

Connections

The EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte Newsletter

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However, do not forget to **LEARN** and **LEAD!**

Without hesitation, I can say the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte team fulfilled the charge at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference held last week in Washington DC. It was elating to be among over 9000 early childhood professionals from over 48 countries to celebrate young children and their families. It was an honor to share our story with others in various stages of program development, who are also seeking ways to support the professional growth of early childhood educators. It was a pleasure to be in the company of my colleagues who share my passion for what we do but also (maybe) like to let their hair down and live a little (just a little)!

Thankful for this opportunity and for each of you! ❤️ Amanda

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Embedding Literacy Authentically

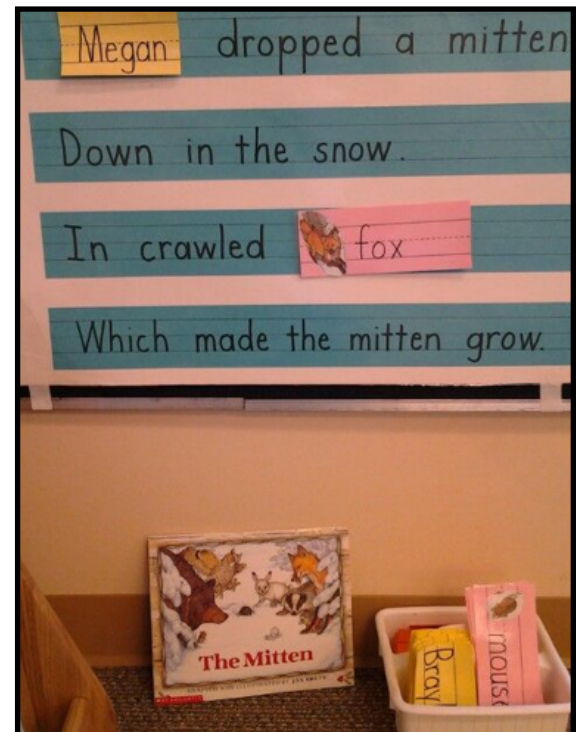
Young children’s development of early literacy skills call for many opportunities and experiences to hear and understand spoken language, to learn about print and writing. Children need to be exposed to print to help them learn about reading, and reading to help them learn about writing. Teachers work to support young children’s language and literacy development by using an interconnected process that transpires across various developmental domains. Children must be provided daily opportunities to actively engage in familiar and meaningful print activities versus teaching skills in isolation. Children are self-motivated to expand their early literacy skills when teachers integrate these skills into meaningful and playful activities in learning centers maximizing spontaneous teachable moments throughout the day. “Classrooms filled with print, language and literacy play, storybook reading, and writing allow children to experience the joy and power associated with reading and writing while mastering basic concepts about print that research has shown are strong predictors of achievement.” (A joint positions statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998).

Guiding questions to encourage embedding literacy authentically:

- What are some ways that you include literacy throughout the classroom?
- How can you use Foundations and suggested strategies to support you in planning for literacy in the classroom?
- How do you differentiate literacy opportunities to support the individual needs of your children ?
- How might you use transitions to embed literacy skills?
- How can you encourage children’s writing in meaningful ways?
- What are some ideas you might have for creating a dramatic play scenario to encourage authentic literacy?
- How can you promote literacy experiences at home that link to your topic of study?
- What literacy skills do you want to address?
- How are children’s interests incorporated when initiating literacy learning opportunities?
- What are some ways that you encourage children’s language?



During a building study, the teacher provides children with authentic literacy opportunities by inviting them to create blueprints & buildings

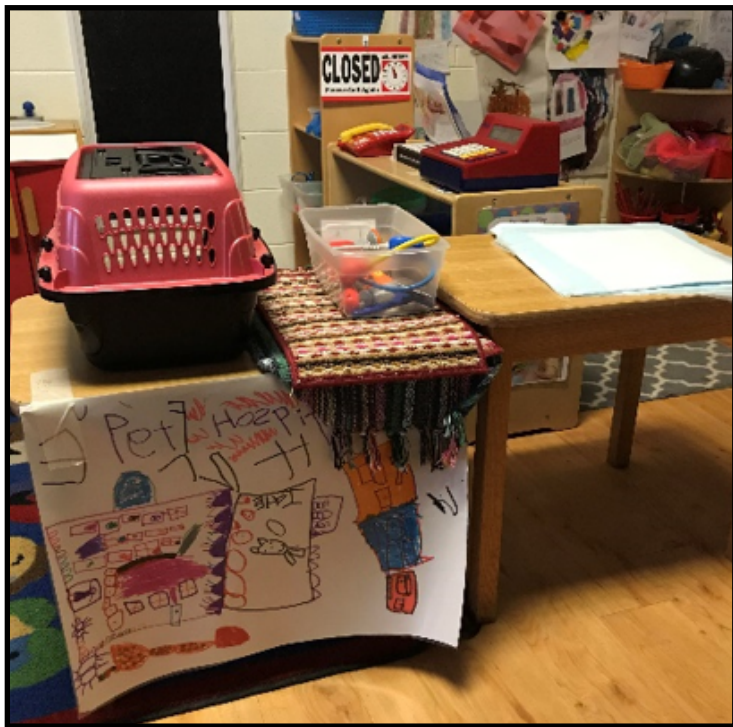


An interactive chart encourages the children to play with & manipulate language using a familiar story. This can be extended further by having children create their own movable pieces

Mentor Minute (cont.)

Other talking points might include discussions about:

- Creating a print-rich environment ; pairing visuals with print when possible or when it makes sense
- Regular read-alouds; incorporating books with repetitive phrases and predictable text
- Creating authentic opportunities for dramatic play scenarios to encourage children’s development of literacy skills by brainstorming and creating needed props and signs
- Creating interactive charts that encourage children’s reading with movable pieces or fixed repetitive texts
- Providing materials to encourage children to create their own books and class books
- Adding meaningful writing materials and literacy props to your learning centers
- Considering children’s interest and the focus of their play when initiating a literacy learning opportunity
- Creating writing opportunities connected to your current topic of study
- Taking advantage of teachable moments
- Model writing for children and consider ways to encourage writing
- Teaching through connection versus isolation; introducing letters using children’s names versus teaching a letter each week
- Finding authentic writing opportunities that strengthen the home-school connection
- Utilizing the developmental indicators and strategies found within Foundations to differentiate instruction



During a pet study, the children & teacher turn the dramatic play center into a pet hospital. The teacher adds many play props, children assist in creating props & explore writing by creating a sign to display



The teacher provides materials to enable children to retell a familiar story and explore writing

Additional resources about Embedding Literacy Authentically can be found below:

- [Five Predictors of Early Literacy \(video\)](#)
- [Promoting Preschoolers Emergent Writing \(NAEYC article\)](#)
- [Talk, Read, and Sing Together Everyday! \(tip-sheets\)](#)

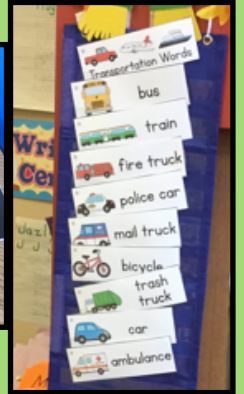
Please be sure to also visit the [EESLPD Useful Resources](#) tab of our website to explore the Literacy section under Mentor/Evaluator Additional Resources

Special thanks to Brooke Hough whom served as a guest contributor to this month's Mentor Minute

"Highlights from the Field"

Sandy Thompson shares, "I worked with a teacher last year who struggled with incorporating her topic of study into her learning environment. We discussed this at each post-conference, I shared examples with her and articles that I read. Her mentor also provided a great deal of support. By the end of the year, we could see progress being made. We were excited to see what the upcoming year would bring.

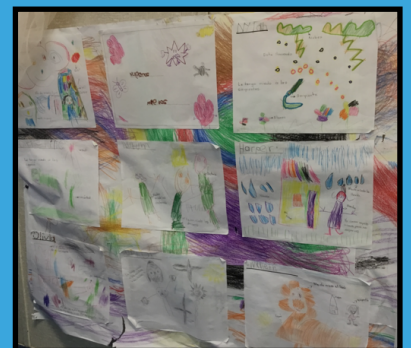
This year, when I went in for her first observation, her classroom reflected her topic of study (transportation) in such a profound way! Transportation was present in every center. During her group time that morning, she talked with the children about the items that would be available in each center. There was so much for the children to choose from. The children remained engaged in their work throughout my visit that morning as there were so many materials present in each area.



Following my observation as I headed to the door, she came over to me and said, 'last year it was really difficult for me to do this. I didn't have a clue of what I could put in some areas.' She said that she was thankful for the support we gave her. She said it was so much easier this year. She was so excited and so were we!

To witness the growth of a teacher, to see that gleam in their eyes when there's an 'aha' moment, really brings joy to my heart and makes me realize the importance of what we do and how it shapes so many lives in such a positive way. I am living proof of that as I too was in the same shoes of that teacher just a few years ago!"

Amy Jo Farrington shares about a teacher she supports, "The teacher observed some behaviors that concerned her, so she created learning experiences (as part of a topic of study about feelings) to support the social emotional growth of her students. One activity that she designed began with the creation of puppets. Each child created a set of puppets with different facial expressions to represent feelings. Next, she read different scenarios that the children might find themselves in, and asked them to raise the puppet that represented how that scenario would make them feel. Taking it one step further, she used a graph to show the children how the various scenarios impacted each of them. The next activity was also related to feelings and came from discussions about fears. The children were encouraged to draw their fears, and more conversation came from these drawings. Both activities were very meaningful and relevant to the needs of the children, and it was really special and heart-warming to witness the deep level of relationship-building and intentional support of children's social emotional growth."



Joanie Oliphant is the Regional Lead for Region 2. She started partnering with our office in 2013 and then became a full-time staff member in 2016. When asked what she likes best about her work with the EESLPD, Joanie expresses, "I love the time I spend in the classrooms: glimpsing a snapshot of the nurturing interactions, the active learning through play and the positive relationships that deepen throughout the program year. Being welcomed into each unique classroom community is an opportunity that is so special to me. I also treasure time spent with members of my team--meetings, trainings and shared conferences with teachers are highlights of the work I do!"

Her favorite children's book is: *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae because it "teaches children that we each have our own unique talents and abilities."

Joanie enjoys many things outside of work as well. She shares, "the joys of my life are going hiking and traveling with my husband, reading or knitting during my rare moments of solitude, and visiting as often as possible with my precious children and grandson. I am also an avid Carolina Panthers fan!"



COLLABORATOR CORNER

Isha Goode serves as the Quality Program Director for several Childcare Network sites in Charlotte. She has partnered with our office since 2014. Isha expresses, "the best part about working with EESLPD is working with the teachers in the classroom. I love connecting with the teachers and seeing their progress over time. Every year is an awesome experience of meeting new people and seeing all of the diversity and creativity within early childhood education. "

One of her favorite children's book is *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak because, "it is such a fun book showing just how vivid children's imaginations can get. It speaks of freedom, adventure, creativity and bravery. My favorite part of the story is when Max, the main character, tames the Wild Things and they called him 'the most terrible Wild Thing of them all.' No matter how often I read that line it always brings smile to my face."

About her life outside of work, Isha shares, "I have been married to my wonderful husband for 12 years and I have 3 little boys who keep me busy daily. I am also a bit of a 'gearhead.' I love muscle cars and tuners. The Fast and the Furious series is my favorite movie series of all time."



Work Group Updates

Online PLC Work Group

The online PLC workgroup is in the process of assessing current teacher needs for an online PLC. We realize that many of us have not had the opportunity to speak with teachers about PLCs and anticipate that we will during upcoming observations when Standard I is observed/discussed with teachers. We would like to encourage everyone to identify those teachers that may be in need of the support of an online PLC and to report those teachers to Amy Jo, Gail, or Stephanie (work group members). Please remember that in order for a teacher to qualify, they must not have any other alternative PLC options available to them. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact any of the PLC work group members.

Topic Briefs Work Group

Our group has been developing a template to use for our one-page briefs. Kyle, Amanda, And Heather have decided to write about topics pertaining to Professional Learning Communities, Authentic Assessment, and Inclusion. We have some other topics we are considering and are well on our way to creating another great resource for our staff to use with teachers they support.

Facebook Work Group

Work group members, Phoebe, Mariel, and Jessica are currently focusing on increasing membership to 200 participants by the end of school year. Therefore, a post will be made soon (before Thanksgiving) to all current page members asking them to invite at least one other teacher whom receives EESLPD services to join. Then, after Thanksgiving, an official invitation which will include the link to the Facebook page (similar to the one sent last year) will be emailed to staff and asked to be sent to teachers. Please be on the lookout for the invitation coming soon!

CHFD Conference Work Group

Heather Taylor and Dr. Bobbie Rowland met with Dr. Charles Wood (Chair of the Department of Special Education Child and Family Development (CHFD) and Jamie Brown (CHFD Instructor) to discuss the possibility of collaborating to develop and kick-off the annual CHFD Conference in spring of 2020. Our meeting was successful and there is interest in the EESLPD Office and the Department of Special Education and CHFD to work together to bring the conference back to our community at UNC Charlotte. Our own Joanie Oliphant and Janet Harris (NC Pre-K Literacy Coach/Partner in Charlotte) have agreed to partner on this project as well. Please reach out to Heather, if you're interested in participating in this exciting, collaborative opportunity.