



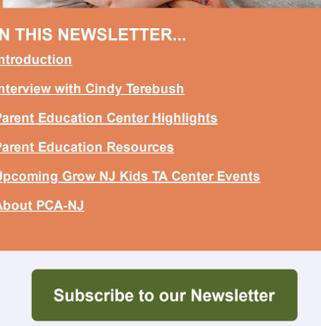
# A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER at Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey

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

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## Parent Education and the Grow NJ Kids Process



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### Introduction

We recognize that the changes that occur during your progress through the GNJK process can be a challenge, and that several of those changes may affect the families with whom you work. In this Newsletter, we address some of the issues that you have shared with us that have been more difficult, including:

- Changes in curriculum
- Children's meals and snacks
- Outside playtime
- Attending parent meetings and workshops

We will provide you with some tips from other child care providers and administrators that you can use, including some ideas that will motivate you to educate your parents in new ways.

#### Some general suggestions in your pursuit to educate parents:

- Always be prepared to listen, and to learn from them
- Acknowledge their "funds of knowledge"
- Be aware of and respectful of cultural difference
- Approach families without judgement, prejudice, annoyance, or resentment

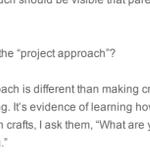
#### What are you doing to help educate parents at your program?

Want a chance to win a copy of Cindy Terebush's book *Teach the Whole Preschooler: Strategies for Nurturing Developing Minds*? [Click the link below to answer the question above by January 30th and three lucky newsletter readers will be chosen!](#)

## CLICK HERE & ENTER TO WIN a copy of Cindy Terebush's book

## Interview with Cindy Terebush

Author of *Teach the Whole Preschooler: Strategies for Nurturing Developing Minds*



Recently, early childhood education author and consultant **Cindy Terebush** sat with Sr. TAS Barbara Thornton to share some information and ideas about her book (*Teach the Whole Preschooler: Strategies for Nurturing Developing Minds*), her work, and Parent Education:

**Barbara:** What are ways we can help parents understand changes in curriculum?

**Cindy:** ...using a research-based curriculum is a common change that centers have to enact. The best way to help parents understand it, is to experience it.... Invite parents into the classroom as participants... Explain how the learning crosses into literacy, math and science... use pictures of their kids - that attracts them. Put up things that the parents can see like documentation panels of children doing experiments and explorations, and quotes, what the children know, what they don't know, webs of their learning. Almost so much should be visible that parents are overwhelmed by the information...

**Barbara:** Tell us about the "project approach"?

**Cindy:** ...Project Approach is different than making crafts. Doing a craft is not evidence of learning. It's evidence of learning how to glue. When children are involved in crafts, I ask them, "What are you doing?" and they respond: "We're gluing."

A craft is anything when an adult has a product in mind. Art is when a child is doing something, and I don't know what they have in mind because I had no product in mind. For crafts, children are going through the motions...if people are worried about children getting an education at this age, we must focus on what works best... We've all done things like "letter of the week" and "calendar", but that doesn't necessarily make it the right thing based on what we know now about how children learn...we didn't understand that what we were doing wouldn't pique children's curiosity...that a child can't be curious about something they haven't experienced. It's a simple thought -- "How can they picture something they don't understand?" If I say to children who have never been to Australia -- "We set up the classroom to look like Australia" they don't know what I'm talking about.... Topics need to be from the child's real world. We have to always remember that children this age are not yet executive thinkers... Teachers say, "I'm trying to expand their world", but you can't expand it if you aren't starting with what they know. We spend a great deal of time trying to make children older than they are...

**Barbara:** Do you have any advice for teachers and caregivers who have to deliver "bad news" to parents?

**Cindy:** First and foremost, you have to come from a place of concern for this child and put aside concerns for your classroom... the record doesn't necessarily follow them for the rest of their lives... what follows the child is up to the parents, up to a certain age. There isn't a fear at this age of labelling, unless the parent chooses that. The parent has choices. Let them know, in the early years the choice is yours. That will change as the child gets older.

We have to be reminded to have empathy for the parents we are approaching.

No one gives birth to a baby and thinks, someone is going to tell me this child needs extra help...it's a shift of their thinking that has to take place pretty soon after birth. I have a lot of empathy for that... I can't go into the conversation thinking this is going to be terrible. And we can't force them into taking the journey. It can take some time, and that's okay... We have to know when parents aren't there yet, just like we know that with children... We have to stop looking at each other's journeys as if one is better than another.

**Barbara:** How important is it that parents and caregivers are in agreement regarding children's development or discipline?

**Cindy:** I think it's very helpful when people are in agreement, but I think it's not realistic for people always to be in agreement. With boundaries and behavior, children can understand that there are behaviors that are different for different settings... children will know in my settings they will feel safe and secure, and they can know it about other settings, but they can know the approach is different for different people. We can tell parents, "Let me teach you how we do it here, and why" and they can take it and run with it or not. We cannot control them. Let go of the notion that we can control the parents. But we have to continue to educate them.

We have to listen to them because their culture could be dictating something very different. Parents may say, "This is why we don't do this at home," and we can't reject this. For example, if a parent says, "I give my child diltos at home," that's their option and I wouldn't fight it, but I'd tell them, "this is why we don't... and you are welcome to do what you like." I think people respect that. It's when you battle people that there is a problem.

**Barbara:** What's next for you?

**Cindy:** I'm doing a Podcast with my friend and colleague Alison Kentos...it's available everywhere, and no more than 15 minute per segment... We call it, "How Preschool Teachers Do it" because that's what parents say to us the most, "How do they do it?" It is for parents and professionals... I took a giant leap of faith. I had been building this consulting part of my career for years. It was a long thinking and planning process. There came a time when I knew I would regret it if I didn't. I still live by the idea, whatever I need to do I'm just going to roll with it, and not try to not feel like I have to control what happens -- which isn't easy. Where ever it leads is probably where I'm meant to be. I couldn't have predicted where I would be today. And it's crazy, but in the best possible way.

For the full interview, [click here](#).

To learn more about Cindy visit her website by [clicking here](#).

## Parent Education Program Highlights

### Little Treasures Learning Center

Christine Glennon, owner/director, and her administrative team are working with an Enrichment Program provider to present topics such as Positive Guidance and Discipline, and Learning Principles. They have had good attendance and positive responses from parents who attend the 1-hour workshops. They take place at pick-up time, and child care is available. Next step is partnering with a local caterer to present Nutrition and Healthy Food Choices!



### Cranbury Presbyterian Nursery School

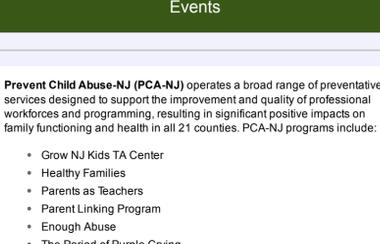
Janice Parker, Director, posted the following on her school's Facebook page:

"...our second "Coffee and Conversations with Janice" will take place... this unstructured, informal time together gives us an opportunity to discuss the values and goals we have for our families and the qualities we would like our children to have. Our discussions explore the barriers parents might be faced with, how we can connect with children and strengthen our relationships with them through "Play", and explore the "Effect of Stress" on child development...coffee and light refreshments are served. Please join us, parents, grandparents and caregivers are all welcome!"



### My World Child Care Center

Manisha Mehta, owner/director, leads by example with regards to teaching about diversity. She has hired a diverse staff, including a hearing-impaired teacher. Reaction from families has been very positive. She is pleased with how children and their parents are learning first-hand how working in an inclusive environment benefits everyone!



### The Tree House Child Caring Center

"Teachers are better prepared to talk to parents about Kindergarten readiness when they know what Kindergarten teachers really need. Provide opportunities for your teachers to visit with the local public school Kindergarten teachers to find out what they want from their incoming students." -Jen Nowack, Director



### Start-Rite Nursery School

Start-Rite Nursery School has created a Parent Partnership Organization that meets monthly to discuss the center, upcoming events and continuous quality improvement.

Other efforts to engage/educate parents and families at Start-Rite include:

- discussing healthy eating during their Back to School Night and throughout the year
- regularly posting Recalls for parents on the Parent Information Board
- providing parents with resources and updating them throughout the year as needed

## Parent Education Resources

### Share these with your staff and families!

- [Grow NJ Kids](#)
- [CDC Milestones](#)
- [NAEYC for Families](#)
- [SPAN](#)
- [NJ Parent Link](#)
- [ASQ-3 Activity Sheets](#)

- [The Parent's Guide to Creative Curriculum](#)
- [The Secret Art of Parent Communication](#)
- [PCA-NJ Tips For Parents](#)



### Having trouble helping families understand your Outdoor Weather Policy?

Share the [Child Care Weather Watch](#).

## Click here for 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.preventchildabuse.nj.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.nj.org)



## CONTACT US ANY TIME!

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NORTHEAST REGION TA CENTER 550 BROAD STREET, SUITE 1105 NEWARK, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

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