



kits

kansas in service training system

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*Newsletter Staff Editor:
Robin Bayless, M.A.*

*Project Director:
David P. Lindeman, Ph.D.*



Going to the Big School: Effective Transitions into Kindergarten **By Sarah Hadden, 2007 KITS Summer Institute Presenter**

Each year, millions of children enter kindergarten for the first time. These children bring a wide variety of skills and experiences to their first day of school. Children who have been at home throughout their early years must adjust to their first large group experience, while children who have attended child care or preschool may feel a bit like “old hands.” Regardless of the kinds of prior experiences they may have had, all children encounter some kind of changes when they start kindergarten.

While change of any kind is difficult, the transition to kindergarten can be particularly problematic. Preschool programs tend to offer a very different kind of learning environment than do kindergarten programs, which place a heavier emphasis on the formal instruction of academic skills. Children may have a hard time adjusting to an environment where the routines, rules, and expectations differ drastically from their previous experiences. Similarly, families may feel uncertain about their role in the kindergarten program.

Because the early years are critical for setting the stage for later school success, it is essential that preschool and kindergarten programs work with families and children to prepare them for this major milestone. Unfortunately, research



suggests that many communities take what can best be called a “one size fits all approach” in which all children and families, regardless of their individual needs, experience the same transition planning activities. These activities generally involve the kindergarten teacher talking to families after school has started.

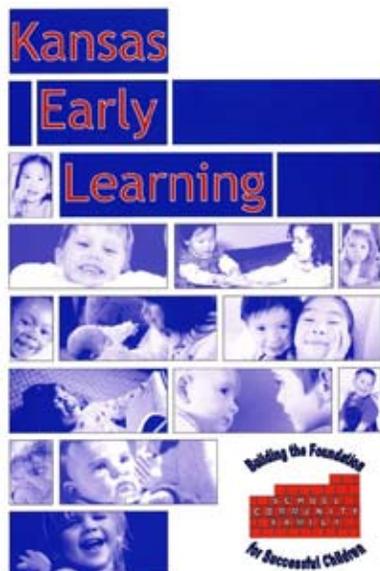
Going to the Big School continues on page 2



AEPS Aligned with Kansas Early Learning Document

In response to the publication of the new Kansas Early Learning Document (<http://kskits.org/publications/KSEarlyLngGuide.shtml>) Brookes Publishing Company announced that they have aligned the Assessment and Evaluation Programming System (AEPS) curriculum based assessment with the early learning standards section of this document. The resource is posted at www.aepsinteractive.com under "State Standards" or you can go directly to <http://www.aepsinteractive.com/correlations/AEPS-Kansas.pdf>.

See related training announcement on page 8 of this Newsletter.



Going to the Big School continued

Rather than being a one-time event that happens after the school year has started, the transition to kindergarten ought to be an ongoing process that starts long before the first day of school. Families, child care programs, preschool programs, kindergarten programs, and community leaders need to work together to develop a transition planning process that can meet the diverse needs of the children and families who reside in their community. This process should focus on helping key players form connections that allow them to share critical information that will support children and families throughout the transition period. These connections should link families to schools, children to teachers, and children to peers who will be in the same classroom. When families meet the kindergarten teacher before school starts, they can communicate important information about their child, as well as learn about the teacher's expectations for the kindergarten year. Chil-

dren who have the opportunity to meet their new teacher and visit the classroom feel more comfortable in their new environment. Similarly, children who know that one of their friends will be in their class are more excited about going to school. However, the effort to form linkages should not stop at the child-family-school level. It is also important that administrators and staff from preschool, child care programs, and kindergarten programs make connections with one another. In doing so, they learn important information related to topics such as program philosophy, expectations, and curriculum. This level of information sharing can help programs align curriculum and expectations in order to create continuity for the children as they move from one environment to another.

The transition to kindergarten represents a new beginning for children and their families. Effective communication and collaboration helps ensure that children, families, and programs engage in a planning process that leads to smooth transitions for all.

Autism Waiver Application Now Available

The final version of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Autism waiver application is posted for your review at <http://www.srskansas.org/hcp/css/Autism/AutismDraftProposal.pdf>. Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) submitted an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on July 5, 2007. The children to be served includes those with autism spectrum disorders from the age of diagnosis through age five. Children would be eligible to receive waiver services for a period of three years with an implementation date of January 1, 2008. The application

proposes to serve 25 families the first year, 50 families the second year, and 75 families in the third year, contingent on continuation of funding. The RFP for a contractor to conduct levels of care determination went out for bids in August with application due in September.

On July 31, 2007, SRS and CMS held a conference call to answer the first round of questions from CMS regarding the waiver application. SRS submitted responses to those questions by August 15, 2007, and as the newsletter went to publication, they are waiting for anticipated follow-up questions from CMS.

—submitted by Phoebe Rinkel, KITS

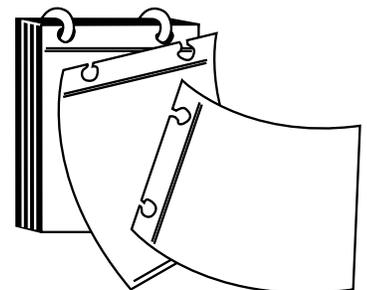
The Collaborative Calendar of Events

View at kskits.org/training

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT
10/4-6/07	<i>Kansas Speech Language Hearing Association Annual Conference, Topeka</i>	Dixie Heinrich, ksha@ksha.org , 620-793-6550
10/5/07	<i>Vision Screening & Assessment, Emporia</i>	http://kuahec.kumc.edu/vision.html
10/5/07	<i>Early Childhood Educator's Fall Conference: Conscious Discipline, Garden City</i>	Smart Start Southwest Kansas, 866-550-1510
10/12/07	<i>Kansas Physical Therapy Association Fall Conference, Junction City</i>	kpta@kpta.com , 785-233-5400
10/12/07 12/7/07	<i>Behavior is a Teaching Event: Positive Behavior Support (Level 1 - 10/12, Level 2 - 12/7), Salina,</i>	913-422-1700, khsa@kc.rr.com http://www.ksheadstart.org/calendar.html
10/19-20/07	<i>Kansas/Nebraska Joint Occupational Therapy Conference, Junction City</i>	Kansas Occupational Therapy Association, 913-904-0529
10/20/07	<i>KAAYC Annual Conference, Manhattan</i>	Mary DeLuccie, 785-532-1475, deluccie@humecc.ksu.edu
10/25/07	<i>Kansas Early Learning Document Training, Topeka</i>	Robin Bayless, rbayless@ku.edu , 620-421-6550 ext. 1618
10/26-27/07	<i>Kansas CEC Conference, Hutchinson</i>	http://www.kansascec.org
10/26-27/07	<i>Parent Leadership Conference, Topeka</i>	Glenda, 785-296-4045, glenda.chessher@srs.ks.gov
11/6-8/07	<i>31st Annual Governor's Conference for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Topeka</i>	Pam Noble, 877-530-5275 ext 1343, pnoble@kcs.org
11/7-9/07	<i>Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Workshop</i>	Anne Nielsen, 913-620-3045, anielsen@ksu.edu
11/9-10/07	<i>Mary Benbow Workshop, Wichita</i>	316-267-5437
11/15-16/07	<i>Kansas Head Start Association Conference, Salina</i>	http://www.ksheadstart.org/calendar_07conf.html
3/6-7/08	<i>KDEC Conference, Wichita</i>	kdec.org
6/17-20/08	<i>Kansas Inservice Training System Summer Institute, Lawrence</i>	http://kskits.org/training

Links to Other Training Calendars

- KCCTO child care or CDA advisor trainings: www.kccto.org/training.htm
- Families Together: www.families-together-inc.org
- HeadsUp Network for Head Start and early childhood: www.heads-up.org
- Children's Alliance Training Team: www.childdaily.org/training/training.html
- KACCRRRA: www.kaccrrra.org
- Capper Foundation: capper.easterseals.com
- Council for Exceptional Children: www.cec.sped.org/pd
- KSDE: ksde.org



Autism: A Hot Topic

While some of us traveled to the mountains or the lake this summer in an effort to keep cool, others elected to visit the desert to bask in the hot topic of autism. The Autism Society of America's 38th National Conference was held in Scottsdale, Arizona July 11-14. Fortunately the conference was held in a very nice air conditioned resort that featured overhead cool mist machines at the entrance where people waited for the air conditioned shuttle that would take them back to their air conditioned hotel. Whoever coined the term "dry heat" has not been in Scottsdale when the temperature hits 116 degrees.

Unlike any of the other professional conferences I have attended, half of the 1800 participants were people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or their family members. The conference agenda is designed to appeal to a diverse population of individuals who live and/or work with the challenges of ASD across the life span.

The tone and the energy of this conference are decidedly different from others I have attended. People are more animated, interactive, and excited about what they hear and see. Some are openly passionate about treatment issues based on personal or professional experience, sometimes both. Another unique aspect of this conference is the juxtaposition between the outcries for a cure ("Cure Autism Now!" "Defeat Autism Now!") and the demonstration of support and respect for adults living their lives with ASD. As I waited on the start of my session on "What to Do

When the Student with ASD Doesn't Meet the Criteria for Language Therapy", I watched a parade of mostly young backpack-toting men, eyes downcast, entering the room across the hall. Curious, I read the sign as I walked by: *The Hidden Curriculum of Sex: Healthy Sexuality on the Spectrum*. Clearly at this conference there is an emphasis on improving the quality of life for people with ASD across the life span.

The opening keynote speaker was Edward Carr, Ph.D., Psychology Professor from State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Carr is a researcher best known for his role in the development of Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavioral Support (PBS). Not surprisingly, his address on the topic *While We Wait for a Cure* advocated the use of scientifically proven practices to identify the function of problem behaviors, teach more adaptive replacement behaviors that will serve the same function, and create responsive environments where positive behavior leads to meaningful consequences. You can find more information on the use of these practices with young children with autism and other disabilities on our KITS website:

<http://kskits.org/ta/Packets/FunctionalBeh.shtml>

<http://www.kskits.org/ta/Packets/PosBehSupport.shtml>

Dr. Luke Tsai, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at the University of Michigan Medical School, who spoke on research findings regarding early intervention and adult outcomes in autism, echoed Dr. Carr's message. His review of research since the 1980's is not suggestive

of the availability of curative treatments for autism spectrum disorders. Positive changes are noted, Dr. Tsai pointed out, especially in younger children. But he cautioned parents and professionals to look at kids in their teens and young adults who have had years of treatment. Most still have autism. While we wait for the cure, Dr. Tsai challenges us to abandon the deficit model (changing what's wrong with the child) in favor of a strengths based model (changing ourselves and the environment to support the child in becoming independent).

Dr. Tsai is the parent of an adult son with autism. In addition to his many scholarly publications, he has written a briefing paper describing the spectrum of Pervasive Developmental Disorders for family members <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs20txt.htm>

Kansas was well represented at the ASA conference by the Kansas Instructional Support Network (KISN) who shared their statewide model for *Providing Quality Training for Educators Using Multiple Distance Education Technologies*. The KISN project is starting its third year of offering training for teams from districts that want to improve their services for students with autism spectrum disorders. KISN sponsored training events for the 2007-2008 school year can be viewed on the KITS collaborative calendar <http://www.kskits.org/~kskits/cgi-bin/CollCal/CollCalIndex.php>

Another highlight of the conference was attending the annual meeting of the Network of Autism Train-

Autism continued

ing Assistance Programs (NATTAP) and finding out that Kansas is sending a team to their first national conference in September.

<http://www.ocali.org/nattap2007/>
Thanks to Lee Stickle, co-director of the KISN Project and member of the conference planning committee, KITS was invited to join the team representing Kansas at the NATTAP Conference. Teams will develop action plans and strategies for increasing the capacity of their state to more effectively support students with ASD.

The official release of The National Teacher Competencies in ASD is scheduled to take place at the 2007 NATTAP Conference. The competencies have been developed by a National Standards Committee of experts on ASD from across the nation and are currently being reviewed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for approval for higher education programs. The project is supported by a grant from the Autism Society of America.

In a separate but related effort, the National Autism Center's National Standards Project announced the anticipated publication of their report this fall. Proposed standards will be based on a systematic review of the literature on educational and behavioral treatments likely to be implemented by school systems for students with ASD under the age of 22 years. You can read more about the project and watch for the release of the standards at

<http://www.nationalautismcenter.org>

A new ASD resource with tremendous potential was unveiled by The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) in partnership with the Autism Society of America and the

Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders Network. The Autism Internet Modules (AIM) project will develop a series of 60 online modules on ASD including characteristics, diagnosis, interventions and supports, transition and employment. Modules are being developed by experts in ASD from across the nation. All modules will be available in an open-source format to any computer or digital telephone user at no cost. Check out the site and help the project evaluate the first modules:

<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/>

As one might expect, exhibitors were a major attraction of the ASA conference. I was able to preview new materials to add to the autism spectrum disorders collection of the KITS Early Childhood Resource Center (email ECRC coordinator Kim Page for a listing of current holdings related to ASD: kpage@ku.edu). In addition I previewed (and have since ordered) the free resources available for family members and practitioners through a campaign aimed at early identification and early intervention sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called "Learn the Signs. Act Early."

<http://0-www.cdc.gov.mill1.sjlibrary.org:80/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm>

If this sounds like a conference you might be interested in attending, mark your calendar now for the next ASA National Conference in Orlando, Florida on July 9-12, 2008. Autism will still be a hot topic, but you can cool off at SeaWorld.

—submitted by Phoebe Rinkel, KITS

Websites

The Inclusion Network
<http://inclusion.org/>

Word Families and Rhyme Words
<http://aslp.byu.edu/BCulatta/projectcall/rhymewordslist.html>

LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile
<http://www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/llap/pdf.html>

Early Childhood.com
<http://www.earlychildhood.com/>

Kid's Farm
<http://www.kidsfarm.com/>

Animals of the Rainforest
<http://animalsoftherainforest.com/>

Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support - Social Stories and Comic Book Conversations
<http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/socialcarolgray.html>

Social Stories
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mdenoncourt/ss.htm>

Shawnee County Infant Toddler Services at TARC, Inc.

Editor's note: Shawnee County Infant Toddler Services at TARC, Inc. is one of two preschool and one infant-toddler program to receive the 2006-07 Best Practice Award (see <http://kskits.org/resources/#ApplicationBestPractice>)

The Shawnee County Infant Toddler Services at TARC, Inc. was awarded the "Application of Best Practice in Early Childhood Services" recognition for their utilization of a coaching model for delivery of early intervention services to children and families they serve. The model is based on extensive evidence of its effectiveness in promoting positive outcomes for very young children with disabilities and their families.

The Shawnee County Infant Toddler Services has a Director and an Assistant Director of Children's Services and three service delivery teams made up of 25 professionals with training in the areas of early childhood special education (ECSE), occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech/language pathology (SLP), nursing, psychology, nutrition, social work and assistive technology. We had the challenge of training these staff and altering services to serve a wide variety of families when we switched to a strength-based program in the fall of 2005. During 2006 we served approximately 475 children.

When a referral is made to the program, the intake person asks for strengths of the child and family within the context of the concern that facilitated the referral being made. These questions reflect the importance we place on input from the adults involved in the child's life. This then begins the journey within a strength-based program.

The initial evaluation process changed from utilizing the Hawaii Early Learning Profile, where we reported back to the caregiver the developmental level of their child, to play-based assessment where we identify what the child is currently doing. Eligibility is now defined as a "yes" or "no" question, rather than an explanation of all that a child is NOT doing that they SHOULD be doing.

To best identify a child's strengths the Asset Based Matrix was implemented as an additional assessment after a child qualifies for services. Every family service coordinator (FSC) as part of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development process now uses it. This matrix provides information not only on the strengths of the child, but of the whole family.

The role of FSC (or primary home visitor) is fulfilled by an ECSE, social worker, OT, or SLP based on the primary needs of the child served. Each FSC is responsible for a caseload of approximately 15 families. All team members are responsible for providing consultation or ongoing follow-up to children needing their expertise within their team.

Each visit that a FSC has is based on building on the current strengths of the child and encouraging new skills within favorite activities and not on "fixing" what the child is not doing. With the use of the Asset Based Matrix, the FSC is familiar with what is important to

that family. Learning occurs within the visit based on how the child and adult learn and it focuses on the child and adult's strengths.

By utilizing coaching to enhance staff ability to support each family served and the other professionals on the team, the strength-based model altered the focus of all interactions. Team meetings went from business focused to caseload focused. Each FSC comes to the team meeting asking for input on a particular family they serve, allowing for competence and confidence building of the team members. Brainstorming within the team meeting encourages building on the learning opportunities the FSC is able to share about a family. It also offers opportunities for identifying when a team member needs to go out and consult on a visit with the family to help problem solve ways to increase participation in daily activities for that child.

Services are provided within the natural environment of each child served. Visits may be done in the child's home, foster home, childcare setting, or a community activity setting such as a playgroup. All services are individualized based on the priorities of the child's family and the activities in which the family and child participate on a frequent basis.

—submitted by Jo Mach,
Occupational Therapist and Cathie
Huckins, Director of Children Services
at TARC

The Early Childhood Resource Center has a New Look!

The ECRC has a fresh new feel to its site. The vibrant colors add excitement and energy to the pages. Even the search page has a new look. The children's faces evoke a feeling of joy and tranquility as the patron searches through the holdings. If you haven't seen the new web site design for the ECRC, go to kskits.org/ecrc. Of course, the magnets and brochures had to be updated also. If you don't have the new ones, call 620-421-6550, ext. 1651 to have the new magnets and brochure mailed to your address.

—submitted by Kim Page, ECRC Coordinator

Marratech

KanREN is a non-profit consortium of colleges, universities, school districts and other organizations in Kansas, organized for the purpose of facilitating communication among them, and providing themselves with connectivity to the Internet via a statewide TCP/IP network. Marratech is one of the communication systems facilitated by KanREN. At this time, up to twenty-five seats are available for desktop video conferencing for KanREN members. Check with your administrator to see if your district or agency is part of the KanREN consortium. If so, you can use the Marratech for desktop webconferencing at NO COST!

Desktop video conferencing has really taken off in recent years. As the term implies, you are conferencing from your desktop. All you need is a computer, audio, camera (optional), and sufficient bandwidth. Desktop video conferencing can be used for more than just discussions. Marratech allows you to share information, ideas and documents. Your meetings are recordable so if you have a member missing, he/she can catch up later. What this means for early childhood professionals in Kansas is being able to spend more time helping children (and each other) and less time traveling. Geographical locations and distance barriers have been eliminated. Potential uses could be:

- Project meetings
- Small group workshops
- Professional development
- International projects – collaboration with people abroad
- Demonstrations
- Virtual learning environments

More people can be exposed to more ideas. The KITS staff has begun to test possible uses for Marratech as a tool to support training and technical assistance needs across the state. Watch your Newsletters and list serv emails for more information!

—submitted by Kim Page, ECRC Coordinator



Contact ECRC:

phone:

620-421-6550 ext. 1638
800-362-0390 ext. 1638

email:

resourcecenter@ku.edu

web:

kskits.org/ecrc

fax:

620-421-0671

mailing address:

2601 Gabriel
Parsons, KS 67357



**Training for
Early Childhood
Professionals and
Families**



Contact KITS by...

...phone:

620-421-6550 ext. 1618

800-362-0390 ext. 1618

...fax:

620-421-0671

...email: kskits@ku.edu

...web: kskits.org

**Kansas Early Learning Document Training
October 25, 9:00-4:00 (Registration 8:30-9:00)**

The Kansas Early Learning: Building the Foundation for Successful Children (KSELD) document is hot off the press. This document promotes learning for all young children in Kansas by providing a learning continuum of skills, knowledge, and abilities that lead and support kindergarten readiness and later school success. A day long regional training has been created to provide an overview of this document and illustrate how it can be used to strengthen early childhood programs.

In the afternoon, local teams will have an opportunity to go through a curriculum alignment activity, allowing them to closely examine their local curriculum with the standards section of the KSELD. Teams are encouraged to bring their curriculum, or samples of their curriculum with them if they plan on participating in the afternoon session.

Please bring your own copy of the KSELD. Download at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1741>

Other dates and locations will be announced at a later time. Register at <http://kskits.org/training/KSDocumentation.shtml>

KANSAS INSERVICE TRAINING SYSTEM
LIFE SPAN INSTITUTE AT PARSONS
2601 GABRIEL
PARSONS KS 67357