2019 Infant Early Childhood Conference – Save-the-Date!

The 2019 Infant Early Childhood Conference will be held May 1-3, 2019 in the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, Tacoma, WA with a preconference day on May 1. The conference will attract nearly 2,000 participants, including presenters, exhibitors, and guests. Audience members will include parents, special educators, early childhood teachers, paraprofessionals, service providers in developmental and neuro-developmental centers, Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) personnel, Head Start and Early Head Start staff, agency administrators, case managers, health care professionals, child care providers, and others interested in young children with special needs. Several Preconference sessions will offer an array of intensive, often advanced, full-day training sessions. The two-day conference follows with a blend of national keynote speakers, more than 100 breakout sessions, and extensive exhibits.

Conference Goals:
- Challenge thinking about diversity and disability;
- Increase family and provider effectiveness through new skills, strategies and ideas for providing high quality services;
- Enhance understanding of the unique strengths and needs of each family;
- Foster partnerships across families, disciplines, agencies and funders to provide coordinated services in local communities;
- Promote networking and coalition building around early childhood issues;
- Enhance the lives of families and their children through the use of information and technology; and
- Promote the mutual understanding of the contributions families and providers bring to the lives of young children.

For additional information, please contact Mike Stewart, Conference Administrator with Boyer Children’s Clinic at info@boyercc.org.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Young Children

Growth Mindset and Professional Development Priority Areas

Washington State recently launched its first annual Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Conference held on November 5-6, 2018 in Seattle. The conference included a strand specifically for early learning educators. A recent book published by Brooks Publishing, titled “Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Young Children: Driving Change in Early Education” can enhance the early learning educators understanding
of key principles of the MTSS framework including evidence-based instruction and progress-monitoring practices focused on individualized early academic skills and developmental competences needed to promote readiness for school. The book defines and describes each of the components necessary to implement MTSS at the individual and classroom levels. As noted in the preface “The expectation is that when MTSS strategies are implemented in early education settings, preschool-age children will be less likely to need special education or other remedial services when they enter the elementary grades (Greenwood, Bradfield, Kaminski, Linas, Carta, & Nylander, 2011).” This is more easily accomplished when resources available within an educational systems or early childhood program are organized to meet the needs of all students. Planning efforts to replicate the MTSS Conference in late Spring 2019 on the eastern-side of the state are currently underway.

**Washington State Guide to Early Childhood Assessment**

*Leadership and Professional Development Priority Areas*

An excellent resource available to help practitioners with selections of early childhood assessment instruments is available on the OSPI website and is titled "Washington State - A Guide to Assessment in Early Childhood: Infancy to Age Eight". This guide helps users clearly delineate the purpose for which an instrument may be used - specifically four categories: (1) screening, (2) informing instruction and monitoring progress, (3) diagnostic, and (4) program evaluation. Below is a direct quote from the Guide that describes the importance of selecting the appropriate instrument for the intended purpose.

"How do early childhood professionals make informed decisions about assessment tools and then select tools from among the thousands available? Identification of appropriate assessment instruments is an important consideration in the development of effective assessment systems for early childhood programs. Selecting an inappropriate assessment tool is analogous to using the wrong household tool, making the task at hand more difficult and producing a less desirable outcome. Using a screening tool to inform instruction or monitor progress, for example, is something like using a screwdriver to pound a nail. The tool is simply not suited for the task, and more likely to produce confusion and frustration than to assist in building a quality structure."

The Guide was developed through a joint sponsorship among the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Early Learning, and the nine Educational Service Districts. The information provided in this resource was designed to be universally applicable in programs that serve young children with and without special needs, including English language learners, students with economic and developmental risk factors, and those developing typically from birth to eight years of age.
Cross-Sector Planning Successful – Washington State Awarded National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) Grant

Evidence-Based Practices and Professional Development Priority Areas

Washington State’s competitive application to participate in an implementation and scale-up training and technical assistance opportunity designed to promote the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of children ages 3 through 5 years of age participating in preschool programs and receiving IDEA Part B, 619 services, was recently accepted by the NCPMI. The application was developed by a cross-sector planning team of early childhood experts, and submitted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in early December. The overarching goal of the State/NCPMI partnership is to plan, implement, and sustain a professional development system to build the capacity of local programs and professionals to use the Pyramid Model in the coaching of service providers to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children 3-5 years of age with or at risk for disabilities in inclusive environments. As recommended in the application, state leaders will be exploring the benefits and opportunities for integrating State Leadership Team (SLT) responsibilities across the IDEA Part B Intensive Technical Assistance grant awarded to OSPI and the IDEA Part C Targeted Technical Assistance grant awarded to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in early October. The work of the SLT will be guided by the State Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) across both NCPMI Initiatives (IDEA Part B and IDEA Part C). This cutting-edge systems alignment will support the vision of establishing, strengthening, and scaling-up a cohesive, comprehensive Professional Development Network serving children birth through age five in the State of Washington. Specific strategies for further exploration and initial installation of a joint SLT will be developed with guidance and technical assistance from the NCPMI specialists in early January 2019.

Child Outcome Summary Data Collection & Reporting Resources

Evidence-Based Practices and Professional Development Priority Areas

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires all state preschool special education agencies to report data on three child outcomes: (1) Positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships; (2) Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language/communication and early literacy; and (3) Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. The Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process is a team process for summarizing information on a child’s functioning in each of the three child outcome areas using a COS 7-Point Scale. With the COS process, a team can consider multiple sources of information about a child, including results from standardized assessment, parent input, and provider/teacher observation. Additionally, the COS process allows programs to synthesize information about children across different assessment tools to produce data that can be summarized across programs in the state, as well as across states for a national picture.
The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy Center) developed an online learning module that provides key information about the COS process, and the practices that contribute to consistent and meaningful COS decision-making. Over the course of multiple sessions, participants learn about:

- why child outcomes data are collected;
- the key features of the COS process;
- the essential knowledge needed to complete the COS process;
- how the three child outcomes are measured through the process;
- how to identify accurate COS ratings using a team-based process;
- the importance of comparing children’s current functional performance to age-expected functioning;
- when and how to measure progress in the three child outcome areas; and
- how to document ratings and evidence to support those ratings in COS documentation.

Early childhood practitioners must register to access the online learning modules. The modules are self-paced, so participants may access them as often as desired. For additional training materials related to the COS process, see the ECTA Center’s COS Professional Development Resources. Local school districts using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment tool, can directly export the data needed for the COS reporting into the required state template. For technical support, please contact Teaching Strategies GOLD at TeachingStrategies.com/tryGOLD or contact GOLD@TeachingStrategies.com or 800.637.3652 option 4.

Prepared by Valerie Arnold, ECSE/Section 619 Coordinator
For more information or questions, contact Valerie at valerie.arnold@k12.wa.us

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