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Karen: Hello, greetings everyone. This is Karen Shanoski. I'm based the Center for Schools and Communities with the Parents as Teachers State Office For Pennsylvania. We’re excited to be with you this afternoon for a special webinar about parents as teachers and the early learning standards and the crosswalk that we’ve created between the standards and the curricula that is used with Parents as Teachers.

I'm joined today by two experts in the field. I'm really excited to be able to have them present some information. I’ll be with you just a few moments. I just want to let you know that Mary Anne Ollie from OCDEL, from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, with responsibility for early learning standards as part of the PDE part of OCDEL is with us, and Christine Ferado from the Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center is also with us today.

As I introduce them, they’ll tell you a little bit about themselves and their connection with this work. At this point, I wanted to ask all of you to think about participating through asking questions or through the chat box and also to let us know in what way you’re using the standards. We’re going to talk about that in just a moment. You received the affiliates, the PAT affiliates, recently received a box that had a package about the early learning standards. It contained a continuum document, the infant and toddler standards, pre-kindergarten standards and kindergarten. That continuum document is pretty interesting. I'm going to refer to that later.

At this point, I would like to ask us to conduct a poll. I hope I told you all of that. What is your role? Are you a parent educator, a supervisor or do you have another role in your work with parents as teachers? If you could respond now to the poll that’s on your page we will have a tally in just a few moments. Please select parent educator, supervisor or another role.

Mike, when you think our votes are in, if you could present the results that would be great. We have mostly, almost 60% of the participants today are parent educators. We do have nearly a third of the participants are supervisors, and some of you have other roles within parents as teachers and the work that you’re conducting. Thank you.

I’d be interested if through the chat box you can share what some of those other positions are. That would be great to hear from you.

The purpose of today’s webinar is to really introduce more formally this alignment with the early learning standards. I mentioned the infant-toddler, the pre-kindergarten, the kindergarten and the continuum itself. We will pull out and talk a little bit about the family partnership standards, a very important aspect of this group of early learning standards. We want to talk a little bit about PAT programs and the parent educator roles and lift up the parent’s role as their child’s educational guide and hope that with this alignment with all the great work that you can choose from to work with a family with Parents as Teachers through personal visits and through group connections and other ways that you can help parents see the connection with the early early standards and the continuum helps us see a through line.

I’d like to ask for one more poll early on here. How many you use the early learning standards in personal visits, in group connections, in staff meetings? Let us know. We’ll get that poll up. Hopefully, you’ve had a chance to respond. If it’s slowing down, Mike, perhaps you can show us the results.

Wonderful. About 83% of the folks involved in this call are currently using the Pennsylvania Department of Education Early Learning Standards. That’s great. Nobody is using them with group connections right now. A good number of you, close to 20%, are using these in your staff meetings. That’s exciting. We want to hear more about that and how that’s working.

Describe what’s in the box. At this point, I’d ligament to introduce Mary Anne Ollie to talk about some of those products in the box and the Early Learning Standards. Mary Anne I’m going to mute myself, and you may unmute yourself and you may advance slides as you wish.

Mary Anne: Okay, great. Hopefully, you can hear me, correct, Karen?

Karen: Yes, I can hear you.

Mary Anne: Okay, great. Perfect, I just wanted to make sure.

Karen: Tell us a little bit about who you are.

Mary Anne: Sure, sure.

Karen: And the work that you’re doing.

Mary Anne: Okay, great, great. Thank you for inviting me to speak with you all today. My name is Mary Anne Ollie. I am an early education adviser with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, and as most you probably know our office is very unique as well as we are dual deputy, so we answer to the Department of Human Services as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I'm actually going on eight years here at the office. Ever since I came to OCDEL I have been involved in the learning standards for early childhood work. I'm actually the project lead for our standards work through our Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge grant which a Federal grant. I have seen our standards through the 2014 revision of our infant and toddler, pre-kindergarten standards as well as our 2016 revisions of our kindergarten, grade one and two standards. I’ve also involved in some of our outcomes reporting strategies here at the office as well as our kindergarten entry inventory work and have just taken on a role as part of the steering committee for our OCDEL fellowship program which is moving forward to year two this year.

Today, I am happy to be here and to actually speak a little bit more about the learning standards. I am pleased to see through the polling that it looks like many of you are familiar with the standards. It looks like 83% of you are using that in personal meetings, 17% of you are using these in staff meetings. Some of what I share with you may not be completely new, but it’s always a good review if it’s not new for the first time.

As you can see on the screen, we have three standards documents, primarily that I would imagine most you as parents educators or supervisors work with. We have our infant and toddler standards which actually encompass three different ages. We have our infant standards, our young toddler standards and our older toddler standards are all found in that book. We have our pre-kindergarten standards. We have our kindergarten, and then we have the continuum which I think Karen had mentioned. She may be discussing a little bit later in today’s webinar.

The continuum is just very quickly a very useful document as it does visibly display the standards horizontally across the continuum beginning from infancy, and then extending all the way through grade two. This document is useful to show families developmentally where their child falls. and also then the next benchmarks that are to come or that child would grow into. The continuum is also useful in helping practitioners differentiate instruction, activity design for children who have differing ability levels.

I'm glad that I was able to advance that. That’s always a good thing. Pennsylvania learning standards were actually, believe it or not, developed in the year 2004. That was through collaboration from the Departments of Health, Education, now Human Services and we had many different stakeholders at the table from childcare, early intervention, school districts, Head Start, higher intervention, family support programs and researchers were also part of the development of our standards.

The age groupings we’re just going to quickly touch upon. They actually align in case any of you had not known this, our age groupings within the standards align to Pennsylvania certification as well as NACE, specifically for out infant-toddler booklet. As you can see on the screen, for infants you can see that we’re looking at birth to 12 months of age; for a young toddler nine to 27 months; older toddler 24-36 months. This is interesting, just to note that the younger toddler age span of nine months to 27 months they do overlap to allow for the fluidity and the uneven development that typically occurs in very young children.

You’ll note that the ages for our pre-kindergarten are actually three to five years of years or 60 months, and then our kindergarten standards actually go to five years of age beginning on September 1st. This is something important to keep in mind that our age groupings are really arbitrary as children’s development, again, is very fluid and can go back and forth across the different age groupings. We have organized it in this manner to help teachers find specific skill levels for children.

Another thing that’s important to keep in mind and whenever I go out into the field and do training I always make note of this that for all of the standards in any of the age groupings they are the benchmarks, they are the expectations for typically developing children, what they should know, what they should be able demonstrate at the end of the that particular age range. Not at the very beginning as they’re turning into the young toddler age range, older toddler, pre-K, but actually that end of that age range is when we would expect typically developing children to demonstrate these particular skills.

A few other things to note about out learning standards that you may or may not be familiar with, as I mentioned, they are research-based according to age and development. They do delineate benchmarks from birth through the grade two and that’s for our early learning standards, but it’s important to keep in mind that Pennsylvania has been a highly commended for our alignment work with our infant-toddler standards through grade two all the way to our academic standards that begin in grade three, and then continue to twelfth grade. We have a really good system of alignment with our standards here in Pennsylvania that have been touted across nationally.

Another thing with our standards is they do form the foundation for activity development, assessment, instruction as well as intervention. You may have heard back in [inaudible 00:12:21] years ago Pennsylvania did adopt the Common Core Standards nationally, but in Pennsylvania the core standards do begin in pre-K. With the 2014 revision of the standard they include the PA Core Standards for the two subject areas of English language arts as well as mathematics.

Also in the revision, we do have science, technology, engineering and math or STEM supportive practices which I will address quickly in a few slides moving forward. Then, we also include updated 21st Century skill sin two of our key learning areas which would be approaches to learning through play as well as social and emotional development. I’ll touch upon this a little bit as we move forward, but as Karen had mentioned we do have partnerships for learning standards. These are really great. This was revised in 2014 and 2016 to actually inform some of the crosswalks including the Head Start Parent, Family and Communities Engagement Framework, our PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships as well as the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework.

You may be wondering what this is. As you work with the standards, not everybody takes note to what’s at the very beginning of the booklet. High quality early care and education programs offer learning opportunities that have significant impact on the success of all children. As we know, a warm responsive relationship with highly trained practitioners is foundational. It is expected that practitioners intentionally integrate developmentally appropriate knowledge with the attitude, the skills and concepts children need to make progress both socially as well as academically. High quality and early care education programming maintain high developmentally achievable expectations for all children. These do include clear performance standards with a continuous cycle of assessment that is understood by a multitude of different audiences which would include staff, which would include children and obviously families.

One component, as I mentioned, of the learning standards for early childhood found at the very beginning of your books is what you see on the screen and those are guiding principles. The guiding principles define high quality early childhood programming and emphasize what our commonwealth feel are the essential elements that support high quality in a variety of different settings via be it home visiting, via center-based care, home-based care, and again, any practitioner that would be working with young children.

Just a thing to note, for the most part, the guiding principles are the same in infant-toddler and pre-kindergarten. However, I believe in infant-toddler we may have one additional guiding principle, but for the most part they are the same.

As you are familiar with, I won’t spend too much time here, but you note we do have nine key learning areas, really eight, and then the partnerships for learning. One thing that I am not sure if you noted as you have become more familiar with the documents is that that they are formatted throughout the book by numerical order.

You’ll find language and literacy as one, math is two, science if four. Social studies encompasses four different numbers, five, six, seven, eight, which that actually stands for significant government is number five, economics six, geography is number seven, and history is number eight. Those align to later academic standards. We have created thinking which is noted nine throughout, that particular domain. Health, wellness and physical development is noted as 10, and then social and emotional development is noted at 16. We do have our approaches to learning standards which not noted through a number. However, it is denoted throughout the standards as an AL, and the same with our partnerships for learning. You’ll find that noted with a PL, and is found at the end of the book.

Big ideas. These area actually declarative statements that describe concepts that actually transcend grade level. You’ll note in the standards that you’ll see some of the same big ideas going through infant, young toddler all the way through even first grade, second grade, etc. They’re essential to providing focus on specific content for all children. In the standards document, I’ll show you. I have the screen coming up where I’ll actually show you where they are located.

Basically, they do provide a focus for activity development, instruction, what do you want children to understand or learn about a particular skill. That’s kind of what we think about as a big idea. It really helps us to make greater sense of things. It helps us make sense of a lot different types of experiences and kind of seemingly isolated facts. It’s kind of like that picture that really connects the dots.

I’ll show you coming up here in a slide where you can find the essential questions. Those essential questions are actually linked to the big ideas. They really frame student or child inquiry. They help to promote critical thinking, and then they help to transfer learning across grade levels and subject matters. Basically, an essential question is an open-ended question. It doesn’t really have a right answer. It’s something, again, in promoting those critical thinking skills that is meant to be investigated. It encourages meaning making by the learner about important ideas. Hopefully, essential questions will actually raise other important questions in regards to activity development, learning, etc. Basically, they naturally arise in everyday life and doing activities, engaging in learning experiences.

Concepts and competencies. You probably refer, I would imagine, often to these in some of your personal meetings with families. A concept actually describes what a child should know or that key knowledge as a result of some sort of learning experience, some sort of activity or instruction that would be specific to that age level. Typically, concepts are organized around a main idea or some sort of theme. A competency, somewhat similar, describes what a child should be able to do or those key skills that would be a result of those learning experiences, activities or instruction specific, again, to that particular age. Keeping in mind as I had mentioned with the actual standard that as you’re looking through the document and you’re looking at the concept and competencies those are, again, what a child should know and be able to demonstrate at the end of that particular age range.

Here is an example of a pre-kindergarten. Actually, this is a domain of scientific thinking and technology. I'm just going to quickly walk you through the set up of the template. At the very top, that’s our key learning area, which I just mentioned is science. Directly underneath there you’ll see what we refer to as a tagline which here is exploring scientific inquiry and discovery.

Underneath that, if you skip down to 3.1 where it says biological sciences, that’s actually what we call the standard area which helps to organize that content. Underneath that, you’ll see a box. The first thing you note in that box is what we had just discussed, so that’s your big idea. Directly underneath that is where you’ll find your essential question or in some cases you’ll have more than one question, so you’ll have essential questions.

Then, if you look underneath that you see an A and then the number, I believe, it is three. That’s actually called a strand which is, again, how we help to organize the information a little bit deeper. Then moving down further, you can see, let’s see here, on the very left hand side you see that the standard is noted. We had talked about the numbering system that we use. Then moving left to right, you notice that the concepts and competencies are included in that center box. Typically, those are all written in the learner will type statements. Then in the very right hand side you see the supportive practices which is what the adult or the individual working with the child can do in regards to activity development, experiences, instruction. That can even include families, what they can do within their home to help foster that skill development with their child.

This is an example of an infant-toddler. The only difference here, I'm not going to go through the thing, but the only difference here is that you’ll note a third of the way down you’ll see something that says the broad standard statement. The broad standard statement, again, is only something you’re going to find in our infant-toddler standards. This is basically an overarching statement that summarizes the key focal points that you’ll find within the infant, the young toddler and the older toddler statements.

The only other thing that I would note before moving on to the next slide is that in some cases within our infant-toddler standard you’ll note that there may not be a particular standard for one of those three ages, and you’ll most likely see the word emerging and that means that developmentally it is not appropriate for there to be a standard for that particular age [inaudible 00:23:18] you’ll find that in our infants. However, that’s a skill that obviously is still developing, but you’ll see that standard then begin at maybe older toddler or young toddler.

I think only two more slides here, then I’ll pass it back to Karen. I had mentioned about our STEM supportive practices. We do include them and we note them in and throughout our books with a green leaf symbol. You’ll actually find this in the supportive practice section of our standard, so that far right column. We wanted to include this because education and STEM beginning at birth is supported by loads of research and neural science as well as other developmental sciences. This research shows that the basic architecture of a child’s brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues through adulthood.

Unfortunately, the United States has been on trajectory of falling behind internationally in regards to STEM careers, STEM knowledge, compared to other countries. Nationally, I'm sure all of you have been hearing STEM, STEM, STEM, over the course of the last couple of years. It’s definitely something that has taken off. Our past governor, Governor Corbett, and also our current governor, Governor Wolf, supports STEM in education, and so you probably have seen a local lead in the community said that you work in as well. We do have STEM supportive practices within our standards document.

The last slide that I have for you is our Partnerships for Learning. As I mentioned earlier that through the revision work in 2014 and 2016 with our kindergarten, grade one and two, the new revised Partnership for Learning standards were informed by the Head Start Parent, Family Community Engagement Framework, the TTA National Standards for Family School Partnerships and the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. We do have seven Partnerships For Learning standards, family engagement standards we often refer to them. Hopefully, you can see them. It’s a blurry trying to enlarge this from the standards book on the slide. I would imagine in your work as parent educators with families that you utilize these partnership standards often. I think they’re a really great resource also for information that you can share with families and how they network with folks that are within their communities as well as how they engage with other families and support one another.

I do believe perhaps that this may be addressed later in the webinar as well, so I won’t go too much more into detail, but certainly welcome questions at any point later about any of the things that I had just mentioned. Karen, I think I will turn that back to you.

Karen: Thank you, Mary Anne, so very much. If there are questions you can use the question box or the chat box. In just a few moments I’ll catch up with that and be able to connect questions with answers, hopefully.

I wanted to point out this what the alignment looks like. Mary Anne mailed to us, emailed to us, the left side with the standards and some of those bullet points. We were able to fill in what from the parents as teachers curricula fit. You’ll notice things that the parent educator resources, how those support some of the standards. You’ll notice parent handouts, and you’ll notice activities throughout. This is not exhaustive, not every single parents as teachers curriculum item is listed, but where there were pretty apparent connections that information is included.

I hope that you’ll take a look at this and see how it might fit in to the work that you’re doing. I’ve sort of looked at this as a process product evolution. Over the years, Mary Anne mentioned that the standards have been in progress over time. The most recent revision was the 2014, 2016. We as part of the early care and education system, parents as teachers evidence-based home visiting program have been asked to make connections with those standards so that we can share that information with families. It took a little bit of time, but we are able to present this information to you, this alignment with the infant and toddler standards and with the pre-kindergarten standards. We have not conducted a kindergarten alignment at this time. I wanted to explain that.

Also, we hope that you’ll look at this as a touchstone so that as you’re working with families within your whole organization, I really like the idea that people are talking about this in staff meetings, how do these standards make sense to us, how do we use them in our programming, how do they connect to the parents as teachers curriculum, and use in personal visits as well as the group connections. It might seem obvious that there are connections, but it might not. Some people may wonder what do you mean integrate early learning standards into my personal visits, that’s crazy.

Actually, it’s not about changing the way you’re doing things. It’s adding conversation. It’s making connections with parents about why the work that they’re doing now with their child as their child’s first and most influential teacher is really leading to student preparedness, kindergarten readiness, better communication skills perhaps, really academic success as they launch into the next part of their lives as young children, and then older children and adolescents.

It helps us think too I think about the parents’ role, that education begins at home and takes place at home throughout the child’s life into college. I’ll mention I have a son in grad school at this point who has called both my husband and I to ask for input on some papers he’s working on, not that we’re experts, but that we’re his go-to around these kinds of things. I think that’s part of what we want to help establish is that parents are the go-to for their children as learners.

This is where you’ll find these curricula alignments on our the parents as teachers page, the Pennsylvania parents as teachers website. You can connect with both the infant and toddler curriculum alignment and the pre-K curricula. We also have a link that will take you to the PDE learning standards.

One of the things we want to start a conversation about and we hope that would that be activated through the rest of the year with you sending us information, questions, comments, maybe even articles for our news brief and certainly through participation. We’re really hoping some of you are going to step up and help us produce some workshops for our regional meetings this spring in April, May-ish time of year.

How are you using these standards and this alignment in home visits, group connections, maybe in transition conversations, and as you mentioned, staff meetings. I thought I would just take a really quick look because this is not my day-to-day job, but I thought it was really interesting to think about this continuum. I turn to page 15 in the mathematical thinking and expression and noticed something called counting and cardinality, mathematical processes. Again thought, “Wow. That’s sort of wacky for infants to be ... how do you make sense of counting and cardinality?” Really, this is pretty well described, engaging in numerical play, stacking and unstacking objects, dumping and filling, starting counting songs, asking even if there’s no answer. How many blocks do we have there? I see one, two, three. All of those kinds of things are things that parents can do with children.

What’s kind of exciting is when we move to the pre-K standards, we have a very similar section using mathematical processes when quantifying and comparing. If you follow across this continuum you see how it connects with the pre-K standards. Now we get into thinking about comparisons, noticing patterns, everyday math, those kinds of activities that Parents as Teachers offers. Then you see how that ties into into kindergarten, grade one and two that we’re helping to build habits of mind of a productive mathematical thinker.

Again, as someone who’s not a parent educator I found this interesting, and I think it helps make that connection, that as a parent educator, as a supervisor, as a Parents as Teachers program we can help parents see these connections so that they really do feel the responsibility is possible and that as they are preparing their children for kindergarten readiness, for school success and for life that their instrumental in that process. The things they do at home are really critical and support children’s early learning.

I'm going to pass the microphone to Christine Farado, ask her to introduce herself, and then talk about some of the ways they’ve been using the standards at the Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center. Thanks, Christine.

Christine: Okay, hello. I'm Christine Farado and I am the director of the Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center in Nanticoke. I'm our Parents as Teachers supervisor and I am also a parent educator, so I do home visits and I do lead some group connections. I wanted to share just a few things that we’ve done to try to start introducing the early learning standards to parents and get it into the conversation. I have to say, I'm really looking forward to some discussion about this too to see what I can get from everybody out there, ideas you have or things that you may have tried.

The Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center has tried a few approaches to helping parents understand these early learning standards. I think they were on our radar for a while because we have a Pre-K Counts in our program and also because we have a community innovation zone grant. Our project was called My School, My Community.

One approach that we did was to have a parent workshop and discussion meaning a PAT group connection centered on this topic. Another approach was to develop a newsletter brochure that tied in the early learning standards by sharing seasonal activity ideas and events, highlighting the standard’s key leading areas. If you have currently have some sort newsletter I would imagine that there’s a lot of possibilities for doing this as well. Overall, the goal that we had was to help parents improve their consciousness of learning opportunities, their intentionality, as they enjoy doing a variety of things with their children and also to increase their confidence as their child starts school by feeling that they as parents are on top of what to expect from school learning and come into that school experience as a partner in learning.

It goes along with that idea, the more you know the more empowered you are, but at the same time we know working directly with parents you can sense when there’s that information overload. That I think is a really key thing in introducing this to parents is to balance that idea of the more you know with the idea of possible information overload timing can be really important.

Also, we want to cultivate just in general the appreciation of their role in the real life learning. Hopefully, a side benefit of that is to sort of displace the abundance of time that many children spend with their screens, with tablets and phones. We know it can be a problem, and even parents themselves will say that this is a problem. I’ve noticed during discussions with parents that whether it’s in a group or personal visit setting parents typically don’t want to be handing their child a phone or a tablet all the time to keep them occupied or entertained as often as they do or for as long as they do.

Like many of us with our own excessive habits, possibly with media, social media use, these are habits that can be broken or controlled by displacing them with better habits. By supporting parents in developing the habit of engaging with this kind of intentionality we’re trying to help bring that screen time into a little bit better balance, just as a side benefit of this. An important part of that is helping parents just appreciate that the real-life learning that’s so greatly benefits their young child can be more powerful when shared parent child than even when it is taught in a classroom.

I really think that we as parents as teachers people are so well poised to play this role and build this link between the early learning standards and parents. We have the important principles of parent-child interaction and rapport building and family engagement so ingrained in us already we get it. To me, it almost feels like a duty to bring this to parents. Then, of course, the key thing is how do we do that.

I just wanted to bring up a couple of reminders about planning a group connection. This is not an all inclusive list, but it’s just important reminders. I know I have to remind myself of these things when I'm planning a workshop. First of all, as always, remember this is adult evulsion. We kind of straddle the world working with children and with adults, but with adults we want to be clear and straightforward in introducing the topic, why we feel it’s important versus with children you’d want to build interest by having some mystery and bringing up some questions. With adults, we want to be more straightforward. We want to give opportunities for collaborative learning, genuine parent input, always real-life applications of things and also having respect for various comfort levels in speaking and sharing ideas among the group. Some people don’t want to get too silly with stuff. You have to maybe feel things out with the group.

Also, even if it’s not a parent café that you’re exactly doing, remember that parent café environment and those general house rules which we all know. It’s good to go over those the beginning of any group meeting because there might some new people who haven’t done that model. Again, you might not already do parent café model, so it’s good to go over those house rules.

Again, I want to repeat about collaborative learning and just the idea of the jigsaw approach which if you’re not familiar with that it’s where you take a larger concept and you break it down for the group and each part of the group covers a different concept, and then they share. That had an automatic input of being collaborative and just having parent input like that. Remember, that we’re always trying to do scaffolding. In other words, getting a sense of what is understood already and building on that without overloading. It’s not always easy to do, but you certainly can’t do it without listening and gathering input first.

Then, really important, of course, is what’s going to get people to attend. You might plan the most amazing thing in the world, but what will get parents to attend. I always think that the most important thing there is bringing various people to the table in that planning process, parents included, of course.

Here, you see our setting for what we did for our workshop. The environment is very similar to a café environment. Our family center is located in a kindergarten and first grade school, so we’re lucky with that. We’re able to use our school library for parent discussion groups. There’re a lot of public libraries that also offer this type of setting. That could be something to look into if you’re looking to plan a group activity. I do want to point out the round tables. I have definitely found that using round tables for discussion groups makes a huge difference.

As you can see from the little mini agenda on the left upper corner there, we printed this little mini agenda for parents and staff. We give it out when they arrive for evening events. We started with a picnic supper. If you’re interested, it was turkey and ham and spinach sandwich wraps. We had the supermarket cut them in quarters. We try different things. I'm mentioning some of these details because we tried different things and that seemed to work well. I also want to mention that our school district was able to fund the food for this event, and we’re grateful about that.

During the bulk of the evening, the children did a few activities with our staff and with high school student volunteers who were assisting. The activities all focused on baseball. In the bottom left, you can see a few of the children were making a baseball field with different geometric shapes. During that, the parents came up to the library with me for a workshop discussion group. You can see on the right at each table there was a pen, and paper, and an awesome fake candle in a plastic cup, and a little brochure that I’ll tell you about more in a few slides from now. One of the posters. I call them mini posters, but I think they’re called posters about the early learning standards that we got from OCDEL.

At this workshop, I introduced the discussion activity by giving an overview of the seven learning areas in the learning standards and there happen to be seven tables set up, each one having a different learning standard poster at the table for guidance, and we have three to five parents at each table. This night the theme was baseball, so given a topic of baseball each group was asked to brainstorm ideas for how a parent or caregiver might do something or discuss something with their child at a baseball game or before or after going to a baseball game, something that tied in with that learning area, the one that they had at their table for their group.

We also had a brochure on the table that we had made the previous year that had some suggestions for each learning area. They had this discussion. I have to say that it was the approaches to learning through play group had the hardest time at first. At the same time, it made for very interesting discussion because we started talking about how in a way this is the most important life-long learning area because we’re always going to be more successful and happier when we learn how to make studying, working, remembering things and learning more fun or interesting. I was thinking about that when Karen was sharing the story about her graduate school or college aged son asking for some input from her and her husband.

When we all regrouped from this, we had a special treat of having a local a professional puppeteer present a little puppet show and everybody sang Take Me Out To The Ballgame together. That was a night to remember. It was really nice. I think the most memorable thing for me was the discussion that we had.

I'm sort of combining a summary here as I talk about what we did for this specific group connection topic from one year and the next. We did this over a few years. It’s important for me to share something that we leaned from this experience. The prior year I had a prepared a blank chart for each table with the different learning standards areas, all of the learning standards areas, in a chart. It also had the patent milestones domains because we love the milestones domains. Our parents do too. They’re easier to understand. They much more relatable, I felt. I had included those.

The discussion test was similar, but in retrospect, this chart that I made I think it made it seem like a more academic worksheet type of thing to be filled in. I imagine it could’ve been overwhelming and it made what I was hoping to be rather fun and lively into something that was rather a chore for the parents. Overall, that would be counterproductive to what we’re trying to do with the parents.

Another thing I wanted to avoid doing was promoting anxiety about having to catch every possible teachable moment, and that’s where you have to be careful about overload, I think. I think many of us as educators who are educators as well as parents have probably struggled with this when you’re with your child and you’re trying to make every moment with our child educational, and then you realize you have to lighten up just a little bit or you’re missing out on life. The idea of starting off this type of parent discussion by introducing the learning standard seemed good in theory and worked okay in practice. when we just did the discussion group again the next year, we made the first discussion topic simply what does parent involvement mean to you. The table groups discussed their ideas first and each table had a note taker or note takers, and after 10 or 15 minutes we talked as a full group, and someone from each group shared what their discussion was about.

It actually turned out to be very a interesting conversation. There were different perspective that came out regarding what is a parent’s role in their child’s learning before they start school and also after they have started school. This particular group, I should say, had just done kindergarten registration for their children which at our school district takes place in April. We had given each child a pair of tickets to our local minor league baseball team at kindergarten registration. It all ties in together because our staff does hearing screenings at the kindergarten registration. That kind of set us up for having that evening event.

As we debriefed as a staff from the group connection meeting that we had, that group connection on parent involvement and the early learning standards we saw that there was much that could be shared in terms of follow up from that discussion we had with parents. This also related to our CIZ grant project, My School, My Community, in which we made a community passport for all kindergartners and we provided them and their parents with tickets to various community events, and that included the minor league baseball game.

To enrich their experience of going to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders game, we developed a brochure guide that offered activity ideas to do before, during and after attending the game. They were organized according to the learning areas. In fall 2016, we extended the idea and we made a similar newsletter brochure that we gave to preschools and daycare centers in our school district as well as the parents that we visit the PAT program. We also gave them to the preschool through third grade classes in our school district, so it was covering a wide range of ages these records. It was kept kind of general and adaptable.

Here you see the front page of the current … this is our GNA Parent-Child newsletter. In the photograph to the right it’s a little sampling of the newsletter. It includes a listing of family events in our area for fall and suggestions. You can see here two of the key learning standards areas, approaches to learning through play and social and emotional development. We keep all of the seven learning areas in the newsletter, but this is just a sampling there. You can see, we used the brochure to try to promote and recruit families for our Parents as Teachers program.

Let’s see. On a technical note, there we go, on a technical note, we meet as a staff to plan the ideas and choose tasks for gathering information for this newsletter, and then I write the newsletter using Microsoft Publisher. Then, I save a copy as a PDF and I also save it in Publisher too because then there’s the saved copy, but then I can just take the first copy to edit it for the next one. The first copy was by far the most difficult, but for the winter issue I was able to take the fall issue as a template and work from there, and then do the same thing for spring.

We’re very fortunate we have a color copier at our office which is provided by the school district. Sometimes we print them in black and white on colored paper. It doesn’t quite pop quite as much when you do that. If we didn’t have a color copier we would look into getting some better colored paper, I imagine. As I mentioned before, we try to emphasize the enjoyment of spending time with your child. It’s a very PAT thing to do. As the headline in text boxes, although we separate learning in school into subject areas and different learning standards real-life learning, of course, often combines skills in math, science, social studies, language, etc. Here are a few ideas for enhancing learning by tying in the Pennsylvania Early Childhood and Primary Learning Standards areas with fun activities right here in the GNA community and at home this fall.

We’re not trying to force parents into an overly academic role. In the newsletter we keep the learning standards information more at that key learning areas level rather than going more in depth with the specific strands concepts, competencies along the continuum. I would imagine in our home visits that’s something that we could do more followup conversation when we’re specifically working with one age level.

We offer suggestions for adjusting the activity in the newsletter to adjusting the activity approach for older or younger children. For example, in the mathematical thinking and expression activity there that’s where the child uses six or eight or 20 pumpkin seeds and lays them out in a straight line. They’re supposed to lay out in the box there if possible. They try to manipulate them to try to lay them out in two equal lines and so forth.

We try to avoid scripting the interactions for parents, but as an afterthought I was realizing that the planning of the newsletter is a wonderful opportunity for a parent committee which we haven’t done. That’s something I think we need to do is bring parents actually into the planning of the newsletter. That I guess will be part of our continuous quality improvement, and we plan to pull in a few parents who are interested in helping us scope out events and to list activities to include for our winter 2018 newsletter. I hop there’re some ideas from other parent educators and fellow webinar attendees that you can suggest during our discussion. Thank you.

Karen: Thank you so much, Christine. That’s exciting work. I'm really thrilled to hear about it. I wonder if anybody would like to tell us about some of the work that their doing right now or if has prompted you to have some ideas. I think we can try raising hands, and I can try to unmute you, or you could write in the chat box. We’ll see if we have any people that want to say anything or in the question box.

I'm not seeing any new hands come up or any comments in the question box beyond what were there. Someone did ask about the tab from the standards on the Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers website. First of all, make sure it’s the Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers website, and then second of all, it’s not so much a tab as a separate area in the lower third of the front page of the website is something that’s called, I believe, it’s called Early Learning Standards. It has a little icon next to it that’s a sideways V. If you click on that, it will take you to the page that I mentioned or that I showed you earlier in the webinar.

Cynthia, do you have a question or a comment that you’d like to make? Cynthia Wilson. Go ahead. I noticed that you’re unmuted, but I'm not hearing anything. Technology is not in our favor at this moment. Please share your idea. If you’d like to share any ideas in the question box that would be great.

I’d like to thank you all for being a part of today’s presentation. I do want you to think about if you’re not already using the Early Learning Standards how might you, and in particular, how does this alignment with the Parents as Teachers curricula make a difference in some of the work that you’ve been doing or if you’re embarking on doing this work what will it look like and how might you use this alignment? In the future, we plan to share practices through our news brief. We’d be glad to hear from you so that we can do that, and please do think about volunteering to participate in the Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers regional meetings and at our workshops that will feature using the alignment and the Early Learning Standards.

At this point, I wanted to point to some OCDEL standard-based resources. I'm going to show you two pages quickly. I'm going to go back to the first page in a moment. Oops, or go back to the first page in a moment and ask Christine and Mary Anne if they have any comments about these resources in ways that they…

Christine: I was going to mention again about the poster. That was on the next page. I keep referring to it as mini posters because they’re small. You saw in the picture we had one at each table. I think I got the idea for using these because in our pre-K classroom these are displayed for parents. These are very parent friendly, so they would be really good for starting off discussion, I think, especially for groups.

Karen: Great.

Maryann: Yeah, Karen. This is Mary Anne. I think the only thing that I would share is that as folks can see on the screen the posters will be available in the spring of 2018. We’re currently out of stock, but we are going to be reprocuring those and reprinting them beginning in January. Just a note to all folks that are on the webinar today that our resources as well as packets of our standards posters are available at either one of those websites except for the posters currently right now at a really reasonable cost.

For organizations that buy in bulk, they are cheaper, I think, some of the resources on the current screen come in boxes of 30 or more or dispensing on how many you may need, but cover a variety of age, great to share with families. A lot of folks like school districts use those at kindergarten registration, etc. You haven’t seen them, something worthy of checking out.

Karen: Mary Anne, I believe several of these are available in English and Spanish, correct?

Maryann: Correct, absolutely. I'm grateful that you had pointed that out. I believe most of the them are available in English as well Spanish. Some of them actually are features as part of PA Promise For Children, so you could probably go onto that website and download pieces of them if not all of them if you didn’t want to actually order those, but just refer to some of the activities that are there in working with the families that you serve.

Karen: Thank you. Mary Anne and Christine, you’ve been amazing. Thank you so much for the information that you shared today. This is the contact information for those of us who are on today’s webinar. I do encourage you to download the handout if you’d like a copy of all the slides you’re welcome to do that. If you run into any technical difficulties, please let us know and we’ll get you a PDF version of those slides. If you have other questions, let us know and we may not be able to answer right away, but we will certainly look into responding to you as quickly as we can and go to the connections and resources that we have if it’s not readily available to us.

Mary Anne, Christine, any last words?

Christine: No, thank you for the opportunity.

Maryann: Just thanks to everybody, yeah.

Karen: All right, great. Thank you all. It is one minute before 2:00 and time to close today’s webinar. Pay attention to our news brief and also our next webinar November 1st. Bye.

How did we do?

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