

2007 – 2022

CELEBRATING

15

YEARS

OAKWOOD ACADEMY



May 2022

Oakwood Academy

Individualized Education JK-12

Playing with your
child at the park!

By: Hope McSwain, Expert DIR/Floortime Practitioner

The nice weather is finally here and it's time to enjoy the outdoors! The neighbourhood park is a great place to go to entice your child to engage with you and others, support their sensory system, and strengthen their motor planning.

Sometimes going to the park might feel overwhelming especially if you are unsure of how to engage with your child while you're there. As caregivers, we often tell our kids to "go play", but we can try to be an active play partner as well! Below are some tips on how to play and support your child at the park!

Join them in their play

Is your child throwing the woodchips in the air or letting them fall through their fingers? Are they walking up and down the stairs or running down the ramp? Join them! Joining in the play is a really nice way to get some shared attention with your child and let them know you are interested in what they

DATES TO
REMEMBER

June 9

Spring
Concert

June 17

End of School
Celebration
&
Last Day of
School



are interested in. Once you join them in the play, you can use AFFECT to encourage engagement and get the 'gleam in the eye.'

Use your facial expressions, body movements and tone of voice to support their engagement (e.g., wide eyes and hands in their air while going down the slide beside them).

Joining them on the play structure

A great way to get shared attention (FEDC 1) and engagement (FEDC 2) is to join them on the play structure. You might go down the slide with them, have them 'catch you' at the bottom, or climb up the ladder or rock wall after them, asking them to 'help you' get to the top!

Build anticipation

Using anticipation to 'woo' them into an interaction is a great strategy. You can move, talk, or do an action in a slow pace while using your affect to build that anticipation to doing that 'thing' together. Some examples of

- Pushing them on the swing – while standing in front or behind (whatever your child prefers) slowing pull the swing forward/back while saying, 'reeaddyy, seettt,' and waiting until your child indicates they want to go. They might say, "go", smile, make a vocalization, kick their feet, gaze at you, etc.
- Sprinkling wood chips, sand through their hands – you might pick up some woodchips and slowly raise them up, using your facial and vocal affect to build anticipation and then slowly let the woodchips fall to your child's hands.
- Going down the slide – either on a double slide or sitting behind them, you might slowly count or pretend to go and then stop, pretend to go, and then stop, then go down together!

Be a play partner


If your child is needing some support with engaging with other children at the park, joining them in the play is a great way to encourage and facilitate play. While being a play partner, you can:

- Narrate and summarize the interactions (e.g., 'I think what she said was...')
- Model ways to invite, join in play (e.g., you might say to the child your child is trying to interact with, "Hi, do you want to play with Katie and I?")
- Support with turn taking and shared social problem-solving (e.g., "(peer) can have a turn in 1 minute or 2 minutes?")

Enjoy the moment and be present!

It can be hard to join at first and maybe even feel a bit awkward being on the playground. However, it supports your relationship, shared attention, and engagement. It can also be a gateway to peer relationships in fun and unstructured play!

Sensory Friday



This month, Oakwood Academy celebrated the start of spring with *Sensory Friday* activities involving the wonderful smells, textures and sights of nature!

Students got to explore with a spring coronation craft and the chance to make their very own bird nests.

Students had the opportunity to be creative when making their very own coronation crowns to turn into the royalty that they are! Using a variety of visually stimulating materials, such as glitter, shiny tin foil, colourful feathers, along with some lovely materials brought in from nature bringing an early aroma to this craft. They were able to explore the difference in texture and smell with each of the plants individually before choosing their favourites to put on display on their crown.

With spring comes new animals and new nests. Students created their own bird nests by combining a variety of materials including twigs, pipe cleaners, leaves, cotton, feathers, grass and much more! Students were encouraged to indulge in tactile experiences and play with the gooey textures of the glue or enjoy the soft and gentle tactile experience of the feathers, all while building their own creation. Students are encouraged to go out into nature and see the other birds nests made and enjoy all the amazing sensory sensations around in springtime!

Spring Concert

OAKWOOD PRESENTS...



THURSDAY, JUNE 9TH 2022
SHOW STARTS AT 6PM

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE
THIS YEAR'S CONCERT...

LIVE. IN PERSON.

Developing Bodies: We Need to Talk About It



By Amy Cooke

Last month, our Oakwood Academy team participated in a professional development session geared toward supporting children and youth with developmental disabilities through puberty and understanding healthy sexual development. The topic of sexual health is often an area that can create feelings of discomfort or embarrassment and thus, can be delayed or avoided all together. Research on the topic indicates that neurodivergent students receive less access to sexual health education and are less likely to have access to credible resources on the topic. It is Oakwood Academy's mission to ensure that all students are able to access programming that addresses healthy sexual development in order to promote individual empowerment and quality of life, prevent physical and sexual abuse and to prevent individuals from engaging in sexual behaviour that could result in trouble with individual health or with the law (STIs, unwanted pregnancy). It is critical that each student has access to learning about:

- ✓ Proper terminology for identifying body parts
- ✓ Public versus private body parts on themselves and on others
- ✓ Public versus private places
- ✓ What behaviours can be done in public versus private places
- ✓ What consent means and how to say, "No"
- ✓ Good versus bad touch and what to do if someone touches you inappropriately
- ✓ What changes will take place during puberty

We encourage all families to begin this discussion with their child(ren) at home and to explore the resources that are available for teaching such topics. An open line of communication on such topics with your child's teacher is encouraged to promote consistency and to ensure your family's values are reflected in programming at school. To learn more about what you can do for your child right now, please contact your Program Director.

Swimming



The students have been enjoying swimming! Each group is paired with a swimming instructor who provides lessons and strategies to strengthen their swimming skills.

This is a great activity as it supports bilateral coordination, motor planning, visual spatial awareness (to make sure they don't bump into anyone else in the water), as well regulation, through tactile and proprioceptive input!





Summer Camp!

There are still spaces
available for summer camp!

Please email admissions@oakwoodacademy.ca to register!

Summer Camp 2022

Don't forget there are still spaces available for summer camp! Please email admissions@oakwoodacademy.ca to register!

Oakwood is excited to announce registration for summer camp is now open! For more information or to register, please contact admissions@oakwoodacademy.ca. Spaces are limited! This year's themes will be:

Block 1: "Oakwoodchella" (July 4 – July 15, 2022)

Throughout this camp, students will engage in a variety of activities that increase regulation, engagement and communication. They will use their imagination and creativity to explore different genres of music, music around the world, as well as explore various mediums of art and creative expression. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in co-operative team games and sports outdoors. Using all the skills they have developed during their time at camp, the students invite their families to our outdoor Oakwoodchella event on Friday, July 15, 2022. During this event, students and therapists/teachers can display their talents during our mini music fest!

Oakwoodchella



July 4 – July 15, 2022

Summer Camp 2022

Block 2: "Oakwood Presents: Days at the Museum" (July 18 – July 29, 2022)

Throughout this camp, students will use their imagination, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Each day your child will have a chance to explore developmentally appropriate topics in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), as well as History and Art themed activities. Students will be able to explore forming opinions and develop decision-making skills. Using all the skills they have developed during their time at camp, the students invite their families to the Oakwood Museum Exhibit on Friday, July 29, 2022. During this event, families can complete a walkthrough of what the students created during the block. Students and families will also be able to contribute to the "Oakwood Time Capsule."



Summer Camp 2022

Block 3: "Oakwood Amazing Race" **(August 2 – August 12, 2022)**

Throughout this camp, students will use their imagination, creativity, problem-solving, critical and abstract thinking skills to explore various adventures with their peers. Each day, the students will participate in a variety of activities, through sensory, art, pretend play, active games and outdoor exploration. The students will also learn about different cultures throughout the weeks. On Friday, August 12, 2022, students will have the opportunity to explore their community by participating in Oakwood's Amazing Race! During this event, students will go around in the community with their therapists/teachers in order to collect clues to race to the finish!

OAKWOOD'S AMAZING RACE

AUGUST 2 - AUGUST 12, 2022



OAKWOOD
ACADEMY

OAKWOOD ACADEMY

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The Oakwood Academy News is a monthly
communication created and distributed
electronically to members of the Oakwood Academy
community during the academic year.

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