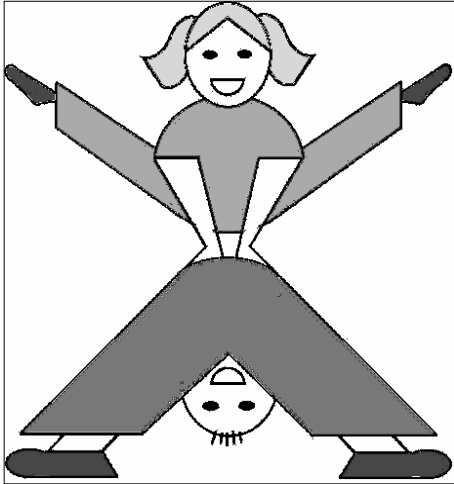


Playgroup Programme Newsletter

www.playgroupprogramme.org

Number 4: March/Apr 2008

PGP Members 2007 Survey



Dear Members,

Thank you very much to all of you who took the time to complete the survey. Over half the membership replied—we received 73 responses in total; which by survey standards is a very good response.

Please see below the summary of what you think about the Playgroup Programme.

The **library**—85% of the respondents were very pleased with the library stating that there was a great selection of books. There was some comment that new books should be bought for the Literacy 4 and 5 groups and that the boxes containing the books were too full.

The **newsletter**—90% of the respondents rated the newsletter excellent or very good. The “What’s On” section was particularly popular. The **member’s directory** was also rated highly by members although there was an appeal to receive it earlier in the PGP year. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide it any earlier as it depends upon our member’s personal information being verified and corrected if necessary. This usually takes about two months to complete after the beginning of the PGP school year.

The **email information** is appreciated by most members.

The **Christmas party** was rated very highly by those who attended. In particular, members stated that it was well organized and LOTS of fun. Unfortunately,

the level of attendance last year was very low. The **summer picnic/end of the year party** was rated as good, but again suffered from VERY low attendance, only 35% of the respondents attended.

We are very pleased to confirm that the **play groups** and **literacy groups** continue to be highly regarded and that the groups **Teachers, Leaders and Assistants** are well respected overall. In summary, the PGP experience for most members is excellent.

Out of the 73 responses received, 55 replies came from members with children in a **playgroup session (Pre-lit and younger)**. They rated the crafts, small and large toys highly. There were some requests for easier crafts for the smaller children.

Out of the 73 responses received, 47 replies came from members with children enrolled in a **Literacy group**. For the Pre-Literacy groups, crafts and singing were rated as the most popular activities. The library was well appreciated with 95% of the respondents stating that their children used the library and the majority of respondents were happy with the books which were being brought home. Unfortunately, only 10% of the respondents attended the Literacy Show last year. The Literacy Information Evening was also badly attended. Interestingly, 90% of the respondents stated that their children enjoyed doing their homework!

In response to our request for volunteers for next year we received offers from over 30 members—thank you, we need your support. Some of you, however, marked you would volunteer as an assistant, a leader or in another role, but did not provide us with your name and contact details. Could you please confirm which position you would be interested in and your contact details to me at pgp-membersrep@hotmail.com.

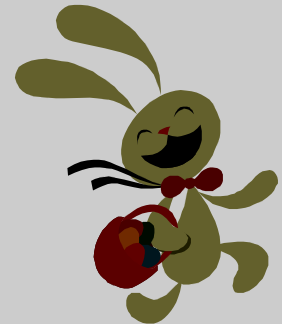
Again, thank you all for your comments and for your participation in the survey this year. If you have any other comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me via email..

Debra

Debra Dimancesco, Members Representative pgp-membersrep@hotmail.com

REMINDER FOR YOUR DIARIES:

21 March to 27 March
EASTER HOLIDAYS



Happy Easter!

Inside this issue:

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Deadline for the May/June issue is:

22 APRIL

vanwilson@bluewin.ch

THE NOTICEBOARD—PGP NEWS & INFORMATION



IS THERE A DIRECTOR OUR THERE—WE NEED YOU!

DIRECTOR VACANCY ON THE PGP BOARD

There is currently only one VACANCY on the PGP Board for next year 2008/2009. It is the **MOST** important role— that of **DIRECTOR**.

Sadly Colette Foort is stepping down from the position of Director. We **URGENTLY** need someone to come forward for this position as without a Director there is **NO PGP!** This role primarily requires a sense of humour , then some flexibility (in order to be able to attend the occasional meetings with Crossroads Church and Board Meetings every two months or so) and also good people management skills (to keep all the Board Members in line!). The successful candidate is entitled to a free place for all his/her kids. If you are interested in finding out more about the position contact Colette on pgp-director@hotmail.com.

We are pleaseD to announce that the other vacancies of Secretary and Newsletter Editor have been filled and that Trish Clements and Nicole Nicholson have agreed to stay on in their roles for another year.



PLEASE TIDY UP!

All PGP members are reminded to please tidy up after you leave the premises.

The lounge and entrance hall has been left a little untidy recently. We ask that parents waiting on the premises ensure that their cups of coffee and tea and/or plates are taken back to the kitchen, cleaned and put away. All rubbish must end up in the rubbish bins. We also ask that parents, whose children play with the toys in lounge, ensure at the end of each session that the toys are cleared off the floor and put away in the available big plastic boxes. **THANK YOU!**



INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW AT PALEXPO

All PGP members should be aware that the show is running from 6 March to 16 March this year and as a result there may be some traffic congestion on the Geneva side before coming through tunnel into Fernay Voltaire. Beware of traffic jams on the way to the Crossroads Church.



REGISTRATION FOR NEXT YEAR

Information regarding registration for next year will be posted in the May/June newsletter.



Dear Playgroup Members

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the Compassionate Outreach Team for the many gifts that were donated to the Crossroads Christmas Gift Drive.

As most of you will know these are donated to the Restos du Coeur, who were very appreciative of these gifts.

You probably will have made many children very happy this Christmas through your donations.

I would like also to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of those who helped out at the Soup Kitchen in Geneva in 2007.

Wishing you all a very Happy & Blessed New Year

Many thanks again

Carol Cookman

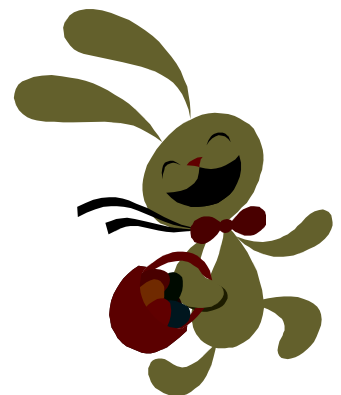
11 rue de la Prairie
01630 St Genis-Pouilly
France

0033 (0) 450204139 Home
0041 (0) 765208128 Daniel
0041 (0) 764042293 Carol



LITERACY SHOW—SUNDAY 18 MAY

All parents of children enrolled in PGP's Literacy Programme are asked to put the above date in their diaries. The kids will start to rehearse their performances in the coming months.



THE INTERVIEW



In this edition, we asked our Playgroup Leader and Representative, Trish Clements, to answer our questions.

Tell us about yourself.

I am from a small village, called Meelin, in County Cork in Ireland. After finishing my studies in Marketing, I hankered to live in Paris. Once there, I worked in Sales and Marketing for a travel company and more importantly I met Mark, my future husband, who hails from London. We moved to New York together, where I worked in advertising as a Media Planner—my dream job. We left NYC just days before the 9/11 attacks, 4 fun-filled years there. With just a few years of sailing experience between us, Mark and I set off on the adventure of a lifetime. We boarded our sailboat “Mistral”, and over 18 months, we cruised the east coast of the US, the Bahamas, the Caribbean, and crossed the Atlantic. We made landfall in Kinsale (Ireland) to an unforgettable welcome by family and friends. In 2003, destiny had us pack our bags for Geneva, where Hugh (now 4) was born. Since then we have moved to Divonne, where we feel very settled, and welcomed Ronan to the fold almost 2 years ago.

Where do you like to do your grocery shopping?

“Nowhere” would be my short answer—grocery shopping is my pet hate! I am just waiting for the moment that on-line grocery shopping comes to my area. Until then, I do a big monthly shop in Carrefour for all non-perishables. I like to go to the small Divonne market on a Friday morning to have fresh produce and fish for the weekend. If I go to the Sunday market it is more for ambience and my Sunday Roast in a bag to go! The Casino supermarket in Divonne has a very good range of international product to satisfy the need for UK and other foreign delicacies.

What is your favourite restaurant in Geneva or environs?

One of my recent favourite restaurants in Geneva is the sushi restaurant Shogun in Eaux Vives. It is a small room and quite popular, so you will need to book. If it is sushi you want, this seems to be the best around. If we need to grab a quick bite to eat, we sometimes go to the self service restaurant downstairs in Globus. It has tasty food, great choice, a fun atmosphere in the evening (open until 10pm) and is ideal before or after the cinema.

What is your favourite summer holiday destination?

Since having children, we have most summer holidays with family. Mark's parents live near Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, which has a wealth of activities for all the family. Last summer we spent a week in a holiday cottage in the seaside town of Kilkee, County Clare, Ireland. Kilkee overlooks a long horseshoe bay, and is renowned for having a very sheltered beach. It also has some lovely natural rock pools too. This holiday was a throwback to the good old days of my childhood. It was really nice to have a very enjoyable time, in a simple old-fashioned way, and to share that with the boys. Having said that, we will probably head somewhere warmer this year!

What is your favourite winter holiday destination?

For the last 10 years or so, I have been holidaying in St Gervais-les-Bains in the Haute Savoie as we have an apartment there. It is a pretty town about an hour or so from Geneva. If the resort lacks altitude (1840m), it makes up for it in pretty tree-line slopes, great restaurants on the slopes and splendid views of Mont Blanc. After years of memories going there without kids, we are now also clients in the garderie and ski school where Hugh and Ronan get to spend a few hours.

What is your favourite sport/activity and where do you do it?

My favourite sports would definitely be sailing and skiing—both have a wonderful way of life attached to them. However, my main form of exercise (other than chasing kids around) is my weekly Iyengar Yoga class. I am extremely fortunate as a friend is a yoga instructor, so it is a nice small group of other local mums. We do workout very hard, but on occasion we have a potluck dinner as well! I really look forward to my class each week, as I need both the exercise and that dedicated time for me.

What is your favourite movie?

I am a big film buff. I especially love contemporary independent films. I enjoy the Hollywood studio films too, but more often than not it is the originality of the independent films that make them stand out for me. A favourite is impossible to choose, but a few films that I enjoy even more after repeat viewings are; Pulp Fiction, Run Lola Run, Amelie, Memento, Snatch, Hot Fuzz, Clerks, Ferris Buler's Day Off, Toy Story I and II (again and again!).

What is your favourite book?

I have to scan my bookshelves to see if I can pinpoint a favourite and I can't! My reading habits have varied greatly over the years. I enjoyed reading a lot of Irish authors (Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett, Roddy Doyle, Joseph O'Connor, Marion Keyes) in my twenties and then I was exposed to many American authors (Toni Morrison, Tom Wolfe, Bill Bryson, Jon Krakauer among others) when I worked in the publishing industry in NY. I definitely have an ongoing love of travel writing, and if it is humorous, all the better.

Thanks Trish!

ADVENTURE PARKS Easter Holiday Ideas!

Sculpture Pak Bruno Weber—On a large piece of land 20 000 metres squared at Dietikon, Zurich dive into a fantastic world of mysterious people. The “Weinreben Park” is open every Sat & each 1st Sun of the month from 1pm to 5 pm from April until the end of Oct. Children 6chf & adults 10chf. See www.bruno-weber.ch

Swiss Vapeur Park—Reputedly one of the most beautiful miniature railways in Europe is found at Bouveret, dozens of steam trains travel on rails set in 17 000 square metres of land. The park is open from 18 March to the beg of Novembre. Entry price - children 12 chf and adults 14 chf. See www.swissvapeur.ch

Ballenberg—The rural lifestyle Museum spreads over 660 000 square metres. The park is open from mid-April to end of October. Children 9chf & adults 18chf. See www.ballenberg.ch

Europapark—a wonderful world of adventure set in over 70 hectares at Rust in Germany. The park is open from April to November. Price of entry—children 25.50 Euros and adults 28.50 euros. See www.europapark.de



Pays des jeux Ravensburger—In this land of play between lakes Constance and Ravensburg in Germany you can complete a huge life-size animal puzzle, drive a tractor or go on an adventure with Captain Blue Beer. Entry price—children 17 euros, adults 19 euros. See www.spieleland.de

Sea Life—At Sea Life in Constance, visitors follow the course of the Rhine from its source up until the North Sea. There are interactive games & a tunnel under the water which takes you under a world modeled on the Mediterranean Sea. Sea Life is open all year. Entry price—children 8.50euros and adults 12.95 euros. See www.sealifeeurope.com

Legoland—A fun time for all the family with attractions made out of Lego. This park is situations close to Ulm in Germany and is open from the beg of April until the end of Nov. Children 26 euros & adults 30 euros. See www.legoland.de

Papiliorama— 1000 species of butterflies live in the tropical vegetation of Papiliorama in Chietres, Fribourg. In the neighbouring Nocturama, one finds the ambiance of full moon in the middle of the tropics. One can also see anacondas and armadillos. Papiliorama is open all year. Entry price—children 7 chf and adults 14 chf. See www.papiliorama.ch

KID'S HEALTH—Dr Cate Esson

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This information has been summarized from the NHS Direct website, UK. To read the full article go to <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk> look in health encyclopedia under ADHD.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common behavioural disorder.

It is estimated that the condition affects between 3-9% of school-aged children and young people. ADHD can be a life-long condition, and many children who have it continue to have symptoms in adolescence and adulthood. However, it is still uncertain as to whether ADHD can occur in adults without first appearing in childhood.

ADHD is defined by two broad groups of behavioural problems - inattentiveness, and a combination of hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Common symptoms within these groups include a short attention span, restlessness, being easily distracted, and constant fidgeting. It is not fully understood whether these problems are an extreme form of normal behaviour, or part of a separate range of behaviour altogether.

People with ADHD usually have symptoms that define them as having one of three subtypes of the condition. The subtypes are: ADHD mainly inattentive, ADHD mainly hyperactive-impulsive, or ADHD combined.

The exact cause of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not fully understood. If your child has ADHD, you may worry that it is somehow your fault, but there is no evidence that parenting technique, or family stresses, can trigger the condition. There are several possible causes of ADHD including genetics, altered brain function and anatomy, exposure to toxins during pregnancy, being male, link to excessive exposure to television, link to food intolerance.

There is no simple test to determine whether you or your child has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Full investigation of a possible ADHD diagnosis is required by a specialist, normally a psychiatrist or a paediatrician. They will make an accurate diagnosis after a detailed assessment.

The assessment should include a physical examination, which will rule out other possible causes for the symptoms, and several tests that can determine your (or your child's) short-term memory, concentration, and problem-solving skills. The assessment may also involve a series of interviews with you, or your child, and interviews or reports from other significant people, such as partners, parents and teachers.

There is no cure for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but treatment can reduce symptoms and make the condition much less of a problem in day-to-day life. ADHD can be treated using medications, or therapy, but it is widely agreed that a combination of both forms of

treatment is the best way to treat the condition. There are also other ways to treat ADHD that some people may find helpful, such as taking supplements and cutting down on certain foods.

The different ways of treating ADHD, and how they can be used for children, adolescents, and adults, are outlined below.

Medication

Medications for ADHD produce a short-lived improvement after each dose, but they are not a permanent cure. They create a short period when someone who has ADHD can concentrate better, be less impulsive, feel calmer, and learn and practice new skills.

There are three types of medication for ADHD: methylphenidate, dexamfetamine, and atomoxetine. (licensed for use in the UK) In the UK, all three of these medications are licensed for use by children and adolescents. In the UK medications for ADHD are controlled drugs, which means their availability and use is more closely controlled than other prescription medicines. When started on any of these medications the patient should be monitored closely by their doctor.

Methylphenidate - Ritalin, Equasym, Concerta XL (brand names, UK)

Methylphenidate is the most commonly used medications for ADHD in the UK. They are known as psycho stimulants, or central nervous system stimulants. It is not completely clear how they work, but it is thought that they stimulate a part of the brain that changes mental and behavioural reactions.

Methylphenidate can be taken as either immediate release tablets, which are small doses taken 2-3 times daily, or as modified release tablets, which are taken once a day, usually in the morning, and gradually release the dose throughout the day. Ritalin and Equasym are immediate release tablets, and Concerta XL is a modified release tablet.

Dexamfetamine – Dexedrine (brand name, UK)

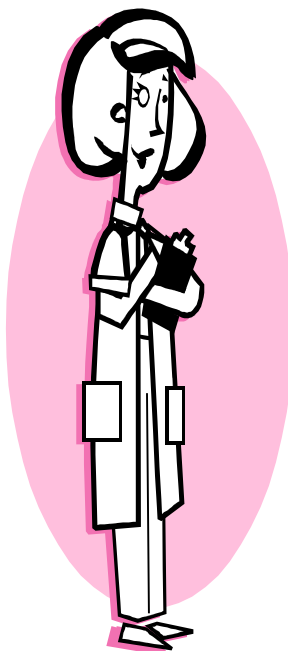
Dexamfetamine works in the same way as methylphenidate. It is also classed as a psycho stimulant, or CNS stimulant, and may be particularly effective in controlling hyperactivity.

Atomoxetine – Strattera (brand name, UK)

Atomoxetine comes in a brand called Strattera, and it works differently to methylphenidate and dexamfetamine. It is known as a selective noradrenaline uptake inhibitor, which means that it increases the amount of a chemical in the brain called noradrenaline. This chemical passes messages between brain cells, so by increasing the amount, it is thought that atomoxetine aids concentration and helps to control impulses.

Atomoxetine comes in tablet form that you or your child takes once or twice a day. The tablets are long-acting, so your child will not need to take them at school. It may be prescribed as an alternative to methylphenidate, or dexamfetamine.

Methylphenidate, dexamfetamine, and atomoxetine all have side effects. All patients on these medications must be closely monitored by their GP and specialist.



(ADHD article continued from Kid's Health on page 4)

If you or your child needs to be prescribed a medication for ADHD, your GP and specialist will take several factors into account before recommending a treatment. These factors will include age, any other conditions that you, or your child, may have, the side effects of each treatment, and whether or not the dosage times interfere with school or work.

Therapy

As well as taking medication, several different therapies can be useful in treating ADHD in children, adolescents, and adults. Therapy is also effective in treating any additional problems, such as conduct or anxiety disorders, that may appear alongside ADHD.

The therapies outlined below can be carried out with the help of counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers. These include psychotherapy, behaviour therapy, parenting skills training, social skills training and others including cutting out certain foods and taking certain supplements. However, there is no medical evidence that these methods work.

Again, PLEASE NOTE that this information has been summarized from the NHS Direct website, UK. To read the full article go to <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk>, look in health encyclopedia under ADHD.

If you have any concerns about you or your child CONSULT your own doctor for further advice.

FOR AN UPDATE ON INFORMATION REGARDING VACCINATIONS SEE THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

<http://www.infovac.ch/>.



FROM THE SOUP LADY "Soups That Do A Job"

From a personal point of view, I think that all soups do an important job. They warm you up on a cold day and they cheer you up when you're feeling low. A BBC programme even presented evidence that soup actually helps you lose weight. According to the study, eating vegetables and chicken made into soup will keep hunger at bay for about an hour longer than eating the vegetables and chicken and drinking the same amount of water separately. So, if you are looking for an excuse to eat more soup, there it is.

However, this month I am going to share two soup recipes that go beyond all these other claims and actually do something else useful.

Cold Curing Soup

I found this cutting in an ancient edition of Cosmopolitan, not a source of many recipes. I am off to make a big batch this afternoon since me and the kids have come down with yet another bout of the sniffles, and my husband, never one to let an illness pass him by, is sure to be suffering ten times as badly tomorrow. The ingredients supposedly all contain essential cold-fighting nutrients.

- 10 ml sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp/15ml mild curry paste
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 450g carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 eating apples, cored and chopped
- 750 ml vegetable stock

Place oil and curry paste in a large pan. Add the carrot, onion and apples. Stir over a moderate heat for 4-5 minutes without browning. Add stock, cover and simmer gently for approximately 30 minutes. Process until smooth, season lightly and serve.

Tattie-Soup-To-Make-You-Poop

Another of my mum's recipes, and, yes, that is still how it's referred to in my childhood home! Most weekends I woke to the smell of this soup simmering on the stove. Heavenly.... The ingredients and quantities are not important, so long as there are loads of vegetables to create the required effect. I bung in whatever I have to hand and it always tastes good. We make it so thick you can stand your spoon up in it, but add more stock if you are one of those purists who think soups should contain liquid!

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 leeks, sliced
- 2-3 parsnips, peeled, cored and chopped
- 4 carrots, peeled and sliced

- 5-6 potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 tbsp/15ml vegetable oil
- 1 - 1.5 l vegetable stock

Heat the oil in a large pan and sweat the vegetables for about 10 minutes without browning them. Add enough stock to just cover the vegetables, bring to the boil and simmer until the carrots and potatoes are

soft - about 30 minutes usually. I mash it roughly with a potato masher to make it easier for small people to manage, but feel free to leave it, or puree it smooth.

This is one of those soups that improves in flavour if you leave it standing on the stove overnight.

Thanks to everyone who has sent me recipes already- I'm having great fun trying them out. But you can never have too many, so please send me your favourite soup recipe, particularly if you have a great minestrone recipe, and the best one will win a prize at the end of the year. Send them to: soupylady@aol.co.uk





PG TIPS—Using Musical Instruments



For this issue, I have asked Rachael Reilly (Leader Fri AM) to suggest ways that Musical Instruments can be incorporated into a session. Prior to moving to Geneva, Rachael set up and ran a music group for 18 month - 5 year olds in Sri Lanka called the "Little Gecko's Music Group". Thank you Rachel!

Trish Clements



‘One of the great secrets about Playgroup, hidden away in the big toy cupboard, is all the different percussion instruments. There are bells and shakers, triangles and tone bars, rhythm sticks, tambourines and cymbals. And there are enough for everyone!! Using instruments during song time can seem a bit daunting and may make you want to rush out and buy ear plugs, but it can also be great fun!

There are several ways in which you can use the instruments. One is to simply put the boxes of instruments in the middle of the group and let the children experiment and make as much noise as they wish – they’ll love it but you may need to retreat to bed for the rest of the day with a splitting head ache!! If you want to structure things a bit more, you could try simple exercises with the instruments. Tell the children that you are going to play a simple rhythm and see if they can copy. It’s best to do this with instruments that can keep a strong beat – the rhythm sticks, tone bars, triangles or tambourines – (bells, shakers and cymbals are harder). Even better is if you have a drum you can bring in to play the rhythm. Try to get the parents involved as well, as they can help their children with the rhythms. Start with very simple beats and as they get the hang of it you can make the rhythms a bit harder and more varied.

Music and movement is fun too. Play a beat and see if the children can move/ dance to it. Get them to join in too with their instruments. Or be a marching band with your instruments and march round the room banging, clanging, shaking and crashing! You could also use the instruments imaginatively during game or story time. Shakers make good rain and cymbals can be crashes of thunder if you’re playing a game, or reading a story, about a storm, for example.

Another way of using the instruments is to integrate them into the songs. This takes a bit more planning and needs to be managed a bit more carefully, but it can be great fun – especially if you repeat the songs often and use the same percussion each time. Below are some examples of songs that lend themselves well to percussion – but use your imagination and you’ll find that most do!

I Hear Thunder

I hear thunder, I hear thunder (*crash with cymbals*)
Hark don't you? Hark don't you?
Pitter patter raindrops, pitter patter rain drops (*bells/ shakers or triangles*)
I'm wet through
So are you!

The Wheels on the Bus

Verse for Horn - (*use party blowers as horns*)
Verse for Wipers - (*Use shakers*)
Verse for Knitting Needles - (*Use rhythm sticks*)

Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock, (*Shakers or bells*)
The clock struck one, (*Triangle/ tambourine/ drum*)
The mouse ran down, (*Shakers or bells*)
Hickory dickory dock,
Tick Tock, Tick Tock (*Wood block/ rhythm sticks*)

Some tips for using instruments with songs:

1. Ensure that there are enough instruments for everyone.
2. Don't get the instruments out until you're ready to sing the song (hide them behind you!)
3. Get the parents/care givers involved. They can help the children make the crashes and bangs in the right places!
4. SIMPLIFY!! If you are using several instruments in one song – then share them out, rather than trying to get everyone to play everything! So, for example, in "I hear thunder" – half the group can have cymbals for the thunder and the other half can have bells for the rain.

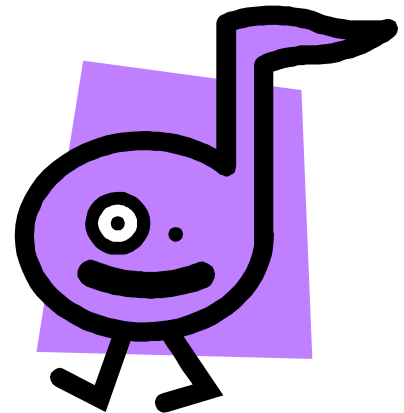
5. Don't try to do actions and use instruments in the same song.
6. Sing the song several times so that everyone knows when to clash their cymbal or shake their bells!
7. If the children want to play different instruments, sing the song again but get them to swap instruments.

When you've finished the song, put the instruments away. You can sing the "putting away song" [*This is the way we tidy up, tidy up, tidy up; This is the way we tidy up; When the music is over*] (to the tune of "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush"). If you leave them out, the rest of song time may disintegrate into a noise fest!

One final thought, if you're really keen on using percussion, drums are the best way to teach children rhythm and help them bang out a beat. I have a few child sized Kandyan drums at home (we used to live in Sri Lanka) that I sometimes bring in, but not enough for everyone. One thing missing in the secret boxes in the big toy cupboard are drums.

They would be a great new addition to Playgroup's wonderful musical instrument collection!

*Rachael Reilly
Leader Friday AM (18m-3y)*



THE LITERACY PAGE

TOP TIPS FROM SOME OF OUR LITERACY TEACHERS:

Kathy:

My son is fine with reading but it is not one who will open a book of his own free will. So to motivate him sometimes I offer to take turns reading with him. Depending on his level of energy, either he reads the first page and I read the second and third, or he reads a page and I read a page.

Sometimes we make a bit of a competition of it—if he reads a word or several words incorrectly on one page he must read the following page as well! I imagine that this tactic will only work for children who like to compete. It also works well for children who try to skip over words or go too quickly.

Katie:

- Always keep a container in the kitchen with a rubber/eraser, pencil and crayons.
- Please ask your child to use the toilet before class starts.
- The kids always seem to be thirsty during class, perhaps they should have a drink before class and before they pee!

Louise:

- Do homework at the kitchen table 10 to 15 minutes before eating dinner. Mum is available to monitor the work and it also becomes a habit and less of a chore.
- Always keep Crossroads books in the car then they won't get lost and kids will read while in the car.

Rebecca:

- Help your children complete their literacy homework in small blocks during the week rather than in one sitting.
- To become a confident reader, children should be reading daily or if this is not possible at least three times a week.

Jenny: (tips for Pre-Literacy)

- Read car number plates in a car park (initiated by my son and now takes me an extra half hour to get anywhere)
- Look at street signs together (McDonald's is a really popular one)
- Collect objects from around the house beginning with that week's sound
- Cut and stick collage from magazines for the letter of the week
- Listen together to alphabet tapes/cds
- Alphabet pasta or make letters with spaghetti, cut letters out of flat cheese
- Play snap or pick pairs with alphabet flash cards



MOM'S CORNER ONLY

The Next SURVIVOR'S series

Six married men will be dropped on an island with one car and 3 kids each for six weeks.

Each kid will play two sports and either take music or dance classes.

There is no fast food.

Each man must take care of his 3 kids; keep his assigned house clean, correct homework, complete science projects, cook, do laundry and pay a list of "pretend" bills with not enough money.

In addition, each man will have to budget in money for groceries each week.

Each man must remember the birthdays of all their friends and relatives, and send cards out on time.

Each man must also take each child to a doctor's appointment, a dentist appointment and a haircut appointment. He must make one unscheduled and inconvenient visit per child to the Urgent Care (weekend, evening, on a public holiday or right when they're about to leave for vacation).

He must also make cookies or cupcakes for a social function.

Each man will be responsible for decorating his own assigned house, planting flowers outside and keeping it presentable at all times.

The men will only have access to television when the kids are asleep and all chores are done.

Each father will be required to know all of the words to every stupid song that comes on TV and the name of each and every character on cartoons.

Each man will have to make an Indian hut model with six toothpicks, a tortilla and one marker; and get a 4 year old to eat a serving of peas.

Each man must adorn himself with jewelry, wear uncomfortable yet stylish shoes, stay thin & fit, have perfect hair, keep their finger nails and toe nails polished and maintain removal of unwanted hair. The men must try to get through each day without snot, spit-up and barf on their clothing.

During one of the six weeks, the men will have to endure severe abdominal cramps, back aches, and have extreme, unexplained mood swings but never complain or slow down from other duties. They must try to explain what a tampon is for when the 6-yr old boy finds it in the purse.

They must attend weekly school meetings, church and find time at least once a week to spend the afternoon in the park or a similar setting.

He will need to read a book to the children each night without falling asleep, then feed them, dress them, brush their teeth and comb their hair each morning by 7.00am. They must leave the home with no food on their face or clothes.

A test will be given at the end of the six weeks, and each father will be required to know all the following information: each child's birthday, height, weight, shoe size, clothes size and doctor's name. Also the child's weight at birth, length, time of birth and length of labour, each child's favourite drink, favourite colour, middle name, favourite snack, favourite song, favourite drink, favourite toy, biggest fear and what they want to be when they grow up.

They must clean up after their sick children at 2.00am and then spend the remainder of the day tending to that child and waiting on them hand and foot until they are better.

They must have a loving, age appropriate reply to "You're not the boss of me".

The kids vote them off the island based on performance. The last man wins only if ... he still has enough energy to be intimate with his spouse at a moment's notice.

From the internet.

What's On In and Around Geneva:

March/April 2008

MARCH

Up to 31 May - Fondue boat cruises on Lake Geneva. www.cgn.ch

19 Feb to 18 May - Photo exhibit of Los Roques (Venezuela) at the Museum of Natural History. Federuci Cabello Alvarez presents a dozen photos of landscapes and animals from this national park in the middle of the Caribbean Sea. www.ville-ge.ch/mhng/

24 Feb to 24 Aug - Small Number - Big Impact. In the course of the last two centuries, some 400,000 Swiss have emigrated to the United States of America to live the dream. This exhibition tells the story of their successes and includes souvenirs, documents and projections that give us a glimpse into some of the most fascinating aspects of their lives. www.penthes.ch

27 Feb to 29 Jul - In-Security - The Nuclear Dilemma. The word nuclear is associated with both energy and defense. Partisans and critics debate the subject, analyzing the past and presenting future scenarios. Free guided tours at 11am on Sundays March 16, April 13, May 18, June 8. One hour long at the Museum of the International Red Cross. www.micr.org

1 to 16 Mar - Les deux rois (The two kings). Marionette show put on by the Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève for children 3 and up. There was once a great king, strong and solitary. There was also a young king, young and ignorant, who was ready to surmount all obstacles to win the esteem of the great king. www.marionnettes.ch

3 Feb to 15 Mar - Le chat botté (Puss in boots). Put on by the Théâtre Rodolphe Töpffer. This is the classic tale as told by Charles Perrault with music by Jean-Philippe Rameau. www.theatre-topffer.ch

5 Mar - Soon Spring! Musical tales for children by Christiane Rychen & Anne-Marie Nicod, story tellers. For everyone aged 2 and up! www.biblio-versoix.ch

6 to 16 Mar - International Motor Show (Salon international de l'automobile). The most frequented and popular annual show in Switzerland. It is the largest fair of its kind in Europe with car manufacturers from around the world. Not to be missed at Geneva's Palexpo. www.salon-auto.ch

8 Mar - Chocolate Festival. The festival in Versoix is an opportunity to (re) discover chocolate makers from Switzerland and France, and tasting their creations. Yummy! www.festivalduchocolat.ch

11 to 30 Mar - Starlight Circus. This young and inventive circus company presents its new show, "C comme", which combines modern circus, humor, emotion and acrobatics. www.starlight-production.com

12 Mar - Contes voyageurs: Pas loin. Tales from Bretagne (Brittany) by Catherine Gaillard, a professional storyteller. For children 5 and up. www.societe-de-lecture.ch

12 Mar - Goldie Locks and Three Bears and The Little Red Hen. Puppet shows by the Théâtre Couleurs d'ombres. For children 3 and up. www.ahvm.ch

12 Mar - The Cousin of King Dagobert. Puppet Show by the Théâtre Du Rêve. The king Dagobert travels across the country to find a princess. For Children aged 4 and up. www.mqpaquis.ch

12 Mar - Disco on Ice for children. Come to dance & skate! www.ville-ge.ch/sports

14 Mar to 26 Oct - Des Alpes au Léman. Focuses on the ways of life led by the prehistoric communities of the Rhone valley and the shores of Lake Geneva. This exhibition presents the hunter gatherers who from around 12,000 B.C. initially colonized the areas freed by retreating glaciers, the first Neolithic crop farmers, the development of an original civilization during the Bronze Age and finally the emergence of a Celtic society. mah.ville-ge.ch

15 Mar - Salsa: a child's play! Dance lessons for children from 2 to 6 years with Monica Mazon, an expert in psychometrics. www.mad.coop

15 and 16 Mar - 5th Festival of Puppets. Festival organized by Eliane Longet and the Croquettes company. Show and workshops. Detailed program on the Internet. www.chene-bougeries.ch

16 Mar - Nature Excursion. Learn everything you always wanted to know about the hare, his unruly habits, his trusty companions, etc. Bird watching is an added bonus. Registration is required. www.lalibellule.ch

25 Mar - Bollywood. Indian music and show. www.geneva-arena.ch

28 to 30 Mar - BD Festival at the Geneva Airport. Discover your favorite comic book authors for two and a half days in the galleries of the Geneva International Airport. www.fetedelabd.ch

29 Mar - Grand voyage - Apassionata. Unbelievable, enchanting and acrobatic, Apassionata transports the audience along its tour around the world on horseback. www.opus1.ch

APRIL

1 to 20 Apr - Les derniers géants (The last giants). Children's theatre played by François Place and directed by Nino D'Introna. www.amstramgram.ch

1 Apr to 31 Aug - Verres à boire, verre à voir. What could be more familiar than a drinking glass? Blown or pressed, used daily or for special occasions, sometimes strong and sometimes fragile, simple or ornate, a drinking glass is essential with increasingly original forms. Built around a private collection with the assistance of the Museum Ariana, this exhibition presents glass from every angle. Workshop-guided tours for children aged 4 to 12 years, registration required, at the Museum, on April 16 from 10am to 11:30am. May 18 International Museum Day, guided tours at 11am and 3pm. www.carouge.ch

2 to 6 Apr - Exhibition of Inventions. The most important fair for inventors, with over 600 exhibitors from around the world. www.inventions-geneva.ch

2 to 23 Apr - Goûter des sciences: Sous la terre, le passé. For children from 5 to 7 years old. Wednesdays April 2, 9, 16, 23. www.unige.ch/science-cite

4 to 6 Apr - Geneva Hot Air Balloon Fiesta. Thirty hot air balloons take to the air from numerous parks around the city. It is truly an impressive site. <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/?rubrique=0000000743>

4 to 13 Apr - Archipel. Festival of contemporary music. www.archipel.org

4 to 20 Apr - Le Printemps Carougeois 2008 celebrates Water. This multi-cultural festival ends a cycle of the four elements. Water: a splendid theme, perfect for dreaming, thinking, wanting, acting. www.carouge.ch

5 and 6 Apr - Charity Fête of Caritas. Every eighteen months, Caritas Geneva organizes its traditional Charity Fête to help people in need who live in the Geneva canton. www.caritas-geneve.ch

5 Apr to 3 May - Chess Workshop. For adult beginners and for children from 5 to 12 years of age, three groups will be organized according to age and experience. The 5, 12, 19 April and 3 May 2008. www.societe-de-lecture.ch

6 Apr - 2008 Open House Day (CERN) - take a plunge into the wonderful world of the LHC. There are eight access points to the accelerator and its experiments in the Pays de Gex and Meyrin: all of them will be open to give the local population one last chance to see these incredible machines before the LHC starts-up. lhc2008.web.cern.ch/lhc2008/

6 to 27 Apr - Take the humanitarian road! Clara, Enzo, Anaïs and their friends from the International School of Geneva tell you about the Museum of the International Red Cross, in French and in English. www.micr.org

10 to 20 Apr - Fantomas. Puppet show. www.usine.ch/theatre

12 and 13 Apr - Carnaval in the streets of Annemasse with entertainment for kids. <http://www.genevoishautsavoyard.com/agenda/>

12 to 19 Apr - Festimôm in Annemasse. Cultural music event for kids. <http://www.genevoishautsavoyard.com/agenda/>

13 Apr - Treasure hunt at the Museum of the International Red Cross. Discover the history of the Red Cross by searching for clues in the museum. www.micr.org

30 Apr to 3 May - 22nd International Fair for Books and Press. A highly popular fair dedicated to the pleasure of reading, to media and all related activities. Also held at the same time: Europ'Art (international art fair), Swiss'Up (students' fair) and Music Fair. www.salondulivre.ch

1 to 11 May - Miss Monde. Puppet show directed by Guy Jutard. Story about the Earth. For children 1 and up. www.marionnettes.ch