



Setting Sail:

Newsletter of the Partnership for Inquiry

October 2004

Volume 1, Issue 1

**The Rochester Region
Early Childhood
Partnership for
Inquiry in
Professional
Learning**

**State University of New
York- Geneseo**

**Children's Center of
Brighton &
Children's Center of
Brighton 2**

Family Learning Center

**Rochester Museum and
Science Center
Preschool**

**Seton Catholic
Preschool**

**Council Rock Primary
School**

**Early Childhood School
of Rochester, RCSD
#57**

**Genesee Community
Charter School**

Harley Lower School

**William C. Munn
Elementary School
Spencerport**

All Hands on Deck

Over the past several years, the Early Childhood faculty at SUNY – Geneseo have been working with a variety of schools serving children and families in the Rochester area. Based on our teacher candidates' positive experiences at a number of these sites, we identified a group of schools that might form a small learning collaborative of professionals interested in promoting innovative and reflective teaching practices. We are delighted to publicly announce this university-school partnership with the first edition of this partnership newsletter: Setting Sail.

Some of the goals for this partnership include opportunities for schools:

1. To find out about the curriculum and parent involvement practices in other schools and programs;
2. To network with teachers in other schools or programs with similar interests;
3. To mentor prospective teachers in ways consistent with the developmental needs of children and with an inquiry philosophy; and
4. To request volunteers (Young Children's Council) to assist in your classrooms.



**Ella Cline Shear School of
Education at South Hall**

An additional goal involves opportunities for Early Childhood faculty to learn more about implementation of innovative practices and parent involvement strategies in various school contexts.

Now that we have "all hands on deck," the Partnership is "setting sail." Among the communication and documentation tools available to Partners will be regularly published newsletters, telephone conversations, personal contacts and visits, and a page devoted to the Rochester Region Early Childhood Partnership at the Young Children Council website:
www.geneseo.edu/~ycc/

Welcome Aboard: Introducing Our Members

Here is a peek at a few of our partnership schools. In the next two issues of this newsletter, each partnership school will be spotlighted.



Genesee Community Charter School

GCCS enrolls a diverse population of K- 6 students and is located on the campus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. They have a local history-based and globally-connected program. This program immerses children in investigation and discovery, and makes extensive use of the cultural and natural resources of the community. See www.gccschool.org/ for more information.



Harley Lower School

The Harley Lower School houses students from ages three to grade four. The major goals of their program are to promote learning, support intellectual curiosity, develop self-awareness and self-direction, and nurture young children's personal and social growth. To provide more attention to each child, all Lower School classes are taught by a team of teachers. See www.harleyschool.org/index01.htm for more information.



Children's Center of Brighton and Children's Center of Brighton 2

This center is locally owned and family operated, and serves children from infancy to school age. It offers a comprehensive program focusing on social, emotional, and cognitive development. A primary goal of the center is to create a feeling similar to that of an extended family. See www.childrenscenter.net/ for more information.



William C. Munn Elementary School, Spencerport

The Munn School is located in Spencerport, New York. Their school family for the 2004-2005 school year is comprised of approximately 390 students (K-5) and 63 staff members. They promote literacy and emphasize a respectful, consistent approach to sharing expectations with all students. See www.spencerportschools.org/munn_elementary.cfm for more information.

Taking Our Bearings and Seeking National Accreditation



Like all teacher education programs in New York State, the Ella Cline Shear School of Education at SUNY Geneseo is seeking national accreditation. They are doing this through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In addition, the Early Childhood Program uses the Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These guidelines contain 5 broad program standards.

The first standard is Promoting Child Development and Learning. Elements of this standard are: (a) knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs, (b) knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning, and (c) using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging environments.

The second standard is Building Family and Community

Relationships. This includes: (a) knowing and understanding family and community characteristics, (b) supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships, and (c) involving families and communities in their children's development.

Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families is the third standard. The elements of this standard are: (a) understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment, (b) knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches and understanding and practicing responsible assessment, and (c) knowing about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals.

The fourth standard is Teaching and Learning. Elements of this standard are: (a) connecting with children and families: knowing, understanding, and using positive relationships and supportive interactions, (b) using developmentally effective approaches: knowing, understanding, and using effective approaches, strategies,

and tools for early education, (c) understanding content knowledge in early education: knowing and understanding the importance, central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas and disciplines, and (d) building meaningful curriculum: using own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum to promote positive outcomes.

The fifth standard is Becoming a Professional. Standard 5 includes: (a) Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field, (b) knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines, (c) engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice, (d) integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education, and (d) engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession.

We use these Standards to develop our courses and field experiences. Teacher candidates use these standards to guide and reflect on their practice.

Mapping Our Voyage

As courses were developed for the current Early Childhood Program based on the NAEYC Standards, three important themes were incorporated: (1) Teacher Inquiry and Reflective Practice, (2) Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

and Curriculum Development, (3) Social Responsibility and a Code of Ethical Conduct.

To communicate how these goals and themes are intended to function, a metaphoric image based on the idea of a three-legged milking stool was

created. The three legs of this stool represent the program's three themes. The assumption is made that each leg individually must be strong, but each leg also must work together with the other legs to support the stool as a whole, (Continued on page 4)

Mapping Our Voyage (continued)



if the stool is to stand. In other words, all three components are equally necessary, if teacher candidates are to accomplish intended learning outcomes for themselves and their students.

The immediate learning outcomes of the program are demonstrated and documented over time through the field experience and portfolio component of the program, which is represented by the seat of the stool. A critical feature of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Program is a strong, sequential field experience component. These field experiences must include a commitment to inquiry, the enlargement of perspectives, and crossing the cultural boundaries of the candidate's prior experience. Although diversity is stressed throughout courses in readings, class activities, and discussions, such activities cannot take the

place of direct field experiences and reflection on those experiences. To this end, there is a gradual increase in the challenge of field experience expectations and the various types of field placements and assignments that our candidates have as they move through the program from service learning to initial field inquiry experiences, to focused field activities, to practicum blocks, to student teaching. In addition, a portfolio component is part of the program assessment system.



YCC Executive Board



The President suggests doing volunteer work at the Ronald McDonald House.

YCC, A Treasure Chest at SUNY Geneseo

The Young Children's Council (YCC) is a SUNY Geneseo School of Education student organization focusing on work with children birth to age 8 and their families. YCC sponsors speakers, workshops, special activities for young children, and professional growth activities.

YCC holds at least one, sometimes two "Family Events" each year. Last year they organized a Family Event with the local Head Start program serving Livingston County families. YCC members played games and created art work with the children. A healthy snack was provided to all the children. YCC also sent each family home with a door prize and each

child chose a pumpkin and book to add to their personal library.

YCC members look forward to being involved in volunteer activities in Early Childhood Partnership Schools. For even more information on YCC visit their website at:

www.geneseo.edu/~ycc/



The first YCC meeting filled the room.