



Capital District
Child Care
Council

Leader

SPRING
2011

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Announcements

Child Development Associate Awarded to Bethany Carlson

Ms. Carlson was awarded her Child Development Associate for Family Child Care on December 1, 2010. She has been employed for over ten years at Melody Time Group Family Child Care located in Schenectady, owned and operated by Melodie and Kevin Carlson. Bethany believes in providing high quality care to the children in her program and feels pursuing her CDA was a way for her to achieve her goal. Congratulations Bethany!

Save the date! Wednesday, May 4

The annual Child Care Provider Appreciation Dinner will be held at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Scotia. Invitations and event details will be mailed in early April.

Announce your news! email
ksmith@cdcccc.org



Winning Beginning NY Advocates met with Senator Breslin during Winning Beginning Wednesday's advocacy efforts on March 2.

Winning Beginning Wednesdays

On Wednesday, March 2, the Child Care Council, children's advocates, child care professionals, parents and community leaders from the Capital District traveled to Albany to meet with members of the NYS Legislature and participate in Winning Beginning Wednesdays with Winning Beginning NY. Constituents met with their legislative delegation to discuss the proposed budget cuts to early education programs.

Winning Beginning Wednesdays was Winning Beginning NY's new advocacy effort that took place during the legislative session. Every Wednesday in March 2011, children's advocates, child care

professionals, parents, children and community leaders went to Albany for one-on-one meetings with legislators. They educated and informed policymakers about early care and learning initiatives and afterschool system initiatives to ask them to support the Winning Beginning NY legislative agenda, available at www.winningbeginningny.org.

Legislators must focus on stopping further cuts on investments in young children and the after-school system! It is critical for our state's future to maintain services to vulnerable young children and their families and address the needs of an increasing number of families who have

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From the Executive Director

By Patricia Skinner, Executive Director



*Happy
Spring!*

It has been a long, hard winter in more ways than one, but I hope that you are joining

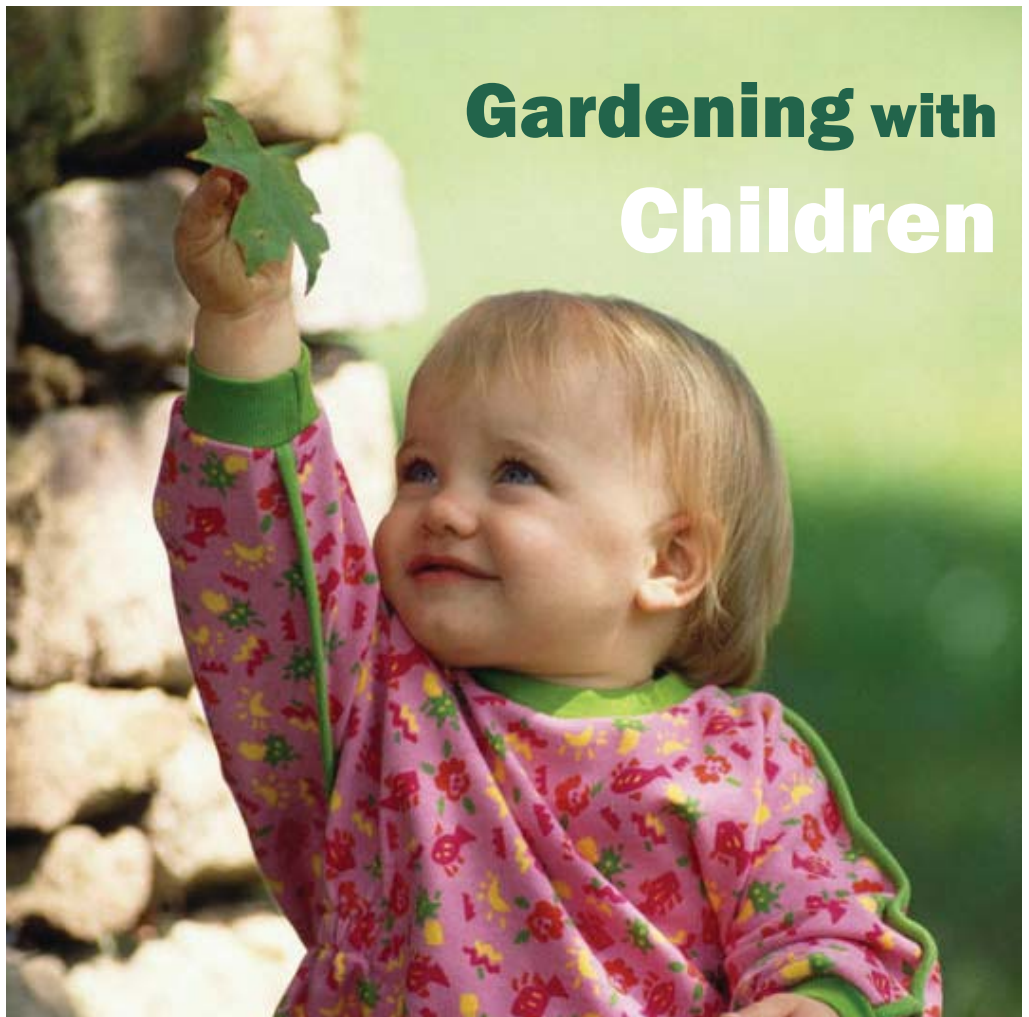
me in celebrating the fact that warmer weather has finally returned to the Great Northeast.

Inside this edition you will find references to the Winning Beginning NY Legislative agenda for this year. The Council joins the Winning Beginning NY coalition in supporting the maintenance/restoration of funding for crucial child care services in the State. In this time of budget cutbacks, it is so important to make our voices heard on behalf of the children and families of the Capital District. We know that children who start behind, stay behind. But children with a high-quality early learning experience have an advantage. They are 40% less likely to need remedial services, 30% more likely to graduate from high school, and 200% more likely to go on to college. In addition, early care and education in New York State creates a \$1.86 return on investment that goes back into local economies creating jobs and supporting working families.

So, please consider lending your voice to preserving and protecting access to high quality early care and learning, which are essential for children's success in school and for our State's economic recovery.

~Patty

Gardening with Children



*Mealtime Memo for Child Care, No. 4, 2010
National Food Service Management Institute,
The University of Mississippi*

Gardening is a fun and easy way for children to learn about how fruit and vegetables grow. Involving children with gardening may peak their interest in trying new fruits and vegetables. While fun and educational, gardening also gives children a sense of satisfaction and pride when they see the produce they have grown.

When planning a garden with children in your care you want to start by explaining to them spring is the time of year that gardeners and farmers start planning for their crops. They plan by preparing the soil, labeling the rows, and planting the seeds.

The soil is prepared by first making compost. Compost is organic material sprinkled around growing plants to give them food they need to grow. To make compost put a quart of fruit/vegetables scraps in a clear plastic bag, add a couple handfuls of top soil, add a piece of charcoal (to keep the compost smelling fresh), and tie the bag with a twist tie. Every few days open the bag and stir it around. In about three weeks the bag of garbage will become a bag of sweet-smelling compost. After the compost is ready, you're ready to dig up

your garden soil and mix in the compost. Rake the area smooth and sprinkle the compost over the garden.

After the seeds have been selected, decide where to plant them in the garden, and create the design together. Following the design, mark each row before planting by stretching a string between two sticks and placing a picture of the planted item next to each row. Be sure to leave a wide path between each row so children can work without ruining other seeds. Plant the seeds following the directions on the seed packet.

After all is planted review with the children the length of time the seeds will need to grow, marking the date on the calendar. Each week have the children assist with tending the garden, watering and pulling weeds. Each week have the children document the changes they see, by drawing pictures or writing. At the end of the season they can make a book.

When ready, per package directions, have the children assist in picking the fruits/vegetables, wash them, review the process, and end with a taste test. Be sure to let their parents know how the experience went.

Winning Beginning Wednesday

(continued from cover)

been impacted by the loss of jobs and extended unemployment. Families also depend on public funding for after-school programs to enrich and support the school day and to keep children and youth safe and supervised while parents are at work or searching for work.

Cuts to early care and learning programs and afterschool programs impact children, families and communities and will place additional burdens on other community social services that are already stretched thin.



Left: Winning Beginning NY advocates with Assemblyman Steven F. McLaughlin



Above and to the left: Advocates from Hudson Middle School Afterschool Program and YMCA



Schenectady County Fire Departments to Install Free Smoke Alarms

Schenectady County has been chosen to participate in a smoke alarm installation program. Firefighters from various fire departments in Schenectady County will conduct home visits to residents in their fire districts to install free smoke alarms and provide fire safety education.

Funding for this initiative is through a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant provided to the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"The goal of FEMA's Fire Prevention and Safety initiative is to prevent both fires and fire-related deaths and injuries," said John Nuzback, Schenectady County Fire Coordinator. "Smoke alarms are the most effective early warning device for fires. About 70% of residential fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Just having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a reported fire in half," Nuzback said.

This program:

- ✓ Reaches out to Schenectady County residents, including adults ages 65 and older as well as families with children 14 years of age and younger.
- ✓ Installs smoke alarms in their homes.
- ✓ Provides fire safety education to household members.

Residents should complete an application and submit to:

Schenectady County Fire Coordinator
Police Facility building
531 Liberty Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

For questions, please contact John Nuzback, Schenectady County Fire Coordinator at 370-3113 x2. After your application has been submitted, you will receive a call to schedule your home visit.

The 'best' fire
is one that
never starts."

Fire prevention is still the best medicine. The 'best' fire is one that never starts and the person least likely to be injured or killed in a fire is the one who is never exposed to fire danger in the first place," said John Nuzback.

To learn more about fire safety, visit the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control's web site at <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/firewww.html>, the Federal government's resource site for residential fire safety and prevention information at <http://www.firesafety.gov> or the National Fire Protection Association at <http://www.nfpa.org>.



Dr. Jean Feldman to Present at 2011 Conference

Dr. Jean Feldman’s noteworthy educational career has spanned more than 40 years. She has served as a classroom teacher, instructor of adults, author, and consultant. She is a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Kindergarten Alliance, and the International Reading Association. Dr. Feldman’s list of degrees include a B.A. from the University of Georgia, a D.A.S.T. from Emory University, and both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Georgia State University. Dr. Feldman inspires teachers across the country with her engaging songs and creative activities that help make teaching and learning FUN!

Among Dr. Jean’s many accomplishments is the authorship of several books, including: *Survival Guide for Preschool Teachers*, *The Complete Book of Indoor and Outdoor Games and Activities*; *Transition Time*, and more.

Dr. Jean has also published a number of recordings that are used by school systems throughout the country. The songs are uplifting for both children and adults. The titles include, *Dr. Jean Sings Silly Songs*, *Dr. Jean and Friends*, and *Sing to Learn*. If you would like to learn more about Dr. Jean, visit www.drjean.org.

**For the latest announcements
about the 2011 Conference
join us on Facebook and sign
up for our email newsletter
at www.cdcccc.org**

Save the date!
The 2011 Conference
is on
Saturday, October 1
Hilton Garden Inn, Troy

After homework is completed, the children in the afterschool program where I volunteer love to gather around a table to play Apples to Apples*, Candy Land, or other board games. I began to wonder about the role of such games in children’s overall development. And then, in an interview in PARADE magazine, there was none other than John Lasseter of Pixar fame, advocating for preserving Sundays as family times. “We are ...huge board game fanatics because they bring the family together,” he said.

There are lots of reasons to include time for games both at home and at child care. Think about some of the lifelong skills games support—thinking, strategizing, solving problems. Children who have learned about taking turns, winning and losing, and playing by the rules are valued playmates and team members whatever their ages.

It’s tempting to give in to the lure of electronic games. Team sports are an attractive possibility, as well. But I am making a plea for time spent around the table playing Hi, Ho Cherry-O, Candy Land, Uno, Dominoes, Apples to Apples, Bananagrams, Set, or any number of board and card games available at discount and department stores. Like any other activity, games need to be selected with attention to children’s interests and skills. Children who are not yet readers can match colors; moving a counter 2, 3, or 5 spaces is something most 3’s and 4’s can do with a little help. Games such as Apples to Apples are enjoyed by those who are

able to read and make choices, even silly ones. Other games—Checkers, Dominoes,

Set—require players to think ahead and strategize. Once children

are confident readers and spellers, games such as Bananagrams are fun.

When a group is able to stay with an activity for a long time, Monopoly and Scrabble might be introduced.

Games also provide parents and caregivers opportunities to introduce new skills, help

children to understand rules and monitor turn-taking. Sometimes adults may decide to modify the rules slightly so that more children can participate. As children get older, they are more able to play without an adult. Often a 4th or 5th grader can have lots of fun showing younger children how a game works. Whatever the game selected, children and adults are experiencing it together, laughing, calling out suggestions, and celebrating good moves.

It’s possible my fondness for games is rooted in my own growing up. I can still picture a warm and rainy summer afternoon with three generations of our family ranging in age from 5 to 70 gathered around a table playing Trivial Pursuit. I hope that the feelings of membership and friendly rivalry that I so cherish become part of the experience of children in the afterschool program where I now volunteer—and perhaps in your program and your family.

**Titles refer to trademarks for various games.*

Board games are a great way to spend time with children & teach them skills they need at the same time

Share your story!
[email ksmith@cdcccc.org](mailto:ksmith@cdcccc.org)

QUALITYStarsNY Update

QUALITYStarsNY in the News

On January 27, advocates and community members gathered at Bethlehem Preschool to call on Governor Cuomo to implement QUALITYstarsNY, New York's quality rating and improvement system for early care and learning programs. This event was part of a series of gatherings held in cities across New York State to raise awareness about the importance of adopting QUALITYstarsNY.

Studies show that children are born learning and about 90% of brain development occurs by age 5. For this reason, community members also noted that any budget cuts to early childhood education would have grave consequences for our communities, by attacking our children's opportunities for success, as well as denying local communities a way for economic stimulus.

QUALITYstarsNY, currently being field tested in 13 counties across New York, will provide parents with key data to determine the best program for their children, while making resources available for programs to improve the quality of the education they offer.

During this time of economic difficulty, quality early care and learning is a smart investment. For every dollar invested in early education programs, \$1.86 is generated in local spending, boosting the economy and creating jobs. Quality early education programs also return \$7 in savings for every dollar invested by reducing costs for remedial education, health care, welfare, unemployment, and incarceration.

"No one can deny the economic benefits from investing in quality early childhood education. New York can't afford not to invest in the future of our state by implementing QUALITYstarsNY," said Patricia Skinner, Executive Director of the Capital District Child Care Council.

"The QUALITYstarsNY program rating system will benefit parents as they seek to find the best childcare and early education for their children," according to Cathy Halayko, Co-Director of Bethlehem Preschool, Inc. in Glenmont NY. "The program is set-up to support providers through its emphasis on quality evaluation and improvement. Currently, there is no state-wide system which supports quality improvement initiatives."



Thank you to the children, teachers and staff of Bethlehem Preschool for hosting the QUALITYStarsNY event.

Get Ready Campaign for Family Child Care

QUALITYstarsNY is New York's quality rating, improvement, and recognition system that is currently in a field study. It is designed to recognize child care programs that demonstrate quality above and beyond meeting New York's strong regulatory standards. The rating scale is divided into four categories of standards; Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Qualifications and Experience, and Leadership and Management.

The Council's Education team is pleased to be assisting family child care providers throughout the six counties that the Council serves, in order to prepare for QUALITYstarsNY. We can provide technical assistance and professional development directly to family child care providers at no cost. To find out more about this free program, contact the Education team at 426-7181 X 323 or attend one of our free Get Ready for QUALITYStarsNY informational classes for family child care providers:

Tuesday May 3 6:30 -8:00
Century Club, 130 Guy Park Ave.
Amsterdam, NY 12010

or
Tuesday May 10 6:30 -8:00pm
Rotterdam Senior Citizens center
2639 Hamburg St.
Schenectady, NY 12303

Call Gail Williams at 426-7181 x310 to register.



Theresa Baker, family child care provider, has already begun to "Get Ready" for QUALITYStarsNY by inviting Anne Gresco, family child care educator, into her program. The "Get Ready for QUALITYStarsNY" informational classes will provide you with the information you need to prepare for this exciting program. For more information, call the Child Care Council at 426-7181.

**Child Care Centers
can "Get Ready" too!
Call Abbe Kovacik at
426-7191 x323**

Does Training Matter?

As the Capital District Child Care Council's Director of Education Services, I am deeply concerned with this age old question. For years we have debated the effectiveness of training. Does training influence the implementation of best practices in early childhood classrooms and in before and after school programs? Surely the answer is yes. To assume the inverse is contrary to common sense. After all, if training didn't matter why is on-going professional development, of one sort or another, mandated as a measure of proficiency for educators, military officers, health care professionals, lawyers, accountants, and engineers? In fact, most American states up-hold regulations and invest tax dollars in professional development activities.

Under the assumption that training does matter; our concern has been with the type and quality of professional development. Not, "does training matter?" but rather "what training matters?" Over the past twenty years, through the careful examination of training results, we are able to conclude that training accompanied with consultation or classroom technical assistance is most effective in motivating teachers to implement new ideas and change old behaviors. Our results are mirrored by educational research which indicates that training conducted through consultation models matters most.

So what of instructor experience and knowledge? Does training matter more when instructors are highly qualified? Surely, highly competent trainers provide meaningful learning experiences that help early educators cultivate their capacity to educate young children. It is this question that has been weighing on our minds. How do we, trainers of early educators, ensure that we are competent?

Council trainers are examining their competence through the Early Care and Education Trainer Credential. The credential program validates the trainer's education and experience with children/and or families in specialized content areas. It also evaluates the trainer's competence in preparing and implementing professional development experiences that result in increased knowledge and improved professional practices that contribute to higher quality programs for children and families. The Credential was developed by leaders in the field and is administered

through the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC.org).

Through the credentialing process Council trainers have measured their practices against industry standards and have set in motion plans for improvement. We have learned that competence is accomplished through peer review and personal reflection. We have aligned our work with the standards for professional development upheld by the Core Body of Knowledge (<http://www.earlychildhood.org/pdfs/CoreBody.pdf>) and with the NAEYC standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (<http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ppp>).

At the Council, we understand that training does matter, and that training matters most when it meets the specific needs of the training participant and when instructors are highly qualified and skilled. In fact, of the 20 credentialed trainers in New York state 5 are employed at the Capital District Child Care Council.

..Abbe Kovacik
Director of Education

Credentialed Trainers

Level 1

Anne Gresco, Family Child Care Education Coordinator

Erin Broderick, School-Age Educator

Level 2

Lynn Siebert, School-Age Education Coordinator

Arlene Schmidt, Family Child Care Educator

Heather Sweet, Child Care Center Educator

Level 3

Abbe Kovacik, Director of Education

Meet Erin Broderick, Credentialed Trainer Level 1

Erin holds a New York State School-Age Care Credential and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design. She has been employed by the Council as a school-age educator/specialist since April 2010. Erin has extensive experience as a school-age care provider and program director.

Erin offers workshops, seminars, and on-site consultation in the areas of child growth and development, behavior management, environment, curriculum, communication, professional leadership, child care regulations, personnel management, creative arts, theories and approaches and school-age programming. She is currently an instructor, mentor and evaluator for the New York State School-Age Care Credential and quality improvement specialist for the Community Foundation's Quality Improvement Project with Albany, Fulton and Montgomery School-Age Programs.

Erin's creative ability is evident in all that she does; conducting a workshop, hosting an event or leading her 4H group in a paper making project. Erin's workshops are active with opportunities for participants to fully engage in learning. She is sensitive to participant needs as she spontaneously surveys the group to adapt learning objectives to meet their expectations. We are pleased that Erin is a member of the Council's education team. We hope that you take the opportunity to meet her.

Annual Provider Appreciation Dinner

Each spring, we pause to celebrate the dedication and hard work of the child care community by hosting the Annual Child Care Provider Appreciation Dinner. This year, the dinner is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, May 4, at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Scotia.

This year's dinner will feature a plated, served meal that guests will pre-select from a menu of choices to be detailed in the dinner invitation. Guests will also receive place cards as they arrive that will guide them to their reserved table. The dinner is also an opportunity to salute the outstanding dedication of colleagues. A "Nominate Someone Great" nomination form (see back cover) will be included with the invitation, which will be mailed in early April. Certificates of Excellence will be awarded in the areas of Program Development, Professional Development, and Parent Communication.

The dinner invitation will be posted on the Council's website and mailed to the Council's mailing list in early April.

CPR and First Aid

Through a grant being offered to the American Red Cross (ARC) by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS), the Child Care Council, in collaboration with the ARC is offering free CPR and First Aid classes to child care providers. The classes are being offered throughout the year at several different locations. A flyer has been mailed to the provider community by the ARC with the dates and locations. Space is limited so register early. The following dates are classes being offered at the Council in collaboration with the ARC: May 17, June 8, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 18 Spanish Speaking Class in Schenectady, November 11, December 13. Call the Council at 426-7181 ext 310, for space availability.

Free Radon Testing Kits

Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County, the New York State Department of Health, and the Albany County Health Department are working together to educate residents about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air. However, radon can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists are concerned about the health risk of radon. There is overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible

for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Because you cannot see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. A limited number of radon detectors are available at no charge from Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County. For more information on radon, radon testing, and to obtain a free test kit, contact Steffen by email at sms525@cornell.edu or by phone at (518) 765-3529.

 <p>www.enableyourbiz.com 6 Century Hill Drive Latham, NY 12110</p>	<p>In Honor of Week of the Young Child, We Would Like to Thank the Child Care Professionals of the Capital District for Shaping our Next Generation</p>												
<p>WHY PAY MORE?!? Get a <u>FREE</u> Analysis of Your Telephone & Internet Bill Start Saving Today!!</p>	<p>Your One-Stop-Shop for All Your Communication Needs</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>* PHONE / VOIP</td> <td>* I.T. SUPPORT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* FILE / WEB / EMAIL SERVERS</td> <td>* NETWORK APPLIANCE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* WEBSITE DESIGN / HOSTING</td> <td>* INTERNET CONNECTIVITY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* DATA BACKUP / RECOVERY</td> <td>* CAMERAS & SECURITY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* FIREWALL / VPNs</td> <td>* EBT/DEBIT/CREDIT RATES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* WIRING/CABLING</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	* PHONE / VOIP	* I.T. SUPPORT	* FILE / WEB / EMAIL SERVERS	* NETWORK APPLIANCE	* WEBSITE DESIGN / HOSTING	* INTERNET CONNECTIVITY	* DATA BACKUP / RECOVERY	* CAMERAS & SECURITY	* FIREWALL / VPNs	* EBT/DEBIT/CREDIT RATES	* WIRING/CABLING	
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DECODING Quality Care

by Abbe Kovacik, Director of Education

Like many women born in the early twentieth century, my grandmother had the refined ability to speak in colloquialisms. As I think about quality early care and education one of her oft used phrases comes to mind; "it's a hard nut to crack".

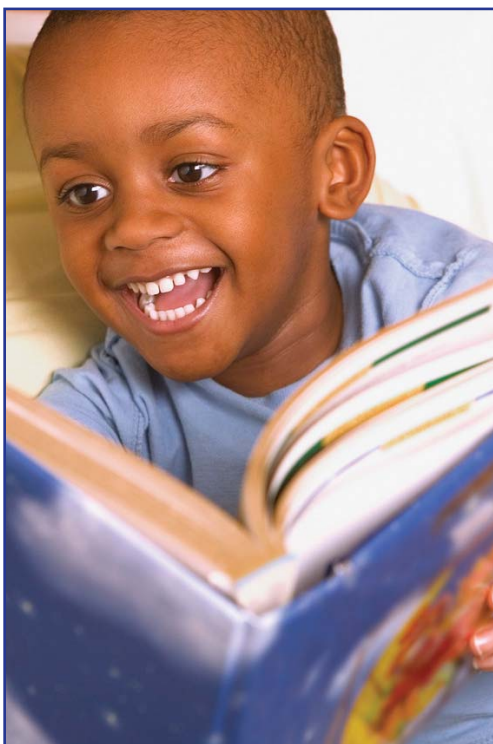
Achieving excellence in regard to all of the varied aspects of quality care is indeed, hard to crack. Like a mysterious cipher, the code to quality can elude even the most skilled cryptologist. Unfortunately secret decoder rings don't come with the job.

It seems that "cracking this nut" takes education, experience and to some degree... enlightenment. Research analysis reveals that directors with classrooms that scored high in observed quality were more likely to:

- * Express high expectations regarding staff qualifications and curriculum planning;
- * Communicate respect for and a commitment to support staff;
- * Integrate new learning/research findings with their intrinsic beliefs to inform decision making;
- * Prioritize resource allocation to staff wages, benefits, and to professional development;
- * Emphasize the importance of good financial planning and management; and
- * Rely on external standards that exceed licensing requirements to shape program practices.

So as grandmother would say; in a nutshell, directors' leadership and management skills influence quality. These skills determine whether administrators are able to overcome financial constraints, have high expectations for teachers, and look to external standards beyond licensing to guide programmatic practice.

How does a program director develop such leadership and management skills? Well, some might take a "crack" at the recently developed online national director credential for early childhood administrators from McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University. The credential focuses on the essential knowledge and skills administrators need to deliver high-quality programming for



young children (<http://aim4excellence.nl.edu>). The credential is earned through the completion of nine self-paced modules. Modules are priced at \$150.00 each and college credit may be purchased for an additional fee.

Directors may also pursue the New York State Children's Program Administrator Credential designed as a standard by which to measure program management, fiscal management, and leadership abilities of early childhood and school-age program administrators. This credentialing process includes three phases; inquiry, candidacy and preparation/review. Credential candidacy requires post associate degree coursework and proficiency related to 18 areas of competence. There is a \$300 credentialing fee. For more information administrators can visit www.nysaeyc.org. Empire State College provides academic preparation required for the Children's Program Administrator Credential (www.esc.edu).

For new administrators the Early Care and Learning Council provides a seven-day, 5 workshop intensive introduction to the complex and dynamic management role of a director. The New Director's Institute is open to directors in their current positions 2 years or less. To learn more visit <http://www.earlycareandlearning.org>.

Through education such as these, program standards related to Quality Stars New York and Program Accreditation (NAEYC) administrators may well begin to decipher the difficult puzzle of quality care.

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The Capital District Child Care Council is a resource and referral agency dedicated to promoting quality, accessible child care for all of the Capital Region's diverse communities. The Council assumes a leadership role in supporting children, parents, child care professionals, and employers through referral counseling, education, training, and advocacy.