

SUMMER 2015

milestones

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Association for the Education of Young Children



Promoting and inspiring excellence in
early care and education for over 60 years!

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We welcome comments & suggestions: generalinfo@ncaeyc.org. Through *Milestones*, NCAeyc provides a forum for discussion of issues and ideas in our field in hopes of provoking thought and promoting professional growth. *Milestones* articles represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of NCAeyc.

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Lorie Barnes

We all have those defining moments in our lives when something we hear or read resonates so strongly within us that it forever becomes a part of us. **For me, one of those defining moments came nearly 30 years ago when I was a preschool teacher in an inclusive classroom serving children with and without disabilities.** And this defining moment began when I discovered an excerpt from a book written in 1972 by Haim Ginott called *Between Teacher and Child*:

“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. **As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous.** I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor. Hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

I was struck by the seriousness of his opening phrase. Ginott didn’t say that he’d been thinking and maybe this could be important. He didn’t say that perhaps we should all consider the possibility of this thought. He said it outright: “a frightening conclusion”.



In many ways I felt prepared as an undergraduate student to meet this frightening conclusion. But in some ways the reality of this conclusion terrified me, especially considering that this was when the very first studies were being released about the importance of experiences on

early brain development. Some days, the weight of this burden of responsibility was very real. At times, the pressure of it all was huge. I’d wonder, **“You mean that what I do and say can have deep and lasting effect on these children in my care?”** This increased awareness of the critical importance of trying to get it right for these children and their families every day was at times overwhelming. And let’s be very honest... the low wages of my preschool teaching job didn’t exactly tip the scales to make me think to myself: “Yes, it is a lot of responsibility, but the great pay makes it all worth it!” Furthermore, I was exhausted from working my second job as a waitress to make ends meet.

The defining moment came when my incredibly wise boss/mentor/coach (this was before I even knew to think of her as a mentor or coach... I simply trusted and admired her and would have gone to the moon and back for her!) helped me reframe the burdensome feeling I'd been wrestling with. She said, "Lorie, you can view your role as a burden. No doubt it does place a great deal of responsibility on your shoulders. **Many days are long and tiring. But what if you viewed it as a privilege? What if you viewed it as an honor to be graciously and gratefully accepted in all its glory and even at its worse times of grief? What if?"**



So I gave my mentor's "What if?" a try. And it was in that commitment and desire to be my best self that the impact of this defining moment came to be for me. I approached each day with a new mindfulness of my actions, responses, words and tone of voice. As I became more intentional in what I said and did, not only did I see how much better it was for the children, but it was better for me. My own well-being improved as I learned to forgive myself when I faltered and found the fortitude to try again the next day. I learned to honor the potential in me to help positively impact the potential in the children I cared for and educated. It shifted from a singular defining moment, to a series of connected daily defining moments. Moments that added up to an intentionality about the importance of taking care of myself so

that I could take care of others. Not in a selfish way, but in an authentic realization that I needed to be well-rested, well-nourished, well-read, well-prepared, and well-supported by positive colleagues so that in my well-being, I could have the greatest likelihood of making a positive difference in the lives of children.

Years later, after graduate school, I shared Haim Ginott's quote with every adult student I taught or encountered at Wake Technical Community College, and their responses were a reflection of my own frightening conclusion so many years before. In a slightly different context, I had the honor and privilege of helping my adult students as young, emerging professionals wrestle with the notion of this frightening conclusion... then help move them into the realm of the "What if?" so that they too could be fulfilled, motivated and inspired by the importance of their own well-being, then embrace the privilege and honor to make a positive impact in the lives of children and families.

In my role as Executive Director of NCaeyc, I feel honored and humbled by opportunities to help make a difference in the lives of children, families, and the professionals who care for and educate them. I am eager to continuously learn more and spark conversations with others about the importance of our individual and collective well-being as educators. Recently, a second "What if?" framework has had a dramatic impact on my professional growth. One of my "she-oes", Rae Pica, has a new book entitled *What If Everybody Understood Child Development?: Straight Talk About Bettering Education and Children's Lives*. I've read and re-read the chapters and have deeply appreciated her "What if?" framework. I invite and encourage you to check it out. Thanks to Rae Pica for sharing Chapter 3 of her book, found on page 20. Follow her on Twitter and see how she's making an impact using #AskingWhatIf to frame important issues in our field.



So with a couple of "What if?" frameworks in mind, this entire issue of *Milestones* is themed around well-being. As you read the articles and explore the digital resources that will help you understand the importance of your well-being as an educator, ask **"What if?"**. Ask "What if every single early childhood professional in our state was at his or her very best well-being?" Ask "What if we were all able to view our roles as an honor and a privilege? **Ask "What if our society and policymakers viewed the importance of our roles and compensated professionals for the critical difference they make in the lives and well-being of the children they are for and educate?" What if?**

From the President



Suzanne Hughes

Until recently, hearing the words “strategic planning” would generate immediate thoughts of displeasure that had me fighting back groans and eye rolls.

In late April, the NCAeYC Board of Directors gathered for a weekend retreat entirely devoted to strategic planning. While I knew that this was a much needed process for NCAeYC, I had immense confidence in the team selected to lead us through this process, and I greatly enjoy the company and expertise of my fellow board members, I must admit that I still viewed the task at hand as daunting.

As I write this article today, I am still utterly amazed at the work we completed toward developing a Strategic Framework for NCAeYC. We came together as Board Members, ECE Professionals, and teammates with various perspectives working toward a common goal. We analyzed our strengths as an organization, looked at the growing trends in early childhood education in North Carolina, and defined our niche. As a result, we were able to create an impact statement, list desired outcomes, and develop strategies to get us there.



I am thrilled to share some of the pieces of the NCAeYC Strategic Framework that highlight the hard work from our retreat. It is a work in progress, but I hope that you will find the messages both inspiring and useful. I can promise you that you will be seeing and hearing a lot more about it in the future.

Impact Statement:

ECE professionals have the expertise, respect, resources, and well-being so that all children in North Carolina birth to age eight experience high-quality early care and education.

Outcomes:

- ECE professionals are connected to each other for learning, inspiration and support.
- (NCAeYC is) A strong, well-funded integrated system of high quality care and education for children birth to age eight that respects and supports ECE professionals
- ECE professional identify as and are expected to be professionals with opportunities for professional and personal growth and well-being.

I left our retreat with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for my work both as a NCAeYC board member and an ECE professional and I eagerly await engaging in the next steps of our strategic planning process. Who knew strategic planning could be so exciting and rewarding?!



DOCaeyc Celebrates Week of the Young Child

Written by Pam Zornick,
DOCaeyc Treasurer



To celebrate the Week of the Young Child, DOCaeyc met at the Chapel Hill Public Library on April 18th. Approximately 30 people attended the event.

Displays featuring various activity centers were set up by The Community School for People Under Six, The Goddard School, Orange County Schools Pre-K, University Child Care (Victory Village) and the Playhouse Preschool.

Michele Rivest presented on how to become an effective advocate in early childcare and answered questions on advocacy.

Lunch was provided to attendees, and door prizes, including 3 NAEYC memberships, were given away.



A Glimpse into the 2015 NAEYC Public Policy Forum

Written by Lori Caudle, Ph.D., Birth-Kindergarten Program, Western Carolina University, and Paige Moretz, NCAeYC

When reflecting on the well-being of our youngest children, policies that impact their education and care must remain a top priority among everyone,

not just early childhood professionals. These policies also have considerable influence on the well-being of families, educators, and other professionals in the field. Recent policy changes have benefited early childhood education and care, such as the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). North Carolina Senator Richard Burr was part of a bipartisan group of leaders who worked to progress this legislative change. Yet there are still major challenges to overcome in the realm of early childhood policy, and NCAeYC strives to support emerging leaders who can make a difference at the local, state, and national levels.

Each spring, a Public Policy Forum is hosted by NAEYC in Washington DC, where members and State affiliates are given the opportunity to send a select group of members to attend. This is a valuable way for members to network with one another and build relationships with legislators and their staff in efforts to advocate for high-quality education and care. Fortunately, NCAeYC was able to send a team of ten representatives to the 2015 NAEYC Public Policy Forum, and these

members had a range of policy experience from new to very experienced. This year, the forum began on Sunday, March 8th with an introductory session on public policy. This initial gathering provided attendees with the nuts and bolts of early childhood policy and advocacy, and was reserved for those new to policy work. Paige Moretz, a staff member of NCAeYC who attended the initial session, said: "The pre-conference day made my experience very meaningful. I was oriented on the federal legislative process, rules for nonprofit lobbying, engaging policy makers effectively, and key issues. All of which are key pieces to make a day on Capitol Hill a success."

Monday followed with presentations and discussions led by political leaders such as Roberto J. Rodríguez, Special Assistant to President Obama for Education Policy, staffers from congressional offices and committees, and NAEYC members. Key sessions included discussions of how to: (1) effectively participate in Nonpartisan Advocacy activities, (2) plan and make a state policy agenda, and (3) advance the early childhood profession. Tuesday's Day on the Hill allowed forum attendees to gain first-hand experience meeting with members of Congress and their staff. The main talking points at these meetings with Legislative Assistants centered around the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the federal budget, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the early childhood workforce. Most of the NCAeYC team members had the opportunity to meet with Senator Richard Burr's Child and Family Issues Legislative Assistant, Christopher Toppings, and attendees also met with staff members of Congress Representatives from regions across our state.



The NAEYC Public Policy Forum strives to provide resources, knowledge, and support for attendees to advocate more effectively on behalf of young children and those who teach and care for them. Kristen Idacavage, director of Kids R Kids in Charlotte and NCAeYC member, reflected on the benefit of attending the forum: "The 2015 NAEYC Public Policy Forum was a great introduction to the world of advocacy in early childhood. What an awesome opportunity to learn about the basics and be able to immediately put that knowledge to use when meeting your local congressmen and senators!" NCAeYC is planning for a strong presence at next year's forum, and encourages members to contact them about how to get

involved in this event and other future initiatives. Through unity, we will successfully progress care and education for young children, families, and early childhood professionals.

Resources from the 2015 NAEYC Public Policy Forum are available at www.naeyc.org/policy/advocacy

Farm to school. Farm to preschool. What's it all about?

Farm to school got started in 2002, with a few K-12 schools across the country integrating school gardens, farm field trips, classroom cooking, and local food served in school cafeterias. Today, farm to school is a huge success and is growing by leaps and bounds! From a handful of schools in 2002, the farm to school movement has grown in all 50 states, there is a National Farm to School Network (NFSN), our First Lady grows a garden on the White House lawn, and millions of children are being engaged in farm to school programming. Exciting times indeed!

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) has been working in farm to school since 2002 and has served as the Southeast Regional Lead for NFSN since 2007. Seven years ago, ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) began working with preschool and Head Start organizations interested in engaging preschoolers in farm to school.

ASAP realized that farm to school (or farm to preschool) was ideally suited for early childhood—it's a perfect time to influence taste preferences and eating habits, parents and families are more involved, and experiential education is a standard practice. Farm to preschool is a great match with this age group! Farm to preschool started happening throughout Western North Carolina and has been initiated in several other states (OR, SC and GA in particular).



So, pan forward to 2015 and the beginnings of a North Carolina Farm to Preschool coalition. ASAP, Smart Start, NC AEYC, NC Child and Adult Care Food Program, and many others are involved who are willing to move this part of the movement forward. This coalition of organizations decided that a common understanding of what we're working toward was needed and came up with definition: *Farm to preschool (F2P) enhances the health and education of young children by developing systems and experiential learning that connects children and their families with local food and farms. F2P includes any type of childcare that incorporates local foods through: meals and snacks, taste tests, lessons, farmer visits, cooking, growing food, and/or community and parent involvement.*



We're building the movement to include preschools. There's lots of excitement and energy out there to make this happen. We want the youngest of our children to not only have the freshest and healthiest food, but we want them to be connected to where their food comes from and to the folks that grow it. We are building the movement so that the next generation will continue this work and these values.

Interested in learning more about farm to preschool? Visit <http://growing-minds.org> to find lesson plans and children's literature suggestions from ASAP's Growing Minds. Sign up online for the SE Farm to School e-news that includes a regular farm to preschool feature. Look for a farm to preschool session offered at the NCAeyc Annual Conference (September 17 – 19) and a farm to preschool track at ASAP's annual Farm to School Conference (November 14). Help us grow the farm to preschool movement!

For more information about farm to preschool or the growing farm to preschool movement, contact Emily Jackson at emily@asapconnections.org.

When Nature Comes Alive

Childcare Network #246 in Clayton, North Carolina is embarking on a fresh new way of exposing children to nature. **In the summer of 2015, a new “Eco-Classroom” opens for children. This learning environment is set up to expose children to more natural objects and experience more “green” ways of thinking and learning. All of the fundamental preschool elements are present, but the added flare of a natural environment makes the space that much more inviting.** Ivan Azamar, Quality Enhancement Coordinator for Childcare Network, envisioned the idea of this eco-friendly classroom. With his educational background in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education and his years of experience coaching early care and education programs to attain and maintain QRIS standards, Ivan says that he is excited to see the added benefits this pilot classroom will have on the children.



Upon entering the classroom, children feel as if they are walking into a world of natural wonders. Many of the available materials in this classroom are made from natural objects. The earth tones of green and brown encompass the room and create a feeling of being outdoors. Children first come upon the sand and water tables. These tables are custom made for this classroom and are made out of antique looking boats. The addition of the sand and water takes children to the beach, lake, or river and allows them to connect closer with the outdoors.



The art area houses an easel made from the actual trunk of a tree. The art materials are organized and provide readily accessible materials for the children to practice their fine motor skills while drawing, painting, sculpting, and making collages.

The library area hosts a refurbished pedal boat that the children can sit in and feel as though they are out on the water. Hanging over the boat are branches with pinecones and things seen in nature such as a butterfly, birds, and nests. Cushions and a shade overhead add more comfort to the space. A huge mural of the oceans waves serves as the backdrop for the books. Books feature a wide variety of themes including science, nature, math, rhyming, fantasy, animals, diversity, and multicultural. Hanging up tall and proud by the boat is an abstract tree with all of the letters of the alphabet perched on its branches. The book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* is on display. Feelings stones are available to help children relate more to their emotions.

The library feeds right into the writing area. The children can pretend to be mail carriers with a mail slot box mounted on the wall. They will be encouraged to write letters to their friends, teachers, or family and at the end of the day they can be delivered from a special helper.

The science area provides children with hands-on experiences to become one with nature. A large tree trunk piece serves as a stand to the large fish aquarium in the classroom. The aquarium is on the children's level and will help the children feel valued by creating jobs like "fish-feeder." There are many plants around the room that the children can help water and care for. This area allows children to see collections of natural objects found in nature, magnets, uses for all of their senses, magnifying glasses, real x-rays, lots of colors, life cycles of different animals, specimens, an ant farm, and the ability to observe and monitor real bugs while learning all about animals from brightly colored fact cards.



The music area allows children to travel all over the world with its multicultural pieces including maracas, scarves, and drums. A wooden wind chime is overhead that carries a peaceful tune when moved.

The dramatic play area has a natural-looking oven, sink, and fridge set. A wooden dollhouse with multicultural accessories and nature accents will allow the children to act out scenes they see play out in real life. The table and chairs in this area are made from the trunk of a tree with bamboo placemats and diverse bowls and food.

Bringing nature alive within the classroom creates its own excitement and wonder in young minds. Children grow physically, emotionally, and socially when exposed to nature and natural elements. All people are part of nature and it is important to allow children the ability to experience it firsthand. When children are allowed to be hands-on, learning occurs.

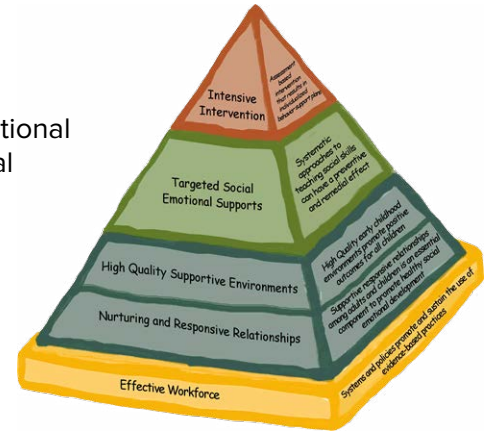
Photos by Amanda Blakely



Embrace the Pyramid!

USING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS AND PREVENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Previously in the Pyramid Corner we've explored the importance of social-emotional development, of building positive relationships, and of designing environmental strategies to support social-emotional development. Research by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) has shown that 85% of children will develop appropriate social-emotional skills in classrooms where these foundational keystones are emphasized. But in any group of children there will always be those who need a little extra support. Teachers can further assist these children to gain social-emotional skills necessary for life-long success by adding some specific strategies to their professional teaching practices.



What are targeted teaching strategies that promote social-emotional development?

Most children will develop social skills when cared for by nurturing adults who have appropriate expectations in developmentally appropriate environments. But even with these foundational supports in place, some children will benefit from the active, intentional teaching of social skills. Targeted teaching strategies help young children develop the specific skills of social competency: emotional literacy, self-regulation, controlling anger and impulse, problem-solving, and developing friendships.

How do these targeted teaching strategies prevent or address challenging behavior?

Most challenging behaviors are born when a child finds a way to get a need met. Perhaps they didn't have adequate communication skills to express their need, or maybe their caregiver simply couldn't meet their demand quickly enough for satisfaction. For whatever reason, the child now associates this behavior with getting a need met, and will consistently use this behavior when s/he experiences this need. Targeted teaching strategies will help children develop some of the skills of social competence, or the ability to get along with others.

In the next few issues, we'll explore several categories of targeted teaching strategies, beginning with Emotional Literacy.

Exploring Targeted Teaching Strategies—Fostering Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label, and understand feelings in one's self and others, and to respond to them in a healthy manner. It is a prerequisite skill to emotional regulation and successful interpersonal interactions and problem solving. It is one of the most important skills a child learns or is taught in the early years. After all, if you can't name it – you can't change it! The development of a 'feeling word vocabulary' helps children better understand their emotional experiences and deal with them in an appropriate way. The ability to give each feeling a name allows children to talk about their personal experiences of the world.

One of the things we can do to enhance the emotional literacy of the children in our care is to help them learn words for labeling or describing different feelings. We can also teach them to attend to facial expressions and body language, to listen to how someone sounds, and to ask how someone feels.

What can you do in your classroom? Put Excellent Ideas Into Action!

- **Express your own feelings**—help children learn to label their emotions by modeling healthy emotional expression.
- **Label children's feelings**—pay attention to children's emotional moments and label feelings for them; the child then connects those words to the physical feelings s/he is experiencing. Support children as they feel a range of emotions, but teach them healthy ways to express those emotions.
- **Play games, sing songs, and read stories with new feeling words**—there are many ways to incorporate emotional literacy lessons throughout the entire day using games, songs and stories featuring feeling words.

Here are some specific Excellence In Action ideas for targeted teaching strategies in emotional literacy you can use to support social-emotional development, to prevent challenging behaviors from occurring, and to address challenging behaviors children may already be using to get their needs met:

Feelings Hunt:

Display the CSEFEL feeling face pictures around the room. Encourage the children to go on a ‘feelings treasure hunt.’ As children find the faces, ask them to tell you how that child might be feeling and about a time they felt that way. It’s best to start with the basic emotions of happy, sad and mad before moving on to the emotions that are harder to define and express like frustration and pride.



Feelings Cube Toss:

Glue one feeling face on each side of a small square box and cover the sides with contact paper for durability. Use this at group time to generate discussion about feelings. Roll the cube to a child who identifies the emotion on the top of the cube before rolling it to another child. Don’t forget to allow time for the children to share their stories of when they have felt that emotion.

Feelings Sign-in Classroom Chart:

When children arrive in the mornings they can “sign in” by selecting a feeling face that best represents their morning mood. One way to make a sign-in chart is to mount the chart on something metal (like a baking sheet or a file cabinet) along with a picture of each child backed with a magnet. Another option is to use Velcro to attach the children’s pictures to the chart. Either way, children can move their picture as their feelings change during the day.



Feelings Wheel:

Instead of a group chart, you can make individual Feeling Wheels for each child to keep in his/her cubby. They can align the point of the arrow with the face that best represents how they are feeling throughout the day. The Feeling Wheel can also be turned into an interactive game with a pair of children taking turns spinning and identifying the emotions represented.

Book Nooks:

Teachers can also use children’s books as a way to promote emotional literacy. CSEFEL has created guides, called Book Nooks, to provide hands-on ways to embed emotional literacy activities into everyday classroom and/or home routines. For example, the *Glad Monster Sad Monster* Book Nook is filled with ideas that support children’s recognition of feelings in themselves and others, including ideas for music/movement, art and literacy activities. There are 22 different Book Nooks on the CSEFEL website.

Research on this topic:

Studies have found that children with emotional literacy skills are less lonely, less impulsive, more focused and achieve greater success in school and life. They can also get into fewer fights and tolerate frustration better. In the next issue of *Milestones* we’ll explore targeted teaching strategies for developing friendships.

Adapted by Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers, from CSEFEL What Works Brief #21. Additional strategies can be found at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>

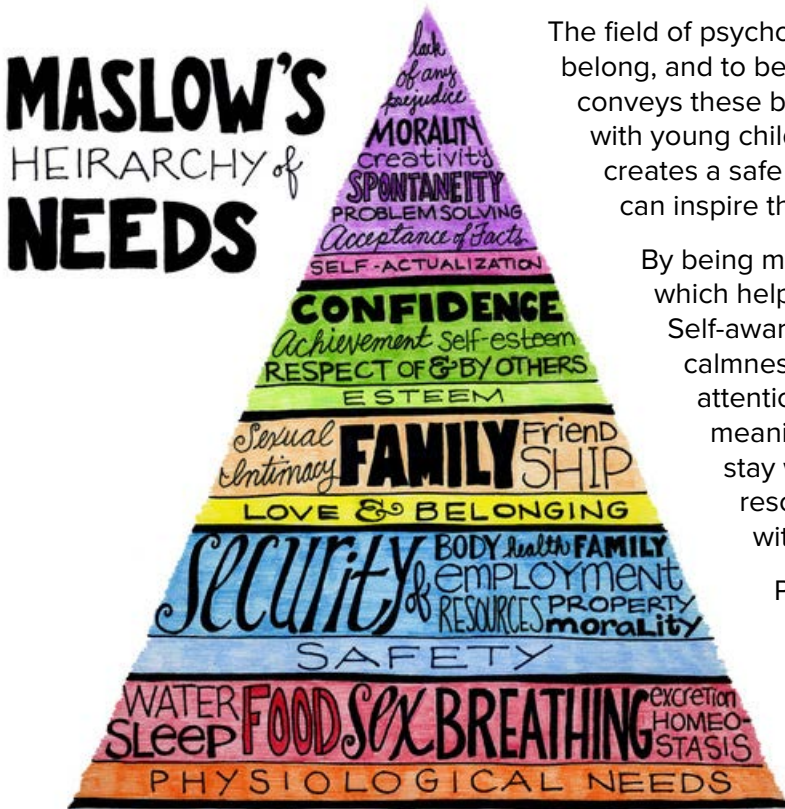
On Mindful Contact

There is growing evidence that supports the importance of mindful contact when caring for and educating young children. While the concept of mindfulness is relatively new to our society, many agree that it has the possibility to create enormous changes in education by allowing for more meaningful interactions in the classroom and beyond. Mindfulness creates a healthier learning environment for teachers as well as students.

Mindfulness is based on paying attention in a non-judgmental way, and when we pay attention, we are better able to observe what is happening to us and around us. It allows us to make the distinction between our own self and others. When we are having a bad day or not feeling 100%, if we can observe that, we can be mindful not to let it out as a projection into the classroom.

Recent research supports the importance of “taking care of yourself so you can take of others. **“Mindfulness” techniques can help reduce stress, depression and anxiety.**

We can also be aware that how we present ourselves to others will affect the interaction. If we are joyful and calm, the other person (people) will likely reflect joy and calm back to us. If we are angry and speak harshly, we will likely get anger and harsh words back. Paying attention to how we speak and act will assist us in keeping our words and actions in line with our goal.



Artwork by Holly Fisher@SpenceCreative

The field of psychology tells us is important to all humans to feel safe, to belong, and to be accepted. Making mindful contact with young children conveys these basic human needs. When we make mindful contact with young children, they delight in it; they love it! Mindful attention creates a safe space for awakening and cultivation of the self, and can inspire the creation of a caring community of learners.

By being mindful with children, we teach them to be mindful, which helps them to develop greater self-awareness.

Self-awareness is a valuable tool for children as they develop calmness, kindness, patience, compassion, empathy, and attention. Being mindful of one another helps develop more meaningful relationships. If nurtured, these principles will stay with them for life. There are many great tools and resources out there to help teach and foster mindfulness with young children.

Practicing mindful contact with ourselves is the first step. You may not even be aware that you are not paying attention to your body's signals. When you start to pay attention, you will realize how good it feels to give yourself what you really need whether it be a drink of water, a nutritious meal, a good burst of exercise, or a good night's sleep. Taking care of yourself is the very best thing you can do for each and every child you encounter. It is important to take care of yourself so you can

take care of others. By developing more positive ways to encounter your stress, you will have skills to deal with it in a healthier and happier way. And you will have the mental, physical and emotional resources to effectively support young children in their learning and development.

To learn more about mindfulness and how to incorporate it into your life and your classroom, participate in the **Making Mindful Contact** session with Brandi Miss, LMBT at the 62nd Annual NCAEYC Conference September 17–19 at the Raleigh Convention Center.



HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- *The Health and Well-Being of Early Childhood Educators: A Need for Compassion and Commitment*
[www.childtrends.org/
the-health-and-well-being-of-early-childhood-educators-a-need-for-compassion-and-commitment](http://www.childtrends.org/the-health-and-well-being-of-early-childhood-educators-a-need-for-compassion-and-commitment)
- *Mindfulness in Schools Project*, a non-profit organization whose aim is to encourage, support and research the teaching of secular mindfulness in schools.
<http://mindfulnessinschools.org>
- *Tish Jennings* is an internationally recognized leader in the fields of social and emotional learning and mindfulness in education with a specific emphasis on teacher stress and how it impacts the social and emotional context of the classroom and student well-being and learning. She is an Associate Professor of Education at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia.
www.tishjennings.com
- Children are already learning at birth, and they develop and learn at a rapid pace in their early years. This provides a critical foundation for lifelong progress, and the adults who provide for the care and education of young children bear a great responsibility for these children's health, development, and learning. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) were commissioned to explore the implications of the science of child development for the professionals who work with children birth through age 8. In the resulting report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, the committee finds that much is known about what professionals who provide care and education for children need to know and be able to do and what professional learning supports they need.
<http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/Birth-To-Eight.aspx>

PlayDaze for School Ageders

The NCAEYC's theme for Spring 2015 is "Excellence in Action". The Randolph County Partnership for Children's initiative **PlayDaze** brought this theme to life in May with a full scale event hosting over 400 children ages 3–12 at the Creekside Park in Archdale, NC, followed by a mini PlayDaze event at one child care center in Asheboro, NC, for eighteen 3–4 year olds. PlayDaze is a wonderland of active play areas limited only by the imagination.



The PlayDaze initiative is now in its third successful year of supervised but unstructured active play offering 18 unique play areas to encourage children, their teachers and parents to play for the sake of playing.

These play areas include mud pools, water play and bubbles, a variety of creative art expressions, hoops, fort building, free play with balls of all sizes and fairy garden with dress up clothes for play acting. One of the more unusual play areas is "loose parts" with natural and recyclable materials such as thin cross sections of tree trunks and dowels where Debbie Hightower of the Archdale-Trinity News reported, "...youngsters and adults collaborate to build crazy contraptions". For the second year, PlayDaze included the Cardboard Challenge (www.cainesarcade.com/cardboardchallenge) which formally originated in 2012 and has become a global play event celebrating children's amazing creativity with cardboard boxes of all sizes and shapes. We have witnessed and celebrated this creativity at our own PlayDaze events.

PlayDaze requires many volunteers who come from a variety of sources—community members, local businesses and local high school and community college Early Childhood students.

They work together to set up and supervise the day all the while encouraging the children to enjoy and actively use their imaginations.

This unstructured play's purpose is designed to help parents and schools to see how easy they can create active play areas using simple materials that allow the children to be creative and active at the same time. One parent who attended the PlayDaze event was heard to say, "Please keep doing this. It's like Wow!" And it certainly is. A few other captured PlayDaze comments from participants:

"Please keep doing this. It's like WOW!"

PlayDaze parent attendee



Child:

"I liked everything! Building forts, lawn play, nature art, corn pool, mountain climbing and mural art, but, catching tadpoles in the creek was the most fun ever!"

Parent:

"PlayDaze gave us new ideas to get dirty and have fun."

Teacher:

"Loose parts inspired me to collect simple items that my children can enjoy and play with outdoors."

Volunteer:

"Watching the kids figure things out for themselves at the cardboard challenge and seeing how their creative thoughts manifested through their designs...also there was an incredible social aspect to the challenge at times... especially when the kids were adding on to each other's creations and sharing ideas together."



Director:

“Our program has been looking into natural play activities and outdoor learning environments for a couple of years, but it wasn’t until after attending the PlayDaze event that teachers really got on board with the ideas of taking our classroom outdoors.”

As the organizer of our PlayDaze events, this has been an incredible opportunity to bring the community together in support of children’s active play and to help teachers and parents see what is possible in their centers and homes using their outdoor space. However, PlayDaze, large or small, does require a lot of pre-planning. Randolph County Partnership for Children received valuable support for our initial PlayDaze from Be Active Kids (www.beactivekids.org) an excellent organization that works to provide information to child care centers, schools, parents and any group working to help increase physical activity opportunities for children.

In the past years the pressure has increased on educating young children, now the focus on the development, creativity and health in children by their participation in active play is a must. Our children need to be encouraged to be innovators and inventors. PlayDaze and active supervised free play helps to connect children to nature, regulate emotions, relieve stress and build confidence in all ages to be those innovators and inventors.

“Children need the tools to build the world that they can imagine but also to *imagine* the world they can build.”
Nirvan Mullick, film maker of *Caine’s Arcade*.

Come join the PlayDaze initiative and have fun!





13th Annual Design Institute

The Whole Child in Nature

Designing and programming children's environments
for play, learning, and well-being

October 21-22, 2015
North Carolina Museum of Art
Raleigh, North Carolina



Naturalized outdoor environments offer children opportunities to engage with the natural world (plants, animals, rocks, air, water, weather phenomena) through self-motivated free play and learning experiences.



Required Kindergarten Entry Assessment begins in 2015–16

Written by Amy Scrinzi, Ed.D
Office of Early Learning (Pre-K–Grade 3)
State Board of Education/
Department of Public Instruction



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

In the first 60 days of the upcoming 2015–16 school year, the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) process will be initially deployed by all school districts for the first time.

This fulfills the mandate of the state legislature that the State Board of Education ensure every kindergartner be assessed at school entry in the 2015-16 school year utilizing a state-wide process.

In this initial deployment year, the KEA is comprised of two constructs: Object Counting and Book Orientation & Print Awareness. Districts also should be aware that additional constructs in the developmental domains of Approaches to Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Cognitive Development, and Language Development and Communication have been completed. These also will be available for use in 2015–16. Kindergarten teachers have the option to explore and learn more about them in the coming school year.

Communication to kindergarten teachers, principals and district administrators providing detailed information including key how-to's on accessing the KEA digital platform, timelines, and answers to frequently asked questions will be sent from the Office of Early Learning beginning this week.

Further information and key documentation on the KEA and these additional constructs can be found on the K-3 Formative Assessment Process Live Binder at www.tiny.cc/nck3fap_educator.

SAVE THE DATE!!!



4th Annual Conference and Annual Meeting *Infants and Child Welfare: Integrating an Infant Mental Health Approach into the Child Welfare Service Delivery System*

Featuring
Brenda Jones Harden, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Human Development
University of Maryland College Park
College Park, MD

Friday, November 6, 2015 9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Elliott University Center, UNC Greensboro

WAKEAHEC
BETTER HEALTHCARE THROUGH EDUCATION

**PURPOSE + PASSION + POTENTIAL =
PROFESSIONALISM**

September 17-19, 2015 • Raleigh Convention Center

Find conference details and registration and lodging information at www.ncaeyc.org/conference


IT ALL ADDS UP TO EXCELLENCE!




Wisdom + Wit = Wonderful Keynote
Session with Dr. Alice S. Honig—Thanks Gryphon House for sponsoring!




[Meet Dr. Honig](#)




Musical fun + Meaningful teaching tools = Mr. Steve and his interactive music and movement from PBS KIDS




[Meet Mr. Steve](#)




Loving Guidance™ + CD Instructors = Two days of Conscious Discipline® (12 session options)




[Meet Kim Hughes](#)




Mindfulness + a Message that Matters = Magnificent Featured Session by TEDxUNC speaker Dr. Kate Gallagher



[Meet Dr. Kate](#)



Artist + Advocate for people with Autism = Amazing and Inspiring Speaker, DJ Svoboda of Imagifriends



[Meet DJ](#)

Immerse yourself in a unique, high-quality professional development experience that connects you to state-of-the-art information, ideas, research, and resources. Explore exciting products and services across a wide variety of Vendors. Get inspired at our Keynote as we hear from world-renowned early childhood expert, Dr. Alice Sterling Honig, sponsored by Gryphon House. Dr. Honig's insights, experiences, wit, and wisdom will warm your heart, make you laugh, and help you learn and grow as a professional.

THANKS TO

Gryphon House
Award-Winning Publisher of
Early Childhood Resources
FOR SPONSORING OUR KEYNOTE



Check out Conference highlights in [this video!](#)

Register now at www.ncaeyc.org/conference

PROFESSIONALISM IS COMPRISED OF THE **skills + knowledge + practice + dispositions + motivation + code of conduct**

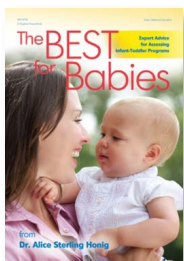
Thursday, September 17 • Two Preconference Options*

* Receive 5 NC DCDEE Contact Hour Credits and/or .5 CEU credits for attending either session.

PRECONFERENCE OPTION 1

Attunement and Attachment: Creating High Quality Environments, Experiences and Care for Our Babies and Toddlers

➔ Experience one of the **most unique professional development experiences** for professionals working with or on behalf of children, birth through age three! Immerse yourself in an **extraordinary day with four amazing experts.**

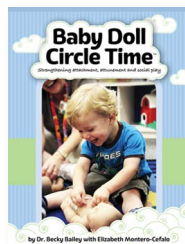


Your day starts with world-renowned infant/toddler expert, **Dr. Alice Honig** sharing decades of wisdom, research, and practice. **Dr. Honig** will feature content from her newest Gryphon House publication: *The Best for Babies: Expert Advice for Assessing Infant-Toddler Programs.*

Next up is **Keith L. Pentz**, National Early Childhood Specialist for Kaplan Early Learning Company. He has been in the field of education for nearly 35 years. Keith, a contributing author to Jackie Silberg's "125 Brain Games" series, will focus on supporting language development of very young children during this Session.



In the afternoon, **connect with two of North Carolina's most beloved, engaging, and inspiring Conscious Discipline experts.** **Kim Hughes**, Loving Guidance™ Associate and National Conscious Discipline® Certified Instructor, and **Kelli Rushing**, Conscious Discipline® Certified Instructor for NC will share *Baby Doll Circle Time* and other effective ways to calm and connect with our youngest children.



The day wraps up with an **engaging Q&A with all four presenters** sharing their ideas, perspectives, and suggestions that will help you leave this experience feeling more capable, prepared, and motivated to provide their very best for our babies and toddlers!

This session is made possible by the generous support of:



PRECONFERENCE OPTION 2

A Blueprint of Learning for Diverse Learning Styles: Full STEAM Ahead

➔ NCaeyc is especially excited to feature our wonderful colleagues at UNC-TV Ready To Learn and **PBS's very own Mr. Steve!** Through engaging and interactive music, movement and literacy-based activities, attendees will explore the PBS "Read, View, Do" approach to teaching and learning Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math for preschoolers.



UNC-TV's Ready To Learn team of experts will lead attendees on an exploration of the innumerable resources that are a part of PBS Learning Media. **You will learn how to effectively use screen time as a powerful and engaging**

teaching tool with preschoolers and kindergartners. In addition to teaching tools and tips by Mr. Steve, the day will introduce **resources related to three of PBS's top educational programs for young children:** *Teacher, Teacher, I Can Count Too!* with Peg+Cat; *Get Ready to Explore STEM* with *Curious George*; and *Word World—Where Words Come Alive.*



Participants will receive classroom kits to enhance teacher/classroom practices addressing the topics of early math and science, developmentally appropriate usage of technology, and building emotional/social competence, as well as participating in a dynamic Music and Movement session with PBS KIDS' Mr. Steve. These resources are aligned to the National Head Start Child Development Framework and the NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development (FELD) guidelines.

Be sure to bring your dancing shoes—this professional development experience is going to be rocking!

This session is made possible by the generous support of:



FOUNDATIONS FOR INCLUSION: HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

In a joint position statement in 2009, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) provided a definition of early childhood inclusion. This definition reads:

“ Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and context as full members of families, communities, and society. **The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.** The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.”

NAEYC & DEC, 2009

(www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf)

Research has consistently provided findings supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities into classrooms with their typically developing peers. Inclusive childcare practices are good for all children. The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion has provided a number of synthesis points about early childhood inclusion through their review of the literature which can be found here: http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NPDCI-ResearchSynthesisPoints-10-2009_0.pdf .

The Draft Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education states:

“All young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with appropriate support in meeting high expectations.” (2015)

The reality is that the statement above is not true. Too often, children with disabilities are left out of the equation in the development of high quality early care and education settings for young children. In order to make inclusion a reality in more settings, early childhood educators must be educated about what inclusion is.

The *Foundations of Inclusion* curriculum was created to do just that. This curriculum was developed out of a collaboration between the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education, the CONNECT project at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, and the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council. It is designed to provide an overview of the history of inclusion policy, current laws around inclusion, and the rights of child care programs, teachers, parents and children as they relate to inclusion and inclusive practices. During this training, participants have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the background of inclusion policies, and the current laws that early care and education programs are required to adhere to. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage in discussion about how they can modify and embrace inclusive practices within their classroom.

Across the state, over 50 staff from Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies have been trained to provide the *Foundations of Inclusion* training in their area. To find a training in your area, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. You can also access the *Foundations of Inclusion* training, along with many other sessions about Inclusion (some with CEUs available) online!

Check out online CONNECT modules here: <http://connect.fpg.unc.edu/connect-courses> .

At the end of May, 2015, there were approximately 7,000 child care centers and family child care homes serving nearly 250,000 children in North Carolina (DCDEE Child Care Analysis—5/1–31/15). Providers and staff of these facilities are required by DCDEE licensing to comply with numerous rules and regulations in order to guarantee to the public that a minimally accepted level of quality is upheld in the provision of safe child care. Professional development and required educational training is also an expectation of early child care providers (10A NCAC 09 .3016 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS).

Many opportunities exist for obtaining the early child care focused educational training, such as ITS-SIDS, Emergency Preparedness & Response planning, and Medication Administration in Child Care. Child care providers and staff are required to take the first two courses, and it is highly recommended that they also take the latter. However, we have found that there are many providers and staff that have not taken advantage of this critically important training.



More and more children are being diagnosed and treated with not only the usual childhood conditions such as ear infections and bug bites, but also there seems to be an increased number of children diagnosed with allergies, asthma and other more chronically oriented medical conditions. Along with those diagnoses come the need for medication administration in child care settings.

Providers and staff are finding themselves being asked by parents to give many different medications that are sometimes familiar, and at other times seemingly quite foreign to what they may have previously experienced. How do they learn what the medicine is and how to give it? Even more troubling, what are the side effects that they need to look for when they give the medications, and what do they do if they realize that they have made an administration error?

Providers and staff are finding themselves being asked by parents to give many different medications that are sometimes familiar, and at other times seemingly quite foreign to what they may have previously experienced.

Many opportunities exist for common medication errors to occur based on a potential lack of knowledge and understanding of the medications, their possible side effects, and specific rules for their administration. There are a number of mandated guidelines in child care for the correct procedures to be followed, as well as documented after the administration of the medications.

According to DCDEE data on medication administration errors in child care settings in NC between 1/1/14 and 1/31/15, there were **1,321** violations cited by

licensing consultants in both licensed child care centers and family child care homes. These errors were found to occur in all regions of the state, in urban and rural areas, and in child care facilities large and small. No single area or group was immune to the problem of being cited for medication administration errors. And, this large number only referred to *reported errors*, i.e. those that were assessed by state licensing consultants. There may well have been more, especially if facilities were not aware of the mandated regulations regarding administration and documentation.

With the problem clearly identified by the numbers, there is a rather urgent need for improvement in this area of child care quality. Many of the common errors cited for violations by the DCDEE licensing consultants in NC can be avoided **if** providers and staff had been properly trained regarding compliance with the child medication administration rules.

How can child care providers and staff obtain the necessary medication administration training? The NC Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center (RC) www.healthychildcarenc.org, based at the NC Department of Public Health in Raleigh, oversees the required training courses for the trainers providing both the ITS-SIDS and Emergency Preparedness & Readiness Planning courses. They also serve as a resource to child care providers, staff, and parents of early childcare aged children. The Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC, www.healthychildcarenc.org/PDFs/cchc_brochure.pdf) in your county or region is also trained to teach the Medication Administration in Child Care course to child care providers and staff. If you do not know if your area is covered by a CCHC, you can find that answer by going to the RC website listed above, or by calling the staff there at 800-367-2229. You will be able to find out the name and contact information of your local CCHC in order to determine when the next *Medication Administration in Child Care* class will be held in your region. Understanding the proper expectations and guidelines for medication administration in child care is a necessary skill. Don't think twice about it—call to schedule your spot in the next training class today!

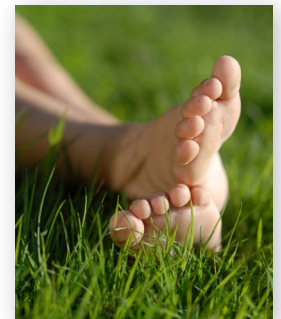
5 Wellness Tips for Early Childhood Professionals



Being an educator has often been regarded as one of the most selfless and rewarding positions that one can hold. Many early childhood professionals often work numerous hours, dedicate personal time to completing tasks and sacrifice their own needs to take part in shaping the future leaders of tomorrow. Occasionally there will be someone to debate this and express that “teachers have it made”, they have lots of paid days off and work short hours. However anyone that has ever worked in an educational setting whether public or private will strongly disagree. The professional field of education can be a very stressful career choice that often requires dealing with demanding accountability requirements, a diverse group of children with varying needs, and caregivers with extremely high expectations. The key to doing these things effectively and with

ease is to prepare both mentally and physically by adopting a practical healthy lifestyle. These 5 wellness tips will encourage a healthier lifestyle in the classroom setting as well as in other parts of an educator’s day.

1. START EACH DAY WELL RESTED. The best way to prepare for the following day is with a good night’s rest. Many adults typically engage in uninterrupted sleep about 4–6 hours per night because they are waking up continuously throughout the night to finish work related tasks for the next day, go to the bathroom, have a quick snack, check email, update their social media status or do some other mundane task that can wait until the next day. A major part of being an early childhood professional is waking up very early and staying on your feet continuously throughout the course of the day. This could prove to be nearly impossible to do if one is not well rested, so it would be beneficial to get in bed at a reasonable time and try to get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep per night to aid in keeping you alert and ready to go.



2. EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST. I am sure that we have all heard the expression that “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day” and this is very accurate. Imagine trying to prepare your classroom, complete morning paperwork, gather materials needed for the day and welcome a classroom of eager children on an empty stomach at 8:00 am. It is highly unlikely that you will be performing at an optimal pace. However, the grouping of a good night’s sleep with a healthy breakfast is an instant recipe for success. Not only does this combination physically prepare you by providing an energy source but it also mentally equips you to handle any issue that might come your way.



3. PACK A HEALTHY LUNCH AND SNACKS. Eating healthy is one of the main components to staying healthy. It is all too common as an educator to forego lunch to work on a classroom project or just grab a quick snack out of the cafeteria because you don’t really have time to sit still and eat. These are all culprits guilty of promoting unhealthy eating habits. It is typically best practice to prepare meals and snacks at night, that way you don’t have to worry about throwing something together early in the morning after hitting your snooze button three times and now you are officially running 30 minutes late. Smart snacking throughout the day and eating a well-balanced lunch not only provides the much needed minerals, calories and vitamins to keep your body energized but this behavior also models to your students healthy eating habits and encourages them to do the same. Some of the best snack foods to consider packing are: sliced apples, grapes, carrots, salad, sunflower seeds, peanut/almond butter, yogurt and applesauce cups.



4. DRESS COMFORTABLY. As an early childhood professional there is nothing worse than to be on your feet all day in awkward shoes or trying to regulate a room filled with children in pants that are two sizes too tight. As a professional working directly with parents and other caregivers it is extremely important to maintain an appropriate appearance while wearing functional clothing. Many teachers and assistants are continuously engaged with children all day long so it is necessary to dress the part to be active participants whether running on the playground, painting in the Art Center or dancing during music and movement activities.



5. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT. The best way to be an effective educator is by consistently coming to work and maintaining a healthy, clean and safe learning environment. Whether you are working in the capacity of an administrator overseeing an entire facility, a food service operator maintaining the kitchen or a teacher in a class providing direct care to children this is key to the overall success of your program. These things can only be accomplished by constantly washing hands using the proper method, thoroughly sanitizing using some type of cleaning agent or bleach/water solution and excluding unhealthy children as necessary. When working with young children you are constantly being subjected to all types of germs and bacteria, so having these systems in place are extremely important in maintaining your health and promoting wellness.



Joe Shlabotnik/Creative Commons

ADDITIONAL WELLNESS TIPS TO CONSIDER



Incorporate some type of physical exercise daily, take time out of each day to relax and decompress, stay hydrated by drinking water, take up a hobby, set a healthy pace for completing work paper, provide yourself with daily affirmations: “I am good enough” and “Today will be a great day”, and create a professional network of learning by sharing information/ideas with others in the field.

The role of an early childhood professional is one filled with both stress and dedication. In order to meet the needs of the children being served one has to maintain a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle. By incorporating some of these wellness tips into your daily routine you should not only have the energy to oversee a classroom filled with eager learners but be able to act as a healthy role model that promotes better eating habits, appropriate hand washing and provide children with a calm and nurturing learning environment because you are an educator that has a better sense of self and focuses on taking care of yourself while meeting the needs of your students.

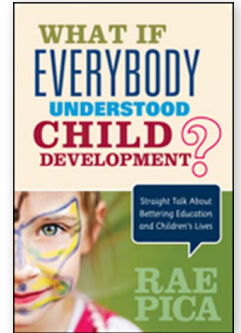
The Power of Joy



Rae Pica has been a children’s physical activity specialist since 1980 (www.raepica.com). A former adjunct instructor with the University of New Hampshire, she is the author of 18 books, including the text *Experiences in Movement and Music*, and the award-winning *Great Games for Young Children* and *Jump into Literacy*. Rae is known for her lively and informative workshop and keynote presentations and has shared her expertise with such groups as the *Sesame Street* Research Department, the Head Start Bureau, Centers for Disease Control, the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Nickelodeon’s *Blue’s Clues*, Gymboree, and state health departments

throughout the country. Rae also served on the task force of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) that created national guidelines for early childhood physical activity, is a member of several advisory boards, and blogs for *Huffington Post*.

Here, Rae shares “The Power of Joy”, an excerpt from Chapter 3 of her latest book, *What If Everybody Understood Child Development?* (Corwin Press, June 2015).



Music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950) claimed that joy is the most powerful of all mental stimuli.

It’s an interesting contention, especially considering the many non-joyful stories I hear from educators and parents. Stories about children crying over tests. Children with so much homework that there’s little time for anything else, let alone joy, in their lives. Children discouraged by schooling as early as kindergarten. Children stressed out, burned out, acting out, and dropping out. Oh yes, and popping antidepressants at an astonishing and alarming rate.

Sadly, none of that surprises me anymore. After all, what part of today’s emphasis on accountability and academics screams joy? How much joy comes from prepping for test after test? How much joy do we witness from students bent over desks and filling in bubbles? How much joy is experienced by students whose success, along with their teacher’s, depends on how well they do on those endless tests?

Granted, there isn’t a whole lot of research to back up Dalcroze’s contention—because there aren’t many researchers who would have considered it a worthy topic. But there is some, including a recent study by two Finnish educators, which points to several sources of joy in the classroom. They include:

- active, engaged efforts from the children;
- desire to master the material—to become “expert” at something;
- students allowed to work at their own level and pace;
- finishing a task or solving a problem, and the time to do so;
- the chance to make choices;
- sharing and collaborating with other students; and
- the opportunity to play.

We do have a great deal of research detailing the impact of stress on the learning process. Dr. William Stixrud sums it up quite nicely when he writes, “stress hormones actually turn off the parts of the brain that allow us to focus attention, understand ideas, commit information to memory and reason critically.” Not a whole lot of learning going on when that happens. It’s darn hard to think straight when your system is poised for fight-or-flight.

Despite this evidence (and it doesn’t surprise me anymore that we ignore the evidence either), the policymakers just keep demanding practices that create more stress...and suck the joy right out of school. Coincidentally, as I was writing this piece, our chief education policymaker, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, posted a blog in which he wrote these words: “Too much testing can rob school buildings of joy, and cause unnecessary stress.” (His solution? A one-year reprieve on test-based teacher ratings.)

I might forgive the policymakers for ignoring (or, if I’m giving them the benefit of the doubt: being unaware of) the research on the roles of stress and joy in learning, but Dalcroze clearly didn’t need research to reach his conclusion. During his time, there was no Internet to allow for large-scale surveys or the collection of anecdotal evidence. There were no neuroimaging and brain mapping scans to reveal that more pleasure areas of the brain light up when individuals are undertaking tasks they enjoy.

I imagine he based his opinion on how he felt when learning something new or when engaged in the act of creation. Perhaps he discovered that whenever he was fully engrossed in a project, he experienced what psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls “flow”—that wonderful occurrence when time passes without our noticing. Of being so involved in what we’re doing that we’re aware of nothing else. Each of us has gloried in such experiences on occasion—for example, in the act of writing, painting, cooking, or teaching.

Perhaps Dalcroze based his contention on the observation of children. He may well have observed them in the process of creating and learning. Watch any child involved in self-directed activity—whether it's trying to write their name for the first time, staging an elaborate production, or experimenting with a chemistry set—and you'll witness flow. There's nothing more engaged—or engaging—than children fully absorbed in an undertaking. They direct all of their attention and effort into it. They put their heart and soul into it. And, if required to stop, the upset is profound...because who wants to stop feeling joy?

Wholehearted absorption doesn't describe much about what kids—or teachers—are required to do in school these days. And that is such a shame. Imagine the lost potential as students continue to struggle to learn when anxious and unhappy. Imagine the ever-increasing number of students stressed out, burned out, acting out, and dropping out if things don't turn around, and quickly. If students are kept from discovering the power of joy in the classroom.

Neurologist and teacher Judy Willis has written,

Joy and enthusiasm are absolutely essential for learning to happen—literally, scientifically, as a matter of fact and research. Shouldn't it be our challenge and opportunity to design learning that embraces these ingredients?

What's a Teacher to Do?

- Be excited and joyful about the learning that takes place in your classroom. When you're excited, the children will be excited.
- As often as possible, use humor in the classroom to lighten things up. In a BAM Radio discussion, Diana Loomans said that when you have a laughing classroom you have students who are participating more, perform better, and retain more information. In that same segment, Ed Dunkelblau contended that humor, laughter, and play are pleasurable experiences that attract and engage students, making it easier to teach. He said, "Humor is one of the few educational strategies that does as much good for the teacher as it does for the students."
- To the extent possible, make test prep fun, rather than drudgery. For ideas, listen to "Ten Ways to Make Test Prep Fun" (see below).
- Employ the excellent suggestions in Steven Wolk's article, "Joy in School" (see below).

Where to Learn More

- "The Neuroscience Behind Stress and Learning"
www.edutopia.org/blog/neuroscience-behind-stress-and-learning-judy-willis
- "Fostering Joy in the Classroom"
<http://anniemurphypaul.com/2014/03/fostering-joy-at-school-and-at-work>
- "Joy in School"
www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept08/vol66/num01/Joy-in-School.aspx
- "Using Humor to Get Students to the Top of Bloom's Taxonomy"
www.bamradionetwork.com/teachers-aid/1991-using-humor-to-get-students-to-the-top-of-blooms-taxonomy
- "Ten Ways to Make Test Prep Fun":
www.bamradionetwork.com/educators-channel/1873-ten-ways-to-make-test-prep-fun
- *The Laughing Classroom: Everyone's Guide to Teaching with Humor and Play*
by Diana Loomans and Karen Kolberg

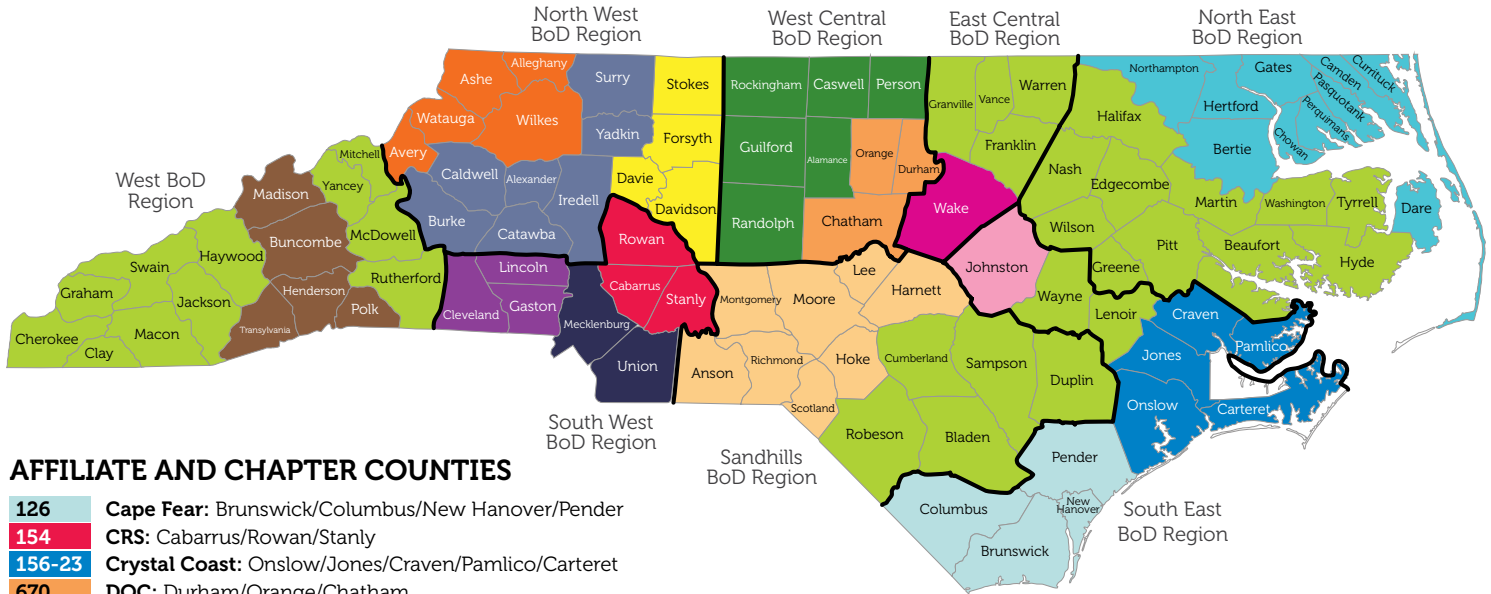
Additionally, Rae is cofounder of the BAM Radio Network (www.bamradionetwork.com), the world's largest online education radio network, and host of two radio programs on the Educators Channel: *Teacher's Aid* and *Body, Mind and Child*, for which she interviews experts in education, child development, play research, the neurosciences, and more.



You can follow Rae on social media: <https://www.facebook.com/raepica.bamradio> and <https://twitter.com/BodyMindChild> #AskingWhatIf

North Carolina's Affiliates and Chapters

NCAEYC AFFILIATE AND CHAPTER MAP



AFFILIATE AND CHAPTER COUNTIES

- 126** Cape Fear: Brunswick/Columbus/New Hanover/Pender
- 154** CRS: Cabarrus/Rowan/Stanly
- 156-23** Crystal Coast: Onslow/Jones/Craven/Pamlico/Carteret
- 670** DOC: Durham/Orange/Chatham
- 156-24** JoCo: Johnston
- 156-11** Land of Sky: Buncombe/Henderson/Transylvania/Polk/Madison
- 537** NC²: Rockingham/Guilford/Randolph/Alamance/Caswell/Person
- 156-22** North East: Northampton/Hertford/Bertie/Chowan/Perquimans/Pasquotank/Dare/Camden/Currituck/Gates
- 673** North West Foothills: Iredell/Alexander/Catawba/Surry/Yadkin/Burke/Caldwell
- 156-18** North West Mountains: Watauga/Avery/Ashe/Wilkes/Alleghany
- 127** Piedmont: Forsyth/Stokes/Davie/Davidson
- 671** Sandhills: Moore/Lee/Montgomery/Richmond/Scotland/Hoke/Harnett/Anson
- 128** South West: Mecklenburg/Union
- 536** Southern Piedmont: Gaston/Lincoln/Cleveland
- 186** Wake: Wake
- 156-01** Served locally by NCAeYC

NCAeYC Board of Directors (BoD) Regions are noted with black outline

NCAEYC CELEBRATES THE FORMATION OF TWO NEW CHAPTERS!

Congratulations to the newly formed **Johnston County (JoCo)** and **Crystal Coast** chapters of NCAeYC. Our newly updated state map reflects these exciting changes. Shown on the map as well are parts of the state that NCAeYC is expanding its service to members in their local areas.

To learn more about opportunities to get engaged in your local group, please contact: generalinfo@ncaeYC.org or call our office at 919-510-5034.

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President	Suzanne Hughes
Past-President	Dan Tetreault
Vice President/Public Policy & Advocacy/Membership	Beth Moore
Secretary	Consuellis Hawkins-Crudup
Treasurer	Joanie Oliphant

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Western Region	West Central Region	North East Region	North West Region
Dr. Lori Caudle	Dr. Stephen Jackson	Sarah Prezioso	Dr. Lisa Mabe Eads
East Central Region	South East Region	South West Region	Sandhills Region
Gina Soceanu	Deborah Saperstein	Ashley Reid	<i>Newly Elected</i>
LAC Representatives			
Resha Washington and Myra Burrell			

To contact any NCaeyc Board member, please send an email to: generalinfo@ncaeyc.org.

NCaeyc is proud to announce the results of our 2015 Elections for Board of Directors. Please join us in welcoming the following leaders:



- **Suzanne Hughes**—President (2nd term)
- **Resha Washington**—Vice President of Membership and Affiliate Support
- **James Beasley-Mungin**—Sandhills Region
- **Krystal Yow**—Student Representative

These leaders will be inducted and begin their service at NCaeyc's 62nd Annual Conference, September 17–19. **NCaeyc thanks all of the candidates for their on-going support and commitment to excellence in early care and education!**



NCaeyc

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All issues of Milestones can be accessed at our ever-growing website: www.ncaeyc.org