

## A Glimpse into Early Years

February 8, 2016

***"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of." Proverb***

Greetings Parents,

The parent coordinator group is organizing a Valentine's Bake Sale on Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> to raise money for next year's winter carnival. We would like to ask all parents to participate in this Early Years event by donating baked goods. We encourage you to consider home baked items which are of high quality and can be a fun time for family members to join together in cooking and tasting as beautiful baked creations are made. We would appreciate it if you would put a note on anything that contains NUTS of any kind and label your donation (e.g. banana bread). Your donations are welcomed and very much appreciated. Please drop off baked goods on Friday morning (February 12) in the area between the bus gate and the lower school office, where tables will be set up. Each child will get the chance to buy 3 pieces for L.L. 5,000, so kindly send this amount of money to your child's teachers by Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Your support and collaboration is always highly appreciated.

To help children reach their age appropriate independence level, I kindly ask you to start dropping off your child at the gate and wish him/her a good day where the guard stands. It might be hard for you or for your child the first time. Prepare your child for this new drop off plan by talking to them at home before you leave the house making sure you convey the message, "you're a big girl/boy now and you can walk to your classroom by yourself." The child will eventually take pride in this behavior. If you have a message for the teacher, wait a few minutes until your child reaches the classroom then go deliver the message. I kindly ask you to instruct your nannies to do the same thing. Our ultimate goal is to help the child develop autonomy and confidence and avoid learned helplessness.

Some parents inquired about the boxed juice and why it's not ok to send it to school. Last year we shifted into providing fresh juice because of the unhealthy processed sugar and the harmful preservatives that long life drinks contain. *"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of."* Your support is crucial in cultivating healthy habits in our children.

Creative thinking is one of the 21st century skills that we highly foster in our EY classes. Read the article on the below link to learn how you at home can raise a creative child. The article was written a week ago in New York Times.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/opinion/sunday/how-to-raise-a-creative-child-step-one-back-off.html?smid=tw-share&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/opinion/sunday/how-to-raise-a-creative-child-step-one-back-off.html?smid=tw-share&_r=0)

Earlier this year, an EY mother drew my attention to a sitting position that we should discourage in children. It's the W sitting position. It never occurred to me that the W sitting may be the cause of some serious issues. The following was written by Pediatric Services, an intervention team serving children with developmental delays, for parents and teachers to help answer common questions about this issue. If you would like to know more about this sitting position, google 'W sitting'.

# What's wrong with W-sitting?

By Jean McNamara, PT  
ADVANCE for Physical Therapists, 1995

The W-position is one of many sitting positions that most children move into and out of while playing, but it's a four-letter word to some parents. Why is it presumed to be ok for some children and forbidden for others?

When playing in these other sitting postures, children develop the trunk control and rotation necessary for midline crossing (reaching across the body) and separation of the two sides of the body. These skills are needed for a child to develop refined motor skills and hand dominance.

W-sitting is not recommended for anyone. Many typically developing children do move through this position during play, but all parents should be aware that the excessive use of this position during the growing years can lead to future orthopedic problems.

**Why do children W-sit?** Every child needs to play and children who are challenged motorically like to play as much as anybody. They don't want to worry about keeping their balance when they're concentrating on a toy. Children who are frequent W-sitters often rely on this position for added trunk and hip stability to allow easier toy manipulation and play.

When in the W-position, a child is planted in place or "fixed" through the trunk. This allows for play with toys in front, but does not permit trunk rotation and lateral weight shifts (twisting and turning to reach toys on either side). Trunk rotation and weight shifts over one side allow a child to maintain balance while running outside or playing on the playground and are necessary for crossing the midline while writing and doing table top activities.

It's easy to see why this position appeals to so many children, but continued reliance on W-sitting can prevent a child from developing more mature movement patterns necessary for higher-level skills.

**Who should not w-sit?** For many children, W-sitting should always be discouraged. This position is contraindicated (and could be detrimental) for a child if one of the following exists:

-  There are orthopedic concerns. W-sitting can predispose a child to hip dislocation, so if there is a history of hip dysplasia, or a concern has been raised in the past, this position should be avoided.
-  If there is muscle tightness, W-sitting will aggravate it. This position places the hamstrings, hip adductors, internal rotators and heel cords in an extremely shortened range. If a child is prone to tightness or contractures, encourage another pattern of sitting.
-  There are neurologic concerns/developmental delays. If a child has increased muscle tone (hypertonia, spasticity), W-sitting will feed into the abnormal patterns of movement trying to be avoided (by direction of the child's therapist). Using other sitting postures will aid in the

*development of more desirable movement patterns.*

*W-sitting can also discourage a child from developing a hand preference. Because no trunk rotation can take place when W-sitting, a child is less inclined to reach across the body and instead picks up objects on the right with the right hand, and those placed to the left with the left hand.*

*Try sitting in various positions. Notice how you got there, got out, and what it took to balance. Many of the movement components you are trying to encourage in a child are used when getting in and out of sitting. Transfers in and out of the Q-position, however, are accomplished through straight-plane (directly forward and backward) movement only. No trunk rotation, weight shifting, or righting reactions are necessary to assume or maintain W-sitting.*

***How to prevent W-sitting.*** *The most effective (and easiest) way to prevent a problem with W-sitting is to prevent it from becoming a habit in the first place. Anticipate and catch it before the child even learns to W-sit. Children should be placed and taught to assume alternative sitting positions. If a child discovers W-sitting anyway, help him to move to another sitting position, or say, "Fix your legs." It's very important to be as consistent as possible.*

*When playing with a child on the floor, hold his knees and feet together when kneeling or creeping on hands and knees. It will be impossible to get into a W-position from there. The child will either sit to one side, or sit back on his feet; he can then be helped to sit over to one side from there (try to encourage sitting over both the right and left sides). These patterns demand a certain amount of trunk rotation and lateral weight shift and should fit with a child's therapy goals.*

*If a child is unable to sit alone in any position other than a W, talk with a therapist about supportive seating or alternative positions such as prone and sidelying. Tailor sitting against the couch may be one alternative; a small table and chair is another.*

*The therapist(s) working with the child will have many other ideas. Caregivers should ask if W-sitting in now, or may in the future, be a problem.*

<http://www.pediatricservices.com/parents/pc-22.htm>

Respectfully,  
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**Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember:**

Feb. 9	St. Maroun Holiday
Feb. 12	Valentine's Bake Sale
Feb. 18	Early Dismissal at 1:00
Feb. 26	'Pump It Up' Day- 8:45-9:45