

READY TO LEARN PROVIDENCE

Fall 2004 / Winter 2005

Director's Report: Great Things to Come

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As 2004 draws to a close it's a good time for each of us to reflect on the accomplishments of the R2LP community during the past year. So much good work has been done: *HeadsUp! Reading*, early learning grants, the *Play and Literacy Forum*, *Family Fun Day*, *Parents Night Out*, child and family literacy programs in partnership with the Providence Public Library, the Elementary School Fair and Open Schools Week sponsored by the Providence School Department, surveys of curriculum instruction and center capacity for children ineligible for kindergarten this year, our neighborhood-level indicator report - the list could go on. As varied as these efforts have been, they all have a common base - the dedicated work of members of the R2LP community and the R2LP staff. I am deeply grateful to all who have participated and supported our collective vision. We've experienced the challenge and satisfaction of working together on behalf of the children and families of Providence.

Much remains to be done and I am delighted to report that R2LP's future has been secured for the next several years. This fall we learned of our success in securing three major federal grants: AmeriCorps, Early Reading First, and a renewal of the Early Learning Opportunities Act. In the short-term, we are gearing up for this new challenge at R2LP by hiring new staff and fine-tuning our local council, board and committee structures. In preparation for the arrival of 30 AmeriCorps volunteers next spring, we will move our offices to 945 Westminster Street. Please visit us at this new location after the New Year - it is not only accessible by both car and bus -



We're Moving!

Look for us at 945 Westminster Street beginning in January.

there is ample on street parking! Even as we move offsite, we remain firmly anchored by our parent agency, The Providence Plan, which has both nurtured and grounded R2LP's work.

Going forward, R2LP will maintain its vision that *all children in Providence enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn*. Our new grants will allow us to "put legs on" our work. AmeriCorps volunteers will serve at all 10 library branches and at early care and education settings throughout the city. Parents will join R2LP's ranks as certified School Readiness Ambassadors. And Early Reading First will provide four early education programs in the city with the rich learning environments and the dynamic early literacy curriculum necessary to become "centers of educational excellence."

On behalf of the R2LP community, I invite you to continue partnering with us in 2005.

Happy New Year! - *Joyce Butler*

New Staff at R2LP

Stan Kuziel is now Director of Program Operations for R2LP. In this new role, Stan will be managing and overseeing the administrative functions of R2LP. Stan is a graduate of Tufts and Harvard School of Ed and has a rich professional history. He is also very familiar with the work of R2LP having helped us over the past two years as a member of several committees and as former chair of the Governing Board.

And, on December 14, Gail Wing joined the staff as Executive Assistant. For 16 years she worked at GTECH Corporation, most recently as a Traffic Coordinator where she organized extraordinarily complex lottery bids for the company. She is a published poet and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in English Literature.

Welcome Stan and Gail!

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Play and Literacy Forum Debuts!

R2LP

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Reeva Sullivan Murphy
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Evelyn St. George
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Rev. Jeffrey Williams

R2LP Staff

Joyce Butler,
Executive Director
Stan Kuziel,
Director of Program Operations
Marcia Moon,
Director of Professional Development
Katie Murray,
Special Projects Coordinator
Kevin Novell,
Systems Coordinator Intern
Tania Quezada,
HeadsUp! Reading Coordinator
Judy Victor,
Parent Engagement Coordinator
Gail Wing,
Executive Assistant

On the cold, overcast Saturday morning of November 20th, over 170 child care educators arrived at the URI/Feinstein Providence Campus to learn about using play and literacy in early child care settings at the **R2LP Play and Literacy Forum**. This opportunity was provided by R2LP and the work of its Professional Development Committee.

The Forum's focus on play and literacy was the result of citywide conversations with child care educators about their professional development needs around curriculum. The committee found a need for more conversation around play in both early child care and kindergarten settings through its alignment activities around the RI Early Learning Standards. A curriculum survey of child care centers in Providence found that the majority of centers were using *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* by Diane Trister Dodge. Dodge was one of two nationally known educational authors who taught at the Forum.

The Forum was the first of its kind in Rhode Island and attracted child care educators primarily from Providence who spent the day learning from Diane Trister Dodge and Candy Jones. Dodge, who gave the keynote speech, is the founder and president of Teaching Strategies, Inc., a company that seeks to improve the quality of early childhood programs by offering developmentally appropriate curriculum materials, practical assessment tools, training programs, parenting resources, and staff development services. She has 40 years of experience in the field and is the author of many books including *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. Jones is a Senior Associate for Teaching Strategies, Inc. and has been in the field of early childhood education for 26 years. She authored *Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach* and several other books.

Two workshops, facilitated by both Dodge and Jones, provided additional learning opportunities

for participants. They covered the use of "interest areas" and strategies" (*see descriptions on next page*). There was a translator who provided simultaneous translation for 28 Spanish-speaking attendees.

Forum registration charges were \$30 for Providence early care educators and \$45 for other participants. Keeping the event this affordable was no small task – discounting volunteer support and in-kind donations, conference real costs per participant were \$95.

Steve Aveson, anchor newscaster for WPRI TV Channel 12 surprised everyone by speaking about his background in early education. He regaled the audience with a performance of "hand" puppets. He acquired a new fan club in Providence!

The first 100 Providence early care educators to register for the forum received the newest Teaching Strategies book *Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach*, courtesy of the Rhode Island Parent Information Network. Additional books were available for sale. Professional development credits were available for attendees.



Diane Trister Dodge, top, delivering the keynote address and Candy Jones, bottom, leads a workshop

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US Department of Health & Human Services
US Department of Education
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation
Hasbro Charitable Trust
Rhode Island Department of Health
United Way of Rhode Island

Forum Workshop Highlights

Play in the Age of Outcomes: Curriculum and Assessment

"While young children learn best through play, not all play is equal. Curriculum developers have a special responsibility to ensure that teachers know how to create the kind of environments that engage children in purposeful and rich play experiences and that encourage meaningful learning."

During the keynote speech participants learned how a comprehensive curriculum and ongoing assessment provide the roadmap for planning and implementing a quality early childhood program that enables children to gain the full benefits of play.

Presented by Diane Trister Dodge

"Strategies" Workshop

"There are many ways for teachers to support children's language and literacy learning. According to research, the seven most important strategies are talking, singing, and playing with language; reading aloud; storytelling; story retelling; writing; supporting children's learning through play; and using studies to promote literacy."

In this workshop, participants discovered how to most effectively employ these strategies so that children's learning is maximized.

Presented by Candy Jones

"Interest Areas" Workshop

"Language and literacy experiences can be part of everyday experiences in a classroom organized in interest areas and filled with literacy-related materials. Teachers can engage children in experiences that help them develop important early reading and writing skills."

Participants explored ideas for integrating literacy props, materials, and experiences in all areas of the classroom.

Presented by Diane Trister Dodge

A Visit from Rosemary Wells



On December 4th, the "fairy godmother" of children's literature arrived in Providence, making a stop at the Central Branch Library. Author and illustrator Rosemary Wells gave two presentations to nearly 200 people. Joining her was her West Highland White Terrier Sophie, who was easily recognized as the inspiration of her popular character "McDuff". Her visit was made possible through Ready to Learn Providence and the US Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Bureau.

With nearly four decades of work and 125 titles to her credit, it seems especially fitting that the New York Times Book Review recently bestowed the title of "honorary fairy godmother" on Ms. Wells. Although she has written several chapter books, Wells is best known for her picture books, and is the creator of such memorable characters as Max and Ruby (based on her two daughters, Marguerite and Victoria), Yoko and Emily. Ms. Wells's picture books are entirely populated by animals, and while they appear to be cute and innocent, the stories are actually based upon the everyday feelings and fears of young children. Through her books, she generously paves the road for young children just beginning to learn, making good things happen through her insight, humor and compassion.

At the morning session, Ms. Wells spoke to public librarians and members of R2LP committees about the importance of early literacy. She emphasized the need to read to children at an early age so as to inspire in them a desire for learning. She cited statistics on the average amount of television that

Right, Rosemary Wells speaking to her morning audience at the Providence Public Library on December 4th.

children watch each week (50 hours!) and the role that reading and thinking creatively should be playing instead.

In the afternoon, Ms. Wells spoke to *HeadsUp Reading!* graduates and members of the general public about her techniques as an author and illustrator. She also introduced her newest book *My Kindergarten*.

Twenty-three different titles were for sale at the event through Books on the Square. The bookstore donated 20% of afternoon book sale proceeds to PPL's children's programs. Ms. Wells signed books for attendees at both sessions.



Left, Ms. Wells signing books for young members of her afternoon audience.

HeadsUp! Reading Trainings Continue

Forty child care providers received training in early childhood literacy through HeadsUp! Reading over the past several months. During the summer, from June 21 to August 12, R2LP held a 15 week session of at Casey Family Services. Tania Quezada, Coordinator of *HeadsUp! Reading*, facilitated the class which was offered entirely in Spanish. Fifteen family home day care providers completed the session. For the first time since R2LP began offering *HeadsUp! Reading* last year, a representative from the Providence Public Library attended a class to share information about resources that the libraries have to offer. Participants found this so helpful that we will make this standard for all future *HeadsUp! Reading* classes. At the end-of-session celebration participants were commended for their hard work and commitment. Participants received certificates, stipends, two professional books and several children's books.

From September 20 through November 30 Tania Quezada facilitated two additional courses at the Genesis Center. Twenty-four child care providers attended the courses, which were conducted in Spanish. A well-attended celebration was held on December 13, 2004 at Casey Family Services.

Los Entrenamientos de HeadsUp! Reading Continua

La sección de verano del programa HeadsUp! Reading fueron ofrecidas durante el mes de Junio hasta el 12 de Agosto. La clase del verano fue ofrecida en español. La clase tomo lugar en Casey Family Services en la ciudad de Providence. En la sección de verano tuvimos el placer de trabajar con 15 proveedoras de cuidado de niños. Todas las proveedoras que se inscribieron para el programa, terminaron la sección de las 15 semanas. Durante la clase estuvimos un representate de las librerías publicas de la ciudad Providence. La representante pudo infórmale a las proveedoras de los beneficios y recursos que las librerías le puede ofrecer. La visita del representante se va a integrar al programa de HeadsUp! Reading. Para finalizar el curso de HeadsUp! Reading el programa les brinda una celebración a los participantes. Y durante la celebración que se le brindo a los participantes de la clase de verano tuvimos la participación de todas las proveedoras. La celebración fue en Casey Family Services donde las proveedoras recibieron certificados, estipendios, dos libros profesionales y varios libros de cuentos para los niños.

En Septiembre 20, 2004 las clases de otoño comenzaron y terminaron el 30 de Noviembre. En la sección de otoño estuvimos 24 participantes que se inscribieron al programa. Las clases fueron ofrecidas en español. El lugar donde ofrecimos las clases de otoño fue en el Genesis Center en la ciudad de Providence.

Our *HeadsUp! Reading* spring course will start January 10, 2005. The classes will be held in our training space at our new office on Westminster Street. Three classes will be conducted this semester; two of which will be in Spanish. We expect 45 participants.

The newly-formed *HeadsUp! Reading* Club held its first official meeting on December 6, 2004 at Knight Memorial Library. R2LP organized this club with 25 members who already completed training. Club members will participate in six interactive workshops over the next several months to reinforce the importance of literacy, writing, and phonological awareness with children. The club will also provide an opportunity for participants to share their successes and challenges of providers. Tania Quezada and Marcia Moon, Director of Professional Development, are facilitating the Club's activities. We are very excited about this new activity as *HeadsUp! Reading* graduates continue growing their educational knowledge.

Estuvimos dos secciones durante el otoño. Tendremos la celebración para los participantes de otoño el 13 de Diciembre en Casey Family Services.

Ready to Learn Providence ha organizado un club para los participantes que han completado el curso de HeadsUp! Reading. El club tuvo su primera reunión oficial el 6 de Diciembre en la librería Knight Memorial en el ciudad de Providence. Habrá un total de 6 talleres interactivos para los miembros del club. Los talleres van a reesforzar la importancia que tiene la lectura, escritura y los conocimientos fonológicos en la educación de los niños. Las facilitadoras del club son Tania M. Quezada, Coordinadora del programa HeadsUp! Reading y Marcia Moon, Directora de Desarrollo Profesional para Ready to Learn Providence. Estamos muy contentos de saber que continuaremos trabajando con los participantes vía este club. Queremos que este club y las actividades nuevas que van a ser integrada puedan estimular a los miembros presente a poder educar a otros miembros en un futuro no muy lejano.

El programa de HeadsUp! Reading va a comenzar la sección de primavera el 10 de Enero. Las clases serán en la oficina de Ready to Learn Providence. Esta sección ofrecerá tres cursos individuales, dos de los cursos serán en español y el tercer curso será en ingles.

R2LP Congratulates all the Graduates of *HeadsUp! Reading*

R2LP Felicita a todos los graduados de *HeadsUp! Reading*

Class of December 2003 Clase de Diciembre 2003

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Xiomarra Aguirre | Felicia Espinal | Georgina Ortiz |
| Magalis Alvarado | Rosa Florimon | Minerva Osorio |
| Alenzo Arevalo | Mirna Fuentes | Lourdes Pichardo |
| Maria Batista | Reina Garcia | Rosemary Raygada |
| Maria Belen | Rosa Garcia | Brunilda Rivera |
| Deuni Benzant | Bartola Garido | Maritza Rivera |
| Maria Billard | Gloria Gonzalez | Petra Rodriquez |
| Elsa Brito | Ramona Gonzalez | Raquel Rodriquez |
| Grace Brown | Chuck Hampton | Rebecca Salcedo |
| Abigael Bucio | Thelma Jimenez | Elvira Saldano |
| Sofia Bucio | Margarita Ledesma | Nelsa Sanchez |
| Maria Cardenas | Josefina Lopez | Hilda Serrano |
| Mary Cipriano | Rosa Martinez | Joyce Sylvia |
| Milagros Collazo | Angela Morales | Roma Tavares |
| Gladys Colon | Lucila Moreles | Somalis Urena |
| Monica Cosme | Olga Moreno | Nilda Vega |
| Lydia De Jesus | Rosa Moyano | Wendy Villatoro |
| Erick De La O | Virginia Navarro | Caligna Viñas |
| Gregoria De La Rosa | Feta Norris | Maria Whatts |
| Grace Diaz | Sandra Novejil | Piedad Ypiña |
| Maritza Done | Zully Ortega | |

Class of May 2004 Clase de Mayo 2004

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|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Antonia Acevedo | Veronica Jeannoton | Ana Perez |
| Josefa Alvarez | Norga Jimenez | Benita Perez |
| Anabella Arnold | Caroline Johnson | Elsa Perez |
| Alma Benzant | Zeneida Lobera | Altagracia Polanco |
| Virginia Carrasco | Ann Lombard | Sarah Ramirez |
| Leonidas Castillo | Rosa Maldonado | Linda Reyro |
| Luisa Castillo | Teofila Maldonado | Glennys Reynoso |
| Maria Chacon | Johnnie Matthew | Francisco Rivera |
| Ybet Collado | Maria Melendez | Amarilis Rodriquez |
| Ines Colon | Miriam Melgar | Lizzie Rodriquez |
| Alexandra Correia | Ester Mercado | Marisol Rodriquez |
| Pamela De Cubellis | Raquel Mercado | Miguelina Rodriquez |
| Ysabel De Rosado | Rosemary Mercado | Sylvia Rodriquez |
| Ligia Diaz | Gina Molis | Carmen Rosado |
| Angela Duran | Maria Morales | Miriam Saldana |
| Ana Esquilin | Melida Morel | Elvira Sarit |
| Carmen Estrada | Carmen Navarro | Odalina Segura |
| Ana Ferreira | Delba Nuñez | Donna Tassoni |
| Juana Francisco | Maria Nuñez | Manuela Tol |
| Lourdes Fuentes | Shannon O'Neill | Cari Ann Tolson |
| Sandra Gamez | Maribel Padilla | Paulina Torres |
| Camelia Garcia | Miguelina Peguero | Ines Turbi |
| Lisa Gregoire | Erin Pellegrino | Flor Vargas |
| Anagilda Gutierrez | Melida Peña | Francisca Viñas |
| Delcy Hilario | | |

Class of August 2004 Clase de Agosto 2004

| |
|------------------|
| Colasita Alcalá |
| Dany Asencio |
| Grecia Damaso |
| Migdalia Duran |
| Maria Fajardo |
| Miladys Gomez |
| Deisy Hernandez |
| Lucila Mora |
| Lilia Peña |
| Mendrid Peralta |
| Estela Rodriquez |
| Olga Rubio |
| Nilda Tejada |
| Maria Vargas |
| Juana Woodward |

Class of December 2004 Clase de Diciembre 2004

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Rafela Barinas | Australia Ramos |
| Rita Bisono | Maria Ramos |
| Merva Espinal | Edicta Rico |
| Rosa Fernandez | Ramona Rivera |
| George Garcia | Ana Rodriquez |
| Lidia Garcia | Pensilvania Rodriquez |
| Lisandra Mendez | Ivelisse Rosario |
| Sandra Morel | Mireya Santos |
| Luisa Nuñez | Ana Tejada |
| Isabel Ovalle | Giomery Tejada |
| Dilia Perez | Maria Tejada |
| Martha Ramirez | Raquel Tejada |



Photos from the HeadsUp! Reading celebration on December 13. Left, Jhoana Cortez writes her ABC's during the celebration. With her is her child care provider and HUR graduate Ivelissa Rosario. Below, graduates of the program receiving certificates, books and stipends.



May Early Learning Grantees Report Back

This year R2LP awarded 32 grants of teaching resources and professional development courses to family child care providers and child care centers. Reports are in and they are extremely enthusiastic. Here are two examples:

"... Being awarded this grant was such a great feeling. It made me know that some people truly know that we are not babysitters.

We provide a valuable service. We help shape little people... the children have been having so much fun with the buggy.* When I am not driving them, it is in the dining room and for some reason they all like to sit in it like they are on a ride. I have included the books in my program. The boys love the dinosaurs books. They all love the Spanish books... All of them love looking through "the glass" as they refer to the magnifying glasses. It has opened a whole new world for 18 month - 2 year olds. I think they are even saying their words better.

Thank you again for awarding me the grant. It has made me know that I have chosen the correct path."

- Julie Triggs, family home care provider

*** See pg.1 for a photo of a buggy in use!**



Time to read at Thelma Jimenez's Home Childcare.



Discovering rocks and patterns at the Miriam Y.

"The children have not only become excited to explore the new materials but they feel a sense of ownership with the 'Science Library' materials.

The introduction of the science and nature materials has met many of our desired outcomes. Children have become interested in learning new things and are increasingly demonstrating emergent literacy skills. Recently, the preschoolers excitedly looked at bugs under magnifying glasses and drew pictures of their discoveries. As they explored, the children spoke about the bugs and discussed their drawings. The children problem-solved sharing their work space and used inventive spelling to describe their drawings, then hung the pictures on the wall. Most importantly, the children were proud of themselves and their work, especially when their parents saw the display. This is only one small example of how the grant materials have assisted us in achieving our desired outcomes for our children."

- Charlene Walmsley, Smith Hill Early Childhood Learning Center/Capitol City Community Centers

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