

Newsletter Fall 2009

Presidents Message:

Hello!

This year has been busy for your KDEC leadership team as I am sure it has been for you!

KDEC leadership has worked hard to assure your voice is heard at the Federal, State and local level.

KDEC officer members serve on many state and national committees. This year KDEC joined with five other organizations (KACCRRA, KAIMH, KCSL, KHSA, KPATA) to advocate for enhanced services for Kansas children and inclusion of all children. We will keep you updated as to the status of KDEC's activities as part of the Kansas Early Learning Collaborative.

We look forward to increasing our visibility and ability to advocate on your behalf for the needs of the children we serve and their families. We are able to do this through your input and stories of what is occurring in the field. Please continue to keep us informed about your needs. We love to receive success stories we can share with others!

I would like to draw your attention to this year's conference! Our conference chair, Cindy Kongs, has put together an exciting program designed to motivate, inspire and give you ideas to put into practice in your daily work. Please find a description of the conference later in this newsletter and as always, check this web site for conference updates.

On the national level, your DEC leadership has been hard at work as well. DEC has put focus on upgrading the products available to you. The latest example is the webinar for members, early childhood practitioners, and family members interested in learning more about linking curriculum to child and family outcomes. The transcripts and audio file of the webinar is on the DEC website. The next year will see a renewed focus on DEC Recommended Practice. Please check out the web site often for information that will be useful to you! www.dec-sped.org/

We look forward to seeing you at the conference! Please know that we are always open to your ideas/feedback!

Peggy Miksch, KDEC President, pmiksch@ku.edu

“Doing What Works: Evidence-Based Practice in Action”

The 27th Annual Kansas Division for Early Childhood Conference was held on February 26 and 27, 2009 at the Wichita Airport Hilton. The conference theme, Doing What Works: Evidenced Based Practice in Action, provided participants the opportunity to combine current research with practical implementation in daily practice.

The conference was fortunate to host three featured speakers. Camille Catlett, University of North Carolina, presented: Doing What Works for Every Child and Family. This presentation high-lighted the importance of providing high quality service and support to young children and families. Camille demonstrated the value of combining research with the service provided to children and their families. She underscored the idea that this style of service provision should emphasize the diverse needs of the families we serve today.

At the lunch session on Friday, Dr. Ann Turnbull, University of Kansas, presented a tribute to her son Jay. Dr. Turnbull’s moving description of the impact of Jay’s life and the families’ experiences as they worked to help him live life inclusively in the community of Lawrence, was an inspiration to all participants. Dr. Turnbull emphasized the importance of utilizing a process of wisdom-based action as we work to serve the families we interact with each day.

Our final featured speaker, Sarah Mulligan, Division of Early Childhood, presented information on how to effectively use DEC’s Recommended Practices in the day-to-day business of working with children and their families. She also presented a session on using the DEC’s Recommended Practices in everyday activities. She highlighted the importance of not wasting a minute of our children’s time and demonstrated effective use of embedded instruction to turn routine activities into instructional moments.

The KDEC Board meeting was conducted on Thursday evening. Sarah Mulligan presented information on the upcoming 2010 DEC Conference which will be in Kansas City during October of 2010. A national conference in our area will provide an exciting opportunity for our KDEC members to take an active part in a national conference. Watch for more information regarding the 2010 conference in upcoming newsletters, the 2010 KDEC Conference and on early childhood list-serves.

A wide variety of presenters provided informative break-out sessions for the conference. The presenters did a wonderful job of demonstrating the use of research in action. The KDEC Board would like to thank everyone who presented or worked at the conference. Your hard work made it a success. We would also like to thank everyone who attended the conference. In light of the economically difficult times,

we were pleased to have you attend and continue the tradition of the annual state-wide conference.

Cindy Kongs, MS 2009 Conference Chair and KDEC President Elect

KDEC 2010 Conference

Plans are already underway for the 2010 Conference

Early Childhood 2010: Meeting the Challenges

February 25-26, 2009

Wichita Hilton

Wichita, Kansas

The Kansas Division of Early Childhood invites you to consider submitting a proposal for a presentation at the 2010 Conference. Please send your proposal via email to Kathy Easterly at keaster-lyhlc@olatheschools.com. Proposals are due October 23, 2009.

Thank you for your time on the KDEC Board!

We would like to take the time to say thank you to our 2009 outgoing board members. Your time, energy and dedication are greatly appreciated.

Outgoing Treasurer: Chelie Nelson (2 years served)

Outgoing Student Representative: Natalie Marks

2009 Awards from KDEC

Congratulations to this group of dedicated individuals!

2009 Award of Excellence: Rud and Ann Turnbull were recognized for their significant contributions in bridging the gap between academic studies and the real world needs of families.

2008 Distinguished Service Provider Award: Deanna Barry was recognized for her innovativeness and imagination in her work. She has inspired many in the field.

2008 Outstanding Contributor Award: Eva Horn was recognized for her extensive research and contributions to many Kansas projects including the Early Childhood Unified License, the Kansas Early Learning Document and School Readiness work.

Where Can I Find Information about KDEC?

The Division for Early Childhood is an international professional organization designed for professionals and families associated with infants and young children with special needs. It was formed as a division of the Council for Exceptional Children in 1973.

The Kansas Division of Early Childhood was founded in 1982 as our state subdivision of DEC. KDEC would like to invite you to be a part of this exciting organization. When you join, you will receive the benefits of a number of opportunities and publications (Young Exceptional Children, Teaching Exceptional Children, Exceptional Children and the Journal of Early Intervention).

KDEC provides:

- opportunities to interact, collaborate and communicate with others in the field
- up to date information on new findings in research, policy, current issues and best practices
- reduced rates for the KDEC annual conference

If you are interested in becoming a KDEC member, you may contact Nancy Miller, KDEC Membership Chair at nemiller@msn.com or call 913-897-3452 for an application. You may also join by visiting the Council for Exceptional Children website at www.cec.sped.org. We would love to add you and your colleagues to our organization.

Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are groups of professionals who come together to explore topics and discuss challenges. KDEC encourages its members to come together in communities of practice to explore evidence based practices and services for children 0-3 in Kansas.

Currently, one Community of Practice is meeting regularly in the Kansas City Area. Members are exploring the topic of authentic assessment and have been participating in a book study. For additional information contact Kathy Easterly at keasterlyhlc@olatheschools.com. New participants are always welcome. Another group is forming in the Harvey County area. For information on this group please contact Chelie Nelson at canelson@newton.k12.ks.us.

The Kansas Early Learning Document: Newly Revised and Ready to go!

The Kansas Early Learning Document has been revised and is available for programs, teachers, and early childhood professionals to use. Previous sections have been updated and two new sections have been added: How to use the Guidelines; and, How to use the Standards. Hopefully, these two new sections will provide teachers and other professionals information and support they need to provide developmentally appropriate environments, align their curricula with the Standards, and develop IEP goals that align with the standards, benchmarks, and indicators in the document.

Section III: How to use the Kansas Early Learning Guidelines provides:

- An overview of responsive and intentional care and education;
- An overview of how children learn, with a focus on the importance of play as the major learn-ing process;
- Examples that show the importance of relationships in the learning process; and,
- Example scenarios that show how play is tied to learning specific skills, abilities, and knowl-edge from the age levels that are listed in the Ages Pages in Section II.

Readers should find that the information is useful as they design their teaching environment to meet the needs of the children in their family childcare homes and early childhood classrooms. Examples of how daily routines and play activities address Guidelines are provided throughout the Section. The major focus is that “Play = Learning” and that play is the fundamental, natural, and universal activity of children. Adults in a child’s life must be both partners as well as intentional teachers. The interactions between adults and children build the relationships and therefore the trust between adults and children—an essential component for successful outcomes.

Section V: How to use the Kansas Early Learning Standards provides a step-by-step guide for the following processes:

- Aligning curriculum to the Standards
- Developing a scope and sequence, based on the Standards; and,

- Linking specially designed individual plans for children with disabilities (Individual Education Plans - IEP/Individual Family Service Plans/IFSP) to the Standards.

These three processes are described through examples. The Alignment example also includes a form to help programs and teachers through the alignment process if they choose to use it. The Scope (all the aligned learning standards/benchmarks) and a sequence (example indicators in hier-archical order) part of Section V gives a program the information necessary to ensure that the curriculum used in the program includes the standards and benchmarks. Finally, linking the Early Learning Standards to IEP's provides a way for all children to have meaningful participation and pro-gress in the general early childhood curriculum.

The Kansas Early Learning document shows the continued connections to the School Readiness Framework, the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive System plan, and the continuum examples that show the strong connection from birth to grade 3 standards and benchmarks. Additional resources and information are provided in the Appendices section.

The Guidelines and Standards are not a curriculum, but they do meet the purpose for which they were designed:

- To recognize the importance of the early years as learning years
- To serve as a guide for appropriate curriculum development and/or selection
- To serve as a guide for creating quality learning environments and opportunities

For copies or for further information, contact Gayle Stuber at gstuber@ksde.org or 785-296-5352. This website will have the document online under Early Learning by mid-April.

Helpful Links

1. www.ksits.org—Kansas Infant-Toddlers Services/Kansas Department of Health and Environment
2. www.ksde.org—Kansas State Department of Education
3. www.kskits.org—Kansas Inservice Training System
4. www.kansasicc.org—Kansas Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services
5. www.keccs.org—Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan
6. www.kpirc.org—Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
7. www.kaimh.org—Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health