

Network News

e-Newsletter of the VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST
NETWORK
"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"

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Construct a Climate for Creativity

Creativity in children can be encouraged through many areas, one of which is the child care settings they are in as infants and toddlers. The climate influences how caregivers, infants, and toddlers think and behave. Climate includes both the environment of the classroom as well as the relationships within the classroom. As teachers of young children, you can help to provide a more creative climate by providing infants and toddlers with the following:

- **Many opportunities to read and be read to** - Reading to infants and toddlers is vital to their development. You can share so much information with toddlers through books and in turn encourage them to learn more about people, places and things they find interesting. You can also pass on the love of reading to them which will benefit their development in many areas.
- **Diversity** - Children should be exposed to many different people, places, types of knowledge, objects, and opportunities. This can be done by having a variety of books, dolls, and posters that reflect diverse populations and experiences.
- **Encouragement** - Show children that there are unlimited ways to do things or to be successful and promote that daily. For example, there are many ways to build with blocks. Also, use and encourage positive language and expressions of gratitude such as "Thank you for putting the blocks on the shelf!"
- **Humor/Fun/Playfulness** - Have fun or see the humor in situations which can bring upbeat energy to a

- child care environment. Join in the fun and laughter and make the setting a place where children and parents want to be!
- **Opportunities for physical activity** - Get outside and enjoy active play or provide time and space inside for whole body movement. Include tummy time for infants to foster their gross motor development.
 - **Challenges** - Talk children through dealing with challenges and failures. Encourage them by recognizing that failures are an opportunity to learn and grow and to try something different next time. Make sure to talk through your own challenges and failures so they can see that everyone has challenges and how they can be handled.
 - **Freedom to be unique** - Let children know that it is perfectly fine to be different from others and that all children are unique in their own ways. This can also be seen through the ways that providers individualize care for each child.
 - **Curiosity** - Encourage children to seek out new information or try new things, such as foods, toys, and activities. This can often lead to unexpected exploration and learning opportunities. It should also determine the pace and direction of learning. If infants and toddlers are very involved playing with a toy or in an activity, allow them more time to continue to explore and investigate.
 - **Teachers as role models** - Get involved with children and their activities. Talk to them and ask questions. Children will want to model your behaviors and activities. Most importantly, your positive relationships with children are critical for their successful brain development!

In the words of Mister Rogers, we want to create a learning climate where children can relate to the quote below:

"Did you know when you wonder, you're learning?
Did you know when you marvel, you're learning
About all kinds of wonderful,
All kinds of marvelous,
Marvelously wonderful things"

Adapted from:

Kim, K.H. (2016). The Creativity Challenge: How we can Recapture American Innovation. New York: Prometheus Books.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT



Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center

Click [HERE](#) to watch a video that further discusses topics such as language and literacy, physical development, resiliency, and relationships and the importance of these in an early childhood responsive learning environment. The video includes examples of classrooms as well as guest speakers who address these various topics.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities



2019 Spring Training	Locations and Dates
Richmond	January 31 and February 7
Berryville	February 2 and 9
Fairfax	March 1 and 2
Hayes	March 2 & 9
Roanoke	March 2 & 9

8:30 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

[Click here for the Spring 2019 1-2-3 READ! brochure](#)

[Register online at www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)



Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Modules 1 & 2

2019 Spring Training	Locations and Dates
Newport News	February 2 and 9
Portsmouth	March 1 and 2
Arlington	March 23 and 30
Abingdon	April 6 and 13
Richmond	April 11 and 18

8:30 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

[Click here for the Spring 2019 CSEFEL brochure](#)

[Register online at www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)



Save the date

Celebrating Babies, Tots, and Healthy Eating 2019

March 2
March 23
April 13
April 27
May 4

Martinsville
Fairfax
Richmond
Blacksburg
Williamsburg

These exciting professional development institutes will focus on infant and toddler nutrition and how infant and toddler caregivers, teachers, and directors can implement strategies to help develop healthy eating habits in the early years.

More information and registration will be available in January 2019 at www.va-itsnetwork.org

Working on Wonderful (WOW)

Congratulations to the following programs that have recently completed Level 1 services with the VA ITSN!

Merlin Cortez Perez	Northern	Farzana Khan	Northern
KinderCare - Stone Road	Northern	Nagla Abdelrahman	Northern
Claudia Robles Arias	Central	Kenia Velasco	Northern
Blooming Child Petite Academy	Central	Country Day School	Central

Working on Wonderful WOW

We are striving to achieve excellence in
early care for infants and toddlers!

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For more information contact Amy Stutt, VA ITSN Statewide Director at (757)378-3167.