

A Newsletter from your Technical Assistance Center, PCA-NJ

Making your Interactions Powerful

Relationships are the key to child development. According to experts, the quality of teacher-child interaction is a stronger predictor of children's learning than staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, group size, family partnerships, and environment.¹ By focusing on relationships in September and building on them throughout the year, the quality of academics improves with the student-teacher interactions. Positive teacher-child relationships also serve as "buffers" or protective factors for children, which is especially crucial during this time of transitions.



In the article **Powerful Interactions Begin with You**², Amy Dombro, Judy Jablon, and Charlotte Stetson describe several ways to build relationships and move children's learning forward in small steps, including:

- ◆ Using children's names each time you speak with them
- ◆ Talking with children one-on-one about topics of interest to them
- ◆ Joining a child's activity, with his or her permission
- ◆ Repeating what the child said or did, and expand on it
- ◆ Acknowledging and accepting a child's emotions
- ◆ Asking open-ended questions and giving proper time to respond
- ◆ Using interesting and varied vocabulary
- ◆ Helping children make connections to familiar experiences, ideas or information
- ◆ Offering manageable challenges that nudge children to take the next step

Think of ways you can incorporate some of these ideas into your routines for the new year.

Ways to promote open-ended questions in your class:

- ◆ When planning activities, think of open-ended questions that support learning. Write the questions on a file cards to keep as reminders.
- ◆ Plan open-ended questions related to different centers in the classroom, write the questions on file cards, and post them in the learning centers to use as children play.
- ◆ Take file cards to the playground. Engage in children's play and ask open-ended questions throughout your outside time.

References:

Dombro, Amy, Judy Jablon, and Charlotte Stetson. "Powerful Interactions Begin with You." *Teaching Young Children* 4, No. 1 (n.d.): 12-14.
https://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/TYC_V4N1_Powerful_Interactions.pdf

Sabol, T.J., S.L. Soliday Hong, R.C. Pianta, and M.R. Burchinal. "Can Rating Pre-K Programs Predict Children's Learning?" *Science* 23 Aug. 2013: 845-46.
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/341/6148/845>

Educating Parents on Play-Based Learning

Play has tremendous value in the lives of young children. Through play, children learn to expand their vocabulary through conversational turn-taking. Play inspires situations where children learn to compromise, listen, and work together. Play builds self-regulation, focus and impulse control – important skills for later experiences in and out of the classroom. However, parents may express concern when they see play-based learning because they worry their child won't be ready for kindergarten. They may expect to see their child in a “traditional” school environment and may not understand that such environments don't provide developmentally appropriate activities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Sometimes our job is not only educating the children, but also the parents. Luckily, there are many ways to help families:

- ◆ Use classroom displays to educate parents, include signs in interest areas describing how the children are learning, display photographs of projects demonstrating their learning process, include colorful graphs representing classroom investigations, showcase lists of children's responses to the morning question.
- ◆ Utilize a Parent Board that can be updated regularly to include the current topic of study, a “What We Did Today” note, ideas for extending learning at home, and articles that explain play-based learning (see below for examples).
- ◆ Provide each parent with a copy of the **NJ Birth-to-Three** or **Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards**.
- ◆ During drop off and pick up, point out the different ways children are learning through play. Instead of saying: “Your child was so cute playing dress up,” say, “When exploring roles in the dramatic play area, she problem solved with another child to avoid confrontation.”
- ◆ Provide parent education workshops, or suggest webinars like this one: “Explaining Play to Families” <https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1097039>



Children can learn so much in each center!

For example, when children engage in dramatic play they:

- ◆ expand their literacy skills by exploring printed words on phone books and empty food box labels.
- ◆ learn writing skills by making lists, signs, menus, and schedules.
- ◆ develop science skills by pretending to measure, balance, mix and create.
- ◆ explore social study concepts as they role-play family life and different jobs.

Questions for the Dramatic Play Area:

- Who do you want to be?
- What would you like to do next?
- What materials will you use?
- What ingredients are you adding?
- How much more food do we need?
- Tell me about your family...

Think about each of your learning centers: what materials will you add, what **critical thinking questions** you will ask, what skills will you look for during observation, and how will you convey to parents the skills the children are learning. Talk to your co-teachers about ways your team can improve centers and communicate to families what children are really learning.

Additional suggestions:

- ◆ **HighScope for Parents**
<http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=746>
- ◆ **Ten Things Every Parent Should Know About Play**
<https://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/child-development/10-things-every-parent-should-know-about-play>
- ◆ **For Parents Only: Teaching Your Child Through Play:**
http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=462
- ◆ **PLAY: It's the way young children learn**
http://www.childaction.org/families/publications/docs/guidance/PlayItsTheWayYoungChildrenLearn_Eng.pdf
- ◆ **Developmentally Appropriate Practices Parent Tip #13**
<http://center.serve.org/tt/partip13.pdf>
- ◆ **Debunking the Belief that Earlier is Better**
<http://www.parenttoolkit.com/index.cfm?objectid=269FB610-3A29-11E6-AEE40050569A5318>



Center Spotlight: South Amboy



Barbara Thornton, Senior Technical Assistance Specialist, and Joy Baker, Technical Assistance Specialist, presented at the **Children's Center for Learning** Monthly Staff Meeting.

During their presentation they provided the center team with an overview of the Grow NJ Kids process and explained how every teacher's role is as important as the director's.

The center staff enjoyed an ITERS and ECERS activity to become familiar with the tool for their age group.

Special Announcements



- ◆ Grow NJ Kids Technical Assistance Centers; **Prevent Child Abuse-NJ**, the **Central Jersey Family Health Consortium**, and **Atlantic County Women's Center** are working together to provide professional development webinars each month for centers and providers enrolled in GNJK. Check your email monthly for announcements on the latest webinar offerings!
- ◆ Coming soon, all previous webinars that have been provided by Prevent Child Abuse-NJ will be archived and available for viewing at www.preventchildabuse-nj.org/growtac. **Each person that registers, watches the webinar, and passes a short post-quiz will receive a certificate of attendance!**

Save the Date!

Join us for the Northeastern NJ Quality Childcare Expo

December 2, 2016 — 11am-4pm

The Newark Waterfront — 2 Grafton Ave, Newark

More information on the Central NJ Quality Childcare Expo Coming Soon!

(These are FREE events for childcare Directors, Teachers, and Staff)

Explore infant, toddler and preschool model classrooms, learn about classroom arrangement and environmental rating scales, meet local vendors and discuss topics such as health, safety, and high-quality learning environments!

Need to Know!

Save the date for these upcoming opportunities...



Webinars

Open to all GNJK programs

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
9/28/16	12pm-1pm	Coaching to Build Capacity in Early Childhood Programs— Open to all	Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, Chanel Wilson	The objective of this webinar is to help participants to develop a professional identity as a coach and be able to build collaborative partnerships with programs. Registration link: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5566441819716815108

GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLC)

County-specific

Date	Time	Location	County
9/13/16	1pm-3pm	Child Care Connection, Trenton	Mercer
9/14/16	12pm-2pm	Union City Public Library	Hudson
9/21/16	1:30pm-3:30	DCF Training Academy, New Brunswick	Middlesex, Somerset
9/21/16	12pm-2pm	Prevent Child Abuse NJ-Newark	Essex
9/22/16	1pm-3pm	Child Care Resources of Monmouth County	Monmouth, Ocean



Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey™

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 TAC
- ◆ Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Human Trafficking Prevention
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Essex Pregnancy & Parenting Connection
- ◆ Parent Linking Program
- ◆ Parent Education & Technical Assistance
- ◆ Enough Abuse
- ◆ The Period of Purple Crying

Needs Assessment Survey

Please help us cater to YOUR needs by completing our Needs Assessment survey. Follow this link and share your thoughts about PLCs.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gnjneedsassessment>



Training

Click on the link provided below to view all currently offered professional development opportunities specifically designed for GNJK centers.

[Trainings](#)

Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

www.preventchildabusenj.org/programs/growtac