

NOVEMBER 2009

Discoveries for those caring for children...

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WE'RE BACK!

Better Kid Care is happy to be back and ready to offer great early education programming! Thank you for being patient during the PA budget crisis. Enjoy the E-newsletter!

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For access to all the links and contacts mentioned in this PDF, please view the E-newsletter online at: <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/ENewsletters/0911November/ENews.html>

NOTABLE QUOTE

“Curiosity is an important part of mastery. It’s the desire to know. And the nice thing about it is you never get there. It’s not like you ever get to the point where you know everything or you’ve mastered everything.” —Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff

FEATURE ARTICLE

Inquiries into Professionalism (no tie needed)

Professionalism is often looked at from the outside in. That is to say, professionalism and professional image may get confused or blurred. For example, if a person is wearing a suit or tie, we may automatically think “professional”. Early educators know it’s not suits or ties that are needed for professionalism. What is needed for professionalism is a clear understanding of what is important and why in early education and care. And rather than outside-in, professional inquiry starts from the inside-out, reflecting on your own ideas and visions for your work.

Believing

In the past there has been doubt in regards to the professional importance of the early educator. Many early educators themselves feel they are not viewed as a professional. But current research in education, science, and political formats clearly defines that, yes, not only is the early educator a professional, but one who carries an immense responsibility for the healthy development of children and also productive contributions to society as a whole.

“It is our hope and belief that the better public understanding of the rapidly growing science of early childhood and early brain development can provide a powerful impetus for the design and implementation of policies and programs that could make a significant difference in the lives of all children.” –The Science of Early Childhood Development, Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do

Building Capability

Professionalism is the base to building quality. Research states that the quality of early childhood services is embodied in the expertise and skills of the adults involved. The wide collection of scientific evidence on the importance of professional development for the early educator indicates the on-going need to build and acquire professional capability. We need to know our stuff!

“The years prior to kindergarten are among the most significant in shaping a child’s foundation for learning and school success. Research has shown that a child’s learning begins at birth, and takes shape as children are nurtured, challenged, and engaged in high-quality learning environments and in relationships with parents and other caregivers.” –The Early Learning Challenge Fun, Results-Oriented, Standards Reform of State Early Learning Programs

The knowledge and skills required are increasing as new research continues to reveal more about the capabilities of young children and how they develop. When programs or individuals are lacking in professional development and expertise, the results can be damaging.

“Programs that cost less because they employ less skilled staff are a waste of money if they do not have the expertise needed to produce measurable outcomes.” – Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

Raising the Bar

The word is out! Early Educators have significant impact on how early learning is shaped. No matter what the program

or what level of funding, the core concept applies to all: Early education programs need adults knowledgeable in current child development and research.

“And we should raise the bar when it comes to early learning programs... Today, some early learning programs are excellent. Some are mediocre. And some are wasting what studies show are - by far - a child’s most formative years.” –President Barack Obama, Remarks to the NAACA, July 16, 2009, retrieved 10/20/2009, www.ed.gov

Needed: Nurturing Adults

Researchers also state that all domains of development and programming are impacted by nurturing, caring adults and their relationship with their children, families, and the programs with which they work.

“The warmth and support of the caregiver in a child care setting also influence the development of important capabilities in children, including greater social competence, fewer behavior problems, and enhanced thinking and reasoning skills at school age.” – Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships ~ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

Continuous Inquiry = Professional Confidence

All early educators can benefit from continuous inquiry into professionalism. The on-going process helps us do our jobs well. When things go “right” we feel good about what we have learned and accomplished - we develop professional confidence. And having professional confidence connects many things: joy, success, reward, and the desire to learn more. It creates a professional spirit for the early educator to embrace.

Continuous inquiry doesn’t have to be overwhelming. The simplest and least expensive forms of professional inquiry are reading, reflecting, and having conversations with other early learning professionals.

By reading articles, publications, and books related to professional topics, we can reflect and immediately apply what is discovered into our professional work. We can learn about professionalism, child development or any topic related to our work (such as how to support and understand the two year old who continues to bite other classmates). We can find out what works and what is important.

With the clearly supported research of the importance of early education and the critical role the early educator plays, there is no doubt that inquiry into professionalism is needed. So, tie or no tie, begin reflecting and planning your inquiries into professionalism today!

Key Inquiries into Professionalism

- Start Inside-out: Think about your individual professional ideas, visions, and goals
- Acknowledge your value as a professional
- Develop nurturing, caring roles as adults working with children
- Build expertise and skills in child development
- Acquire information and current research (both educational and scientific) on children’s development and learning
- Reflect and communicate with other early learning professionals
- Continue your professional inquiry

References:

- Summary of Essential Findings, A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, www.developingchild.harvard.edu
- Investing in America’s Children: The Business Case, Partnership for America’s Economic Success, The PEW Center on the States, www.pewcenteronthestates.org
- The Science of Early Childhood Development, Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Harvard University, January 2007
- Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Harvard University, Summer 2004, www.developingchild.net
- The Early Learning Challenge Fund, Results-Oriented, Standards Reform of State Early Learning Programs, July 2009, retrieved 10/20/09, <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/elcf-factsheet.html>

DISTANCE EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Are you aware that Better Kid Care provides comprehensive curricula in early childhood development?

The Better Kid Care curriculum follows the PA Core Body of Knowledge and offers multiple course titles to choose from. Each course offers numerous Distance Education lessons, providing a well-rounded approach to obtaining your professional development. View the entire Better Kid Care Distance Education curriculum on line at www.betterkidcare.org

betterkidcare.psu.edu and choose your course of study today!

FEATURED COURSE: PROFESSIONALISM AND YOU

This course offers four 1- hour professional development lessons which can be completed on-line. Register for a lesson or try the entire course!

Embracing Professionalism Part 1: Where to Begin? (K6C1) CDA 6

Although professionalism is often shown outwardly by a person's physical actions and appearance, it is the inner awareness of professional values, beliefs, and ambitions of each person that guides professionalism. This lesson takes a deeper look at professionalism and prepares you for professional growth by describing important early childhood professional terms, planning for quality professional development, reviewing the role of mentorship, and generating written professional development plans.

Embracing Professionalism Part 2: Forward Visions (K6C1) CDA 6

Although professionalism is often shown outwardly by a person's physical actions and appearance, it is the inner awareness of professional values, beliefs, and ambitions of each person that guides professionalism. This lesson takes a deeper look at professionalism and prepares you for professional growth by describing important early childhood professional terms, planning for quality professional development, reviewing the role of mentorship, and generating written professional development plans

Autobiographical Statement (K6C1) CDA 6

Autobiographical Statements provide the opportunity for a person to share information about themselves. You may be required at some point in your early childhood profession to write an Autobiographical Statement—for example, if you apply for the CDA credential. Autobiographies are often required when applying for a position of work or with academic applications. Writing an Autobiographical Statement can seem overwhelming, but with a little planning ahead, you will be able to share a professional Autobiographical Statement.

Advocacy: Raising Awareness for the Early Childhood Professional (K6C1) CDA 6

To advocate for something requires a belief in something and a vision for the better. This lesson is about exploring

advocacy to deepen our understanding of the early childhood system and deepen our role as an early childhood professional. What does advocacy mean to the early childhood professional? Find out about the variety of advocacy roles and multiple resources to prepare you for and help you learn about advocacy.

For information call 800-452-9108.

RESEARCH-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD INFORMATION

Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships

A report from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, states, "We have long known that interactions with parents, caregivers, and other adults are important in a child's life, but new evidence shows that these relationships actually shape brain circuits and lay the foundation for later developmental outcomes, from academic performance to mental health and interpersonal skills."

It's All About Relationships!

Zero to Three Policy Network shares the article "Parallels Between Infant-Toddler Development and the Public Policy Process" which explores relationship-building in both early childhood and in the world of policy and advocacy. With a deeper understanding of relationships and how to build them, we can be stronger advocates for babies, toddlers and their families. [Click here to download and read the article.](#)

INSPIRATIONS

Leaf Painting

Materials: leaves, fine point felt markers, paint pens, fine-tipped paint brushes (and paints of choice if using paint brushes).

Enjoy the last of the autumn leaves (this is a good time to collect many and stock up for winter). Collect and press leaves until they are completely flat and dry. Using tool of choice, begin to create designs, patterns, or even writings on your leaves. To add contrast to the leaf, use light shades on dark leaves and darker shades on light leaves. And try shades with shimmer, such as silver and gold. Let your imaginations flow! Spark ideas by having time to doodle and draw different shapes on paper or peruse art books and art pictures detailing patterns. Display leaves in desired format. The photo here shows some that we tried.

TURN THE PAGE: BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Children

[Yellow Umbrella](#), by Dong Il Sheen and Jae-Soo Liu, published by Kane/Miller Book Publishers, ISBN 1929132360. A wordless picture book packaged and designed to be read with an enclosed classical-style music CD. Originally published in South Korea, the book shares the story of a rainy-day walk to school with the colorful umbrellas as the lead characters of the story.

Adults

[The Wisdom of Play: Why Children at Play are Their Own Best Teachers](#) – Ten renowned early childhood educators explain why play is such an essential part of every child's emotional and physical well-being. (28 page booklet). Request this booklet for free from Community Playthings [here](#).

FAMILY TIME / WORK TIME—Words are Powerful

Are you looking for articles to share with your families? Do you need information for your parent/family bulletin board? Family Time / Work Time shares easy-to-read articles for busy parents and caretakers with a focus on Building Strong Families.

You are welcome to print and share these publications with your friends, family, and other child care providers.

Words are Powerful

By Nancy Wilson, Early Childhood Program Specialist
Family Time Work Time Image WORDS CAN BE VERY POWERFUL. When talking with your child, think about what you are saying. Will your child understand what you really mean? An adult may say to a young child, "Be polite" or "Cooperate" or "Be safe." What does polite mean to a three year old? Can a two year old really understand what it means to be safe? To understand what the word cooperate means, a child needs to be taught how to take turns. Teach your child how to do something with someone else. Children learn much faster when they are shown how to do something. This is normal. It's how a young child develops and learns new things.

Click on the image to read or download the entire article.
[Spanish version](#)

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE

America After 3PM

America After 3PM - Each afternoon across the U.S., 15 million children--more than a quarter of our children--are alone and unsupervised after school. The parents of 18 million would enroll their children in an afterschool program, if one were available. These are some of the key findings from the nation's most in-depth study of how America's children spend their afternoons. America After 3PM was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. The 2009 report, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance, surveyed nearly 30,000 households across the United States.

The survey finds that 8.4 million children participate in an afterschool program, an increase of nearly 3 million children over the past five years. While this is encouraging, there is still work to be done. The number of children left alone after the school day ends has risen to 15.1 million children - an increase of 800,000 children - since the 2004 edition of America After 3PM.

[View the report here.](#)

In addition, view the New York Times article [Home Alone here](#).

CDA

Frequently Asked Questions

The Council for Professional Recognition Answers FAQ's

The potential enactment of the Early Learning Challenge Fund has spurred new hope for improving quality and a renewed focus on enhanced qualifications of early childhood teachers. All of this activity has prompted an increase in calls to the Council for Professional Recognition about the training requirements for those applying for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The Council presents some of the most frequently asked questions and their answers in their newest CouncilLink Newsletter.

Do you need CDA help?

Visit [Better Kid Care's CDA Information link](#) and get answers to your CDA questions! Call Christine at 800-452-9108 or e-mail your CDA questions to Christine at crb16@psu.edu.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The following information highlights upcoming professional development opportunities available for early childhood practitioners:

November 7 - Building Blocks to Early Development, Clearfield, PA (You will need to login to the PA Key site to access more information about this event).

November 18-21 - NAEYC National Conference, Washington, D.C.

November 21 – Teaching Across the Curriculum with Music, WQLN, Erie, PA contact 814-217-6001 or e-mail kcarducci@wqln.org

December 5 – Let’s Explore, WQLN, Erie, PA contact 814-217-6001 or e-mail kcarducci@wqln.org

December 12 – What Do You Do With the Mad You Feel? WQLN, Erie, PA contact 814-217-6001 or e-mail kcarducci@wqln.org

January 9 – Teaching Across the Curriculum with Your Favorite Authors, WQLN, Erie, PA contact 814-217-6001 or e-mail kcarducci@wqln.org

January 23 –Early Years are Learning Years from Penn State Extension, 814-355-4897

January 23 – Learning Discipline, WQLN, Erie, PA contact 814-217-6001 or e-mail kcarducci@wqln.org

GREAT RESOURCES

By topic: Early Education, Families, Nature, Health and Well Being, Grants and Funding

Early Education

Ed Extras is a free monthly service that offers preschool programs, elementary schools and PTAs articles about learning that you can include in your parent newsletters. The one page articles are available as a formatted PDF or Word document, in both English and Spanish. Sign up to have Ed Extras delivered each month right to your inbox!

Education and Training Materials Database - Find educational materials developed by universities, private industry, and local, State and Federal government agencies for school personnel and others working in Child Nutrition Programs here.

Families

FREE Aggressions Resource for Parents from Invest in Kids and The Canadian Council on Learning™ Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre – downloadable information cards use the latest research and the principles of Comfort, Play & Teach®, to provide parents with information to help them better understand and deal with aggression effectively.

Kids.gov: The Official Kids’ Portal to the U.S. Government –Why do leaves change color in the Fall? Let the U.S. Forest Service explain! Nearly every government agency and all the states have created kid-friendly web sites explaining their own areas of specialization – including topics like space and flight, our planet, national parks, money, how laws are made, and much more. Go to www.kids.gov

Nature

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is launching Be Out There, a national movement to return to the nation’s children what they don’t even know they’ve lost. A daily dose of the outdoors improves children’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Join the Be Out There movement to get children outside, connecting to nature. The benefits of outdoor play are real: healthier kids with a life-long appreciation of wildlife and nature.

Back to School shouldn’t mean back indoors for children. National Wildlife Federation’s new report TIME OUT: Using the Outdoors to Enhance Classroom Performance highlights research linking time kids spend outside to increased classroom success.

Health and Well Being

Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Child Care and Early Childhood Programs –The purpose of “Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Child Care and Early Childhood Programs” is to provide information and communication resources to help center-based and home-based child care programs, Head Start programs, and other early childhood programs implement recommendations from CDC’s Guidance on Helping Child Care and Early Childhood Programs Respond to Influenza during the 2009-2010 Influenza Season. Accessible here.

The Safe Start Center recently published its first two issue briefs in the new Moving From Evidence to Action: The Safe Start Center Series on Children Exposed to Violence. The series was developed in response to the urgent need to translate research-based information on treating children’s exposure to violence and disseminate it to practitioners working in different systems and settings (pediatric care, schools, child welfare, domestic violence, homeless shelters and transitional housing as well as fatherhood programs). The publications are available free from the Safe Start Center.

Grants and Funding

The H. J. Heinz Company is proud to sponsor the Heinz Wholesome Memories Intergenerational Garden Award, designed to foster family focused garden efforts in

communities across the country. The award will provide 57 families with a \$500 award package containing the tools needed to embark on a successful gardening adventure that will foster lasting intergenerational memories while growing wholesome food. <http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/heinz.asp>

Books Without Barriers –Bookshare provides accessible books and periodicals for readers with print disabilities — and it's free for all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities, thanks to a grant from the Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs.

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Reflections...

We would love to hear from you! E-mail your ideas to crb16@psu.edu or call 814-865-7894.

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