

# NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE HEALTH AND SAFETY BULLETIN

NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCE CENTER

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## About The Resource Center

The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center is a project of the Department of Maternal and Child Health, School of Public Health, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Funding for the Resource Center originates with the Maternal and Child Health Title V Block Grant of USDHHS's Health Resources and Services Administration/Maternal and Child Health Bureau, awarded to the University under a contract from the Division of Public Health, NCDHHS.

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*Outdoor Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers.* (Insert)

## Starting, Changing and Going Back: Transitions in Child Care and School

I ncreasing numbers of young children today attend early child care programs. In generations past, the kindergarten teacher was often the "first teacher" and the kindergarten class was the first group experience for children. Today, North Carolina is home to 620,000 children under age six. And every day, more than 212,000 of those children are cared for in 8,900 regulated child care centers and homes (North Carolina Partnership for Children). Going from a known environment to one that is different and unfamiliar is stressful for everyone, even when it is a positive experience. For children, a transition may be met with a mixture of delight and concern. They may feel the pleasure of accomplishment as they move toward something new, and they may feel anxiety as they move into something less familiar. Children, just like adults, need time to adjust to new people and situations. Experience can make transition a bit easier, but even with experience, change can still be stressful. Patience and understanding on the part of parents and teachers or caregivers will help children learn how to approach new situations with confidence — a skill that will help them make successful transitions all through life.

These early transitions affect everyone involved. The parents may experience pride when seeing their child meet new challenges as they grow up. They may also feel concern for how their child will cope with change and how the new situation will impact their role as parents or their family life. Child care providers may be experiencing a different type of transition. They may be parting with a group of children they have cared for and grown attached to, and starting anew with a group of children at a developmental level



different from the parting group. They are hopeful that their experience together will build on the children's earlier developmental foundation and provide for continued growth. Child care, kindergarten and the lower school grades remain important influences throughout children's lives. Early childhood programs, whether center-based or home-based should be built on the growth taking place in the first years of the child's life. Kindergarten programs and elementary school programs should be built on the learning and development that have taken place in the home and through earlier educational experiences. The influence of the family upon the child remains fundamental throughout the child's school years, and it is important for parents to be involved with the early childhood program or school their child is attending.

*This edition of the N.C. Child Care Health and Safety Bulletin focuses on some of the transitions facing the child care community at this time of year.*

## References:

- Head Start Information and Publication Center. *Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten: A Guide for Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators*, updated 6/27/02, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran\\_hs2.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran_hs2.htm).
- North Carolina Partnership for Children (2001). *Smart Start Facts: Children and Child Care*, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.ncsmartstart.org/professionals/facts.htm#Care](http://www.ncsmartstart.org/professionals/facts.htm#Care).



## Three Stages of Transition

When a child attends child care for the first time or changes classes, he or she will experience new settings, new teachers, new routines, and new peers. Transitioning is a process that takes place in stages.

### Letting go stage

As children prepare to leave the familiar, they may experience feelings of sadness or resistance, anxiety, or concern. This may become apparent in their behavior. It is common for children to become fussy or whiney, to cry easily, or go back to comforting habits they have outgrown, such as thumb sucking. Talk to the child or read stories about children in similar situations. Celebrate the child's growth by looking at baby pictures, and pointing out new accomplishments.

### Uncertainty stage

When children are confused about what is happening next, they may become anxious and fearful. Visiting the new setting ahead of time gives the child an opportunity to see the new space, meet the new provider and see what the new routines and materials will be. If possible, especially for younger children, introduce the new program for short periods of time and gradually move into a regular schedule. Children may ask questions:

- *When/where will we eat?*
- *Where is the bathroom?*
- *Will we go outdoors?*
- *Will you come in and get me at end of the day?*
- *Will I see my old friends again?*

Try to be relaxed and clear when answering questions and responding to concerns.

### Taking hold stage

As children settle into a new situation, it is helpful to provide guidance as to what is expected from them and acknowledge when they act appropriately and meet expectations. Point out how the child is learning, making new friends, and doing new things. It can be helpful to assign a special "buddy" in the class. Families like to feel welcome as well. Encourage parent involvement by hosting a family night, asking for volunteers in the class, and involving parents in daily interactions at drop off and pick up.

### Reference:

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2002). *Transition is a Journey*, updated 8/30/99, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1999/12.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1999/12.htm).

## Keys to Successful Transition

There are four critical elements or keys to the successful transition of young children and families. Educational staff in both settings can facilitate by:

- Providing program continuity through developmentally appropriate curricula for preschool and kindergarten children,
- Maintaining ongoing communication and cooperation between preschool and kindergarten staff,
- Preparing children for the transition, and
- Involving parents in the transition.

By focusing attention on each one of these important aspects of the transition process, early childhood educators build a more continuous educational experience for young children and their families.

### Program continuity

Within a child care program, continuity of care can be provided in a number of ways. In some programs, a teacher will stay with a group and move up with them as they go into the next class. Being familiar with the setting the child came from gives the teacher information that guides discussions about similarities and differences of the new and old setting. Parents can help by providing that information if the child is changing programs or schools.

### Developmentally appropriate curriculum

Providing developmentally appropriate curriculum helps the child moving into a new setting. Children will be more likely to find similar activities, which will allow them to feel confident as they adjust. When a child knows what is expected, he or she feels more self-confidence and feels encouraged to try new activities. This helps the

child to continue to grow and develop. Because every child is unique and has his or her own personality, learning style, family background and experiences, it is important for teachers to be responsive to individual differences. Developmentally appropriate programs can provide a wide range of interests and abilities to meet these challenges.

**Reference:**

Head Start Information and Publication Center. *Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten: A Guide for Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators*. updated 6/27/02, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran\\_hs2.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran_hs2.htm).

## What are the Benefits of Facilitating Transition?

Children, parents and teachers all benefit from a smooth transition when a child is faced with change. When

adults take the time to help facilitate transitions, the benefits are many.

### For Children:

- Continuity with earlier educational experiences
- Increased motivation and openness to new experiences
- Enhanced self-confidence
- Improved relations with other children and adults
- A greater sense of trust between teachers and children

### For Parents:

- Increased confidence in their children's ability to achieve in the new setting
- Improved self-confidence in their own ability to communicate with teachers and to effectively influence their child's education
- A sense of pride and commitment in their ongoing involvement in their child's education
- A greater knowledge and appreciation of early childhood programs and staff

### For Teachers:

- Increased knowledge of the children and an enhanced ability to meet individual needs
- Increased parental community support
- More resources and a larger network of professional support
- Increased awareness of the preschool or kindergarten programs in the community
- A renewed sense of professionalism and pride in their efforts to reach out to young children and their families

**Reference:**

Head Start Information and Publication Center. *Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten: A Guide for Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators*, updated 6/27/02, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran\\_hs2.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/text/recruitment2/tran_hs2.htm).

## Tips to Help Children Adjust

1. Make sure activities are developmentally appropriate for children. Interesting and challenging, but doable, activities will help children feel comfortable in their new setting. Adjust expectations, materials and activities to the abilities of the children coming into the classroom.
2. Make an effort to get to know each individual child as quickly as possible. Parents can provide information about children's likes, dislikes, and special interests.
3. Welcome suggestions from families, particularly those of children with special needs. Parents can offer specific suggestions they have found useful for their own child and advise on classroom set-up and modifications.
4. Let the child set the pace for the transition. Expect some tears, some delighted exploration, some

shyness, and some demanding behavior.

5. Talk to the child's former provider to gain insight about the child before he or she attends the new class or program.
6. Hold an orientation for children and parents. Small groups will make it easier for children to get to know each other. Prepare an orientation packet for new families. Include daily routines, introduce caregivers, and the schedule for that day.
7. Have children moving to a new classroom make a gradual transition by visiting the classroom several times before actually changing rooms.
8. Show children around the new school or program, introducing them to other adults who are there to help them become acclimated.
9. Encourage children to bring a security item in the beginning to help them feel safe in the new environment.
10. Create partnerships between pre-schools and elementary schools in the community. Meetings may focus on the sharing of ideas and concerns.
11. Set up an area for photos of parents and family members that children may "visit" throughout the day. Also include items that reflect the cultural experience of all children to help promote a sense of mutual respect and understanding.
12. Special Considerations for Infants and Toddlers: Carefully schedule staff and assign care responsibilities to provide continuity, consistency, and primary caregiving.

**Reference:**

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Back to School Time – Tips to Help Children Adjust*, updated 10/23/98, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1996/11.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1996/11.htm).

## Celebrate Transitions in the Early Years

In early child care programs, children often move from class to class and eventually to kindergarten. Plan at the beginning of the year for the celebration you will have when children transition to the next class or to school.

- ❑ **Have a children's fair to display a sampling of the children's art work done throughout the year.** Pictures can include a brief description of the art dictated by the child, or a photograph of the child working on the art project.
- ❑ **Organize a family picnic.** Invite all of the families to participate in games, storytelling, songs, and socializing. Help children to host the event.
- ❑ **Invite teachers from the schools or class the children will attend.** Have teachers from the next class visit and talk about what children can expect the next year.
- ❑ **Make books with children about their favorite things, poems, and sayings.** Allow children to present books to their families.
- ❑ **Plan a family meal.** Invite families to a potluck meal at the center, home, or school on the last day.
- ❑ **Share the memories.** During the year videotape, create a photo album, and save stories to share at year's end.
- ❑ **Prepare for the next class.** Have children help teachers "clean up" and prepare for next year's class.
- ❑ **Take a field trip to the new school or room which many of the children will attend.** Visit the classroom, playground, cafeteria, etc., talk about the things you see and what the new class will be like.

### Reference:

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Celebrating Transitions in the Early Years*, updated 10/23/98, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1998/07.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1998/07.htm).



At Your Service

## 1-800-246-6731 North Carolina Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center

Providing Training, Consultation & Resources for North Carolina's Child Care Community

### Just for Administrators

August and September are good months to:

- Revise family packets.
- Review immunization records, remembering that Varicella (chickenpox vaccination) is now required.
- Review child health records.
- Review emergency contact information.
- Have staff check rooms and playgrounds for hazards.
- Have a car safety day when a staff person greets families at the curb or parking lot to remind people of proper car seat installation and use. Include handouts.
- Remind classroom teachers to take up toys that are not age appropriate for the incoming group of children and replace them with developmentally appropriate toys.
- Remind classroom teachers of the need for additional supervision as children move to new equipment indoors and outside.



## August is

National Immunization Awareness Month

Children's Vision and Learning Month

Family Fun Month

Back to School Month

Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month

Cataract Awareness Month

August 1 – 7 is National World Breastfeeding Week

## September is

Baby Safety Month

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

Leukemia Awareness Month

National Cholesterol Education Month

National Food Safety Education Month

Head Lice Prevention Month

National Sickle Cell Month

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Sept. 15 – Oct. 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month

Sept 16 – 22 is National Reye's Syndrome Week

Sept. 29 – 30 is Family Health and Fitness Days USA

Sept. 30 – Oct. 4 is Walk a Child to School Week

parent



sees

children as they face transitions. If possible, start with shorter days and gradually build to full hours of care. On the first days of school or child care, parents can help with the transition by arriving a few minutes early to give the child time to settle in, and by being on time at the

As summer ends and the school year begins, many families face changes in daily routines. It may be a parent starting school or work and a child returning to child care or school. It may be another child in the family or different hours at work. Children, who have far less experience dealing with change and "the unknown", need their parents help as they face new situations. Smooth transitions can be accomplished when parents prepare the child in advance, talk about feelings, and make a point to be there for their child. If the child knows what to expect, he or she will feel more comfortable going into a new situation, whether it is going to child care for the first time, changing classrooms, or going back to school. Reading books with your child about children in similar situations is a great way to introduce new ideas and start conversations.

Many feelings spring forth when children start in a new classroom or program. Parents may feel sad or anxious. It helps the child when the parent shows confidence and good feelings about the new situation. Children may also feel anxious or concerned, and these feelings may show up in their behavior. Parents should be patient if their child has toileting accidents, resists getting up from bed, brushing his teeth, or getting dressed. Expect an occasional meltdown. It is not unusual to see a few tears and other emotional displays from young



end of the day. Children feel confident from the beginning if you come back when you said you would. The drive home is a good time to talk about the day and to ease the transition between school or child care and home.

**Reference:**

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Tips for Easy Back-to-School Transitions*, updated 10/23/98, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1998/16.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1998/16.htm).



1.800.246.6731

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## How parents can help children starting or returning to child care or school

Take time to talk to your child about the upcoming change. Family time at the dinner table is a great time to review the day and talk about tomorrow. Whenever you make time to talk with your child, consider the following suggestions:

1. Be enthusiastic about the upcoming change. If you are excited and confident, your child will be, too.
2. Prepare yourself. Take note of how your child reacts to separation. If possible, visit the new setting with your child. Introduce your child to the new teacher or early childhood professional in advance.
3. Arrange a play date with another child from the program, preferably one-on-one, so that your child will see a familiar face when she walks in.
4. Start daily routines that will add to continuity. Let your child become involved with packing lunch or laying out clothes. Also, begin an earlier bedtime several weeks before.
5. Put aside extra time, particularly on the first day, for chatting together. But remember not to prolong the good-bye. If the child whines or clings, staying will only make it harder.
6. Always say good-bye to your child. Be firm but friendly about separating. Never ridicule a child for crying. Instead, make supportive statements like, "It's hard to say good-bye."
7. At the end of the work day, put aside your concerns and focus on being a parent.

### Reference:

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Back to School Time — Tips to Help Children Adjust*, updated 10/23/98, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1996/11.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1996/11.htm).

## Balancing Work and Family

When families go through transitions such as going back to work or school, parents often feel that there is too much to be done, there is not enough time, and life can become stressful. These feelings can be addressed as a way of avoiding stress and working through these transitions.

### Organize your time

Decide what is most important, making sure you make time to take care of yourself. Make "to do" lists and learn to say no to things you don't have time to do. Ask for help from the family with chores or projects. Plan and schedule family time using a family calendar or message board in your home. Avoid rushing. Get up at a time that allows the family to have a happy morning and structure time to relax in the evening.

### Budgeting

A new job means more money, but also more expenses as you face costs in transportation, child care, appropriate clothes for work, etc. Figure out what your income will be, create a spending and savings plan, track it for a month and then review it. After a few months, you will probably be able to make a spending plan that helps you spend less and save more.

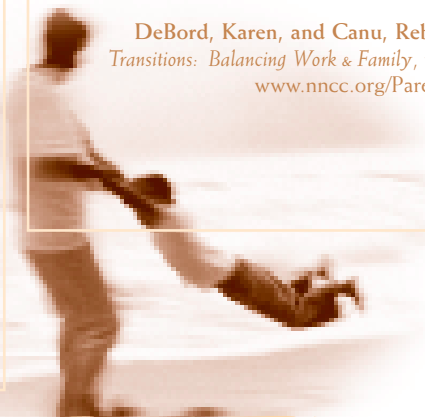
### Keeping positive relationships with family and friends

Consider who can provide personal support, get to know your neighbors, and keep strong ties with friends and family. Make sure you have someone you can talk to about your concerns, decisions, or when you are having a bad day. Make time for your own family, making sure you give children attention after work even when you are exhausted. Build in time for the family to sit down and talk together, whether it is a family meeting or the evening meal. Make the most of the car drive home and bed time rituals.

These actions can help balance work and family issues especially during times of transition.

### Reference:

DeBord, Karen, and Canu, Rebekah (1997). *Easing Transitions: Balancing Work & Family*, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.nccc.org/Parent/wftransition.html](http://www.nccc.org/Parent/wftransition.html).





## Preparing the Classroom Identifying Hazards – Prevent Injuries

In all types of settings, child care center, child care home, church, or school, children must return to a safe setting. Keeping children safe involves education, supervision and preparing the environment. Take the time to conduct a safety check to identify potential hazards and address them before the children arrive. Safety issues will vary greatly depending upon the age of the child. Resources are available through the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Red Cross, and the NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center to help you identify potential hazards. Call the Resource Center for more information at 1-800-246-6731. Include the following in your safety check:

- Entrances and exits
- Windows
- Floors
- Walls
- Ceilings
- Furniture
- Cribs
- Toys and supplies
- Poison prevention
- Storage closets
- Bathrooms
- Kitchens
- Playground equipment
- Outdoor learning environment



## Automobile Safety

Returning to work, school or child care often means spending more time commuting and more time in the car. To make sure you and your child are safe in the car follow these basic guidelines:

**Prevent heat exposure.** Never leave a child alone in a car, regardless of the length of time you expect to be away.

**Children are passengers, not cargo.** Do not allow children to ride in the back of a truck.

**Use safety devices properly.** Learn how to properly use the appropriate car seat for your child, and use your seat belt.

## School Bus Safety

Returning to school for many children means riding the school bus. Teach children these rules to keep the bus ride safe:

- When the bus approaches, stand at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb, and line up away from the street.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says that it's okay before stepping onto the bus.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you pick it up.



### References:

- Hendricks, Charlotte (2002). *How Safe is Your Classroom? Identifying Hazards Before Accidents Happen*, retrieved 7-2-02 from [www.earlychildhood.com/Articles/index.cfm?FuseAction=Article&A=273](http://www.earlychildhood.com/Articles/index.cfm?FuseAction=Article&A=273).
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Automobile Safety During the Early Years*, updated 10/23/98, retrieved 7/2/02 from [www.naeyc.org/resources/ely/1998/13.htm](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/ely/1998/13.htm).

## Ask the Resource Center

*I am a family child care provider who cares for a school-age girl recently diagnosed with diabetes. Can you help me find resources? I am very worried. How will I be able to take care of her physical and emotional needs? Am I going to be able to maintain my high quality of care, meet her needs and still meet the needs of the other children? How can I continue to take field trips if blood levels need to be tested and food provided on a schedule?*

*Worried and sleepless*

Not to worry. Any time a person is diagnosed with a chronic health condition like diabetes she and her entire support system must confront how to make the changes necessary to maintain the best possible health for the child, physical and emotional.

Fortunately North Carolina has many child care health consultants who can assist providers with this transition. Call us at 1-800-246-6731 for the name of the child care health consultant in your area. In addition, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (an international, nonprofit funder of Diabetes research designed to find a cure for diabetes) supports individuals with diabetes and their support families. In North Carolina the three chapters of the foundation are located in **Charlotte** (704-377-2873), **Piedmont /Triad** (336-768-1027) and **Triangle/Eastern** (919-870-5171).

The Foundation gives their "Bag of Hope" to children newly diagnosed with diabetes. It contains educational and support materials such as the stuffed bear Rufus that goes along with the children's book *Rufus Comes Home..Rufus, the Bear with Diabetes*. There are books, videos, and other support materials that guide children and their families in living with the disease, offering practical tips on nutrition and recipes. Also included are games, comic books, magazines, and a Dex glucometer. If your after-schooler is nearly a teenager you might ask for the "Teen Pack".

As you go through the "Bag" of materials you will gain insight into how to pace the day to meet everyone's needs in your program. In addition, each of the Foundation's chapters has diabetes educators available to answer any questions you might have about the disease. You can call us at the Resource Center if you have further questions.



## HEALTH BULLETIN

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

or if you would like to send comments

### WRITE:

NC Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center  
1100 Wake Forest Road, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27604

### OR CALL:

1-800-246-6731

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## Babies Get Outdoors!

### *Outdoor Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers*

#### *Keeping your cool!*

The warm summer weather offers many opportunities for outdoor play for all ages. It is important to provide time outdoors for infants and toddlers to be active and explore the natural world. Over-heating can become a problem because infants and toddlers may not be able to communicate their needs or discomfort. Avoid the problem of the children becoming overheated by going outdoors during the cooler hours of the morning and late afternoon, limiting time outdoors on very hot days, finding shady areas for activities, and by providing plenty of water to drink. A cooler with a spigot and cups can be useful if you don't have a drinking fountain. Help children to take advantage of shade. Bring their toys to a shady area under a tree or arbor and help the youngsters to be entertained in a comfortable area. If you do not have shade in your outdoor space, consider a temporary shade canopy and plan for ways to develop the outdoor area to be comfortable during hot weather.

During hot August days, water play can be a great cooling off and fun time for young ones. Water sprinklers can be fun on a grassy lawn and mobile infants and toddlers can enter at their own risk, make decisions about how wet they want to get. Spray bottles are fun for older toddlers who can pull the lever. Caregivers can use them as a mini sprinkler for infants and young toddlers. Providing an inch or two of water in shallow containers for the infants and toddlers to splash in is exciting and cooling. They can stir, fill and dump, and mix water with small amounts of sand or grass clippings.

Specific health and safety concerns should be taken into consideration with this age child. Be particularly careful when using a hose to provide water. In

hot weather, the water in the hose can heat up to the point that it could seriously burn a child. Always run water out of the hose and test the temperature before a child comes in contact with the water. Wading pools are not recommended for child care because of the potential drowning hazard. Because infants and toddlers are "top heavy" and can topple over readily, do not use buckets or large pans of water for sensory play and cooling off on hot days.

We all need to be careful about exposure to the sun, but this is especially important for infants and toddlers because of their delicate skin. They tend to be even more sensitive than older children to over-exposure to the sun. Remember that the effects of sunburn do not show up immediately. Provide skin protection or clothing cover to protect infants and toddlers outdoors and do not leave them in direct sun for long periods of time. Hats can be helpful to protect young scalps that may be exposed.

*Continued on Side B*



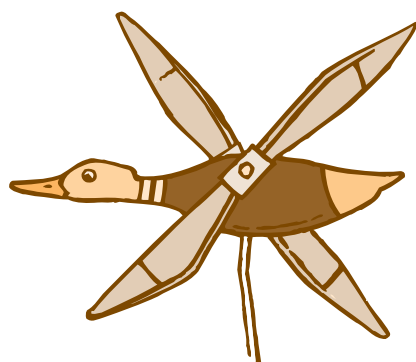
## Activities for Infants and Toddlers Outdoors

### Flutter Tree six weeks and older

Take advantage of a nice shade tree by playing "Flutter Tree".

#### Materials

- Things that make interesting sounds in the wind, such as chimes, foil pie tins, strips of plastic and plastic pompons
- String
- A tree, arbor, or overhang of some type



#### What to do

Tie a few of these items to a tree limb or other overhang where the wind can freely move them. They should be out of reach of the children. Carry the children over to the tree and notice all the pretty sounds. Talk about the sounds with the babies.

#### Want to do more?

Make a wind chime collection. See how many chimes and other things you can gather that make musical sounds.



### Down the Bumpy Road A Textured Path (Ages six months and older)

Make a textured path to guide children to shade or water or to a grassy lawn.

#### Materials

Things with interesting textures to place on the ground, such as:

- Rubber floor mat
- Hemp floor mat
- Woven floor mat
- Throw rug
- Carpet samples
- Vinyl
- A soft blanket
- A foam pad
- A tire

#### What to do

Spread these materials out to form a path. Encourage a child to crawl along the path. Talk about the textures as he crawls over them.

#### Want to do more?

Arrange these differently each day. Look for new and interesting materials to add.

#### What they can learn

This activity is good for body awareness and stimulates the sense of touch.



### Water Painting Ages eighteen months and older

#### Materials

- Large cups of water (rather than buckets)
- House painting brushes of different sizes

#### What to do

Let the children dip the brushes into the water and paint the sidewalk, building (or themselves) with plain water.

#### Want to do more?

The children will also enjoy using regular easel brushes or smaller brushes. Scrub brushes or sponges might be fun, or try toothbrushes.

#### What they can learn

The children are learning how brushes work to hold liquids, how they drip and how to hold them properly. They will also see that some surfaces become darker when wet. Help them to notice how the dark water marks disappear more quickly in the sun than in the shade the sense of touch.

