



Fall 2007

Greetings!

Welcome to the Fall edition of your Inside Gateways quarterly e-newsletter. This issue focuses on current early care and education initiatives in Illinois.

As you begin reading this issue, I think you'll be inspired by the Profiles in Leadership career stories of two of our colleagues in the field who are our newly named co-chairs of the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC). Their stories illustrate the many diverse paths available in the early care and education field and the need for a career lattice to "show the way" for someone choosing a career in early care and education.

Illinois Quality Counts, Quality Rating System (QRS) and Early Care & Education Core and Infant Toddler Credentials are new initiatives that you will want to read about and consider how to implement with your programs and/or staff. The focus of both QRS and credentials is to improve the quality of care for children in Illinois.

And finally, Dr. Lilian Katz shares with us her reflection on Professional Responses in the Early Childhood Classroom. Through a typical classroom example, Dr. Katz illustrates the importance of professional development by contrasting how a professional and nonprofessional might handle the same situation differently. Join us in learning about the importance of staff professional development as it relates to children.

Enjoy this latest edition of Inside Gateways! Thank you for all you do for children and families!

Paula Steffen and Your
Gateways to Opportunity
Professional Development Team

Profiles in Leadership

Periodically in this e-newsletter we will profile Gateways' leaders to acquaint you with their work and to illustrate through their experiences the range of career options available in early care and education.

Cass Wolfe

In this issue of Inside Gateways, we profile the new co-chairs of the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) [<http://ilgateways.com/about/pdac.aspx>], Cass Wolfe and Jeanne Anderson.

PDAC is the statewide advisory group of practitioners, educators, and advocates that designed the Gateways to Opportunity Illinois Early Care and Education Professional Development Network.

Cass Wolfe [<http://ilgateways.com/profdevel/profdevadvbio.aspx#CWolfe>], the new co-chair of PDAC and a Professional Development Advisor (PDA) for Gateways, works at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning (CRCL) [<http://www.crcl.net>] in Chicago as the Director of Curriculum and Staff Development for a staff of 200. During her nine years at CRCL, Cass has implemented a CDA training program, maintained a database of staff credentials and training, and advised, encouraged, and supported staff going back to college to earn degrees and credentials.

For as long as she can remember, Cass wanted to work in early childhood. As a young teenager, she worked in a summer camp, advancing to the position of assistant director by the time she went to college. Cass received undergraduate and graduate degrees in Child Development from Iowa State University. In graduate school, she worked on a Head Start training grant, participating in performance review visits and piloting the ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale). Cass worked as a classroom teacher for a relatively short time and then served as director for two different centers. The two director experiences were quite different from each other. The first position was at a struggling nonprofit center on the north side of Chicago, where Cass was a newcomer with few colleagues or mentors available to provide support: "I was the struggling director fighting to survive." The second position was at a more financially stable corporate-supported program in Boston, where Cass had access to mentors and colleagues to turn to for advice and support.

In the mid-1980s, Cass moved back to Chicago and took a position at the Day Care Action Council of Illinois (DCAC) to lead the organization's newly formed Resource and Referral Program. The state's CCR&R system was just developing, and through her role at DCAC, Cass helped give shape to a structure that would ultimately become the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) [<http://www.inccrra.org>]. "To help us figure out how to develop the Illinois system, we had access to leadership development and technical assistance from many smart women who headed up CCR&Rs elsewhere in the country. These were very exciting times." While at DCAC, Cass also worked on professional development for center and family child care providers and helped to write the Foundations of Family Child Care Curriculum, a curriculum still widely used in Illinois.

"Then, in 1995, I discovered my passion for early childhood professional development when I moved to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to be the Statewide Coordinator of Child Care Professional Development." There Cass worked on professional development initiatives, many of which are still in place today. Cass remained in that role until she came to her current position with the Carole Robertson Center.

Cass attributes her 30-year career in early care and education to her lifelong interest in working with young children and families, along with a combination of serendipity—being in the right place at the right time—and access to good mentors and leaders in the field. "Co chairing the state's Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) seems a natural fit right now."

Jeanne Anderson

Jeanne Anderson [<http://ilgateways.com/profdevel/profdevadvbio.aspx#JAnderson>], co-chair of PDAC and also a Professional Development Advisor (PDA) for Gateways, is Director of YWCA Child Care Solutions [<http://www.ywcachildcaresolutions.org>], the resource and referral agency that covers Winnebago, Boone, Stephenson, and Jo Daviess Counties in northern Illinois. Jeanne also is an instructor at Rock Valley College and serves on several advisory boards for early childhood groups, including the Rock River Association of Education for Young Children and the Rockford Early Learning Council.

Jeanne began her career in early care and education with a bachelor's degree in child development from Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois, with the intention of teaching kindergarten in a public school. Because a permanent kindergarten teaching position was not available at that time, Jeanne accepted a position as director of a local child care program that was, to Jeanne's dismay, out of compliance in many areas of state licensing regulation. With the help of a dedicated and knowledgeable licensing representative, Jeanne was able to correct all areas of noncompliance and

increase the center's enrollment within a 6-month period. Jeanne left the center when a kindergarten teaching position became available. When Jeanne had her first child, she found a position in the infant program in a nearby child care program so she could be with her baby. Jeanne held teaching positions in each of the center's classrooms, working with infants, toddlers, 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and school-age children. She eventually became program director and remained in that position for 10 years.

During that time, Jeanne participated in a series of training events sponsored by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University, which solidified her commitment to early childhood and to advocating for high-quality professional development in Illinois. In 1995, Jeanne began teaching workshops at conferences and facilitating a series of short training events for directors and family child care providers.

In 1995, Jeanne joined the board of the local Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC) affiliate and attended many statewide professional development meetings. "The more I learned, the more I wanted to provide support for others in the field to reach their professional goals," said Jeanne, who went on to help with the development of a Child Development Associate (CDA) module series. Then, in 1999, she joined the local CCR&R as a training specialist. "I quickly moved from Training Specialist to Training Coordinator, and then on to Professional Development Coordinator at the CCR&R, which allowed me to assist and mentor others to reach their professional development goals—something that had been a top priority for me as a center Director."

Jeanne then enrolled in National Louis University's Early Childhood Administration master's program to sharpen her skills and stay on top of current best practices in the field. In 2005, Jeanne started teaching courses at Rock Valley College in child development, math, and music for the young child.

Jeanne spent one year working for INCCRRA and Gateways to Opportunity as the Infant Toddler Credential Coordinator when that credential was in its early stage of development. "This experience taught me a great deal about the professional development system in Illinois." Jeanne heard about an online training opportunity through a national listserv for educators. In 2006, she completed a program to become an online course design specialist, which will help her design coursework for use in many adult education settings.

"All of these opportunities—as a teacher and administrator, a college instructor, a member of advisory boards and councils, working in the CCR&R system, and as a course design specialist—have led me to the position of co-chair of the Gateways Professional Development Advisory Council."

Lilian Katz: Reflections

Professional Responses in the Early Childhood Classroom

Introduction

Most teachers of young children, sooner or later, experience incidents like the one described here:

Four-year-old Robin comes to the teacher and with some agitation launches a protest, saying, "Leslie won't let me have a turn with the trike!"

There are probably scores of "right" as well as "wrong" ways to respond to this predicament. In the following discussion, we take a quick look at a few of the distinctions between possible responses to this situation typical in all kinds of early care and education settings.

A defining characteristic of any profession is that the practitioner responds to the standard predicaments that arise by using judgments on the basis of the best available professional principles and knowledge. One of the ways of appreciating the importance of professional development is to

contrast the way a professional and a nonprofessional might deal with these kinds of standard predicaments frequently encountered by teachers of young children.

A professional teacher would respond to such situations by exercising judgment based on professional knowledge in terms of (1) what she thinks could be taught to the participants, (2) the clinical questions relating to particular individuals in the incident, and (3) management issues, the curriculum, and perhaps the philosophy of the program.

These considerations would not require long periods of reflection before responding to Robin; with increasing experience, they would become deeply integrated into the teacher's regular way of dealing with the ups and downs of events in a lively class with young children. Furthermore, one of the important attributes of a professional teacher is that she exercises her professional judgment even when she is not really "in the mood" and when she has other pressing matters on her mind. Indeed, to respond to the situation without the application of professional judgment would, in fact, be unprofessional. In such a case, the teacher might simply ignore the plea or say something unhelpful to Robin or Leslie such as, "Life is tough some days!"

A nonprofessional, on the other hand, is often a person who can do wonderful things with young children, but the nonprofessional is more likely to respond in terms of the immediate situation and to settle for what "works" well for the moment rather than act in terms what is most likely to enhance the children's long-term development.

Some examples of the application of professional judgment in this kind of typical predicament are outlined below. These responses are contrasted with those of a person without training, and a few points are also added concerning what might constitute unprofessional responses to the same situation.

Responses by Professionals

Ideally, a trained teacher approaches the situation described by asking herself questions like: What can I be teaching in this incident? In formulating answers to this question, the teacher takes into account the most reliable knowledge about the development of children; the norms of the age group; and the goals of the parents, the school, and the community at large. Here are just a few examples of possible professional responses to this predicament.

Social Skills. This incident presents an ideal situation in which to support the development of a range of social skills, as described below.

Turn-taking. The teacher might suggest to Robin that he or she simply wait a few minutes, do something else for a little while, and then try asking Leslie again for a turn. She might also suggest to Robin that Leslie be observed for signs of weariness or boredom with the tricycle, indicating that a bid for a turn as soon as such signs appear is likely to be successful.

Negotiating. During the preschool period, children can begin to acquire bargaining skills. The teacher can encourage Robin to consider what might appeal to Leslie. She can offer a verbal model of how the negotiations might go by saying something like, "Go to Leslie and say, 'I'll push you on the swing if you give me a turn on the tricycle.'"

Coping with rebuffs. The teacher can help Robin to cope with denial of her wishes by saying (in a matter-of-fact tone) something like, "All right. Perhaps Leslie will give up the tricycle later. There are lots of other things to do in the meantime..." Specific activities can then be suggested.

Verbal Skills. The tricycle situation is also a good one in which to teach children how to express their feelings and assert their wishes more clearly and effectively.

Assertive phrases. The teacher could respond to Robin's complaint by saying something like, "Go back to Leslie and say, 'I've been waiting a long time. I really want a turn.'" In such a case, the teacher models a tone of moderate but firm assertiveness that the child can imitate and introduces a simple phrase to be used when the teacher is not there.

Social Knowledge. This typical incident also provides a good opportunity to teach various kinds of social knowledge.

Social perspective. For example, the teacher might say to Robin something like, "I know you're disappointed not to get a turn on the tricycle, but there are other things you like doing." The tone should be matter-of-fact and pleasant, with no hint of reprimand.

Rudiments of justice. Even young children can begin to absorb some of the rudiments of justice, particularly in the form of "ground rules." Thus, a professionally trained teacher would not just say, "Leslie, I want you to give Robin a turn now" but would add "and when you need help getting a turn with something, I will be glad to help you also."

Dispositional Learning. The professional teacher also considers which dispositions could be strengthened or weakened in this situation.

Empathic and altruistic dispositions. For example, if Leslie resists giving up the tricycle, the teacher could say, "Robin has been waiting for a long time, and you know how it feels to wait a long time," thereby arousing empathic feelings and nurturing the disposition to be charitable as well.

Experimental disposition. The teacher can strengthen children's dispositions to approach confrontations experimentally, as problem-solving situations in which alternative solutions can be invented and tried, and in which a few failures will not be debilitating. So, in this predicament, the teacher can respond to Robin by modeling a mildly assertive tone and say, "I suggest you say to Leslie, 'I really want a turn. I've been waiting a long time.' If that doesn't work, come back and we'll discuss something else to try."

Responses by Nonprofessionals

The term "nonprofessional" implies no inferiority; this designation is used in order to contrast the application of knowledge and professionally accrued experience and practices with common-sense responses and to focus attention on how professional education and judgment come into play in daily work with other people's children.

In order to explore this contrast, it may be helpful to imagine how the person without professional education and experience might respond in this situation. The untrained individual is likely to focus on what is happening rather than what is being learned. Similarly, she is likely to see the situation as calling for "putting out the fire," hoping that will be the end of it, rather than one that calls for teaching a variety of skills, knowledge, or dispositions. In other words, the nonprofessional may wish simply to put a stop to the incident without considering which of many possible interventions is most likely to stimulate long-term development and learning.

Often untrained teachers use distraction in these situations. While distraction "works," it does not really teach alternative approaches to the situation. On the contrary, it may teach children that complaining, tattling, and so forth very frequently get adult attention.

A unprofessional response might be to say something like, "Cut it out!" "Don't be so selfish!" "Be nice!" "Don't be nasty!" "We take turns in this school!"—even though we just didn't. While such exclamations are probably not harmful, they are unlikely to teach the children alternative approaches to the situation. Some nonprofessionals also respond to squabbling over equipment by putting it away or locking it up. This strategy does "work," of course, but it does not teach, and teaching is the professional's commitment.

Occasionally, a nonprofessional issues a threat such as, "If you don't let Robin have a turn, you won't go to the zoo with us on Friday." One problem with such threats is that they are often empty. Will Leslie be prevented from going to the zoo? Furthermore, threats do not teach the children alternative strategies for solving the problem, nor do they encourage new knowledge or strengthen desirable dispositions.

Some nonprofessionals in this kind of situation use time-out procedures—removing the child from contact with the ongoing life of the group. Time-out procedures often seem to “work.” Indeed, many teachers are trained to use them. The main problem is that time-out procedures do not teach new skills or desirable dispositions, although they do sometimes change behavior for a while.

Many adults in such predicaments preach about the virtues of “sharing,” “kindness,” and “generosity.” Though not harmful, these actions are unlikely to teach strategies to use when adults are not present. Another common response of untrained adults is to become preoccupied with the feelings of the “victim” and to neglect the development of the child who seems to be the aggressor. The professional, on the other hand, is committed to responding to the feelings, needs, and development of all the children in her charge.

Many nonprofessionals respond to situations like this one by asking questions about who had it first, who started it, and how a conflict situation arose, intending to assign blame for the incident, while emphasis is best placed on teaching the children strategies for resolving the problem.

Some untrained adults in these situations would say to Leslie such things as, “Your behavior makes me sad” or “Your acting that way makes me feel bad.” Though not harmful, such statements draw attention to the adult’s own internal states and perhaps add a layer of guilt to the child’s feelings. Again it fails to teach effective ways of coping with the predicament.

Finally, the nonprofessional person in such a situation is apt to employ not only common sense but also impulse, custom, or erroneous folk wisdom. The danger also exists that this individual may occasionally use shaming comparisons with other children in order to intimidate a child so that he or she will give in to the adult’s demand.

Conclusion

This typical incident arising in groups of young children is used to illustrate differences in how professionals and nonprofessionals teach. The professional teacher exercises judgment in the service of the long-term best interests of the children; the untrained person is more likely to respond in terms of the immediate situation and to settle for what “works” well for the moment rather than act in terms of what is most likely to enhance the children’s long-term development.

I have not discussed the clinical judgments that professional teachers make—the processes of taking into account the meaning of the behavior of each individual child involved in a particular incident into the context of all other known behavior and history of the individuals involved. Nor have I discussed the implications of the situation for curriculum and management. Only a very small sample of the potential uses of contemporary knowledge about children’s development and learning has been discussed here. However, it is hoped that even this brief description of what mature professionalism in teaching in early care and education settings might be like will add weight to the proposition that the effective training and education of preprimary teachers can help to make a significant contribution to children’s development and learning.

Acknowledgment

This article is adapted from a paper titled “The Professional Preschool Teacher,” originally included in the 1984 publication *More Talks with Teachers* (pp. 27–44) by Lilian G. Katz. The full text is available from ERIC at

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/2e/ac/4a.pdf.

Periodically in this e-newsletter, we will provide updates on key early care and education initiatives. Additional information and updates about the following initiative are available on the INCCRRA website.

Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System (QRS)

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) began implementation of the new Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System (QRS) on July 1, 2007. The overall goal of QRS is to assist child care providers with program quality improvement. QRS is a voluntary system available to License-Exempt Family Child Care Providers, Licensed Family/Group Home Child Care Providers, and Licensed Centers. To participate in QRS, programs must serve a specific number or percentage of children eligible for the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) [<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ts/ChildCareDevelopment/CCD/CCAPText.asp>].

To be eligible for QRS, a program must meet specific eligibility requirements based on the type of care it offers. License-Exempt Family Child Care Providers need to complete specific training requirements to become eligible for one of three progressive QRS Training Tiers. Licensed Family/Group Home Child Care Providers and Licensed Child Care Centers need to meet specific indicators of quality related to the following areas: learning environment, program administration, and provider qualifications and training. Eligible licensed programs are awarded with a Star rating at one of four progressive levels.

Providers eligible for QRS will be awarded a Training Tier or Star Level certificate. These programs will also receive a quality add-on rate to the current standard daily rate for CCAP children in care. For License-Exempt Family Child Care Providers, the quality add-on rate will be 10%, 15% or 20% depending on the Training Tier achieved. For Licensed programs, it will be 5%, 10%, 15%, or 20% depending on the Star Level awarded.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies are offering free, 2-hour QRS Orientation sessions to help providers understand QRS eligibility requirements, the application process, and the supports available to those interested in applying for QRS. Attendance at a QRS orientation is required for any program that plans to submit an application to QRS. To find a local CCR&R or for more information on QRS Orientations, visit the INCCRRA website at www.inccrra.org

More than 30 states have some type of quality rating or tiered reimbursement system in place. Illinois's own Quality Rating System is, however, more inclusive and comprehensive than most. No other state, for example, includes license-exempt family child care providers in their QRS process. IDHS and its partners look forward to assisting providers on improving the quality of child care in Illinois through the new QRS and tiered reimbursement structure.

For more information about QRS, contact:

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)
qrsinfo@inccrra.org
www.inccrra.org

Core Credential and Infant Toddler Credential

A key component to any professional development network is the identification of what professionals should know and be able to do at various levels of education, training, and role responsibilities—the core body of knowledge in the discipline. Within the Illinois early care and education field, the focus for professional growth and development centers around Core Content areas. These Core Content areas [<http://ilgateways.com/faqcoreknowledge.aspx>] identify knowledge, skills, and dispositions that provide the foundation for ensuring that all children have access to programs staffed by highly qualified professionals in Illinois.

Credential awards are based on achievement of skills, experience, and knowledge in early care and education. The Core Credential aligns with the Gateways to Opportunity Career Lattice

[\[http://ilgateways.com/careers/careers.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/careers/careers.aspx) and will be available at six levels when completed. Level 1 [\[http://ilgateways.com/credentials/levelone/index.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/credentials/levelone/index.aspx) is currently available as a 45-hour training module taught through the Illinois Trainers Network (ITN). Levels 2-5 will be available in early 2008. Level 6 will be available at a later date.

Specialized credentials build on, and go beyond, the Core Credential to ensure knowledge, skills, and experience in a specialization area. The Illinois Director Credential (IDC) [\[http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/idhome.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/idhome.aspx) has been available since 2001, and the Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) [\[http://ilgateways.com/credentials/itc.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/credentials/itc.aspx) is expected to be available by early 2008. Both of these credentials are earned through validation of accomplishments in six required categories. The IDC and ITC have the same requirements for four of the six categories: (1) General Education, (2) Education and Training in Early Care and Education, (3) Work Experience in Early Care and Education, and (4) Professional Contributions. The remaining two categories have requirements specific to each credential. For the IDC, they are (1) Education in Management and (2) Experience in Management. For the ITC, they are (1) Formal Education Working with Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families, and (2) Experience with Infants and Toddlers.

In 2007, 14 institutions of higher education around Illinois were awarded mini-grants [\[http://ilgateways.com/highereducation/forms/ITCMiniGrantRecipients.pdf\]](http://ilgateways.com/highereducation/forms/ITCMiniGrantRecipients.pdf) to begin piloting the entitled route process [\[http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/entitledroute.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/entitledroute.aspx) for the Core and the Infant Toddler Credentials. Program requirements are being aligned with the requirements for the credentials through the Career Lattice of Gateways to Opportunities.

In addition to institutions piloting the entitled route process, 50 individuals statewide and 20 individuals from Chicago Public Schools are currently piloting the direct route process [\[http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/directroute.aspx\]](http://ilgateways.com/credentials/idc/directroute.aspx) for the Core and the Infant Toddler Credentials. Once the pilot is completed in spring 2008, the Core and the Infant Toddler Credentials will be available statewide. Stay tuned for more information about the availability of these credentials through Gateways to Opportunity!

For more information about the Core Credential and Infant Toddler Credential, contact:

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)
888-548-8080
<http://www.ilgateways.com/about/contact.aspx>

New Gateways Resources

The following resources and resource links have been added to the Web site since the last issue of Inside Gateways.

New Frequently Asked Questions about Professional Development

- Core Knowledge Areas <http://www.ilgateways.com/faqcoreknowledge.aspx>
- New Illinois and National Resource ECE Resource Links
<http://www.ilgateways.com/resources/links.aspx>

Research Reports

- Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES)
<http://nieer.org/resources/research/APPLES.pdf>
- Buenos Principios: Latino Children in the Earliest Years of Life
<http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/download/45609>

- The Challenges of Change: Learning from the Child Care and Early Education Experiences of Immigrant Families
http://www.clasp.org/publications/challenges_change.htm
- Chutes or Ladders: Creating Support Services to Help Early Childhood Students Succeed in Higher Education
http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/chutes_ladders07.pdf
- Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: Roles, Issues and Opportunities
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/01/7401.pdf>
- County Profiles of School Age Care in Illinois (29.9 MB)
<http://www.ianetwork.org/docs/County%20Profiles%20of%20School%20Age%20Care%20in%20Illinois.pdf>
- Low Wages Prevalent in Direct Care and Child Care Workforce
http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/Caregivers%20Brief_final.pdf
- Public Policy Form: Research on Early Childhood Outcomes
<http://www.publicpolicyforum.org/Matrix.htm>
- Roots of Decline: How Government Policy has De-Educated Teachers of Young Children
http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/roots_decline06.pdf
- States Efforts to Integrate Measures of Leadership and Management in Quality Rating Systems
<http://cecl.nl.edu/research/issues/rnsu07.pdf>
- The Quality of School-Age Child Care in After-School Settings
<http://www.researchconnections.org/SendPdf?resourceId=12576>

Research Centers

- Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
<http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/index.html>
- Promising Practices Network
<http://www.promisingpractices.net/research.asp>