her friends’ names on separate pieces of paper, which she folded. We then “mailed” the invitations and proceeded to the party. I grabbed my purse and waited to be seated. We each handed our invitations to our hostess and sat down for tea. As I served the tea (I asked our hostess if I could), one of the girls counted out the number of sugar lumps each of us requested. We gave a “toast” in both English and Spanish, and drank our tea. I thanked our hostess for a wonderful party. Before I knew it, choice time was over, and I had to get back into “teacher mode.”

For a moment, I felt like the girls and I had been the only ones in the world; having tea and doing what children do—learning through play. I never imagined I could have so much fun while working. I now regularly play with my students. We explore new ideas and have fun together. While playing, I am able to add a lot of new vocabulary and make discoveries about the children’s interests. I use their interests



to help me develop lessons I know they will enjoy. I have thought a lot about how I responded to this situation and have realized that my inner child allowed me to find the balance between being “the teacher” and being playful. This experience has taught me my biggest lesson: playing with the children is the best way to support their learning! ●

Advocacy Corner

This is an exciting time for the field of Early Care and Education. Through the hard work of advocacy organizations like the Early Childhood Strategic Group and the Emergency Coalition to Save Universal Pre-K, attention is being turned to the needs of our youngest citizens city- and state-wide. The diligent efforts of advocates have not only won the battle to save UPK during the last budget crunch, they have ensured its place on the slate for the future year. Additionally, Child Care Inc., along with other networks, have worked tirelessly to develop and disseminate key information about the important place pre-k holds in the life of a student, while New York worked to define the term, “sound basic education.” Mayor Bloomberg, in his recent State of the City address, shared a vision to allocate funds for full-day preschool for 4-year olds and half-day preschool for 3 year olds.

The Department of Education’s Division of Early Childhood is working hard to implement an infrastructure that will maintain a focus on high quality programs for all pre-k children. *The Standards*, written and distributed in the spring, are a wonderful support in moving towards appropriate goals for children and supportive frameworks for teachers and administrators.

SPOTLIGHT:

Can Books and Laughter Help Redefine Standards?

Lisa Wenz is currently the head teacher in a Universal Pre-Kindergarten classroom at The Amalgamated Nursery School in the Bronx, NY. She also serves as a Mentor at the Center for Universal Pre-K's Early Childhood Mentoring Program at Bank Street College, which provides experienced early childhood teachers the opportunity to become trained mentors and pass on their expertise and guidance to beginning teachers.

Take a good look and a good listen around your classroom. Are your students smiling and laughing among themselves and with the classroom staff? Are they generally enjoying themselves at school? If children are not having fun in pre-kindergarten, then something needs to change.

The current educational trend towards standardized testing and strict curriculum in many pre-kindergarten classrooms is dampening the spirit of many teachers, administrators, and children. Historically, standards were

A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.
— Dwight D. Eisenhower

put in place to establish equitable opportunities for children across different program settings. Well-designed standards reflect appropriate developmental

benchmarks and provide a supportive guide for educators. We *can* reclaim this interpretation of standards in our pre-k classrooms and keep the focus on growing healthy, happy, and well-prepared children.

The question, then, becomes, How can we meet these standards while embracing a playful, enjoyable environment for the children? My belief is that using humorous literature can be an excellent beginning. A bit of research will yield a wealth of titles on every theme or topic a classroom may be working with, that can easily align with our New York City Department of Education Prekindergarten Standards.

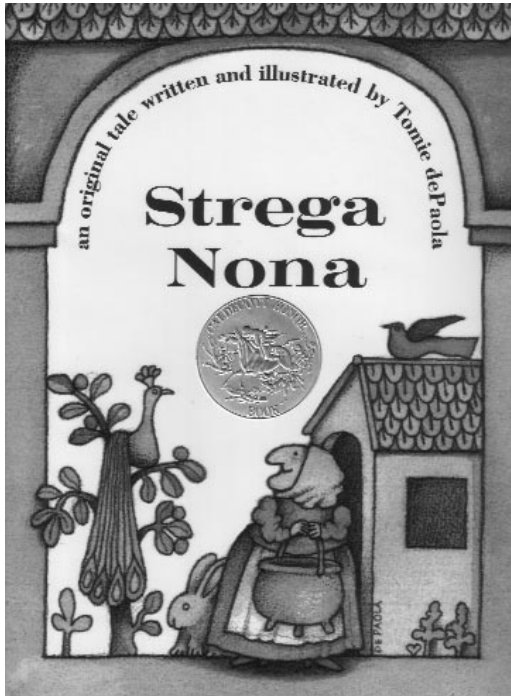
- Read aloud to your students in small groups and one-to-one. Mem Fox, literacy expert and author of *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud To Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever*, advocates that adults “read aloud with animation” and guides us to, “listen to your own voice and don’t be dull, or flat, or boring.” She encourages us to, “hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.”

STANDARD: Listen with understanding to conversations, directions, rhymes, songs, and stories.

- Take literature into your song circle. There are multitudes of hilarious songs available in book format. Allow the children to view the illustrations while singing, and soon they will be choosing books to read and sing on their own. They may even begin to make up their own silly songs!
STANDARD: Participate with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, and games.
- Incorporate humorous literature into dramatic play. If you add a few props from the story, you will find that children will often take on the roles of the characters. They may even move beyond the story line to create humorous scenarios of their own.
STANDARD: Show growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in dramatic play situations.
- Send the laughter home. Extend the humor by packing up the books and their props to travel between school and home. In our very busy, stressful society, laughter is often needed in the home environment too. I am so delighted when a parent recounts the fun they had with one of our “book bags.”
STANDARD: Describe and share their own experiences with books.
- For children who speak a foreign language in school or at home, many amusing books are available in foreign language editions. This would be a joyful gift for families to share with their children. Additionally, families can rewrite the books in their native language as a family activity and the child can then share it with the class.
STANDARD: Demonstrate the behaviors of a beginning writer.

We as educators may have to meet these more rigid standards, but we also have the responsibility to ensure that children work in a developmentally appropriate environment. A developmentally appropriate curriculum ensures that children develop socially and emotionally, and humor provides children with the opportunity to practice these skills playfully.

Find time within your day for laughter. It will do you and your students a lifetime of good! ●



Extending the Humor *Strega Nona*, By Tomie dePaola:

- Follow a reading of *Strega Nona* by cooking pasta with your children.
- Add scarves, straw hats, vests, aprons and a plastic witch's pot to the dramatic play area. Fill the pot with a skein of white wool cut into one-foot lengths to represent the pasta.
- Make up a tune and sing *Strega Nona's* magic words during song circle, but do not forget the "three kisses"!
- When the fun begins to wane, read *Strega Nona takes a Vacation*, and have a water table full of bubbles ready.

The Center for Universal Pre-K at Bank Street College of Education

The Mission of Bank Street's Center for Universal Pre-Kindergarten is *to help early care and education programs strengthen their services to young children and their families*. We provide a variety of services and resources at NO cost, for teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, policy makers, advocacy groups, and researchers that promote quality Universal Pre-K programming.

Early Childhood Mentoring Program

The Early Childhood Mentoring Program offers experienced early childhood teachers the opportunity to become trained mentors to beginning teachers.

Universal Pre-K Fellows Program

The Universal Pre-K Fellows Program is a credit-bearing professional development program that strengthens teachers' and assistant teachers' understanding of developmentally appropriate practice through seminars, mentoring, resources, and career development.

Quality New York

Quality New York provides support to early childhood programs throughout New York City that are seeking accreditation through NAEYC. This program is a collaboration with Bank Street College's Center for UPK, Child Care, Inc., and the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.

Community of Learners Project

The Community of Learners Project brings together Bank Street College and Region One in the Bronx, to provide professional development services to Universal Pre-K program staff.

On-site consultation, professional development, and technical assistance

The Center for Universal Pre-K works with preschool programs throughout New York City to provide specialized professional development workshops and targeted on-site support.

For more information, please contact María Beneján at 212.961.3410, or visit our website at www.bankstreet.edu/upk/index.html.

The Center for Universal Pre-K is a part of the *Division of Continuing Education* at Bank Street College of Education.

Upcoming Events 2004

May 4 – 7

Parents as Teachers' 13th Annual "Born to Learn" Conference,
St. Louis, Missouri

A conference for early educators, parent educators, child care providers, health care professionals, social workers, and other professionals who work with young children.

May 7

Center for Early Education Development (CEED)'s 2004 Symposium,

Minneapolis, Minnesota

A symposium to address a variety of topics from early literacy skills to challenging behavior.

May 6 – 8

Leadership Connections Conference for Early Childhood Administrators,
Chicago Marriott O'Hare

A conference for skill building, energizing discussions, networking, and resource sharing.

June 3 – 5

Administration for Children's Services' Staff Development and Family Child Care Conference—Changes, Challenges and Strengths of the New Child Care/Head Start System: Collaborations and Partnerships for Quality Care and Early Learning,
New York, New York

June 20 – 23

NAEYC's 13th Annual National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development—Learning from Assessment,
Baltimore, Maryland

July 21 – 24

The World Congress of the World Organization for Early Childhood (OMEPE)—One World: Many Childhoods,
Melbourne, Australia

July 28 – 31

National Association for Family Child Care—Family Child Care...Where Relationships Start with the Heart,
Kansas City, Missouri

September 26 – 28

National Black Child Development Institute's 34th Annual Conference—"Shifting the Kaleidoscope: New Possibilities for Children,
Los Angeles, California



The New York City Association for the Education of Young Children's mission is to support the development of professionals to advocate for and promote quality care and education for the well-being of all children, birth through age eight, and their families. To join our chapter, please call 212-807-0144, or visit us online at www.nycaeyc.org. Help us reach throughout our early childhood community and welcome new members for the 2004-2005 school year!

Have you heard about New Perspectives?

New Perspectives graduate-level courses are designed to meet your needs in two to four days. Imagine - you could take a class Monday and Tuesday and apply what you learned on Wednesday! Earn one graduate credit in two days! Our most popular courses include: Behavior Management, How Young Children Learn Through Play and Setting up Learning Centers. There are a full range of classes offered in early childhood this summer. Check it out at www.bankstreet.edu/ce/newpers or 212.875.4649

Resources

Compiled by the Center for UPK

This list of books may assist you in supporting humorous and playful experiences with your preschoolers!

Books for Children

- *A Frog in the Bog*, by Karma Wilson, Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. There was a frog sitting on a log in the middle of the bog. He flicks ONE tick off of a stick. He sees TWO fleas in the reeds. He spies THREE flies buzzing in the skies. The frog is feeling pretty fine, but then...the log in the middle of the bog starts to rise...
- *Diary of a Worm*, by Doreen Cronin, Joanna Cotler Books, 2003. This is the diary . . . of a worm. Surprisingly, a worm not that different from you or me. Except he eats his homework. Oh, and his head looks a lot like his rear end.
- *How I Became a Pirate*, by Melinda Long, Harcourt Children's Books, 2003. When Braid Beard's pirate crew invites Jeremy Jacob to join their voyage, he jumps right on board. Buried treasure, sea chanteys, pirate talk--who wouldn't go along?
- *Jamberry*, by Bruce Degen, HarperFestival, 1994. Hat and boot in hand, a boy and a bear set off on a delicious and raucous romp through Berryland. They frolic in strawberry fields forever, rumble and ramble in blackberry brambles, and topple their canoeberry with blue berries. Silly rhymes and a musical beat practically beg to be read aloud.
- *Silly Sally*, by Audrey Wood, Red Wagon Books, 1999. Dance a jig with a silly pig. Play leapfrog with a silly dog. And that's just the beginning of all the fun! Come along and join Silly Sally and

her outrageous friends as they parade into town in a most unusual way.

- *Sheep in a Jeep*, by Margot Apple, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. What could be better than a misadventure from a rambunctious flock of sheep? The hapless flock goes for a drive in the country - a normal outing is sure to turn into a joyous lark.

And Some Dr. Seuss Titles

Choose the always-wonderful Dr. Seuss, published by Random House Books for Young Readers.

- *The Cat in the Hat*
- *Green Eggs and Ham*
- *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*
- *Hop on Pop*
- *Fox in Socks*
- *Horton Hatches the Egg*
- *Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?*

Books for Teachers and Parents

- *Pathways to Play: Developing Play Skills in Young Children*, by Sandra Heidemann, et al., Redleaf Press, 1992.
- *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, by Vivian Gussin Paley, Harvard University Press, 1992.
- *Taking Humor Seriously in Children's Literature: Literature-Based Mini-Units and Humorous Books for Children Ages 5-12 (School Library Media Series, #11)*, by Patricia Roberts, Scarecrow Press, 1997.

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An In-Depth Look

For more information and additional resources on humor and play in the preschool classroom, check out our website at www.bankstreet.edu/upk/index.html.

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