

Enhancing your Learning Community in Child Care

Provided by: Child Care Training Consultants

Agenda

- * Professional Learning Community
- * Continuity of Care
- * Planning and Programming
- * Curriculum
- * Environment
- * Health and Safety
- * Communication
- * Supporting Parents
- * Inclusion



Learning Objectives

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize appropriate learning community ideas.
- 2) Identify their own values as they work with young children given the resources from the Building a Learning Community training Course.
- 3) Implement clear communication skills between adult care providers and the children in their care.
- 4) Organize an early child care facility environment to optimize productive spaces.

What is a Professional Learning Community?

- * Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.
- * **The primary goal is to reach student achievement.**
 - * (Dufour, & Eaker, 2008)

Opportunities for Collaboration

- Build relationships
- Relationships lay the foundation
- Find time to collaborate
- Leads to higher levels of student achievement



Removing Barriers

- State standards do not guarantee that all students will learn
- Teachers need time to discuss state and district curriculum
- Teachers must know what they are expected to learn
- No excuses for failing to collaborate

A Focus on Results

- Teacher participation
- Identifying current level of student achievement
- Collaboration
- Periodic evidence
- Shift attention to goal that focus on student learning



Commitment

- Focus on learning rather than teaching
- Working collaboratively on items related to learning
- Focus on continual improvement



Security

- * Supporting emotionally meaningful separations and reunions
- * Provide parents with access to staff after saying goodbye to their children.
- * Spending time in the morning observing the classroom can give the parent a concrete image of other children in the arms of caregivers singing and talking and reminding them that "mama or dada will be back later."

Security continued...

- * Create a welcoming environment for parents so that they can enter the room, help children get settled, connect with a teacher, and hang out at the end of day.
- * Arrange for and invite parents to regular (monthly) parent/staff meetings to talk about their children and hear how other parents and children are doing.
- * Provide regular, reflective supervision so staff can discuss their emotions and responses to children and parents.

Continuity of Care

- 1) The day to day interactions between the primary caregiver and a child that give the child a sense of predictability in their daily experiences
- 2) The deepening relationship and shared memories created through the enduring, year-after-year relationship between the primary caregiver and the child

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- * What does the program staff understand about the process of early learning and early relationships?
- * What kinds of trainings does the program offer about continuity of care and primary caregiving?
- * How do the organizational structure and personnel policies of the agency support continuity of care?
- * How does the staff feel about working with restricted or expanded age groups?
- * Does the staff have the range of skills needed to work with mixed age groups or the range of
- * the first three years of life?
- * How does the program support children and families when caregivers or home visitors leave?
- * How do licensing or accreditation requirements impact the plan for continuity?

Curriculum Design

- * Planned activities
- * Materials and equipment
- * Interactions between children and providers and among children



Curriculum Plan

- * Experiences
- * Events
- * Activities



Curriculum Plan continued...

- * Children's Interests
- * Child Input / Family Input / Community Events
- * Intentional Teaching
- * Children's Portfolios
- * Daily Diary
- * Spontaneous Experiences
- * Observations
- * Continuation Of Children's Learning
- * Group Experiences
- * Supporting Skills and Development

Curriculum Format

- * Learning Outcomes
- * Play Based Learning



Curriculum Format continued...

* Interest Areas

* Child Development

- * Children Have A Strong Sense of Identity relates to Emotional Development
- * Children Are Connected With & Contribute To Their World relates to Social Development
- * Children Have A Strong Sense of Wellbeing relates to Physical Development
- * Children Are Confident and Involved learners relates to Cognitive Development
- * Children Are Effective Communicators relates to Language Development

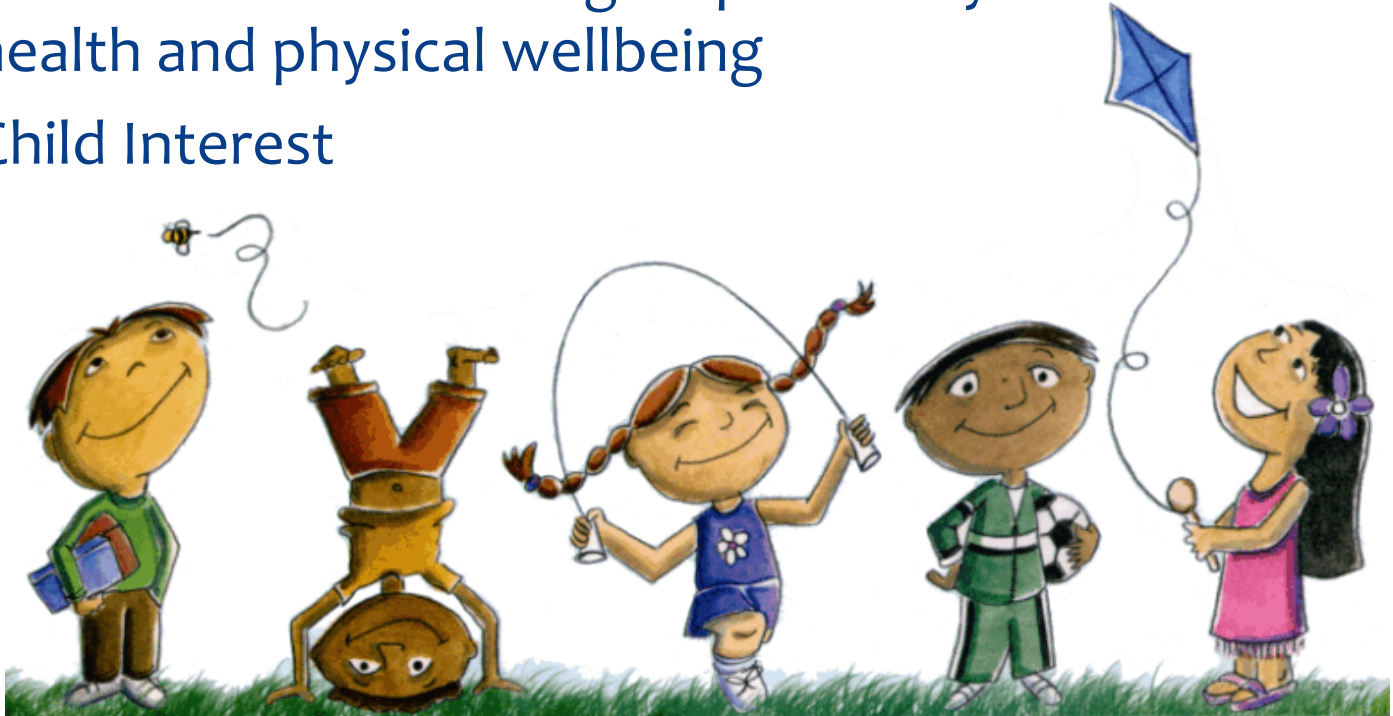
How to Write the Curriculum

- * Experiences and Activities
- * Learning Outcomes
- * Input Keys



How to Write a Curriculum continued...

- * Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing
- * Child Interest



Curriculum continued...

- * Do experiences and activities planned cover each of your curriculum plan
- * Does the curriculum assist in the development of Belonging, Being and Becoming
- * Has parent input been added into the curriculum plan
- * Is the current setup of the environment working
- * Anything to follow up in regards to children, parents and staff

Environment

- * This is a good place to be
- * You can trust all the big people in this place
- * You can be independent and do many exciting things that will help you learn
- * You can get away and be by yourself or be with friends whenever you want to
- * This is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas
- * Everything here is for you and you can use it whenever you like
- * You know where things are and they're always in the same place
- * This is a happy place that helps you learn new things

A Welcoming Environment

- * **Defined Play Spaces** *that offer challenging play opportunities and promote acceptable behavior*
- * **Defined Quiet Spaces** *that allow children to take a break and refocus their energies, while at the same time can be supervised by child care provider*
- * **Curriculum & Activities** *that are age-appropriate and support Early Learning Guidelines*
- * **A Variety of Equipment and Play Materials** *that are age-appropriate*

Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment

- * Support
- * Create
- * Design
- * Respond
- * Look through the eyes of a child
- * Size
- * Establish



Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment continued...

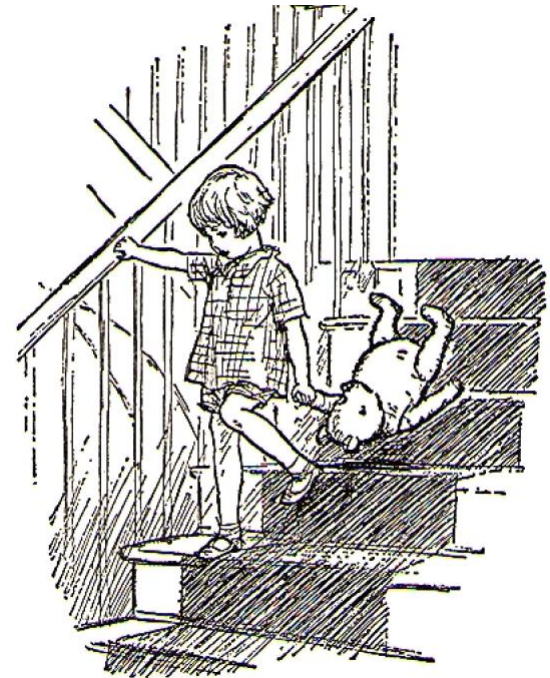
- * Provide
- * Size
- * Establish
- * Create



Putting It All Together

- * Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there is really another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it'

* Milne, A. A. (1926). Winnie-the-pooh. London: Methuen.



Communication

- Why are the kids always playing? Why don't you teach reading and math?
- My sister's childcare provider takes the kids on field trips. When are you going to the museum?
- I noticed a bruise on Juan's leg last night. What did you do to him yesterday?

Parent – Provider Relationship

- **Systemic**— anchored in leadership priorities, program management, continuous improvement systems, and staff development
- **Integrated**— effective PFCE activities are carried out throughout the entire organization
- **Comprehensive**— the full range of strengths, interests and needs of the adults and children in a family are considered, and staff support families by connecting them with services and resources to achieve their goals
- **Outcomes-based and data-driven**— enabling, parents, teachers, program directors, family service providers, and community partners to find new solutions to new challenges

Supporting Parents

- * Jobs
- * Schedules
- * Consistency



© Gary Roberts

Parents and Divorce

- * Choose a good time to talk, especially the first time. Make sure you can talk in a private place. Choose a time when you will not be in a hurry.
- * If both parents are involved with the child, try to talk to both of them. Talk with them together if they are comfortable with working together. Talk with them separately if they are not comfortable.
- * Listen. Give parents your full attention when they are talking to you. Listen to them without trying to fix, judge, criticize, or change their feelings.
- * Try to understand the parent's feelings and perspectives. Repeat what you understand. Make statements such as "I can understand why you would feel that way," "It sounds like you are..." or "That must be really difficult when...." Remember that understanding does not mean you agree with another person's perspective; it only means you understand.
- * Review your agency policies regarding family information and changes in information. Make sure you know about custody arrangements and any

Parents and Divorce continued...

- * Let parents know how you can help them with the child. Help parents feel that you are a “team.” Be a helpful resource or support system during this stressful period.
- * Avoid being judgmental. Parents might do some things that seem very unreasonable during a divorce. You do not need to correct them. You need to work together for the child, though.
- * Avoid taking sides or forming alliances with one parent against the other. Avoid joining with the child against the parent or parents. Be available to all family members as much as you can.
- * Keep a focus on the child’s feelings and issues. Don’t worry about the details of the divorce.
- * Check with parents before you reassure the child. For example, don’t say “Papa will come back home” unless you know that is really happening.
- * Check often with parents what you should tell their child about the divorce. Help them understand that you are trying to match what you tell the child with what parents are telling the children.
- * Think ahead about some of the changes that may come up. For example, a parent who has moved out may not remember to tell you about the change in address for emergency contacts. You may have to remind them and ask that they keep you informed.

Inclusion

- * Activities
- * Accommodations
- * Developing adaptations
- * Implement



Inclusion continued...

- * Instructional groupings or arrangements
- * Lesson format
- * Teaching strategies
- * Curricular goals and learning outcomes
- * Adaptations to the method for responding
- * Environment conditions

Inclusion continued...

- * Modifications of instructional materials
- * Level of personal assistance
- * An alternative activity



Conclusion

- * Maintaining consistent rituals and routings between home and childcare facility
- * Allowing children adequate time to settle in
- * Adopting flexible care giving strategies
- * Develop an understanding of individual needs
- * Demonstrate empathy for all involved including children, families care givers and staff

Resources

- * Check into these wonderful resources for more on Enhancing your Learning Community

