

# KANSAS INSERVICE



# TRAINING SYSTEM NEWSLETTER

*Training for Early Childhood Professionals and Families*

Volume 13, Issue 4

Fall 2004



## Head Start & Services for Children with Disabilities Meeting Attendees

This annual meeting will now be a strand of the Kansas Head Start Association Conference which will be held Nov. 15-16, 2004 at the Wichita Marriott.

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## Teachers: Planting the Seeds for a Better Tomorrow

Written by Kim Hughes  
2004 KITS Summer Institute Presenter

Teaching is world-changing work. Children crave thoughtful, caring adults who can nurture and challenge them, coach and guide them, understand and care about them. Classrooms can be places of possibility and transformation for not only young people, but also for teachers. Good teachers marvel at what children bring to our world ... they love to watch them open up, risk, grow and become more competent and powerful in an ever complex, always changing world. Working with children helps many adults be their best self... for those who love teaching or love what happens to them when they work with young children.



Each year teachers have the opportunity to nurture and motivate, challenge and stimulate, and generate a thirst for knowledge and a desire to become passionate, lifelong learners within the minds, souls and bodies of their students! Those who choose a life's work in teaching share ever-changing images filled with wonder and an abiding sense of challenge. We are fueled by a passion within our soul to do whatever it takes to intentionally, thoughtfully and deliberately nurture children's

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## 2004 Report Card on American Education

While other states received a rating of “incomplete,” Kansas ranks 9th in the nation in academic achievement. Nationally, 73% of the 8<sup>th</sup>-graders taking the 2003 National Association of Educational Performance (NAEP) mathematics exam performed below the proficiency level. Thirty-two percent of the 8<sup>th</sup>-graders taking the exam performed below the basic level.

## Autism Conference December 2-3 at Kansas City Airport Hilton

Temple Grandin and her mother, Eustacia Cutler, along with Raun Melmed, Catherine Faherty, and Jerry Newport are speakers at this year’s Autism Conference December 2nd and 3rd in Kansas City, Missouri.

Eustacia Cutler wrote a story about raising the non-verbal, often violent child that Temple Grandin was 50 years ago. “A Thorn in My Pocket” captures the years it took to nurture her through tantrums, protect her from the labels of the 1950s, and to keep her from being institutionalized.

Catherine Faherty works on weekly diagnostic evaluations at the TEACCH Center at the Univer-

sity of North Carolina. Catherine is Greek-American and founded the Greek Autism Project in 1995. She has written “Aspergers...What Does It Mean to Me?” which provides children with high functioning autism and Aspergers, and their families and teachers, a method to understand the effects of autism in their daily lives.

For more information, contact the Autism Asperger Resource Center, 913-588-5988, [www.autismasperger.org/conferences.html](http://www.autismasperger.org/conferences.html)

## No Child Left Behind Toolkit Available Online

To help parents, No Child Left Behind gives them a chance to strengthen their involvement in their child’s education. See [www.ed4allkids.org/NCLB/](http://www.ed4allkids.org/NCLB/) for more information.

## Scrub Club for Kids Encourages Hand Washing

Families and teachers now have a resource to help kids learn better hand washing techniques and help stop the spread of food borne illnesses and the flu. The website has a “Webisode” featuring the Scrub Club kids battling villains “BAC” and “Sal Monella,” interactive games and even a theme song. According to the U.S. Center for Disease

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### NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor: Robin K. Bayless, M.A.

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

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# The Collaborative Calendar of Events

For a more extensive calendar look at [kskits.org/ktc](http://kskits.org/ktc)

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT PERSON
10/21-22/04	<i>Infant Mental Health, Salina</i>	Peggy Graves 785-825-4861
*10/29/04	<i>Preventing Problem Behavior in Young Children through Positive Behavioral Support, Dodge City</i>	Robin Bayless <a href="mailto:rbayless@ku.edu">rbayless@ku.edu</a>
11/1/04	<i>Infant Mental Health, Hays</i>	Kris Schulte, 785-625-3257
11/4/04	<i>Infant Mental Health, Oakley</i>	Melanie Baalman 785-672-3125 ext 181
*11/15-16/04	<i>Kansas Head Start Association/Head Start &amp; Services for Children with Disabilities Meeting, Wichita</i>	Mary Baskett 913-422-1700
11/17/04	<i>Mid-America Conference on Children with Special Needs, KC, MO</i>	816-931-8687
11/20/04	<i>Infant Mental Health, Beloit</i>	Misty Elder 785-243-9345
11/30-12/1/04	<i>Parent Involvement Conference, Kansas City, Missouri</i>	866-711-6711
12/2-3/04	<i>Autism Conference, Kansas City, Missouri</i>	913-588-5988
12/18/04	<i>Infant Mental Health, Dodge City (date tentative)</i>	Lorna Ford, 620-227-8344
1/13-14/05	<i>Infant Mental Health, Topeka (date tentative)</i>	Kathy Johnson 785-233-7374
2/12/05	<i>Families Together Statewide Inclusion Conference: Together We Can Learn, Overland Park, <a href="http://www.familiestogetherinc.org">www.familiestogetherinc.org</a></i>	913-287-1970
*2/24-26/05	<i>Kansas Division for Early Childhood (KDEC) Conference The Changing Faces of Early Childhood Overland Park, <a href="http://www.kdec.org">www.kdec.org</a></i>	Peggy Miksch <a href="mailto:peggymiksch@usd475.org">peggymiksch@usd475.org</a> 785-762-7859
3/9-10/05	<i>KSDE Law Conference/Kansas Assoc. of Special Ed. Administrators Topeka</i>	Carol LeDuc <a href="mailto:CLeduc@ksde.org">CLeduc@ksde.org</a>
4/21-22/05	<i>Third Annual Statewide Kansas Fatherhood Summit Wichita</i>	Tammy Aguilar 785-368-6350
*4/22/05	<i>Preventing Problem Behavior in Young Children through Positive Behavioral Support, Salina</i>	Robin Bayless 620-421-6550 ext. 1618
*4/27-29/05	<i>KSDE Annual Conference/TDAP Conference, All Systems Go: A Systematic Approach to Teaching &amp; Learning, Wichita, <a href="http://www.ksde.org/annualconference">www.ksde.org/annualconference</a></i>	Barbara Kirkegaard <a href="mailto:bkirkegaard@ksde.org">bkirkegaard@ksde.org</a>
*6/21-24/05	<i>KITS Summer Institute: Curriculum as the Basis for Quality IFSPs/IEPs, Lawrence</i>	Misty Goosen <a href="mailto:mistyg@ku.edu">mistyg@ku.edu</a>

## \* KITS sponsored or co-sponsored events

- **KCCTO child care** or **CDA** advisor trainings: 785-532-7197 or 1-800-227-3578, web [www.kccto.org/index2.html](http://www.kccto.org/index2.html)
- **Families Together Family Enrichment Weekends, Parent Networking Conferences** and **Families Together Mini-Conferences**: 1-800-264-6343 in Topeka; 1-888-815-6364 in Wichita; 1-888-820-6364 in Garden City; 1-877-499-5369 or 913-287-1970 in Kansas City, web [www.familiestogetherinc.com](http://www.familiestogetherinc.com)
- **HeadsUp Network** distance training for the **Head Start** and **early childhood** community: 1-800-438-4888, web [www.heads-up.org](http://www.heads-up.org)
- **The Children's Alliance Training Team**: Debra Childress, 785-235-5437, web [www.childally.org/training/training.html](http://www.childally.org/training/training.html)
- **KACCRRRA** training: [www.kaccrra.org](http://www.kaccrra.org)
- **The Capper Foundation**: [www.capper.org](http://www.capper.org)
- **Council for Exceptional Children**: [www.cec.sped.org/pd](http://www.cec.sped.org/pd)
- **Kansas State Dept. of Education Student Support Services**: [online.ksde.org/calendar/calendar.asp](http://online.ksde.org/calendar/calendar.asp)

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desire to learn, thus watching them blossom into knowledge seekers... knowledge lovers!

Imagine, if you will, a field plowed, planted and watered. The soil of the curriculum is rich, the seeds fertile and sprinkled with best practices, and the water plentiful and rich in providing a multidisciplinary amount of nutrients. The teacher serves as the sun, giving warmth and light to the tiny seeds causing them to develop, flourish and yield a rich harvest. Our sun's rays serve as a catalyst for tapping student's full potential, sowing and reaping higher student achievement and nurturing a love of learning.

Further reflection of this cultivating concept lends a metaphoric ideal that the *celebration* of student's individuality lends a rich beauty to the classroom's soil. A garden of a single variety may be lovely, yet the exquisite beauty of variegated flowers, each blooming in triumphal glory, is magnificent. The many colors, textures, and scents of the different flowers symbolize the diversity of our students. Each bloom's color, unique in its sim-

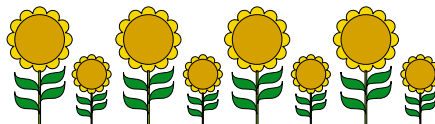
ilarity and beauty, is like our students who bring various opinions and cultural experiences, ideas and reflections, strengths and vulnerabilities to our classrooms each year.

Educators must be the ever-patient gardener, consistently and conscientiously digging for more methods of inspiration, weeding out lessons of insignificance, and nourishing the souls of self-esteem. Certainly some of our flowers will bloom early; however, we never know when one pesky weed may burst forward to add a sense of magnificence to the garden. Unexpected splashes of color can suddenly burst from its edges; unexpected patterns can materialize and supply the garden with a sense of purpose and possibility. Strength in teaching cultivates wholeness in student's growth and development. The beauty of the garden may last for a fleeting moment of time; yet the real strength in education lies in the flower's roots. The flower may die, but the roots nourish ever-lasting knowledge and students' quest to be lifelong learners. Roots ground the learner, giving a foundation and

meaning to all the student learns.

Teachers find seeds of their teaching contributions and accomplishments everywhere. Teachers see it daily in the eyes of the young child experiencing the joy of knowledge as he mixes yellow and red to manufacture orange and in the exuberance of a beginning reader discovering that letters make sounds, pictures give clues, and the world of a reader is a wonderful place to be. Carefully interweaving fosters a love of lifelong learning and an excitement to build upon educational successes.

Teachers make a growth provoking difference in the lives of their students and families, by ensuring that young children bud, grow, bloom and flourish in the rich soil of our classrooms. In the words of Carl Gustav Jung: "One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but WARMTH is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child."



## Positive Behavior Support Workshops

There are still openings for the KITS sponsored, *Preventing Problem Behavior in Young Children through Positive Behavioral Support* workshops in Dodge City on October 29, 2004 and Salina on April 22, 2005. See [kskits.org/conferences/pbs](http://kskits.org/conferences/pbs) or contact Robin Bayless, [rbayless@ku.edu](mailto:rbayless@ku.edu), 620-421-6550 ext. 1618 for more information.



## Supporting Kids Naturally

Our network has truly gone through a transformation in our attitudes and practices regarding Early Intervention Services in the past two years. We have always preached collaboration within our teams, but sometimes more in theory than in practice. So we decided to get serious about it and implement some changes that would enhance our services to children, as well as our providers' knowledge of the whole child.

Our Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) had identified many barriers preventing us from using a more collaborative approach. One of the biggest factors came from the way our network was set up. At the time, our ICC contracted with various agencies and individuals to provide services. Due to this arrangement, time, or lack of it, billing issues, and being able to coordinate and talk with others were huge hindrances. Our providers and ICC staff wanted to move toward a more cohesive teaming model. We went from using a variety of providers for evaluations and service provision to three core teams. Each team consisted of an ECSE teacher, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, and a speech-language pathologist. The three teams shared a dietitian and social worker. Other disciplines, such as vision specialist, were pulled in on an "as-needed" basis. These service providers developed into truly unified teams, using consultation, co-treatment, collaboration, and role-release as methods to implement quality services. In

addition, each of the three teams met at least once a month for collaboration time to share concerns and learn from one another. These teams became transdisciplinary in all respects, and began using a routines based approach in working with our children and their families. Training for our teams was integral to these changes.

Our routines based approach was integrated with our transdisciplinary approach. We found that one service delivery model would not work for all children; so we adjust our level of support for each child and family to reflect their individual needs. The family prioritizes the outcomes for their child, and services are built around supporting the family in achieving these outcomes. Our providers have become skilled at writing outcomes that focus on activities within the child's daily routines based on the parent's concerns, while also including many components of development. These skills can only be achieved when providers have a good sense of a transdisciplinary approach and value the family's input and ability to carry through. We have been pleased with the result of our efforts, and feel that we are very successful in supporting families and children more naturally and efficiently.

—submitted by Dena Bracciano, Coordinator, Douglas County Infant-Toddler Coordinating Council, Winner of the 2003-04 Exemplary Practice Award for Early Intervention Networks.

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Best of all, Part C service providers and Part B special education and related service staff can attend at **NO COST** to their program if they attend the "disability strand" only. KITS will pay the \$25 fee!

Register online at [kskits.org/conferences/headstart](http://kskits.org/conferences/headstart) or [ksheadstart.org/kansas/register.html](http://ksheadstart.org/kansas/register.html)



- Complete your personal information.
- Click on the button "Part B or Part C Provider".
- Click on the button "Option 2".
- Submit.
- KITS will pay the fee!

Questions can be directed to Vera Lynne Stroup-Rentier, [vlsrent@ku.edu](mailto:vlsrent@ku.edu), 620-421-6550 ext. 1768. If you are unable to register online contact Vera at [vlsrent@ku.edu](mailto:vlsrent@ku.edu) or Kansas Head Start Association at [khsa@swbell.net](mailto:khsa@swbell.net)

## Dr. Rick Gaskill - Infant Mental Health November 4, 2004 in Oakley

Neuroscience has made some profound discoveries in the past few years about the development of a child's brain. These discoveries are changing our understanding and our perspective on how to best nurture and enhance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of our children. While brain development is an extremely sensitive and complex process, research tells us that the healthiest enrichment activities are clearly within the reach of parents, teachers, and caregivers. When parents, teachers, and caregivers understand this process, they are better able to create an environment that will most benefit the children in their care.

**Dr. Gaskill** has worked in community mental health for nearly 30 years and is currently the Clinical Director and Deputy Director of Sumner Mental Health Center. In his work with children, Dr. Gaskill has developed numerous programs for children and their parents; including child development classes, parenting classes, child-parent relationship training, attachment enhancement treatment groups, therapeutic alternative

schools, therapeutic preschools, after school programs, and juvenile offender programs. Dr. Gaskill is on adjunct faculty at Wichita State University where he teaches play therapy classes, child psychopathology, and supervises play therapy practicum students. Recently Dr. Gaskill was named a Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy in Houston Texas.

One-half hour college credit is available through Friends University. For further information contact Kathy Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer, [kko@nkesc.org](mailto:kko@nkesc.org), 785-672-3125.

Registration deadline is October 28, 2004. Contact Melanie Baalman, Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, 703 W. 2nd, Oakley, KS 67748, [mbaalman@nkesc.org](mailto:mbaalman@nkesc.org), 785-672-3125 ext. 181 to register.

EDITORS NOTE: There are nine Infant Mental Health workshops in the next few months across Kansas. See *The Collaborative Calendar of Events* on page 3 of this newsletter or [www.kaccrra.org](http://www.kaccrra.org) for more information on the other workshops.



## Parent Involvement Conference

**Nov. 30 – Dec. 1, 2004**

On November 30 and December 1, the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), along with eight other federally funded PIRCs in Kansas and Missouri is sponsoring a bi-state Parent Involvement Conference at the Downtown Marriott in Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Karen Mapp with the Institute for Responsive Education from Boston is the keynote speaker on Tuesday and will talk about the latest research on parent involvement.

Dr. Kathy Thornburg, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri will address early childhood parent involvement issues on Wednesday. More than 100 concurrent sessions will focus on five strands – early childhood education, family literacy, parent involvement policies and practices, working with diversity, and No Child Left Behind.

The first 100 Birth to Preschool Title I and/or Title III parents who sign up will have their conference registration fee (\$120.00) waived. Please see the website for further details – [www.kpirc.org/Conference.htm](http://www.kpirc.org/Conference.htm) – or call toll free 866-711-6711 if you have questions.

—submitted by Nancy Kraft,  
Kansas Parent Information Resource  
Center

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Control and the National Center for Health Statistics, each year more than 164 million school days are lost due to illness. Besides the obvious reasons for not wanting kids to miss education in school, there are the other issues of parents having to miss work to go to the doctor and care for the sick child. Proper hand washing is the single most important thing we can do to keep kids from getting sick and spreading illness. See [www.nsf.org/consumer/newsroom/kit\\_scrub\\_club.asp](http://www.nsf.org/consumer/newsroom/kit_scrub_club.asp)

## Good News for Pre-K Programs

According to “Quality Pre-Kindergarten for All: State Legislative Report,” support for early education programs is increasing. Fifteen states increased funding for pre-K by \$205 million making programs available to about 60,000 more children. Although this is good news, seven states decreased funding and 10 don’t offer pre-K at all (reported in the Trust for Early Education, a project of the Pew Charitable Trusts).

An important new ally to high-quality pre-K is the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which passed a resolution, “Quality Pre-K for All” at its annual meeting in Boston this summer. See their website at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)

—submitted by Marnie Campbell, Kansas State Department of Education

## Celebrations and Holidays

Some early childhood programs seem to build their curriculum around holidays, just going from one to the other on the calendar. We don’t take that approach, but we do like to celebrate! We are just as likely to celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday by enjoying *Green Eggs and Ham* (Random House 1976) as we are to celebrate Presidents’ Day by reading *Just Like Abraham Lincoln* (Houghton Mifflin 1964).

We also honor the traditions of all the children and families in our program. We believe in the importance of family traditions and holidays in strengthening the connection between home and school.

Upon enrollment, we gather information from families about the various heritages and traditions that make up our home-school community. With this knowledge, we plan activities to reflect the diverse cultures of our group and to foster respect for their cultures.

All preparations involve children in hands-on activities. Kids are invited to explore the special objects and foods that reflect different traditions. We encourage each of you as families to join us in our celebrations by sharing family traditions, recipes for holiday foods, and any special items that reflect their heritage and family history.

Adapted with permission from Diffily, D., & Morrison, K. (Eds.). *Family-friendly communication for early childhood programs* (p. 44). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## Curriculum as the Basis for Quality IFSPs/IEPs Annual KITS Summer Institute

The 12th Annual KITS Summer Institute is taking shape! The topic of Summer Institute this year is *Curriculum as the Basis for Quality IFSPs/IEPs*. Plan to be at Burge Union, on the campus of the University of Kansas, June 21-24, 2005! Watch the KITS website at [kskits.org](http://kskits.org) under “Training and Calendar” for more information.

# The Screening Process: Common Questions

Screening is an important activity that is carried out in various ways across the state of Kansas. The Local Education Agency (LEA) is responsible for implementing screening activities to identify children (birth through 21) who may need special education. Screening involves the initial collection of information about a child to help determine if further testing is needed, and if so, in what developmental areas. Since screening information alone cannot be used to determine eligibility or placement in special education, the LEA has some wiggle room in how it conducts screening activities and who it allows to conduct them. The standard for screening is not set as high as it is for formal evaluation activities. Given the differences in how LEA's collect screening information, the KITS project often receives pleas for clarification. What follows is an attempt to answer some of those questions.

## **Question 1: Should the LEA use a certain screening tool or method?**

No. State regulations do not identify specific tools or methods to be used in screening activities. However, state regulations specify that screening procedures used must meet certain requirements:

*K.A.R. 91-40-7. Child find.*

*(b) Each board's policies and procedures under this regulation*

*shall include age-appropriate screening procedures that meet the following requirements:*

*(1) For children younger than five years of age, observations, instruments, measures, and techniques that disclose any potential disabilities or developmental delays that indicate a need for evaluation, including hearing and vision screening;*

*(2) for children from ages five through 21, observations, instruments, measures, and techniques that disclose any potential exceptionality and indicate a need for evaluation, including hearing and vision screening as required by state law; and*

*(3) implementation of procedures ensuring the early identification and assessment of disabilities in children.*

## **Question 2: Who is allowed to conduct early childhood screenings? Are certain credentials required?**

Kansas and Federal regulations do not require specific credentials for individuals who are involved in the screening process. There is no mention regarding specified credentials for screening in either the state or federal regulations. However, this issue is briefly addressed in the evaluation section under, "who is allowed to test":

*K.A.R. 91-40-9. Evaluation procedures.*

*(a) If tests or other assessment instruments are used as a part of the evaluation or reevaluation of an exceptional child, the agency shall ensure that the following requirements are met:*

*(4) Any standardized tests that are given to a child shall meet the following criteria:*

*(A) Have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used; and*

*(B) be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the tests.*

In other words, any time a formal standardized test, including a standardized screening instrument is used, it must be administered by someone who is trained and knowledgeable of that instrument in accordance with the procedures of the tests. Some standardized screening tests require minimum training, others require more. In general, screening instruments do not need the same level of extensive training as formal diagnostic tests (some of these measures require specific degrees, such as a school psychology degree). Training for screening instruments can often be done "in-house" by other staff experienced with these instruments. The following example illustrates



how someone may or may not be qualified in administering a standardized screening instrument:

*If a person has not been trained in administering the DIAL-3, that person would not be qualified to give that screening instrument. If a person is trained by LEA staff, or other qualified personnel in accordance with the producer of the DIAL-3, they would be qualified to administer the test. Regardless of professional status, a person would be qualified to administer screening tools as long as they have been appropriately trained in that tool or method.*

It is important to remember, standardized instruments are not the only means of collecting screening information. The LEA can use information from the family doctor, local health department, or others who routinely collect information that suggests the child might be at risk for having a disability. Such information can be used in lieu of formalized screening information collected by the LEA.

### **Question 3: Should the LEA screen a child who is transitioning from the Infant Toddler Program (Part C) into the Preschool Program (Part B)?**

No. A child who has been receiving services from Infant Toddler Services (Part C) is already known to be a child who is at risk for having a disability. Children transitioning into the Preschool Program (Part B) must undergo an initial evaluation to determine if the child is eligible and in need of special education and related services. Local programs (both Part C and Part B) may determine how much Part C information will be used for this initial evaluation.

### **Question 4: Why is the government so lax concerning what and who can collect screening information?**

The purpose of screening is to determine if more testing is necessary. It is not used to make a formal life changing decision. By allowing the LEA to collect and use screening information from a variety

of sources, children can get through the evaluation process much more quickly and receive special education in a timely manner. Allowing appropriately trained non-professionals to participate in collecting screening information, the LEA will free up valuable time for the trained professional staff to concentrate more heavily in the formal evaluation process where they are needed most.

### **Question 5: Should the LEA accept anything as screening information?**

No. Screening information is important. It sets the stage for future evaluations, and keeps the district from conducting unnecessary evaluations. There should be a fairly high correlation between children who fail screening and those who go on to qualify for special education services. So if an LEA routinely accepts screening information from a collaborative partner and high numbers of these children do not go on to qualify for special education services, the LEA and the collaborative partner may need to reevaluate the screening procedure. The LEA may ask the collaborative partner to add to or change the screening process in order to get a higher correlation between children who fail the screening and those who qualify for special education.

While the correlation between screening and evaluation should be relatively high, there **should not** be an exact match. To be effective, the screening process should “over identify” some children (false positive). There should be a handful of children who fail the screening and later are found to be typically developing and not eligible for services. The ideal correlation between screening and assessment should be around 85 to 90 percent. If 50 out of 100 kids fail the screening and later do not qualify for special education then the screening process is not stringent enough and is therefore inefficient. If 10 to 15 out of 100 kids fail the screening and later do not qualify for special education, the screening process is over identifying the correct number of children. If only 2 out of 100 kids fail the screening and later do not qualify for special education, then the screening instruments are too intensive. In this example there is a high probability that some chil-

*Screening continued on page 10*

*Screening continued from page 9*

children were found to be typically developing during the screening, when in fact they may actually have a disability (false negative). The results of false negatives are more serious than false positives, which is why the screening process is better if it over identifies a small number of children for further evaluation.

Overall, screening tools and methods should be reliable, valid, inexpensive, quick and easy to administer. They should over identify a small portion of children who later go on for a more formal evaluation and are found

to be typically developing. However, screening should be stringent enough to keep the LEA from doing large numbers of unnecessary evaluations. Screening information can come from a variety of sources, and those conducting screenings must be appropriately trained. LEA's may find it beneficial to talk with their collaborative partners about specific tools and methods, to ensure a good match between the screening process and the evaluation process exists.

—submitted by Misty D. Goosen,  
Ed.S., KITS Project Coordinator



## Legos™ and Pla-Doh™ A Dynamic Duo

Children are not born with fine motor control. The process does begin early, when infants and toddlers reach for and grasp objects. But development and coordination of wrist and finger muscles—necessary for handwriting later—come slowly and require lots of practice.

Adults can help children develop fine motor control by providing appropriate materials. Pla-Doh™ and Legos™ are two of the best materials.

One of the many skills learned through playing with Pla-Doh™ and Legos™ is the development of strength and dexterity in hands. Simply through pinching, rolling, and shaping Pla-Doh™, children develop strength in finger and wrist muscles. Connecting Legos™ together develops hand muscles and the pincer grasp, the touching of the thumb and fingers that is important for holding pens, pencils, silverware, brushes, and other tools.

Pla-Doh™ and Legos™ are both open-ended materials. Children can experiment with these however they choose. These materials not only help develop fine motor skills but also provide opportunities for practice and discovery of many math-related skills.

Pla-Doh™ can be made at home or purchased. Legos™ are a considerable investment but worth it. Both materials provide hours of enjoyment, many ways to enhance fine motor skills, and great opportunities for intellectual development.

Diffily, D., & Morrison, K. (Eds.). *Family-friendly communication for early childhood programs* (p. 40). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Reprinted with permission.



## New Materials Available for Check-out



### Early Childhood Resource Center

620-421-6550 ext. 1651 or 1-800-362-0390 ext. 1651

email: [resourcecenter@ku.edu](mailto:resourcecenter@ku.edu)

web: [kskits.org/ecrc](http://kskits.org/ecrc)

PM-923 Dancing With Words; Helping Students Love Language Through Authentic Vocabulary Instruction

PM-924 Dual Language Development & Disorders; A Handbook on Bilingualism & Second Language Learning, Volume III

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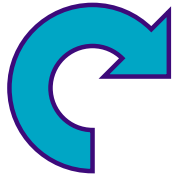
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## Contacting KITS:

**In Parsons:** KITS/KUCDD  
2601 Gabriel  
Parsons, KS 67357  
620-421-6550 or 1-800-362-0390  
fax 620-421-6550 ext. 1702



**KITS web address:** [kskits.org](http://kskits.org)  
**KITS email address:** [kskits@ku.edu](mailto:kskits@ku.edu)

**Early Childhood Resource Center web address:**  
[kskits.org/ecrc](http://kskits.org/ecrc)

**Statewide Collaborative Early Childhood  
Training Calendar web address:**  
[kskits.org/ktc](http://kskits.org/ktc)

- Dr. David P. Lindeman, Director, ext. 1713, [lindeman@ku.edu](mailto:lindeman@ku.edu)
- Vera Lynne Stroup-Rentier, Technical Assistance Coordinator, ext. 1768, [vlrent@ku.edu](mailto:vlrent@ku.edu)
- Robin Bayless, Program Assistant, ext. 1618, [rbayless@ku.edu](mailto:rbayless@ku.edu)
- Tammie Benham, ECRC Coordinator, ext. 1638, [tammieb@ku.edu](mailto:tammieb@ku.edu)
- Helen Erickson, ECRC Assistant Coordinator, ext. 1651, [heleneri@ku.edu](mailto:heleneri@ku.edu)

**In Lawrence:** University of Kansas  
521 J.R. Pearson Hall, Bldg. #80  
1122 W. Campus Rd.  
Lawrence, KS 66045-3101  
fax 785-864-3983



- Misty Goosen, Project Coordinator, 785-864-0725, [mistyg@ku.edu](mailto:mistyg@ku.edu)
- Chelie Nelson, Technical Assistance Specialist, 785-864-5550, [chelie@ku.edu](mailto:chelie@ku.edu)

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U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 56  
Parsons, KS 67357

Kansas Inservice Training System  
Life Span Institute at Parsons  
2601 Gabriel  
Parsons, KS 67357

