

Innovations in Education, LLC

Early Childhood Education Training Solutions for Individuals & Programs

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Fall 2010 Newsletter



"The *innovation point* is the pivotal moment when talented and motivated people seek the opportunity to act on their ideas and dreams."

— W. Arthur Porter

A message from our owner:

Caring for young children can be one of the most challenging professions, and yet it is also one of the most rewarding. Early Education and Care providers must stay current on research about child growth and development, have good communication skills, and provide a warm, safe, nurturing environment for children.

At Innovations in Education, LLC, we cater to the needs of individuals. Whether you are a family child care provider, child care center staff, teacher, administrator or parent, our goal is to help you provide the most current information about child development as well as the highest quality services to help you be the best in your field.

In this issue of the Innovations in Education Newsletter, we highlight the importance of evolution and change in the Early Education Environment. Too often, our classroom routines become just that, *routine* – I hope that the articles and tips in this issue inspire you to assess the status quo and capitalize on opportunities for growth! Since 1998, my dedicated staff has been consulting, mentoring, and training in classrooms and child care centers – this newsletter is our opportunity to continue those conversations beyond the classroom and throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randi Albertsen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randi Albertsen

Owner

Innovations in Education, LLC

Which of our services best meet your needs?

For Individuals:

Already have some training hours to meet your training requirements? Call our office for suggestions on how to supplement the training you've already completed.

Just starting an initial application for the Maryland Childcare Credential or the CDA? Our training specialists will be happy to review your past training hours and make suggestions on what additional training you may need to meet your requirements.

For Programs:

Child Care Centers and other groups should inquire about training to be held at your location. **On-site workshops can be customized to meet the needs of your staff.**

For Parents:

How do you convey information to your parents about child development, school readiness, or education philosophy? Host a workshop for parents! We provide parent workshops on a range of topics and customize to meet the needs of your staff and parents.

For Administrators:

Child Care Directors and Administrators need training too! Small workshops, online chats, and networking opportunities to meet the needs of administrators are available through our office.

“Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.”

– John Cotton Dana

Thinking about accreditation?

There are so many new initiatives in Early Childhood Education, it's hard to figure out where to focus your time and energy. Being an accredited program is at the heart of almost every one of these new initiatives in Maryland. But where do you start? Which accreditation program should you choose?

If you're looking for some answers or guidance to these questions, contact us for a **free consultation** with an accreditation specialist. We can help you sort out which program will best meet your needs. We can help you set short – and long-term goals and guide you towards resources that will help you accomplish your goals.

Contact us for **free consultation**:

410-370-2837

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Visit our website for full services and registration materials and

Sign up for an electronic version of our newsletter:

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410-370-2837

“Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.” – Pauline R. Kezer

Change Your World

“Change your thoughts and you can change your world.” – *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale

Have you ever been presented with a solution to your problems – but you don’t take action and make changes?

You possess the amazing power to change your world through changing your thoughts. Let's define how we can transform our negative thoughts into positive thoughts and what we need to do to remain positive. Transforming our negative thoughts into positive thoughts is one part of the equation. The next and most important part is to take action. Back your positive thoughts with positive action, and get positive results in your life - the results you deserve.

Fill your mind with as much positive information as possible. The more your mind is flooded with positive information, the more your mind will reject negative information. Read autobiographies of people who have triumphed over tragedy. Read the comics or self-help books on change and mind control. Listen to motivational tapes. Listen to uplifting music.

Anytime you have a negative thought write it down. Next to your negative thought, write a positive thought that you'll use to replace your negative thought. For example, my negative thought is: "Dummy, you should have known better." My positive replacement thought is: "You always do your best."

Keep a list of positive affirmations with you wherever you go. Positive affirmations are positive messages that you say to yourself to reinforce your goals, plans, and dreams. When you have a negative thought, override it by saying a positive affirmation out loud (or say it to yourself if you're not alone). For example: "I deserve success!" or "I'm worth it!"

Seek positive, constructive support. Seek out someone who will help you find positive, constructive solutions to your obstacles, someone who will lift your spirits and help you to move forward with you life.

Once you truly open your mind to the positive possibilities that your life contains and start practicing the above techniques you will get results immediately. The key is to take positive and immediate action. Negative thoughts will still flow into your mind, but realize that you have the choice to dwell on those negative thoughts and let them overcome you or transform them into positive thoughts, inspiring you to take positive action.

You have the power to make it a great day. You have the power to accomplish your goals and achieve your dreams. You have the power to build positive, productive relationships. The choice is yours - change your thoughts, take positive action and change your world!

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Julie Bartkus is a staff motivation expert. She helps leaders of small to mid-sized teams create the positive and productive workplaces that they desire and deserve. Through her workshops, courses, coaching programs, and products, Julie shows her clients how to eliminate the destructive communication patterns (such as workplace GOSSIP) and mindsets that keep their teams stuck. Get your FREE CD on Staff Motivation by visiting <http://www.JulieBartkus.com>.

From

Are we doing things just because we've always done them this way?

By Kim Turner, *Exchange Magazine*

In the schools in Reggio Emilia, the environment is often seen as the 'third educator,' along with the teachers. "In order to act as an educator for the child, the environment has to be flexible: It must undergo frequent modification by the children and the teachers in order to remain up to date and responsive to their needs to be protagonists in constructing their knowledge" (Gandini, 1998, p. 148).

- How can the environment support the children's autonomy?
- Can we rethink the organization of each space in the classroom?
- What research is available on architecture and on classroom environments, both traditional and progressive?
- Can we better connect indoor and outdoor spaces?
- Can we design more eco-friendly classrooms that contribute to sustainability?
- Can we discover our biggest challenges during the day? How does the environment relate to these challenges?
- How does documentation help children better understand the organization of the classroom and the school?

Asking these questions, we find what things we were doing out of habit — because we had always done them this way — and what things were based on clear intentions that were well thought out. Creating a classroom environment is an ongoing process. If a new idea doesn't work, you can keep changing things until you find something that does work.

References:

Gandini, L. (1998). Educational and caring spaces. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education* (pp. 135-149). NJ: Ablex.

Directors' Corner: Inspiring Your Staff to Change

If you want your staff to be open to change, and even seek out opportunities to make change happen consider the following suggestions:

Model change. Find ways that you can incorporate constructive change into your daily, weekly and monthly routines. Here are a few thoughts: At a staff meeting instead of sitting in the same spot, mix it up and sit somewhere new. When you go out to eat, share with your staff the new places you're checking out. Evaluate your systems and processes and see what you can change for the better. Get feedback from your staff to help give you ideas on the constructive change that you can make happen.

Create a change award. Award a special certificate or a jar filled with change to the person who makes the most constructive change happen in the workplace. Remember to layout good guidelines on how you will determine who gets the award.

Order take-out from new places. It's easy to get stuck in the mindset that we always eat there because we like it there. Encourage everyone to try someplace new.

Brainstorm with your staff about small changes that can help elevate your organization's success.

At a staff meeting ask everyone to sit next to someone new or someone that they have not sat next to in a long while. And then - patiently wait while they work through their own emotions attached to the comfortable and the familiar.

Marketing your program

As the new year approaches and focus on enrollment increases, marketing your program is key. Having a consistent message allows you to focus your energy on reaching out to families that share your philosophy. Spend some time identifying what qualities of your program are unique and you support children's growth and development. When your message is clear, you can turn your attention to how to bring families through your door first.



Recommended Reading from Innovations in Education Staff:

Designs for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments
Deb Curtis & Maggie Carter

Inspiring Spaces for Young Children

Jessica Deviney, Sandra Duncan, Mary Ann Rody, & Lois Rosenberry

Prime Times: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs
Jim Greenman, Anne Stonehouse, & Gigi Schweikert

Just for You

Online resources to help make life easier

www.lifeorganizers.com

Organize your home and work space with smart, unconventional tips and tricks

www.easybreezyrecipes.com

Feeling the squeeze to get dinner on the table in between work and family commitments? Check out this site for recipes that are quick and easy.

www.familyfun.com

Find activity ideas, recipes and more on this easy to navigate site.

Featured in our next issue: Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)
