**March 1, 2012**

**MNACC Meeting notes**

***Welcome and Introductions***  12 new comers; one person from the school system, and a retired school teacher

Sign in sheet was handed around - see the form to share your information (This evening is worth it and it makes a lot of difference- please indicate # of children your job/position is influencing with this movement (example: I work at a centre with 150 children- you are influences a minimum of 150 human beings)

***Announcements***

**2.1 Claire Warden April 21, 2012** Next MNACC Meeting Discovery is bringing Claire Warden into Winnipeg. We will have her here on Saturday, April 21, 2012. There will be a cost of $50.00. More information will be sent out.

**2.2 Manitoba Nature Summit** - **Corine**  Cards with website and Face book page were distributed- All information can be found on the website[**www.naturesummitmb.com**](http://www.naturesummitmb.com)

* **Video project –** MTS on demand and an amateur film maker- A call for stories – if interested reach Mavis-
* **Summit RFP –** Nature Summit is a conference event- it is held at Camp Manitou September 14, 15, 16, 2012 (90% of conference is outside)- perfect event for people who work with children- to model importance of connecting children with nature.

Call for proposals have just ended; although they are still accepting applications for proposals for workshops.

* **Summit Fundraisers** We are now looking for participation with our Summit Fundraisers
* **Movie and a meal-** Order forms to be filled out ahead of time
* **Sale of shirts, water bottles, and books**

**2.3 M.N.A.C.C.**

* MCCA Conference- Manitoba Child Care Association If you are looking for nature related workshops we would recommend to see the following three people at this conference; Julie Rose and Adam Bienstock and Jill Bienstock

**2.4 Children and Nature Network**

* **Enid Elliot (from BC)-** has a school division, University and Childcare centre to start first Nature Kindergarten project in BC People are taking notice at what we are doing in Manitoba
* **Nature Play Day** June 15, 2012 has been identified as this special day- one of the reasons we chose TWO (Two Weeks Outside project) dates.

**3. *Power of T.W.O. (Two Weeks Outside****)*

**3.1 Introduce 3 centres; Seven Oaks Child Care- MFRC & DCC (Discovery Children’s Centre)** who participated in **T.W.O. (Two Weeks Outside**)

**3.2 How to Inspire your coworkers**

**DCC -** A group of 16 (2-5 year olds) was involved in one of our groups. This began with the inspiration from the Director Ron- Ron shared what they were doing in Scotland. Doris had a vision- If it takes you a while to have a dream it will take longer to inspire others. It began with courage and you need time to grow into it- The Director was willing to put money into this and I didn’t want the fears or “what ifs” to stop us- When you have a vision you might notice that there is a lot of nattering behind your back- your coworkers may think you are trying to be the bosses favorite- once the other staff see you doing this, they start trying it themselves. Another group got on board- This year DCC vision is to have all groups be involved in the project.(Courage- try it- share your vision)

**Seven Oaks-** it mentally took some time to process it- even physically I wasn’t sure that I could do it- take your time One group of 16 - 2 & 3 year olds and another group of 16 - 4 year olds

**MFRC-** Other staff felt that the staff involved were working too hard– the obstacles that other staff believed were myths. A group of 16 - 4 & 5 year old children

**3.3 Involving parents and rainy days**

**DCC**  Getting parents prepared- sent a letter home to parents and we created a brochure- shared our vision with parents- really wanted parents to know that children would have to be ready- parents began taking small steps with the staff in the room. Parents were flexible, Parents will share their perspectives- how it was to them. This was a bit of a journey for all of us. The brochures help promote and present this adventure to the parents. (This doesn’t have to been done professionally)

**MFRC-** Not too many issues- like basic training- more parents upset that their children weren’t in the group that was spending the day outside

**Seven Oaks-** all parents were on board (we have noticed that parents are able to reflect on their childhood memories of outside play) In our parent policies we mention our vision. Curriculum statement could also be used to tell parents that this is a part of what we believe is important for children. We made sure parents were aware, we informed parents to be sure they were ready, a list of items needed**.**

**3.4 Programming and prep work**

**Seven Oaks-** We stored equipment used outside in the shed to be prepared- purchased plastic protection capes- dollar store- for shade we had some tarps put up- organization is key- you need a couple of weeks to prepare- make lists- For children with additional support needs- we accommodated and modified so that he could participate with the group

**DCC** had a lot planned but they planned so much, they didn’t use most of it either. The extended periods of uninterrupted play took the children to places that were beyond our expectations. (Our experience with the cardboard house village) One day a 4 year old child asked when they are going inside- staff commented we’re not- but one comment- about worms lead to more than 2 hours of unplanned activities- It doesn’t take a lot of planning

**MFRC** brought face paints to enhance play- their imaginations were challenged- the children went with it. Children loved finding “lost treasures “while exploring –they found things like a ball and a shopping cart

**3.5 Best things we did during TWO**

**Seven Oaks-** Playing in the rain- for the first time we even planted in the rain- our boots were covered in mud- check out the pictures – a child commented “At least we don’t have to water the garden” Smelled nature, heard the sounds of nature, bugs, we were able to listen to thunder- children were able to explore nature at their own pace- WE DIDN’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT TIME – extended from 2 weeks to 3 weeks, we couldn’t stop the fun children were having A lot of things that were planned we didn’t use- the children were so engrossed in what they were doing- exploring, having fun, learning Children made their own little shelter to protect themselves from the rain.

**DCC-** Best thing for one group was to spend the day at Assiniboine Park – no worry about returning by a certain time. The other DCC group really enjoyed the outside space with a smaller group and letting the children do things on their own time and to be able to reconnect with the children.

**MFRC -** one of my favorite things was walking along a bike path- the children solved the problem of the squeaky wheel- lots of fun- MRFC is surrounded by green space- staff learned as much as the children- the children did not display behavior problems- Not following a schedule was so good - this is refreshing- emergent curriculum there were no interruptions- the children progressively got bravely- to explore on their own. A lot of time tree climbing and rolling down the hill- tall grass adventure was so much fun

**3.6 Food needs and hand washing**

**Seven Oaks-** Only inside time was for bathrooming and washing hands- but too many transitions- (Some thoughts of using a port a potty – then after more discussion decided that this was not what we wanted to do) Picnic tables were used outside for meals; same as inside (Seven Oaks has a hot lunch program and a Nutritionist- hot lunch program-meals were being prepared and being brought outside-children used a bucket and soapy water to wash hands- also used nonalcoholic wipes)

**MFRC-** we dug holes for bath rooming- (staff as well) Parents brought lunches for children and children carried their own things in their back packs-

**DCC-** we spent a lot of time away from the centre so we needed a way to bathroom - we went to Living Prairie museum Children needed to be taught this is only appropriate in certain spaces. Always brought their own water bottles and food- One group cooked all of the meals over the open fire pit- made up menu before-.- All wash hands in a bin of water.

**3.7 Sleeping Outdoors**

**DCC** Children were prepared to sleep anywhere and they still are

**MFRC-** It wasimportant that children were dressed appropriately- wagon carried blankets- constantly dragging bodies out of the direct sunlight. The children helped choose sleeping spots- it only took one to two days to adjust to sleeping outside- the children were relaxed- they rested well- they had long naps- had to be woken up several days- Listening skills were enhanced by nature sounds (Often slept more than 2 hours)

**Seven Oaks-** some children choose not to nap outside -they went in.

**3.8 Documenting for parents- coworkers and your boss**

**Seven Oaks-** created a binder- very simple- made a book- for a fundraiser- do what works for you. This was not about the presentation- our focus was to get the children outside- the children are able to reflect after seeing the pictures or books of what they did. Also made a video of outdoor experience to share with parents and the children.

**DCC-** we also made a book; this keeps it alive for a long time for the children. And the teachers can learn from the documentation and get ideas for the next TWO. Staff kept a daily journal. A DVD was also created to share with staff and family.

**MFRC-** used camera, video camera, children’s pictures, journals- everyday would try to post a few pictures at the end of the adventure we gave each child a “goodie bag”- (canvass bags with pockets) Tried to journal daily, highlights- what did and didn’t work- children’s art work- always had pencils and pencil crayons on hand- verbal exchange took place daily with staff and parents. Children also documented their own experiences; example of pictures drawn by children- (those were some pretty big wood ticks)

**Day Centre** were able to get a grant – they planned an outing for each day-

**QUESTIONS**

**Q: What did you do for sun protection?** Used sun screen , hats, bug spray- be prepared- Also we strategically chose dates for this project (before the hot sun).

**Q: What did your staff do for breaks?**

**Seven Oaks-** Staff could come in for lunches and breaks (mostly done onsite)

**MFRC**- staff took breaks with the children.

**DCC**- less stress to either bank breaks or not take any

**Day Centre**- staff were told to go on breaks when they arrived back and the staff didn’t feel like they needed a break

**All centres who shared this experience –all the staff enjoyed it. If the staff got tired, it was a “good tired” The rain “got to” some of the staff**

**Outdoors have a lot to offer staff and children**

**4. *Video*-** DCC share their video

**5. *Adjournment***