



Early Childhood News

Welcome to Early Childhood at Towson University

Welcome to all new and returning students! We are facing an exciting year full of opportunities for professional development and further learning. Through this newsletter and our website, we will be keeping you up-to-date with news regarding the program, special events, advocacy issues, and job opportunities.

As the Early Childhood Graduate Programs at Towson continue to develop and grow, one of our goals is to help you feel a part of a vibrant learning community while you pursue your higher education. Later in the semester, we will be having a fall gathering for all of the students to es-

tablish more connections with one another and others in the department and hear about current issues of interest. More information will be included in the next newsletter.

Another special upcoming event is the trip to Reggio Emilia, Italy in Spring 2005. This trip is only offered every two years, so plan ahead and take your Early Childhood experience to an international level! If you are interested in going, please email us your name and contact information so we can let you know the trip dates as soon as we receive them.

As you journey through this

semester, remember that we are here to help you if any need arises. Come visit us in Hawkins Hall 107-O with any questions or concerns. Let us know how we can be of assistance to you!

~ Dr. Wheeler and Staff



"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn."

~ John Colton Dana

Towson University

September/October 2004

Special points of interest:

- ☉ Minimester Registration begins in October!
- ☉ Remember to check your Towson email account!
- ☉ Don't forget to email us if you are interested in the trip to Reggio Emilia, Italy!
- ☉ Dr. Wheeler's Office Hours:

Mondays 4:00-5:30 pm

Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 pm

Or by appointment

Call 410-704-2460 or email: ejwheeler@towson.edu

Congratulations to our Spring/Summer 2004 Graduates!

Spring 2004 M.Ed. Grads:

Celeste Atkins
Deborah Beale
Patricia Birkmaier
Christine Burns
Denise Cutair
Leigh Durham
Nadia Irani
Sally Loercher
Laurian Mathias
Kimberley Ouellette

Candace Winterson

Firoozeh Zarrabi

Summer 2004 M.Ed. Grads:

Lynne Coven
Jennifer Epstein
Faye Hufham
Melissa Miller
Shirlene Moore
Wendy Perraut
Taryn Randall
Eugenia Smith
Melissa Zito

Spring 2004 M.A.T. Grads:

Jennifer Cossentino
Susan Foudy
Judith Fuller
Cheryl Gormus
Laurie Hammette
Jessica King
Carol Provonche
Kimberly Sepanik
Carol Smith
Katherine Sonnefeld

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U.S. House Passes Federal Child Care Spending Bill

NAEYC Update—September 15, 2004

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 5006, the bill for fiscal year 2005 spending for programs such as Head Start, child care, NCLB, job training and medical research, among others. The final funding levels were the same as we reported from the subcommittee for Head Start and CCDBG (child care assistance). Note: the \$12 million increase in child care discretionary funding in the House bill restores a previous year's cut.

As you know, the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is funded in two ways: annual discretionary appropriations and mandatory funds in the reauthorization bill. The amount in the House bill for fiscal year 2005 in discretionary funds is the same level as three years ago. The Senate appropriations committee

is expected to mark up the bill today, probably with a similar figure as the House appropriations bill. No date has been set for when the full Senate will take up the appropriations bill. The reauthorization of CCDBG has not concluded, and that bill contains the mandatory (guaranteed) funding increase of \$7 billion in the Senate version compared with only \$1 billion in the House version, spread over 5 years. Both versions also contain an increase in required work hours for welfare recipients.

Congress is likely to recess after the first week of October for members to campaign before the November 2 election. They may or may not hold a



**"Injustice is a sixth sense,
and rouses all the others."
~ Amelia E. Barr**

"lame duck" session after the election. We have had available on our website for several months a sample message for you to use to write your Representative and Senators to insist that the 108th Congress not close without a significant increase in funding for

the CCDBG. Please write to them by email or find their fax number at <http://capwiz.com/naeyc/home/>. We have a sample letter that appears when you click on your member of Congress to send an email, using our Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/naeyc/dbq/officials>. Please personalize your message with information you have on the struggle families have in finding affordable, quality child care and the difficulties programs have in sustaining and raising quality with insufficient resources.

**There are two
lasting bequests
we can hope to
give our
children—one is
roots; the
other is wings.**

**~ Hodding
Carter**

Employment Opportunities

Kindergarten Position Available at McCormick Elementary School

First Grade Position & Second Grade Position Available in Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Afternoon Teacher's Assistant needed at Towson Presbyterian Pre-

school (ages 4-5). M-F, 11:30 am—5:30 pm. Requires MD state 90-hour certification.

For more information, please contact our office at 410-704-2460 or email at ejwheeler@towson.edu.

Greetings from the New Grad Assistants!

Hello, my name is Stresa White and I am Dr. Wheeler's new full-time graduate assistant. I have just begun the M.Ed. Plus program in Early Childhood and am also a first-year Pre-K teacher. Many of you have already provided me with resources and encouragement that have helped me in my new career, for which I am very thankful. I am so excited to be a part of this program and I look for-

ward to working with you and assisting you in any way that I can!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Hello! My name is Jessica Bolton and I am Dr. Wheeler's part-time graduate assistant. I also work part-time for Dr. Hartzler-Miller in the Secondary Education Department. I am a first year graduate student in the School Psychology program. Thanks to everyone for making me feel "at

home" here in the education part of the building! It is nice to get to know a whole new set of faces that I know will impact my time here at Towson.

Our Office Hours:

Stresa M/W 2 p.m. -5 p.m.

T/R 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Jessica M/R 10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Announcements

Winter Graduates—There will be a separate commencement ceremony just for graduate students on **Sunday, January 9, 2005 at 2 p.m.** in Towson Center. For more details, go to <http://www.new.towson.edu/commencement/> or the Graduate College website (<http://grad.towson.edu>)

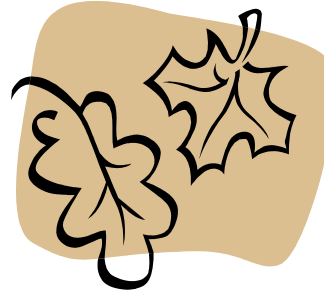
Remember to check your email! It is essential that you both set up your TU email account and check it regularly because we communicate with students almost exclusively through email. If you want to forward your Towson email to your personal account, click on "Pref" in the taskbar at the top of the page, then type your

personal email address into the "Forward Mail To" field, and click Save.

M.Ed. Early Childhood Portfolio Requirement— This is a graduation requirement for all M.Ed. Early Childhood students who will begin their program in Fall 2004. It will be an on-going collection of your graduate work and you will have the opportunity to present your portfolio to the department faculty during the final semester of your

program. Look for our upcoming semester gathering later this fall, when we will discuss this topic more in-depth.

Spring Reggio Emilia Trip— The dates are still to be announced, but this opportunity is not to be missed! Plan on visiting this unique place and observing their fascinating approach to early childhood education. Check our next issue for specific dates and more information. Email us with your name and contact information if you would like to participate.



"Play is really the work of childhood."
~ Fred Rogers

Upcoming Events

Playing to Learn, Learning to Play: Why Play Matters for Today's Kids

October 7-9th in Washington, D.C.

"This gathering of parents, educators, researchers, toy industry leaders, cultural leaders, and others offers a unique opportunity to learn about what's happening in the world of play and who is doing what to make sure our children have access to

Go to www.playingforkeeps.org for more details.

NVAEYC Fall Conference: Saturday, October 30th 8 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

At Fairfax County Government Center. Fees—\$50 (NVAEYC Members), \$60 (Non-members), \$35 (Full-time students). Find more information at www.nvaeyc.org

NAEYC 2004 Annual Conference:

November 10-13th, Anaheim, CA. Check out www.naeyc.org for more information.

Look for our future newsletters to be posted on this site each month.

Minimester Schedule Preview

Registration will begin in October. **The dates for Minimester 2005 are January 3—January 21.**

Graduate Courses Offered:

ECED 607.418: Learner Diversity & Inclusion in ECE—TR 5-9:30 pm, Instructors: Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Watson-Thompson (1/4/05-1/21/05).

ECED 610.418: Learning Environments: Curriculum & Technology—MW 5-9:30 pm, Instructor: Dr. Rowe (1/3/05 - 1/21/05).

ECED 670.418: Special Topics Course: Social Justice and Ethics: An Educational Perspective—TR 5-9:30 pm, Instructors:

Dr. Berkeley and Dr. Wheeler (1/4/05—1/21/05).



*Note: Internet connection is required for all of these courses, due to on-line Internet sessions that are part of the courses.

Children Who Just Watch

While many young children, when given the opportunity, will immediately engage in play with others, families and early childhood teachers often encounter children who want only to watch from the side. These children will watch others playing around them - constructing a towering building; reenacting a battle of dinosaurs in the sandbox; putting on a puppet show - without actually getting involved.

Family members and teachers may be anxious when preschoolers do not engage in play with other children, but this "onlooker stage of play" can be an important step in the social development of young children. It is an opportunity for young children to learn and mentally practice interacting with others. With adult guidance, they'll benefit from this thoughtful time.

In the onlooker stage, children don't physically interact, but their minds and feelings are fully engaged in the play of others. You can see it in their faces and body language. Their eyes may open wide as they see a block building growing taller, then they may dart quickly to another corner to determine the location of the growling dinosaur sounds. Their faces may break into smiles at the antics of other children pretending to be monkeys and gorillas.

Each type of play has value: in solitary play, children acquire self-knowledge; other kinds of play help them build confidence, practice interacting, and learn how to cooperate with other children. Children who go through an onlooker (or "watcher") stage get to be mentally engaged without the potential intimidation of actually being in the thick of things.

This engagement offers children opportunities to mentally manipulate what they see and hear, organizing and integrating information and storing it away for future use. The children may actually be mentally placing themselves into a situation they are observing, and testing how they might respond if they were involved.

As "watchers," children have opportunities to manipulate their cognitive experience of the behaviors of others, gaining information which will later be used within the context of their physical, verbal, emotional, and social behaviors. The use of this information is not just imitation, but a true understanding of the causes, actions, and consequences of particular behaviors - similar to the way preschoolers might use self-talk or private speech to review what they have learned about words and language. The onlooker stage offers an opportunity to watch and learn before stepping into the action.

All young children do some watching; some young children do it a lot. We now know that this is a valuable experience for children. As family members and as early childhood teachers, we are often anxious when preschoolers are not willing to engage overtly in play with other children. Perhaps we should allow them more time to watch and learn. When the time is right, they will be more comfortable and successful moving into the world of full social interaction.

Excerpted from "He's Watching! The Importance of the Onlooker Stage of Play" by Sarah Jane Anderson - an article in the NAEYC journal, *Young Children*. Available on the web at <http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/2003/02.asp>.



Towson University's Early Childhood Education Graduate Programs:

M.Ed. —The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is an advanced degree program designed to prepare the degree candidate for a future professional role, to increase competence in a current career role, or to provide a step toward further study in the field of early childhood education. It is not an initial teaching certification or licensure program, but an opportunity for increased professional development at the graduate level. Recommended for practitioners in a wide range of programs for children from birth through age eight in a variety of community settings.

M.Ed. Plus—A certification option for Early Childhood graduate students who already have a background in the field of early childhood education in addition to increased professional development at the graduate level. It is recommended for graduate students with undergraduate degrees or significant experience in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Child and Family Studies or who are practicing professionals working with young children and families.

M.A.T.—An option for those without formal training in the field of education who wish to enter the teaching profession. It is well suited to recent graduates and to those seeking to change careers. A graduate of this program will meet state teacher certification requirements within the General Education Tracks of Early Childhood, Elementary or Secondary Education.
