

E The Childcare Professional XPERIENCE

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On the Inside...

IDEIA:
Overview Page 1

Strategic
Planning: Set
The Foundation Page 2

Learning Stations:
Benefits to your
Preschool
Classroom Page 3

Cape May, NJ
Summer Training
Schedule Page 4

Children's Book
Corner... Page 5

Mouse Paint

By: Ellen Stohl

Field Trip
Safety Page 5

Where in the
World... Page 6

Conference Information
on Ronald V. McGuckin
and Associates.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

By: Janice Nielwocki

Many of us involved in the child care industry are familiar with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Far fewer of us are familiar with IDEA: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Both pieces of legislation are designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and both can have an impact on child care agencies and the services they must provide.

In 1975, Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act was designed to protect the rights of, and meet the individual needs of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. This law was amended in 1997 and became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It was again updated and amended in 2004, evolving into IDEIA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Since first enacted the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act and its subsequent versions, there has been a significant and far-reaching impact in the area of special education. It is estimated that IDEIA now provides early intervention programs to almost 200,000 eligible infants and toddlers (and their families) and serves approximately 6.8 million children and youth with disabilities.

IDEIA has brought about some major accomplishments. Because of IDEIA, a majority of children with disabilities are now being educated in neighborhood schools, in regular classrooms with their non-disabled peers. IDEIA has also played a significant role in the increase in high school graduation rates and employment rates among youth with disabilities. In addition, post secondary enrollments among individuals with disabilities receiving IDEIA services have sharply increased.

IDEIA requires public

schools and publicly funded educational institutions to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. In addition, IDEIA requires that these publicly funded educational institutions develop appropriate Individualized Education Programs, more commonly known as IEPs, for each child.

The specific special education and related services must be outlined in the IEP and must reflect the individualized needs of each child.

Furthermore, IDEIA mandates that particular procedures be followed in the development of the IEP. Each child's IEP must be developed by a team of knowledgeable persons and must be reviewed at least annually. The team includes the child's teacher, the parents, possibly the child, an agency representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the special education

continued page 2...

Strategic Planning: Set the Foundation

By: Dawn Martini

When beginning the Strategic Planning Process it is important to take a long, hard look at the current state of affairs before delving into grandiose plans for the future. Everyone can dream big dreams for their agency, but Strategic Planning is a more structured and realistic process, which begins with the business planted solidly on a strong foundation. It is important to know where the agency is so you can determine where you want it to go and how best to get there.

The business owner/administrator should begin the Program Review by gathering all important agency documents and conducting a thorough review and critical analysis of them. The Crucial Documents, as we refer to them, include: Agency By-Laws, if the agency is a for-profit or non-profit corporation, Organizational Chart, Personnel Policy Manual, Parent Handbook, Contract for Services/Fee Agreement, Budget, Profit and Loss Statement, Job Descriptions and Performance Appraisal Instrument.

It is often recommended that agency's hire an outside firm to conduct the critical analysis of the Crucial Documents. The outside firm should be well versed in the child care field so as to understand the unique demands, regulatory requirements and customer relations issues this field presents. The reason for the outside critical analysis is to have some one removed from the agency review the documents to see if they can be understood, are well written using consistent language throughout and express what the author intends for them to express. It is also important to have an outside firm read and analyze the documents to highlight any missing/recommend practices and/or illegal practices because the administrators drafting the documents are not frequently employment or contract law specialists or licensing regulation experts.

One of the mistakes child care administrators tend to make in these agency documents is to use abbreviations commonly known in the industry. Someone outside the industry would be lost trying to understand what is meant. It is important that these documents be understood by persons outside the industry in the event that it must be used in a Unemployment Compensation case, a private lawsuit filed by parents etc. Another common mistake is to use terms interchangeably throughout the document, like staff, teacher, employee and/or faculty instead of choosing one term "staff" and using it consistently throughout. By using terms consistently throughout the document you make it easier for the reader to understand and follow along.

It is important to conduct a Cost of Care Analysis and Break-even Analysis to establish the financial health of the agency. The Cost of Care analysis will help to determine how much it costs to care for one child for one day. That figure is the amount, at current enrollment the center would need to collect to simply break-even. The Break-even Analysis is used to determine the cost of growth.

By determining the current state of affairs, the agency can work on repairing cracks in it foundation and then move forward with planning for the future.

Next Issue: The Role of the Facilitator

...continued from page 1

provisions of the IEP, and other individuals at the parent's or agency's discretion. If parents disagree with the proposed IEP, they can request a due process hearing and possibly a review from the state educational agency. Parents also have the right to appeal the State agency's decision to State or Federal court.

With that said, what affect does IDEIA have on early child care agencies and other early care organizations? IDEIA requirements apply to "*public schools and publicly funded educational institutions*", thus only those child care agencies that are funded by public sources need to follow IDEIA regulations. Head Start agencies, as well as Abbott funded child care agencies (NJ) are examples of organizations which need to comply with IDEIA. Privately owned and operated child care agencies and those non-profit agencies which are not publicly funded are not required to comply with IDEIA regulations. Child care agencies need to access their funding sources in order to determine whether they need to follow IDEIA requirements.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 has had a tremendous impact in improving educational opportunities for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. As IDEIA continues to expand its support for quality programs and services for all children, we, as a society, will reap the benefits for years to come.

The Childcare Professional EXPERIENCE

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Learning Stations: The Benefits for Your Preschool Classroom

By: Janice Nieliwocki

In the previous issue of *"The Child Care Provider Experience"*, you were introduced to Learning Stations for the preschool classroom. Remember, Learning Stations are individual areas set aside in your classroom for small group interactive learning. Each area is equipped with teacher developed materials and activities designed to teach or reinforce a specific skill or concept. Learning Stations can be of various formats and can be designed using a curriculum theme or children's book as the central focus. Several *related* "stations" are set up simultaneously and children, in small groups, rotate through the various stations.

When I first considered implementing Learning Stations into my classroom curriculum, I was well aware that the children would experience certain benefits. I knew the children would benefit from the small group interaction, as well as enjoy the uniqueness of the activities. However, once in place, the benefits were far greater than what I had anticipated!

From a teacher's perspective, Learning Stations provide the opportunity for enhanced interpersonal relationships between the teacher and each child. A child's strengths and abilities, as well as possible difficulties or delays, can more easily be evaluated. In addition, a small group setting often fosters increased conversation, thus providing better assessment and evaluation of a child's vocabulary skills.

I also found that Learning Stations allowed me to encompass and include many domains of

learning. I was able to focus and/or introduce specific skills and concepts in a concrete, documented way and subsequently focus on skill-building, as basic skills and concepts were mastered.

Learning Stations also proved to be quite cost-effective. As each station is equipped with teacher developed activities and materials, you can enhance your preschool curriculum with limited expense.

The children in your classroom will experience far reaching benefits, as well. Learning Stations provide children with the opportunity to complete tasks and activities on their own, thus fostering independence. As children are successful in completing those tasks and activities, self-esteem and self-confidence increases. Children also develop problem-solving skills.

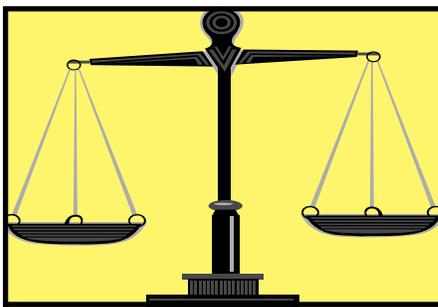
Peer support and peer cooperation are additional benefits often seen when incorporating Learning Stations into your classroom curriculum. Opportunities are created for children to build

social and classroom skills, such as taking turns, passing materials, responding to requests by peers, etc. Leadership qualities are also enhanced.

The Learning Station format of small group rotation promotes the ability to transition, often necessary throughout the child's day. Time-management skills are strengthened, as well.

If you focus your Learning Stations around children's literature, you can expect some additional benefits. In choosing a variety of books, you can ensure that children are exposed to books on wide range of topics and varied writing styles. Skills such as predicting a story's outcome and/or sequencing of events can be reinforced.

Perhaps the most important benefit of incorporating Learning Stations into your curriculum is that they make teaching and learning FUN! If you decide to include them in your pre-school classroom, they should prove to be a learning tool that both staff and children enjoy!



CHILD CARE PROVIDER RETAINER PROGRAM

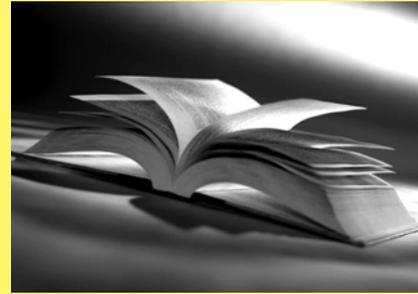
Ronald V. McGuckin
and Associates
is proud to announce the
expansion of this program

With the recent addition of **Attorney Jason D. Dalton**, we have been able to open the retainer program to a limited number of new clients in **Pennsylvania and New Jersey**. The Child Care Provider Retainer Program offers special discounted rates to Private Child Care Agencies, Corporate Agencies, Head Start Programs, Family/Home Based Providers, and School Age Programs.

Over 25 years of Experience Representing Child Care Providers

For Information about how to Become a Retainer Client
Please Contact Dawn Martini at
(215) 785-3400

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS



- ◆ Model Personnel Policy Manual for Child Care Agencies: 3rd Ed.
- ◆ Model Parent Handbook for Child Care Agencies
 - ◆ Model Forms for Child Care Agencies
 - ◆ Current Issues in Child

Available at childproviderlaw.com by downloading and completing the ORDER FORM and mailing or faxing it according to the instructions. The MODEL publications come with a workbook and a CD for your computer to make them easy to use. CD is WORD formatted but can be converted to MAC applications easily. These are the most valuable and child care specific administrative re-

2007 Cape May Training Seminars

SESSION TWO

Strategic Planning for Child Care Business Owners & Administrators

June 26, 27 and 28

Long Range Strategic Planning is a process whereby the Owner/BOD of an agency set out to chart the course of the business and make plans for its future. The agency's position is reviewed and goals are set in relation to various indicators including: Agency Mission, Financial Stability, Range of Services Provided, Facilities, Population Served, and Administrative/Human Resource Systems. Participants will learn about the Strategic Planning Process including conducting a complete program/agency review. Participants will be engaged in goal setting discussion and will be given strategies for how to assemble a Strategic Planning Team, promote the open flow of ideas and writing a Strategic Plan.

SESSION THREE

PRACTICAL HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES

July 10, 11 and 12

Participants will be engaged in discussion and activities related to Human Resource functions including: Writing Job Descriptions, The Application Process and Conducting Interviews, Documentation and Record Keeping, Conducting Employee Performance Appraisals, Employee Corrective Action/Discipline, The Exit Interview and Terminating Employees. Participants will leave this three day seminar with practical knowledge and policies/procedures they can implement to make their Human Resource functions run more efficiently.

SESSION FOUR

18 HOUR LAW SCHOOL For Child Care Administrators

July 24, 25 and 26

An Overview of Basic Legal Concepts which are Key to Running a Successful Child Care Program including:
Contract Law
Employment Law
The Fair Labor Standards Act: The FairPay Update
Including: Wage and Hour
Unemployment Compensation
Discrimination and the EEOC
Getting What's Owed to You: Small Claims Court
Confidentiality and Rights of Privacy

SESSION FIVE

Your Agency's Personnel Policies and Parent Handbook

August 7, 8 and 9

Participants will be engaged in Drafting and Editing their Agency's Personnel Policy Manual and/or Parent Handbook over the entire three days of this seminar. Participants are asked to bring their current Personnel Policy Manual, Parent Handbook and a laptop computer. A laptop computer is not required for participation.

As part of the registration fee, participants may choose to receive either the Model Personnel Policy Manual for Child Care Agencies: Third Edition or Model Parent Handbook for Child Care Agencies to work from during the seminar. A \$175.00 value.

SCHEDULING AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please visit our website childproviderlaw.com for the full schedule and registration information. Location and Accommodations information is also available on the website. From the website home page click on Seminars and then click on Upcoming Seminars. Registration is Limited and Discounts are available. If you do not have access to the internet contact Jan at (215) 785-3400 for more information.



Coming Fall 2007

Learning Stations for the Pre-School Classroom

- * A Curriculum Guide designed to enhance and enrich your Pre-School Educational Program
- * Designed for small group interactive learning
- * Each "station" is equipped with activities and materials designed to teach/reinforce a specific skill or concept
- * Learning Station Activities are developed from and center around popular Children's Literature

Learning Stations for the Pre-School Classroom is a comprehensive curriculum guide with over 50 activities and includes everything needed for implementation including: Lesson Plans, Reproducibles, a Management Guide, Organizational Tips, Parent Newsletters and a Concept Chart.

CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER

At a recent visit to a local preschool, I had the opportunity to observe the Art Room where several delightful 3 year olds were busy mixing various colors of paint. I noticed the children's obvious pleasure as red mixed with yellow produced orange (imagine that?), yellow mixed with blue produced green and red mixed with blue produced purple. I wondered if their teacher had read them Mouse Paint, the wonderful book written by Ellen Stohl Walsh.

A long time favorite of preschoolers, Mouse Paint, tells the story of three precocious white mice who explore the wonders of, what they believe to be, "mouse paint". The mice dabble and dance in the red, yellow and blue paint only to discover that their frolics result in the creation of different colors. Though quite delighted in their own antics, the mice are ever aware of the cat lurking near by. After mixing and producing various colors, (and becoming quite sticky), they wash themselves in the cat's water dish.

Instead of painting themselves, the mice paint a white piece of paper various colors, leaving a small section white for self-preservation from the cat.

Using simple text, the story is told in an enchanting way which quickly captures the interest of young children. The illustrations, which are actually cut-paper collages, are simple, yet charming, and clearly portray the personalities and antics of the three mice.

It's not always easy to combine education with fun, but Ellen Stohl Walsh has accomplished this in Mouse Paint, as children learn about primary and secondary colors through the mouse's actions. Why not "put out some paint", "put on some smocks", and read Mouse Paint as the perfect accompaniment to Art Room "color mixing" activities?!

Field Trip Safety

By: Dawn Martini

It is once again that time of year...Summer. Field Trips are the staple of many summer programs. They are what often attract the parents of school age children to your program. Parents often consider how frequently you will be taking their children off site in the summer and to what new and exciting experiences their children will be exposed. Swimming, horse-back riding, museums, hands-on nature experiences etc...

When planning field trips be sure to have all parents complete a Field Trip permission slip for each specific trip. Parents should be provided with the name, address and phone number of the trip location, the time of departure from the center and the time of departure from the trip site. Parents should also be informed of the educational purpose for attending the site if there is one. The Permission Slip should also list the alternative for the child if the parent does not wish for their child to attend, which may very well be that the child stays home because no one will be available to watch the child back at the center. Parents should also be asked to include specific contact information for the date and time the trip is to be held.

Prior to leaving for the trip staff should assemble all permission slips, all emergency contact and medication information for each child. This can be prepared well in advance of a field trip and assembled in a three ring binder that lead staff member on the trip carries with them on the trip. Being organized as much as possible ahead of time will alleviate confusion the day of the trip.

To account for children needing medication on the trip, including Epi-pens for emergency allergic reactions, staff should pack a cooler or insulated lunch sack that can be locked and easily carried on location.

Consider having the children all wear the same shirt in a bright and unique color with the name and phone number of the program on the shirt. Never have the children wear name tags and consider using the programs digital camera take a waist-up shot of each child as they board the bus or van in case of a missing or lost child. You will be able to immediately provide authorities with a recent photograph of the missing child that can be printed, emailed and shared within minutes.

Finally, you can never take attendance too many times. Require staff and volunteers to stop regularly to account for each child. Children should be identified not simply counted...think "Home Alone" the movie!

By taking the time to prepare and plan before the trip, staff can then enjoy presenting the children with the new and exciting experiences field trips provide.



WHERE IN THE WORLD...

Ronald V. McGuckin and Associates 2007 Cape May, NJ

Training Seminars:

June 26, 27, 28: Strategic Planning

July 10, 11, 12: Practical HR

Strategies

July 24, 25, 26: 18 Hr. Law School

Aug 7, 8, 9: Your Agency's

Personnel Policies & Parent Handbook

To be held at the Inn of Cape May

For more information or to register

please visit our website child-providerlaw.com

Upcoming Seminars Section or call

Dawn (215) 785-3400

North Carolina AEYC:

September 13-15 Greensboro, NC

for information visit ncaeyc.org

NACCP Administrators Training:

September 14 Springfield, IL for

information visit naccp.org

ECA of Florida:

September 27-29 Orlando, FL for

information visit ecaoffl.org

NACCP Administrators Training:

October 5 Columbus, OH for infor-

mation visit naccp.org

Bucks County AEYC:

October 6 Bucks County Commu-

nity College Newtown, PA for

information visit bcaeyc.org

York Area AEYC:

October 6 Penn State York Campus

York, PA for information visit

yaaeyc.org

Colorado AEYC:

October 6 Denver, CO for informa-

tion visit coloradoaeyc.org

Texas AEYC:

October 13 Galveston, TX for infor-

mation visit tecec.org

Texas Licensed Child Care Assoc:

November 1-3 Dallas, TX for infor-

mation visit tlcca.org

New Jersey AEYC:

November 2-3 Atlantic City, NJ for

information visit njaeyc.org

NAEYC:

November 8-10 Chicago, IL for

information visit naeyc.org

NHSA: Parent Conference

December 14-17 Indianapolis, IN

for information visit nhsa.org

Ron, Dawn and Jan will be traveling to the following cities for Local, State, Regional and National Conferences on the dates indicated. We welcome you to attend the conferences. Information has been provided so you can contact the organization conducting the training/conference. If we are going to be in your state or area, we welcome you to contact us about coming to your program or organization to do a private training. The cost of bringing us in to your program or organization is significantly reduced because we are already traveling to your area. We certainly don't mind adding a day or two to our travel schedules to work with you.

Contact us at (215) 785-3400 to see if we can visit your program when we are in town.

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