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*Creative use of reusable resources...
A community partnership benefiting local
children, schools, businesses and government*

MARCH 2008

TAKING PLAY SERIOUSLY

Stuart Brown, president of the National Institute for Play, recently spoke at the New York Public Library, and his talk was the subject of a lengthy New York Times article by Robin Marantz Henig on February 17th. The full, in depth article titled *Taking Play Seriously* can be found on www.nytimes.com. Excerpts from that article follow:

Brown created the institute for Play in 1996, after more than 20 years of psychiatric practice and research persuaded him of the dangerous long-term consequences of play deprivation. In a sold-out talk at the library, he and Krista Tippett, host of the public-radio program "Speaking of Faith," discussed the biological and spiritual underpinnings of play. Brown called play part of the "developmental sequencing of becoming a human primate. If you look at what produces learning and memory and well-being, play is as fundamental as any other aspect of life, including sleep and dreams."

The message seemed to resonate with audience members, who asked anxious questions about what seemed to be the loss of play in their children's lives. Scientists who study play, in animals and humans alike, are developing a consensus view that play is something more than a way for restless kids to work off steam; more than a way for chubby kids to burn off calories; more than (Continued on page 4)

Teachers come to the Reusable Resources Adventure Center to pick up reusable resources.



Dr. Walter Drew (at left) receiving materials from Larry S. Webber, Exec. Director of Keep Brevard Beautiful, and Michael J. Hazlett, President of American Recycled Plastics of Palm Bay.

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why... In the next issue of TYC Writing Online Learning Next issue topics

Why... Reuse Resources?

To support learning
Local businesses and industries give away bamboo, plastic rings, foam shapes, cardboard tubes, fabric, yarn, wood, wire, paper, and many other things that fascinate and inspire creativity in children and teachers. Children think, plan, and observe what happens when using these items to count, sort, stack, build, make books, create art, or roll across the floor. They can learn to understand concepts and relate one idea to another while stacking pieces of Styrofoam or filling cardboard tubes with plastic caps.

To develop a new generation of environmentalists
Using these materials lets children and families see reusable items in a new way. They learn that materials can serve numerous purposes. A piece of pink foam becomes carpet in the doll house; buttons and bottle caps are perfect for sorting by size, color, and shape. Instead of continuing to throw away or replace items, families might donate them to the program or find new uses for them at home.

To encourage creativity
The unique shapes and designs of packaging and manufacturing leftovers awaken children's imaginations. They wonder, "Where did these spools come from? What can I do with this cardboard tube?" Children investigate, explore, and make new things, often combining reusable resources with items on hand. They think, "I am creative, powerful, and capable of learning."

Because they are free and fun
Creative teachers will find many ways to use reusable resources. They might make games, puzzles, and books. Children can make collages, sculptures, mobiles, and more. Programs can use the money saved for other learning materials.

Many thanks to the following individuals for sharing their responses: Vanessa Anthony, Corner Stone Center for Early Learning, St. Louis, MO; Pauline Baker, Tucson Unified School District, AZ; Walter F. Drew, Reusable Resources Association, Melbourne Beach, FL; Suzanne Duarte Jones, Pacific Oaks Children's School, Pasadena, CA; Maria Lopez, Joy of Learning, Miami, FL; Kristie L. Norwood, Chicago Commons Child Development Program, IL; Peter Pizzolongo, NAEYC, Washington, DC; Mery Faial Zaynourne, Haynes Early Education Center, Boston, MA.

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Pre-K teacher, Linda Vinson of Holland Elementary School, guides play with one of her pre-K students, using foam blocks donated to the Reusable Resources Adventure Center.



Melbourne High Kiwanis Key Club coaches play using reusable resources while volunteering with the Hope South Head Start Center in Palm Bay.

CENTER'S OPEN HOURS

Come look over the reusable materials we have available, and make your selections during our "Open Hours." If you are donating materials, please call ahead to schedule an appointment; do not leave items by the door.

March

Wed., Mar. 5, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed., Mar. 12, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed., Mar. 19, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Sat., Mar. 29, 9:00 AM to Noon

April

Wed., Apr. 2, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed., Apr. 9, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed. Apr. 16, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Sat, Apr. 26, 9:00 AM to Noon

May

Wed., May 7, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed., May 14, 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Wed. May 21, 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Summer Hours

Our summer hours will be different and will be posted by May.

Thank you, Melbourne Kiwanis Club, for supporting the Reusable Resources Adventure Center of Melbourne, Florida.



We'll be at The Melbourne Art Festival.

The Reusable Resources Adventure Center will be represented in downtown Melbourne during the 24th Annual Melbourne Art Festival, April 25-27, 2008. Look for our table and introduce your friends! Local school Art teachers will be displaying Art created by their students using reusable materials from our center.

TAKING PLAY SERIOUSLY from page 1

a frivolous luxury. Play, in their view, is a central part of neurological growth and development — one important way that children build complex, skilled, responsive, socially adept and cognitively flexible brains...

Animal-play experiments have focused largely on the most vivid form of play — social play, in particular the kind of social play known as play-fighting. But it's clear to anyone who thinks about it that play-fighting is a very narrow definition of play. Wrestling is not the same as chasing. For that matter, playing tag is not the same as playing dress up; playing in a soccer league is not the same as shooting hoops in a neighborhood

park; and none of these are the same as playing Scrabble or Uno or video games. For all its variety, however, there is something common to play in all its protean forms: variety itself.

The essence of play is that the sequence of actions is fluid and scattered. In the words of Marc Bekoff, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Colorado, play is at its core "a behavioral kaleidoscope."

"I think of play as training for the unexpected," Bekoff says. "Behavioral flexibility and variability is adaptive; in animals it's really important to be able to change your behavior in a changing environment." Play, he says, leads to mental suppleness and a broader behavioral vocabulary, which in turn helps the animal achieve success in the ways that matter...

"Look at life without play, and it's not much of a life," said Stuart Brown. "If you think of all the things we do that are play related and erase those, it's pretty hard to keep going." Without play, he said, "there's a sense of dullness, lassitude and pessimism, which doesn't work well in the world we live in..."

Animal findings about how play influences brain growth suggest that playing, though it might look silly and purposeless, warrants a place in every child's day. Not too overblown a place, not too sanctimonious a place, but a place that embraces all styles of play and that recognizes play as every bit as essential to healthful neurological development as test-taking drills, Spanish lessons or Suzuki violin. ■

Partner with the Reusable Resources Adventure Center (RRAC)

Become a Member! Your annual support fee gives you access to materials during the center's open hours and the opportunity to participate in special Center activities at a discount.

Donate materials! Let your imagination be your guide. Many manufactured objects are appropriate for children's art and construction projects, imaginative play and learning

activities. Highly desired materials include wire, mylar, plastics, fabrics, wood, foam, gaskets, tools and paper. Does your business have overruns, scraps, rejects, punchouts and/or outmoded parts? Give us a call at (321) 729-0100, and we'll explore the possibilities with you.

Volunteer! We need volunteers to work at the Center, assist with special events, and provide periodic transportation of donated materials.

Help fund the program! Your financial donations may be targeted toward the cost of transporting materials, printing publications such as this brochure, outreach efforts such as the development of our website, teacher workshops and special operational needs.

Become a Sponsor! Pay the annual membership of a school,

Scout troop, local community center, or other organization of your choice.

Become a Strategic Partner! If you can donate a usable building for storage or classroom workshops, shelving, a large work table, filing cabinets, a small closed trailer that can be pulled by a car, large storage containers or up-to-date computer equipment, give us a call at (321) 729-0100.

Become a Corporate Sponsor! If you would like to become a 2006 corporate sponsor with a money donation, we will put it to good use providing educational programs for the underserved of our community and increasing our outreach to the educators of Brevard County. Our corporate sponsors are featured in our newsletter. ■

**FIELD TRIPS TO THE
ADVENTURE CENTER:
90-Minute, Hands-On
Discovery Workshops for
Students – For Information:
Call Dr. Walter F. Drew at
729-0100 or e-mail
dr-drew@earthlink.net.**