



THE P.E.P. POST

PROVIDERS EMPOWERING PROVIDERS

Put a Little PEP in Your Step!

March 2011

PEP—Year One at a Glance

Year one for PEP was very busy and productive.

Designated the six PEP regions

Recruited and appointed 10 regional coordinators

Developed and distributed Regional Coordinator Handbooks

Developed and maintained PEP website

Held two Regional Coordinator trainings

Wrote and were awarded grants from the Department of Health and the Department of Workforce Ser-

vices in addition to our original grant from the Department of Family Services

Held PEP events in Cheyenne, Laramie, Douglas, Casper, Gillette, Lander, Sheridan, Worland, Torrington, Cody, Rock Springs, and Rawlins

Conducted home provider visits in Rock Springs, Gillette, Sheridan, Powell, Cheyenne, and Wheatland

Sponsored, coordinated or conducted trainings in Cody, Rock Springs, Raw-

lins, Gillette, Torrington, Cheyenne, and Casper

All regional coordinators and state coordinator attended the NAFCC annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee

Developed Regional Training Calendars

Held a Meet and Greet at Stand and Celebrate

Recruited 247 members located in 21 of the 23 counties across Wyoming

Supporting Curiosity by Patricia Dischler

Children are naturally curious, so to be sure this sense of exploration doesn't get lost in your day, give them lots of opportunities to follow their own questions and be exposed to new things, people and experiences that build their interest. By supporting a strong curiosity, parents and teachers are giving children the tools to construct their own learning, to make it more meaningful and to have more success in school.

Curiosity activities support a wide variety of state standard developmental areas as children engage all of their senses, use creativity, and build a foundation for problem solving. Including activities that support a child's natural curiosity in your daily curriculum creates a bridge between knowledge and fun, making your day not only developmentally successful, but a time for pure enjoyment for both you and the children!

Storyteller Fun

Professional storytellers make even the simplest stories come alive! Either take a field trip to visit one, or invite them to your classroom. In addition to having them tell a story, have the children prepare questions to ask them about what they do and how they learned to do it.

Continued on page 4

Inside this issue:

Wyoming Career Development Ladder	2
PEP Talks for Family Child Care	2
Professionalism: Painting a Picture for Success	3
Supporting Curiosity	4

Wyoming Career Development Ladder by Rose Kor

The Wyoming Career Development Ladder has grown and changed over time. Its purpose is to track and to recognize those practitioners in the field of early care and education who grow their skills and professional level over time.

The ladder provides a public acknowledgement that child care practitioners are working to be much more than simple child watchers. Practitioners in career ladder program are invested in quality interactive and developmentally appropriate care giving. Parents are more aware of variations in care settings and look for quality indicators such as training levels before they place children. Share this information with clients through the certificates issued by the career ladder program that display the level of each practitioner. Talk about care giver qualifications with parents.

The ladder runs from entry through level nine. The person at the entry level has just begun in the field and probably does not yet have basic training such as first aid and CPR and less than one year of experience. The person at

level nine holds an advanced degree in early care and education, either a master's or doctoral degree. Many practitioners in Wyoming are located in levels three through six.

Several critical elements within the ladder mark professional growth. The first, of course, is the amount and type of training completed by the participant following by experience working in the field and has two or more years of experience. In addition, there is consideration for professional leadership that includes membership in a professional organization, such as PEP, a willingness to volunteer on professional development efforts or a willingness to volunteer in the community in efforts on behalf of children.

Any child care provider interested in the career development ladder can apply to become part of the effort by simply completing an application that provides some basic demographic information. In addition, a provider who has qualifications that may not have previously been tracked in STARS will be asked to provide

copies of certificates or transcripts to verify other training or qualifications. The career development form can be found at www.wykids.org by clicking on forms and then career development. Find a copy of the Wyoming Career Development Scale in the same location.

If you have questions about the career ladder or career development call, Rose Kor, STARS – Career Development Director at 1-800-400-3999 or email her at rkor@wykids.org.



PEP Talks for Family Child Care- Upcoming Regional Conferences

PEP is in the planning stages of our first round of Regional Conferences. These conferences will be held in locations throughout the state. All training will be relevant to family child care providers.

The title of the conferences will be PEP Talks for Family Child Care. A full conference schedule will be posted on our website (www.providersempoweringproviders.com) as soon as the details become available.

Professionalism: Painting a Picture for Success

By Teira Scott and Lindsay Hineman

As family child care providers we strive to create a loving, nurturing environment in our homes that can foster a child's learning and development through hands-on activities, social interactions, nutritious meals, and established safety guidelines. We must see ourselves as professionals in the field and work together to establish this image throughout our state, both in the eyes of other professionals and the families that we work with on a daily basis. Being seen as a professional is vital to the future of family child care and will ensure that providers are successful in creating partnerships within their community and a quality program that is unique and personal.

Professionalism is a word used to describe how to care for children using the best standards, practices, strategies, ethics, resources, and materials available. As a professional we need to:

Use daily routines as opportunities for learning.

Know our own strengths and weaknesses and work to make those weaknesses stronger.

Connect with other children care providers to share strategies and resources.

Understand ethical issues involved in caring for children and ensure that we are acting in ethical ways.

Act as role models for children in the way they act towards themselves and others.

Work together with parents to provide the best care possible.

Create nurturing learning environments and engage them in a variety of activities.

Provide a safe place with nutritious snacks and meals where children can feel happy and secure.

Know the resources available in our communities and take advantage of them.

Know that learning is a lifelong process and seek to improve our skills and knowledge.

As providers we know that children learn from everything around them, especially from the caring adults that are in their lives on a daily basis. Because of this, we are teachers. By seeing ourselves as "teachers" we can begin to work to connect with other "teachers" to see what they do, how they do it, and how our strategies and techniques can be shared to create the best environment possible.

Based on information from *A Place of Our Own*
www.aplaceofourown.org

Teira Scott and Lindsay Hineman operate a family child care center in Douglas. Along with being family child care providers, both Teira and Lindsay are PEP Regional Coordinators for Region Two which serves Converse, Niobrara, Weston, Crook and Campbell counties.



PEP is a project of Wyoming Children's Action Alliance with funding from the Department of Family Services and the Department of Workforce Services

Supporting Curiosity continued from page 1

After this visit, have the children choose one of their favorite stories and do a storytelling session on it for the group! *Activity supports curiosity through story and encourages creativity as children learn a variety of ways to tell a story.*

Exploring the Sound of: Paper!

Give children a sheet of paper, it can be any kind: construction, newspaper, typing paper, poster board, tissue paper. Ask them to play with it and see how many different sounds they can make with it. They can crumble it. Rip it. Tap it against itself. Blow on it or wave it. Let them try to see if they can come up with something new you haven't discovered yet! *Activity supports curiosity through the exploration of possibilities through the senses and also supports creativity through functional freedom, using paper for something other than drawing on it.*

Explorer Kit

Every good explorer needs the right tools for discovery! Provide a few of these kits in your Discovery Area, and create extras for taking outside as well. Include in the outside bags: compass and binoculars. Make the Kit using either a belly-pack carrier, a small shoulder bag, or metal lunch box. Preferably in a camouflage design! Make it fun for them to dress up as real explorers and they'll be more excited about trying out the Discovery Area!

Contents to include:

- Magnifying glass – several types/sizes
- Stethoscope
- Tweezers
- Small plastic clear jars.
- Petri dishes
- Magnet
- Small notepad and pencil
- Small plastic jar of water and eye dropper (to observe how item changes when wet)
- Small cloth for drying object
- Handheld tape recorder to tape sounds made with object
- Color Paddles
- Prism
- Small Flashlight
- Safety Goggles

An explorer's kit supports curiosity by giving children the tools they need to explore their world, experiment and wonder.

Me and My Shadow

On a driveway, or paved playground area, in the morning of a sunny day have children stand and create a body shadow of themselves. Use sidewalk chalk to trace the figure. Let the children use sidewalk chalk to finish the drawing by adding eyes, hair, clothes, etc. Then, a couple of hours later have them return to the spot to see if they can repeat the shadow. The sun will have moved and now their shadow will have moved too! Let them trace another outline. Continue this throughout the day to see just where the shadow travels to! *Activity sup-*

ports curiosity through exploration of our world, the sun and its shadows and the turning of the earth and our place in it all.

Smelly Day for a Walk!

Take a walk outside with the children and stop at intervals to close your eyes and smell. Have the children do this as well and see what types of smells they can discover. Stop often to smell things such as flowers, tree bark, mud, someone's garbage, a puddle, a dog pen, etc. Make a list of the smells so when you return inside you can discuss them again. *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of the outdoors, heightening awareness of our sense of smell.*

Patricia Dischler is the author of several books, including *From Babysitter to Business Owner* and *Because I Loved You*. She speaks nationally at early childhood and adoption conferences and is a columnist for NAFCC's the National Perspective and Adoption Today Magazine. Patricia is a board member of the NAFCC, WFCC and the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition and was the recipient of the 2007 Wisconsin Governor's Award for excellence in the field of child care. Her latest book, *Teaching the 3 Cs: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy* shares her activities and philosophies of teaching young children from her 17 years of operating Patty Cake Preschool, a nationally accredited program. To learn more, visit her website at www.patriciadischler.com.

