



**Institute for Disability Studies**  
Mississippi's University Center for Excellence  
in Developmental Disabilities

# Possibilities

## Early Childhood Inclusion

**Issue No. 24 • Fall 2010**

### Upcoming Project PREPARE Training Opportunities

#### Early Childhood Mini-Conferences

You have the opportunity to earn four contact hours by attending one of Project PREPARE's Early Childhood Mini-Conferences on October 23 in Ocean Springs and on December 4 in Meridian. Please make plans to attend. Registration is available online at [www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare), or you may register by completing the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information, please contact Becky McPhail at 601.266.6790 or toll free at 1.888.671.0051.

These Early Childhood Mini-Conferences will offer child care providers the opportunity to choose two of four topics they want to learn more about as they earn four contact hours approved by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Workshop topics include "Connecting with ALL Children," "Are Problem Behaviors Really a Problem?" "Listening: The Language of Learning," "Reaching and Teaching ALL Children Through Inclusion"(for teachers) and "Inclusion: Making it Work" (for directors).

Project PREPARE will also be offering Early Childhood Mini-Conferences during 2011 in Cleveland, Desoto County, Grenada, Hattiesburg, Jackson, and Tupelo. More information about registration for these locations will be included in the next edition of *Possibilities*.

### PREPARE Essentials

Project PREPARE is happy to announce our continuation of funding from the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth beginning October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011. The primary goal of Project PREPARE is to improve the quality of care for children in licensed child care settings across the state by enhancing the professional development opportunities needed for centers to successfully include high-risk children and children with special needs. The project is coordinated through the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) at The University of Southern Mississippi. The mission of IDS is to promote independence, productivity, full inclusion and participation in the community of individuals with disabilities.

Services to be offered and provided during this grant year include the following:

- Hosting Child Care Mini-Conferences in eight Mississippi communities (Cleveland, Desoto County, Grenada, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Meridian, Ocean Springs, and Tupelo);
- Offering Professional Learning Community sessions which include small-group intensive trainings, coaching/mentoring across the state;
- Providing technical assistance to child care centers across the state who request assistance serving children who are at high risk for or have developmental disabilities;
- Providing a Preschool Literacy Series consisting of four training sessions centered around promoting early literacy development for all children;
- Providing local workshops in various communities as requested by child care centers;
- Publishing of our newsletter, *Possibilities*;
- Providing weekly features on our Web-based listserv, Postings; and
- Providing a variety of resource information on our Web site, [www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare).

As you can see, there is much to look forward to during the upcoming year. It is with great excitement that I join the PREPARE staff for 2010–11 as we all strive to provide quality experiences for those working with children in early childhood environments. Our program will continue to offer quality training, technical assistance, resources and support that reinforce realistic everyday developmentally appropriate practices for all children.

If you are interested in learning more about Project PREPARE and the services we offer, please feel free to check out our updated Web site at [www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare), or call me, Ann Henson, at 601.331.7369. The PREPARE staff and I are eager to launch the activities for 2010-11. We look forward to assisting you in your vital role as an early childhood professional. It is our goal to support YOU with opportunities that benefit ALL young children in Mississippi! Working, learning and sharing together.....the possibilities are obtainable!

Most sincerely,

*Ann Henson*

Project PREPARE is funded by the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth (GR# 525Q7411A).



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## Perspectives of Inclusion

Contributed by Kathy Long, M.S.,  
Speech-Language Pathologist at  
Early Connections in Hattiesburg



### **Why do you believe that inclusion works?**

I believe that the inclusive classroom benefits both typically developing peers as well as children with developmental challenges. Individual differences between children become a source of richness and diversity and less of a problem when all children are included and all children know they are valued for their individuality. Each child's needs can be met by adapting activities, materials and curriculum so that academic as well as social needs are met. Inclusive education teaches all children teamwork and that all children can contribute in their own way.

### **Can you give an example of how you have made adaptations or modifications to help a child with a disability participate in an activity or daily routine?**

Adaptations such as picture schedules can benefit all of the children in a classroom, both typically developing as well as peers with developmental delays. A typical peer can be a buddy to a child with disabilities and help that child participate in activities that would normally be prohibitive. One child helping another child fosters a spirit of giving and a sense of accomplishment.

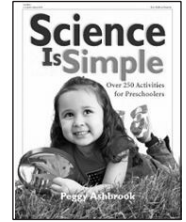
### **As a therapist working with young children, do you have any recommendations for early childhood teachers that would help them have open communication with therapists working with children in their classrooms?**

Open communication between teachers and therapists can be achieved by having the classroom teacher participate with the child during part or all of the therapy session. The therapist should inform the teacher either in a therapy note or in conversation what goals the child is working on, and conversely the teacher may want to tell the therapist what problems the child is having in participating in the classroom.

## Book Spotlight

### **Science is Simple** (2003)

By Peggy Ashbrook  
Publisher: Gryphon House



This book encourages young children to predict outcomes, ask questions and investigate answers. Science is Simple contains activities spanning 39 child-pleasing science concepts. Young scientists will be captivated as they learn about science and the role it plays in their everyday lives.

Each book featured in our book spotlight is available for purchasing at online bookstores such as Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com. You may also check these books out at your local Mississippi Child Care Resource & Referral Network office. To contact the MSCCR&R call 1.866.706.8827.



*During July, Ann Henson led a workshop on creating homemade blocks in Horn Lake. Staff from MITI Kids Child Care and Learning Center used their own imaginations as they created blocks using empty boxes covered with brown paper and stuffed with newspaper. Staff designed many different sizes of blocks and colored pictures of things they chose to paste and laminate on the boxes. The children were excited to have some new toys to play with in their classroom centers.*

We would like to thank the 35 early childhood programs for their participation in our on-site technical assistance during the grant year October 1, 2009-September 30, 2010.

Bright Beginnings in Flowood  
Brown Bear in Tupelo  
Busy Bodies in Southaven  
Christian Learning Center in Canton  
Crayon College in Hattiesburg  
De Kalb Head Start in De Kalb  
Dewberry Day Care in Batesville  
Early Connections Learning Center in Hattiesburg  
Early Learning Center in Hattiesburg

First Baptist Day School in Tupelo  
First Discovery Preschool at First Baptist Church in Hattiesburg  
First Presbyterian Preschool in Hattiesburg  
Fun Time Preschool in Clinton  
Heaven's Treasures in Fulton  
Hinds Community College Early Childhood Education Center in Pearl  
Play House Learning Center in Mantachie  
It's a Small World in Guntown  
Kid Kountry in Rienzi  
Kid's Kingdom Learning Center in Laurel  
Lakeside Presbyterian Preschool in Brandon  
Lil Blessings in Hamilton  
Little Footprints Learning Center in Madison

M & M Learning Factory in Hattiesburg  
McCoy Christian Academy in Jackson  
MITI Kids Childcare and Learning Center in Horn Lake  
New Horizon Child Care Center in Jackson  
New Jerusalem Christian Preschool in Jackson  
Noah's Ark Day Care Center in Jackson  
Northtown Child Development Center in Jackson  
Petal Preschool in Petal  
Play House Learning Center in Mantachie  
Play School Preschool in Petal  
Precious Hands in Verona  
Rainbow Learning Center in New Albany  
Wiggles and Giggles in Tupelo

Project PREPARE has had great success with the introduction of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) throughout the state. These trainings are conversation-based, and active participation is encouraged through take-home activities, phone interviews and on-site technical assistance. Participants earned 20 contact hours for their participation and attendance at four workshop training sessions. The training sessions focused on social and emotional development, cognitive development, communication development and motor development. Video tapes of each participant in his/her classroom were utilized to enable discussions and self-reflection. Take-home assignments and follow-up telephone calls from Project PREPARE staff allowed participants to apply what they were learning and allowed them to receive support in implementing new teaching strategies. One participant summed up her experience by stating, "My involvement in the PLC has been a great refresher to my teaching. It has inspired me and helped me to be a better teacher."

If you are interested in attending a PLC in your area, please call Ann Henson at 601.331.7369.

## Resource Room

Some teachers may not feel confident in their knowledge of science. They may not have the resources and support to engage children in hands-on science activities. Our goal is to help teachers see that science can be exciting and fun for young children. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

### **Plants in Nature**

You will need: Plants and moss that grow in Mississippi, aquarium or small fish tank, gravel and small stones, potting soil, sandspray bottle with water, and clear plastic wrap

Directions: Place a layer of gravel on the bottom of the aquarium or fish tank. Add a layer of sand. Cover with a layer of potting soil. Add plants, moss and stones. Water the soil and plants by spraying a fine mist. Tightly cover the top with clear plastic wrap.

### **Discovery Bottles**

You will need:  
Small plastic, clear bottles, glue, and miscellaneous substances such as sand, colored beads or sequins, oil, water or corn syrup



Directions: During a small group activity, have the children select different substances to fill a variety of clear plastic containers. Use super glue or hot glue to secure the cap. Place in the science area for all of the children to explore and enjoy.

## Getting Started

Young children, both with and without disabilities, are naturally curious about their world. They learn through manipulating, touching, watching and exploring. It is important for young children to have opportunities to safely explore and experiment with the natural world through hands-on experiences. Children are concrete learners and use all of their senses to gain knowledge about the world. It is important that teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials that relate to nature/science. Children should have easy access to nature/science materials for self-selection that does not require help from an adult. Materials should be located on low shelving that is organized and labeled for independent use. Teachers can take pictures of science/nature items and glue them individually to index cards. Underneath the picture, the word describing the item should be clearly written. The index card should be laminated and then taped in the appropriate place on the shelf. Children will learn where to return items after using them. For example, children will understand that the magnets belong where the magnet label is located on the shelf.

According to the ECERS-R (1998), each science center should include three to five items from at least three of the following categories:

### **Collections of natural objects**

- Leaves, shells, rocks, types of wood, pinecones, birds' nest, dried flowers, gourds, fossils, feathers

### **Living things**

- House plants, class pet, window bird feeder, aquarium, ant or worm farm, butterfly hatching kit, outdoor garden

### **Books, games, toys about nature and science that are factual**

- Magnets, magnifying glasses, balance, microscope, mirrors, prisms

### **Nature/science activities**

- Sink and float activity, smelling and matching different spices, cooking experiments, sorting objects, sand and water table, color paddles

*By attending Project PREPARE training I have learned the importance of letting children express their individual creativity and how to encourage their individuality. - Deandra Smith, Small Miracles, Tupelo*

# Thank you.

*We would also like to thank the 2,316 individuals who attended inclusion training sessions that Project PREPARE's staff led at workshops and conferences during last year's grant period, October 1, 2009 - September 30, 2010. We appreciate those of you who made the time to attend and expand your knowledge base to better serve ALL children.*

## Project PREPARE Early Childhood Mini-Conference Registration Form

Check the box for location and complete the information in the bottom of the form. Please print.

- |                          |                             |  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | October 23<br>Ocean Springs | 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.<br>First Baptist Church, 602 Washington Avenue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | December 4<br>Meridian      | 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.<br>Meridian Community College, 910 Highway 19  |

Child Care Center Name \_\_\_\_\_

Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Center County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Center Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Names \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send the registration by mail or fax:  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Institute for Disability Studies  
Attn: Becky McPhail  
118 College Drive #5163  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Fax: 601.266.5114  
Attn: Becky McPhail  
Project PREPARE

For more information, please call Becky at 601.266.6790 or 1.888.671.0051 (TTY).

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To subscribe or to submit materials (pictures, articles, etc.) for consideration, contact Kristie Bowlin at 662.397.1902 or [kristie.bowlin@usm.edu](mailto:kristie.bowlin@usm.edu).

Alternate formats available upon request.



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