



A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

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Supporting Hudson, Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean & Somerset Counties

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators

Standards 4.2.2, 4.3.3, 4.4.3

Effective PD provides staff with the opportunity to talk about new research on Early Childhood Development practices, link the research to their practice in the classroom and reflect on their teaching practices. Often, staff leave enthused with new ideas, possible solutions for the challenges they face, innovative plans for implementing curriculum and armed with the latest resources to increase the quality of teaching and learning in their programs.

Trained Early Childhood Professionals understand and appreciate the uniqueness of children and know how to nurture their growth and development. As a result of ongoing professional development, teachers respect individual differences, encourage higher level thinking in the classroom and know how to help children to self-regulate their emotions.

The "WHY" of Professional Development: Through Professional Development, teachers will:

- understand the journey of learning, what children need and how they develop and grow
- be life-long learners and model the same for their children.
- feel nourished and challenged
- have opportunities to practice evidence-based teaching practices
- build a community of learners through uplifting conversations and stirring stories
- engage in collaborative projects initiated and inspired by a community of professional learners
- embark on a journey of problem-solving in teams formed during interactions with other Early Childhood Educators
- embrace a broader perspective, encompassing the family and the community
- receive greater insight into pedagogy through the integration of knowledge and experiences
- nurture joyfulness and skills for working with children

In today's rapidly changing world, Early Childhood Professionals need to keep up with the pace of the new generation of children entering their programs. Understanding where our children come from is key to understanding them. Increasingly, our Early Childhood Teachers are being looked upon as Brain Builders. An understanding of a child's evolving brain can bring insight and a change in teaching practices in the classroom. But, the most important piece of Professional Development is keeping our Early Childhood educators moving constantly on a journey of learning and practice.

Resources for Professional Development

Do you have time for Professional Development? YES!

Standard 4.3.1, 4.4.4, 4.5.3, 4.3.8, 4.3.9

Professional Development gives us the tools to bring about lasting changes which positively impact our work. Early Childhood Professionals have a laundry list of daily tasks, and the hamster wheel feeling of trying to get it all done may be stressful. However, just a few minutes/hours/days devoted to self-reflection and PD can make a world of difference for teachers' effectiveness and overall wellbeing.

Professional Development may seem synonymous with "training." However, PD can come in many forms and shapes, ranging from a quick 10 minute video to a two-day, 10 hour classroom-style training. However the PD is received, it is most effective when it is ongoing and consistent.

Here are some ways to get different types of PD into your regular schedule:

If you have 10 minutes:

Self-Reflection: Take time to reflect on the effectiveness of your teaching practices at the end of the day so that you can be more intentional. After careful reflection, create an action plan and implement the plan toward improved practices.

Reading a magazine article: Take 10-minutes to read an article from a professional ECE publication, such as [Teaching Young Children](#) NAEYC's magazine or [Highscope](#) magazine. In only minutes, doing so can open up a world of new ideas for any Early Childhood Professional. Find online magazines [here](#).

Peer Conversations: Take time to have informal conversations with other teaching staff. Reflect with each other and share stories about classroom experiences; often these conversations lead to relationship building and an opportunity to see a new or unique perspective.

If you have 15 to 30 minutes:

Podcasts: Listen to a podcast while driving, while cooking in the kitchen, while taking a walk! Reflect on how to use this information in your classroom. Find podcast links [here](#).

5 minute videos+5 minute reflection+5 minute action plan: Watch the videos and explore the tools and tips before you create an action plan. Find videos [here](#).

If you have 1-2 hours:

Webinars: Set aside time to watch and take notes on a webinar. Most webinars last an hour and are freely available on the internet. Find webinar links [here](#).

Community of Practice or Professional Learning Networks: Create or join a group of like-minded early childhood professionals who get together with the intention of improving their Early Childhood knowledge and skills by sharing stories and experiences, and learn together as a group.

Join your local Peer Learning Community, Virtual Learning Community and Networking Meetings for furthering your Professional Development Network. For more information, click [here](#).

If you have 3-6 hours:

Search for trainings on [NJCCIS](#) on various topics from basic health and safety to curriculum training and higher level leadership trainings.

If you want to pursue a certificate or degree course:

Visit the following websites to review degree and certificate courses for budding Early Childhood Professionals.

- [TCNJ](#)
- [Rutgers](#)
- [Montclair University](#)
- [William Paterson University](#)

Want to further your education? Get inspired!

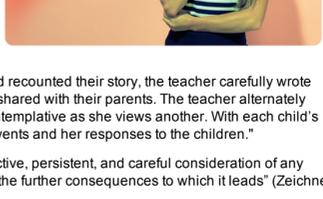
Standard 4.3.8, 4.3.9

Watch the "Building Brains Together" video below where ECE professionals describe their passion for their work and the challenges they overcome to advance their skills. The video draws a connection between well-trained, nurturing educators and healthy brain development in young children."



Reflecting on Teaching Practices

Effective Early Childhood Professionals Reflect on their teaching practices: Research Quotes



"At the end of the day, a preschool teacher sits at the writing center in her classroom, quietly sorting through the drawings the children created during the day. As she looks at each piece of work, the teacher is aware that although the drawings appear to be scribbles, the children had also narrated for her the story that unfolded in their minds as they created their drawings. As each child recounted their story, the teacher carefully wrote their words on the back of each drawing so they could be shared with their parents. The teacher alternately smiles as she pauses over one drawing and becomes contemplative as she views another. With each child's artwork, the teacher is remembering the day's activities, events and her responses to the children."

Dewey defined "reflective action" as that which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p.9).

For more information refer to this dissertation: [Collaborative Reflective Practice of Two Early Childhood Educators: The Impact on Their Ongoing Inquiry and Professional Development](#). Stacy Cummings Onks, 2009.

How to begin a simple Daily Reflection?

Five to ten minutes of reflection can go a long way in improving our own teaching practices. You may choose to record your reflections in a journal, Teaching Diary or you may choose to use a voice recorder or take a video of yourself. Whichever method you choose, ask yourself these simple questions at the end of the day.

What happened during the day that I liked?

What was the most challenging part of the day? How do I feel about it?

What made it challenging?

What can I try to do differently in a similar situation?

Do I need help from my teaching partner, my peers, my Supervisor, a coach or a mentor?

[Resources for Reflective Teaching Practices](#)

Showcasing Professional Development for Families

Families need to understand that Early Childhood Professionals *build babies' brains!*

Right from the start, make Professional Development Days part of your school calendar. Consider mandating a minimum number of training hours annually for your staff and showcasing them as certified and trained professionals.

Here are some ways to showcase your team:

- Create a professional profile for each teacher or teaching team highlighting their teaching credentials, certificates, and number of years of experience.
- Invite parents to the classroom and explain the benefits that their child is receiving because of a specific training. For example, the sensory materials the teacher has created, the new STEM activities the teacher has introduced in the classroom, the new vocabulary that the children are learning.
- Post pictures on social media and parent boards of teachers attending trainings, describe the benefits the children indirectly receive and the new activities or plans the teachers are conducting after the training. This has multiple benefits: the teacher has the incentive to use the information she received at the training, the children benefit from the research-based practices and the families are happy that their children are excited about learning with certified Brain Builders!

[Click here to learn about upcoming GNJK TA Center Events](#)

Prevent Child Abuse-NJ (PCA-NJ) operates a broad range of preventative services designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties. PCA-NJ programs include:

- Grow NJ Kids TA Center
- Healthy Families
- Parents as Teachers
- Parent Linking Program
- Enough Abuse
- The Period of Purple Crying
- Human Trafficking Prevention
- Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- Essex Pregnancy and Parenting Connection
- Parent Education and Technical Assistance

For more information visit www.preventchildabusenj.org



CONTACT US ANY TIME!

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