

Innovations in Education, LLC

Early Childhood Education Training Solutions for Individuals & Programs

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Summer 2011 Newsletter



"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake. This isn't the kind of problem that can be solved overnight, but with everyone working together, it can be solved. So, let's move."

Michele Obama

A message from our owner:

As caregivers, one of our primary jobs is to keep children safe. Because we spend so much time with the children in our care, we also serve as role models, both to the children and their parents. With [childhood obesity](#) on the rise, part of our responsibility for keeping children safe is also to teach them how to be healthy. When 25% of children age 2-5 are considered obese, it's time for us to take action.

Michelle Obama has made it her mission to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity. Her "[Let's Move](#)" campaign provides timely information on healthy food choices and appropriate activities to keep children physically fit while providing nutritious meals and snacks. There are plenty of resources on the [Let's Move](#) website to help you get started moving in the right direction.

The US Department of Agriculture has also joined in the fight against obesity. They have spent many years researching health and nutrition and have published food portion recommendations for over 30 years. As research and understanding of nutrition has changed, so have the recommendations from the USDA. Most recently, in 2011, the USDA has revised the "My Pyramid" food chart. My Pyramid is being replaced with "[My Plate](#)" to more accurately represent portions and representative food choices. The [Choose My Plate](#) website has many resources for adults to help explain the variety of foods within each food group, in addition to information on portion sizes and meal planning. The USDA is still developing revised food and nutrition recommendations for children, which should be released before the end of this year.

Beyond food and nutrition, we must also consider physical activity and exposure to the natural world as additional ways to keep children safe and healthy. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families provides "[Fit Source](#)," a wide variety of physical fitness and nutrition resources for providers. June is "[Great Outdoors Month](#)," which is a great reason to take children outside to reconnect with nature. Research shows that children deprived of substantial opportunities to interact in the natural world have more physical and mental health challenges. The [Children & Nature Network](#) has many resources and research studies to help you plan activities that help reconnect children with the great outdoors.

To help you get started, Innovations in Education, LLC offers several workshops related to health and safety. See page 6 for a listing of workshops and descriptions.

Have a safe and healthy summer!
Randi Albertsen, Owner

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randi Albertsen".

Play, while it cannot change the external realities of children's lives, can be a vehicle for children to explore and enjoy their differences and similarities and to create, even for a brief time, a more just world where everyone is an equal and valued participant.

Patricia G. Ramsey
Contemporary American educational psychologist



Getting Motivated for Summer

The Values of Outdoor Play

By David Elkind, Exchange Magazine

It is sad to say but children are spending more and more time inside and the time they do spend outside is usually as an observer and not as a participant. Even our school system is trying to make more time for work (academics) and less time for play. "Although play and work are often thought to be in opposition to one another, they are most effective when they, along with love, are all operative" (Elkind, 2006). Playing outdoors is important for all ages, even adults, but it is especially important for young children. Young children learn about the world they live in through play and exploration. It is important to take an interest in what the child is excited about, it may seem boring to an adult to repeat the same repetitive action but to a child this is how they learn and grow. When an adult takes an interest in a child's play that child will bond more with the adult. "Put simply then, play, is the answer to the question, "How does anything new come about?" Learning allows us to acquire what is already known. Play enables us to create new knowledge, skills and artistic creations. Children's outdoor play is not a luxury. It is critical in children's ability to learn about the world, others and themselves" (Elkind, 2006).

Making the Most of Outdoor Play: A Bounty of Ideas to Motivate the Hesitant Teacher

By Karen Stephens, Exchange Magazine

For children summer is all about getting outside and enjoying a little fun in the sun. "Ingenious and motivated teachers use the outdoor play yard DAILY to extend and enrich children's learning. Open air activities do more than educate, they rejuvenate the spirit; mental health as well as physical health is enhanced in outdoor play. Children with pent-up energy are LESS able to comply with indoor expectations. When you tune into outdoor experiences, you do yourself and the children a favor." (Karen Stephens, page 49)

Looking for a few new outdoor activities, take a look at the list below:

Sunny Day Shadow Play- go on a shadow walk and have the children figure out which object is making the shadow. Hang up a white bed sheet and have children perform behind the sheet, have the audience guess what the children are doing. Play shadow tag!

Warm Weather Play Days- play water tag using spray bottles. Have the children wear their bathing suits and have a "car wash" where the children wash the toy cars or bikes.

Rainy Day Fun- take some time to play in the rain! Have the children wear their rain jackets and boots and play in the puddles. Go on a rainy day nature walk looking for muddy animal tracks.

Windy Day Play- make recycled wind chimes and hang them outside. Dance with scarves or streamers.

Open Air Art- create an outdoor art studio. Outside is a great place to create mural art.

Take some time this summer to try out a few new outdoor activities!

Directors' Corner: How do you make your good ideas happen?

In Good magazine (Fall 2010), Scott Belsky provides three tips:

"Overcome reactionary work flow. The constant inflow of stuff — email, texts, tweets — causes us to react rather than be proactive with our energy. Create windows of non-stimulation in your day to be proactive with your energy.

"Organize with a bias toward action. Enter every meeting and occasion of creativity with an obsession for capturing 'action steps.' When a meeting yields nothing actionable, question its existence. Keep action steps separate from notes.

"Share ideas liberally. The more people who know your ideas, the more accountable you will be to follow through. Use blogs, networks, and social media to spread ideas, gather feedback, and boost accountability."

Teachers' Corner: Laughter

Many people feel that some things in life are just too serious to laugh about. But did you know that laughter is a way to relieve stress and a way to cope with life's tough challenges?

Sandra Baker had cancer and tells us that laughter helped heal her. Bethany Hamilton's arm was bitten off four inches below her shoulder and she used humor to cope with the situation and to ease other's discomfort with the situation. A little boy's eyesight was failing due to a degenerative disease, and with the help of his father and humor, he was able to focus on the blessings he did have. Gloria Estefan nearly died in a bus accident and used humor to lighten the mood as doctors worked with her to restore her health.

Sandra Baker who I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this article, states that laughter helped heal her when she had cancer.

Following are several strategies she recommends to help people laugh more.

*Read funny cards at stores

*Do something for yourself every day.

*When you get frustrated with someone or something

- perhaps your boss - get a roll of toilet paper and write all the things that frustrate you on it. At the end of the week, flush all of the toilet paper that you wrote on (and your negative feelings) down the drain and out of your mind.

*Draw a cartoon of your frustrating experience.

*Look at the pictures on cards and think of something funny to say about the picture.

*Have fun and laugh every day that ends in y.

*Keep a book filled with pictures, cards, or other positive things that you can review to help lift your spirits.

*Watch funny tapes. Sandra watched I love Lucy videos during her chemotherapy treatments.

*Attend a comedy show. The day Sandra found out she had breast cancer she went to a comedy club and laughed the night away.

Try tape recording children laughing and play the tape to yourself when you need a laugh. I bet you'll at least crack a smile. Remember, it takes only 26 muscles to smile and 62 to frown!

Caring for Children's Mental and Emotional Health

Mental health: part of healthy development

From "[The Children's Advocate](#)"

What does mental health mean in early childhood? It's important to think about mental health in a positive light, as part of healthy child development, says Kadija Johnston, a psychotherapist at the Infant-Parent Program at San Francisco General Hospital. We need to stop defining mental health "by its absence," Johnston says, and focus on helping children build healthy self-esteem and positive relationships.

We can think of mental health as "socioemotional development," says Leonard Levis, director of the West Coast Children's Center in El Cerrito. It's helpful to think of programs that foster mental health as a form of education.

Healthy development includes the child's growing sense of self and capacity to engage in satisfying relationships with others. Young children with good mental health generally experience themselves and the world in a positive way. This does not mean that the children expect all experiences will be happy. But mentally healthy children have enough confidence in themselves and others to believe that problems can be solved.

"A child's experience of self begins to be internalized at a very young age," notes Johnston. Even though a small child's adjustment problems may not always seem significant to adults, it's important not to ignore these difficulties or to assume they will simply go away as the child matures. Very early in life, Johnston observes, "a child develops perceptions of what the world has to offer, and what he or she is able to do in the world. They can only perceive what they have experienced." For example, when children are made to feel their requests are a burden, they may be reluctant to ask for help from adults. If they receive nothing but criticism, they may expect to be treated as "bad children" and behave accordingly.

Supporting Children's Emotional Development

At Innovations in Education, LLC, we believe in supporting whole child development. Our workshops are designed to help you do the same. We have a variety of workshops based on the Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning.

Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)

Relationships and Routines the Foundations for Success

Proactive Teaching: Supporting Children's Success

Infant-Toddler Social Competence Part 1 & 2

Teaching for Success: Strategies to Promote Social and Emotional Development

Teaching for Success: More Strategies to Promote Social and Emotional Development

Strategies for Success: How to Handle Challenging Behaviors

In this workshop, participants will explore behaviors that most frequently challenge your patience. Learn new strategies to support children and save your sanity. 2CD 15N

Supporting Children's Emotional Needs during Emergency Situations

With the new COMAR regulations requiring Emergency and Disaster Preparedness training for caregivers comes the added requirement of practicing fire safety and other evacuation type drills. The COMAR regulations requires at least 2 non-fire related evacuation type drills per year. This may be a shelter-in-place, or alternate evacuation drill. While providers may have taken the 6 hour Emergency and Disaster Preparedness training, what training and preparation is offered for children?

At Innovations in Education, LLC, we've addressed this with a new workshop, ***Beyond Emergency Preparedness: Helping Children Feel Safe and Secure***. Our region has been experiencing a large number of severe weather situations, including blizzards, tornadoes and severe storms. This region has also seen childcare centers experience intruders and bomb threats. As adults, we have training to help us know how to handle these situations. For children, these events, whether real or practice, can be very frightening. ***Beyond Emergency Preparedness: Helping Children Feel Safe and Secure*** offers activities and materials that you can use with young children to prepare them for before and after an emergency, and help children deal with the intense emotions they may experience. See our Fall catalog for dates and times of this workshop.

Enhance your professional Development

Innovations in Education, LLC offers a wide range of training and professional development opportunities. We offer everything from 3 hour face-to-face workshop, the MMSR series of trainings and a variety of MSDE approved online trainings.

Series Trainings-

Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)

SEFEL training provides caregivers with a wide range of strategies for supporting children's social-emotional development.

Workshops are for

infant/toddler caregivers or preschool providers.

Healthy Beginnings

This workshop will introduce participants to the Maryland Healthy Beginnings guidelines. Participants will explore myths of child development, how to use a developmental continuum, and how to use Healthy Beginnings with children birth - age 3.

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) – New session begins in Fall of 2011

MMSR is an assessment and instructional system designed to provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children should know and be able to do upon entering school. MMSR incorporates research-based instruction, age-appropriate assessment of children's learning, and effective communication among teachers, parents, and early childhood providers.

MMSR Domain Training

Domain Training provides in-depth training into the 7 Learning Domains in 6-hour modules.

Assessment: Opening the Door for Infant Toddler Care

30 hours of training specifically for caregivers of infants, toddlers and twos focused on building relationships with young children and their families

Online Training:

- Using the Internet and Technology as a Professional Tool 12 COK hours: 1CD, 2HSN, 3PROF, 3COM, 3CUR
- The Big Picture: Observation and Documentation 15 COK hours: 6CD, 2SN, 2 PROF, 2COM, 3CUR
- The Value of Play 12 COK: hours 3CD, 2 SN, 1HSN, 2PROF, 1COM, 3CUR

A Sampling of 3 hour workshops

- **Health, Safety and Nutrition (HSN)**
Health and Nutrition for Young Children
Beyond Emergency Preparedness
- **Special Needs (SN)**
Welcoming a Child with Special Needs
Learning Through Play
- **Professionalism (PROF)**
Enhancing Your Professionalism: Communication Styles and Strategies
Stressbusters
- **Community (COM)**
Building Relationships with Family
- **Curriculum (CUR)**
The Great Outdoors
Secrets of Success: Strategies for School Age Care
Intentional Teaching: Moving Beyond the Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- **Child Development (CD)**
Creating Inviting Spaces for Infants and Toddlers
Infants and Toddlers: Nurturing Early Brain Development

Look for our Fall 2011
newsletter in August

MMSR registration is now open
for Fall 2011

Find complete registration
details online

www.innovationsed.com

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COMING IN THE FALL OF 2011:

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) is an assessment and instructional system designed to provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children should know and be able to do upon entering school. The MMSR is important because it provides a common goal and language of how parents, teachers, and providers can support young children's learning. MMSR incorporates research-based instruction, age-appropriate assessment of children's learning, and effective communication among teachers, parents, and early childhood providers. Teachers and providers receive on-going professional development to implement these practices.

Dates (Saturdays, 9am-4pm)		Description	Core of Knowledge Hours
MMSR 1	September 17	Understanding purposes and expectations for MMSR; Increased understanding of developmentally appropriate practices; Understanding of basic principles of early childhood assessment; Deeper understanding of observing and recording children's learning	1.5 each PROF/CD/SN/HSN
MMSR 2	October 15	Increased understanding of the purpose and benefits of observing and documenting children's learning; Familiarity with the Work Sampling System (WSS) Guidelines and Checklists; Strategies for observing and documenting children's learning	1.5 each PROF/CD/SN/HSN
MMSR 3	November 12	Practical strategies for observing and documenting children's learning to get to know them better and build relationships with them; Insights and strategies for supporting children's learning in developmentally appropriate ways; Instructional strategies that promote Mathematical and Scientific thinking and Language development	1.2 each PROF/CD/CUR/SN/HSN
MMSR 4	December 10	Ideas for making learning opportunities developmentally appropriate; Successful instructional and assessment strategies for promoting children's mathematical thinking; Strategies for nurturing children's social competence; Tips for managing observation and recording	1.5 each PROF/CUR/CD/COM
MMSR 5	January 7	Ideas and strategies for developmentally appropriate learning experiences; New ideas for music experiences; Understanding of how to interpret and apply observational data; Strategies for using assessment data for child study	1.5 each PROF/CUR/CD/COM
MMSR 6	February 4	Strategies for studying children's work; Strategies for using observations to have conversations with children and build relationships; Strategies for building effective partnerships with families; Strategies for communicating information about children to families	3 each CUR/CD
MMSR 7	March 3	Ideas about many aspects of using portfolios with young children; Understanding purposes of portfolios; Strategies for preventing portfolio problems; Understanding of the connection between portfolios and classroom learning experiences; Ideas for sharing portfolios with families	2 each CD/CUR/SN
MMSR 8	March 31	Deeper understanding of the definition and purpose of family partnerships; Strategies for building and sustaining family partnerships; Strategies for successful family conferences; Format for planning family conferences and summary reports	2 each CUR/PROF/CD
MMSR 9	April 28	Deeper understanding of the process of transition from program to program; Appreciation for how transition affects children, families, and early educators; Strategies to support positive transitions; Awareness of resources to support transition; Specific plans for transition activities; Plans for continued professional development through collaboration and professionalism	2 each CUR/PROF/COM
Snow Date	May 19	Make up date to be used if necessary	

All classes are held at the Children's Learning Center at Howard Community College from 9am-4pm.
The cost is \$350 per person.

Registration forms can be found online: <http://tinyurl.com/5rkwcvj>