

Connections

The EESLPD West Office Newsletter

May 2018

Volume 2 Issue 5



It is when we are in transition that we are most completely alive.

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This is the time of the year when most of us begin to wrap up our work and slowly transition into the summer months. You'll likely find that you wake up one morning in July and feel completely lost and confused and feel angst because you just know that there is something that you are forgetting to do...contact a teacher, finish up something in NCEES, or participate in a WebEx meeting. The hustle and bustle of this very busy time of year has faded and you may miss your colleagues and teachers, who you have spent time with and bonded with over the last 10 months. Yes, you will be thrilled that it is summer and you can finally breathe but your sense of identity may still be a little shaken. Most of us naturally define ourselves by our surroundings and all of a sudden your day to day surroundings will be very different. If we can reflect on Williams Bridges words, we will find that during these times of transition is when we are the most completely alive!

Transitions are a wonderful time for growth! A wonderful time to practice new habits, to sharpen your skills, but also to reteach yourself what relaxation feels like and the importance of taking time each day to care for your own mental and physical well-being. As you enter into your time away from work, keep in mind all of the amazing relationships that you have built, how your support system has increased this year and that your colleagues are all going through this same transition. If you think of them, pick up the phone and give them a call. Send them a quick text, even just to say, "Thinking about you today". You may even want to take time to meet for coffee or lunch, simply to stay connected and keep in touch. Over the years we learn that the summer months allow us time to organize and that we have new found excitement for preparing ourselves for the upcoming year. I encourage you to reach out to our new team members and share your strategies, share your wisdom during this transition.

Some of you will experience or have recently experienced larger life transitions...new babies, new homes, this new job, higher education. Through those exciting transitions, take time to revel in the fact that these are the times that you are most alive! These are the times when you grow the most and learn the most- you have new surroundings that over time define you in different ways.

Nan, I know these words are speaking to you, friend! What an exciting life transition that you are approaching. As you explore the new identity that being surrounded by those beautiful grandbabies provides you, I hope that you will always also define yourself as the leader, advocate, and champion of children that you are. We will miss your presence on this team. I will miss your thoughtful emails and words of encouragement. We wish you well! The teachers whose lives you have so positively impacted have shared their well wishes on page 6.

Wishing you all the best during your transitions!

Amanda

Mentor Minute

Celebrating Success



“The best partnerships aren't dependent on a mere common goal but on a shared path of equality, desire, and no small amount of passion.”

Sarah MacLean

As the school year comes to a close, it is important to take the time to celebrate success. From the progress a teacher has made from the start of the school year (or over several years) to our own growth as mentors and evaluators in meeting each a teacher where he/she is in order to help facilitate that progress; all movement forward whether big or small deserves celebration! These celebrations often lead to reflections on our year and create a visual picture in our mind of how we want to start our next year anew. How then can we guide our teachers at year end or what strategies might we use?

- Actively listen (Be present) in our last conversations of the year with teachers
- Encourage teachers' reflections of their growth and the "why" growth occurred
- Acknowledge teachers' hard work in words, emails, cards, etc.
- Support teachers' strengths and encouraging their leadership in those areas
- Create a "Top Ten Lists" of teachers' accomplishments or what stands out (Maybe start a list of 5 and then invite the teacher to add 5 more for themselves)
- Encourage teachers to be an informal observer of your children to celebrate how much they have grown this year
- Intentionally notice and point out tangible evidences of teachers' growth (lesson plans, displays on the wall, progression in children's work and leadership and collaboration with other children in the classroom.
- Encourage teachers to reflect on the value of having a vision of what is important to them to start the year and have a plan in place to begin at the start of the new school year (It's so much easier to start from day 1, than to try and implement one month into school)
- Encourage teachers to take time to rest, rejuvenate and recharge over the summer by going outside, enjoying nature, going on a picnic, reading a good book, or reconnecting with a friend for lunch





Phoebe Seiler has been part of our team at the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte since September 2017. Previously, she was a Mentor/Evaluator with the EESLPD Office at ECU for 3 years.

She expresses the things she likes best about her work, "I enjoy the relationships I form with teachers as well as helping them grow and gain confidence in their abilities. I also love seeing the wonderful things in the various classrooms I visit and sharing those ideas with others."

Phoebe says that she could never pick just one favorite children's book but that some of her favorites are *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, *When Sofie Gets Angry-Really Really Angry*, and anything by Dr. Seuss.

When asked about her interests outside of work, Phoebe shares, "I love spending time outside! Gardening, playing in the water, exploring the coast and the mountains, camping, going to music festivals or just walks outside!"

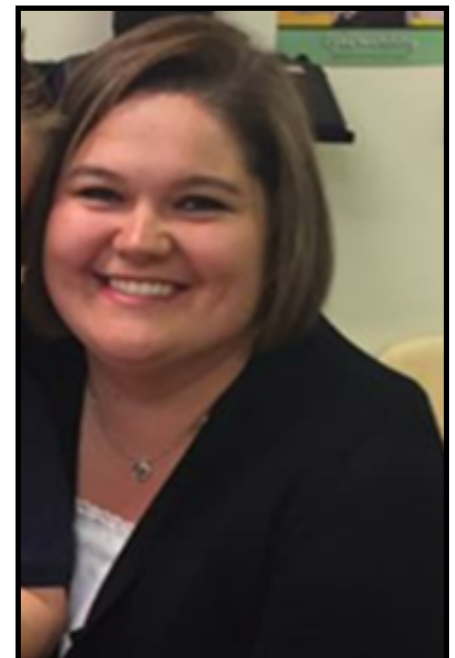
COLLABORATOR CORNER

Jenny Rogers is the Training and Professional Development Specialist at Macon Program for Progress. She has partnered with the EESLPD for 4 years.

When asked what she likes best about her work with the EESLPD, she responds, "I really enjoy working with teacher seeing the growth they make and the impact that it has on the classroom."

Jenny's favorite children's book is *Snowmen at Night* by Caralyn Buehner, Illustrated by Mark Buehner. She adds, "This is one of my favorites because it helps with phonological awareness with all the rhyming lines throughout the book. It not only has beautiful pictures but on each page you can find hidden images. It really encourages the children to really examine and look at pictures."

About her life outside of work, Jenny shares "I've been married for 12 years and have been blessed with 5 wonderful children through adoption (twins Adam and David 11, Jase 7, Addison 6 and Levi 5.) I enjoy spending time watching my children play sports baseball, soccer, and basketball. I also enjoy spending time with family fishing, camping, and gardening."



"Highlights from the Field"

Erica Recchio shares, "Just recently I was given the opportunity to attend a 3 day training on 'Managing Challenging Behaviors using the Pyramid Model Framework'. While I was there I was able to make new relationships and gain a lifelong learning framework which will guide me while mentoring/evaluating teachers as well as raising my two little boys. As educators, we are always striving to continue professional growth and become lifelong learners. After completing this training, I was observing a teacher whom I've have had the joy of mentoring all year. In the beginning of the school year, she had reached out for help with some challenging behaviors that were happening in her classroom. When I made my first visit to her classroom in September, she had very little social emotional tools implemented and was asking to refer a few children that she felt needed behavioral support. Some of her children were throwing blocks, knocking down others and very challenging for her. Knowing that relationships and environment are crucial components in the Pre-K classroom, I had stressed teaching social emotional skills at the very beginning of the school year. After working with

this teacher for several months, she was able to teach, model, and implement many social emotional skills and watch her class evolve into a cooperative school family. I just went to visit her and share some of the new tools that I had gained at the training and she thanked me for all the support I had given over the year. Her classroom was a peaceful happy community that she had created! Supporting teachers while building and maintaining relationships with them and watching them grow is the most rewarding part of working with them.

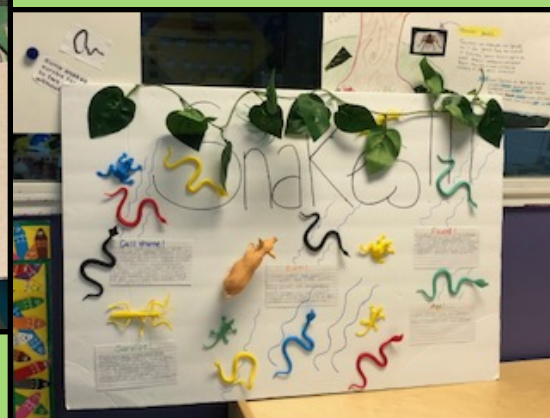


Joanie Oliphant expresses, " I am writing to celebrate a recent event in a classroom where I have served as evaluator for the last two years. The teacher consistently integrates literacy instruction throughout the curriculum. A particular book, however, led to an experience that the children in her class will never forget. After reading the Quinceanera, as part of her Creative Curriculum clothing study, the children's interest in the story led the teacher to mention the book to some of her Latin American parents. (The Quinceanera, a fancy party for fifteen-year-old girls, is an Hispanic tradition associated with Mexican, Central and South American cultures). The parents were delighted, and suggested having a classroom Quinceanera, which they renamed Transitional Celebration, in honor of the children's moving from Pre-K to Kindergarten. The families created sparkling tiaras for the girls and wristband corsages for the boys. One mom baked a special Quinceanera cake, and others cooked traditional dishes to be served. Children dresses up and the families that attended brought music and taught the children traditional dances. The teacher took many photos and videos of the event, including a highlight moment when a teenage sibling came to the celebration dressed in her own Quinceanera gown and tiara. What an amazing way to celebrate the diversity of the children in the classroom, involve families, conclude the clothing study, and anticipate the children's transition to kindergarten! "



"Highlights from the Field" (Cont.)

Adriane Mingo shares a highlight from a teacher whom she has served as the evaluator for the past two years. Her passion and love for our profession is obvious to everyone who enters her classroom. She and her co-teacher are totally committed to providing engaging learning activities daily. They both take a real interest in building strong meaningful relationships with their students and families. During the Habitat unit, they demonstrated how learning comes "alive" in their classroom. Throughout the unit, students learned about the various habitat of animals. This connected learning to previous units and also provided the background for upcoming units. As a culminating family activity, students along with the families selected an animal and created its habitat. Each child participated. The pictures below provide a great example of the various ways students demonstrated their learning and creativity. Not only is she a shining star and outstanding teacher, she is also a leader in her classroom, school, and community. I count it a real joy to work and learn from her each time I walk into her classroom. Our profession is strengthened because of her gifts and talents. She is truly an amazing teacher and valuable professional.



DID YOU KNOW?

One of our part-time employees, Nan Lee, will be retiring at the end of May. Nan has devoted her entire career to serving young children and families. After graduating from East Carolina University in the seventies, Nan taught students with special needs in a rural eastern Carolina community. She began her early childhood education career as a church preschool teacher, then moved on to what was then Pitt Memorial Hospital to work in their playroom. Nan was integral in helping begin Camp Rainbow, a camp for children with cancer and their siblings as well as ECU's child life program. After her work in the hospital, Nan spent many years in Early Intervention, serving young children with disabilities and at risk populations. Nan's commitment to young children and families in and around Pitt County eventually lead to her joining East Carolina University as the Director of their Child Development Laboratory. During her time at ECU, Nan served as director of the lab school, taught in the preschool classroom, and taught early childhood courses in the Birth-Kindergarten program (often wearing many of these hats simultaneously). After 30 plus years working in the early childhood field in Eastern North Carolina, Nan followed a lifelong dream of living in the NC mountains. She left ECU and Greenville and moved across the state to Brevard. Soon after she attempted to retire, although that did not stick. She taught early education workshops and served as a consultant for many local agencies before joining the EESLPD team. Nan has worked part-time for the EESLPD evaluating teachers in Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties for approximately 4 years. She has been a tremendous asset to the teachers as well as the site administrators. After several years with the EESLPD, she is finally retiring for good (so she says). Although, she will never venture far away from young children, as she will be helping care for her two youngest grandchildren. Nan and her grandson, Grady (the son of our very own-Phoebe Seiler), are in the left and right pictures below. She is holding a friend's baby in the center picture.

Nan,

You will be truly missed!

We thank you for all you do!



"Ms. Nan,

I am a better teacher because of your valuable feedback. Thank you for your dedication to the profession and the next generation of lifelong learners you've touched."
-Chad C

"During my 1st year of the BTSP, Nan was my evaluator. I was extremely nervous about the whole process and being "evaluated" 4x year. Nan came in with a kind and supportive presence. I appreciated her constructive feedback and it felt relevant. Nan helped me gain a lot of confidence and in turn, I feel like I'm a better teacher for having had the opportunity to work with her last year. I wish Nan all the best in her retirement." -Leslie Nelson

"Nan ,

Thank you for the kind and warm support you have given me through EESLPD program. I truly felt that I was supported by you, and it is important for all the teachers to feel supported in order to be motivated and passionate about what we do. I've learned a lot under your guidance. I hope we get to work together again. Enjoy spending time with your grandchildren. I will miss you very much. Have a coffee with me sometimes." - Kai



"Miss Nan,

It was an honor and privilege working with you. I know I have grown professionally as a teacher for all the advice that I received from you. I gained more confidence in myself as well as my teaching style. I knew I needed to critique in other areas and you always gave me your input. I also value the knowledge that I gleaned from you and for that "mahalo". As you know, it's not about me but for any future children that I teach. Take care and enjoy your retirement! Aloha!" -Fran Clark

"She was my first Evaluator. The first day she came into my room, I was pretty intimidated and frightened but by the end of the evaluation after we had talked, I realized she was once a teacher and had my best interest at heart. I think she has so much to offer as a mentor, evaluator and friend. She gave such great advice on how to make the classroom be the 'best' it could be. I flourished under her watchful eye. She will be missed."
-Maggi Bailey Carroll



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 2018

May 15th

**Final Observation and Summative (of teachers needing licensure action)
locked in NCEES/Home Base**

May 15th

Last workday for Part-time EESLPD UNC Charlotte Staff

June 2018

June 4th

Final Observation and Summative (of teachers *not* needing licensure action) complete

June 8th

**Final Observation and Summative (of teachers *not* needing licensure action)
locked in NCEES/Home Base**

June 19th

Mindful Coaching Training in Hickory

June 21st-22nd

End of Year Staff Meeting in Asheville (EESLPD UNC Charlotte Staff)

June 25th

CLASS Training in High Point (EESLPD UNC Charlotte Staff)

For more information about the EESLPD West Office at UNC Charlotte, please follow this link:
<https://ceme.uncc.edu/early-educator-support-licensure-and-professional-development-eeslpd-office>