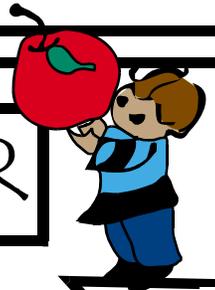


# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



May, 2006

Volume 10

## Section 1:

### *An Overview of Volume Focus*



Application of  
Personal &  
Professional  
Learning  
Experience

Welcome again to **APPLE**—a newsletter for kindergarten teachers. This will be the last APPLE that is structured around articles in the Young Children journal. This change is due to the sad fact that we cannot pay for a membership in NAEYC and KAEYC (as well as local levels) for all readers. We will still include summaries of articles that are of interest to teachers of young children, both in kindergarten and in pre-school classrooms. As was noted in the last APPLE, teachers in the Four Year Old At-Risk program will be receiving the APPLE as well as kindergarten teachers.

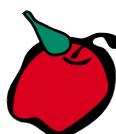
This volume will examine one of the articles from the March, 2006 Young Children. The focus of this journal volume was Innovative Practice. **Section 2** will give an overview of the article entitled "*Using Engagement Strategies to Facilitate Children's Learning and Success*". Teachers know that children learn when they are engaged, and this article provides research and guidance to promote student engagement.

The state update (**Section 3**) will give an overview of the current training that is going on for teachers in the School Readiness Project related to the data collecting next fall (2006). Both kindergarten teachers and teachers in the Four Year Old At-Risk programs are involved in the Project now. Other updates of state work will be provided as well.

**Section 4** is the application portion of the newsletter, but again, we are going to be a bit different. Dr. Renee' Patrick has written an article about working with children who have behavioral issues. Renee' has worked with children who have behavior problems or issues for 12 years and provides research-based suggestions for teachers.

Finally, **Section 5** provides a list of resources, websites, and conferences that might be of interest to you. There are several new state and national resources that can be useful to teachers of young children.

As always, we appreciate you and all the work that you do. Please address any comments, suggestions, or questions to the editor, Gayle Stuber. (785-296-5352 or [gstuber@ksde.org](mailto:gstuber@ksde.org))





# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



## Section 2:

*"Using Engagement Strategies to Facilitate Children's Learning and Success", Vol. 61, #2, pp. 12-16.*

The authors, Jablon and Wilkinson, describe and define 'engagement'—a critical aspect of children's learning. They offer strategies and implementation pointers for teachers as they facilitate engagement in learning.

Children are born eager learners. They explore their world through their senses and through interactions with others. The authors provide both psychological and behavioral characteristics of an engaged learner. Such students are 'intrinsically motivated by curiosity, interest, and enjoyment, and are likely to want to achieve their own intellectual or personal goals. In addition, the engaged child demonstrates the behaviors of concentration, investment, enthusiasm, and effort" (p. 12).

Research quoted by the authors shows a significant correlation between engagement and attendance and achievement. Children who are highly engaged come to school and achieve. This is particularly strong at the early elementary ages. As children grow older, the engagement in learning seems to become less and less. The current pressure on academics may de-emphasize engaged learning. The authors provide some suggested engagement strategies that many teachers may already use. The following examples are likely familiar to most teachers.

- KWL—what do you already know? Wonder about? Want to learn?
- How many ways can you do this?
- Think, pair, share
- Dramatic touch—use drama and humor to enhance child interest
- See what you can find out about .

- Quick games such as Twenty Questions, 'I'm thinking of a number', etc.

Engagement strategies work because they are purposeful while also focused on what the teachers wants children to learn and what the children want to learn. The teacher provides a clearly stated purpose, explicit directions (the what and the how), needed materials, and guidance. Characteristics of engaging experiences include:

- Activate prior knowledge
- Foster active investigation
- Promote group interaction
- Encourage collaboration
- Allow for choice
- Include games and humor
- Support mastery
- Nurture independent thinking
- Do not make children wait

In conclusion, the authors suggest that teachers use a range of engagement strategies. These well-implemented strategies will enable teachers to 'capture the interest' of their children allowing them to enhance their skill and knowledge base. And engaged children are successful learners—for life!





# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



## Section 3:

### An Update from the State

#### School Readiness Project

We are getting in lots of spring data—thanks! We are still training both kindergarten teachers and four year old at-risk teachers. We have added training dates in June: June 1 and 6 from 1-3 for four year old at-risk teachers and June 6 from 3:30 – 5:30 and June 8 from 9-11 for kindergarten teachers. If you are interested (and if you did not attend a face-to-face training last year), please let me or Lucy Campbell at [lcampbell@ksde.org](mailto:lcampbell@ksde.org) know. Lucy is getting registration forms on everyone who attends so we can keep an updated and accurate data-base.

**REMINDER:** your papers for your college credit are due soon. Please send as soon as you can to Gayle (either by email at [gstuber@ksde.org](mailto:gstuber@ksde.org) or by mail at 120 SE 10<sup>th</sup>, Topeka, KS 66612). THANKS for you help. And if any of you want to provide feedback on the project or suggestions as to how it might be better next year, this is your chance! Just email it to [Gayle](#) or [Renee](#)!



A group of higher education faculty in the area of early childhood are working to develop several online courses that might be of interest to you. The following course is being offered this summer at Four Hays State (but, of course, it is online).

SPED 673 CA – Problems in Education: Diversity in Early Childhood (3 credits, graduate or undergraduate). This is a course is designed for teachers, administrators and other educational personnel working with young children. The focus

of the course will be on the child and the family in the context of the schools and the larger community. Current and historical issues related to diversity will be explored.

For more information, contact the instructor: Placido A. Hoernicke at 785-628-4214 or [phoernic@fhsu.edu](mailto:phoernic@fhsu.edu).



**SPECIAL NOTICE:** There is a strong likelihood that KSDE will be working with a couple of other organizations to do some more in-depth data collection on entering kindergarteners and their skills and abilities. This will be a random selection of students and may or may not include students from your classroom. THIS WILL NOT REQUIRE YOU TO DO ANY MORE DATA COLLECTION!!! All you would be asked to do is to allow any students that are selected for this additional study to be assessed by an outside evaluator for a short while (approximately 15-20 minutes).

This is additional information that will support and strengthen the results from the data that you are providing. This additional study will not be conducted every year—but more likely every few years (if that).

This is just a 'heads up' so that you don't think it is in place of what you are doing. Your participation will make a difference—this will help support your work, but will definitely NOT replace you or your help with the project!





# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



## Section 4:

*"So you have a child (or children) in your class with some behavioral issues. Now what?" by Renee' Patrick, PhD, TLP*



Many of you have children who have difficulties managing their behaviors in the classroom or playground. Dr. Patrick has some specific suggestions that might be of use to you.

One thing to keep in mind is that children are highly sensitive to the contingencies that are most salient to them and within a relevant context. So, while there may be some "leftover" reaction to the home routine causing irritability or hyperactivity upon little Susie's arrival to class, the mechanisms you put in place to reduce unwanted behavior in the classroom can make a large difference in your day (and in little Susie's day).



Well established routines are one way to create a context that serves as a setting event so that children can settle in and attempt to self-regulate regardless of any previous events before the start of the school day. Most teachers are adept at setting routines for their classroom. Scheduling bathroom breaks, reading time, nap time and math time takes great organizational skill. Behavioral routines can be somewhat difficult to create, as these often occur within a more fluid context of social interactions.

A good way to create a context in which children can better function is to **consider the interaction between yourself and the child.** Children with disruptive behavior are adept at eliciting a coercive process between themselves and others. This is not a conscious manipulation of others, it is a process with which they become comfortable because it becomes routinized and expected. Children are scientists in their own way.

If you respond in a similar fashion to those in their home or other environments, children will continue to behave in the ways that are familiar to them. You have, in effect, confirmed their hypothesis about behavior. Try to create an atmosphere where the child needs to create new hypothesis about behavior. One way to circumvent a cycle of coercion between yourself and a disruptive child is to focus on how your respond to them.

Do you find yourself feeling angry when a child behaves in a way that you do not approve? This emotion likely shows in your voice and in your choice of words. If you find yourself becoming upset, remind yourself of the following:

- You are in control because you are the grown-up.
- The child is not doing anything TO you, they are just doing!
- Tell and show the child what you want them to do.

If you respond in anger, the child will typically "up the anti." The child has won the power struggle no matter any subsequent consequences, because you have lost control of the emotions in the situation. Despite difficulty regulating their own emotions, disruptive children recognize emotions in others. Exhibiting anger that is coercive in nature, even subtly, also models for the child that anger and coercion are appropriate responses to frustration. **Remove the emotion from the situation and deal with the behavior.** This helps you to signal to the child that the





# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



behavior is inconsequential to you, but can have consequences for her.



**For every negative statement or redirection you give a disruptive child, provide them with 11 positive statements.** Be SPECIFIC!! Be SINCERE! Be QUICK! As soon as the child begins to move toward doing a desired behavior after a redirection

– reinforce it. You are shaping the child's behavior in this way. For example, if you have a child who has difficulty following directions – "please, go to your seat and sit down," when the child turns toward the seat say "thank you, for heading to your seat to sit down." This not only serves as positive reinforcement for the desired behavior but also as a reminder of the steps you expect the child to take. As soon as the child is seated say "thank you for sitting in your seat." You have already added two positive statements to the child's day!

**Ignore what you can.** Not only is it tiresome to continually address negative behaviors, focusing on the positive behavior can help with getting in those 11 positive and specific statements



for each negative or redirect statement. After a few weeks you can wean the child back to the number of statements you provide the average child in

your classroom. The rate of positive statements given the average child is typically higher than the rate given disruptive children. Remember that increased total statements to a disruptive child often result in an increase in the ratio of negative to positive statements. Be aware of this potential problem, and you can reduce this effect. For example, you may only speak to a child who is not disruptive twice in a day. If both statements

to the child are positive, that is a one to one correspondence. You may speak to a disruptive child 15 times in a day and only one of those comments may be positive. That is a 14:1 correspondence with negative statements taking up the majority of your time. Anytime you observe an increase in negative behavior, increase the positive and directive statements.



**For more difficult behavior, such as hitting when angry, you may need to pay more attention to what triggers the child.** It may be something that doesn't bother

most children. Do not de-legitimize these triggers. They are very real to the child, even if the rest of us can tolerate those types of things. When you know what the triggers are, you can set yourself up to be there to talk the child through the situation.

**Acknowledge or define the emotion that typically precedes the physical behavior.** For example, "I know you are upset (angry, frustrated, mad – the more different words you use the better) when (such and such) happens. We do not hit! Tell (the other child) that you are angry (or other descriptive word)!" More coaching may be necessary here. But the idea is to get the child to say what he feels rather than showing how he feels!



**Next it is important to help problem solve without solving the problem for the child.**

Ask the child what he wants from the situation or the other child. Then have him ask or tell the other child what that desire is. You may have to support the child if the other child refuses the request or will not negotiate. Children can be allowed to say "no" in many situations, and the disruptive child may have difficulty tolerating this.



## AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

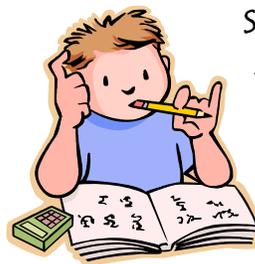


Realizing that there are times when behaviors need to be dealt with more quickly, time out is an option. However, time out in and of itself doesn't teach anything, especially when used in excess! **Use timeout judiciously with disruptive children.** Time out is most effective with children who are reflective. The disruptive child may not be very reflective. Disruptive children tend to be more impulsive and often have fewer words in their vocabulary making reflection very difficult. These children need more practice doing the right thing and time out does not lend itself to this.

**When there is a power struggle over time out – win it.** You may have to let the child know that time out starts when his behavior stops. This is a situation when time out can be a learning experience. Time out in this situation is a place to collect one's self and to engage in self-regulation. It does not require good verbal skills but does require impulse control. Prepare yourself to deal with escalating behavior. This includes setting a standard procedure for the entire class to ensure safety.

Is there a place in the room that is reasonably distant from time out that the other students can sit and engage in a quiet activity while the child being disciplined can be attended? Classroom safety contingencies need not be derisive. The rule for the class can be – for example – when someone does not want to go to time out, we sit and read in the reading center while they calm down. This allows the teacher to concentrate on the disruptive child, maintain calm in the classroom, and keeps other children safe from flying objects (should you have a child that throws things). Some schools find it helpful to have an additional space at the ready (in another room) so that the entire class can go and work on

some other project while discipline occurs in the classroom. This does require a good communication system between classrooms. Do not call the other children's attention to the child. You may announce that it is time to go to the reading center (or Mrs. Librarian's room, etc). *Never engage any of the other children in a discussion of the disruptive child's behavior during an outburst.* This includes labeling the behavior as bad. This will reinforce the disruptive behavior and contribute to the potential escalation of behaviors. Remove all proximal potential projectiles! Remember to be calm and quick. State the behavior you wish to see "Please, sit in time out." You will not have to raise your voice. Raising your voice can escalate the situation. You can restate the command as many times as needed. Some children respond to several reiterations of a command.



### **Some children require a choice.**

Avoid using "you better," "if you don't," or similar comments as a preface to the choice. Sometimes simply providing a choice about where to sit in timeout is enough. "You may choose to sit in time out here, in our time out spot, or you can choose to sit in time out in the – (nurse's office, principal's office, Mrs. Counselor's room, next to my desk, etc.)." It is best to use a choice you like or one that is the next logical step and one the child will optimally choose and then comply. For some children you will need to put a time frame on the decision making. "Please sit in time out. You may choose to sit in time out now or we can go down to the office to call your parent (or what ever is your next practice)." You may need to give a specific time frame – one minute is a little abstract to children this age so it is best to count to three (or



# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



five or ten, etc.). Tell the child that you will count to 3 and will expect an answer. If they have not made a decision, you will proceed with the next step. This procedure is not best used with a child who becomes physical as a first line of discipline. Use a choice that allows the child to choose between equal levels of discipline first. For example, when choosing where to sit in time out, offer the official spot and a spot near the teacher as both occur in the classroom and do not imply an increasing punitive measure.

Using another teacher's room for time out is not always productive for the child or the other classroom involved. This is a big contextual signal to the other children in both classes that the disruptive child is not desirable. This procedure communicates rejection, even if it is not the intention. Most teachers use this to avoid escalation and as a mechanism to allow time to regroup without losing one's cool. Many times, the disruptive child continues to misbehave in the other classroom while in timeout. In this case,



disruptive behavior may be a way for the child to gain attention. **To prevent behavior with this function, be sure to keep this child engaged in "important" activities that draw**

**positive attention to the child.** It is better to circumvent disruptive behavior in this way than to send the child out of the room, increasing the

potential for peer rejection, and increased disruptive behavior, in addition to the disruption of the other classroom. This can have long term negative effects for the child's social and emotional development as well as her academic progress. *Children also engage in disruptive behavior to avoid tasks. Be sure to identify the task and provide additional support or refer for additional assessment if necessary.* The child with

academic problems is at additional risk of peer rejection when placed in timeout in another classroom.



If the child's behavior persists despite the use of multiple and consistent interventions, it may

be helpful to consult the parents and local mental health professionals for additional guidance. Clinical Psychologists, Behavior Analysts, and School Counselors/Psychologists can provide additional strategies that can promote desired behaviors for even the most difficult children. Contact your local community mental center or university Psychology, Education, or Behavioral Sciences department for additional information about managing

If you would like further information on disruptive children, please contact Dr. Patrick at [rpatrick@ksde.org](mailto:rpatrick@ksde.org).





# AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER



## Section 5:

### *SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources*

1. From NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

#### **NEW COMPREHENSIVE BENEFIT FOR JUNE**

#### *K Today: Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year*

*Dominic F. Gullo, ed.*

The kindergarten year is quite unlike preschool and not like first grade, either. What should teaching practice look like for this critical year? *K Today* offers a vivid picture of kindergarten children, perceptive discussion of the current kindergarten context and policy issues, and clear guidelines for teaching and assessing kindergartners. Also, for six curriculum domains—language and literacy, math, science, the creative arts, social studies, and physical education—leading experts outline what children should know and be able to do and how effective teachers ensure that learning. For both current and future practitioners, this is a fresh, engaging resource that gets readers thinking and promotes well-informed, thoughtful teaching and leadership at the

kindergarten level. This publication will be mailed to all NAEYC Comprehensive Members in June. Comprehensive Members receive six publications automatically as they are released throughout the year. Call NAEYC at 800-424-2460 for details on upgrading your membership.

2. The Early Childhood Resource Center in Parsons has several resources for developmentally appropriate practices that can be easily borrowed. This is a terrific resource for Kansas. I would recommend that you go into the KITS website and look over the long list of possible items for review and use. [www.kskits.org](http://www.kskits.org) and the recourse center is at [www.kskits.org/ecrc](http://www.kskits.org/ecrc)
3. A new resource from NIEER (National Institute for Early Education Research): 'Early Literacy: Policy and practices in the preschool years' by Dorothy Strickland and Shannon Riley-Ayers. This is a new policy brief that provides some great information in the area of early literacy. NIEER's website is [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).

