

Foundation for Early Education

2009 Leadership Institute For Early Care and Education

March 5th and 6th, 2009

San Francisco, California

“Opportunities in Challenging Times”

Highlights of the Days’ Events

Christine James-Brown, CEO Child Welfare League of America

Topic: Leadership, Fundraising, National Efforts, the White House Conference on Children

What is on the horizon nationally, how we can best maintain economic viability for programs, leveraging funds to support families and children

In Brief: The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) takes a broad view of childhood welfare, where children are seen as vulnerable human beings who need the support of the public will. On a daily basis CWLA works in the best interest of children, with issues of most concern including the foster care system, adoption, housing, and successful experiences that lead to productive lives. Christine James-Brown also noted that children of color, including Native American children, are in need of equal access to funds and are in the deepest need for care, residences, general education, early childhood education, and the best fruits of an equitable juvenile justice system. Christine was thrilled to join the Foundation for Early Childhood Institute because she made it clear that 25% of people involved in the welfare system are children under five. The foster care system, and other systems serving this population, needs to be appraised of systematic summaries of the best research on the needs of children. She also stressed that early childhood care providers must understand the nature of abuse and neglect.

These are the best of times and the worst of times, according to Christine. Regarding the later, parents are working multiple jobs, nonprofit organizations are cutting their staffs and costs. On the other hand, we have a new administration with a clear commitment to education and a focus on young children that intends to be strategic.

In order to address the needs of the audience, Christine shared some best practices in times of stress:

- Remember to use the power of social capital—people connected in informal situations bond in many ways and care more deeply about each other than those who are not connected informally.
- Within your organization
 - Proactively plan for the worst
 - Manage costs effectively

- Protect your core programs and staff
- Develop closer relationships with your key funders
- Look for no-cost ways to get things done
- Leverage your Board (know your Board's skills and use them)
- Explore new opportunities in funding
- Be a little more "full of yourselves"
- Have contingency plans (use the Internet more)
- Be aware of the upcoming White House Conference on Children in the 21st Century. It will need legislation to happen, so watch for it.

Resources Mentioned

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Robert Putnam <http://www.bowlingalone.com/>

Keynote –Dr. Iliana Reyes, Professor, University of Arizona

Topic: Leadership, Multilingual Communities, Biliteracy Development, and Immigrant Families

What we are learning from the research, development of policies to support multilingual education?

In Brief: For years, Dr. Iliana Reyes has been interested in emergent biliteracy in young Mexican immigrant children and her keynote addressed some of her major findings. But first, Dr. Reyes explained that over five million children in the United States speak a language other than English. She stressed that English language education need to address the cultural similarities and differences of these children such that their cultural heritage is not only respected but utilized as a tool during the school day. Dr. Reyes stressed the need for moving from the term English Language Learners to Emergent Bilinguals, which changes the rather subtractive view embodied in ELL to the more additive view of bilingualism. For the families she has been working with as part of a longitudinal study there was no quibble about developing children's second language, but an interest in also maintaining the first one. As in Christine James-Brown's keynote, Dr. Reyes discussed the value of social capital and urged participants to see immigrant families as resource pools which can enhance the cultural education of children.

In regard to Dr. Reyes' study of Mexican immigrant children, participants learned that bilingual children, just a English only children, develop knowledge of some of the basics needed to learn to read and write in kindergarten and first grade. They developed knowledge and meta-linguistic awareness about print in both their languages (that print carries meaning, writing goes from left to right and up and down, books tell

stories, list are used to remember, and so on); the families demonstrated a wide variety of communicative practices and ways they used written materials in two languages, and intergenerational learning occurred in *both* directions –*bidirectional learning*- among family members (with some children becoming language ‘teachers’ and ‘language brokers’ for their parents).

Dr. Iliana Reyes concluded her presentation by reminding early childhood educators and administrators that we all can support young children’s early language and literacy development by creating and fostering multilingual and multicultural learning environments that integrate families’ cultural and linguistic resources.

Dr. Iliana Reyes's
Presentation

Biliteracy Development in Young Immigrant Children


Iliana Reyes
University of Arizona

Leadership Institute
for Early Care and Education
San Francisco, CA
March 5, 2009

**Dr. Reyes'
Handout**

3/05/09

*Biliteracy Development in Young
Immigrant Children*



Iliana Reyes
University of Arizona

Leadership Institute
for Early Care and Education
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"Mis hermanos mi mamá, sus tíos y abuelos hablan español entonces si me gustan que se puedan comunicar con gente de aquí y con gente de allá. Quiero que aprendan también sus raíces de allá de México"

My siblings, mother, and their uncles they all speak Spanish. I would like that my children are able to communicate with our people here and there (Mexico)... I want them to learn about their roots there, in Mexico.

—CLLD Project Participant, Isela, mother of a preschool child

Significance

- Over 5.5 million of children in US public schools speak languages other than English.
- Understanding the uniqueness of bilingualism, and biliteracy in young English Language Learners benefits all.
- In Arizona and California, English Language Education for Children (Prop. 227 & 203) denies children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds as part of classroom resources.

Resources Mentioned:

“Emergent Biliteracy in Young Mexican Immigrant Children” by Iliana Reyes and Patricia Azuara, found in the *Reading Research Quarterly*, a journal of the International Reading Association (IRA), October,

November, December, 2008.
<http://www.reading.org/General/Publications/Journals/RRQ.aspx>

Keynote: Dennis Vicars, CEO of Human Services Management Corporation and Executive Director of the Professional Association for Childhood Education Alternative Payment Program (PACEAPP)

Topic: Leadership, Ensuring a Diverse Child Care System, State Efforts

What is on the horizon for ECE programs in California, providing the best leadership possible, developing policies to support all child development programs, families, and children

In Brief: Dennis Vicars brought a great sense of community to the Institute in that his presentation outlined what providers can do to make ends meet in the best interest of children during these stressful, economic times. Bottom line: Times are tough. Even so, there are tenets we can look to: vision and purpose, operations/infrastructure, finance, and customers. Below are just a few, highlighted statements.

With regard to vision and purpose, for example, Dennis spoke about the need to always be aware of your vision: Is your mission statement a daily activity? In this regard, Dennis also stressed that leaders must get “above the fire” and zoom out, not in. Think big: What is your company for? What do your people think? (He reminded us that “perception is reality”—and encouraged participants to have honest discussions with their faculty. He also suggested peer review and soliciting information from vendors.

Regarding operations and infrastructure, Dennis encouraged participants to ask themselves, “Why are you doing it this way?” Also, is there staff transparency: Are staff members partners in your present situation? Finance was another crucial subject. Important questions to ask are: “Are systems efficient and does everyone have their arms around the numbers?” Approach vendors for mutual help and pricing; negotiate or re-negotiate purchases and long-term contracts. When thinking about customers, leaders must keep them in mind *all the time*. Do we ask them what we can do better? Is your staff a reflection of the way your customers are treated? (Is there a sense of purpose in hiring, training programs, and what Dennis called, “we-ness.”) Are there systems in place to track your success in finding customers?

In the end, we all must be advocates. A successful country depends on education and health!

Resources Mentioned:

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership
http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/situational_leaders hip_hersey_blanchard.htm

Keynote: Mike Milken, Chairman, Milken Institute

Topic: Global Issues and Education, Leadership Issues

New and emerging trends, leading in challenging/changing times, creating thoughtful policies

In Brief: Mike Milken's career has mirrored his three main professional passions: medical research, education and finance. In each, he has been uniquely successful in creating value, whether measured in saving lives (in a cover story, Fortune magazine called him "The Man Who Changed Medicine"), inspiring educators and students or jobs created. Between 1969 and 1989, he financed more than 3,200 companies that collectively created millions of jobs. His philanthropy, focused on education and medical research, began in the 1970s and paralleled his business career. The Milken Family Foundation's National Educator Awards have honored more than 2,300 educators with awards of \$25,000 each over the past two decades.

The focus of Mike's address at the FEE Institute was on building human capital through education and health. "Great education," he said, "requires passion. It's crucial for children to develop early in life the ability to learn and to have a love of learning." Mike cited the increased emphasis Asian nations have placed on education by prioritizing family spending on supplemental education for their children. Americans, on the other hand, tend to spend higher amounts on housing and transportation. "We must invest more in our children's education, and hold ourselves to higher standards," he said, adding that priorities in the U.S. are beginning to change. He believes that early childhood educators will play a crucial role in preparing our children to compete in the 21st century.

Mike also gave a brief overview of the current economic situation, as well as a look at how lifestyle choices affect not only people's health, but the financial health of our nation. Mike concluded his presentation with a reminder that each person can make a difference, and that each educator has an opportunity to create a legacy of education, good health and prosperity.

Mike's full address to the Foundation for Early Education can be found here:
(Powerpoint presentation to be provided to FEE)

Resources:

www.mikemilken.com

An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease
(The Milken Institute)

<http://www.milkeninstitute.org/publications/publications.taf?function=detail&ID=38801018&cat=ResRep>

Keynote: Dr. William Rankin, President and Founder, Global Aids Interfaith Alliance (GAIA)

Topic: Leadership, Creating Partnerships

Creating the best possible solutions for children and families, developing programs with little infrastructure and resources

In Brief: The audience received a detailed photo-journalistic presentation featuring Dr. Rankin's work and the work of his foundation, The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance. Participants found themselves in central Africa, specifically in Malawi. The average annual income of the families in Malawi is \$200.00. 16% of the men and 9% of the women in this African state, the size of Pennsylvania, have HIV/AIDS. Participants saw, first hand, the many obstacles Dr. Rankin's group and the people of Malawi must overcome. For example, there is a belief among many of the Malawi people that AIDS comes from a witch-type personage and must be cured by a witch doctor, to the point where children can be seen withering away until death. As one participant put it, "I thought I worked in poverty. Now I don't believe that anymore." Over time, the audience began to understand how programs with little infrastructure and resources can make a difference. A saying repeated more than once by Dr. Rankin bears mentioning: Don't let a problem that seems insurmountable stop you from doing anything. Just "do it."

During a question and answer period, a participant asked, "What, in your opinion, makes a leader?" Dr. Rankin felt it was a good question, one he hadn't thought deeply about before, but within just a few moments he said the following: 1) the lack of attracting attention to oneself, 2) the #1 concern is somebody else—a focus on the "other," and 3) inherent resourcefulness. To say the least, the audience felt humbled. Dr. Rankin's work is an inspiration and certainly demonstrates one theme that emerged during the conference: One person can make a huge difference in people's lives. Despite the devastation Dr. Rankin uncovered, the Malawi people do not give up. Dr. Rankin asked that we don't either. Dr. Rankin reminded us that 80,000 thousand people die of AIDS-related illness each year, leaving over 500,00 children alone and orphaned.

Resources Mentioned:

The Global Aids Interfaith Alliance. <http://www.thegaia.org/>

Keynote – Dr. Anne Cunningham, Director of the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education, UC Berkeley

Topic: Leadership, Recommendations of the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP)

What we are learning about literacy acquisition, recommendation of the NELP, developing policies to support literacy education

In Brief: The thrust of Dr. Cunningham's presentation was her sharing the scientific synthesis of early literacy development and the implications for intervention. Dr. Cunningham served on the National Early Literacy

Panel, so was in a good position to speak directly to this audience of early care providers. First, Anne spoke about the impact of code-focused interventions on young children's early literacy skills. She made the point that during the years from three through age four, the focus, for most youngsters, shouldn't be on teaching children to decode, or even the alphabetic principle (letters in a full word represent specific sounds), but to develop their awareness of the sounds in their language (44 in English, for example) and to be able to manipulate those sounds in fun and playful ways. (Later in the day she and Dr. Nathan shared some useful songs and strategies.) Dr. Cunningham also discussed the role of shared-reading and its consequences, such as vocabulary development, concept development, sensitivity to texts' syntactic structures, and global understanding of how stories and nonfiction are built.

Dr. Cunningham also mentioned the work of Hart and Risley, the authors of the book *Meaningful Differences*, with the intent to demonstrate that talking to young children intentionally while being respectful of their curiosity is crucial for literacy development, not just oral language development.

Resources Mentioned:

Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel (Dr. Cunningham's presentation) from National Institute for Literacy/National Center for Family Literacy, 2008. www.nifl.gov (to download a PDF)

California Preschool Learning Foundations, Vol 1 from the California Department of Education, 2008. www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn 1-800-995-4099

Presentation

Themes Across Keynote Speakers

Prepared by Ruth Nathan, Ph.D., FEE Board Member

The Foundation's purpose in hosting this leadership institute was to acknowledge the role all of the Institute's participants play in children's lives and to provide highly meaningful and timely information that would be of use. Certain themes seemed to cross several of our keynote addresses. We share them here.

1. Human and social capital are crucial aspects of productivity.
2. It's hard to change when everything is going well, so times of stress produce opportunities for thinking creatively and acting with precision and intention.
3. Excellent leadership averts disaster. Among the characteristics of great leaders are 1) the lack of attracting attention to oneself, 2) the #1 concern is somebody else—a focus on the “other,” and 3) inherent resourcefulness.
4. Bilingualism is in the best interest of all children. We can't let speculation about the advantages or disadvantages of bilingualism drive the decisions we make for real children.

5. It's important to get the facts out about the importance of early education. Science, the facts, and research are all on our side. Be an advocate!

6. Organizations must keep their focus.

7. Systematic and comprehensive research summaries need to drive our practice as preschool educators. Two important areas of research that have been designated as high priorities in all preschool settings are phonological awareness and reading aloud: phonological awareness training supports the acquisition of the alphabetic principle in kindergarten and 1st grade; and reading aloud helps develop concepts, vocabulary, sense of story, and the love of reading.

8. One person can make a difference.

9. There is a huge role that research plays in the prevention and cure of AIDS. We must support these research efforts.

Additional Resources mentioned by Dr. Nathan

1. *Helping Your Preschool Child* (with activities for children from infancy through age 5), U.S. Department of Education/Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, 2002.

http://www.amazon.com/Helping-your-preschool-child-activities/dp/B0001171X2/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236727243&sr=8-3

2. *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning: A Resource Guide* from The California Dept. of Education, 2007.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/documents/preschoolel.pdf>

3. *Preschool Curriculum: What's In It for Children and Teachers* from The Albert Shanker Institute, 2009. www.ashankerinst.org

4. *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* from The National Academy Press, 1999. www.nap.edu