

CaribECD Link Newsletter

2011

Issue 14



DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES - Strengthening the Caribbean Early Childhood Development (ECD) Network

Networking, the art of building alliances, is a powerful strategy in any sector. It is about developing relationships and expanding opportunities. Making the right connections and building mutually beneficial associations require regularly meeting new and old colleagues, exchanging experiences and learning about available goods, services, funding opportunities, as well as sharing knowledge and benefits, such as ‘favours’. The key to successful networking is follow-up and follow-through.

With the support of UNESCO, the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC) is helping to strengthen the region’s ECD network, via the CaribECD website, its e-forum, regional teleconferences (via UWI Open Campus) and this publication.

- Special points of interest:**
- **Feature Article** - Positive Discipline, Effective Alternatives to Corporal Punishment
 - Order your copy of **Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development—A Handbook for Practitioners**

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With the continued support of UNESCO and many other local, regional and international partners, CCDC's ECD network has strengthened over the last decade and the Centre continues to serve as a conduit of knowledge and resources.

Meaningful Child and Parent Participation in ECD

What is meaningful child participation in ECD? Why does it matter? What is meaningful parent participation in ECD? How can we facilitate it?

At the first teleconference of the 2011 Series, 104 stakeholders from across the region (in 12 Caribbean countries) discussed the meaning of meaningful participation, why it is necessary, and how best to facilitate it - in the home, day care or preschool, and community.

Guest presenters, Jamaica's Janet Brown and Richard Troupe, along with Grenada's Susan Parke, outlined strategies for engaging young children and their parents. ECD colleagues exchanged ideas, experiences, and best practices.

To learn more about multiple, effective strategies, visit:

<http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/reports-and-publications>

Exchange your thoughts, comments and questions with colleagues in the e-forum - <http://www.uwi.edu/caribecd/forum/default.aspx>

Renewed CaribECD Still Focused on the Whole Child

CaribECD focuses on the whole child and how we can best help young children in the Caribbean to achieve their full potential. This website is for all persons who are interested in Caribbean early childhood, parenting and family development issues.

Recently renovated and re-launched to better serve ECD stakeholders' needs and interests, the site provides information, knowledge, resources and opportunities relating to the status and development of young children (from birth to eight years). Check out what's new at CaribECD. <http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/welcome>

Send your contributions and ideas for improving the website to caribecd@open.uwi.edu



Tell Us What's Happening In Your Country

In an effort to have a country profile for all Caribbean nations on the CaribECD website, CCDC requests the support and cooperation of governmental and non-governmental colleagues from across the region to submit updates on laws, policies, plans, services and resources that support ECD.

Better Supports For Our Youngest Citizens

The June teleconference was planned in conjunction with the regional policy forum; it was convened the week prior to the Kingstown meeting and its outputs were expected to inform the forum deliberations. CCDC hosted 56 ECD stakeholders in 13 countries, via the UWI Open Campus, to:

- Discuss which interventions are most effective;
- elaborate on the status of young children in each country;
- identify existing gaps in addressing the needs of children from zero to three, particularly the most vulnerable;
- exchange ideas on how best to reach children, from birth to three years, and provide quality parenting education and EC services in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

What did representatives from 13 Caribbean Countries have to say? A detailed report of the teleconference is available at: <http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/reports-and-publications>

Child Rights Training Learning about child rights for child rights

The final teleconference of the 2011 Series, held in November, focused on the region's ECD Sector child rights training needs and interests.

Child rights trainers, Dr. Beverley McKenzie and Heather Gallimore, presented lessons learned, particularly from CCDC's Child Rights Education Project, a UNICEF-supported initiative that provided child rights education and training for five learner cohorts (2009-2011). Learners included social workers, children's officers, police and juvenile corrections personnel, and education officers.

A group activity engaged the 77 teleconference participants in an informal assessment of the child rights education and training needs in the 11 participating countries.

Generally, participants indicated:

- Child rights are not adequately addressed in early childhood training programs;
- Legislators and policy makers have limited knowledge of child rights and are not sufficiently supportive of implementation efforts;
- Child rights are minimally translated into daily activities for young children and parenting education efforts;
- Lack of knowledge, understanding, poor enforcement of standards, culture/traditions are some of the challenges practitioners face in upholding child rights;
- Multi-sectoral child rights education and training is wanted in all participating countries.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/parents?page>

Teleconference participants from across the region expressed profound gratitude for the opportunity to meet and exchange via the regional teleconferences

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

SVG SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (VINSAVE) CHILDCARE AND DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN ST. VIN- CENT AND THE GRENADINES

VINSAVE is the major training institution for Early Childhood Education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Established since 1964, the institution now runs two (2) courses yearly, providing theoretical and practical components, and has residential facilities for students. Many VINSAVE trained students received certification from the National Council on Technical Vocational Education and Training, (NCTVET) Jamaica, which has allowed them to work in other Caribbean countries. With the opening of Government Pre-Schools, several other trained Caregivers have found work and continue to make a positive impact on the lives of children.



2011 VINSAVE's Child Care and Development Students

Other regional highlights:

- An Assessment of ECD in Belize (2010)
- Jamaica's Parents' Places (2011)
- Montserrat's Child Month Celebrations (2011)

[http://www.open.uwi.edu/
caribecd/eecd-contacts-
caribbean-countries](http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/eecd-contacts-caribbean-countries)

FEATURE ARTICLE

Positive Discipline

Dr. Helen Baker Henningham, UWI (Mona) Lecturer in Child Development, was the main presenter at the September teleconference, which was attended by 97 colleagues in 11 countries. Her work in recent years has focused on intervening during early childhood, at school entry, in order to put children on a more positive path; helping them to develop positive relationships with their teachers and peers, and be engaged in the learning activities in the classroom.

Children with behavioural problems have several difficulties. For instance they -

- often have poor attention;
- might be overactive and restless;
- often have a problem understanding their own and other people's emotions;
- have poor self-regulation (have difficulty regulating their own emotions) and find it difficult to regulate their behaviour;
- have poor social skills;
- often do not do well at school; and
- often find hard to solve interpersonal problems.

In early childhood, children are challenged to:

- make a successful transition from home to school;
- learn to follow the rules and expectations of the classroom;
- make friends;
- learn age appropriate material.

Young children's ability to regulate their behaviour is crucial

Children with behavioural problems find the developmental path of early childhood quite difficult. If they have social, emotional and behavioural problems at the point of entering school, they tend to develop poor relationships with their teachers, may be rejected by peers, and often have low levels of participation in the classroom.

The relationship between parents and teachers are also often not good because the teachers are usually sharing bad news with the parents. All of these things impact on the child's early experiences and these factors often lead to a continuation or escalation of the child's problems. When this child enters primary school, he/she probably has continuing behavioural problems, might not like school very much, may start to make friends with other children with behavioural problems and probably has poor academic achievement.

This sets the child on a negative developmental path so in adolescence he/she is more likely to be:

- involved in juvenile delinquency,
- truant from school,
- involved in substance abuse,
- vulnerable to depression and suicide ideation.

As such behaviours can continue into adulthood, making the person more likely to be involved in crime and violence, and have low educational and economic attainment. Experiences in the early years are critical to achieving developmental milestones.

What can we do to help children?

Schools should increase their use of positive and nurturing behaviour management techniques and decrease use of negative behaviour management techniques, whilst promoting parent-teacher collaboration, and explicitly teaching children expected behaviours and the emotional skills they need. Quite often practitioners and teachers assume that children know how to behave when they reach the classroom. If a child does not know how to read, we know we must teach them to read.

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FEATURE ARTICLE Cont'd....

Components of Behaviour Management

Dr. Henningham outlined components of the behaviour management programme she uses, the U.S. developed Incredible Years Training Program, (www.incredibleyears.com) which was tailored to fit the Jamaican setting. It is research-based, proven effective approaches (for parents, teachers and children) for reducing children's behaviour problems and aggression and increasing social competence at home and at school. She described the levels of interventions as building a pyramid, with a strong base that is firm enough to withstand the test of time.

The foundation of the behaviour management pyramid is filled with strategies for building positive relationships with children – such as playing with, listening to, talking with children and getting them involved in paying attention to what they say and showing empathy. Other positive strategies include:

- praising, encouraging, and giving them incentives;
- Being proactive, ensuring that children understand the classroom rules, with clear limits and clear classroom structures;

Toward the top of the pyramid are strategies for dealing with misbehaviour, such as:

- redirecting using non-verbal cues,
- reminding children of the expected behaviour,
- warning them of the consequences that will occur if they continue with the misbehaviour
- implementing the consequences.

The positive, pro-active strategies used for the foundation are intended to be used as much as possible, and the strategies at the top are used only when necessary. Unfortunately, human nature is such that we tend to flip the pyramid upside down and go straight to threatening consequences – the pyramid topples over.

Highlights from a recently completed study in 24 preschools in Jamaica were shared:

12 schools received the teacher training program (eight full-day workshops with one hour of in-class support for four months) and 12 schools' teachers received no training.

Researchers selected, from 73 classrooms, the three children who were giving the most trouble – a total of 225 children. At baseline, about 60% of teachers were observed using physical punishment at least once during the school day.

The results from this study showed that, at the end of the intervention:

- *The trained teachers drastically increased the number of positive strategies (four-fold) and significantly decreased (cut in half) negative strategies used in the classroom; the control teachers did not change.*
- *In dealing with the most difficult children, the trained teachers' use of positive strategies resulted in significantly reduced misbehaviour.*
- *The behaviour of the three most difficult children in each class was measured by observation, by teacher report and by parent report. Researchers found the children's problem behaviour reduced across all measures, they became less aggressive, less disruptive, and friendlier. Encouraging results were recorded for both teachers and children after the intervention.*

Teleconference participants engaged in brainstorming and video- observation activities to list the barriers to and the many benefits of positive encouragement. The bottom-line was, paying **attention to positive behaviour leads to an increase in positive behaviour**; conversely, paying attention to negative behaviour leads to an increase in negative behaviour. **When we pay attention to the behaviour we like we also let children know what we expect. When we pay attention to the behaviour we want, the misbehaving children tend to fall 'in line'.**

Teacher Hermione Baptiste, Curriculum Development Officer (HFLE) in Grenada's Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, also presented on the developmental approach to discipline (age appropriateness), gender considerations, and effective alternatives to corporal punishment.

This presentation is available at <http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/reports-and-publications>

Sharing Knowledge

Global Child Development Group authors 'Child Development in Developing Countries 2 - Addressing inequity early in life'

Four years after *The Lancet* published a first Series on early child development, it has published new papers by the Global Child Development Group Steering Committee and associated members which document progress worldwide and builds a case for addressing the issue of inequity early in life.

The series aims to elaborate the risks and protective factors for early childhood development, identify gaps in implementation and coverage of interventions, to calculate the economic costs of missed investment in early learning programmes, and to present new evidence on the causes and effects of developmental inequities in early childhood. For more info,

visit www.globalchilddevelopment.org

CARICOM Early Childhood Development (ECD) Working Group

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Framework of Action for Children (2002-15) prioritized the development of regional strategies (2008-11): to address the needs of children birth to three years of age; and, to strengthen capacity to establish special mechanisms for increasing marginalized

children's access to early detection and prevention services.

With the support and collaboration of regional partners, a regional forum to explore practical strategies to support the development of children zero to three, particularly the most vulnerable, was convened in Kingstown, in June.

Supporting the development of children zero to three

73 participants representing health, education, social development and parenting support agencies from 18 countries across the region attended the Kingstown forum. They received new information on scientific findings related to the zero to three cohorts, exchanged ideas and experiences, explored new opportunities and approaches and examined practical ways in which programs and services could be strengthened.

Discussions focused on six themes: health and nutrition, screening, referral and early intervention services; childrearing practices and supports, early stimulation; non-parental day care and policies for supporting parents. For more information, visit: <http://www.open.uwi.edu/caribecd/reports-and-publications>.

CCDC is a member of the ECD working group and partners with regional and international organizations to develop and promote ECD legislation, policy and best practices, and to ensure their translation into actions at the local level to strengthen the delivery of services and support better outcomes for the region's youngest citizens.

Now available!

*Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development
In the Caribbean: A Handbook for Practitioners*



**Also for
Parents**

**Cost:
J\$2500
USD30 +
shipping**

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