

1957 2007

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF
PRIMARY PROJECT

Happy Birthday Primary Project!

What a celebration! It was indeed a privilege to be surrounded by hundreds of child associates and Primary Project supervisors at the 50th Anniversary Conference held November 15-16 in Rochester, NY...home to the beginning roots of Primary Project.

The birthday party and reception was celebrated as a "very special tribute to child associates," reminding us of Primary Project's rich history, growth and future promise. Joined by retired Primary Project friends and current supporters, the evening reception was filled with fun, laughter and memories. All child associates from the class of 1957-2007 were inducted into the Coterie of Children's Institute, a special honor for a distinguished group of individuals who have made significant, special and sustained contributions to the organization.

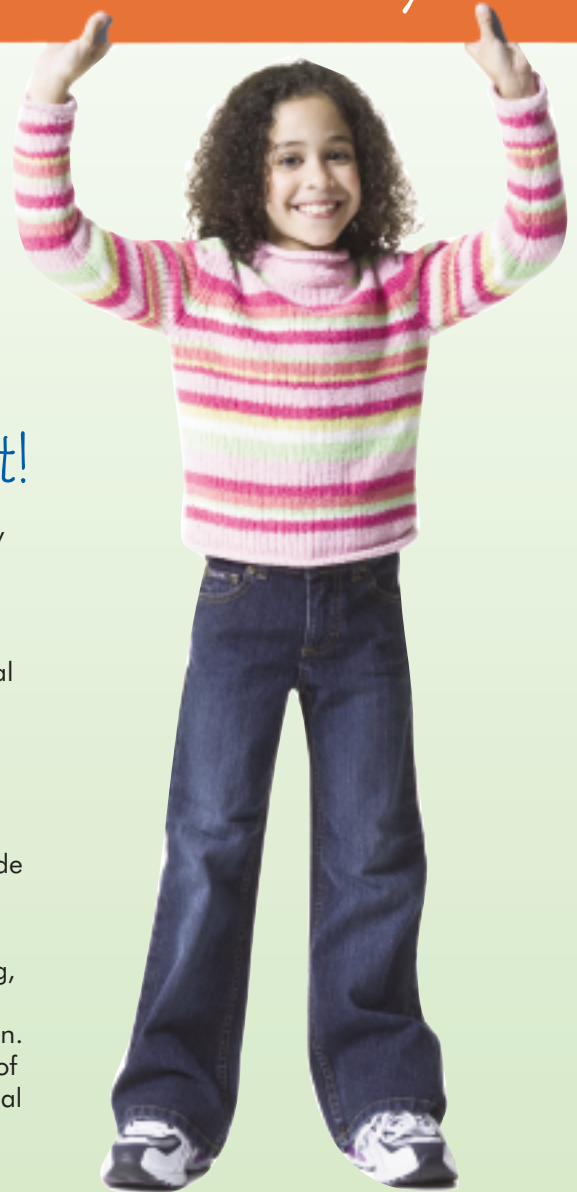
The conference itself was a special event featuring Dr. Garry Landreth, a University of North Texas Regents Professor of counseling, development and higher education, as well as a nationally known researcher and publisher in the field of play approaches with children. He spoke with us about touching what was untouchable in the lives of young children and why child-centered play approaches are so critical in helping young children feel valued.

The following day, Sue McCann and Christian Dean from New Orleans, Louisiana shared their journey in bringing Primary Project to children in New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As we witnessed and heard about the stories of hope, resilience and adjustment of school and families, we were all touched.

Both days provided choices in smaller break out sessions by area professionals on a number of play or child specific areas to enhance and support the work of Primary Project teams.

Especially exciting was that representatives across the country joined us in an international celebration of 50 years of promoting healthy school relationships based in play. Joining a strong showing from sites around New York State were numerous child associates, supervisors and principals from Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Missouri and Ontario, Canada. Nationally, Primary Project is strong and reaching more and more children. What could be better?

From the Playroom



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Nationally Certified Schools

Apple Glen Elementary
Bentonville, AR

Harp Elementary
Springdale, AR

Abate Elementary
Niagara Falls, NY



Transitions

Goodbye to Steve Demanchick

This past fall, Steve Demanchick, M.S.Ed., LMHC, left Children's Institute to pursue his lifetime dream...to be a Counselor Educator. Our congratulations extend to Steve who is now teaching full-time as an assistant professor at Nazareth College in their Creative Arts department. Fortunately, Nazareth College is located in Rochester, so we can continue to collaborate with Steve on various projects. On behalf of the many child associates, supervisors, coordinators, children and colleagues whose lives Steve has touched, we wish you well!

Hello to Gail Ferguson

Gail Ferguson, Ph.D., is a research and clinical associate at Children's Institute with a background in clinical psychology. She has joined the New York State leadership team and is involved in the coordination/support of model schools and the organization of trainings for the Binghamton/Oneonta, NY area. Gail also serves as a program and clinical consultant to a number of Primary Project programs in the Rochester City School District and is a behavioral health consultant to urban and suburban preschool programs in Rochester. Born and raised in Jamaica, Gail continues research on child and adolescent development and well-being in Jamaica. She is married to a fellow Jamaican and together they enjoy watching movies, seeing new places and imagining the future.

Anniversary celebration ideas:

Ways to Make an Impression

We asked child associates, supervisors and friends of Primary Project for ideas to celebrate this milestone year at the school level. Below is the second set of 25 suggestions...both big and small ideas...something for every program.

Find ways this year to both "celebrate and educate" others about healthy school adjustment, prevention through play and the power of relationships.

1. Five times during the remainder of the year, **contact ten parents** of children in your school to tell them about something unique or interesting that you saw their child doing that day at school.
2. **Offer the 4th R...Relationships...series** on building emotionally responsive skills. Offer the series during the months that have an "R" in them...January, February, March and April for either teachers or parents or both.
3. **Take 50 minutes:** Commit to a public awareness activity (writing about Primary Project, presenting, submitting a grant, etc.) for at least 50 minutes a week or 50 minutes a month or every other month...whatever you can do this year.
4. **Fifty ways to say thanks:** Send a handwritten thank you note to people who support Primary Project in your school and community.
5. Fifty opportunities for Primary Project children past and present to **participate in morning announcements** throughout the school year.
6. **Ask 50 children the same "play" question** and publicize the answer. For example: What do you wish parents had more time to play? What do you wish teachers had more time to play?
7. In large districts, **hold a Primary Project progressive party:** One day a month out of this school year, visit 2 or 3 programs and playrooms in different schools.
8. **Create your own collection of children's stories** about Primary Project or create a week where children draw on placemats to be used at the superintendent's office.
9. **Celebrate with conversations about the future:** Invite your early childhood teachers and principals to an afternoon of tea and cookies and thank them for being on your Primary Project team.
10. **Share the results of your evaluation** in a short presentation to the school board and teachers so they can see how Primary Project is impacting early child adjustment to school.
11. Every 5 weeks, **revisit-reconnect with a past Primary Project child** for 50 minutes.

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Bringing the Lessons Home

Consider playtime an investment in your child's future

Playtime is valuable time. It has tremendous payoffs. During play, children learn how the world and the people in the world really work. During play, children often imitate valuable adult behaviors, stretch their imaginations and feel like they have accomplished something. When you play with your child you add to these benefits by making your child feel important and valued.

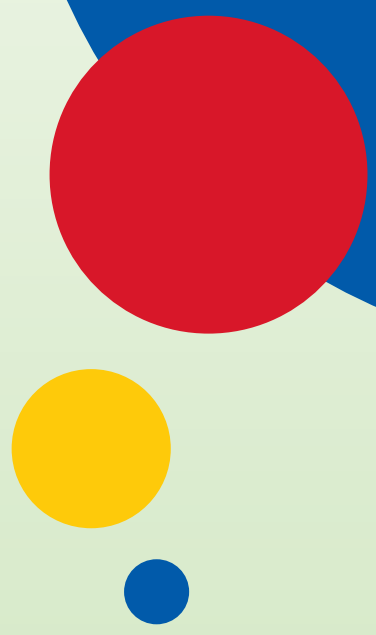
As you play with your child let your child decide what to play. Children usually choose an activity in which they are interested. When a child decides what to play themselves, it will keep their attention longer. It also increases the child's feelings of self-worth because it shows you appreciate their interests and you believe in their ability to make decisions. You might get bored with the same activity but your child learns through repetition. If you are tired of it, gently and occasionally extend with a simple suggestion, but be careful not to overtake the activity. This simple extension can come in the form of statements called, "I wonder...statements." For example, turn the tea party into cooking an entire meal, simply by suggesting, "I wonder if we should cook an entire meal," and then see where your child takes the idea. Instead of just pushing around cars, gently extend by suggesting, "I wonder what happens if my car needs fixing." Your child will then take this wonderment suggestion and extend the play or simply ignore your wonderment suggestion. Either way, just make sure that your child chooses the activity not you, and these extension statements only occur occasionally, allowing the child to direct the play.

Slowing down our adult thoughts: While you are playing focus on your child, don't let your mind wander to work, the cooking or the dishes in the sink. Your child will realize that they don't have your complete attention and feel that they are not important enough to keep your attention. Use your imagination and get involved. Play the part that you are given. If you can quiet your "adult head," playtime can be a time for parents to relax and unwind. It can become a time to slow down your life and help you focus on what is truly important, your child. Play helps parents better understand their children's desires, abilities and developmental stage. During play a child may reveal how they view their own style of being a parent, their view of you. This can be heart-warming and/or eye-opening.

As your child gets older their interests will change as well. They might want to go outside and kick around a ball or play a game. When your child is a little older you will find that a great time to talk is when you are involved in an activity. Remember the commercial featuring a father talking to his son about drugs while playing basketball? Because you are involved in an activity that the child enjoys, the conversation is low-key. Your child is more likely to listen to you and you are more likely to really listen to your child.

Schedule some time to play with your child everyday. It doesn't need to be a lot of time, but focused time. If you don't plan playtime into your day it is easy to let the day slip away without ever really playing with your child. Consider playtime an investment in your child's future. It is during playtime that you build a bond with your child, expressing to them their importance to you. And this investment early, has payoffs, now, because your child will look forward to being with you. Later, as your child grows, they will continue to want to spend time with you.

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Please feel free to copy this page and share it with Primary Project parents.

Trayendo las Lecciones a la Casa



Considere el tiempo dedicado al juego como una inversión en el futuro de su niño/a

El tiempo para jugar es tiempo valioso. Tiene beneficios tremendos. Durante el juego los niños aprenden cómo el mundo y la gente en el mundo realmente funcionan. Durante el juego los niños a menudo imitan las conductas adultas valiosas, expanden sus imaginaciones y sienten que han logrado algo. Cuando usted juega con su niño/a usted añade a esos beneficios porque hace que su niño/a se sienta importante y valorado.

Cuando juegue con su niño/a deje que él o ella decida qué van a jugar. Usualmente los niños escogen una actividad que les interesa. Cuando los niños deciden qué van a jugar por sí mismos, esto les mantendrá la atención por más tiempo. También aumenta los sentimientos de valía propia en los niños porque demuestra que usted aprecia lo que les interesa a ellos y cree en la habilidad de ellos para tomar decisiones. Puede que usted se aburra con la misma actividad pero su niño/a aprende por la repetición. Si usted se cansa de ello, gentil y ocasionalmente ofrezca una sugerencia simple, pero cúdense de no acaparar la actividad. Esta simple sugerencia puede venir en el tipo de frases llamadas, "Frases...me pregunto si." Por ejemplo convertir la fiesta de tomar té en preparar una comida, simplemente sugiriendo, "Me pregunto si debemos preparar una comida," y luego esperar a ver hasta dónde el niño/a lleva la idea. En vez de simplemente empujar los carritos, sugiera gentilmente, "Me pregunto que pasaría si mi carro necesitara ser reparado." Su niño/a podría tomar esta sugerencia y extender el juego o simplemente ignorar la sugerencia. De cualquier modo, simplemente asegúrese de que su niño/a escoge la actividad y no usted, y que estas frases de sugerencias solamente se ofrecen ocasionalmente, permitiendo que el niño/a dirija el juego.

Frenando nuestros pensamientos de adulto: Mientras que usted juega enfoque en su niño/a, no permita que su mente se desvíe hacia el trabajo, cocinar o los platos en el fregadero. Su niño/a se dará cuenta de que no tiene toda su atención y esto le hará sentir como que no es lo suficientemente importante como para atraer su atención. Use su imaginación y participe activamente. Juegue la parte que le asignan. Si usted puede acallar su "cabeza adulta," el tiempo de juego puede ser un tiempo para que los padres se relajen y se diviertan. Puede llegar a ser el tiempo para frenar su vida y ayudarlo a enfocar en lo que es realmente importante, su niño/a. El juego ayuda a los padres a entender mejor los deseos, habilidades y etapas del desarrollo de sus niños. Durante el juego los niños pueden revelar cómo ellos ven hasta su propio estilo de ser p/madre, su visión de usted. Esto puede ser muy alentador y/o abrirle los ojos.

A medida que su niño/a crece sus intereses cambiarán también. Ellos querrán salir afuera y patear una pelota o jugar un juego. Cuando su niño/a es un poco mayor usted encontrará que un buen momento para hablar es cuando están participando en una actividad. ¿Recuerda el anuncio donde un padre está hablando de drogas con su hijo mientras juegan baloncesto? Ya que está participando en una actividad que su niño/a disfruta, la conversación es moderada (tono bajo). Su niño/a le escuchará con mayor probabilidad y es más probable que usted realmente escuche a su niño/a.

Fije un tiempo para jugar con su niño/a todos los días. No tiene que ser un tiempo largo, pero sí un tiempo enfocado. Si usted no hace planes para separar tiempo para jugar en su día es muy fácil dejar pasar el día sin haber jugado realmente con su niño/a. Considere el tiempo para jugar como una inversión en el futuro de su niño/a. Durante el tiempo para jugar es cuando usted forja los lazos que le unen a su niño/a, expresándole lo importante que él o ella es para usted. Y esta inversión temprana rinde beneficios, ahora, porque su niño/a quiere estar con usted y más tarde, a medida que su niño/a crece, porqué deseará pasar tiempo con usted.

Durante el tiempo para jugar es cuando usted forja los lazos que le unen a su niño/a, expresándole lo importante que él o ella es para usted.

Siéntase en libertad de copiar esta página y compartirla con los padres del Primary Project.

Ways to Make an Impression

(continued from page 2)

12. **Host a developmental fair** with the Primary Project team, including the school counselor, social worker and psychologist, during an already scheduled school event such as parent conferences, a school play, etc. Have information on the importance of social/emotional needs, why children need play, normalizing prevention of social/emotional needs just like physical needs as well as where parents can go if they are concerned about emotional or behavioral problems.
13. Every 10 weeks, **conduct a 50th anniversary playroom inventory**: Look at your playroom...is it time to clean or get rid of items that aren't used? Do you really need 10 stuffed animals or 50 Matchbox cars?
14. **The heart of Primary Project**: Create 50 hearts with facts or comments about Primary Project connections and relationships to be displayed in the hallway during February, or any month!
15. **Family play night**: 50 board games...one evening at the school. Ask the school PTA to help you celebrate families playing together.
16. This year, **provide Primary Project business cards** for your child associates.
17. **Plant 50 seedlings in cups or planters** and watch them grow into your Primary Project garden this school year.
18. **Create "50 ways" postcards for parents**: For example, 50 ways to make a child smile or 50 ways to show a child they are special or 50 things to play with your child when they say, "I'm bored!" or 50 wonderful quotes from the eyes of children.
19. **Ask the local newspaper or television station to visit** your program and capitalize on promoting the social and emotional needs of children and prevention.
20. **Decorate your program door** with something that celebrates and calls attention to the 50th anniversary and the importance of relationships, play and all aspects of health.
21. **Invite the superintendent** to your playroom this year.
22. **Reach out to Primary Project parents** in a way you haven't in years past. What can you do to enhance their knowledge about children's social and emotional needs? An extra phone call, a conference, a note....take time to connect.
23. **Educate**: Share what you do with children by showing clips of the Basic Skills: Intervention DVD to educate staff about what is occurring in the playroom. Look at past issues of From the Playroom. Are there articles that you could copy to increase the staff's understanding of the six core components?
24. This year, **investigate local retailers or community grants**. Take time out of your typical week to apply for a grant to use for new materials or other needs you may identify.
25. **Finally, remember to celebrate the relationships you have as a team....play together!** Be creative and appreciative of each other's contributions. Surprise each other when you least expect it...a kind word, something from the children, a private or a public thank you!

The Cardinal Sings

Half a century. The age of Primary Project, younger than I, much older than a baby that will be born today. 50 years, 18,250 days (not figuring in leap years!), 438,000 hours, 26,280,000 minutes. That's as much as I am going to calculate! My guess is that over these years Primary Project has touched at least 26 million lives when we consider the number of children screened, the number of child associates, the number of supervisors and the number of schools and communities touched. Now it would be one thing to rest on our laurels and talk about the past...but...



At the national conference in November, one of the many things Garry Landreth reminded us about our work is how important it is to focus on the PRESENT, not the past, and on the PEOPLE, not the problems. Perhaps that can be our guide as we move forward into the new year...perhaps this can be our New Year's resolution.

Let 2008 be a year that we focus on the PRESENT.

Let 2008 be a year that we focus on the PEOPLE.

Let 2008 be a year that we focus on our FEELINGS.

Let 2008 be a year that we ACCEPT.

—Deborah Johnson
Primary Project, National Director

Note to Child Associates

At the 50th Anniversary celebration, the Primary Project child associate class of 1957-2007 was inducted into the Coterie of Children's Institute. The Coterie is a group of individuals recognized for their sustained, significant and very special support.

We would be happy to send a certificate, acknowledging their induction into the Coterie, to any child associates who would like one. Please send us the names of the child associates, past and present, with their schools and school addresses. Also, please send us the names and addresses of the person(s) who can distribute the certificates to the child associates. We would like to have these names by February 15, 2008.

For more information, please contact Arlene Bobin at abobin@childrensinstitute.net or call (877) 888-7647, ext. 266.

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