

The Mind-Body Connection

This fall, OFC's Community Education and Provider Services program held its biennial family child care conference. Nearly 200 local family child care providers attended the conference to learn about "Building a Mind-Body Connection." Providers learned about different ways to enrich children's exploration of the world around them using their minds and bodies.

Keynote Speakers

Participants heard from two keynote speakers: Erin Ramsey, Senior Manager for Mind in the Making at the Bezos Family Foundation, and Julia Washburn, Associate Director for Interpretation, Education and Volunteers for the National Park Service Foundation.

Ramsey shared information about the importance of executive function skills for children's lifelong success. She provided relevant ways families and educators could put the science into action. Washburn provided ideas, advice and activities for engaging children in the natural world around them.

Breakout Sessions

Participants had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions led by four other presenters. These dynamic workshops provided many opportunities for hands-on exploration of activities that could be used with children.

Judy Polivy is a longtime educator with Fairfax County Public Schools. Polivy demonstrated ways to incorporate the MITM Essential Life Skills through children's books.

CEPS Child Care Specialist Kerry Ralston incorporated movement and fitness into her session. Ralston placed providers in six groups that rotated through stations. Each group used the materials provided at each station to create children's games, which they demonstrated for all the workshop participants.

As the director of the Natural Start Alliance, Christy Merrick has a background working with educators who are helping to connect young children with nature. As part of her workshop, she took providers outside to explore nature through some activities they could replicate with children in their care.

Joanne Hunter, an adjunct professor and Northern Virginia Community College, explored movement and the correlation between movement activities and children's development. She provided a variety of ideas for ways to fold learning experiences into physical activities.

CEPS Director Jene Moore explained, "We had several goals in mind for participants, but most importantly, we wanted providers to come away understanding that movement is the gateway for learning and discover different ways to incorporate a variety of movement activities into their child care programs."



Each breakout session at the CEPS conference incorporated activities that explored movement and nature and their role in children's development.



Through this year's curriculum, children in SACC will travel through time into the past and future as they become Time Adventurers: Connecting with the Past and Exploring the Future!

Time Adventurers extends last year's curriculum, which featured five SACC designed curriculum characters (introduced below) that shared the children's journeys around the globe, to this year's adventures that will include travel through time! This year's curriculum goal is for children to have fun while exploring exciting points in the past and future and learning about how events and time periods help shape the reality we live in today. To facilitate their time and space travel, each SACC center is creating their very own "time machine"!

Also new this school year is the addition of the SACC curriculum character, "Kat." Kat was designed by children at Hunters Woods SACC during a program wide contest that challenged children to design a character from the future. Over 75 amazing character designs were submitted, and children had the opportunity to vote for their favorite. Kat was selected for her interesting backstory, cool look, and futuristic technology. As SACC's Archivist, Kat collects and stores information and artifacts that represent her time travel adventures, and encourages children to create their own collections.



Archivist, Kat

Kat is from a galaxy in the future and the new member of SACC's curriculum Adventurer Team! She has the ability to communicate with animals and has adaptable features that allow her to travel over any terrain and environment. Kat collects and stores information and artifacts that represent her time travel adventures. Kat will encourage children to create their own collections to share from their

adventures through time and space.

Global Pioneer, Tinker

Tinker is passionate about inventing new things. She dreams of traveling through time and has invented a time machine

with hopes of making a positive impact on the world of tomorrow. Tinker will encourage children to experience destinations through science, technology, engineering, architecture and math.

Atlas Adventurer, Addae

Addae loves running and participating in anything that promotes fitness. He is curious about the athletes and events that shaped the sports of today and will influence the future. Adventures with Addae will challenge children to eat healthy and be active through exercise, sports and outside exploration.

Story Chaser, Astoria

Astoria seeks to discover the who, what, when, where and why of places, people, events and historical milestones. She yearns to visit famous writers and time periods when storytelling was prevalent and language was expressive. Astoria will inspire children to investigate, research, write and tell stories through various media and styles.

Culture Champion, Maddox

Maddox enjoys experiencing the unique language, customs, food, and celebrations of people from different time periods. He loves tracing the origins, history and evolution of famous festivals and cultural events. Maddox will introduce children to the culture, traditions and communities of various destinations. Along the way, he will encourage children to participate in local and global community service opportunities.

Image Maker, Isla

Isla loves to express herself through the visual and performing arts. She is excited to explore the music, art and performances that shaped history as well as those which may exist in the future. She can't wait to hear the music and learn the dance moves of different eras. Isla will inspire children to share the artist, designer, singer, musician, dancer, performer and dreamer inside.



Deer Park SACC's time machine is a fun and creative way for children to connect with the past and explore the future.

SACC Orientation Off to a Great Start!

SACC staff recently enjoyed the opportunity to travel through time during this year's orientation and introduction to the SACC school year curriculum, "Time Adventurers, Connecting with the Past and Exploring the Future."

Staff participated in several workshops that highlighted time travel adventures along with SACC's curriculum characters. One workshop featured a nostalgic trip to the '70s. Staff was challenged to a game of Jeopardy featuring '70s trivia, and explored ways to incorporate curriculum character Isla's love for music, fashion and art into experiences for the children at their centers.

In a workshop featuring Astoria, the Story Chaser, staff explored ways to make learning about the Elizabethan era fun for children. Staff made quill pens and used berries to make ink. Then they adapted and performed a Shakespearean play.

The first modern Olympic Games of 1896 was brought to life as staff joined Addae, the Atlas Adventurer, in a re-enactment of the international competition. This included opening ceremonies, shot put, 100 meter race and closing ceremonies, complete with a medal presentation.

Tinker, the Global Pioneer, lead staff into the year 2026 where the applications of technology and children's imaginations make the possibilities of the future endless!

The final workshop of the day highlighted Kat, SACC's archivist and featured fun ways for staff to engage children in documenting their time travel adventures by creating timelines and reproducing artifacts.

Beth Leggat, program administrator, reflected on the day and shared, "Staff loved that they were able to explore a variety of ideas for creating an environment for children that encourages exploration, discovery, creativity and innovation."



Early Head Start Offers Professional Development Workshop

EHSFCC works with Community Business Partnership to Promote Business Best Practices for Family Child Care



Community Business Partnership President and CEO Kathy Wheeler and Business Counselor Jessica Smith, demonstrate examples of payment and expense tracking for the workshop participants.

Fairfax County's Head Start/Early Head Start program has been a pioneer for some time in partnering with community-based family child care homes to provide comprehensive quality care for income-eligible children and their families. Early Head Start staff recently worked with Community Business Partnership to host an Annual Professional Development Day for EHS family child care partners. This event was developed to support family child care partners in meeting all federal Head Start Performance Standards.

The professional development workshop focused on recordkeeping



and budgeting best practices. The family child care partners were invited to bring people to the workshop who help them with tracking their business records.

Workshop participants were provided with real life scenarios and had the chance to try out a system that promotes continuous improvement of their business recordkeeping practices. Using the RedLeaf Calendar Keeper specifically designed for family child care, the participants learned about time/space calculation; expense and budget tracking; and calculating payments for each individual child from multiple sources including the child care subsidy, copays, stipends, and the USDA Food Program.

Feedback from the workshop participants was positive, and many felt it was a helpful opportunity. The Community Business Partnership will be following up with the Early Head Start program by offering smaller group sessions tailored to the needs of partners as they put

what they learned into practice over the next couple months.

"The Early Head Start Family Child Care program is supported by braiding funds from the Early Head



Start – Child Care Partnerships Grant with other local and state funding sources. Good stewardship of these public funds is required of the partners," said Head Start Financial Specialist Maryom Fox. "This training is just one way HS provides support to all our partners."

O F C Office for Children

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