



Sowers & Seeds

Published by the WELS Commissions on Youth Discipleship & Parish Schools to assist those in early childhood ministry.

A Child's Value . . . Priceless!

By Dr. Joel A. Nelson, Administrator – WELS Youth Discipleship

Harold J. Morowitz, a biochemist at Yale University, once received a humorous birthday card that said, "According to biochemists, the materials that make up the human body are only worth 98 cents." Morowitz didn't believe it and began to check it out. After determining what chemicals were in the human body and what percentages of each were present, Morowitz concluded that a gram of human being was worth \$245.54. He then multiplied that number by his body weight and arrived at the figure \$6,000,015.44.



put together and functioning. After a few more calculations, putting molecules, cells, tissues, organs, and systems into the picture, Morowitz raised the worth of a human being to 6 quadrillion dollars. It was a mind-boggling number, but it still didn't take into account all the different things a human body can do, say, think, and feel. Finally, Morowitz exclaimed, "Each human being is truly priceless."

Amazing as that may seem, that's not even the whole story.

Though an impressive amount, Morowitz knew this figure only showed the value of body chemicals in isolation, not

Each one of us is more than just a magnificently designed living creature. God has given us an immortal soul. We can define soul as, "the spiritual being which, when united with a body, makes a living, human person." An amazing body, an immortal soul. Can it get any better? It can, but only if we understand two other things about children and ourselves. We are sinful, and we are saved.

We are sinful. Psalm 51:5 says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Our wonderful body is corrupted by sin. It will die (Romans 6:23) and, left in sin, our body and soul will spend an eternity in hell (Matthew 10:28). There is nothing we can do to change this either. Nevertheless, it has been changed for us.

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The Physically Educated Child

By Dr. Sharon Burow – Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, WI

It is a beautiful summer morning and the neighbors call to invite you to play tennis, in fall to hike in the nearby state park, and in the winter to cross-country ski, but throughout the year you always have an excuse— too much to do— maybe next time. Truth is, you have the stamina to do little beyond chores and day-to-day activities, were not nurtured to want to be physically active, and/or feel too inadequate as an adult to participate even in recreational sports or activities to support a healthy lifestyle.

Just as developmentally appropriate curricular practices in school are to foster lifelong learning (habits), so, too, early childhood physical education programs often are undervalued, underdeveloped, and overshadowed by academics. Thus, teachers often fail to lay the foundation to nurture a lifelong interest in physical activity. This article will examine some of the “best practices” in teaching and link them to the early childhood physical education program.

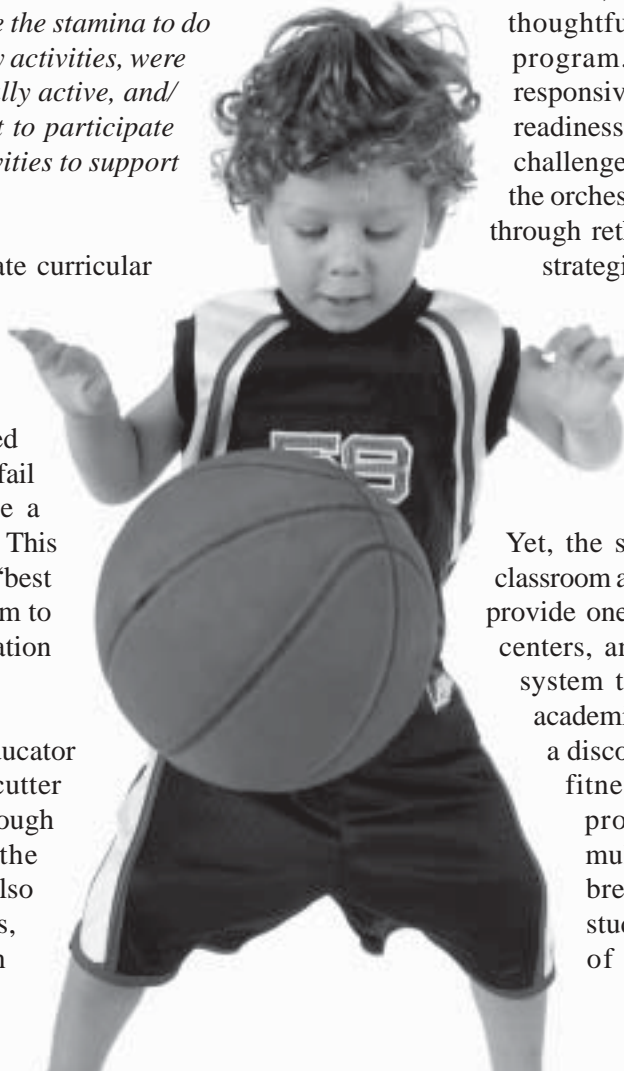
Just as a savvy early childhood educator avoids the rigidity of a cookie cutter approach or a comatose march through prescribed well-worn lessons, the physical education program must also be designed around the strengths, interests, and needs of children in each new school year, and requires

multiple and varied approaches, and opportunities. It is second nature for teachers to assess the literacy skills of a new group of children at the beginning of the school year and then, on a continuum to ensure a thoughtfully designed reading readiness program. It is equally important to be responsive to children’s sports/recreational readiness so that they are self-motivated to challenge themselves physically apart from the orchestrated gym class. It can be realized through rethinking location, lesson planning strategies and planting dispositional seeds to grow sportsmanship.

Frequently, a physical education program is taught in a concentrated 15 -20 minute stint with a “whole group mentality” within the parameters of the gym.

Yet, the same educator will return to the classroom and coordinate small group learning, provide one-on-one attention, utilize activity centers, and design an integrative support system to reinforce or expand emerging academic skills. Somehow there tends to be a disconnect when it comes to a physical fitness program. Quality movement programs require extended time, multiple settings, varied formats, a break down of the skills for some students, peer-tutoring, and a variety of contexts for guided practice

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“A Child’s Value . . . Priceless!” . . . continued from page 1)

We’re saved! “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus came into our world to save us. (Isn’t it interesting that God chose to send our Savior into the world as a child?) He set you, me, and everyone else free from the slavery of sin and gave us the hope and joy of eternal life.

Harold J. Morowitz used the number 6 quadrillion dollars to try to express a person’s worth. God profoundly increased the value of human worth when he lovingly sacrificed his only Son on behalf of every person who has

ever lived, lives, or will live. The children and families you serve are among those for whom God’s personal love-offering was given. Those complex little human bundles you teach, and their dear families cost God everything so that their ugly stains of sin could be washed clean. Those same children and families, because of the Holy Spirit working through the Word taught and modeled in your early childhood ministry, will someday receive the inheritance of a lifetime, an eternal place in heaven, living and ruling in glory with the risen and ascended Lord Jesus. You’ll receive it right along with them. Talk about priceless!



Spiritual Growth & the Dual Partnership

*By Jessica Hegman, Early Childhood Major,
Class of 2007, Martin Luther College – New Ulm, MN*

*Respect the parents and their concerns, establish two-way communication
early in the year, work together on behalf of the child . . .*

These main concepts are what I found as I read through a chapter for my Early Childhood class on the relationship between the home and school. This relationship is vital in the education of a child. When the home and school work together there is a greater opportunity for the success of the child. As teachers, we must be concerned about how we can involve the family in the education of a child.

In the education field, there is a great emphasis on the home-school partnership. The importance can be seen through the numerous courses offered and the abundance of books written specifically about this topic. As I paged through my notebook, I found lists such as “Tips for a positive home-school relationship”, “How to improve communication between the family and teacher”, and “Tips for a successful parent-teacher conference.”

The education of children is important, but when children enter our schools their spiritual well-being is our top priority. We will teach the children how to read, how to add and subtract, and how to write a story. But we have something to offer the children much more important than multiplication facts or the state capitals. We have the gospel to share with Jesus’ little lambs. Not only can we help prepare the children for life on this earth, but we have the blessing of sharing with them the hope of an everlasting life with our Lord in heaven.

Our Lutheran schools, preschools, and early childhood ministries are a wonderful blessing from the Lord. The children are able to begin and end their school day with prayer, listen to devotions, and learn and grow in their faith through God’s Word. But a child’s spiritual growth does not stop there. Just as the success of a child’s education depends on the relationship between the home and school, so much more so does their spiritual growth depend on this dual partnership.

Christian education is a supplement, not a replacement for the parent’s spiritual training of their children. As Christian teachers, we are fighting an uphill battle if the Word is not found in the home. We are able to share God’s Word with the children during the short amount of time we have them in class, but we need to get the Word into the home. Faith is not just set apart for Word of God class or church on Sunday mornings. Together we have to show children that our faith is always part of our lives—including our life at home.

This is much easier said than done. As Christian teachers, we have to help and show parents how to build and nurture the faith of their children in practical ways. Parents do not need to be told what to do, they need to be taught. We need to train parents how to pray with their children and bless their children in the Lord before they go to bed. As a family, they can talk about the highs and lows of their day and pray about them and ask for forgiveness. They can read the Bible together and begin each day in prayer. If parents and teachers are on the same page, children will have consistency in their spiritual lives. The children’s spiritual lives will not end with the closing prayer at school, but will continue with their prayers and the Lord’s blessing before they go to sleep.

We must learn to take advantage of the teachable moments. Through those little moments, children are reminded that the Lord loves us, provides for us, forgives us, died for us, and rose for us. When children fall down and scrape their knees, we can ask Jesus to help take away the pain. Children need to know that we can talk to Jesus at anytime and anywhere, and talk about what Jesus does for us throughout the day. God’s love is evident throughout our entire lives, not just when we read about his love in a devotion book or study his Word. In his great love, the Lord saved us from our sins and has given us the gift of eternal life. The Lord has blessed us with both families and schools to share this wonderful message.



It's Time to CAST Off!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Oshkosh, WI has launched a new ministry to bring Jesus' love to its youngest members. The ministry is called **CAST** and stands for **C**hildren **A**t-home **S**tories to **S**hare.

CAST is designed to serve families of preschoolers (member and prospect) through a once-a-month home visit. Each home visit lasts about an hour and includes a Bible lesson, video, book, and activity. This visit and the CAST ministry help parents in their role of sharing God's love with their children.

If you'd like more information about CAST, contact Stacey Lidtke via the Bethlehem Lutheran Church office: 920-235-5390

Check Out Exchange Every Day

Exchange Every Day is a free resource from Early Childhood Exchange. ECM teachers and directors could find some helpful articles for parents and personal use. Go to www.childcareexchange.com.

*Janis Visaggio, Director, Bethany Preschool
– North Fort Meyers, FL*

From the Mouths of Babes...

A little boy was at his very first wedding. After the service, another child asked him, "How many men can a woman marry?"

"Sixteen," the little boy said.

"How do you know?" his friend asked.

"The preacher said it – four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer," the boy replied.



Beneficial Bags Keep Them Quiet

Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Berlin, WI has developed "Quiet Bags" and a special tree on which to hang them. The bags are filled with books, soft toys, and other items to keep young children in church engaged and excited about coming. The bags are kept on a special rack/tree near the entry to the sanctuary, and families pick one up as they enter church and return it when they leave. Designated Star of Bethlehem members make sure the quiet bags are ready to go before each service. If you'd like to learn more about this awesome idea, contact Shirley Imig at 262-860-8803.

Uncommon Family-Friendly Ideas

Here are nine ways to broadcast to families that they are welcome at your church:

- Provide a small exterior door that children can open on their own to go into your church building.
- Add child-size furniture to areas normally used by adults.
- Establish reserved parking spaces close to the church door for mothers with babies (and tons of baby paraphernalia).
- Create a staffed drop-off zone to help families with small children into church.
- Set up changing stations in women's and men's restrooms.
- Hook up video transmissions in the mothers' cry room and the fathers' cry room so parents don't have to miss the service when the baby needs attention.
- Put in child-size restroom fixtures-especially sinks and drinking fountains. Or, at the least, provide step stools.
- Hang paintings and art work at a child's eye level or children's artwork at an adult's eye level.
- Create a children's space with Lego tables, books, toys, and children's furniture.





("The Physically Educated Child" . . . continued from page 2)

(Murphy & Surridge, 2000). The following marketed resources can aid in establishing a learning environment in which skills beget interest, confidence, and self-motivation to be physically enabled:

Hengstman incorporates the alphabet within a challenging physical education program utilizing stations (specifically designed areas) to teach various large motor skills. The stations can be readily implemented in the classroom (circle area) just like traditional centers. This format allows the teacher the time to nurture children's competence in locomotor, nonlocomotor, gymnastic, and manipulative skills through games and activities while facilitating other centers. Providing a physical education center within the classroom is also invaluable for bodily/kinesthetic learners, children who may require sensory integration or those who have attending difficulties—they can utilize this center to support their needs and then successfully re-engage with the class. [Hengstman, J. G. (2001). *Movement ABCs: An inclusive guide to stimulating language development*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics]

Dolesh focuses on creating physical education lessons that incorporate patterns, rhythm, eye-hand coordination, visual tracking, awareness of left and right, and developing unilateral and bilateral skills. Activities are also designed to encourage locomotor movements, develop directionality (left/right), crossing the midline of the body, balance, movement flow, memory and strengthening sequencing to help children learn to follow

multiple directions. Her movement experiences directly transfer to support literacy development, and align with best practices related to brain research. [Dolesh, G. (1992). *Learning with a s.m.i.l.e: Sensory motor integrated with leaning experiences*. Wheeling, IL: Look at Me Productions]

Another means to foster physical fitness is to provide an environment in which the teacher's proactive strategies for group and individual guidance create positive experiences. Establishing procedures, rules (bounds), consequences, and positive feedback are essential especially if utilizing a center format. Children's scaffolding of perceptual-motor functioning and physical skill development during the early years is dependent on the teachers working at the child's physical level (especially for individual support), the modeling of thinking during the demonstration of a specific skill, personalizing cues for particular students, using mistakes as learning opportunities, and assessment with personalized feedback. Such responsiveness aids children to move to more complex levels of skills and understanding, and gives them the confidence to participate in other venues.

Students also need teachers to deliberately model interpersonal skills and to develop strategies and opportunities for students to practice sportsmanship for recreational activities. Such mindful attention provides socially positive skills that impact future competitive sports. Even more important is taking turns, moving as a group, staying on task, listening to others, contributing to a team effort, negotiating, tolerating, handling conflict, decision-making, respecting others. Knowing when to ask for help, and thanking others for their help are invaluable social skills that can separate or include you from being asked to share various recreational opportunities in life.

Finally, best practices in education include the element of family partnership. Children look to the home to validate what happens in the classroom. Just as early childhood teachers communicate academic goals and provide suggestions to foster the mindset of partnership between home and school, it is also important to regularly seek such support for physical education.

In 1992, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Outcomes published a five-part definition of the physically educated person (find it at www.wels.net/jumpword/ecm in the "Non-WELS, Print Resources" folder). Certainly it speaks to early childhood educators to stand vanguard and be proponents for the physically educated child—in fact it may be life altering!



Get Parents Crosslink for Your Families

Parents Crosslink, the quarterly newsletter published by WELS Parish Services and Northwestern Publishing House, would be a great resource for your ECM families. Add the subscription costs to your ECM tuition/fees, get your congregation's oversight board to add the costs to its budget, or find a member donor who loves children, your ECM, and Jesus. Bulk subscriptions are available. You can find all of the ordering details at www.parentscrosslink.net in the "About Parents Crosslink" area.



Sowers & Seeds

Summer and Fall Conferences You Won't Want to Miss!

Building From the Ground Up

The 2nd Biennial WELS Youth Ministry Conference

- ◆ Friday-Sunday, September 15-17, 2006
- ◆ Chaparral Suites Resort – Scottsdale, AZ
- ◆ \$225 per person

More details at www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship

Minnesota & Western Wisconsin

Early Childhood Conference

Tuesday, July 25: Trinity St. Luke's, Watertown, WI

Thursday, July 27: Crown of Life, West St. Paul, MN
(repeat of Tuesday)

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Cheryl Loomis
Best Practices in Early Literacy

Sectionals will cover the following topics:

- ◆ A review of children's book titles, award winners, and a few books by favorite authors.
- ◆ "Make and take" - make props and visual aids to aid in telling stories or use with picture books.
- ◆ Learn how to find and write grants to aid in getting funds and classroom materials.
- ◆ Use your classroom computer to make pictures and symbols to enhance learning for young children with two special programs.
- ◆ Learn how to develop the concept of print with young children.

**For more information, contact Jim Moeller
920-206-1844 or Betty Van Loon 507-725-3412.**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, New International Version © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. *Sowers & Seeds* is published four times a year by the WELS Commissions on Youth Discipleship & Parish Schools. Comments about this *Sowers & Seeds* and ideas for future issues can be directed to Dr. Joel A. Nelson, Administrator WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship.

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