



Bob Fitzpatrick's recent visit to his Head Start Body Start Assigned Center The TRI CAP Head Start Center in Stoneham, MA

“Recently I had the pleasure of visiting my Head Start Center in Stoneham Massachusetts on a cold and snowy day in early February. Due to about three feet of snow on the ground, the children could not go outside, even though I was prepared to use one of my snow games, called the "Sled Dog Activity". As I approached the center for my second visit with the children, I realized what a monumental task it would be to shovel out the gates to the play area, due to snow removal from all of the roofs adding to the workload. I entered the Center, which is located in the basement of the local church, and as I was removing my coat and getting ready to set up for my visit, one of the children came over to me and in a demanding voice said, "Hey Mister, where ya been?" He then proceeded to grab me by the hand and emphatically announced to the rest of the children, "The man is back!" I chuckled to myself and thought if only time could stand still.

I modeled some physical activity ideas for Miss Kim, The Center's head teacher, as we performed the Paper Plate Dance. The children seemed to enjoy the Mickey Mouse ears the best (holding the plates up by their ears and hopping up and down in time with to the music). Each child had 2 paper plates and we would perform many bilateral and cross lateral activities, which I would lead, and then I would asked them for ideas as to their favorite movements using the plates. We followed that activity up with some play acting experiences, which were stimulated by a set of visuals. As I held up pictures of children batting, running, throwing and jumping they would simulate that activity and repeat the movement vocabulary associated with the activity.

We finished with the Sled Dog Activity, which I usually do outside on the snow. This activity involves the use of a harness made from webbing and rope in which 6 children are the sled dogs and one child rides the saucer as the musher. Since we could not go outside, we walked through the activity while the children took turns being the musher and in the various dog positions. This activity has an accompanying book called, "Elim The Determined Athlete" by Joan Jackson.

The accompanying music for our activities were: Hip Hop Alpha Bop # 2 by Jack Hartman (the children love "Tooty Ta" which is like the Learning Station's version of Che Che Cha) and Chubby Checker's, "Twist", for use with the Paper Plate Dance. The Hip Hop Song CD has a diverse array of music for all children to identify with.

Before leaving I observed some of the children who had learning or any physical impairment issues. One student in particular, who had focus issues with regard to throwing and catching, as well as some body awareness issues, seemed to respond very

well to the extra work afforded him. It was certainly a very rewarding time for me and hopefully the staff and the children. I am very anxious to get back to the center to see the impact of our In-Service Training, which took place just prior to my last visit.”

Bob FitzPatrick
HSBS PAC

