

# Child Care Chatter: A powerful relationship

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As we move into summer, I wonder if you have reflected back on the care that our local early childhood educators have provided for your child(ren) over the past year. Whether it be in a child care center, a preschool, a day home, or an out of school care, these Educators work hard to provide your child with a safe environment, a caring response, and opportunities for learning through play.

In March, some of our educators spent the day with Dr. Jody Carrington, a psychologist from Olds, Alta. We learned a lot from Dr. Carrington on how to connect with the children in our lives and how important that connection is. I hope to share some of what we learned with you today.

As a parent or as an educator, your relationship with children is so very powerful. Children need somebody to be crazy about them! They need a positive, emotional relationship with adults in their lives. In fact, adults are answering some important questions for children: Is the world a safe or a scary place? Can I depend on the leaders in my world or do I need to manage on my own? And an even bigger question, Am I worth it?

Quality child care environments have educators that understand children's need to answer these questions. These educators take the time to listen to children's thoughts, respond to their unique needs and display a calm demeanor in the face of upset or crisis. When you enter a child care environment with your child, how is your child greeted? What kind of relationship does the educator build with your child? Are they a safe haven for your child to turn to? One where the child feels secure enough to explore their environment?

Parents should have a feeling of welcome and security when they enter a quality child care environment. You should feel that the educators want to be connected to you as well. They want to know more about you and your family.

Furthermore, educators can be a resource to your family in a variety of ways. Educators are trained professionals who understand children's development. They can let you know if something your child is doing is developmentally appropriate or not. Sometimes just knowing that other children are doing the same thing can be a relief. Educators and/or directors are also connected to community resources and can steer you in the right direction if you are in need of some assistance.

Should you have any questions about how to choose a quality child care environment for your child(ren), I suggest you check out our website at <http://www.mhdcca.com>. There is an excellent presentation on Choosing Quality Child Care which lists some good questions to ask during interviews. In addition, we have a membership list that includes location, hours of operation and ages of child served. These are important things to know to help narrow down your search. There are many high quality child care programs located here in southeast Alberta, go check them out!

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