

# Early Childhood Education and Care

Pacific Union Conference

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## Playtime Is Over

I realize that most of us do not have a kindergarten class in our CDC, but when I found this article I had to share it with you. I have only included a few paragraphs for the purpose of provoking some thought. The full article can be found at <http://www.teachermagazine.org>.

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"With academic expectations for young pupils rising across the country, homework is becoming a routine part of the kindergarten experience, though teachers often try to balance policies requiring take-home assignments at all grade levels with creative approaches for their youngest students. According to a study released last fall by the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, the amount of time spent on homework has jumped significantly for 6- to 8-year-olds, many of whom are kindergartners. The researchers attributed the jump—from about 52 minutes a week in 1981 to more than two hours a week in 1997—to a strengthened emphasis, in the early grades, on learning to read.

"It's a way to involve the parents in what's going on in the classroom," says Wendy Kennar, a teacher at Rosewood Elementary School in the 740,000-student Los Angeles Unified School District. Kennar, who has taught kindergarten for three years, argues that aside from academic skills, homework teaches children the responsibility of taking something out of their folders when they get home and making sure the work gets back to school on time. Another kindergarten teacher at Rosewood, Schyler Anaya, points out that the assigned worksheets are simply meant to reinforce lessons that were taught in class, such as practicing writing a certain letter or drawing straight lines. And, she says, the work is never expected to take more than 15 or 20 minutes to complete.

"Many experts in early childhood education say that homework in kindergarten is not a yes-or-no issue. After all, reading to a child each night could be considered homework and has been shown to contribute to reading

success later on, says Marilou Hyson, the associate executive director for professional development at the National Association for the Education of Young Children. What's important, Hyson says, is that the tasks are relevant to what's happening in class and that children still have time to interact with their families after school.

"Like Los Angeles and many other districts, the 438,500-student Chicago school system has a policy requiring homework in every grade.

"With expectations rising for students at all grade levels, Hyson of the NAEYC says she understands the pressure teachers are under to help children meet state and district standards. But in kindergarten, she adds, it's important that children move forward in school with enthusiasm and that they are "engaged and curious." "The way to get ready to do hours of homework in 9th grade," Hyson says, "is not to do hours of homework in kindergarten." - by Linda Jacobson, *Teacher Magazine*, May 2004

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Allow me to draw some conclusions here. No Child Left Behind is about federal monies. It is imperative that state governments find a way to ensure that public school students are linguistically and scholastically able to adequately perform on standardized tests. Not only have public schools begun mandating homework at every grade level including kindergarten, but one of the most favored options is for the state to start educating children at a younger age than five which means taking them away from their parents during their formative years (See Legislative Watch section on page 3).

Keep in mind, the largest and most influential organization backing these kind of initiatives is none other than NAEYC—the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This is very disappointing since NAEYC has historically been a family friendly organization. We are indeed in the last days of earth's history. I encourage you to cling to the mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to our young children and



# Director Highlight

Mary Lou Aukee, Rainbow

Bishop, CA

Mary Lou Aukee is the soon-to-retire director of Rainbow Connection Preschool and Kindergarten in Bishop, California. Mary Lou's introduction into the world of early childhood education began 18 years ago with (would you believe) Stella Leonard and Faye Knecht (a cousin of Dr. Marilyn Beach).



As Mary Lou tells the story, Stella was a teacher at a Nazarene child development center and somehow talked her into cooking lunches for the center; an initiation rite that lasted for about a year. A few years after this, Faye asked Mary Lou to help her devise a way for the elementary school to raise money. Mary Lou suggested a well-run preschool could be beneficial as a feeder for the school, so she, Faye, Stella, and Carol Timmerman began the licensing process and the Rainbow Connection Preschool and Kindergarten was opened in 1984 with Stella as the initial director and Mary Lou, Faye, and Carol as teachers.



After a year at Rainbow Connection, Mary Lou moved away. Apparently, though, the draw to Bishop was strong because in 1988 she returned to the center as a teacher under the

direction of Beverly Hill. The Lord blessed their efforts and in 1993, Beverly retired leaving Mary Lou to be director, a post she will continue to hold until the summer of 2004. Fortunately, Mary Lou is planning to continue working part time at Rainbow Connection, a testimony to the dedication and love that she has for her program and families.

Under Mary Lou's direction, the center has held true to its mission of providing children with a Christ-centered early childhood education that leads many of the chil-

dren into the Bishop SDA Elementary school. The center's aesthetic appeal is enhanced by orderly



classrooms, a large play yard, children's vegetable garden, pet chickens and three rabbits. Bishop itself is nestled within a picturesque mountain range, providing the beauty and peace of a country lifestyle.

Leadership change is always difficult, at least to some degree, but Mary Lou has chosen a capable and considerate understudy in Kathy Peterson who will assume the duties of a teaching director as well as a family witness for Jesus Christ. Praise God for the many faithful years of service that Mary Lou has given to young children and their families. May He continue to bless her through the coming years.



***Parents and teachers should teach the children that God is their heavenly Father, that His love is expressed to them in the gift of His only-begotten Son... If these lessons are presented in love and tenderness, they will leave a lasting impression upon the minds and hearts of the youth.***

***- Counsels on Sabbath School Work, p. 107***

# For Your Information

## Focus on Dramatic Play

Imaginary play is an important means of learning among preschool-age children. Because it holds such a rich potential for promoting children's cognitive, linguistic, social, and physical development, high-quality preschool programs view play as a key element of the curriculum. Here are a few ideas to help enhance your center's developmentally appropriate program.

### Camping/Fishing

Canteen, flashlight, rope, tent, knapsack, food, cooking and eating equipment, binoculars, nature books, camera, compass and maps, life jackets, sleeping bag, grill, plastic plates and cups, pancake turner, raincoats, backpacks, cooler, tent, fishing hat, toy fishing pole, kettles and fry pan, minnow net, minnow bucket, fishing "pond".

### Millinery Shop

Hats, mirrors, veils, feathers, boxes, play money, cash register, hat making materials.

### Cleaning Kit

Several brooms, mops, sponge mops, dust cloths, sponges and paper towels, vacuum, dust pan, scrub pail, plastic spray bottles with water in them, clothes to wash, plastic basin, clothesline and clothes pins.

### Painter

Caps, coveralls, brushes, sponges, rollers, buckets and water.

### Construction Center

Blue prints, order forms, signs, carpenter's apron, Styrofoam pieces, blocks, egg cartons, lumber pieces, small wheels, cloth measuring tape, nails, hammer, screws, screwdriver, boards with drilled holes so children can put nails or screws into them, pliers, carpenter pencils, graph paper, etc... And close teacher supervision!

### Office

Telephone book, typewriters, adding machine, telephones, envelopes, paper stamps, ink stamps, desks and chairs, pens, rulers, pencils, tape, clock, ledgers, erasers, notepads or three ring binders filled with paper, business cards made from recipe cards.

### Sanitary Engineer

Clean garbage cans or sacks for "garbage," "recyclables," "yard waste," and wagons for transporting cans/sacks to appropriate areas. Great for an outdoor activity during *Caring for the Environment* week.

## Miscellaneous Info.

### Available for the asking

The PUC Office of Education has been given several cases of 3-ring binders of different widths and colors. We would be happy to send some to you, for free. Just let us know what color, width, and how many. Contact Joy at (805) 497-9457 x 302.

### Information Sharing

Included with this newsletter is a Growth and Development wheel from Children's Home Society of California. They are free, 50 per order, at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

Also included is some fundraiser information that the PU-COE received from Common Threads. *No endorsement should be implied.*

## Legislative Watch

Some items we are watching for you are:

### California

S.B. 1343 Senator Escutia: **Master Plan for Infant and Toddler Care** - would expand and encourage funding of state controlled day care, undermining parental rights and intruding upon the jurisdiction of the family.

**UPK** - has been pulled from the November 2004 ballot, but expect to see it again in the near future. Currently, there is talk about UPK being under the CA Dept. of Ed. with certified teachers and no licensing requirements. Stay tuned...

### Hawaii

HB 2208/ SB 2716 — The purpose of this Act would be to authorize the Hawaii Council of Private Schools to license the preschools of private elementary schools already licensed as elementary schools by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools. The department plan for quality early education would focus on children from ages four up to six years.

—[http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessioncurrent/bills/hb2208\\_.htm](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessioncurrent/bills/hb2208_.htm)

## Dates to Remember...

May 4	Teacher Appreciation Day
<b>May 12</b>	<b>SECC Director's Meeting</b>
July 8	CDC Advisory Meeting
Oct. 14	CDC Board Meeting
Nov. 10	Union Board of Education Meeting
Nov. 10-13	NAEYC Annual Conf., Anaheim, CA
Nov. 10, 12 & 13	ACCN Annual Meeting, Networking and Worship, Anaheim, CA



# F.Y.I., continued...

## Licensing Updates

### Arizona

In 2004, Arizona will work with private childcare providers and government agencies to establish a quality childcare rating system, identify tools and resources to meet standards of quality, and prepare information for parents to adequately evaluate those centers.—*JOURNAL OF THE SENATE, January 12, 2004*

### California

CCLD fees have increased significantly and will increase by a third every year for the next three years. All licensing forms and regulations are on the internet now and centers are expected to access them since printed copies will no longer be available. You can obtain your licensing forms and regulations from [www.cclد.ca.gov](http://www.cclد.ca.gov). Most importantly, licensing is now more enforcement oriented rather than correctional support oriented, which will result in the more frequent revocation of licenses and center closures. (In other words, it is now **dangerous** to ask licensing to “write up” the center to force the board to act on an issue!)—*Ventura County Child Care Planning Council, July, 27, 2004*

### Hawaii

No new updates.

### Nevada

No new updates.

### Utah

No new updates.



New reading center at Parkwood Christian Preschool in Modesto, CA, where stories come to life.

**Everything leaves its impression upon the youthful mind... - *Child Guidance*, p. 482**

## Preschoolers Celebrate Black History Month

Sunday, February 22, 2004, Parkwood Christian Preschool of Modesto, CA concluded their observance of black history month by dressing up and parading in traditional



African customs. Each of them played instruments and sang songs such as “When the Saints Go Marching In” and “Kum-Ba-Yah”. Each preschooler stood up with a microphone and recited “I have a dream” and then in their own words shared some of their dreams. A dinner banquet on the grounds of Modesto Parkwood Seventh-day Adventist Church followed.

During the month of February, Eva Dotson, preschool teacher/director read stories of famous black people who contributed to their people and society. A few of those highlighted were Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Dr. Charles Drew, and Dr. Martin Luther King. The children also learned about President Abraham Lincoln’s role in providing freedom for black slaves.

One may wonder if young preschool children are capable of understanding these stories. When asked if teaching them about black history was premature for young children, Mrs. Dotson responded, “Absolutely not. There are simple lessons children can learn from stories of people like Dr. King.” In fact, one book by Jean Manzollo entitled *Happy Birthday Martin Luther King* was written specifically with preschoolers and kindergarteners in mind. Mrs. Dotson believes that books and stories along with dedicated teachers can teach simple truths about people like Martin Luther King and his emphasis on equality. Often, children absorb a lot more information and are capable of learning much more than adults give them credit for; their abilities are greatly underestimated.

Parkwood Christian Preschool in Modesto emphasizes a positive nurturing environment with the simple idea that learning is fun, repetitive, and hands-on. The children daily experience the truth that whether one is “red, yellow, black, or white,” we are all special in the eyes of God and that He created all human beings as equals, therefore, we should love one another as God loves us.