

INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

FROM DAN HODGINS

DKJ5075@AOL.COM

We Forgot What Children Are Good At!

What Are Young Children Good At?

- **Taking what they see and like**
- **Keeping it until they are done with it**
- **Taking it home if they really like it**
- **Push to get it**
- **Letting everyone know it belongs to them**
- **Give it to someone when they are done with it**

For more information on workshops contact me at:
DKJ5075@aol.com.
or visit my website:
www.danieljhodgins.com

A preschool program invited me to observe a child in their setting. The staff viewed this child as displaying some behaviors that were disruptive.

During my observation I saw this child push another child who came close to a tower he was building with blocks, grab a truck that another child was playing with, and during a story reading the child stood up and walked away only to be brought back at least twice by a staff member. After observing the child for the morning session the staff seemed to be excited to sit with me to discuss strategies that might be used to change his behaviors. What surprised them was my response. I didn't see anything that the child did that was not

typical for that age child. Not only was it typical for his stage of development but everything the child did, he was "Good At" doing .

The behaviors that were concerns for this early childhood staff are not unusual from the many questions and comments that I receive at workshops. We need to step back and rethink what children can and cannot do based on their stage of development. Children are not "bad" because they push, take, or leave activities not interesting to them. They are displaying behaviors that fit their growth and development. Perhaps the problem is we have forgotten what children are good at!

It is important,when working with young children, that we keep in mind what they can do and what they are unable to do...yet.

Revisiting What Children can and cannot do!

- **Children don't share well** - they are egocentric and believe that everything that is provided in our programs belongs to them.
- **Children frequently don't recognize that someone else might have the same needs and wishes they have** - they often take objects that another child is playing with because they think that child wants them to have it
- **Children only remember what is important to them** - if it is not relevant it will be forgotten, ex. walk, listen, stop
- **Children can't sit still very long** - a preschooler's body is crying out for movement, sitting is unnatural
- **Children can't express themselves using words** - they often use physical means of communication ex. pushing, shoving, yelling
- **Children have difficulty understanding the differences between right and wrong** - they often don't relate to cause and effect relationships