



R&D

A L E R T

THE early childhood foundation FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Children are born ready to learn but not ready for school. This important understanding, honed by the work of two WestEd centers, mirrors the conclusion of 20 years of research: infants' earliest relationships with their caregivers are closely linked to their success in the classroom later in life.

These early interactions form the basis of children's social and emotional well-being, which in turn impacts their ability to attend to the important tasks associated with learning language and growing intellectual competency.

"Social and emotional development is the foundation for school readiness, and this development begins in infancy," says Virginia Reynolds, director of WestEd's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI), which focuses on young children with disabilities and their families in a variety of settings.

Yet, many caregivers who work with infants and toddlers aren't putting research findings to good use, adds J. Ronald Lally, co-director of WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies (CCFS), which focuses on typically developing children in child care settings. "Unfortunately, despite the recommendations from the scientists, most school readiness initiatives persist in relating to infants and toddlers as though they were older. But because of their unique style of learning, which is a blend of great vulnerability and incredible learning competence, they need to be treated differently from how you treat first graders."

The challenge, says Peter Mangione, CCFS's other co-director, is to "take what the research tells us about social-emotional development *and* about language and intellectual development and put it in a form that people who run child care centers and family child care homes can use every day."

Helping policymakers, infant care teachers, and specialized service providers do just that is a goal of both of these centers. For 20 years, CCFS' signature project, the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, has been training infant care teachers nationwide to deliver care that takes into account the latest research findings. In 2002, the program was named a model initiative supporting infants, toddlers, and their families by the National Center for Children in Poverty.

California has turned to CPEI for more than two decades to guide its training, technical assistance, and resource development for infants and toddlers with disabilities or at risk of developing disabilities and for their families. "Regardless of the setting — whether child care, preschool, or an early intervention program — we emphasize

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Improving the lives of children requires much more than improving schools. If we want all children to succeed in school and beyond, we've got to start young. Very young.

While the importance of early childhood education has long been recognized, traditional ideas of "school readiness" may be outdated. The first years of life are uniquely important in terms of what children need in order to learn, grow, and thrive, not just in setting the stage for how children will fare in school.

FOCUSING ON *Early Childhood Education*

FROM THE CEO

The best way for adults to support infants is *not* necessarily by focusing on the more "academic" areas of literacy and numeracy that will become important later. Instead, as the lead article in this issue of *R&D Alert* suggests, adult caregivers would do better to focus primarily on what the children are interested in, while providing encouragement, enhancement, and social and emotional support.

Drawing on early childhood research and the work of two WestEd programs – the Center for Child and Families Studies (CCFS) and the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) – the article describes the kinds of support and experiences that best help address the unique developmental needs of infants and young children.

A second article, drawn from an upcoming book on "Bridging Cultures," addresses how culture and child-rearing are closely intertwined. The article outlines two broadly different cultural perspectives that provide a framework to help teachers and caregivers support children's transitions between home to child care settings.

Another article looks at the benefits of high-quality early childhood education from an economic perspective. It reports on a WestEd paper in which economist Robert G. Lynch makes a compelling case for large-scale investment in an early childhood development program. By focusing especially on children living in poverty, such a program can lead to enormous benefits for children, including improved graduation rates and decreased risk of trouble with drugs, alcohol, and crime. Lynch notes that these outcomes also provide significant economic benefits for society as a whole.

WestEd's expertise in early childhood education goes far beyond what we can share in the space of this newsletter, so we encourage you to follow up by using the contact information included with each article and by visiting WestEd.org. Whether you work in a school setting, in higher education, as a policymaker, or elsewhere, strengthening programs for children in their earliest years should be everyone's business.

Glen Harvey
Chief Executive Officer

Why should early childhood professionals consider the role of culture? Increasingly, home- and center-based staff and providers work with children and families who come from cultural backgrounds different from their own. Early care and education programs are generally the first settings where children may be away from their families for extended periods of time.

Most families with children have more contact with early childhood professionals than they do with educators once their children enter elementary school and start moving up the grades. This first contact is especially important because it helps form families' attitudes toward school, educators, and other child-serving professionals. Thus, the early childhood years provide caregivers and early educators an opportunity to make a positive impact not only on children's adjustment to outside care and education but also on long-term relationships between families and professionals.

Bridging Cultures IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood is a critical time to begin establishing common ground between teachers (including infant-toddler caregivers and other professionals) and the children and families they serve.

AN ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

Bridging Cultures in Early Care and Education: A Training Module introduces how early childhood educators can use the organizing concepts of *individualism* and *collectivism* as a means of understanding cultural differences between themselves and the families they serve. These concepts have been shown to be accessible and highly useful in improving home-school understanding across cultures.

The framework describes the value systems of cultures in a nonjudgmental way. This makes it a safe way to begin learning about cultures — one's own as well as those of others.

Culture has many different definitions, but a simple one used in the *Bridging Cultures in Early Care and Education* (BC-ECE) module is “a set of values, beliefs and ways of thinking about the world that influences everyday behavior” (Trumbull & Farr, 2005). Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next in multiple ways, both explicitly — in conversations and direct guidance — and implicitly — in daily practices such as child-rearing. It is when disparities in the values and belief systems of different individuals become evident that culture comes into focus.

(continued on next page)

This article is an excerpt from *Bridging Cultures in Early Care and Education: A Training Module*, a resource to help pre-service and in-service early childhood educators, including infant-toddler caregivers, understand the role of culture in their programs and in their interactions with parents. Developed with the support of WestEd, the A. L. Mailman Foundation, and the Foundation for Child Development, the training guide is published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and due to be released in early 2006. The authors — Marlene Zepeda, Janet Gonzalez-Mena, Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, and Elise Trumbull — caution that the cultural framework described here is a tool for understanding fundamental cultural differences but should not be used to oversimplify cultures or to categorize individuals.

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BC-ECE training helps teachers and child care providers become “cultural bridges” between children and families and early care and education settings.

The framework’s two basic concepts — *individualism* and *collectivism* — are used to illustrate how cultural beliefs and values shape attitudes and behaviors. Each orientation is associated with a different set of cultural priorities that, among other things, guide how members of a culture rear and educate their children. Focusing on this distinction is not the only way to think about cultural differences, but it has proven to be extremely useful for understanding many instances of cross-cultural misunderstanding.

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism stresses independence and individual achievement, focusing on the needs of the individual, self-expression, and personal choice. It emphasizes the “object” world, particularly with respect to the concept of private property and the idea that objects are a source

feeding, dressing), and use “their words” to identify their needs. All of these examples are signs that individualism is valued.

COLLECTIVISM

While the culture of the United States as a whole values and encourages individuals’ independence, most of the world’s cultures tend to focus on the *interdependence* of groups and individuals, reflecting the cultural value of “collectivism.” According to cross-cultural experts, a collectivistic value orientation is found in 70 percent of the world’s cultures (Triandis, 1989).

Collectivism emphasizes social responsibility and the priority of group needs over individual needs. It stresses respect for authority and obligation to group norms. In collectivistic cultures, possessions are often shared, with objects being important in the context of human relationships, not in and of themselves. For instance, a toy or household object may be used as a source of interaction between a mother and child, but the child

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of learning about the physical world. When a preschool, infant program, or family child care home operates primarily from an individualistic perspective, children are treated as unique and special individuals who need the opportunity to explore objects in their surroundings and to learn to become independent.

The physical environment is also likely to reflect this perspective, with children having their own cubbies, lockers, or coat hooks identified as “theirs” and their names and pictures prominently displayed. It is also likely that parents are asked to put nametags on their child’s clothing. Children are encouraged to take care of their property, take care of themselves (e.g., toileting,

is not likely to be directed to play with it or investigate it independently. In this example, the object is viewed as a tool for emphasizing the relationship between the mother and the child, one based on interdependence, helping, and sharing. In collectivistic cultures, there is also a strong emphasis on the family as a unit, not on each individual member per se.

When a preschool, infant program, or family child care home emphasizes sharing and downplays the individual and his or her personal accomplishments in favor of the achievements of the group, it is exhibiting collectivistic values. Collectivistic practices that can be seen in early care and education settings include potluck meals as a means of sharing across many families, favoring

large-group size for activities over small-group or individual interaction, and mixed-aged grouping where older children help and assist the younger children.

WE CAN BUILD CULTURAL BRIDGES

Is it possible to reconcile the differences between collectivism and individualism? Can early childhood educators create links between those who are clearly collectivistic and those who are not? Can collectivistic families and children be made to feel at home in an individualistic environment and vice versa?

The Bridging Cultures project is predicated on the belief that the answer to all of these questions is yes. In fact, many early childhood care and education settings already reflect a good balance between collectivism and individualism. But they are rarer than they should be. BC-ECE training is designed to help participants develop an appreciation for the contrasting patterns of care and education reflected in individualistic and collectivistic value orientations, to understand that these values need not be mutually exclusive, and to explore how best to bridge and blend these two perspectives in early childhood and related settings.

Trumbull, E. & Farr, B. (2005). *Language and Learning: What Teachers Need to Know*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). *Cross-cultural studies of individualism and collectivism*. Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 37, 43-133.

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supporting and nurturing the healthy caregiver-child relationship to provide the foundation for social and emotional well-being,” says Reynolds.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Both centers are guided by research on early childhood development and early intervention, such as a notable study by the National Research Council and the National Academies’ Institute of Medicine that includes the following findings:

- “Human development is shaped by a dynamic and continuous interaction between biology and experience....
- The growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior....
- Children are active participants in their own development, reflecting the intrinsic human drive to explore and master one’s environment....
- Human relationships, and the effects of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy human development....”¹

Lally points out that such findings carry significant implications for those designing and implementing early childhood programs. For example, he notes that babies have an “inborn capacity and inclination” to learn particular things. So, infant learning “is more heavily influenced by the child’s internal agenda” than by external stimuli, he says.

Likewise, consider the strong connection between how infants and toddlers feel and how well they learn. “In the early years, safety, survival, and security are crucial,” says Lally. “That means that before they can attend to intellectual pursuits, children need to link to people they trust and feel relaxed around.”

Reynolds agrees. “When a caring adult provides encouragement to infants and toddlers in their initial attempts to explore their environment, young

¹ Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (eds.). (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

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CAN FUNDING PRESCHOOL TODAY

Investing immediately in a **national preschool program** would yield significantly strengthening our nation's economy well into the future, says a

In "Early Childhood Investment Yields Big Payoff," economist Robert G. Lynch writes that funding a national, high-quality, early childhood development program would help balance cash-strapped government budgets by creating year-over-year incremental savings. He notes that the first class of today's preschoolers would enter the workforce and begin increasing its productivity at about the same time when some experts project that the nation could face serious financial difficulties paying for Social Security and other programs.

By selecting all three- and four-year-olds who fall below the poverty line, Lynch's proposed national preschool program would enroll the very 1.6 million youngsters who, as they grow up, would otherwise cost taxpayers most. A national preschool program also would directly

benefit the children and families it would serve. When children from low-income families are provided access to high-quality preschool, research shows they perform much better in school, experience higher graduation rates, and tend to stay out of trouble with drugs, alcohol, and crime.

"From an investment point of view, the returns are greater than if we invested the same amount of money in the stock market. It's an ingenious way for our tax dollars to beat average Wall Street returns while benefiting society at the same time," says Lynch.

Lynch estimates the annual preschool cost per child at \$12,000. If the national program were fully implemented next year, by the time the first preschoolers entered the workforce, they would contribute substantially to Social Security and help counteract the demands aging baby boomers

will place on the system. As adults, they would enter the workforce at higher skill levels, earning larger salaries, and paying more taxes into the system.

Although the upfront costs of the program would be substantial, the payoff would be huge. In addition to helping Social Security, such a publicly funded early childhood development program is expected to have enormous positive impacts on our society by improving the quality of life for millions of children and lowering crime rates. It also would benefit the U.S. economy by raising the gross domestic product, helping balance government budgets, and strengthening global competitiveness.

In response to the report, J. Ronald Lally, co-director of WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies, emphasized the importance of high-quality

REDUCE BUDGET WOES

TOMORROW?

high returns,
recent WestEd report.

preschool. "As a society, we have ignored too long the indisputable research demonstrating the clear benefits of high-quality out-of-home care for children from birth to age six. Now is the time to act."

WestEd's peer-reviewed report follows on the heels of a March 2005 RAND study showing the economic benefits of a preschool program for all children in the state of California.

"Early Childhood Investment Yields Big Payoff" is available free of charge as a pdf file online:
www.WestEd.org/earlyinvestment

The Proposed National Preschool Program At-A-Glance

- » High-quality preschool enrollment for all low-income three- and four-year-olds
- » Affects 20% of all three- and four-year-olds nationwide
- » Impacts 1.6 million children in the program's first year
- » Every dollar spent generates \$3.78 or more in benefits
- » Full implementation in 2006, running a surplus by 2021
- » By 2050, the budgetary surplus grows to \$167 billion

Fast Facts About High-Quality Preschool: Benefits Extend Throughout Life*

IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- » Higher scores on math and reading tests
- » Greater language abilities
- » Less grade retention
- » Less need for special education and remedial work
- » Improved nutrition and health
- » Lower rates of child abuse and neglect

IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL:

- » Lower teen pregnancy and parenting rates
- » Lower dropout rates
- » Higher high school graduation rates
- » Higher scores on math and reading tests

- » Fewer criminal acts
- » Lower rates of alcohol and drug use
- » Lower incarceration rates

IN ADULTHOOD:

- » Higher employment
- » Higher earning rates
- » Increased tax base
- » Less dependence on welfare
- » Lower rates of alcohol and drug use
- » Fewer criminal acts
- » Lower incarceration rates

*Research references are included in the full report:
www.WestEd.org/earlyinvestment

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children learn they have someone to rely upon, so they feel secure, and thus become more eager to try new things,” she says. “With guidance, they learn to persist and experience mastery. The lessons learned from these early interactions and relationships form the basic building blocks for later learning.”

Such relationships also help shape a child’s self-image, which is developed as early as two years of age. And the way young children view themselves, says Mangione, affects how well they learn. One goal of early childhood education, he says, is to help children become “self-confident enough to explore and self-regulated enough to function” in a classroom.

“These crucial components of a child’s sense of self,” he adds, “come from the way he or she is treated in the first three years.”

Marie Kanne Poulsen, a CPEI consultant, notes that school success, traditionally equated with academic achievement, is more appropriately pursued by focusing on “relationships, resilience, and readiness” in early childhood. These skills can be developed long before a child enters the classroom. “When children show up for kindergarten, they are expected to sit still and focus, express their feelings, and get along with others,” Poulsen says. “However, these tasks have less to do with their ability to

recite the alphabet than they do with their ability to negotiate their emotions and relationships.”

PUTTING THE RESEARCH TO USE

Both CCFS and CPEI disseminate information — through institutes, seminars, on-site training sessions, technical assistance, and materials such as videos, guides, and manuals — aimed at increasing the practice of relationship-based care in all settings.

Consider these three CCFS projects undertaken for the California Department of Education:

- Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Guidelines — a resource for those running center-based and family child care homes serving children from birth to age three that highlights key elements of exemplary early childhood programs
- Infant/Toddler Learning Standards — a tool to help infant care teachers understand what learning generally looks like at specific ages from birth to age three
- The Desired Results Developmental Profile for Infants and Toddlers — an assessment tool that helps infant care teachers determine the developmental progress of individual children

“As infant care teachers use these kinds of resources to learn about children’s developmental stages and the emotional foundations of

learning,” says CCFS’s Lally, “we see them giving a higher quality of care.”

According to Cathy Tsao, CCFS’ director of national and international training, the guidelines call on infant care teachers to develop strong, positive partnerships with families. “You can’t underestimate the importance of honoring the role of the family in the child’s life,” says Tsao. “Family members are a child’s best and first teachers.” Thus, it’s critical, she says, that decisions about children are made only after “engaging families in a true dialogue and taking into account how they want things done.” Only when families believe the infant care teacher really understands them and their child will they be willing to accept the teacher’s advice and recommendations.

The guidelines also point out the need for infant care teachers to respond simultaneously to both the emotional and intellectual needs of a child. “Some think all you need is tender, loving care, while on the other extreme the goal becomes infant stimulation — all flashcards and Mozart,” says Tsao. “We need to remember that young children need to have their emotional and intellectual needs met.”

MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

In the case of children with disabilities, says CPEI’s Reynolds, “Achieving social and emotional wellness begins with the same foundation as for typically developing children, but it also necessitates the use of individualized supports and strategies that specifically address the child’s special needs. Linking families to high-quality support services can go a long way.”

You can’t underestimate the importance of honoring the role of the family in the child’s life. Family members are a child’s best and first teachers.

CPEI works closely with the California Department of Developmental Services, the agency responsible for implementing the Early Intervention Program (Part C) of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The challenge, says Reynolds, is to ensure that service providers not only meet the requirements of IDEA, but also do so in a way that takes into account research findings on the importance of relationship-based services.

Reynolds notes that achieving emotional and social wellness is different for an infant or child with a disability and the primary caregiver. “It adds a whole different dimension,” she says. Take, for example, children born blind or with cerebral palsy who cannot make eye contact with or hug their mothers. “These are critical behaviors that mothers, babies and toddlers engage in as a way of establishing relationships,” says Reynolds. “If a child is unable to make eye contact or if a baby can’t hug his mother, it opens up the possibility of the mother feeling unloved or unfit. Left unattended, this lack of typical behaviors that let a mother know she’s okay may lead to relationship difficulties. We know from the research that we need to provide support in these situations and teach mothers, as well as other caregivers and service providers, alternative strategies and techniques that can build strong social and emotional relationships.”

Infant care teachers need to respond simultaneously to both the emotional and intellectual needs of a child.

Three CPEI projects that focus on social and emotional development are:

- The Infant, Preschool, and Family Mental Health Initiative — a collaborative of interagency teams from eight California counties working together to provide relationship-based early intervention for children from birth to age five, including those with disabilities. The initiative developed personnel competencies and training guidelines for people who work with children and families, including early interventionists and mental health providers.
- Project Relationship — a facilitated, relationship-based problem-solving framework to help local teams work together to meet the needs of all children and families in their communities.
- All of Us Together Moving to Inclusion Institutes — events that bring representatives of local agencies, school districts, and communities together for three intensive days of training to increase the ability of local communities to serve children with disabilities in child care and preschool settings.

To be sure, all of CPEI’s work is infused with the concepts of healthy social and emotional development of children with disabilities and their families for many reasons. But the work is predicated on the notion that early intervention is critical if all children are to achieve their full potential. “By creating caring relationships, understanding why children are acting the way they do, and responding appropriately,” says Reynolds, “we help optimize their resilience, develop readiness for school, and support families in ensuring competency in all aspects of their lives.”

For more information:

- on CCFS, contact J. Ronald Lally at 415.289.2300 or rlally@WestEd.org; Peter Mangione at 415.289.2310 or pmangio@WestEd.org; Catherine Tsao at 415.289.2328 or ctsao@WestEd.org; or visit www.WestEd.org/ccfs
- on CPEI, contact Virginia Reynolds at 916.492.4017 or vreynol@WestEd.org; or visit www.WestEd.org/cpei





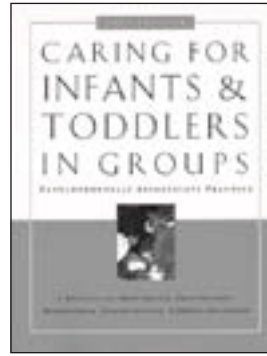
Full-Day Kindergarten: Expanding Learning Opportunities (Policy Brief)

(WestEd, 2005)

As districts across the country focus on closing the achievement gap between different socioeconomic

and ethnic groups, research points to early childhood as a potent time for preventing the gap before it becomes established. Many policymakers are turning to an extended kindergarten program as part of the solution. This brief summarizes the most recent research on full-day kindergarten, provides information on state and local reform efforts, and identifies policy implications. It also touches on the characteristics of an effective kindergarten program.

4 pages / Price: Single copy, free / Order #: PO-05-01L



Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice, 2003 Edition

J. Ronald Lally, Abbey Griffin, Emily Fenichel, Marilyn Segal, Eleanor Szanton, & Bernice Weissbourd
(Zero to Three Press, 2004)

Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups is designed to help caregivers, program directors, coordinators, administrators, trainers, licensors, families, and leaders in the field of early childhood care and education recognize the special knowledge and skills needed to offer a nurturing group care environment to very young children. Contributors, led by WestEd's Ron Lally, discuss meeting the needs of each individual child, recognizing early developmental stages, achieving necessary health and safety standards, creating good relationships, developing training and mentoring programs, linking with other community-based service systems, providing continuity of care, and being sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs.

88 pages / Price: \$18.50 / Order #: CCFS-03-03L / ISBN: 0-943657-67-9

WestEd Resources

ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

WestEd has a number of resources addressing early childhood. A few are summarized here. For additional related products, please refer to the WestEd Resource Catalog or visit www.WestEd.org/products.



Nurturing the Nurturers: The Importance of Sound Relationships in Early Childhood Intervention

Bonnie Benard & Douglas Quiett
(WestEd, 2002)

In the Marin City Families First early-

intervention model, a home visitor plays a sweeping role in the life of the client family. The job is particularly challenging for those working with families in which financial uncertainty, substance abuse, feelings of oppression, inadequate education, and other poverty-related factors can breed depression, anger, and hopelessness. To become and remain effective, home visitors need a high degree of support. This report describes how home visitors support client families and how, in turn, home visitors receive support from the program supervisor.

22 pages / Price: \$8.95 / Order #: CCFS-03-01L / ISBN: 0-914409-09-3



Battered Agencies: Supporting Those Who Serve Low-Income Communities

Diane F. Reed, J. Ronald Lally, & Douglas Quiett (WestEd, 2003)

This research report identifies problems that are common to and impede the effectiveness of community-based family support agencies serving low-income communities. Drawing from on-the-ground experience and research literature, the authors identify the stressors experienced by such agencies and make recommendations for strengthening the agencies.

34 pages / Price: \$9.95 / Order #: CCFS-03-02L / ISBN: 0-914409-14-X

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WESTED PROGRAMS, RESOURCES, AND SERVICES RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION:

www.WestEd.org/childhood

what's
HNEW,
HOT,
USEFUL, &



Collaborating for High Standards: Analyzing Student Work
 Trudy Schoneman (*WestEd, 2003*)

This 25-minute video and its facilitator's guide help teachers develop the skills needed to learn from student work and use the understanding derived from that work to advance learning in a standards-based classroom. This resource illustrates how to bring teachers together to examine student work for three related purposes: setting common student performance standards; planning the re-teaching of concepts for which students have not met the performance standards; and identifying possible strengths and weaknesses in instructional and programmatic practice.

Multimedia / Price: \$59.95 / Order #: WAC-03-01L / ISBN: 0-914409-15-8



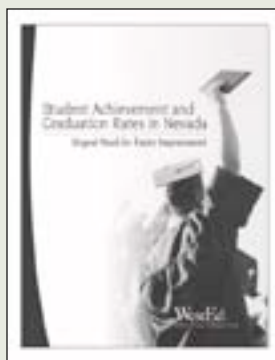
Linking Nevada's Early Literacy Training with Teaching and Learning: Eight Tracer Cases of Teacher Effects

Stanley Chow, Jan Whitney, & Holly Holland (eds.) (*WestEd, 2004*)

How do staff developers make the case to policymakers that

investments in high-quality staff development will yield tangible benefits in teaching and learning? Nevada's early literacy staff developers created the tracer case, which traces the linkages from staff development, to teacher use of instructional strategies, to the performance of K-3 students in the all-important early literacy skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. This collection of eight tracer cases highlights the impact of these specific literacy practices in schools large and small, urban and rural, and serving high percentages of children from low-income families.

68 pages / Price: \$11.95 / Order #: REL-04-01L



Student Achievement and Graduation Rates in Nevada: Urgent Need for Faster Reform

(*WestEd, 2005*)

For many years, Nevada has led the nation in enrollment growth rates. In the midst of explosive growth, how are Nevada's students faring in achievement and graduation rates? And how do those rates affect the state's economy? This free report endorses and expands upon recommendations of the Nevada Department of Education's 2004 State Improvement Plan to raise the state's near-bottom national rankings by taking seven crucial steps, including improving teacher preparation, especially for teaching English language learners; using timely student data to make teaching and program improvements; and increasing access to quality infant/toddler day care and preschool education.

43 pages / Available as free pdf download: www.WestEd.org/nevadareport



Keeping Quality Teachers: The Art of Retaining General and Special Education Teachers

(*WestEd, OSEP, NCPSE, NASDSE, Syracuse University, & New York State Education Department, 2005*)

This user-friendly tool for retaining quality teachers — especially those in special education — contains a framework for action that can be used to create a plan at the school or district level, or to strengthen existing plans. *Keeping Quality Teachers* provides research to assist stakeholders in understanding why retention is such a compelling issue; focuses on the improvement of working conditions; provides strategies for administrative support at the district and building levels; emphasizes the importance of induction and mentoring programs as part

of a retention initiative, providing several model programs and strategies; articulates the key role played by institutions of higher education in supporting recruitment and retention; and provides implementation and evaluation suggestions for states and local school districts.

226 pages / Price: \$35 / Order #: LI-05-01L



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