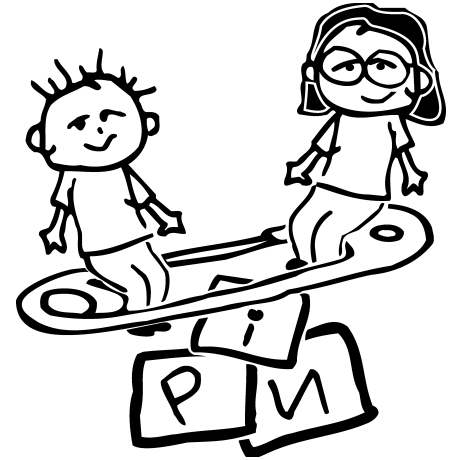


Preschool Inclusion News



Fall 00

Philadelphia Inclusion Network

Building Healthy Brains

Early care of infants and toddlers has a profound impact on the development of brain function, a child's ability to learn, and their ability to regulate their own emotions. We cannot see what is going on inside an infant's or toddler's brain and perhaps the greatest misunderstanding about a newborn's brain is that it is simply a small version of an adult brain. New thinking in brain research tells us that the prenatal and newborn brain is not a fully developed brain. Rather it is a brain waiting to "get hard wired". In other words, it is in the process of developing and maturing. Actually, by the age of three, the brain of a child is two and a half times more active than the brain of an adult. Recent research also reveals that early experiences have a determining impact on the developing brain and on the nature and extent of adult capabilities. Additionally, brain development is not linear. Growth depends on providing life experiences at "prime times" of development (prime times are also referred to as "critical windows" or "windows of opportunity"). Early development of

conditions or experiences, but also by social conditions and interactions. Learning, and hence brain maturation, is acquired through the context of important relationships. As suggested in brain development literature, the best way to promote the development of curious, confident, able learners is to provide the very young child with warmth, consistent care, and opportunities for attachment. Research supports nurturing brain growth and maturation, not drilling for facts (i.e. ABC's and 123's). Brain research underscores that early emotional experiences are the foundation and seeds of human intelligence.

Brain development, or neuronal synaptic formation groundwork, is laid out by our genetic inclinations. In other words our genes tell the brain what will happen. However, the environment that infants and toddlers are exposed to will tell the brain how to make the necessary connections to help the brain grow. It is through exploration, guidance and consistent,

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the brain is not only shaped by physical

BOOK NOOK

Building Healthy Brains

- ♦ *Building your baby's brain: A parents guide to the first five years.* By: Diane Trister Dodge and Cate Heroman, Teaching Strategies, 1-800-637-3652
- ♦ *Rethinking the brain.* By: Rima Shore, Families and Work Institute, 212-465-2044. www.familiesandwork.org
- ♦ *Special Edition, Newsweek - Your Child*, Spring/Summer 1997. Check your local free library.

When you come across a book that you think would be of interest to teachers, parents or children, please send the book title, author and brief description of the material to *Preschool Inclusion News*.

Building Healthy Brains

Continued from

positive, responsive care that a healthy brain will develop. "Prime times" of brain development do not occur for the brain as a whole, rather each "division of labor", each area of the brain is ready to develop at different times during infancy and toddler-hood. Therefore it is critical for a care giver to recognize "prime times" and provide opportunities to enhance learning and brain growth. Between birth and age four, in order of succession, an infant is able to learn motor development, emotional control, vision, social attachment, vocabulary, second language, math/logic, and music.

The outside world shapes the development of an infant's brain. The outside world comes in through the senses - vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell - allowing continued brain development. Both the physical and the social outside world provide opportunities for the senses to take in new and brain forming information. Enriched physical environments have recently been shown in research to have a direct impact on the number of neurons in the brains of infants and young toddlers. Social environments allow for attachment and the development of trust and comfort. Research shows that secure attachments to a consistent child care provider have been associated with better cognitive and social development, greater language proficiency and fewer behavior problems.



Rethinking the Brain

Old Thinking

how a brain develops depends on the *genes* you are born with

the experiences before age three have a *limited impact* on later development

a toddler's brain is much *less active* than an adult brain

New Thinking

how a brain develops depends on the *genes* you are born with and the *experiences* you have

early experiences have a *profound impact* on the architecture of brain development

by the time children reach age three, their brains are *twice as active* as those of adults

“Early neurological development is shaped not only by the physical conditions, but also by an individual’s social environment.”

Rethinking the Brain, Families and Work Institute

Activities to enhance brain growth:

- i **Sequencing:** offer activities that encourage children to establish order
- i **Patterning:** provide repeated visual and auditory experiences
- i **Movement:** offer several activities each day that encourage the development of eye-hand coordination and muscle development
- i **Reading aloud:** read to children several times a day - this helps them see patterns, learn language, and develop listening skills
- i **Sensory experiences:** 95% of the information received is through seeing, hearing, & touching - children’s sensory channels are primary sources of learning
- i **Cause and Effect:** provide repeated opportunities for children to discover cause and effect, for example dumping toys out of containers
- i **Making choices:** encourage children to make their own choices and help them understand the thinking behind their actions

Update: Philadelphia Inclusion Network

Philadelphia Inclusion Network is celebrating it's 5th year of providing training for community day care and preschool programs.

- PIN staff was busy this summer revising and reformatting the PIN Center-based and Infant/Toddler training curriculums. The new formats will be used for all up-coming training sessions.
- In June of this year PIN completed two concurrent sessions of the Infant/Toddler Training program. Sixty nine participants completed the five session program at Thomas Jefferson University. Due to an overwhelming request for additional programs to be offered, PIN has submitted a proposal to the Child Care Resource Developers, Quality Initiative Grants for additional funding over the next two years.
- The Infant/Toddler training curriculum has been officially named: *First Beginnings: Caring for Infants and Toddlers*.
- This fall PIN will be providing training for Center-based programs in North and Northwest Philadelphia, Family-based programs in South Philadelphia, and a Community-based program for a local children's museum.

If you or your staff are interested in participating in the Philadelphia Inclusion Network center-based, family or community based training, or the infant toddler training please contact **Suzanne A. Milbourne @ 215-503-1608**.

Both quality of care and security of attachment affect children's later capacity for empathy, emotional regulation, and behavioral control.

Brain Teasers

A snail is at the bottom of a well 30 feet deep. It can crawl upward 3 feet in one day, but at night it slips back 2 feet. How long does it take the snail to crawl out of the well?

You have 10 gray socks and 20 blue socks in your bureau drawer. If you reach into it in the dark, how many socks must you take out to be sure of having a pair that matches?

Submitted by Kurt Busse, 8th grade



FYI

To learn more information about
Brain Research & Brain Development
check out the

Beginnings Workshop

published by
Child Care Information Exchange 5/98 p 45 - 68

If you have helpful information for child care providers,
please send it to the
Preschool Inclusion News
to be included in our next edition.

**"THINKING :
THE TALKING
OF THE SOUL
WITH
ITSELF."**

PLATO

Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative

Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative (TLC) is based in the Child & Family Studies Research Program at Thomas Jefferson University. TLC is providing training for early intervention staff (primarily birth to three) and families to promote children's learning opportunities through participation in community settings and activities. TLC also facilitates collaborations among early intervention providers to enhance consistency among services and supports for children and their families. These activities are funded by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Mental Retardation Services.

Upcoming Training

- T Reporting Suspected Abuse & Neglect
- T Natural Environment Training Makeup
- T Policy and Procedure Training
- T Teaming Training I

Optional Skill Building Courses

- T Home Visiting
- T Working with Infants and Toddlers with Multiple Disabilities
- T Guiding Children's Behavior

For date, time and location information call Lalita Boykin at 215-503-1636.

Teacher to Teacher



In this section your questions about inclusion issues will be answered by teachers that have been there before and have advice for you.

Dear Teachers,

I just attended the PIN Infant/Toddler training in May. We learned about infant brain development and how the physical environment can influence overall child development. I would like to explore ways of setting up my classroom that will support good brain development. Can you make suggestions on books or video tapes that that you have used - ones that talk about setting up the physical environment? What have you done in your classroom to make it a fun learning place for the children?

Karina in Center City

Dear Karina,

Here are a few suggestions for books you may want to review:

Planning Environments for Young Children by Sybil Kritchovsky et.al. available from NAEYC 1-800-424-2460. Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work by Jim Greeman, available from Border's Book store. Infant and Toddler Experiences by Fran Hast and Ann Hollyfield, available at Barnes & Noble bookstore. There is one video tape you may also want to view. The New Room Arrangement as a Teaching Strategy by Diane Trister Dodge, available from Teaching Strategies, www.TeachingStrategies.com

Dear Teachers,

I am in a bind. I am concerned about a child in my care who is not keeping up with the other children and is not yet talking or feeding himself. He is three years

old. I have mentioned this to his mother but she said she thinks he is fine. What do I do now - I don't want this mom to think

that I am really negative but I really feel like I need to do something to help the child. Other children are starting to notice that he is not feeding himself during lunch. I have tried to talk with mom at the end of the day when she picks him up but she is always in a hurry to get home for her other children.

Please send suggestions,
Lori in the Northeast

Dear Lori,

At the end of the every day, mention to mom about something positive and wonderful that her child is doing, even if it is only a sentence or two. She needs to hear positive all the time.

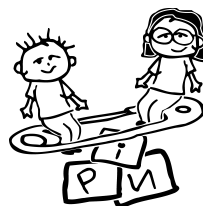
Try to talk to her at a different point in the day (set up a conference time, early morning, a phone call) and tell her about something good, then mention your concern, and don't drop the problem and run. Have some ideas on what you could do to help her child. (No matter mom's response the child is still a part of your classroom and will need you to help). Ask mom, if she shares the concern!!! (Not all parents have the same expectations for eating and talking). Ask how the child eats and communicates at home. Ask her for suggestions on what you could do to help you understand the child. Don't over

Do not train children to learn by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of genius of each.

Plato

Send your questions and advice to:

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
130 South 9th Street Suite 220
Philadelphia, PA 19107
fax 215-503-1640
Fax # 215/503-1640



Dear Teachers,

Why do we need to read to infants? Most times they don't pay attention or they're falling asleep. Besides... if I hold one baby and read to them there are others who are crying and need attention. And what kind of books should we read to babies? I still don't know why this is important.

Mary in Center City

Dear PIN,

I am a family-care provider and have been asked to care for a child with a physical disability. I am worried that I'll have to spend a lot of money making my house accessible. I can't afford to do that. Can you tell me what "reasonable accommodation" means. I really would like to care for this child, I just need to know what I am required to do and where I can gather some information about any community supports or funding that is available.

Hopeful in Harrogate

*"Experience is
the chief
architect of the
brain"*

*Bruce Perry,
neurologist*

**Please fill out the form below if you would like to be added to our mailing list.
FAX to 215-503-1640 or mail to CCFSRC/OT, Thomas Jefferson University,
130 South 9th Street, Suite 220, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5233.**

Check one:

☐ Please add me to the mailing list. ☐ Please update my mailing information.

NAME _____

PROGRAM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (____) _____ **FAX** (____) _____

E-MAIL _____

I RECEIVED AT COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER _____ **ON** _____
(where) (date)



Sneak Preview

The next issue of the *Preschool Inclusion News* will feature

Spaces for Learning

- what early childhood educators can do to their
child care environment.

Now that more than half of all children are in child care it is imperative to pay attention to the kinds of environments we provide for them. Environment is more than just the physical setting, it includes how time is structured, expectations of behavior, and adult/child and child/child instructional and social interactions. Environments teach cultural values about how space is to be arranged, lived in and shared. Children need environments rich in experience, play, teaching, people, and a place to call their own. See you next month!

Preschool Inclusion News

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OT-Child & Family Studies Research Programs
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Inside This Issue

***Healthy Brain Development -
What child care providers can do to
promote infant/toddler brain growth***
