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ABSTRACT

Emphasizing strong partnerships with family and community, the School-Based Early Childhood Centers Project of the Child, Family, and Community Program (CFCP) identifies, develops, and evaluates early childhood partnerships with six Northwest school sites to provide case studies of the restructuring process. This report presents the results of a meeting of representatives of the six schools over the course of 4 years to discuss the early childhood center concept and share their experiences of integrating features of early childhood centers into early elementary classrooms. The report consists of two parts. The first part provides an update of the literature review regarding developmentally appropriate practice, parents as partners, community involvement, and transition services. The second part provides an overview of the early childhood centers project and the 4-year process of implementing the early childhood center concept in the six schools. The findings show that all six sites demonstrated consistent success in implementing developmentally appropriate practices, encouraging family participation in children's schooling, and recruiting community members to the school. The results suggest that successful restructuring efforts must occur simultaneously in a number of components for changes to accumulate into a systematic effort. Two appendices include a self diagnostic survey form and analysis tables of components by site. Contains 96 references. (AP)

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**RESTRUCTURING SCHOOLS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:**

SCHOOL-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

Rebecca Novick

February 22, 1995

**Child, Family, and Community Program
Helen Nissani, Director**

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INTRODUCTION

The period between 1983 and 1989 represented the longest peace-time economic expansion in U.S. history, bringing unprecedented wealth to an elite group of affluent Americans. In contrast, the median incomes of most Americans declined. Hardest hit were families headed by a person 30 years old or younger. Young families' income plunged by one-third between 1973 and 1990. While one in four children under six lives in poverty, an astonishing 40 percent of children in young families are poor (Johnson, Sum, & Weill, 1992).

Rising numbers of at-risk children constitute a fundamental challenge to the success of schooling in the Northwest (Jewett, 1991). In addition, the increase of single-parent and dual-worker families has generated needs for extended care for large numbers of youngsters. Early intervention and parent and community involvement are key approaches which have been used successfully to enhance developmental outcomes for children. In 1988 a National Association of School Boards (NASBE) task force, made up of leaders from the public schools, early childhood education, and state policymaking, worked together to develop a comprehensive vision of early childhood education. The concept of early childhood centers the task force endorsed featured a holistic approach, viewing the student within the context of the family and community.

Emphasizing strong partnerships with family and community, the early childhood centers concept called for a restructuring of schooling for children ages four to eight, utilizing an approach to teaching that focuses on how children learn and develop. Based, in part, on this comprehensive view of service delivery for children and families, as well as utilizing input from Northwest Educators, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), identified four features of early childhood centers (Jewett, 1991):

- Adherence to quality standards based on child development principles and developmentally appropriate practice
- Active involvement, support, and empowerment of parents as partners in their child's development
- Active involvement with and responsiveness to the resources and needs of the community
- Transition services, including a school-based commitment to educating preschoolers either onsite or through collaborative relationships with preschool care providers

To learn how early childhood centers could be developed effectively within the public schools, the Child, Family, and Community Program of NWREL established partnerships with six Northwest sites in 1991 to provide case studies of the restructuring process. Representatives of each of these schools met periodically over the course of four years to

define and discuss the early childhood center concept, reflect on the changes they were making, and offer their experiences to the group for analysis. Representatives from the Child, Family, and Community Program at NWREL made site visits to observe first-hand the restructuring efforts and to assist in developing documentation of the innovations.

The purposes of this report are to:

- Provide an update of the literature review relevant to early childhood centers
- Describe the methodology used by Jewett (1991, 1992, 1993) to identify sites and to chart the change process, including a description of the major findings
- Analyze the resulting findings for the understanding they can contribute to early childhood restructuring efforts
- Discuss the next steps in the project

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will include research and writing relevant to the four components of the framework: developmentally appropriate practice, parents as partners, community involvement, and transition services (Jewett, 1991). Because the field of early childhood is an evolving profession whose knowledge base is continually expanded through questioning and reflection (Bredenkamp, 1993), the review will include a discussion of the major controversies and confusions which have surrounded the concept of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) since the introduction of the guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1987.

Implementation of Quality Programs and Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children Through the Age of Eight

Child Development and DAP

In the 1970s child development began to shift from the study of pathology to the study of self-righting tendencies that appear to move children toward normal development in all but the most adverse circumstances. The study of the innate "wired-in programs" that predispose the infant and young child to have competent interactions with the environment is the single most powerful new model of the infant (Cramer, 1987). It is now well accepted that the infant is born preadapted for social interaction and actively participates with caregivers to develop a "shared reality" (Emde, 1987). Called variously "intersubjectivity," "jointly created little worlds," and "interfacing of minds," this shared meaning appears to be a prerequisite not only for language development but for the development of a "sense of self" (Bruner, 1986; Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978).

At the same time the social nature of the infant and young child was "discovered," research on brain development has provided new insights into the elegance and complexity of the human brain. Far from being a blank slate or an empty vessel that is gradually filled up with knowledge, the brain is designed as a pattern detector, perceiving relationships and making connections fundamental to the learning process. Because the brain ceaselessly performs many functions simultaneously, thoughts, emotions, imagination, and predispositions operate concurrently and are interrelated (Caine & Caine, 1990). David Krech uses the term "perfink" to illustrate that people perceive, feel, and think all at once (Quoted in Bruner, 1987).

Based on these findings regarding social, emotional, and cognitive development, effective teaching would facilitate the child's ability to find meaningful and personally relevant patterns in an atmosphere which is emotionally supportive (Caine & Caine, 1990). Yet today, despite dramatic gains in our knowledge of how children develop and learn, the last 50 years have seen little change in the classroom (Goodlad, 1984).

Description of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

As early as 1979, Overly, in the *Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development* (quoted in Caine & Caine, 1990) lamented, "Much has been known about the learning process but little has been applied to education." By introducing guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp, 1987), the National Association for the Education of Young Children led a movement to tie child development knowledge to early childhood practices (Bowman & Stott, 1994).

Based on theories of Dewey, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Erikson, DAP guidelines are based on an interactive, constructivist view of learning. Key to this approach is the principle that the child constructs his or her own knowledge through interactions with the social and physical environment. Because the child is viewed as intrinsically motivated and self-directed, effective teaching capitalizes on the child's motivation to explore, experiment, and to make sense of his or her experience. Children's spontaneous play promotes learning by providing opportunities for concrete, hands-on experiences; these experiences not only help the child to master his/her environment but allow the child to develop the capacity for abstract thought, imagination, and creativity. According to Vygotsky, (1978) play and practical activity lead development by providing "a stage between the purely situational constraints of early childhood and adult thought, which is less context bound."

In this interactive approach to learning, the role of the teacher has been variously described as one who guides, observes, facilitates, poses problems, extends activities, and in Vygotsky's (1978) words, "creates a natural moment" in the child's environment. Rather than a dispenser of knowledge, the teacher acts as a "dispenser of occasions" (Phillips, 1993). A major theme in DAP is to make learning meaningful for the individual child, using practices which reflect both the age and individual needs of the child. A strong emphasis is placed on learning to think critically, work cooperatively, and solve problems. Language development and emerging literacy are encouraged through the use of whole language approaches, which embed learning throughout the day in meaningful activities.

Citing social, cognitive, and emotional benefits for children, a number of early childhood educators advocate for mixed-age grouping (Katz, Evangelou, & Hartman, 1990). These heterogeneous groupings not only provide opportunities for children of differing ages and abilities to work and play together, but they facilitate continuity for children by allowing children to stay with the same peer group and teachers for several years. To reflect the interrelatedness of developmental domains, curriculum is integrated, using strategies which include learning and activity centers, and conceptual organizers, or thematic units.

In order to make sound educational decisions that effect the child, authentic assessment, which reflects the child's performance during typical activities in the classroom, is employed. Assessment practices utilized in developmentally appropriate classrooms include collections of children's work, tape recordings of their reading, teacher observations, and summaries of children's progress. Integral to the assessment process is

the opportunity for both children and their parents to participate in both evaluation and goal setting.

Brief History of DAP

DAP was developed in part as a reaction to the downward extension of academic curricula into early childhood programs, with its concomitant emphasis on drill and practice. The guidelines were developed shortly before the national Education Goals Panel formulated its six educational goals for the year 2000. These goals reflect the recognition that tomorrow's successful employees will need to be creative problem-solvers and decision makers, adept at collaboration and conflict resolution. As Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) point out, the early childhood profession entered the education reform debate by proposing guidelines for early childhood educational practices which facilitate development of these competencies.

But DAP served another function as well. In the 1980s, NAEYC developed accreditation criteria, using the term "developmentally appropriate." Because of a variety of interpretations of this concept, NAEYC felt the need to clarify "developmentally appropriate." In the process, Johnson and Johnson (1992) observe that it became clear that DAP could serve political and advocacy aims in negotiating with the educational establishment and the public-at-large. Thus, in addition to enhancing the quality of educational experiences for young children, an important consideration in formulating the guidelines was to foster professional identity and visibility for the field of early childhood education. Following a lengthy process which involved the input of thousands of early childhood professionals, NAEYC published guidelines which reflected a consensus definition of developmentally appropriate practice.

The consensus was short lived (New & Mallory, 1994). If DAP was maligned by many outside the field as structureless and nonacademic (Kagan, 1992), some educators inside the field of early childhood viewed DAP as far too prescriptive and discouraging of reflection, reducing the teacher to an actor following a script from an authoritative organization (Lubeck, 1994). Despite assertions by Kostelnik (1992), Bredekamp (1993), and other NAEYC professionals that DAP is open-ended and amenable to variation, some saw in the guidelines (which juxtaposed appropriate and inappropriate practices in a dichotomous fashion) no recognition that competing views exist. In a discussion of politics and pedagogy, Lubeck (1994) concluded that in effect, the dialogue had been silenced.

In the attempt to build consensus, not only had important players been left out, including behaviorists and learning theorists (Johnson & Johnson, 1992), but a number of writers believed that the authors of DAP had failed to appreciate the degree to which the guidelines were embedded in a specific historical and cultural context, specifically that of white, able-bodied, middle-class America. While purporting to refer to all children, DAP neglected to mention variations in development due to physical, intellectual, and

behavioral impairment and virtually ignored the importance of the sociocultural context for the child's development (New and Mallory, 1994).

Given these omissions, it is not surprising that by far the most vocal critics came from the field of early childhood/special education and from writers concerned with issues of cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity. In addition, a number of writers pointed out that the DAP guidelines failed to address the important question of curricular content. In the following sections, these criticisms, as well as NAEYC's response, will be explored.

A Question of Curriculum

As indicated earlier, DAP was an attempt to tie child development knowledge to early childhood educational practices. However, as Katz (1992) observes, the relationship between this body of knowledge and pedagogical practices is not simple or direct one. Because the guidelines were primarily concerned with how to teach and less specific about what to teach, the basic philosophical questions of what knowledge and whose knowledge is of most worth were not addressed (Apple, 1992, Kessler, 1991). Observing that values underlie any form of educational practice, a number of educators argued that what counts as "legitimate" knowledge to be included in the curriculum of the school is the result of complex power relations. In this view, the current debate over DAP is seen as one between individuals "who hold different values about the purposes of schooling, what counts as legitimate knowledge, and presumably the nature of the good life and the just society" (Kessler, 1991, p. 193).

In order to include the voices of those frequently excluded, Kessler suggested that discourse about DAP should address the larger issues of fairness and equity. Arguing that child development knowledge is an insufficient justification for appropriate practice, she offered the metaphor of "schooling for democratic living." Based on the writings of educator and social critic John Dewey, this view holds that schools would not only teach about democratic values but "provide opportunities for students to live democratically in the microcosm of the classroom."

In a response to Kessler, published in the same journal, Bredekamp (1991), editor of NAEYC's position statements on accreditation and developmentally appropriate practice, concurred that the position statements do not provide sufficient guidance on curricular content. She asserted that "NAEYC never intended to imply that child development knowledge is or should be the only consideration for programming for young children" (p. 202) and agreed that cultural knowledge and values are important sources of curriculum. However, she warned that in order to avoid abuses to children arising from neglect of child development knowledge, "what children are capable of knowing" must be an important consideration in educational practices. She closed her argument with an invitation for social reconstructionists (advocates of curriculum for democratic living) to join forces with developmentalists to challenge the "scientific-technological view of curriculum that has successfully reduced all worthy education to observable, measurable answers to multiple choice questions" (p. 207).

In 1991, NAEYC published *Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment* which had been developed jointly with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education. The result of more than a decade of work, the guidelines were developed specifically to address the question of *what* to teach--curricular content.

A year later, NAEYC published *Reaching Potentials*, to guide teachers and supervisors to make informed decisions about curricular content and to advocate for more appropriate approaches. In this book, NAEYC offered a "new paradigm derived from the guidelines--transformational curriculum" (p. 7). Transformational curriculum is a "mindful curriculum" (p. 70), which draws on four perspectives: child development knowledge, conceptual organizers, the knowledge base of the disciplines, and the individual developmental continuum of each child. Such a curriculum, wrote Rosegrant and Bredekamp (1992), is "meaningful, intellectual; and developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate" (p. 70). In a statement which anticipated the response of critics, the authors observed, "Perhaps that sounds like an attempt to be all things to all people, to satisfy our critics by putting in a little bit of each perspective" (p. 72).

The critics were not long in responding. Educators concerned with issues of cultural diversity suggested that DAP addressed culture by making it a characteristic of individuals, like a person's need or interests, rather than understanding the dynamic interplay between a child's sociocultural context and his or her developmental processes and outcomes (Lubeck, 1994; New & Mallory, 1994).

DAP and Cultural Diversity

The idea of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technology, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life. (Octavio Paz)

Psychologists have known for a long time that one of the most important elements in learning is meaning. A major theme in DAP is to make learning meaningful for individual children. However, the image of the lone child constructing his or her own world almost in isolation has dominated the thinking of child development theorists and early childhood educators alike. While the recent discovery of the "social" infant has led to increased emphasis on the interpersonal life of the child, less attention has been paid to the importance of the wider social, cultural, and historical context. It is only in the last decade, due in large part to increasing attention to Vygotsky's theoretical framework, that we have begun to understand that "making sense" is a profoundly social process (Bruner, 1987), a process in which culture and individual development are mutually embedded (Bowman & Stott, 1994).

With a Piagetian emphasis on individual construction of knowledge and the privileging of logical, mathematical, and verbal knowledge, the original DAP guidelines were seen by

many as failing to place the child's development in a cultural context. In doing so, DAP failed to appreciate alternative ways of "knowing" and "seeing" and the multiple intelligences which are represented in a culturally diverse world. A number of researchers pointed out that just as curriculum is a political text, child development principles are not "value free," but instead reflect the prevailing beliefs of a particular society. In a critique of DAP's inadequate response to issues of cultural diversity, New and Mallory (1994) observed, "It is hard to think of any word in the English language that is more socially constructed and context bound than the word "appropriate" (p. 1).

Several researchers (Bowman & Stott, 1994; Ogbu, 1987) warned that by equating child development competencies with particular forms of behavior, teachers may misread the meaning of these behaviors, failing to understand how children interpret their own experiences. The absence of continuity and congruence between the child's home culture and the school—an absence of shared meaning—may interfere with children's competent functioning in the new setting. As Becker (1983) observed: "Kids who test dumb usually look and act dumb in school. That their dumbness may be result of deep cultural differences between what they know and feel comfortable doing and what the schools require doesn't alter that" (p. 107).

Bowman (1992) describes culture as a prism created from shared meaning; members of a cultural group see the world from a different perspective, making sense of their experience in different ways. Emphasizing the role of the teacher as co-constructor of knowledge, Bowman and Stott (1994) suggests that teachers must bridge the gap between the culture of the home and school by using interactive styles and content that are familiar to children, thus establishing new and shared meaning: "When teachers plan experiences that connect them to their children through understanding and respect, they can 'make meaning' together" (p. 131).

The emphasis on the social construction of knowledge and the importance of the sociocultural context was brought to the pages of *Young Children* with the discussions of Reggio Emilia, a town in Italy which has an early childhood program that has attracted thousands of visitors worldwide and is the topic of a book entitled *The Hundred Languages of Children* (1993). According to its founder, Loris Malaguzzi, the school's philosophy is based on a "theory of relationships, which goes beyond Piagetian views of the child as constructing knowledge, almost in isolation" (p. 10). With an emphasis on a continuously renewed network of communication among parents, teachers, children, and with the community and the wider society, proponents of Reggio Emilia propose an image of the child which is "rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent, and most of all, connected to adults and other children" (p. 10).

In the same journal issue, Bredekamp (1993), reiterated that the DAP statement is meant to be dynamic, changing as new knowledge is acquired. She announced that NAEYC was collecting suggestions for proposed revisions to the position statements on developmentally appropriate practice, carefully considering many issues brought to their attention by critics, particularly aficionados of Reggio Emilia.

DAP and Early Childhood/Special Education

The field of early childhood/special education (ECSE) utilizes a number of knowledge bases. Although programs draw heavily on the work of behaviorists such as Watson, Skinner, Baer, and Bijou, most programs have a framework that is cognitive and developmental in orientation, as well as behavioral. The last 10 years have seen a trend away from didactic techniques toward more naturalistic strategies (Bricker & Cripe, 1992). However, the intervention strategies that are used to teach children with disabilities often focus on eliciting a particular skill or behavior (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Munson, 1989). Because the broad overall goal is to promote children's independent functioning in mainstreamed school and community settings, the focus of intervention is to accelerate the child's development to help the child meet the demands of succeeding environments.

When the DAP guidelines were published in 1987, virtually no reference was made to the inclusion of young children with special needs. Despite this omission, some educators began urging the use of these principles for children with special needs. A lively debate was touched off in which the appropriateness of DAP for children with disabilities was examined by members of both fields, and each discipline sought to promote, and at times question, its unique identity and contribution to early education.

For example, in an article which suggested a new model of early intervention based on the convergence of the developmental, functional, and biological models, Mallory (1992) asked: "Is special education simply a bastard child, to be pitied but not encouraged, or should it be given its own place at the table and granted legitimate status?" For their part, early childhood educators took pains to dispel the myth that DAP classrooms are child indulgent places, where children are "just left to play," or, even worse, chaotic environments where children are in control of the classrooms (Bredenkamp & Rosegrant, 1992, Goodman, 1992).

In a number of journal articles published in *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, metaphors flew as tensions, as well as humor, peppered the pages. Carta, Schwartz, Atwater, and McConnell (1991) warned against "jumping on the bandwagon" of DAP as the sole guidepost for programs serving young children with special needs. Evoking the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, functionality, and normalization, Carta and colleagues argued that DAP provided a necessary but not sufficient framework for serving young children with disabilities. Asserting that the explicit mission of ECSE is to accelerate children's developmental progress beyond rates that would occur without intervention, they argued that children with disabilities need "direct" intervention that addresses the acquisition of "critical skills." They concluded that the burden of proof is on proponents of DAP to demonstrate the effectiveness of relatively unstructured approaches for preparing young children with special needs to meet the social, behavioral, and academic demands of kindergarten and successive educational placements.

Johnson and Johnson (1992) responded that Carta and colleagues (1991) had set up a straw man and suggested that the authors "suffered from the myopia of outsiders and the uninformed" (p. 444). They asserted that, unlike Carta's belief that DAP represented a single non-directive approach to teaching, DAP was not "etched in stone" and was, in fact, neither too hard (such as back-to basics programs) nor too soft (such as maturational "let Mother Nature take her course models), implying, of course, that DAP was "just right." Recalling the image of the tortoise and the hare, they argued that it was not how fast or how far the child can be made to go but how well the child goes. Delineating a number of studies which documented the benefits of nondirective strategies for children with disabilities, they admonished special education not to fall into the "catch-up obsession" and the "life is great when you accelerate" syndrome (p. 446).

In an apparent attempt to bury the hatchet, Carta and colleagues (1993) reacted to Johnson and Johnson's (1992) response to their critique by pointing out the many areas of overlap between what is considered quality practice in ECSE and in the DAP guidelines. These included the principle of individualization; deemphasis of standardized assessments; the integration of curriculum and assessment; the importance of child-initiated activities; the importance of active engagement; emphasis on social interaction; the importance of cultural diversity. Efforts at a rapprochement had begun.

Bredenkamp (1993) quipped that tensions between early childhood educators and early childhood special educators had "reportedly (although unconfirmed empirically) resulted in the special educator being DAPped over the head" (p. 259), a practice which she discouraged. Rather, she exhorted both fields to join forces and work together as advocates for better services for all children. Johnson and Johnson (1993) followed suit, despite what they suspected were "deep philosophical differences" between the two fields. They concluded that "transcending turf problems and professional vanity becomes our mandate," urging both sides to "roll up our sleeves and begin to do the serious work that now needs to be done" (p. 252).

The trend toward full inclusion of children with disabilities in all early childhood settings will, from necessity, bring the two fields closer together. Bredenkamp (1993) outlined a number of collaborative efforts that have been launched or proposed. These include joint sessions on developmentally appropriate practice at each organization's national and local conferences; joint efforts around Goal 1 of the National Education Goals; review of NAEYC's position statements on DAP, accreditation, and teacher preparation by early childhood special educators on NAEYC advisory panels; and initiation of work on a joint position by the Division of Early Childhood (DEC), NAEYC, and ATE (Association of Teacher Educators) on standards for personnel preparation and certification (p. 270).

According to Odom and McEvoy (1990), one of the major barriers of full inclusion of children with disabilities into early childhood programs is the contrast between theoretical orientations. As the field of ECSE moves toward more naturalistic intervention techniques, and as early childhood education becomes more inclusionary in both theory

and practice, these barriers appear less insurmountable. The continued collaboration between the two fields may do much to benefit children.

Summary

Clifford Geertz (1973) describes anthropology "as a field whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate." He goes on to say, "What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other" (p. 29). This statement might be equally applied to the field of early childhood. The preceding discussion demonstrates that early childhood educators take seriously their view of DAP as a "working hypothesis," which continually changes through a dynamic process of questioning and reflecting on practice, research, and theory.

Developmentally appropriate practice is only the first feature of an early childhood center. Bredekamp (1993) noted that early childhood is moving towards comprehensive services and family support. Following is a discussion of the advantages and difficulties of school-community partnerships.

Active Involvement, Support, Empowerment of Parents as Partners in Their Child's Development

A common culture requires the creation of the conditions necessary for all people to participate in the creation and recreation of meaning and values in which all people can be involved in the deliberation of what is important. (Apple, 1992, p. 10)

Early childhood has a long tradition of valuing program-family connections. Strongly held beliefs that early socialization is the right and responsibility of the family have resulted in high levels of parental choice regarding the care and education of young children (Powell, 1994). Because child care and preschools have operated in open-market conditions with little oversight from the government, parents have been able to influence programs to a far greater extent than in formal education (Holloway & Fuller, 1992).

Since the 1960s, parent involvement in early childhood programs increasingly has been conceived of as a relationship involving two-way communication, mutual respect, and, in some cases, shared decisionmaking (Powell, 1991). There is recognition that continuity and consistency between home and school are important factors in providing a strong and secure foundation for children during their early years. Parents who actively participate in their children's education during the early years have the opportunity to learn skills and develop positive attitudes toward school, thereby enhancing their ability to effectively support their children's learning throughout their educational experience (NASBE, 1988).

The value of parental participation in their young children's education has been well established, particularly for low-income and ethnic minority families. In a number of studies of preschool programs, researchers concluded that programs with high parental

involvement were far more likely to produce long-term gains than child-focused programs (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Lazar & Darlington, 1979). Since 1970, the national Head Start office has adhered to performance standards that require parental involvement in decisions about program operation. Head Start parents are welcomed not only as participants, but as decisionmakers (Mallory & Goldsmith, 1990).

The discipline of early childhood/special education has long recognized the important role of families. As in regular early childhood programs, the role of parents has changed over the years. Turnbull and Turnbull (1990) trace the development of the role, from parents as problem source, in need of "parent training," to parents as political advocates, decisionmakers and family members. Recently, the field has moved toward a "family-guided" approach to intervention. Legislation passed in 1986 (P.L. 99-457), which established the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), places the family "squarely in the center of the assessment and intervention process" (McLean & Odom, 1993).

The field of early childhood education, then, has been a pioneer in working with parents (Powell, 1994). However, as Bredekamp (1993) points out, the family focus is strongest in programs, such as Head Start, designed for at-risk children, and in those designed for children with disabilities, while it is weakest for children perceived as less vulnerable. Most schools have limited experience with forming partnerships with families; the NASBE Task Force (1988) concluded that schools have not gone far enough in reaching out to parents. Thus, challenges remain, both philosophical and practical, in developing effective partnerships with families.

Practical Considerations

A family is a unit composed not only of children, but men, women, an occasional animal, and the common cold. (Ogden Nash)

The changing structure of American families is a much talked-about subject. While scholars and politicians debate the causes and consequences, it is clear that fewer and fewer families meet all of Nash's criteria. It is equally clear that time is a declining natural resource for both children and parents (Louv, 1992). As children and adults "pass each other in the night at ever accelerating speeds," (p. 5) the opportunity for parents to spend "quality time" with their children has decreased dramatically over the years. A study conducted by Pittsburgh's Priority Management Company in 1988 revealed that the average working couple spends four minutes a day in meaningful conversation with each other, and the average working parent spends thirty seconds in meaningful conversation with his or her children (cited in Louv, 1992).

Given this trend, it is not surprising that many dual-worker and single-parent families have little time or energy for active involvement in program activities. In addition, some parents have negative views of schools based on their own experience as children and find schools unapproachable and intimidating. Lack of teacher training in working with parents often makes forming the parent/teacher relationship problematic. Schools of

education offer little direct training in parental involvement. A University of Minnesota report on improving teacher education listed what researchers identified as the 37 most important teaching skills; learning how to work with parents was not among them (Louv, 1992).

A number of strategies, both formal and informal, have been identified by practitioners and researchers to enhance parent-school communication. These strategies include two-way notebooks, frequent phone calls, family-friendly homework, newsletters, invitations to participate in field trips, activity nights, lunch programs, and classroom reading. Linguistically diverse parents can be encouraged to read to children in their primary language and to share knowledge of traditional celebrations, music, poetry, and dance (Woolfe, 1992).

Home visiting programs, sometimes with parents visiting other parents who become links between parents and schools, have been effective in increasing participation of "hard to reach" parents (Davies, 1994). Davies also reports that parent centers where parents can chat with other parents and teachers, watch videos, and learn about school activities, are a highly effective way to communicate to parents that they are welcome at school. Parent information centers, which provide resources and information about children, school policies and procedures, and how to support their child's education, are another promising strategy to promote parent/school collaboration.

Pedagogical Paradoxes

Philosophical differences between parents and school personnel regarding educational practices can present challenges to effective collaboration. For example, the child centered educational approach advocated by NAEYC is incompatible with the more directive and academic approaches desired by "fast-track parents raising fast-track children" and by many low-income and ethnic minority parents (Kagan, 1991). As argued earlier, child development knowledge is embedded in a sociocultural context. Laosa (1983) points out, "Groups differ in their views of what constitutes desirable behavior on the part of their children; they differ, moreover, in the conceptions of the attributes that define 'optimal development'" (p. 337).

The DAP guidelines emphasize program-family continuity and regular communication between family and staff; the parent-staff relationship is defined as a "partnership" (p. 12). Yet the guidelines were designed, in part, to enhance the professional status of the field and make a claim to a distinctive body of knowledge for work with young children. While the responsibility of staff to share child development knowledge with parents is clearly stated, the role of parents as decisionmakers is less clear (Powell, 1994). Powell (1994) points out that "the call for parents to share in decisions about their children's care and education is a one-sentence recommendation" (p. 177) and the report offers no formal mechanism for including parents in the formal decisionmaking structures of a program.

According to Powell (1994), the DAP statement "seems to reflect a profession in an understandable quandary about how to accommodate parents" (p. 178). With the recognition that parental choice does not necessarily lead to high-quality care and educational practices, at least as defined by the early childhood profession (Holloway & Fuller, 1992), many proponents of DAP consider it their responsibility to educate parents, as well as other professionals, in the value of their approach. For example, Katz (1991) writes that NAEYC has effectively tied child development knowledge to pedagogical practices. "A remaining challenge to early childhood educators is to bring parents' understandings, expectations, and preferences in closer agreement with these recommended practices" (p. 66).

Powell (1994) argues that the role of professional as "expert," while tempered with recommendations for teachers to promote mutual respect, runs counter to the trend of parent empowerment. In order to be responsive to and inclusive of diverse views in an increasingly pluralistic society, true partnerships with parents are needed, relationships which permit a two-way flow of influence. Bowman and Stott (1994) note, "Only if parents and teachers can collaborate are children free to learn from both" (p. 136).

The dilemma, of course, is how to value and include multiple perspectives, while at the same time advocating for educational practices which are based on our best understandings about how children develop and learn. Clearly, developing partnerships with families is complex and challenging. As the citizens of Reggio Emilia acknowledge, the process of maintaining a dialogue between parents and teachers is one "which is and should be complicated" (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 11). Fortunately, the field of early childhood education has a long history of working with parents and can draw on the expertise and experience of both parents and professionals to enhance developmental outcomes for all children.

The early childhood center concept emphasizes continuous, seamless provision of comprehensive services to young children and families. Providing these services requires that the schools develop partnerships, not only with parents, but with community service providers. In the following section, research on this concept will be examined.

Active Involvement With and Responsiveness to the Resources and Needs of the Community

To the doctor, the child is a typhoid patient; to the playground supervisor, a first baseman; to the teacher, a learner of arithmetic. At times, he may be different things to each of these specialists, but too rarely is he a whole child to any of them (White House Conference on Children, cited in Usdan, 1994).

Undoubtedly, some of the language in the above statement might provide the reader with a clue as to its antiquity. Most politically correct speakers would use he/she (or perhaps he/she) and typhoid is not making a resurgence. However, the sentiment is as applicable today as it was in 1935 when this speech was delivered at the White House Conference on

Children. Despite growing awareness of the need to view a child in context, embedded in a family, community, and a larger society, our service delivery system remains specialized, fragmented, and often inaccessible to children and families.

Our human services delivery system contains three components: education, health, and social services. Referred to as the "iron triangle" by Farrow and Joe (1992), each system has its own organization, funding, and professional perspective. In effect, each component has its own culture and language, a culture which is often as impenetrable to other service providers as it is to the families it serves. The rapidly increasing numbers of at-risk children have provided an impetus for bringing our service delivery system more in line with what we know about children and families. It is by now well understood that children bring more to school than their cognitive abilities (or deficits) and that schools alone cannot help children become competent and contributing members of their communities. If our educational focus is to broaden from a purely academic approach to include physical, social, and emotional development, collaboration among service providers will be essential.

School-Linked Services

It is imperative for schools to be involved extensively in collaborative initiatives. Why? To paraphrase the response of famed bank robber Willie Sutton who, when asked why he robbed banks, said, "That's where the money is," that's where the children are (Usdan, 1994).

Tyack (1992) describes two current conceptions or visions of educational reform: a "nation-at-risk" model or a "children-at-risk" model. In a nation-at-risk model, the goal of education is to improve academic performance to make our country more competitive in a global economy. Effective education, then, focuses on strict instruction in the "basics," eliminating extraneous features such as collaboration with social services agencies. According to Eisner (1991), this viewpoint portrays education as "a competitive race, the front line in our quest for international supremacy" (p. 10).

In a children-at-risk model, rather than increased competition between children and schools, the goal becomes meeting the health and social needs of underserved children (Tyack, 1992). Arguing that schools and communities are adversely affected by nonacademic problems among students and families, proponents of this view advocate for schools to establish links with community service providers as an essential component of restructuring schools to meet our national educational goals.

In school-linked services, schools do not typically provide the actual health and social services; rather, they work closely with service providers located at the school or a site near the school. Schools are among the central participants in planning and governing the collaborative efforts. An urban superintendent asserts, "The school should serve as a clearinghouse for children's activities so that all child welfare agencies may be working simultaneously and efficiently, thus creating a child world within the city wherein all

children may have a wholesome environment all of the day and every day “ (quoted in Tyack, 1992). The goal of linking school and community agencies is for services to become part of a truly integrated system that produces successful outcomes for students. However, Levy and Shepardson (1992) caution that no one model could or should be produced “cookie-cutter” style throughout the country. Instead, each community must develop its own approach, tailored to the unique strengths and needs of its citizens.

In addition to establishing partnerships with service providers, efforts to elicit support from the entire community are increasingly considered essential to meet children’s complex educational and social needs. Usdan (1992) points out that demographic changes are rapidly eroding public education’s traditional support base. Only about 25 percent of the adults in the United States currently have youngsters enrolled in public schools, which means a decline in citizens who have a “vested interest in the success of education” (p. 19). Reaching out to community partners, including universities, businesses, labor, public and private agencies, churches, and other community agencies, is seen as a way to broaden the support base for education.

For supporters of school-community collaboration, the metaphor of education as a competitive race is giving way to an educational model based on shared responsibility, reciprocity, and interrelatedness. As Bronfenbrenner (1985) writes, the way to improve education and society is to make schooling more central to family and community, while making family and community more central to schooling. Educators caution, however, that true collaboration, which includes sharing power and resources, will require “overcoming multiple layers of resistance--in attitudes, relationships, and policies--within and across service provider institutions, among consumers, and throughout the community” (Melaville & Blank, 1993, p. 19). Thus, not only “empowerment” but training will be necessary for forming and maintaining successful partnerships.

In addition, even the most successful collaboration will not make up for social underinvestment in children; nor will collaboration create jobs that pay a living wage or provide adequate housing and health care for all (Gardner, 1990). Yet collaboration is essential to maximize current as well as future investments in educational and social services and to provide continuity for children and families as they negotiate the educational and social service systems.

Transition Services, Including a School-based Commitment to Educating Preschoolers Either Onsite or Through Collaborative Relationships with Preschool Care Providers

Continuity allows children and their families to build on the positive aspects of their experience as they make transitions. In other words, transition becomes a part of the ongoing experience of families, as opposed to being an interruption or an abrupt change that results in difficult adjustments. (Regional Educational Laboratories’ Early Childhood Collaboration Network, 1995).

It is generally accepted that the early childhood years lay the foundation for the child's success in school and life. Yet our child care system is inadequate to meet the needs of our nation's children, particularly children from low-income families. Due in part to our strongly held beliefs that early care and socialization of children are not only the right but the responsibility of the family, our child care and preschool system have never been integrated into a comprehensive educational system. In the absence of government regulation and sanction, these systems have grown into a nonsystem of programs, with widely different philosophies, practices, and quality of care. Isolated from one another in a market economy, their relationship is typically characterized by competition, rather than collaboration (Caldwell, 1991; Kagan, 1991).

Research has shown that children from low-income families derive positive benefits from high-quality preschool programs. By far the largest, oldest, and most comprehensive educational effort for low-income preschool children has been Head Start. Head Start has a proven track record of enhancing children's development and furthering school success, particularly when efforts are made to provide transition support through the early elementary school years (Ramey & Campbell, 1987). Gains from such comprehensive preschool programs are particularly durable in the areas of social competence, with fewer grade repetitions and referrals to special education, and more positive attitudes toward school. Schweinhart and Weikart's (1993) recently published their findings through age 27 on the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. They reported that:

High quality, active-learning programs for young children living in poverty return \$7.16 for every dollar invested, cut in half participants' crime rate through age 27, significantly increase participants' earnings and property wealth as adults, and significantly increase participants' commitment to marriage (p. 54).

Yet children from low-income families are far less likely to be enrolled in preschool programs than middle or upper-income children. In addition, in many child care and preschool programs, high child/adult ratios and staff turnover rates of 40 percent provide little continuity of care for children (NASBE, 1988). Because young children's emotional development depends, in large part, on the quality and stability of relationships with caregivers, this lack of stability can have harmful effects on the developing child.

Communication to Support Continuity

Continuity in care and education may be further undermined when children move from preschool programs to kindergarten. Isolated from the educational mainstream as well as from each other, there is typically little networking between preschool and kindergarten programs. The report published by the National Transition Study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (Love, Logue, Trudeau, & Thayer, 1992), concludes that public schools do not place a high priority on transition activities. Although a high percentage of incoming children and their parents visit the school before the beginning of the kindergarten year, only 10 percent of schools reported systematic communication between kindergarten teachers and previous caregivers.

Housing a preschool onsite is one strategy to ease transitions for children; however, physical proximity by itself does not necessarily lead to open communication. The Southern Regional Education Board (1994) reports that in one site where preschool and kindergarten were located in the same building, the two groups of teachers still had little or no interaction after several years; many did not even know each other by name. Differences in status (teaching versus baby-sitting) and remuneration (child care providers often receive poverty-level wages) may militate against open communication. Caldwell (1991) poses a rhetorical question, "Whoever heard of a kindergarten teacher who valued the opinion of a child care worker enough to ask for one?" (p. 70). Yet an even more important question may be, whoever heard of a child care program which provided release time for its staff to meet with school providers?

If children are to derive optimal benefit from each new educational setting, these "hidden boundaries" and "sacred cows" (Kagan, 1991) must begin to be broken down and teachers and child care providers given opportunities for on-going communication among staff within and between settings. As Kagan (1991) asserts, "The care young children receive is inseparable from learning and learning is inseparable from care," (p. xi). Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that a setting's developmental potential is improved when there are supportive linkages between settings; when a child's entry into a new setting is made in the company of one or more persons with whom the child has participated in other settings; when there is open two-way communication between settings that includes the family in the communication network; and when the mode of between-setting communication is personal.

Continuity in Curriculum

It is now well understood that effective teaching builds upon the child's prior knowledge and experience. As Bowman and Stott (1994) point out, children's learning is context bound, tied to specific settings. In order to make sense of their experience, children must see the connections between what they already know and what they experience in school. Yet the transition to public school often results in sharp discontinuities. The young child must adapt to a new culture, a new ecology, with different sets of procedures, requirements and values (Caldwell, 1991). In the National Transition Study mentioned above, only 12 percent of schools had kindergarten curricula designed to build on preschool programs (Love, et al., 1992).

Although the benefits of a high-quality, developmentally appropriate preschool environment have been well documented, these benefits can be lost when students enter schools, whose expectations and practices differ markedly from the previous setting. Caldwell (1991) cautioned, however, that continuity alone is not necessarily a good thing.

Because of the downward extension of academic instruction into kindergarten and preschool, there is often the most continuity in the most developmentally *inappropriate* programs. In a study by Mitchell, Seligson, and Marx (1989), some school administrators

and teachers had worked to improve continuity for children by making the curriculum for four-year-olds more like that in kindergarten and the kindergarten curriculum more like that in first grade. Thus, one of the most important steps in providing continuity is to ensure that programs at all levels--preschool, kindergarten, and primary grades--are developmentally appropriate (SREB, 1994).

Summary

Development is continuous and hierarchical; each level involves new elements of behavior which represent the integration and differentiation of former accomplishments (Sroufe, 1979). It seems clear that in order for early care and education to have a lasting impact on children's development and learning, it must be integrated into a comprehensive system of education and social services. Thus, there is ample support in the literature for the early childhood center concept. All four features, developmentally appropriate practice, active parent participation, community partnerships, and continuity of care and education are integrally related and essential to support children's optimal development. Implementing this concept will require collaboration and, above all, a willingness to change the way our schools and communities deliver services to children and their families.

OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS PROJECT

The mission of the School-Based Early Childhood Centers Project of the Child, Family, and Community Program (CFCP) is to identify, develop, and evaluate options for restructuring primary education to integrate the best features of early childhood education with early elementary education. The project provides leadership and research and development assistance to Northwest innovators who are exploring ways to restructure their primary units to better meet the developmental needs of young children.

The CFCP initially identified several innovators within the five Northwest states served by NWREL (Jewett, 1991). Partnerships were established with six sites, based on a regional survey conducted during 1991. These schools have demonstrated a wide variety of strengths, as well as a range of innovations reflecting sound early childhood principles and practices. They have also faced challenges associated with making changes in their educational systems. In this section, the methodology used by Jewett (1991, 1992, 1993) to identify the sites and chart the change process will be described. In addition, the major findings, including facilitating and inhibiting factors and strategies used by the centers, will be discussed.

Project Activities

Based on both a comprehensive literature review, as well as input from Northwest educators, Jewett (1991) identified four defining features of early childhood centers. These features, which have been described in detail in the previous literature review, are: developmentally appropriate practice, parents as partners, community collaborations, and transition services to the next educational environment. Using these features, NWREL contacted state department of education elementary specialists and professional associations, seeking recommendations for sites that demonstrate promising early childhood practices. These leaders responded enthusiastically, recommending sites which they considered to be demonstrating innovative practices in early childhood education.

A regional survey, which included intensive interviews with 35 educators, was conducted in NWREL's five states. These interviews provided considerable evidence for a strong regional interest in early childhood-related techniques, strategies, and services. Deeply concerned about the readiness of young children to succeed in the educational environment, many were taking active steps in restructuring education toward prevention, rather than remediation, and toward comprehensive approaches to meet the needs of children (Jewett, 1991).

Analysis of the interviews revealed some key factors which have played a powerful role in facilitating the process of restructuring education to include the features of early childhood centers. Leadership and support from state and district levels, as well as principals who provided vision and resources, were considered highly important for the change process. Staff flexibility and willingness to change were considered essential to effective

restructuring. In some cases, principals and other leaders explained that they had to respond to the strong efforts of competent professional staff who have pushed them and their schools to stay abreast of current trends.

In *School-based Early Childhood Centers*, Jewett (1991) discussed the findings from the interviews, concluding:

Early childhood-related school change can result from a number of points of impact, including "top-down" influences that come from broader administrative leadership and policy guidelines, and "bottom-up" influences in which child/family need or teacher interests drive movement towards change. Probably the most successful innovations arise when both types of influences are congruent in pointing the school towards change. Regional efforts can have impact through leadership and policy influences as well as through needs analysis and professionalization (p. 26).

In 1992, based on site interviews, the CFCP selected six Northwest schools for further intensive case study. The sites include:

Centennial Early Childhood Center in Portland, Oregon
Mary Harrison Primary in Toledo, Oregon
Nome Elementary School in Nome, Alaska
Ponderosa Elementary School in Billings Montana
South Colby Elementary School in Port Orchard, Washington
Tendoy Elementary School in Pocatello, Idaho

Each of these schools was involved in restructuring its early childhood/primary elementary services through the use of developmentally appropriate practices and along comprehensive service lines. A panel of educators from each of the six sites reviewed the research synthesis and identified issues associated with the process of restructuring. From these issues, the CFCP then developed a matrix. Using this matrix, the panel of educators rated issues according to importance, difficulty and immediacy in regards to implementing a school-based early childhood center. In addition, the panel identified the strategies which they used to address these concerns. In 1992 NWREL published *Effective Strategies for School-based Early Childhood Centers* (Jewett, 1992). These strategies will be discussed below in the section entitled "The Change Process."

Over the course of three years, representatives from each of the six Northwest sites met periodically to define and discuss the early childhood centers concept, reflect on the changes they were making, and offer their expertise to the group for analysis (Jewett & Katzev, 1993). In refining the concept, Jewett and Katzev kept the four defining features and expanded the concept of developmentally appropriate practice to include classroom curriculum, school context, assessment and outcomes, staff development and participation, and support structures.

Using these eight components, the School-Based Early Childhood Self-Diagnostic Survey (see Appendix A) was designed to help schools assess their progress in the development of early childhood centers. In addition to rating the degree to which their school was implementing the early childhood center elements, participants rated each component as very important, somewhat important, or not important. While all parts of the framework were considered important, elements uniformly rated as very important by participants at all sites included: (a) using developmentally appropriate practices; (b) emphasizing language and literacy; (c) using a variety of authentic assessment techniques; (d) school leadership for innovations; (e) family involvement in children's schooling; (f) school board support for change.

To provide a quick comprehensive look at the type of progress the sites had made, CFCP also developed a matrix, based on the degree of implementation of the various components, from the perspective of the participants (see Appendix B). In 1993, NWREL published *School-based Early Childhood Centers: Secrets of Success From Early Innovators* (Jewett & Katzev, 1993). In this report, they included the findings from the self-diagnostic survey, the matrix, and presented case studies describing the characteristics of the six early childhood centers as they had evolved by early 1993. These case studies were based on at least one site visit by a NWREL representative, including interviews, classroom observations, document review, principal report and interviews, and survey responses.

Although a thorough discussion of the findings documented by NWREL is beyond the scope of this paper, some of the major findings, including strategies used and barriers identified by schools, are presented below.

The Change Process

Staff empowerment and staff decisionmaking were identified unanimously as of crucial importance and critical immediacy in the restructuring process. The establishment of an atmosphere of trust and openness, acceptance, and professionalism was identified as a precursor to the building of a joint vision and commonly accepted philosophy. As one principal observed, "I no longer believe in school restructuring. I believe in changing adults. And adults change when they feel secure and can personally make decisions to do so" (Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

The panel of educators emphasized that the changes involved in systemic early childhood restructuring are so broad that they must be managed, coordinated, and monitored by an effective leader (Jewett, 1992). The leader's role as a buffer to protect staff from too much discouragement and as a motivator were highlighted. Principals who use an "inclusive style," recognizing and nurturing leaderships capabilities among staff members, can help provide continuity of leadership, even when they move on to other schools.

Site-based decisionmaking was seen as highly important in the change process. Although all sites took this decentralized approach seriously, decisions are sometimes counter-

manded at the district or school board level. For example, utilizing a theme-based, integrated curriculum can be difficult when district guidelines for documenting progress are tied to specific criteria in each subject area. Some sites, then, felt that district policies sometimes undermined the implementation of innovative practices.

Opportunities for school personnel to collaborate and work together were considered important by all educators, although actual opportunities for collaboration varied from site to site. A multipronged staff development plan is recommended, which offers staff a diverse menu of options for increased expertise through ongoing inservice training: peer coaching, site visits, consultants, videotapes, attendance of workshops and conferences, and review of literature. In addition, sharing of in-staff expertise through cross-grade dialogue, staff "show and tell," and group celebrations of school success were seen as important features in developing a collegial atmosphere (Jewett, 1992).

Including parents in the development of the restructuring plan is seen as important in establishing supportive school-family partnerships and in easing the change process. One site which originally presented the restructuring plan as a "fait accompli" used meetings, open houses, and parent participation in conferences as a way to "mend fences." However, they believed that the change process would have been smoother if parents and other community members had been included from the beginning (Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Time, Funding, and Facilities

Not surprisingly, administrative support of time for school personnel to pursue staff development and school improvement activities has been identified as a significant factor in the success of restructuring efforts. Although all schools provided some release time for development of a philosophy of early childhood education and for inservice training, inadequate time was mentioned by many sites as an inhibiting factor in effecting change. In many cases, teachers simply donated some portion of their own time to develop and maintain the early childhood center concept (Jewett, 1992; Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Acquiring funding and facilities can also present challenges to the restructuring process. These Northwest innovators demonstrated creativity in solving funding problems. Sites obtained small local grants, recruited and developed relationships with local businesses, and used monies which traditionally went for textbooks and basal readers to purchase developmentally appropriate materials. To facilitate collaboration and implementation of multiage classrooms, some sites obtained funds to knock out permanent walls and replaced them with flexible ones between classrooms. Utilizing unused space was a strategy used by one site to open a family-centered facility. Successful funding acquisition, however, requires time, skill, and resources not always available to public school educators (Jewett & Katzev, 1993). Many schools actually lost funding during the restructuring process, resulting in a reduction of services.

Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice

All six sites demonstrated consistent success in implementing developmentally appropriate practices. All maintained a strong emphasis on language and literacy, using whole language strategies, as well as a thematic approach to curriculum. Mathematics is taught with the aid of a variety of manipulative materials and games, including Addison Wesley's *Explorations*, *Math Their Way*, and *Box It and Bag It*.

All classrooms were structured to enhance cooperation and caring attitudes and used heterogeneous groupings to include children of differing ability levels. A "push-in" model was common, with special services available within the classroom. However, only some sites were able to use multiage groupings. These sites felt that multiage groupings provided opportunities for children to sustain caring relationships with the same teacher and with other children over several years.

All schools recognized the importance of reflecting cultural diversity and nonsexist values in materials and activities. Staff typically reviewed materials carefully, for example, selecting a variety of multicultural dolls, representing both genders for the dramatic play area. In one kindergarten, an antibias curriculum had been adopted. Curriculum is planned to build on cultural diversity by incorporating elements from a multicultural perspective. Parents are encouraged to bring materials and activities to class that address diverse cultural practices. Still, most sites felt that this was an area which needed more attention in the restructuring process (Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Authentic assessments, based on "continuous progress" models were used in all sites. Although a variety of such strategies for assessing progress were used, including portfolios, teacher observation, and report cards which reflect developmental goals, many educators noted the difficulty of documenting children's progress using these methods. Not only is it often hard to explain progress to parents and administrators, but some of the assessment tools were considered cumbersome and time consuming to administer. This lack of user-friendly, as well as child-friendly "continuous assessment" models, was noted by some as a barrier to effectively implementing these practices. This was particularly true in sites in which some parents and staff were concerned that with less teacher-structured curriculum, children might not acquire adequate math and literacy skills.

Lack of congruence between district assessment requirements can create difficulties for implementing developmentally appropriate practices. For example, at one site, a district requirement for standardized testing at the first grade level put pressure on some teachers to "teach to the test." Formalized assessment procedures based on developmentally appropriate practice are clearly needed.

School-Family Partnerships

All sites placed great emphasis on and demonstrated success in encouraging family participation in their children's schooling. Developing partnerships with families often

required a reconceptualization of the relationships between the family and the school. Respecting family strengths in contributing to children's progress, recognizing the importance of the family as the child's first and foremost teacher, and viewing parents as allies, rather than as potential adversaries were themes mentioned by practitioners (Jewett, 1992; Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Strategies for increasing communication, inclusiveness, and mutual understanding included: open houses, newsletters, an "open door" policy in which families and community members are always welcome, flexible event scheduling which does not exclude working parents, telephone "warm lines," positive notes home, and family resource rooms or areas (Jewett, 1992). One school implemented a successful home visiting program. The goals of the program were: (a) to establish a family school partnership between students, parents, and school personnel; (b) for teachers to gain an understanding of each student's interests, abilities, and concerns from the parent perspective; (c) to provide information, answer questions and address parent concerns about the school. However, due to reduced funding, the home visiting program was reduced substantially in 1993 (Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Schools used a number of creative strategies to encourage "short commitments" by busy parents. For example, a monthly "Love, Lunch and Laptime" program was initiated by one program to bring parents to school to eat lunch with their child and participate in a learning activity. One school developed a database of parent resources. The resource directory included parents willing to work in the classroom on reading, writing, dance, craft, storytelling, or to act as volunteers and chaperones at school activities (Jewett, 1992).

Although decisionmaking opportunities for families were viewed as limited, many sites did include parents in school improvement projects, site based management teams, and advisory committees. However, sites reported that when opportunities for participation did exist, only a few parents participated. Schools also reported limited involvement with parenting classes or parent use of library materials. Thus, despite many creative strategies designed to increase parent participation, Jewett and Katzov (1993) concluded that the area of family support and involvement represents the least developed component in the framework.

School-Community Partnerships

All six sites had considerable success in recruiting community members to contribute ideas, resources, and time to the school. Business partnerships have been developed in which corporate or business members "adopt a classroom," eating lunch, or visiting the class regularly. Mentor programs, in which children with particular needs are matched with community members who visit regularly, provide positive role models and assist the students and school in locating needed resources (Jewett & Katzev, 1993).

Coordinated resource teams, combined case management, and co-location of social and educational services were cited as valuable strategies for improved family-centered service integration. In one school, a districtwide "Caring Community" program provided twice-weekly information and service referral meetings. In addition, a program which helped parents obtain a GED was located on the site. In another, a pilot program which utilized a combined case management team to provide integrated services to families in need, ended after funding ran out. In all sites, the development of comprehensive services collaborated through the schools was seen as important but highly difficult (Jewett, 1992). No sites had developed strategies which successfully linked schools to community service providers in a long-term collaborative effort.

Transition Services

Educators stressed the importance of enhanced relationships between preschool and school staff in easing transitions between programs. Preparation, information, and site-to-site visits were cited as important strategies. In one school which serves a broad area and incorporates a number of Native American children who must come to stay in town in order to attend school, each child is assigned an "auntie" or "uncle" from the bilingual specialist staff who is able to speak the child's dialect and serves as a special friend.

When preschool providers were onsite, staff members were likely to share information and inservice training opportunities. Communication with community preschool providers was less frequent. Whereas extended day care services were available to all sites, the child care program was typically operated by a community provider and coordination with the school site was limited (Jewett & Katzev, 1993). Lack of release time for child care staff was cited as the major barrier to increased collaboration among staff members.

Current Findings

In the fourth year, the CFPCP visited several of the participating sites to gather additional information on their progress. Principals and teachers in four schools participated in the visits and answered questions about overall school goals, level of implementation of each of the early childhood components, and successful strategies. Although all sites reported that considerable progress has been made in implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, establishing partnerships with families and with the community continues to be challenging. Time and resources to work collaboratively continue to be in short supply; reductions in funding are the rule rather than the exception. In addition, most sites continue to have questions regarding the match between developmentally appropriate assessments and the requirements and expectations of the district.

According to those interviewed, staff attrition and transition to other positions greatly affects the change process. This is particularly true when principals, who can encourage change and support staff with the changes, move to other positions. One participant recommended that other people in leadership, such as superintendents and lead teachers,

should be mentored in order that the philosophy and concept will continue to be supported.

In summary, in the four years of implementing the early childhood center concept, all sites have been able to make systematic changes in curriculum, in working with families and the community, and in providing continuity for children as they move from one school program to another. Participating educators identified these areas as needing research and development:

- Training and materials for gender and cultural appropriateness
- Resources for implementing assessment practices which are authentic and encourage appropriate participation by children and families
- Resources for new strategies for communicating with and empowering families
- Models for collaborating with community service providers

Following is a discussion of these findings, using current research to aid the analysis.

DISCUSSION

We are in the midst of a growing national crisis. Families are increasingly unable to raise children who are "ready" for schools and schools are said to be unready for children. According to a 1991 survey of kindergarten teachers by the Carnegie Foundation, more than a third of the 3.5 million children who enter the nation's public schools each year are not ready to participate successfully (Boyer, 1991). Greene (1992) points out, "That's more than a million kids predestined for failure *every year*" (p. 4).

"What we find so shocking is that such a high number of kindergarten students come to school educationally, socially and emotionally not well prepared," writes Boyer. Although many children will gain the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, many will not. As children experience an ever-widening gap between their skills and school expectations, they may experience a pervasive sense of failure that eventually leads to dropping out of school. The "high cost of rotten outcomes" (Schorr, 1988) is reflected in increased drug use, crime, child maltreatment, unemployment, homelessness, and large numbers of hopeless people who have "nothing left to lose."

During the last 20 years, vast economic and demographic changes have resulted in increased economic hardship and stress for many families and an accompanying pressure on schools to increase our nation's competitiveness in a global economy. The growing crisis has spawned a number of proposed solutions, including welfare proposals which have the potential to leave millions of children and families destitute, severe cuts to children's programs such as Head Start, and "back to basics" school reform, which would reduce even further the school's link to families and communities. Many educators, however, recognizing that neither families nor schools can do it alone, are advocating for increased collaboration between schools, families, community service providers, businesses, and universities to help offset the deterioration of our economic and social fabric.

There is growing recognition that fostering "readiness" for kindergarten and for succeeding educational environments will require addressing the strengths and needs of the whole child. The National Education Goals Panel endorsed a complex, multifaceted definition of readiness, which includes physical well-being and motor development, social competence, approaches toward learning, language and literacy, cognitive development, and general knowledge (NEGP, 1992). This comprehensive definition requires a new approach to schooling, one which includes a shared responsibility for children's development and "will likely permanently alter the school's relationship with families and communities" (Kagan, 1992, p. 8).

The early childhood center concept reflects this comprehensive definition of restructuring. Jewett and Katzev (1993) observed:

The findings from this review suggest that successful restructuring efforts must occur simultaneously in a number of components in order for changes to accumulate into a systemic and sustained effort. The six sites under study made systematic changes in classroom, grouping and assessment practices, developed new approaches to staff development and leadership, altered their relationships with families and community members and organizations and created new linkages with preschool service providers. They learned a great deal about the change processes and politics involved with public school change. Their challenges and problems can offer useful information to others just embarking on such efforts (p. 11).

Educators who participated in this project demonstrated a strong commitment to restructuring their classrooms to better meet the needs of children and families. Their experience with the change process reinforces findings from other restructuring efforts, in particular, the caveat that effective change is a developmental process which takes time and preparation. As Newman (1993) notes:

Belief systems cannot be changed by unilateral imposition or by the simple replacement of an old belief with a new one. Instead beliefs change through dialogue that stimulates open, non-threatening questioning and testing of basic assumptions through exposure to new experiences. Unless teachers themselves conclude that a given change ought to be tried, they are unlikely to invest in making it work. (p. 8).

Teachers and parents, then, ideally should be involved at all levels of the change process. They should be encouraged to bring their own values and personal meaning to implementing the change process, building on their own experiences and knowledge in an atmosphere which is psychologically safe (Espinosa, 1992). In other words, these findings suggest that developmentally appropriate practice is applicable to adults as well as children.

Shared Decisionmaking

Facilitating the change process at all sites was a strong belief in shared decisionmaking. Just as the role of the teacher in developmentally appropriate practice has changed from dispenser of knowledge to children to "co-constructor" of knowledge with children, the role of the principal is evolving from direct instructional leadership to the role of facilitator, "leader of leaders," liaison to the outside world, and orchestrator of decisionmaking (Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994). This change is part of the trend toward site-based management, which decentralizes control, transferring it from district offices to individual schools.

In a decentralized system, with "every tub on its own bottom" (Goodlad, 1984), schools are empowered to make decisions, tailoring them to the particular needs of students. According to Goodlad, in a well-functioning system, authority is decentralized but schools

are linked to a hub--the district office--and to each other in a network: "The ship is not alone on an uncharted sea, cut off from supplies and communication. But neither are decisions for the welfare of those on the ship the prerogative of persons in the hub or in charge of other ships" (p. 277).

All sites evinced a commitment to site-based management. However, as discussed earlier, educators who participated in this project described a number of incidents in which rules and regulations from the district office countermanded site decisions regarding curriculum and assessment, undermining the implementation of innovative practices. Thus, as Jewett (1991) noted, "Rigid adherence to a mode of equipping, documenting, and implementing curriculum can impede the development of early childhood practices" (p. 27). It seems clear that effective educational change requires restructuring at all levels of the educational system.

Implementing DAP

Sites demonstrated consistent progress in implementing developmentally appropriate practices. Classroom structure and teaching styles reflect the goal of providing an integrated approach to learning in an interactive, collaborative environment (Shoemaker, 1989). Site visits and interviews made it clear that Eisner's (1991) admonition to schools to "develop an ethic of caring and creating a community that cares" (p. 16) was a top priority. Yet, a common theme in this study was the lack of time and resources for staff development and training. Because most teachers have little prior training in developmentally appropriate practice, this work must be done "on the job." To make needed curriculum changes, schools need resources to support ongoing inservice training.

Class size was another area of concern for most sites. The actual size of classes and the corresponding child-adult ratio is rated as only slightly supportive of achieving desired outcomes for children. Because of the strong correlation between low child-adult ratios and desirable outcomes for children, this is an area which needs attention at the state and national level. We cannot continue to hold teachers and schools accountable for children's learning when adequate funding is not provided.

In some sites, doubts continued as to the efficacy of developmentally appropriate practice for efficiently promoting skill acquisition. These doubts were particularly evident in the area of standardized assessment, where concern was expressed that children in such programs may not "measure up" to children in more structured programs. Proponents of developmentally appropriate practice believe that authentic assessments, such as teacher observations and examples of children's work over time, provide a more meaningful picture of children's development than standardized test results. Many educators lament our "obsessive preoccupation with standardized tests" (Goodman, 1986), our "paranoia over test scores," (Elkind, 1991), and our "love affair with scientific quantitative psychology" (Becker, 1983).

However, some educators advise that until appropriate, meaningful program assessment and accountability procedures are developed, "prudent educators cannot afford to seek success in terms other than those measured by standardized tests" (Schweinhart & Hohmann, 1992, p. 16). Espinosa (1992) observed about a successful school restructuring effort that she directed, "When the top administrators who had initiated the change to more developmentally appropriate practices left, it was not our theories and our good intentions that protected the primary program, it was the positive results of our evaluation study" (p. 165).

The Work Sampling System (Meisels, 1992) is a performance assessment system that offers an alternative to product-oriented, group-administered achievement tests in preschool through grade three. It consists of three complementary components: (a) developmental checklists that guide teacher observations with specific criteria and well-defined procedures (b) portfolios, and (c) summary reports, which provide year-end comparative and aggregate data. Engel (1993) concludes that supportive, child-friendly, and learning-enhancing measures can also produce aggregate data for accountability to the public. Field testing of such instruments, as well as more research, is needed to provide teachers and parents with meaningful and effective assessment practices.

Schools and Cultural Diversity

According to legend, Henry Ford periodically staged a ceremony to celebrate "the great American melting pot." In the ceremony, newly arrived immigrant employees, dressed in their ethnic attire, walked behind a large caldron. When they emerged on the other side, dressed in their new company-provided overalls, they symbolically disposed of their ethnic clothing in the caldron.

Mass public education, it has been argued, was instituted and continues to be shaped by the perceived needs of the work place. The need for a well-disciplined, homogeneous, semiliterate work force to "man" the factories and assembly lines is giving way to the need for a very different kind of employee. The employee of the 21st century, unlike Henry Ford's ideal, is expected to be adept at problem-solving, critical thinking, conflict resolution, and to exhibit cross-cultural competence. Paralleling this shift is a move away from the ideal of equality as a synonym for sameness. Rather, we are exhorted not only to tolerate diversity, but to celebrate it.

Practicing this new pedagogy is, of course, easier said than done. The educators who participated in this study made it clear that implementing a culturally sensitive and inclusive curriculum is a complex, highly difficult, and even unsettling process, one in which, in Geertz's (1973) words, you strongly suspect that "you are not quite getting it right." Despite using numerous strategies to include culturally diverse perspectives, all sites expressed a need for more training and materials in this area.

It is obvious that cultural sensitivity cannot mean knowing everything there is to know about every culture that is represented in a population to be served. In fact, such an

attempt may lead to stereotyping children and families as “the Navajo family” or “the Korean family,” when these families may lie on different points of their cultural continuum, from traditional to bi-cultural (Anderson & Fenichel, 1989). Bowers and Flinders (1990) argue that cultural literacy means the “ability to recognize (make explicit) and reconceptualize the taken-for-granted cultural patterns that would otherwise dictate thought and social action” (p. 102).

Cultural literacy, in this view, begins with self-reflection and with the understanding that what one may assume is objective knowledge is an historically and culturally specific way of thinking. Facilitating cross-cultural competence, then, entails helping students “recognize the deep underpinnings of the dominant culture, as well as the deep patterns of others” (Bowers & Flinders, 1990, p. 124).

The difficulties, both practical and philosophical, involved in changing the role of teacher from “dispenser of knowledge” to teacher as ethnographer, epistemologist, and anthropologist (New, 1994) are daunting. The difficulties are compounded by the pressing need of administrative bodies and the public for accountability. “Producing” the ideal employee and citizen of the 21st century may require a post-modernist approach (Elkind, 1994). Our educational system remains solidly based on positivist assumptions of objectivity, rationality, and efficiency. Reducing this mismatch by developing kinder, gentler ways to measure student progress, at the same time satisfying the need for accountability, is essential for the successful adoption of developmentally appropriate practice by public schools.

Parent/School/Community Partnerships

Another problematic area for all sites was parent involvement. Although all of the participating educators expressed a strong interest in including parents in their children’s education and had developed a number of creative strategies for doing so, no site felt that it had achieved its goal of active participation of a substantial number of parents. Given the confusion in the field of early childhood education regarding parent participation, particularly parental involvement in decisions about program operation (Powell, 1994), it is not surprising that this component of the early childhood centers was one of the least developed.

As the field moves toward an inclusive and empowering approach, the parent-school relationship becomes more ambiguous. Just as children are no longer looked at as blank slates, parents are no longer looked at as “empty vessels waiting to be filled with professional expertise” (Weiss, 1987). It is recognized that parents have a wealth of knowledge which can add to the school learning environment. However, Weissbourg (1987) cautions that parent-school partnerships do not mean that professionals should abdicate the professional role. She suggests that parents be viewed as experts about their own particular child and cultural environment, while professionals contribute broad expertise in and knowledge of their field. She points out that while teachers and other service providers must “monitor tendencies to be judgmental, controlling, or overly

didactic, they must now also monitor tendencies to be too laissez-faire or value free" (p. 257).

In addition to ambiguity concerning new roles, a number of practical factors identified earlier make the goal of active parent participation in their children's education elusive: parents' hectic schedules, lack of teacher time to form partnerships, and lack of teacher training in working with families. Yet because of the high correlation between a child's learning and the involvement of his or her family (*The Oregonian*, 1994), effective strategies to encourage involvement, particularly for "hard to reach" parents, are needed.

Perhaps the most powerful form of parental involvement occurs when parents are actively engaged with the child at home in ways that lead to optimal development. Because it is now widely understood that parents are the child's first and most essential teacher, encouraging and supporting parents in this role can have a positive effect on children's learning. The U. S. Department of Education report, Strong Families, Strong Schools concluded that, in addition to providing a language-rich environment, the single most important parental activity for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (*The Oregonian*, 1994).

Respecting and strengthening families by building strong parent/school/community partnerships was seen by all participants as important but highly difficult. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective (1979), Sameroff and Chandler's transactional model (1975), and family systems theory all emphasize the interrelatedness and mutual influence of interacting individual, family, and societal systems. It has become axiomatic that if we want healthy communities, we need healthy families and children. As early as 1974, Bronfenbrenner argued that in order for early intervention to be effective, parents need ecological intervention in the form of family support systems.

Yet this paradigm shift has made little difference in our service delivery system. Based on a deficit model, the system remains fragmented, rigidly categorical, and crisis oriented, responding only to a clearly diagnosed problem, typically when it has gone unattended for too long (Farrow & Joe, 1992). Unlike many countries which provide an array of family support services that benefit poor and nonpoor alike, our country created a distinction between social insurance, such as social security, and public assistance or welfare. This policy, in turn, leads to a distinction between worthy and nonworthy poor, creating stigma for anyone in need of assistance and "guaranteeing just enough support that they can't really make it" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In addition, the tradition of separating education from other government institutions has created a school culture that is often self-contained, detached, and insular (Usdan, 1994). Because of these conditions, it is, as Behrman (1992) cautions, "impossible to overestimate the difficulty of establishing true collaborations" among these highly specialized systems. Crowson and Boyd (1992) note that interagency efforts to collaborate on integrating services "routinely face a string of obstacles such as the ubiquitous problems of institutional deficiencies, professional training differences, resource

constraints, communication gaps, authority, and ‘turf problems.’” Given these formidable impediments, it is not surprising that no site had developed a long-term collaboration with community service providers to provide comprehensive services to children and families.

There is reason, however, to be hopeful. The educational and social service literature abound with language that reflects a holistic approach, including relationship, shared meaning, shared responsibility and authority, reciprocity, nurturing, collaboration, cultural diversity, cooperation, community, “felt” meaning, and the social construction of knowledge. These words provide a sharp contrast to the language of the isolated, rational individual, who pulls himself up by his bootstraps, the “paddle my own canoe” mentality, upon which our legal, educational, and social service delivery system often are based.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that if children are to grow to be socially competent adults who "live well, love well, and expect well" (Werner and Smith, 1982), schools must join with parents and service providers to create a system which reflects what we know about how children learn and develop. Kagan (1991) asserts that nothing short of a basic restructuring, both within the school and in the school's relationship with parents and communities, will enable social institutions to deal with rapidly increasing social problems.

Early childhood education, with its philosophy of caring, inclusion, parent/teacher partnerships, shared responsibility for teaching, learning, and decisionmaking, and above all a willingness to question and reflect on its practices and beliefs, is in a unique position to lead the way toward such a radical restructuring. Early childhood centers, with their comprehensive approach to education and service delivery for children four through eight, can help schools become a community of learners and communities places where learning can happen.

NEXT STEPS

The Child, Family and Community Program is revising its technical assistance plans to respond to the findings presented in this report. There is a continuing need for assistance in the areas of models for home/school/community partnerships and resources for implementing assessment practices which are authentic and which also produce aggregate data for accountability to the public. Research is needed to determine if the lack of authentic assessment instruments is a barrier to the successful implementation of developmentally appropriate practices. NWREL will work with schools to identify and field-test alternative assessment instruments and strategies.

Both a review of the literature and interviews with Northwest educators strongly indicate that children's and families' needs can best be met through a continuum of family-centered, comprehensive, and integrated services. NWREL, in partnership with the nine other laboratories, has developed a document, *Continuity in Early Childhood: A Framework for Home, School, and Community Linkages*, to provide a framework that defines the key elements and their indicators of continuity in early childhood. This document will be disseminated to all partnership sites and state officers.

In addition, NWREL will work with sites to identify barriers to collaboration with families and community service providers, as well as to identify and document effective collaborative strategies. Efforts are now under way to develop training modules to address the need for effective home/school/community partnerships. The early childhood centers project will work in partnership with previously identified sites and identify new sites which are in the process of restructuring their programs to better meet the needs of children and families.

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APPENDIX A

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
School-Based Early Childhood Centers
Self Diagnostic Survey

School Name _____

Date _____

Role in relation to school:

Age level you work with in relation to school:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-primary (0-5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary (6-8 yrs.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate (9-12 yrs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Rate each item in two ways:

In our school:
 A = Applies Completely
 B = Applies Mostly
 C = Applies Partly
 D = Applies Slightly
 E = Does Not Apply
 F = Don't Know

I believe this is:
 1 = Very Important
 2 = Somewhat Important
 3 = Not Important

	A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3
In this school. . . .									
1. Children have opportunities to make and act on significant decisions regarding classroom and school life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Classroom and school practices are adapted according to the age- and individually appropriate needs of the children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Classrooms have a strong emphasis on language development and the successful emergence of literacy skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Curriculum content is integrated and learning activities are thematically related.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Cultural diversity and nonsexist values are consistently reflected in a variety of age appropriate materials and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The special and diverse needs of all children, including those with disabilities, are responded to within the "regular" classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Class groupings afford children regular opportunities to interact in mixed-age groupings consistently over time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3
8. Classes are appropriately sized with an age-appropriate adult-child ratio for fostering the outcomes identified by our school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Classrooms use inclusive groupings and afford all children in our school regular opportunities to work with a broad range of peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We provide opportunities for continuity of caring relationships between and among children and adults which are sustained for more than one school year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. We offer comprehensive services to children, including provisions and support for their health, nutrition, safety, and extended care needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Children actively participate in and reflect on assessment practices related to their school progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. We identify and monitor the progress of children towards desired, clearly identified outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Our desired outcomes are designed to set high expectations for every child in our school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Staff utilize a variety of assessment techniques which are based on clearly stated goals/outcomes and which provide a balanced, holistic and authentic understanding of each child's progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3
16. We use and periodically refine a written statement regarding our educational philosophy, which includes information about our shared values and expectations about the school's purpose, function, and the range of acceptable practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. School staff working with children up through the age of eight have demonstrated professional qualifications (training and experience) in the field of early childhood development and education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Ongoing and diverse opportunities for staff inservice regarding early childhood education and development are consistently available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Opportunities for collaboration among school staff to develop and broaden expertise in the field of early childhood education are offered regularly every year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. School staff exercise professional flexibility and are willing to attempt to change their practice when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Staff participate in site-based decisionmaking regarding program components which will have an effect on their classroom practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Standards for teacher evaluations are consistent with the goals, philosophy and identified practices being implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. We have adequate resources for making the changes needed in our program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. We have time to prepare for and implement desired innovations in our school practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3
25. Leadership processes in our school are strong and supportive of the efforts we are making to provide high quality service to children and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Family and community members have regular and meaningful opportunities to contribute ideas and resources to classroom curriculum content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Family members are expected and encouraged to become involved in their child(ren)'s education at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. We offer comprehensive support to families through parent education, family support services, and linkages to needed human services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Broad-based decision-making opportunities are afforded to families to contribute to program design and operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Collaborative relationships exist with other human service providers and our school participates in integrative "case management" efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. We actively solicit broad and representative participation in school decision-making from community members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Community members contribute ideas, resources and time to school and classroom processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Frequent and regular communication flow into and out of the school is maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3
34. We have the support from the school board and the community to make changes which the school community identifies as being needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Established relationships encourage sharing of information and professional development opportunities between school staff and preschool service providers sending children into the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. We play an active role in providing and/or supporting the provision of preschool services to the preschoolers who will enter our primary program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. School staff work collaboratively across age levels to articulate curriculum processes and ease transitions for children in developmentally appropriate ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. School staff assist families in making transitions into, through, and out of the primary program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
IA. Classroom Curriculum						
Classroom practices reflect both the age and individual needs of children	Applying	Applying	Applying	Developing	Applying	Developing
Curriculum content is integrated and learning activities thematically related	Developing	Applying	Applying	Developing	Applying	Developing
Children actively involved in learning and decision-making	Applying	Applying	Developing	Applying	Applying	Applying
Strong emphasis on language development and the successful emergence of literacy skills	Applying	Applying	Applying	Developing	Applying	Developing
Gender and culturally appropriate materials and practices	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	None	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
IB. School Context						
Classrooms structured to include children of differing abilities and backgrounds	Applying	Applying	Applying	Applying	Applying	Applying
Opportunities for children of differing ages to learn together	Developing	Applying	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Continuity of caring relationships among children and adults sustained for more than one school year	Emerging	Applying	Emerging	Emerging	Applying	Emerging
School support services for children and families	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
IC. Assessment & Outcomes						
Opportunities for children to participate in assessment of own progress	Developing	Developing	Applying	Developing	Applying	Developing
Opportunities for parents to participate in assessment of children's progress	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Expectations established, to insure each child experiences success and accomplishment	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
Authentic assessment techniques used to monitor each child's progress on regular basis	Developing	Applying	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Notre	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
ID. Staff Development and Participation						
Staff involved in development of mission and philosophy statement	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Consistent opportunities for inservice on developmentally appropriate practices	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Opportunities fo. staff members to work together and collaborate	Applying	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Staff flexible and willing to try new approaches	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
IE. Support Structures						
Opportunities for site-based decision-making	Applying	Applying	Developing	Emerging	Applying	Emerging
Standards for performance evaluations supportive of developmentally appropriate practices	Applying	Applying	Applying	Applying	Developing	Developing
Adequate resources for making needed changes	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Adequate time for planning, collaboration, and implementation	Developing	Developing	Applying	Emerging	Developing	Emerging
Supportive leadership for innovations	Applying	Developing	Developing	Developing	Applying	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
II. Family Involvement and Support						
Opportunities for families to contribute to curriculum design & implementation	Developing	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Emerging
Family involvement in children's education at school	Developing	Developing	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Developing
Families supported through education and comprehensive services	Developing	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Emerging
Decision-making opportunities for families	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Emerging

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
III. Community Involvement and Support						
Community agencies and institutions linked into accessible network of resources	Developing	Developing	Developing	Emerging	Emerging	Applying
Opportunities for community members to participate in school decision-making	Developing	Developing	Applying	Applying	Emerging	Emerging
Community members contribute ideas, resources, and time to school	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Applying
School board and community supportive of changes	Applying	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Developing

Analysis of Components by Site

Component	Centennial	Mary Harrison	Nome	Ponderosa	South Colby	Tendoy
IV. School-based Preschool-to-School Transition Services						
Provision of preschool services on-site or in collaboration with providers	Applying	Applying	Applying	Applying	Emerging	Emerging
Preschool providers and school staff share information and inservice training	Applying	Applying	Applying	Emerging	Developing	Developing
Curriculum coordinated across preschool and school programs	Applying	Developing	Applying	Developing	Emerging	Emerging
Comprehensive child care coordinated through school	Applying	Applying	Developing	Emerging	Applying	Developing
School staff assist children and families in making transitions into and across school levels	Developing	Applying	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing



NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

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The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) provides leadership, expertise, and services of the highest quality, based on research and development, for systemic changes which result in improvement of educational outcomes for children, youth, and adults in schools and communities throughout the region.

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