

John Caboto Academy Students Learn Their Rights Through Play

AN ENGAGING HUMAN RIGHTS TOOLKIT

The rights of our children are very important to us at B.A.S.E. Play It Fair! is a Human Rights Education Toolkit designed by the organization Equitas to promote human rights, non-discrimination and peaceful conflict resolution within non-formal educational programs for children. The toolkit is a perfect complement to the amazing work our daycare educators already do with the daycare children when it comes to teaching them about values. Play It Fair! is an excellent resource pairing interactive activities with discussion questions that promote positive values among children.

On Thursday, November 14, 2013, B.A.S.E. Daycare Advisors Jennifer De Freitas, Robin Kelley and Marcus Lobb facilitated a Play It Fair! pedagogical day at John Caboto Academy, organizing a fun-filled day of human rights education for its daycare students. The students played many different games and contributed to thoughtful discussions afterwards about respect, inclusiveness and cooperation. Each discussion included questions about what they thought of the game, how they felt playing it, how they might have felt in playing a different role in the game, and how they might act if they encountered a similar situation in class, on the playground or at home.

FUN AND THOUGHT PROVOKING GAMES

The morning began with groups of Grades 3 to 6 students participating in six different value-promoting activities and discussions, earning a sticker for each value they covered. Highlights included the game Crocodile, which had the children moving from lily pad to lily pad while trying to escape the crocodile. Each time the crocodile appeared he took away a lily pad or two, slowly reducing the number of lily pads to one. Afterwards the children talked about how they tried to share the lily pads as best they could, even though they knew eventually there would not be enough space for everyone.

Another popular game with the older students was Saturn and Jupiter. In this game the two planets were defined at either sides of the room and a direction to go to one planet was called out based on something the children know about themselves. For example, "Go to planet Jupiter if you have brown hair; Saturn if you do not." During the discussion the children said they liked this game because they got to know more about each other. They had an interesting conversation about why it's great to have friends who are similar to you as well as have friends who are different from you. One impressive surprise everyone learned from playing this game was that most of the students knew three or more languages!

In the afternoon, the Kindergarten, Grade 1 and 2 children participated in an age-appropriate version of the morning activities. The children played a game about inclusion and exclusion, using their non-verbal communication skills to find teammates within



Clockwise from top: Students created a collective work of art illustrating children's rights; Students participate in the "I Have a Disability" game, which teaches students to respect and include others; B.A.S.E. Daycare educator, Ms. Rose, puts stickers on students' forehead as part of the game "Inclusion...Exclusion;"; B.A.S.E. Advisor Jennifer De Freitas engages students in a conversation about respect for diversity and accepting others.

the group. They also played a game called "I have a disability" in which they had to transport a small ball across the room to a bucket and drop it in, with various senses and limbs restricted. The children really took to this challenge and the discussion afterwards revealed their understanding of disabilities, particularly those related to mobility.

INCLUSIVE ART PROJECT

To conclude the day, all of the students worked together on an artistic project. The students were divided into teams and given a value, large paper and paint with which to create large banners proclaiming the values they had learned about throughout the day. The final posters reflect the great teamwork of the students.



The Play It Fair! pedagogical day was a wonderful success. The activities not only kept students engaged and moving, but thinking and talking about how to put the values of the day into action outside of school. Jennifer, Robin, Marcus and the rest of the B.A.S.E. team look forward to holding more Play It Fair! Pedagogical Days throughout the school year.

Robin Kelley,
Extracurricular Activities Advisor

B.A.S.E. and Equitas Announce Partnership on Global Television News

B.A.S.E. AND EQUITAS PARTNERSHIP

The English Montreal School Board's B.A.S.E. Daycare Program formed a new partnership with the organization Equitas, the International Centre for Human Rights Education, in November 2013. B.A.S.E. spokesperson, Jennifer De Freitas, and one of Equitas' Program Officers, Laura Butler, appeared on Global Television News on Friday, January 17, 2014 to speak about the Play It Fair! program.

In 2004, Equitas implemented Play It Fair! in day camps and after school classes. It aims to teach children about human rights, respect for diversity and peaceful conflict resolution through games and discussions. Butler said, "The Play It Fair! program is really a Montreal success story. It started here in the city and now we are in 24 communities across Canada."

What does a partnership like this mean to the EMSB? "Play it Fair! was implemented last November to teach children about basic values," said De Freitas. "What's great about it is that the children have fun with these games. They are really learning, but having fun at the same time."

The topic of the digital evolution came up during

the conversation and both were asked if they thought the strategy behind Play It Fair! was needed now more than ever, with the Internet and social media being so open to showcasing violence and terrorism.

Butler agreed: "We see the importance around issues of diversity and inclusion coming up more and more and children are being expected to deal with quite serious issues around bullying and identity. I think it speaks to tools such as Play It Fair! which are holistic and can equip children with critical thinking skills and human rights based knowledge through which they can analyse the situations that are happening, whether its internationally or in their school and local community. They can learn to think about how they can take action themselves or take responsibility to make that community a better place."

When asked if the new partnership has anything to do with the Quebec Charter of Values, De Freitas replied, "the Play It Fair! program was implemented because everyone plays a role in anti-bullying. By teaching children early on that we need to respect everyone's rights and values, maybe we can prevent bullying and discrimination from happening."

The EMSB B.A.S.E. Daycare Program has so far



The Play it Fair! Human Rights Educational toolkit for kids.

trained 30 employees in the Play it Fair! program, with more trainings scheduled in the upcoming months.

Brittany Witt-Segal
Touching B.A.S.E. Contributor