Infant-Toddler Mentoring Program Manual

Introduction to CAECTI's Mentoring Program

Philosophy and Definition

The Capital Area Early Childhood Institute is a community-based initiative designed to provide training and information to parents and child care providers of children birth through three years of age. The Institute currently serves child care providers and selected centers in Dauphin, Cumberland and Perry counties. In 2000, the Institute created a mentor program to provide on-going intensive on-site technical assistance to selected caregivers of infants and toddlers in child care centers. The Institute proposes that a mentoring program will fill the gap between training and improved caregiver practice. The Institute focuses its mentoring program on infant and toddler caregivers because there are fewer opportunities for training or education in the special needs of infants, toddlers and their families. The Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute's Mentoring Program has utilized research from numerous disciplines that address the needs of infants, toddlers, parents and caregivers. The principles that guide the Institute's Mentoring Program are described below. Effective training includes core knowledge of appropriate child care practices; direct observation; individualized reflective supervision for relationship building and collegial support from the mentor, the director and the other staff at the child care center. The relationship-based training approach defines the mentor-protégé relationship. A relationship-based approach is one that fully acknowledges both the complexity of relationships that exist within child care centers and the trust that develops between the mentor and protégé. Mentors take the time to get to know the protégés in their environment, as well as becoming familiar with the children in the classroom and the parents at home. Trust is built upon clear expectations about how the protégé and the mentor will work together and what each hopes to accomplish during the mentoring sessions. Mentors focus on the strengths of the protégé and builds upon his or her knowledge about what is best for the children in his or her care. Mentors do not judge the protégés or their actions. Instead, they lead the protégés to self-awareness and guide them toward their professional best. Change is a process that takes time and initiating changes means taking a risk. Change is a highly personal experience with its own timeline. The protégés will more likely persevere despite barriers and anxieties when they understand the benefits of change, can anticipate the problems, know their feelings will be accepted, and know that their goals and objectives are clearly defined.

Policies that Structure the Mentoring Program

Specific polices are designed to help mentors establish and maintain professional boundaries. Mentors will:

- Model behaviors and interactions, demonstrate techniques and make suggestions during observations
- Never be alone with children or be counted as part of the required staff-child ratio
- Meet with each protégé at a time that has been prescheduled and planned with the director and co-workers, if needed
- Meet only on the grounds of the center and within the protégé and mentor's normal working hours
- Negotiate with the protégé and with the approval of the director, a schedule of observation and meeting days to occur weekly and at different times of the day including drop off and pick up times
- Give the protégé and the director a written schedule
- Call to confirm day and time of each observation and visit, ensuring that both director and protégé are responsive to the mentor's schedule while showing respect for unexpected events that may occur
- Attend all Institute sponsored training events that the protégé may attend
- Not engage in gossip about children, families, or center staff and will, while allowing the protégé to vent feelings, guide him or her towards professional strategies for resolving problems
- Meet with the director to discuss expectations, goals and objectives
- Not contribute to performance reviews of the protégé
- Share conflicts with the Training Coordinator, and/or Statewide Coordinator, who will assess the situation and intervene when necessary
- Adhere to the ethical standards outlined by NAEYC in Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment
- Maintain confidentiality concerning issues and information about children, families, staff, and programs.

Goals of the Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute's Mentoring Program

- To improve the quality of care that infants and toddlers receive by providing their caregivers with on-site training and technical assistance through a mentoring relationship with an early childhood professional
- To collect initial and ongoing data to provide analysis of the success of this type of training intervention
- To utilize the data collected as quantitative evidence that on-site, intensive training is an effective method to improve caregiving behavior in infant and toddler classrooms

Relationship Building

Building Initial Relationships

The key to the success of our mentoring program, and what differentiates mentor training from other methods, is building a trusting relationship between mentor

and protégé. The ability of the mentor to initiate and develop the relationship is of as much importance as the information and resources that the mentor has to offer. Adults, like children, learn best in the context of a positive, trusting relationship.

It is important for the mentor to spend time before meeting with the protégé to define what he/she is expecting from the mentoring process. Because of the one-on-one nature of the training, the mentor should understand what skills/knowledge/experience that he/she brings to the relationship, and also what he/she hopes to gain from the relationship.

The approach that the mentor takes when working with the protégé needs to be supportive, effective, and respectful. In supporting the protégé as a learner and a professional, the mentor should be open-minded and should work to find a common ground for collaboration. The mentor needs to support new ideas and attempts and be willing to assist in non-judgmental evaluation of success.

As we conducted exit interviews with the first group of protégés, it was clear that many felt that more time should be devoted initially to "getting to know each other". From our standpoint, the length of the intervention was short (four months) and we were eager and excited to get to work! However, both the mentors and the protégés felt at the end of the intervention period that they had just reached a point in the relationship where they felt comfortable in trying new things.

In our second intervention, we are beginning with the mentors just visiting their protégés to observe for several visits. This time will be spent learning about the routines, center and classroom atmosphere, getting to know the children, and of course beginning the mentor/protégé relationship. After the first few visits, the mentors will work with the protégés to define the expectations that each has for the mentoring process, and the goals and direction that the training will take.

The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum: A Handbook for Mentors has some helpful information about relationship building in the mentoring process on pages 64-71. Topics covered include: establishing expectations and setting goals, the structure of the relationship, and the stages of the mentor/protégé relationship.

Ongoing Maintenance

As our mentoring program progressed, we found it beneficial to meet on a regular basis to share information about how things were progressing, triumphs and difficulties, and to keep everyone informed and "on the same sheet of music". We chose to meet bi-weekly, in order to allow the mentors to have more time in the programs.

Just as it was important for the mentors, training coordinator, and director to touch base, it is important for the mentors and the protégé to periodically

evaluate where they are in the training process and how close they are to meeting the goals and objectives that they initially set for themselves. It may also be necessary in the process to reassess the initial goals and objectives and change direction. In order to be most effective, the process must be flexible.

The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum: A Handbook for Mentors has a tool entitled "Taking the Pulse of Your Relationship: A Checklist for Mentors" on page 74, which may be helpful.

Problem Solving/Obstacles
Each mentor/protégé relationship will be unique, and will bring its own set of dynamics, successes, and failures. Some of the obstacles that our mentors encountered included:

- Protégés that were chosen to participate by their directors, rather than having volunteered for the program
- Mentors and protégés with differing expectations about additional readings, video observations, etc.
- Differing levels of director support for the program
- Program philosophies that were in conflict with developmental needs of children
- Protégés with years of experience who felt that they had little need for additional training

We found it helpful to use the bi-weekly meeting of the mentors and Institute staff as a forum to bounce some of these issues off the whole group as a method of problem solving. We also realized that this intervention would not solve every issue encountered at a site, and the mentors worked as effectively as possible with the tools that they had.

Relationships with Others Involved

Directors and Administrators
Our initial contacts in the site and caregiver selection process were the program directors and administrators. This had advantages, such as their availability to attend informational meetings during the workday and their knowledge of the strengths of their staff. It also had disadvantages, such as a lack of control on the part of the Institute as to the process of selecting the participating caregivers. In some cases, the program directors provided their infant and toddler caregivers with information on the mentoring program and then let the staff decide whether or not to participate. However, in many cases the director chose the participating staff members, which had a direct impact on their receptiveness and enthusiasm for the program.

As the mentors worked with the caregivers, the directors and program administrators had differing levels of involvement in the process. Most directors are so busy with the daily tasks and challenges of operating a childcare center that they had little time to actively participate in the process. The mentors made it a point to touch base with the directors regularly.

Parents
It is important for mentors to emphasize the caregiver and parent relationship as a partnership for the care of the child. Just as each mentor/protégé relationship will be different, the caregiver will have a different relationship with each family in the classroom. Mentors should encourage the caregivers to develop and enhance communication with families.

In 2001, the Institute will broaden its mentoring focus to include working with parents.

Relationship Building Bibliography

Bellm, Whitebook & Hnatiuk. The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum. 1997. The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, Washington, D.C. Units 5 & 6.

Adult Learning

Principles of Adult Learning
Part of being an effective instructor and mentor involves understanding how adults learn best. Adults have special needs and requirements as learners. Malcolm Knowles identified the following characteristics of adult learners:

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed. Mentors must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Assess participants' perspectives about what should be covered and let them work on projects that reflect their interests.
- Adults have accumulated life experiences and knowledge and they need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base.
- Adults are goal-oriented. Mentors must show participants how the intervention will help them attain their goals.
- Adults are relevancy-oriented. They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them.
- Adults are practical and will focus on aspects of learning that will be most useful to them in their work.
- Adults need to be shown respect. Adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge.

Motivating the Adult Learner
Six factors serve as sources of motivation for adult learning. They are:

- Social relationships
- External expectations
- Social welfare
- Personal advancement
- Escape or Stimulation
- Cognitive interest

Barriers Against Participating in Learning

- Lack of time
- Lack of money
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of information about opportunities to learn
- Scheduling problems
- Problems with child care and transportation

The best way to motivate adult learners is to enhance their reasons for learning and decrease the barriers.

Learning Styles
Learning styles are influenced by childhood experiences, families, cultures, schooling and social and economic backgrounds. Howard Gardner describes certain kinds of intelligence in which people bring to learning environments.

- Intrapersonal intelligence is understanding things through individual projects, research and reflection
- Interpersonal intelligence is interacting with others to answer questions, solve problems and create representations
- Musical intelligence is developing understanding using rhythm and musical patterns
- Spatial intelligence is using diverse media to understand the world
- Kinesthetic intelligence is using movement to translate understanding of the world

Adult Learning Bibliography
Zemke, Ron and Susan. 30 things We Know For Sure About Adult Learning. Innovations Abstract, Vol VI, No 8, March 9, 1984.

Zemke, Ron and Susan. Principles of Adult Learners.

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Bellm, Whitebook & Hnatiuk. The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum. 1997. The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, Washington, D.C.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The curriculum of the Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute's mentoring program is based on the concepts of developmentally appropriate practice for the care of infants and toddlers. Although the mentors tailored the curriculum and topics to the needs of each protégé, there were a few curricula and resource books that were utilized extensively. These resources include:

- **The Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, developed by Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development**
  This curriculum is a comprehensive series that includes videotapes, resource guides and trainer's manuals. It was selected because of the high quality of the materials and because it provides a curriculum framework to cover most topics important to providing good infant and toddler care.
- **The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers, by Amy Dombro, Laura Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge (Teaching Strategies, 1999)**
  This curriculum is a very practical, user-friendly guide for infant and toddler caregivers. It was selected because of the combination of good information that it provides, and its easily applied planning tools.
- **Caring for Infants & Toddlers in Groups, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, developed by Zero to Three**
  This manual was selected because it provides excellent information about the kinds of care and experiences that are important for high quality infant and toddler care and development.
- **Prime Times, A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs, by Jim Greenman and Anne Stonehouse (Redleaf Press, 1996)**
  This is a very reader-friendly resource book for infant and toddler caregivers. It provides a wealth of information on everyday situations in a childcare setting and mixes situational anecdotes with practical solutions.

The mentoring program focuses on relationships and interactions between infants and toddlers and their caregivers. Since we know that infants and toddlers, as well as adults, learn best in the context of trusting relationships, the mentors emphasized the importance of:

- Providing care that is sensitive and responsive to children's needs
- Interactions that are respectful and supportive
- Opportunities for children to explore and discover
- Enhancing everyday routines to provide one-on-one interaction and "learning moments"

- Environments that are warm, inviting, and stimulating
- Learning through play

The mentors encouraged their protégés to plan their environments and experiences to address the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and creative development of the children in their class

Environment and Materials

The environment and materials in an infant or toddler room are key to providing the types of experiences that promote healthy growth and development. The first priority is that the environment and the materials and equipment in it are safe and clean. Caregivers should make it a routine practice to clean and inspect the furnishings and toys - this practice should be obvious to the mentor or any person who spends time in the room.

Areas in the classroom must be sufficient to support the routine activities of basic care. There should be appropriate areas for:

- Feeding/eating
- Sleeping
- Diapering or toileting
- Children's personal items
- Play and interaction experiences
- Areas of the environment that are not safe for the children to explore should be made inaccessible to them.

Beyond basic care items, the play area should be rich in opportunities for infants and toddlers to explore and discover.

Environments for young infants should include:

- Protected areas where infants may play safely
- Adult-sized furniture for feeding and cuddling
- Unbreakable mirrors at infants' play level
- Pictures of family and familiar objects at infants' play level
- Mobiles and visuals (hung where infants can see but not reach)
- Grasping toys (rattles, teethers, squeeze toys, washable cloth toys)
- Batting toys for infants to kick and bat at
- Washable cloth and vinyl books

Environments for mobile infants should include:

- Unbreakable mirrors at infants' play level
- Washable cloth and vinyl books

- Pictures of family and familiar objects at infants' play level
- Washable soft dolls and animals
- Grasping toys (teethers, plastic pop beads, squeaky toys, balls, interlocking rings)
- Construction materials (large lightweight blocks)
- Transportation toys (large, simple vehicles)
- Manipulative materials (nesting cups, 2 or 3 piece puzzles)
- Low, sturdy furniture for pulling up on
- Cozy places for comfort, quiet time
- Areas to move that are free of clutter
- Low, soft climbers

Environments for toddlers should include:

- Unbreakable mirrors at infants' play level
- Washable cloth and vinyl books
- Pictures of family and familiar objects at toddlers' play level
- Washable soft dolls and animals
- Simple accessories for pretend play (blankets, toy bottles)
- Containers to be filled and emptied
- Simple role-play materials (toy phone, baby carriage, simple dress-up materials)
- Simple vehicles
- Plastic people and animal figures
- Construction materials (lightweight blocks, connectable blocks)
- Push/pull toys
- Activity boxes
- Low, soft climbers, tunnels, etc.
- Soft, lightweight balls
- Low, stable ride-on toys

Caregivers should consider the materials available in the environment and how to arrange the environment for play with various materials and toys. Thoughts about how to introduce toys, promote play, interact during play, and assess play should also be considered. Environment, materials, and toys should create a responsive, learning atmosphere that meets the needs and interests of all children.

Environment and Materials Bibliography

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum For Infants and Toddlers. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1999.

Greenman and Stonehouse. Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996. Chapter 11.

Lowman, Linda H. and Linda H. Ruhmann. "Simply Sensational Spaces: A Multi-"S" Approach to Toddler Environments." Young Children (May 1998), 11-17.

Routines, Scheduling, and Planning for Infants and Toddlers

Infants
In caring for infants, it is important for caregivers to work within each infant's individual schedule in order to provide care that is sensitive and responsive. Each infant will develop his or her own patterns for eating, sleeping, and playing; these patterns may already have developed by the time the infant enters care, or they may develop or change while the child is in care.

This individualization of care has many benefits to both the child and the caregiver. First of all, the child will become more content and trustful when his or her needs are met and the methods for communicating those needs are responded to. As the caregiver balances the schedules of the infants in care, there should be opportunities for one-on-one interaction during play or routine time with infants who are awake, while others nap on their own schedules.

As our mentors worked with their infant caregivers, they found the caregivers strong in the functional aspects of their job; for the most part, the infants are fed and changed promptly and kept clean. What seems to be lacking in many of the infant rooms is the incorporation of quality interactions and activities within the "job" of daily caregiving.

Mentors working with infant caregivers need to model, demonstrate and encourage the use of daily routines as opportunities for quality interactions and one-on-one time with each infant. Songs, games, and discussions with the babies can easily be incorporated into the daily routines of care, and will make for a much more rich learning environment.

Toddlers
While many infant rooms used to care for infants until about 18 months of age, it seems that most programs today transition infants into a "young toddler" program closer to one year of age, or when the infant starts walking. The expectation seems to be that by this time, infants need to be ready for more of a group setting. The disadvantage for the children is that the "young toddler" rooms often schedule more like an older toddler or preschool room, with group meals and afternoon naps.

Mentors need to help their protégés support the young toddlers making the transition. It is important to remind caregivers that the child's timetable may not be ready to conform to the new schedule, and that the caregiver may need to adapt the program to allow for a morning quiet/nap time or other individual need.

Once toddlers have made a successful transition to the toddler program and schedule, caregivers need to be aware of the developmental needs of the toddler, which differ from those of infants and preschoolers. Most of the planning that is involved in toddler rooms is the careful arranging of environment and experiences. Toddlers are not developmentally ready for the concepts of playing together, sharing, and "circle time". Many toddler caregivers have expectations that exceed toddlers' abilities, and have little opportunity for training in age-appropriate expectations.

The toddler room provides the mentor with many opportunities for "teaching" through reflection and caregiver self-discovery. Allowing the caregiver to "step back" and analyze what works well in their program and what their challenges are can lead to the discovery of what is appropriate for toddlers.

Planning the Infant and Toddler Curriculum
How do teachers plan for infant and toddler learning? Caregivers need to plan the curriculum and design the environment to provide appropriate materials to stimulate and engage children in the discovery process. Listed below are the six steps for establishing a reflective and responsive curriculum for infants.

- Establish primary relationships for each child. This will provide the child with emotional security and a safe base for exploration.
- Be responsive to the child's emotional and physical needs.
- Create opportunities and environments for interactions with people and things
- Understand how a young child learns and provide opportunities to expand that knowledge.
- Provide activities for children to repeat learning experiences.
- Assess how well the learning activities meet the needs of the individual children in the classroom

Routines, Scheduling, and Planning Bibliography

Greenman and Stonehouse. Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs. p. 63-64, 41, and 118-119. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996.

Dodge, Yandian, and Bloomer. A Trainer's Guide to The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers. p. 83-85, 151,181, and 272-274. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1998.

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddler Programs. p. 91 and 329. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1999.

Albrecht and Miller. Innovations: The Comprehensive Infant Curriculum. p.427. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 2000.

Health and Safety

Health

One of the most glaring needs that our research data indicated in all of the infant and toddler rooms that our mentors worked with was the need for improved health and sanitation practices.

While caregivers seem to have an idea of what practices should be taking place in their rooms, the actuality is that very few are consistently practicing proper health and sanitation. It is important that mentors reinforce the following practices:

- Handwashing, handwashing, handwashing!

  Caregivers must be washing their hands:
  - Before and after each diaper change or check
  - Before and after handling food
  - After wiping their own or a child's nose, eyes, or ears
  - Before and after helping a toileting child
  - After returning from outside play
  - After art activities

  Caregivers must assist children in washing their hands:

  - After each diaper change/use of the toilet
  - Before and after eating
  - After wiping their nose, eyes, or ears
  - After returning from outside play
  - After art or water play activities

- Sanitizing diapering surfaces after each diaper change
- Disinfecting nap surfaces daily
- Disinfecting food prep areas and highchairs/tables where children eat
- Disinfecting and sanitizing toys

We were fortunate to collaborate with the PA Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS), who provided funding for visiting nurses to follow up with our mentoring sites. The nurses visit the sites to reinforce the health and sanitation practices, provide additional training in the areas of health and safety, and also to serve as a resource for the centers on related issues.

Safety

Maintaining a safe environment is crucial to providing quality care for infants and toddlers. Since infants and toddlers are at a most vulnerable and dependent

stage of development, they rely on those who care for them to keep them safe in their environment. Mentors need to reinforce the importance of constant re-evaluation of the environment to ensure safety.

Infant and toddler environments need to achieve a balance between addressing safety concerns and a providing a rich learning environment that encourages exploration. Caregivers must minimize the chance of accidents and make sure that there is no threat of serious injury.

Staff must be particularly conscious of the following safety hazards to infants and toddlers:

- Ingestion of harmful substances, small objects, toxic plants, large pieces of food, or food that is too hot
- Falls from furniture, changing tables, high chairs, climbers
- Strangulation hazards such as drapery or blind cords, loose bedding, or strings on clothing or toys
- Falling objects or unsteady furniture
- Sharp objects, corners, or broken toys
- Objects that could pinch or trap fingers such as doors, cabinet doors, rocking chairs, etc.

If there are items or areas of the room that are off limits or dangerous to infants and toddlers, they must be made inaccessible. Electrical outlets must be capped, and any heaters and fans must be out of children's reach.

Centers and/or caregivers should utilize a safety checklist as a guideline to remind them of potential hazards and reinforce the necessity of constant evaluation of the environment. One example of such a checklist can be found on pages 187 - 190 of Primetimes: *A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs.*

Mentors should work with caregivers to assess the safety of the classroom environment and to assist with any modifications that will improve the safety of the room.

Health and Safety Bibliography

Greenman and Stonehouse. Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs. p. 174-179 and 187-190. St Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996.

Marose. "Successful Toilet Learning: At a Child's Pace." Young Children November 1997: p.81.

Dodge, Yandian, and Bloomer. A Trainer's Guide to The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers. p. 228-230. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1998.

Aronson. "Maintaining a Sanitary Child Care Environment." Child Care Information Exchange January, 2001: p. 94 - 97.

Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc., Holyoke, MA

Attachment

Caregivers with a strong knowledge of child development recognize how important it is for children to have a sense of belonging, being loved and trust in their environment. Warm and caring relationships with adults provide children with the basis for all types of learning. Items that can assist in building this sense of trust are:

- Small groups of children - for infants, no more than 6 to 8 children; and toddlers, 6 to 10 children with at least two adults.
- A primary caregiver assigned to infants and toddlers to promote consistency and responsiveness.
- A schedule that keeps groups of children with the same caregiver for an extended period of time.
- Low staff turnover to reduce anxiety caused by changes.
- Active parent participation to establish close communication.

When infants and toddlers develop attachments with their caregivers, they form affectionate bonds that create a sense of trust and a secure base. This sense of trust supports the infant's exploration of the world. A secure infant-teacher relationship includes the following:

- Involved teaching and caregiving. This type of "involved teaching" includes high levels of touching, hugging, holding, prolonged conversations and interactive joy.
- Low stress separations and reunions.
- A secure base for exploration.
- Stimulation to encourage language and discovery.
- Meeting physical needs and physical comfort
- Positive relationships with other children.

Attachment Bibliography

"Early Years are Learning Years. An Important Bond: Your Child and Your Caregiver," Release #4, NAEYC, 1996.

Raikes, H. A Secure Base for Babies: Applying Attachment Concepts to the Infant Care Setting. Young Children, July, 1996.

Language Development

Infants and toddlers learn about the world through their senses. Language development in these early years depends greatly on the attention the caregiver shows towards the infant or toddler. Constant eye contact, touch, facial expression and responses with the voice in varied tones are crucial to early language development.

The following are suggestions for caregivers to implement in their classroom to promote and encourage early language expression and development:

- Book selections for infants should include "chubby" books, cloth books, sound books and interactive books. Books should be kept clean and in good condition.
- Use a flannel board with age appropriate materials.
- Recite simple poems during routine activities.
- Encourage dance and movement in your classroom. Provide a variety of different types of music, parachutes, bubbles, and instruments.
- Use real and safe objects such as beach balls, cups, pans, sponges, boxes, water, washcloths, etc. for dramatic play.
- Use soft, cuddly and safe puppets to speak to the children.
- Read to infants and toddlers daily using developmentally appropriate books. Give ample opportunities for toddlers to "read" familiar books to caregivers.
- Avoid using "baby talk" or repeating infants' attempts at new words. Model the word or phrase for the child to facilitate language development.
- Elaborate on the infant's one-word sentences and telegraphic speech.
- Create a language and listening activity center with adequate numbers of telephones, puppets, tape recorder and cassettes to encourage language development and speech
- Describe children's actions during playtime and routine caregiving activities

Language Development Bibliography

Barclay, K., Banally, C., & Curtis, A., "Literacy Begins at Birth: What Caregivers Can Learn from Parents of Children Who Read Early," Young Children, (May, 1995).

French, L., "I Told You All About It, So Don't Tell Me You Don't Know: Two Year Olds and Learning Through Language," Young Children, (January, 1996).

Positive Guidance

Positive Guidance is a process by which all children learn to control and direct their own behavior and become independent and self-reliant through strategies facilitated by their caregivers. Using positive discipline strategies teaches children what to do by letting them know when they do something appropriate. The goals of positive guidance are to promote independence, autonomy, self-esteem, and caring toward others and the physical environment. The foundation for these goals is a developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning environment. Positive guidance is based on respect for all children and their families.

Caregivers' and parents' roles in positive guidance include:

- Meeting children's physical, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Establishing expectations/responsibilities with children.
- Developing a safe, secure, and responsive environment.
- Fostering self-esteem through reinforcing appropriate behavior.
- Guiding children toward learning self-control.
- Encouraging children to be independent.
- Modifying adult behavior as necessary.

Often times in infant and toddler classrooms, caregivers create environments or situations that undermine their ability to use positive guidance because the limits don't match the developmental abilities of the children. Some of these settings include:

- Rooms with too little or too much open space
- Too few materials or equipment, no multiple copies
- Materials that are too simple or too challenging
- Lots of waiting time or sitting still time
- Inflexible routines, space, schedules and people
- Too little order or routine
- Too much change
- Too many accessible places and objects that are off limits
- Activities in which children can't be "hands on"
- Unrealistic expectations for self-control

It is important for mentors to let caregivers identify activities or times of the day when behavior is a challenge, and to analyze what works well or not so well during these times. Many "behavior problems" are actually the result of the caregiver expectations or behavior rather than the behavior of the children in the room.

In our mentoring program, we found it helpful to use videotaping in some of the classrooms so that caregivers could watch their classrooms through a new set of eyes. This technique was helpful for them to identify their own techniques that either worked well or not so well.

Positive Guidance Bibliography

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum For Infants and Toddlers. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1999.

Greenman and Stonehouse. Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996. Chapter 9

Play

Play is the essence of young children's learning and development. Play enables children to progress developmentally and enhances all areas of development - cognitive, language, physical, social, emotional, and creative. When caregivers play with infants and toddlers, they stimulate responses and development, while fostering nurturing relationships.

Infants and toddlers primarily engage in three types of play:

- Practice
- Functional
- Solitary play

These types of play occur in the sensorimotor stage of development, where infants and young toddlers use their senses to learn about the world around them. Infant play progresses from reflexive, characterized by random, involuntary muscle movements, to deliberate, when an infant is beginning to learn that their actions have an effect on objects and their environment.

Toddlers may begin to engage in parallel play. This type of play refers to children playing side-by-side, but not necessarily with one another. Infants and toddlers are not developmentally ready to play with other children. Most often when it appears as if infants and toddlers are playing together, they are probably engaged in parallel play. It is important to have multiple materials and various areas for infants and toddlers to play and not expect them to play together or share toys and materials.

Movement is essential to young children's development. Infants and toddlers move to explore, discover, and interact with the world. They move to practice and develop their motor skills and to strengthen their muscles. Caregivers must think in terms of infants' and toddlers' need to move, run, climb, etc. While playing, infants and toddlers must have opportunities to run, jump, climb, ride, etc. both indoors and outdoors. Adding music throughout the day encourages appropriate movement. An environment that promotes indoor and outdoor developmentally appropriate play will enhance infants' and toddlers' learning and development.

It is important for mentors to reinforce the concept that infants and toddlers learn best through play. The caregiver's role as the "teacher" is to arrange the environment and materials to provide many interesting opportunities for infants and toddlers to play and explore, and therefore learn. There seems to be increasing pressure from parents for toddler caregivers to "teach" toddlers numbers, letters, and other more abstract concepts that toddlers are developmentally not ready for. The mentor needs to strengthen the protégés knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice to empower the caregiver to explain the necessity of play for this age group.

Play Bibliography

Greenman and Stonehouse. Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996. Chapter 12.

Hughes, Fergus P., et.al. "A Program of Play for Infants and Their Caregivers". Young Children (January 1995), 52-58.

Rodger, Lauri. "Adding Movement throughout the Day". Young Children (March 1996), 4-6

Art

The idea of doing art with infants and toddlers creates anxiety in most caregivers. Typical concerns are that it will be too messy, too time consuming, that it will require too much supervision, and that it will interrupt the daily classroom routine. The result is that caregivers either don't plan art experiences at all, or that they put so many limits on the space, materials, and experience that it becomes a teacher created project rather than a child-directed experience.

Because of the value that art and creative experiences have for infant and toddler development, mentors need to demonstrate to protégés the importance of the process and experience. One advantage that on-site mentoring offers in this area is that the mentor can assist the protégé in overcoming their concerns regarding art, and other "messy" experiences, by making it happen for them in their own classrooms. The mentor should focus on the sensori-motor aspects and process of art experiences, rather than the product.

Art experiences for infants and toddlers should include opportunities to work with a variety of textures and medium. Of course, caregivers need to ensure that all materials are non-toxic and washable. Children's clothing should be protected with bibs, smocks, or old shirts that keep clothes clean and dry while not limiting movement. Materials used should be appropriate for childrens' age and stage of development.

Some caregivers or parents may have strong feelings about the use of food products for art experiences. If caregivers choose to use these items in the classroom, they should speak to the parents first to ensure that there is no objection.

Art Experiences for Older Infants Include:

- Playing with pudding or yogurt on a tray or table
- Fingerpainting (either with non-toxic fingerpaint, homemade finger paint, or pudding, yogurt, whipped cream or jello)
- Marking paper with large crayons, large chubby paintbrushes, or large washable markers
- Playing with a variety of different types of paper (waxed, newsprint, construction, wrapping paper)
- Molding play-doh or edible dough

Art Experiences for Toddlers Include (in addition to the above):

- Painting with a variety of "brushes" (cotton swabs, sponges, rollers, empty roll-on deodorant containers, squirt bottles)
- Molding doughs with hands and also props (plastic cookie cutters, child-sized rolling pins or plastic soda bottles)

Art Bibliography

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum For Infant and Toddler Programs. p. 239-250. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1999.

Szyba. "Why Do Some Teachers Resist Offering Appropriate, Open-Ended Art Activities for Young Children?" Young Children January 1999: 16-20.

Engel. "Learning to Look: Appreciating Child Art." Young Children March 1996: p.74-79.

Clemons. "Art in the Classroom: Making Everyday Special." Young Children January 1991: p. 4-10.

Demarest. "Playing With Color." Young Children March 1996: p. 83.

Edwards and Nabors. "The Creative Arts Process: What It Is and What It Is Not." Young Children March 1993. p. 77-81.

Seefeldt. "Art-A Serious Work." Young Children March 1995. p. 39-45.

Creating Partnerships With Parents

Because protégés work with so many different types of families, effective communication is essential. This often takes special thought and practice for many caregivers. Sharing with protégés the importance of listening to what each parent is saying, or not saying as the case may be, is an important tool to pass on to them.

Forming close relationships with parents can make all the difference in creating a good experience for the infants and toddlers in their care. Setting up routines that are similar to those at home, and also honoring cultural rituals creates an environment where the children can form close bonds with their caregivers and be treated as individuals.

Helping the protégé create tools to translate information is an important first step. Planning a regular method of daily communication with parents helps keep parents involved and informed about their child's day. Caregivers do this in many ways, including:

- Written reports of the day's activities, the child's mood, eating and sleeping, etc.
- Sign in/sign out sheets where caregiver and parent communicate about the previous evening at home/the day at the center
- A drop off and pick up routine that includes time for conversation
- Parent Information boards
- Weekly or monthly parent newsletters

Brainstorming with protégés on ways to involve the children's' families will help them establish a relationship with the parents. Something as simple as hanging family photos around the room, or as in depth as a monthly newsletter to parents are some ways to reach parents. As a mentor, it is good to listen to your protégé to gauge their comfort level when talking to parents before suggesting what those tools could be.

The mentors will also have occasions to work with or get to know the parents in their protégés classrooms. Parents should be informed in advance that the mentor will be working in their child's classroom, and the mentor should introduce themselves to parents when they are in the room.

Creating Partnerships with Parents Bibliography

Miller. Simple Steps :Developmental Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Two-Year-Olds. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, Inc., 1999. p. 261-268.

Kieff and Wellhousen. "Planning Family Involvement in Early Childhood Programs." Young Children May 2000: p. 18-25.

Melmed. "Parents Speak: Zero to Three's Findings from Research on Parents' Views of Early Childhood Development." Young Children July 1997: p. 46-49.

Armstrong. "Using Communication To Build Good Relationships Between Parents and Staff." La Petite Academy NAEYC November 2000 Annual Conference.

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum For Infant and Toddler Programs.

Dodge, Yandian, and Bloomer. A Trainer's Guide to The Creative Curriculum For Infant and Toddler Programs. p. 213. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1998.

Lane and Signer. Infant and Toddler Caregiving: A Guide to Creating Partnerships With Parents. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, 1996. p. 32-34 and 64-65.

Curtis and Carter. Reflecting Children's Lives: A Handbook for Planning Child-Centered Curriculum. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996. p. 38

Culture

Culture can be defined as a set of values, beliefs, traditions and experiences of a particular group. The group may be defined in many ways; by national origin, racial experience, common language, religious background, socioeconomic status, region or even neighborhood.

Every individual in a classroom, adult and child, brings to the room their own culture, which may be very similar to others in the room or very different. The profession of childcare, in contrast to many other professions, is by nature entwined with the culture of each caregiver's experiences of childhood and of experiences of rearing their own children.

Mentors must develop an awareness of their own cultural background and experiences, particularly in relationship to their knowledge and beliefs about children and child rearing. In recognizing their own culture and values, the mentor must then recognize that the protégés they work with and the children in the classrooms may come from cultural backgrounds with differing values with respect to children and child rearing.

It is important in the mentoring process to develop a respect for both the similarities and differences that various cultures present. This can be accomplished by mutual sharing and learning about the values that the mentors and protégés have with respect to the care of infants and toddlers. Mentors must recognize that there is sometimes a compromise between what is considered

developmentally appropriate and what is culturally appropriate for children and their families.

Toys, materials, and room environment in infant and toddler programs should be respectful and representative of cultural diversity. Photographs and literature should represent people of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, age groups, occupations, and gender roles. There should be unbreakable mirrors at the children's eye level (near the diapering table, in the play area) where children can see themselves, their caregivers, and their peers. Caregivers should also include photographs of the children in the room and their families.

Culture Bibliography

Dombro, Colker, and Dodge. The Creative Curriculum For Infants and Toddlers. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1999.

Bromer, Juliet "Cultural Variations in Child Care: Values and Actions." Young Children (November, 1999), 72-76.

Ball, Jessica and Alan Pence. "Beyond Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Developing Community and Culturally Appropriate Practice." Young Children (March, 1999), 46-49.

Gonzalez-Mena, Janet and Navaz Bhavnagri. "Diversity and Infant/Toddler Caregiving." Young Children (September, 2000), 31-35.

Learning Language and Loving It - The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators and Teachers

CAECTI was able to co-sponsor a second mentoring-style training program for infant and toddler caregivers through a partnership with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU). The program, Learning Language and Loving It - The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators and Teachers, is facilitated by a speech and language pathologist and focuses on methods of fostering language development in infants and toddlers.

Learning Language and Loving It - The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators and Teachers helps teachers learn to make language learning a natural part of everyday conversations, play activities and daily routines in any early childhood or childcare setting. The program addresses the teacher's vital role in facilitating the children's social and language development and in fostering peer interaction, pretend play, and the development of emergent literacy. While teachers use the knowledge they gain from this program to promote all of the children's social, language, and early literacy development, it is particularly helpful in addressing the needs of children with language delays, with special needs or those who are learning a second language.

The program combines workshop sessions where concepts are introduced and modeled with videotaping sessions of each caregiver with the children in their care. Following each videotaping session, the instructor and caregiver review the tapes together to identify and reinforce the concepts of the program.

The three goals for "Learning Language and Loving It" are:

- Prevention of language delays by helping teachers learn how to create a language-rich, highly interactive environment for children at risk for language delays.
- Early language intervention by helping teachers provide children who have identified language delays with a language-rich, highly interactive language-learning environment, geared to each child's individual language level and conversational style and structured so he/she can participate fully with his/her peers.
- Enrichment by helping teachers provide typically-developing children with an enriched language learning environment, that builds on their existing language skills and promotes the development of the language of learning.

The goals of "Learning Language and Loving It" go beyond enhancement of language skills. When teachers encourage and respond to children's initiations, taking pleasure in their efforts to communicate and explore, not only do they lay the foundation for language learning, but the responsiveness also helps infants become attached and develop a sense of effectiveness and autonomy. Toddlers learn to separate, explore, and develop their mental capacities. They are, in effect, helping children build trusting relationships, positive self-esteem, and effective learning skills.

Program Format
In order for this program to be effective, teachers need to be involved for an extended period of time in order to understand the program's philosophy, to undergo a possible shift in attitude, and to learn to apply the program's strategies flexibly and across contexts. For this reason, the format is intensive.

All training sessions involve experiential learning activities, which ensure all participants' involvement. Session components include a combination of: interactive presentations by the facilitator; hands-on simulated practice of strategies taught during the session; viewing of videotapes filmed in the childcare center, as well as large and small group discussion.

Program Content
Program content is drawn from the guidebook Learning Language and Loving It and focuses on how teachers can create a child care environment that fulfills the two conditions on which language development depends, interaction and information.

Because communication and language skills are learned in the context of interactions, each child needs to be engaged in many interactions throughout the day.

To "crack the language code" and develop more advanced language skills, children need to be provided with information, fine-tuned to their receptive and expressive language levels.

Topics of group training sessions include: identification of children's conversational styles, learning to "let the child lead", developing social routines, appropriate use of questions, encouraging peer interaction, learning how to provide information and experience that promote language learning, and how to let language lead the way to literacy.

The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators and Teachers Bibliography

Learning Language and Loving It by Elaine Wietzman, A Hanen Centre Publication, 1992.

Website:http://www.hanen.org

Collaborations

As a community-based initiative, CAECTI is fortunate to have obtained a great deal of support from a variety of agencies linked to providing services to young children and their families. Once our mentoring program was underway and additional needs were identified in the programs involved, we were able to establish some collaborations that have strengthened the quality and scope of our interventions.

Early Childhood Linkage System (ECELS) and the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA)

After collecting our initial round of pre-test data and working with our fall group of programs, we realized that health and sanitation practices were lacking in all of the classrooms we visited. As a result, we made contact with the PA Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) to ask for assistance in reinforcing proper health and safety practices in our infant and toddler classrooms.

ECELS responded by providing funding for the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) to follow up with our mentoring sites. Nurses with both school and maternal/child health experience visit the sites to reinforce the health and sanitation practices, provide additional training in the areas of health and safety, and also to serve as a resource for the centers on related issues.

Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
CAECTI was approached by the Director of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department at nearby Hershey Medical center to provide an elective experience for residents in the field of child psychiatry. The residents in the program have abundant experience with children in a clinical setting; however, the director was interested in providing residents with an opportunity to observe infants and toddlers in group-care situations to gain additional knowledge of child behavior and interaction.

This linkage was an additional benefit to the mentors and caregivers in our program, as it provided another resource to assist in addressing challenging behaviors within the infant and toddler classrooms. The resident provided the caregivers some background on possible causes for challenging behaviors, and some strategies to use when working with the infants and toddlers in their care.

Penn State Cooperative Extension / Better Kid Care
Penn State Cooperative Extension is another entity within the Penn State University system that provides training for those who care for children. Through their Better Kid Care program, Cooperative Extension targets both licensed and unlicensed family child care homes, as well as interested center-based providers and parents. The program provides resource materials on topics related to providing quality childcare, as well as workshop, satellite downlink, and web-based training.

CAECTI is assisting the Better Kid Care program by providing resources pages, activity ideas, and developing web training units that focus specifically on infant and toddler care. This broadens the scope of CAECTI's service provision by targeting family child care and other home-based providers.

Challenges

Turnover
The biggest challenge that we faced in our mentoring program, which parallels the childcare industry nationwide, was staff turnover. From June 2000, when we selected our initial group of 40 caregivers at 24 centers, to December 2000, when we collected our first round of post-test data, we lost 25-30% of our program participants (the turnover of directors was at the same rate as the turnover of caregivers).

Because of the research component of our mentoring program, our intervention targeted and followed one caregiver in each classroom selected. This limited our ability to replace the caregivers who left the program once the initial data collection phase ended. Of course, the larger concern and impact of this rate of turnover is for the infants and toddlers in the classrooms.

The only positive aspect of the turnover in the program was the increased amount of time that the mentors had to work with the remaining protégés.

Although we found no solutions to the issue of turnover, our demographic data indicated that turnover was drastically reduced in programs where staff salary was significantly higher.

For more information about the results of our research, refer to the Report section of this manual.

Accountability
Director and caregiver accountability proved to be another challenge that we faced throughout our mentoring program.

In coordinating the program and the research component, we had difficulties with directors and caregivers completing/returning the data collection tools and directors informing the Institute when participating staff left employment.

In addition, the mentors faced issues of caregiver absence for scheduled visits and caregivers not following through with agreed upon readings or "assignments".

In our second round of mentoring interventions, we hoped to address some of the issues we found in the first phase. Our first approach was to be more diligent in our follow-up with programs on materials and paperwork that we require. In addition, the mentors have worked to improve the communication with their caregivers and program directors on matters of absence and expectations.

Reportable Issues/Role of the Mentor
Prior to working with centers and protégés, it is important to clearly define the role of the mentor with regard to regulatory issues. Although the mentor is there to support and work with the caregiver, the mentor will also observe the center and classroom on a long-term, regular basis and often see situations that are in conflict with regulations.

We found it helpful to discuss the mentor's role upfront with both the center administration and the caregivers involved in the program. The mentors and training coordinator were clear that although the role of the mentor was not a supervisory or regulatory one, the mentors are mandated reporters. In addition, because our program is funded partially by the PA Department of Public Welfare, we have a responsibility to make the program directors aware of regulatory violations.

When issues did arise, the mentors and/or the training coordinator addressed them with the caregiver and program director, and documented both the issue and the discussion.

It is essential that the mentors be familiar with state childcare regulations, and have a copy that they can refer to.

Tools

As part of our mentoring program, we developed and adapted some tools to use to document the mentoring time, goals, and objectives. The tools that we used are on the following pages and include:

- Mentoring Log - The mentors utilized this form to document each mentoring visit, their objectives, summary and next steps.
- Videotaping Log - The mentors used this form to document each videotaping session, at the sites where videotaping was used.
- Videotape Self-Assessment - The mentors used this tool to facilitate the viewing of the videotaped segments with their protégés.
- Initial Self-Assessment - The mentors used this tool early in the mentoring relationship to generate feedback from the protégés about themselves and their work with children.
- Protégé Assessment Questions - The mentors used these questions with the protégés to help define how the mentoring intervention would work in each classroom.
- Areas of Learning - The mentors used this chart to document the initial materials in each classroom to address each area of learning, and also to document later additions.
- Classroom Routines - The mentors used this chart to document the classroom routines and how they were handled in the classroom initially, and later in the mentoring process.
- Props in the Environment - The mentors used this chart to document the materials in each area of the classroom environment initially, and later in the mentoring process.
- Self-Assessment - The mentors used this assessment at various stages in the mentoring process to help protégés assess themselves and set goals for their training.
- Individualized Professional Development Plan - The mentors used this chart as a follow-up to the protégés self-assessment to establish a plan for the training included in the mentoring intervention

Resources

Each protégé was given a resource notebook at the beginning of the mentoring program. A core group of articles and resources was included in the notebook, and as the mentors and protégés worked together, the mentors supplemented the notebooks with articles and resources specific to each protégés needs and interest areas. The notebook then became a collection of resources that the protégé could refer to for information.

Each notebook contained the following materials, which are included on the following pages:

- "Weekly Planning Form," (page 139, The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers by Amy Laura Dombro, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge, 1998 Teaching Strategies Inc.)
- "Developmental Milestones of Children from Birth to Age 3," (pages 70-71, Caring for Infants and Toddler in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Zero to Three, 1995)
- "Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Practices for Infants," (pages 72-80, Developmentally Appropriate Practice In Early Childhood Programs, NAEYC, 1997).
- "Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Practices for Toddlers," (pages 81-90, Developmentally Appropriate Practice In Early Childhood Programs, NAEYC, 1997).
- "Additional Expectations for Toddlers, Structuring Time and Space for Quality Care, & What is Discipline?" (pages 41, 63-64, and 138-139 of Primetimes: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs, by Jim Greenman and Anne Stonehouse, Redleaf Press, 1996)
- "Handwashing Procedure" (Adapted from Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs, NAEYC, 1995)
- "Maintaining a Sanitary Child Care Environment" (Susan Aronson, MD, pages 94-97, Child Care Information Exchange," January, 2001)
- "Dabbling in Art" (Chapter 17, The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers by Amy Laura Dombro, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge, 1998 Teaching Strategies Inc.)
- "A Program of Play for Infants and Their Caregivers" (by Fergus Hughes, James Elicker, and Linn Veen, Young Children, January, 1995)
- "Simply Sensational Spaces: A Multi-"S" Approach to Toddler Environments" (by Linda Lowman and Linda Ruhmann, Young Children, May, 1998)
- "Successful Toilet Learning: At a Child's Pace" (by Natalie Rehmer Marose, Young Children, November, 1997)
- "Core Concepts Contribute to the Development of Good Character in Infants, Toddlers, and Two-Year-Olds" (Young Children, March, 2000)
- "I Am A Teacher" (by Faye Henderson, Early Childhood News)
- "A Letter From A Toddler" (by Alice Honig and J. Ronald Lally, Infant Caregiving)
- How Very Young Children Grow and Learn (pages 131-132, A Trainer's Guide to The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers by Amy Laura Dombro, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge, 1998 Teaching Strategies Inc.)