

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROJECT

INTRODUCING . . .

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS

Volume 1 No. 1

October 1981

- a bimonthly bulletin from The Children's Museum's Early Childhood Project, a three year program exploring the issues of parenting in natural settings, funded by the Carnegie Corporation.



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROJECT STAFF:

Back row, L to R:

- Brett Cook; ECP Manager
- Jeri Robinson; Director, Early Childhood Program
- Pat Cornu; Director, Resource Center

Front row, L to R:

- Shiamin Melville; Early Childhood Program Assistant
- Eleanor Chin; Exhibit Center Manager
- Maureem Murray; Floor Manager, Playspace

Welcome! The past months have been busy ones for all involved in the ECP: hiring staff, recruiting volunteers, establishing local and national advisory boards, renovating exhibit space to accomodate expanded programming - and continuing to offer the events and workshops that have drawn young children, families and teachers to the Museum in ever increasing numbers. We have repeated our previous successes and tried out new productions: back, by popular demand, to sell out participating audiences, were Tot Stuff Workshops, Story Hours, Puppets and Play Groups. Premiere performances included Father's Day at Playspace, Parent Consultants, and a museum guide for visitors with very young children. Coming soon, a Parent's Room . . . for complete Program Notes, please turn over. . .

- * April brought showers of parents, teachers and children for Toddlers Take Over, a full month of events and workshops . . . Kindergym . . . homemade toys . . . child development seminars . . . puppets . . . pets for tots . . . and more.
- * 7th grade students at the Phillis Wheatley School in Roxbury became certified Babysitters during a 6 week course conducted by ECP staff members Jeri Robinson and Shiamin Melville . . . training included actual babysitting experience, with sitters helping toddlers explore TCM.
- * A new kit; Playspace at Home, took its place on the shelves of TCM's Kit Rental Dept. . . but not for long. Developed by ECP Director Jeri Robinson, the Playspace kit has been used to train Museum staff, checked out by pre-school programs and demonstrated at parent groups.
- * Wondering how to tackle the Children's Museum with a toddler? Prospective visitors have gained an introduction through screening Jenny's Tour, a slide show produced by the Resource Center's Program Director, Dorothy Merrill, her husband David . . . and starring Jenny, their two year old daughter.
- * In addition to TCM's orange, beige and green aproned exhibit staff, Playspace visitors regularly encounter Parent Consultants: a group of extraordinarily qualified individuals who volunteer their time and bring seasoned expertise as early childhood educators, administrators and counselors and, most important - PARENTS - to the exhibit . . . availing themselves to all who visit and seek advice or support from "one who's been there."
- * Visiting with someone in a stroller? Pick up TCM's new brochure/guide Exploring the Museum with Children Under Five at the front desk . . . we've ordered another 10,000 copies . . . over half of TCM visitors arrive with children under five.
- * What to do with a room full of five minute attention spans? Pre-school educators and care givers continue to flock to our Staff Training Workshops, to glean inspiration and gather new ideas and activities to take back to their classrooms . . . summer and fall sessions drew full houses.
- * Playspace: renovations and additions: a Parent Talk Back Board encourages visitors to post questions, suggestions and advice on a large bulletin board installed in July . . . in the works: a Parent's Room, designed to facilitate opportunities for sharing, quiet respite and resourcing . . .

Coming Up:

- First local board meeting: December 2 - Save that date!

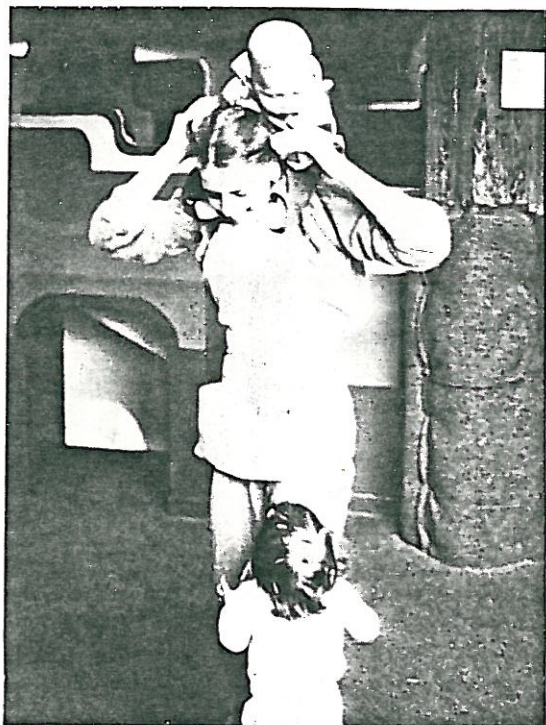
THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROJECT

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS

Volume 1 No. 2

January 1982

- a bimonthly bulletin from The Children's Museum's Early Childhood Project, a three year program exploring the issues of parenting in natural settings, funded by the Carnegie Corporation.



Introducing...

Tammy Batherwich, Playspace Parent Intern, with her children, Robert, age six months, and Danielle, one and one half years old. Tammy came to TCM through the Beige Apron Program, directed by Suzanne Le Blanc, and has been doing a terrific job on Playspace, pioneering the teen parent internship under the ECP.

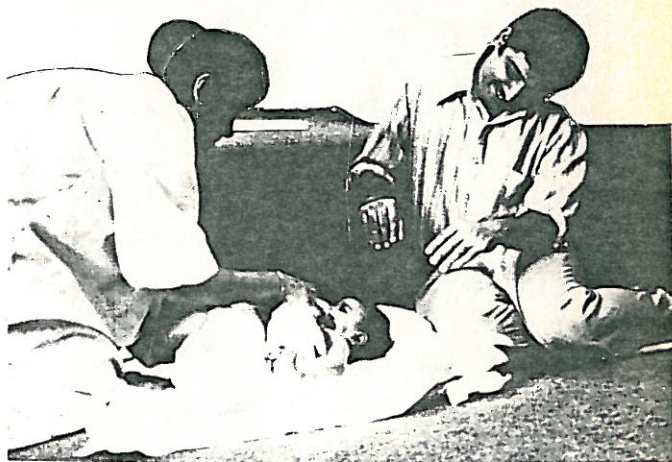
Happy New Year! 1982 is off to a fine start for all involved with the Early Childhood Project (ECP). Our exhibit and resource space has expanded with the completion of the Parent's Room, adjoining the Playspace exhibit. New programming is underway and several successful workshops behind us, thanks in large part to our volunteer staff, who continue to enrich the project with their enthusiasm and expertise. Project Director Jeri Robinson found time to attend the NAEYC conference in Detroit, spreading the word of the ECP and making contact with other parent educators, in addition to overseeing the ongoing Museum based programs and events throughout the fall. Program assistant Shiamin Melville kept Playspace humming with activities for school groups, toddlers and parents and conducted on-site child-care for Museum staff over the holidays, while Brett Cook, Project Manager, continued to add to the burgeoning collection of slides documenting all ECP events in preparation for the Project's first slide tape. We continued to hear from other "natural settings" interested in creating play space for parents and children - to date, an airport, shopping center, prison and two hospitals - and we anticipate collaborating with such a diverse group of sites, each presenting a unique spectrum of challenges. For newsclips of what made the headlines this fall, please turn over...

* In October, the ECP hosted a workshop for homeschoolers with educator and author John Holt, editor of the newsletter Growing Without Schools. Organized by veteran Playspace Parent Consultant Litty Medalia, the workshop drew over two hundred adults and children from all over New England. Babysitting and child-care were provided by teenagers from several Boston high schools, who received on-site training from Shiamin Melville and Parent Consultant, Amy Squibb. Participants gained insights and access to the resources available at TCM through small group discussions with Museum developers in exhibit areas, while children explored the Museum with Interpreters and babysitters in tow.

* Also in October - ECP staff met with representatives from Norfolk Prison, Dr. Enid Gamer and Naomi Weiner, to discuss collaboration in designing and operating play space for family visitors at Norfolk's new visitor's center.

* Wheelock College intern, Joanne Shoemaker, has come and gone, but, happily, her contributions to the project remain with us. While working toward a M.S. Ed. in the Infant and Toddler Behavior Development Program, Joanne spent three months with ECP staff assisting Shiamin in Playspace, photographing the exhibit in action and advising us in designing the Parent Room - environments for toddlers and infants being her particular area of interest.

* Concerned about the cutbacks in social services and wanting to address the particular needs of new parents, the ECP initiated a support group for "First-Time Parents," led by Parent Consultant Sheila Singer. Parents (yes, we have a father!) have met weekly since November to talk about development issues, make toys, and most importantly, share their questions, qualms and feelings about being parents. One recent meeting of particular interest featured a demonstration of the traditional Indian art of baby massage, (see photo).



Mr. and Mrs. K.P. Mohanan and their daughter, Malvika, four months.

* Congratulations and thank you to all of the ECP Local Advisory Board Members who tramped over for dinner and our first Board meeting on December 2. We were delighted to see so many of you in a season when time is scarce. The Board echoed our own concern about spreading word of the ECP to groups and neighborhoods not aware of what we are doing -- we're working on it! Let us know your ideas.

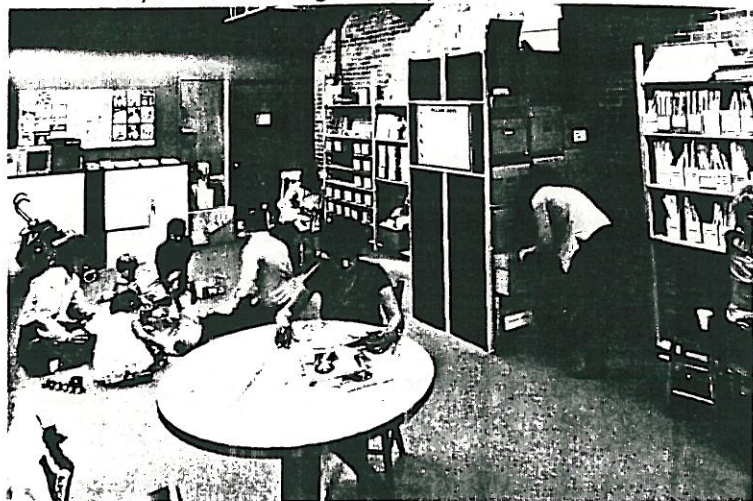
* Finally - saving the best for last - the most exciting news of the season... Program Director, Jeri Robinson, became a parent in November! The arrival of five-year-old David has brought joy to us all (not to mention an added credibility to the project!)

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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS

May 1983

- an update from the Boston Children's Museum's Early Childhood Project, a three year program exploring the issues of parenting in natural settings, funded by the Carnegie Corporation.



MORE NEWS
ABOUT FUNDING,
STAFF, WORKSHOPS,
CONFERENCES, BOOKS,
TODDLER TAKE OVER
AND KITS.....OVER

Next time you're visiting the Children's Museum, stop in at Playspace (for kids 5 or younger and their parents or adult friends) and catch up on what's been happening in the adjoining Parent Resource Room.

In addition to the book lending library members may now take home toy boxes (including duplo, constructo straws, rubber stamp sets, magnifiers, etc.) and Kits for Kids, 26 low cost, reproducible activity kits. There is a limit of 4 books and/or one kit or toy box per member.

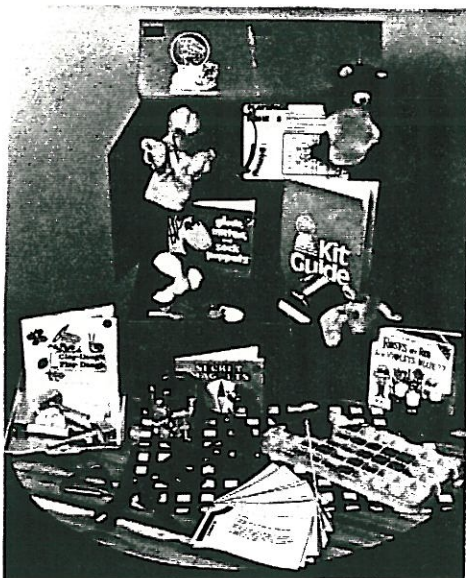
You'll also find all kinds of resource materials on everything from health and safety to babysitting and a place to have a quiet cup of coffee - while you mull over the traumas of toilet training with other parents.

There's a bulletin board, "What's Up", with local events and agencies of interest. Ask anyone wearing an apron - they are Museum staff and parent volunteers, for more information about parent/child workshops and other special events in Playspace.

When parents aren't resourcing, the room is available for 5 and under birthday parties. (Call Terri Heanue at ext. 216)

So the next time you're at the Museum, and the kids are involved in Playspace, come in and find out why the Children's Museum isn't just for children.

- * First and foremost, the Carnegie Corporation renewed their generous support of the Early Childhood Project for a third and final year, allowing us to disseminate what we've learned and assist other sites interested in developing similar spaces and programs - needless to say, we're thrilled to have this opportunity to spread the word!
- * Many of you know Litty Medalia, long time Parent Consultant volunteer and workshop leader, and now PLAYSPACE'S Program Manager - if you haven't met Litty, you have a treat in store! She keeps PLAYSPACE buzzing with fun but always seems to have time to chat with newcomers, support our burgeoning crew of volunteers and continue to run the parent/child workshops. Look for Litty Tuesday through Saturday.
- * Speaking of workshops...Marcy Ericson's drop-in workshops for parents continue through May: May 12 - Puppets, May 19 - Summer Toys, May 26, - Traveling With Kids - all take place in the Parent Room, Thursdays from 10:30 to 12, for free! Also happening the first Thursday of each month, La Leche; support and information for nursing mothers on PLAYSPACE. Litty's parent/child workshops will resume on Wednesdays in August - call then for information.
- * On the conference circuit, the Early Childhood's Project Director Jeri Robinson, and Manager, Brett Cook, will present project findings at Yale University's Bush Center's "Family Support Programs: the State of the Art", in May... Jeri will travel on to the American Association of Museum's conference in San Diego to spread the word at this annual gathering of museum professionals in June.
- * Last year Jeri became a parent, this year, an author! Activities for Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere, published by Little Brown and Co. , - a tried and tested collection of super activities!
- * Toddler Take Over, 1983, brought musicians, artists, puppeteers, gymnasts and child development experts to PLAYSPACE for the scores of parents and toddlers who turn out every April for these special events...
- * Special thanks to Beth Cohen who has organized and catalogued the lending collections in the Parent Room for our visitors - come check out her efforts!



Did you know you could take PLAYSPACE home with you? PLAYSPACE AT HOME is a kit containing materials and instructions for 66 activities with young children - terrific as a training tool for day-care providers, play group leaders or anyone who spends time with kids under 6. To rent this kit (2 weeks at \$10) call the Kit Rental Dept. (617) 426-6500 ext. 231.