

The Rhode Island Early Childhood Newsletter



Intentionality in the Efforts to Promote Future Leaders in the Field of Early Childhood Education

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At this year's National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Annual Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development held in Pittsburgh, a session was held related to future leaders. Schools and AEYCs that were represented included:

Old Dominion University; Tidewater Community College; Hudson Co. Community College; Miami University/Wright State University; Onandaga Community College; Tarrant County College; the Universities of Alaska, Texas Austin, and Maryland College Park; the Alaska and Minnesota AEYC Boards; and AEYCs from Utah, Boston, Ohio, North Carolina, Nebraska, San Antonio, Iowa, and Syracuse.

Over the past several years, NAEYC has supported college and university students who have attended the national conference by providing specifically designed information sessions and meetings for them. NAEYC has held joint programs, seminars, and more recently, Excelligence Learning Corporation has honored the students with a special student networking room, available to students and faculty over the course of the national conference.

The topics covered at this year's Institute were as follows:

The dynamics of leadership as well as supporting student participation and leadership development in and out of college. How do we get colleges and universities connected to the local, state, or regional affiliate of the national association? College/university Early Childhood

Club meetings are typically held on campus. A creative link would be for local AEYCs to consider holding one of their board meetings on campus, too.

Tools for developing student leadership through partnerships between AEYCs and colleges and universities. Invite students to come to your AEYC Board meeting to share some of their activities and community outreach efforts. How can students get involved in local conferences, workshops, and professional development initiatives?

Current activities involving students. How are the activities and efforts of the students' outreach and activities shared? Web site? Word of mouth? Campus newspaper? How can students get the word out to the larger early childhood community?

Linking with the on-line communities of future leaders. Go to the NAEYC On-line Communities, and look up the Student Community web page. Learn more ways to connect and support college students! (To access the on-line communities, you must be a member of NAEYC. Go to www.naeyc.org, click on "Member," then click on "Get Involved with NAEYC On-Line Communities." Next, log in your ID number and password. Click "Go to NAEYC On-Line Communities," then scroll down to "Join New Communities" to join the Student Community.)

Building connections, building future leaders, building stronger AEYCs, and mentoring for our field's future! Go colleges and universities! U-Rah! Or is it *U-Rock!*

Letter from the Editor

A Happy New Year to you, devoted readers! Welcome to Issue 2 of this newsletter. Our theme is *leadership*, and this issue is chockablock with articles devoted to this theme!

The children's literature reviews introduce concepts of leadership that can be encouraged in young children, while the professional resource review highlights a book for emerging adult leaders. A national web site with pertinent information to all leaders, regardless of experience level, is the focus of the Internet Information article. Finally, the CHILDSPAN article highlights a new venture: a three-part leadership workshop series with accompanying, post-series technical assistance for each professional taking the entire program!

In our lead article, the author, a well-known local early childhood leader, reports on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) recent efforts to engage college students—our next generation of early childhood professionals—and connect them with their larger, local early childhood community.

Connections to the field are essential. There is a Japanese proverb that states, "One kind word can warm three winter months." How true this proverb is! I state this idea with conviction because I was once a fledgling neophyte who entered the world of early childhood truly by accident. I was fortunate to meet a handful of experienced professionals—most of whom were in leadership positions—who took the time to listen to my wishes and ideas (however unusual or misguided!) right from the start, and treated me with respect, despite my lack of experience.

When I see any of these colleagues now at meetings or conferences, a grin spreads across my face. I respect their integrity as leaders, their creative abilities, and their wonderful balance of seriousness of purpose and sense of humor. My delight and devotion are inextricably tied to the fact that, once, these individuals took the time to listen to me and offer me sound advice and mentoring. They were instrumental in helping me gain knowledge and shaping me into the professional I am today.

Kind words can warm any time, any season. Words have the power to encourage, spark reflection and/or creation, and build loyalty to the field. Perceptive leaders realize this power, and use their words to support and inspire. It works—trust me.

Joseph Morra, Editor
jmorra@childspan.net

Statewide and National Calendar of Professional Development Opportunities

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Bradley Hospital, East Providence

Workshop:

Managing Behavior in Kids

Contact Lifespan Health Connection:
 (401) 444-4800

Friday, February 8, 2008

Save the Bay, Providence
 PASA-sponsored **Workshop:**

RIPQA: Safe Environment

Contact Lindsay Lockwood:
 (401) 490-9599 x105

Friday, February 15, 2008

Warwick Police Station, Warwick
 FCCHRI, Inc.-sponsored **Workshop:**
Using Visual Arts to Enhance Literacy
 Go to

www.familychildcarehomesri.org
 for more information.

Saturday, March 8, 2008

Bryant University, Smithfield
 CHILDSPAN's
Critical Issues in Child Care Conference:

Developing Infrastructures to Support Every Child (with keynote speaker Jeanine Fitzgerald!)

Contact Joseph Morra:
 (401) 721-6404

Mondays, beginning March 16, 2008

CHILDSPAN, Pawtucket
Mini-course: CDA Core Components
 Contact Jessica Baéz:
 (401) 721-6401

Saturday, April 12, 2008

RI Convention Center, Providence
 RIAEYC's
43rd Annual

RI Early Childhood Conference:
 Contact RIAEYC:
 (401) 467-1219

CHILDSPAN News

by Shevaun Keogh-Walker

The new year is now in full swing, and with it come new directions for CHILDSPAN! While CHILDSPAN has traditionally provided technical assistance, professional development, and support to early childhood educators, the team has now expanded its scope to encompass *all professionals* working with young children. To meet this goal, CHILDSPAN is convening a committee of mental health professionals, educators, and parents to develop a bilingual conference for infant and toddler practitioners and administrators. This half-day conference will be held at Bryant University on Saturday, June 14, 2008, and is entitled *The Delicate Balance Between Active Learning and Nurturing Relationships: The Role of Infant and Toddler Professionals*. It will provide a wide array of professional development offerings including such topics as infant and toddler brain development, designing environments for active learners, reflective practice, family support and communication, and the importance of early intervention.

Quickly approaching is our Critical Issues in Child Care Conference, to be held on Saturday, March 8, 2008, also at Bryant University. The theme of this conference is *Developing Infrastructures to Support Every Child*. We have once again secured the very knowledgeable and dynamic Jeanine Fitzgerald as the keynote speaker, and will provide professional development offerings that focus on behavioral health and educational topics. It is shaping up to be a very exciting conference with many new workshop presenters! We hope to see you there.

On a slightly different note, CHILDSPAN is trying a new venture to support adult learners as part of our 2008 Spring Training Calendar. The most recent research on adult learning theory emphasizes that classroom-based academics is not enough to support adult learners' ability to translate theory into best practice. Researchers strongly recommend that a technical assistance component will provide

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Professional Resource Review

by Anne Kilkenny

Sullivan, Debra Ren-etta. (2003). *Learning to Lead: Effective Leadership Skills for Teachers of Young Children*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

The field of early childhood is filled with women (and men) who are busy nurturing young children, participating in the growth of others, and placing the needs of others before their own. These wonderful characteristics, which make us excellent at what we do, also make it uncomfortable for us to take on leadership roles. In fact, the field in general has an ambivalent view of leadership. Our field, however, is filled with leaders, both born and made; it is up to all of us to discover the natural leader within and learn to use these skills effectively.

In her book, *Learning to Lead: Effective Leadership Skills for Teachers of Young Children*, Debra Ren-etta Sullivan takes teachers of young children on a journey of self-reflection and learning. With the use of "Ask Yourself" sidebars, the author encourages the reader to reflect upon the concepts discussed in each chapter. These exercises allow the developing leader to recognize natural strengths and abilities that can be put to more effective use while working to develop other skills through practice and training. It is a combination of both the natural and the learned that creates the most effective leaders. The author includes fine explanations of terms used to discuss leadership, clear charts which describe effective early childhood leader competencies, and chapter topics which provide a natural progression, from "Who, Me, a Leader?" to "Advocacy and Empowerment." There are also good resource lists, chapter summaries, and real-life "Story Times" at the end of each chapter, which relate a topic to a real-life situation.

Overall, this book is a quick (119-page), well-written, down-to-earth guide for the

entire field. All of us are leaders—in our classrooms, in our programs, in our neighborhoods, in our organizations, in our families. We need to learn to utilize these skills to their fullest potential. Doing so will help make our field stronger.

Internet Information

by Joseph Morra

The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership, based out of Illinois's National-Louis University, has a comprehensive web site geared for directors in the early childhood field: <http://cecl.nl.edu/>. Its home page notes that it acts in "supporting directors as the gatekeepers of quality," offering support in four main areas: training, technical assistance, research, and public awareness.

It publishes two excellent news briefs: *The Director's Link* and *Research Notes*. Both can be downloaded from the site, or ordered in hard-copy format. (Other high-quality resources and research reports can also be ordered.)

Interesting on-line discussions can be accessed from the site's archives. Topics have included *What Science Has to Say about How Children Learn*, *Professional Portfolios for Early Childhood Educators*, and *Family Child Care: Providing Quality Everyday*.

While the site is primarily for directors of early childhood programs, there is information that other emerging leaders in the field—regardless of their position—can use. It is a worthwhile web site, waiting to be explored!

"True generosity requires more of us than kindly impulse. Above all it requires imagination—the capacity to see people in all their perplexities and needs, and to know how to expend ourselves effectively for them."

- I.A.R. Wylie

Early Childhood Resources in Rhode Island

Aquidneck Island Directors' Association
Pam Griffiths, 683-0991

BrightStars: RI's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System
Tammy Camillo, 467-1219

Child Care Support Network (CCSN)
Kristine Campagna, 222-5372

Children's Friend and Service
Beth Sousa, 276-4336

CHILDSPAN: Rhode Island's Child Development and Education Training System
Shevaun Keogh-Walker, 721-6400

Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island, Inc. (FCCRI)
Maria Belliard, 461-8908

Options for Working Families
Sandra Gaspar, 946-2300

Providence After School Alliance (PASA)
Elizabeth Devaney, 490-9599

Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island (PCARI)
Katherine Begin, 728-7920

Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP)
Joyce Butler, 490-9960

Rhode Island After School Plus Alliance
Sarah Cahill, 331-2869

Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC)
Jennifer DeFrance, 467-1219

Rhode Island Child Care Directors' Association (RICCDA)
Kathie Sandberg, 334-0100 x238

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, 351-9400

Rhode Island School-Age Child Care Association (RISCCA)
Charlotte Boudreau, 444-0750, x102

Rhode Island Head Start Association
Mary Nugent, 437-0018 x103

Rhode Island Head Start Collaboration Project
Lawrence Pucciarelli, 462-3071

Rhode Island Parent Information Network
Matthew Cox, 727-4144

URI, CE, Children, Youth, and Family 4-H Program
Marilyn Martin, 277-5255

Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

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Children's Literature Reviews

by Melody Allen

Weatherford, Carole Boston. (2006). ***Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom.*** New York: Hyperion Books.

Perseverance and belief. Harriet Tubman was strengthened by her spiritual faith as she made countless trips guiding slaves on the Underground Railroad. She risked her own hard-won freedom to lead others to a better life. Notice how artist Kadir Nelson, who received a Caldecott Honor for his work, uses light in his powerful illustrations throughout this wonderful book.

(Ages 5 – 9)

Cumpiano, Ina. (2005). ***Quinito's Neighborhood / El Vecindario de Quinito.*** San Francisco: Children's Book Press.

Be a part of something bigger than yourself. The star of this bilingual book is Quinito, who walks through his neighborhood, telling the reader what each person (including his relatives) does for a living, and how that person is connected to himself and others in the neighborhood. The rich, warm paintings reflect the comfort and confidence he feels as everyone around him builds and contributes to a community of caring. Can you make a map of Quinito's neighborhood? Are your neighbors like Quinito's?

(Ages 4 – 7)

CHILDSPAN News

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adult students with the support they need to implement the ideas, concepts, and philosophies they have studied.

CHILDSPAN's new Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Christopher Salaun, will be putting this research into practice as an offering in our Spring Training Calendar. He will present a three-part series focusing on early childhood leadership skills, and then provide each participant with one free hour of technical assistance to help them implement some of the leadership theories into best practice in their specific professional environments.

While adult learning theory has always been the foundation for CHILDSPAN's delivery of professional development offerings, this component of the series is a new and exciting venture in our support of best practice for all professionals working with children and youth. As always, CHILDSPAN understands the importance of keeping abreast of current research in order to share the most recent information on social and emotional development and educational practices with other professionals throughout Rhode Island.