

Career Choices & Challenges

A News Sheet about Montana Early Care and Education Career Development

Spring 2010



Annual Directors' Symposium

Mark your calendars today for The Annual Directors' Symposium will be held in Billings on Thursday and Friday, September 9-10. We are excited about this year's format and we hope that you will be too. The planning committee, under Sandra Morris' leadership, has planned this wonderful opportunity for Montana's Center Directors. Thursday morning will be a pre-symposium seminar. Participants may choose between an NAEYC Accreditation workshop or a Round Table session featuring representatives from Licensing / Quality Assurance Division, the Child and Adult Food Program and The Early Childhood Services Bureau. Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, Valerie Dawkins Krajec from the National Child Care Information Center who will lead us on an investigation into Center Director Credentialing/ Certification and what other states are doing. Thursday evening we will have a networking social from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Friday will feature play with Donna Donnelly. The title of her presentation is "Unwind Before You Unravel: Stress Management Using Play and Laughter". This fun, interactive, session is guaranteed to rejuvenate the spirit and give you plenty of ideas to take back to your programs to refresh and re-energize your staff. Be watching for save the date information and registration materials to follow. We hope to see all of you in Billings!

Spotlight: Diana Greytak—Havre, MT

As we travel around the state we have the honor of spending time in training workshops and mini-conferences with people dedicated to high quality child care for children in all corners of our big state. Recently, Ann Klaas and I met almost thirty early childhood professionals at an all day event sponsored by Havre's child care resource and referral program, Child Care Link housed in District 9 HRDC. Diana, her husband and her mother all attended the training focused on meeting the needs of a multi-age group of young children. Here is her story:

"I love the delight of a child!", Diana Greytak says responding to the question, "What do you most love about your work?" She adds with enthusiasm that watching them grow and change every day is a joy to her. She and her husband, Gary operate an Infants Only facility serving children ages birth – age two and their families out of their home in Havre, Montana. Diana says, she has always enjoyed working with children and over the years has provided care for her two cousins for seven years, worked at an elementary school for seven years and opened her current child care program three years ago. She completed the sixty hour MT Infant Toddler Caregiver Education course for which she received the \$500 Merit Pay award and became a certified infant-toddler caregiver. Diana was able to write for and was awarded a mini-grant to enhance her outdoor play area for very young children.

She is most proud of how her husband, her sons (teenagers!) and her mother have all helped to make her facility a success. Her biggest challenge is the paperwork required to operate efficiently and effectively – she would love to have a secretary!

Diana takes advantage of the training made available to her in her area and states that Montana early childhood trainers have been very inspirational to her and have given her ideas that she has put into practice in her program.

Spring Into Action!

Now is the time to do what it takes to apply for and be named to The Practitioner Registry! This is Montana's way to count you as an early childhood professional and recognize you for your commitment to young children, their families and to your training and professional development in the field. The Registry is **the first step** to being eligible for the Best Beginnings programs we have to help you enhance your program, your training and education and the early care and education you provide for Montana.

You will need to have a **current Registry Certificate when you apply** for:

Mini-Grants through our local child care resource and referral agency

Merit Pay (changing name to Professional Development Award) through the ECP to reward you for completing specific early childhood training

Higher Education Merit Pay (changing name to Higher Ed Professional Development Award) through the ECP for completing college course work in early childhood education

NAEYC and NAFCC Accreditation Fee Scholarships to pay the full cost of fees.

Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credential Assessment Fee Scholarships to pay the full cost to complete the CDA process.

Infant Toddler and Preschool Certification Awards that are available upon completion of either one of the sixty hour courses.

Start now so you will be all set when an opportunity comes your way to apply for an incentive or grant for you or your program! We cannot process your application at the last minute when you have a deadline to meet. Ask your local child care resource and referral agency people for help or more information or call or write us at 1.800.213.6310 or ecp@montana.edu with your questions. **We are eager to help you successfully apply to the registry, complete your application process online, and receive your certificate—call us if you get stuck or need help in any way!**

What is the CSEFEL Pyramid Model?

Many early childhood teachers feel unprepared and even helpless in trying to meet the needs of children with challenging behaviors. In Montana the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality initiative addresses this issue with the Center on the Social Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model. CSEFEL is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and the Child Care Bureau focused on improving the social and emotional outcomes of young children.

The following describes the five layers of The CSEFEL Pyramid Model from the foundation to the top.

- ❖ **Effective Workforce:** systems and policies in place to help promote and sustain the use of evidence based practices.
- ❖ **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships:** that fosters positive outcomes for all. Positive relationships are not only essential between the teacher and child, but also between the teacher and families, and among children in the classroom or group. Equally important to the social emotional development of young children are the positive relationships that are modeled among the teachers and other staff members.
- ❖ **High Quality Supportive Environments:** how the classroom or spaces designed and arranged along with the curriculum requires careful planning and attention to foster positive behavior, relationships, and development of children.
- ❖ **Targeted Social Emotional Supports:** requires a systematic approach to teaching social skills to all children that emphasizes prevention and solutions.
- ❖ **Intensive Intervention:** concentrates on targeted assessment based strategies that result in individual behavior guidance and support plans.

If time and energy are spent on the bottom layers of the CSEFEL Pyramid, many behavior problems will be prevented and only a very few children will need the intensive intervention and behavior supports described at the top of the pyramid.

The CSEFEL Pyramid Model is a vital part of Best Beginnings STARS to Quality initiative and the ECP is taking the lead to ensure that Montana's common vision for children's social emotional development across all training efforts is realized. To date, forty people, including all Child Care Resource and Referral agency trainers are being trained in the CSEFEL Pyramid Model and will be able to train and coach individual early childhood providers, teaching teams and parents in the model. There are many tools available to help trainers, administrators, directors, parents and teachers implement the model.

The good news is that the Pyramid Model is a framework where early educators can put to practice all of the knowledge and skills they have learned throughout their careers and gain some new strategies and ideas along the way.

Through the CSEFEL framework we are working to create a cohesive and effective approach to addressing the needs of all young children including those with challenging behaviors. For more

information about the CSEFEL Pyramid Model and to see an illustration of the model go to: www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel or contact Christy Hill Larson: christyhl@montana.edu 406-444-7067.

Update: Professional Organization Memberships for The Practitioner Registry

The Registry in Montana requires people to document membership in a professional early childhood organization at the state or national level to qualify for Level 3 or beyond on the MT Early Care and Education Career Path. This has been in place since The Practitioner Registry was founded back in 1998 as an indicator of professionalism and as a means to be linked to the larger community at the state and national level that supports healthy growth, development and learning for all young children in the early years. The field of early care and education is extremely dynamic with new evidence-based information about brain development, early childhood education and best practices for high quality programs! Your membership may be documented with a copy of your current membership card or letter with your name on it. The following are the organizations most frequently identified for The Practitioner Registry:

- ❖ The Montana (or National) Association for the Education of Young Children
- ❖ The Montana Child Care Association
- ❖ The National Association for Family Child Care
- ❖ The Montana Education Association/American Federation of Teachers
- ❖ The Montana Head Start Association
- ❖ The National Head Start Association
- ❖ The Association for Childhood Education International
- ❖ The Council for Exceptional Children Division of Early Childhood
- ❖ The National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators

You may read more about these organizations and find contact information in our **Info Sheet: Professional Organization Membership** which may be found on our website www.mtecp.org by clicking on *Publications and Reports* on our homepage. If you find another organization that meets your needs, please contact us to find out if that will work!

