

National ECELC Newsletter

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The Unique Child: Working with Children with Disabilities

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Disabilities in Children

Disabilities are conditions that affect the everyday functioning of a child. Disabilities can affect the child's development, language, learning, and behavior. Many signs and behaviors of delays can be identified in children as early as birth to three years. Common disabilities identified in early childhood are:

- Developmental Disabilities - a combination of conditions that impair achieving various developmental stages;
- Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- Attention Deficit / Hyperactive Disorder; and
- Down Syndrome.

How are disabilities identified?

Women are monitored for disabilities during the beginning stages of their pregnancy. Recent technology has increased physicians ability to identify abnormalities during the prenatal stages of development. Once the child is born, they go through developmental screenings by their physician. These screenings continue as children reach various developmental milestones. During these screenings, physicians perform short tests to verify that age-appropriate milestones are reached. If delays are identified, physicians provide additional resources and support to families as they work with their child.

Reference: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>.

April is Autism

Awareness Month!

The month of April brings awareness to Autism Spectrum Disorders. Autism is a mental and developmental condition that impairs the daily functioning of an individual. Autism can affect the communication, social, and behavioral development in children before the age of three. Early childhood providers can play an active role in supporting children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Providers can practice using developmentally appropriate practices, tracking developmental milestones, communicating with parents, and being aware of community-based resources.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/asd>
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Week of the Young Child

April 12-18, 2015

April 13

Music Monday- sing, dance, celebrate and learn

April 14

Taco Tuesday- Healthy eating and fitness at home and school

April 15

Work Together Wednesday- work together, build together, learn together

April 16

Artsy Thursday- think, problem solve, create

April 17

Family Friday- sharing family stories

Week of the Young Child Showcase

The New Jersey Department of Health and the Early Care and Education Learning Collaborative are encouraging all early care and education programs in the state to showcase activities that support children's health and development. Providers are encouraged to post photos, along with a brief description of the activity, and name of the program on the *ShapingNJ's* Facebook page. Participating programs will be entered to win giveaways from Becker's School Supplies.



Supporting Children and Families in Your ECE Program

Supporting Children

- Increase awareness among children in the classroom.
 - Develop activities that are inclusive.
 - Promote discussions with children about disabilities.
- Indoor/Outdoor environment and physical equipment should be appropriate for all children.
- Provide inclusive exploratory center materials.
 - Dolls of children with disabilities.
 - Housekeeping equipment (i.e. crutches, glasses, walker, braille books etc.) - ask families to donate items.
 - Multicultural Puzzles.
- Read books that illustrate children's differences and promotes acceptance. Examples include:
 - *We'll Paint the Octopus Red*, by: Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen,
 - *A Rainbow of Friends*, by: P.K. Hallinan
 - *We're Different, We're the Same*, by: Bobbi Kat

Supporting Families, and Program Staff

- Early Intervention Specialists are available to work with children and families to provide support and direct services.
- Provide trainings to program staff to increase knowledge and awareness of disabilities.
- Provide resources to program staff and families about various disabilities.
- Host a Parent Night and invite community agencies that support children with disabilities to speak and provide resources.



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