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Improving Communities of Practice/BIA-CSPD  
At the Center for Development and Disability  
2300 Menaul NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87107

THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO



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# The Navajo NETWORK NEWS

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PLEASE WELCOME...

**Dr. Eugene R. Thompson** as the new Director of Education Leadership of the *BIA-CSPD Project* with the Navajo Nation. He has served as a consultant to the project for the past several months. Dr. Thompson received his doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from Arizona State University and has worked extensively on the Navajo Nation with students and adults with disabilities and their families. Fluent in Navajo, Dr. Thompson has served on the BIA Advisory Board for Special Education, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation (2001-2002), and has been identified as an educational leader in special education nationally and internationally. He has done study-visits at the University of Oxford and the University of London, Institute of Education. Dr. Thompson was previously the Executive Director of St. Michael's Association for Special Education in Window Rock, Arizona which serves children and adults with disabilities from across the Navajo Nation. He may be contacted at: **(505) 862-1165**. We are very pleased that Dr. Thompson has chosen to join the University of New Mexico in carrying out this project. "Gene" joins Daisy Thompson in our Gallup office. (Yes, they are married!!)



Congratulations to Dr. Rena Yazzie, who has been awarded the degree of Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at the University of New Mexico this spring. Dr. Yazzie is the ELO of Chinle Agency.

## **BUSY, BUSY SUMMER...**

The end of the school year is here. Summer offers many opportunities to rest, spend time with family and friends, travel, and continue to grow professionally. Several trainings and institutes are planned for the summer, supporting professional development for those working with children on the Navajo Nation.

Some of these include:

### **BIA/OIEP/CSI Summer Institute for Special Education**

July 12-15, Albuquerque, NM.

Representatives from schools are invited to participate in learning about key areas of service for children with special education needs, including positive behavior supports, transition, literacy, math, low incidence disability. Check with your principal, or Gloria Yepa at CSI (505-248-7541) or by email at: [gyepa@bia.edu](mailto:gyepa@bia.edu) for upcoming information.

**IDEA/NCLB Symposium** sponsored by the BIA, June 8, 9, 10, 2004 in Albuquerque. Contact Gloria Yepa at CSI (505/248-7541) or by email at: [gyepa@bia.edu](mailto:gyepa@bia.edu) for more information.

### **Summer Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research,**

June 21-29, Crownpoint Institute of Technology, Crownpoint, NM. This is a collaboration between Southern University and tribal colleges to explore disability issues and research areas. Contact Elmer Guy, Crownpoint Institute of Technology (505/786-4112) or by email at: [elmer@cit.cc.nm.us](mailto:elmer@cit.cc.nm.us) for more information.

**On-going training and technical assistance** planned throughout the summer with your ELOs and school staff by us, ICOP, the CSPD Project of the BIA on the Navajo Nation. Please check out our training calendar at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/CSPD/> for current information, or check in with your line office staff.

### **IHS/SAMHSA and National Behavioral Health Conference,**

June 8 - 10, 2004, San Diego, CA. "Expanding Partnerships to Meet Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Challenges in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities."

**BIA/OIEP National Meeting,** August 2-6, Denver, CO. Pre-Registration Deadline: July 9, 2004. Fax to Trina Fox at (505) 248-7545, Center for School Improvement. Pre-registration form is in the Pre-Meeting Information booklet.

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## **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT...WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT**

*Jeanie McNabb – Center for Development and Disability*

Curriculum and assessment is a challenge for most teachers. We know that ongoing assessment provides the benchmark for determining the efficacy of classroom instruction and an appropriate curriculum ensures that children receive the foundation they need for later learning. The difficulty is in choosing material, which meets the diverse needs of a particular classroom.

Here are some guidelines adapted from national resources which may be helpful:

### **Curriculum**

Implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children.

#### *Indicators of effective curriculum:*

- \* Children are active and engaged;
- \* Goals are clear and shared by all;
- \* Curriculum is evidence-based;
- \* Valued content is learned through investigation and focused intentional teaching;
- \* Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences;
- \* Curriculum is comprehensive;
- \* Professional standards validate the curriculum's subject-matter content;
- \* The curriculum is likely to benefit children.

Curriculum is more than a collection of enjoyable activities. It is a complex idea containing multiple components, such as goals, content, pedagogy, or instructional practices. A recurring theme in recent research syntheses has been that curriculum in programs for infants through the primary grades must be

comprehensive, including attention to social and emotional competence and positive attitudes or approaches to learning (Peth-Pierce, 2001; Raver, 2002). Another emphasis is on the implementation of curricula providing cultural and linguistic continuity for students and their families.

What children should learn is influenced by their ages and contexts. Researchers have found that children with and without disabilities benefit more from the curriculum when they are engaged or involved (Raspa, McWilliam, & Ridley, 2001; NCES, 2002). First-hand learning through physical, mental, and social activity is frequently a key. At every age through age eight (and beyond) play can stimulate children's engagement, motivation, and lasting learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). Learning is facilitated when children can "choose from a variety of activities, decide what type of products they want to create, and engage in important conversations with friends" (Espinosa, 2002, p.5).

Widespread agreement exists that curriculum should be based on evidence and evaluated for its effectiveness (National Research Council, 2001). However, claims that specific curricula are *research-based* (that evidence exists that these curricula are effective) are often not supported. Instructors may be confident in their choice, when in reality the curriculum was shown to be effective with children who are older or younger, or who differ in culture or language, from the children for whom the curriculum is now being adopted.

Next time we will explore assessment and how it links with curriculum.



### **LINC – Resources Available at the CDD**

LINC, or the "Resource Center" at the CDD, has thousands of books, videos, journal articles, and other professional resources to lend. There is no charge for this service, and librarians can mail items out to you at your home or school. The collection is online, so you can see what is available and make your selection from your computer. We are building our Native American collection of resources and expanding Navajo language options. Please let us know if there is disability information you think we should include in this collection. Check it out at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/linc/> or call: 1-800 827 6380. If you are in Albuquerque, come by the Center and see what is available. Our librarians are always happy to help.