

## Digital cameras as provocation for young children activity

Milton Community Resource Centre (MCRC) is a multi-service agency that provides programs and services to families in Milton and surrounding communities. Some very interesting and exciting things happened when MCRC educators followed the interest of a group of kindergarten children and provided them with good quality digital cameras to use on their own. As the Camera Project/Exploration originally stemmed from the children's interest in an educator's digital camera, this most likely explains their deep engagement with the project.

If you work with young children and are interested in trying this with a group of children who haven't shown a particular interest in digital cameras, consider the following things when offering the cameras as a *provocation*:

**1. Ensure that you have \*good quality digital cameras available for the children to use at their leisure.**

- Example: in a basket, on the shelf in the classroom where children have easy access.

*\*cameras that have many different features/settings, zoom in and out, have a movie mode, etc.*

**2. Show children how to hold and be gentle with a camera.**

- Example: consider showing the children how to wrap the camera strap around their wrist so that if they drop the camera by accident, it won't fall to the floor and break.

**3. Have a group/class discussion about considerations for using the cameras (this could be documented in a web format and posted at the children's eye level).**

- Example: how to hold a camera, walking vs. running with a camera in hand, turning the camera on/off when being used/not used, person responsible for charging the batteries, etc.

**4. Listen and observe attentively and when necessary, ask children open-ended questions to discover more about their thinking/ideas as they explore the camera.**

- Example: "Can you tell me more about that?" "Why do you think that?" "What might happen if..." "What do you know about that?" "How might you be able to research/answer that?" "What are your ideas with that?"

**5. Document children's thinking, questions, theories, ideas, discoveries and explorations.**

- Documentation can include (but is not limited to): photos, video, transcriptions of children's words/conversations, anecdotal notes, teacher interpretations of the children's thinking, children's work samples, and webs (mind maps).

**6. Revisit documentation with children to encourage reflection on, and extension of, prior ideas.**

- Example: documentation could be placed in a 3 ring binder (that can easily be added to as the project/exploration continues) that children, teachers and families have easy access to and can look at/talk about, etc. on a daily basis.

**7. Add provocations, when appropriate, to encourage children to think deeper and extend ideas further.**

- Provocations could include (but are not limited to): introducing photography websites, adding reference books about cameras and/or photography, or asking a particular

focussed question such as “Why do you think people take photos?” or “How do you think a camera works?”

- Conversations between teachers and children stemming from revisiting documentation together, can also offer provocations by generating new ideas, questions, theories, etc.