



# Culturally Speaking!

Volume 1, Issue 3

Spring, 2004

Wayne County  
Health and Family  
Services Head Start



## “Month of the Young Child”

### Self-Assessment of Practices to Support English Language Learners

Consider the following strategies, as you assess your practice in supporting English language learners. These strategies are not exclusive of others that support all children’s expressive and receptive language abilities:

- I slow my rate of speech.
- I use gestures, symbols, and visual aids.
- I re-phrase questions/ comments to make simpler when not understood.
- I translate the child’s non-English utterance into English.
- I provide positive feedback for a child’s attempts to use English.

*(Wilcox, M.J., Murphy, K.M., Bacon, C.K., and Thomas, S. 2000. Promoting use of language facilitation practices by Head Start teachers. Poster at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention, Washington, D.C.)*

Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm has joined early childhood professionals across the nation in recognizing April as the Month of the Young Child. The Governor issued a proclamation encouraging all Michigan citizens to become informed and support efforts that ensure the growth and maturing of children into healthy, productive, and loving adults.

Early childhood professionals know that their personal future and the future of the nation depends upon the quality of children’s lives today. People in the field of early childhood have an opportunity to impact the quality of children’s lives.

There are four “focus weeks” during the Month of the Young Child. Each “week” is dedicated to an effort needed to ensure the successful development of young children:

April 1-10 Celebrating Community Partnerships

April 11-17 Promoting Healthy Children and Families

April 18– 24 Recognizing Early Childhood Professionals

April 25 –30 Advocating on Behalf of Children and Families

Why are these efforts important? What do they mean for Head Start staff?



The Month of the Young Child is a time to reflect upon what you can do to make an effective contribution to the growth and development of children.

Focus Week 1:

Discover your passions and (continued on page 2)

## “Kindergarten Transition”

For young children, the transition from Head Start to kindergarten may include both excitement and concern. Children may be experiencing a sense of success as they move on to kindergarten, while at the same time feeling stressed because they are leaving

friends and teachers they have been with during the school year.

In order to help children adjust to a new environment, it is important to introduce them gradually to routines and activities that may be a part of their new

kindergarten setting. Any transition activity should be done in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for children.

Here are some ways we can

(Continued on page 3)

## “Month of the Young Child” (continued)

offer your support to a community agency that serves children and families.

### Focus Week 2:

Attend to your health needs, so you can perform optimally and engage in daily interactions with children that keep them active and healthy.

### Focus Week 3:

Pursue on-going professional development activities from reading early childhood journals and publications to enrolling in degree level courses.

### Focus Week 4:

Become informed about issues that impact children and get involved, even if your involvement is simply voting.

Join fellow members of the early childhood community in celebrating April as the Month of the Young Child. The month in which you can re-commit yourself to contributing to the future of young children. They are your future!

Kimberly Crafton, Grantee Early Literacy Specialist

**The future of our state depends**



on

**the quality of the early childhood experiences provided to children.**

## “Investing in Yourself: A Message for Women”

The field of early childhood is one that is typically female. As women, many of us may have been brought up to believe that everyone else is more important than we are. The cultural values or era in which we grew and mature may or may not have supported a secure sense of personal value.

As a woman, there is one thing which you must understand: Whatever you learn - it is yours! It is yours to invest

in your life. Invest in yourself!

When you invest in yourself, you are investing in the lives of those around you – the lives of your children, family members, and friends.

Learn a new skill. Learn to play an instrument. Learn another language. Develop proficiency in an old skill. Develop your reading and writing

skills. When you develop and enrich your personal skills, you enrich yourself and others. Invest in yourself!

Barbara DeBarge, EECD Specialist  
YWCA Head Start

Whatever you learn - it is yours!

## “Remembering Dr. Seuss”

As I reviewed my collection of Dr. Seuss books, I was drawn to pick up my favorite title, “The Cat in the Hat”. For years, Dr. Seuss has entertained, delighted, and introduced countless children to the joys of reading.

In 1955, in an effort to promote literacy among school-aged children and to take on a challenge given by his publisher, Dr. Seuss was given the task to use 250 words to write a book. He met and exceeded the challenge by using

220 words, and thus, completed the famous “The Cat in the Hat”.

You probably wouldn’t be surprised to know that Dr. Seuss really wasn’t a doctor or that Seuss wasn’t his surname. Born Theodor Seuss Geisel on March 2, 1904 in Massachusetts, he chose the name “Seuss” because it was his middle name. He used “Dr.” because his father always wanted him to pursue a career in medicine. Learn

more about Dr. Seuss by accessing these websites: [www.seuss.org](http://www.seuss.org)

[www.seussville.com](http://www.seussville.com)

[www.literature-awards.com](http://www.literature-awards.com)

[www.carolhurst.com/authors/drseuss.html](http://www.carolhurst.com/authors/drseuss.html)

Mylon Reynolds, Grantee EECD Specialist

## “Kindergarten Transition” (continued)

help children and families make a smooth transition from Head Start to kindergarten.

Talk to children about the activities and routines that may be the same next year. While singing songs during class, tell the children that they also will sing songs next year with a new teacher. Engage children in conversations that help them to express what they may be feeling about going to a new school. With the children, put together a scrapbook or make photographs of their Head Start class for them to keep.

Role play with puppets to pretend and create stories about meeting new teachers, bus drivers, and friends. Children may feel more comfortable when they have opportunities to practice their social skills with the use of puppets. Puppet play also can help them work through anxieties or fears they may be experiencing.

Read to children in small groups about going to kindergarten, meeting new friends, and having a new teacher. Help children label their feelings by asking them open-ended questions while reading a story. “Why

do you think \_\_\_\_\_ was worried about his new school?” “What helped \_\_\_\_\_ feel better?”

Celebrate what children have learned by pointing out to parents the accomplishments children achieved while in Head Start. Provide visual cues in user-friendly information for parents on the transition. This is important for parents new to the typical culture of public school kindergarten education.

Linda Thomas, EECD Specialist  
The Guidance Center Head Start

## “Books that Explore Cultural Differences in School”

Many children enter kindergarten unaware that cultural practices familiar to them are unfamiliar to others. Issues of language, clothing, and routines can be thoughtfully discussed through these stories.

ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL (2002)  
by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen  
Lee & Low Press.

THE WAY WE DO IT IN JAPAN

(2002)  
by G. Cobb Iijima  
Albert Whitman & Co..

SUKI'S KIMONO (2003)  
by Chieri Uegaki  
Kids Can Press.

MY NAME IS YOON (2003)  
by Helen Recorvits  
Farrar Straus & Giroux.

I HATE ENGLISH! (1998)  
by Ellen Levine  
Cartwheel Press.

SUMI'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL  
EVER (2003)  
by Soyung Pak  
Viking Children's Books.

## “Assessment of Young Children”

Researchers suggest that professionals need to deepen their understanding of the impact of culture and language on the assessment process. This is critical in understanding the development of children and conveying such information to parents. There are resources to help professionals develop their knowledge of culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment. One source is the Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

<http://clas.uiuc.edu/>

Publications include:  
Barrera, I. (1994). The assessment of young children whose sociocultural background is unfamiliar to the assessor. *Zero to Three*, 14(6), 9-12.

Metz, I. Barrera (1992). Interview in *Cultural Competence in Screening and Assessment (Monograph)*. National Early Childhood Technical

Assistance Center, Chapel Hill, NC.

Quintero, E. (1999). The new faces of Head Start: Learning from culturally diverse families. *Early Education and Development*, 10(4), 475-497.

**Early education professionals must continue to heighten their awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity.**

Look for our next edition  
in October, 2004

Send Your Contributions To:  
Attn: Kimberly Crafton  
Wayne County Health & Family  
Services Head Start  
30712 Michigan Avenue  
Westland, MI 48186  
Phone: 734-727-7620  
Fax: 734-727-7640

www.waynecounty.com/hcs/hstart

We are on the web!



**Robert A. Ficano**  
County Executive

## SPEAK UP!

Wayne County Child Care Coordinating Council Program Specialist, Carolyn King, offered the following activity. Pre-school-aged children are beginning to classify and sort by color, shape, and size. But, they have difficulty with multiple classifications. They wonder why two people with different skin tones are considered part of the same "racial" group. Skin color can be discussed and explored with this activity:

### "SKIN COLOR MATCH-UPS"

Materials: \*Nylon knee-high stockings of various shades

Encourage children to try the stockings on their hand, like a sock puppet. Comment on the color of the stocking and the color of their hand/arm. Ask questions to increase awareness. "Try on the \_\_\_ stocking. Is it lighter or darker than your hand?" Emphasize that skin color differences are interesting and desirable. You may want to use the stockings as puppets with "skin" tones that may foster further conversations about physical differences.

**Wayne County Health and Family Services Head Start**  
**Division of Health and Family Services**  
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## "Community Resources"

Early childhood professionals can continue to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities by participating in programs offered by community agencies, institutions of higher learning, and professional organizations.

A.C.C.E.S.S.  
6451 Schaefer  
Dearborn, MI 48126  
(313) 945-7550

SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE  
18600 Haggerty Rd.  
Livonia, MI 48  
(248) 552-0044

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - DEARBORN  
220 Student Center Bldg.  
4901 Evergreen Rd.  
Dearborn, MI 48128  
(313) 593-5000

WAYNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
1001 W. Fort St.  
Detroit, MI 48226  
(313) 496-2758

U of M—DEARBORN  
Storyteller & Children's Art Exhibit  
School of Education  
Ford Center South, Dining Hall D  
Tuesday April 13, 2004  
5:00pm to 7:00pm

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
Children's Bridge presents  
"Promoting the Well-Being of Children and Youth in Urban America"  
April 22-23, 2004  
(313) 577-5071 or email  
ae0809@wayne.edu for information

METROPOLITAN DETROIT AEYC  
Learning Through Play Workshop  
Saturday April 24, 2004

Neighborhood Child Care Center  
345 Griggs Rd.  
Rochester, MI  
(248) 652-1132  
Or Fran Neuman (248) 650-4832

HIGH/SCOPE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
International Conference  
May 4-7, 2004  
Ypsilanti, MI  
(734) 485-2000 or visit  
www.highscope.org

