



From the Playroom

SEPT 2017 • A PUBLICATION OF CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE INC.
A NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCY • COPYRIGHT ©2017

Prevention Goes a Long Way: 60 Years of Primary Project

A new school year brings with it lots of excitement – this year is no exception. There is an added level of enthusiasm related to Primary Project's 60th birthday celebration! We hope that your school-based Primary Project team is planning to join us on October 26 & 27 in Rochester, NY for what will be a remarkable two days of Primary Project professional development. The theme of the conference is **Prevention Goes a Long Way: 60 Years of Primary Project**. Whether you work in the Rochester area, in New York State, or are a national partner, it will be time well spent connecting with other Primary Project colleagues, networking, sharing, and learning! If you have not yet registered, there is still time to do so by [visiting our website at www.childrensstitute.net](http://www.childrensstitute.net).

Here are a few highlights about the conference:

1. Each year Children's Institute releases an **Application for Funding (AFF) to schools across New York State (NYS)**. This year we will release the AFF prior to the conference so that interested school personnel can learn how to bring Primary Project to their district while at the conference. A track of workshops will be offered on program overview, the intervention, the application process, and requirements for a successful grant proposal. These workshops will also be great for those that are newer to Primary Project or need a refresher.
2. Children's Institute is pleased to announce the conference has been approved for **6.25 hours of continuing education credits for NYS social workers in attendance**. We know that this is exciting news for Primary Project school-based social workers/supervisors!
3. As part of this year's conference at Woodcliff, you are also invited to attend **Children's Institute's biennial Community Update** on Thursday, October 26 and will feature an update on Children's Institute's new Social and Emotional Learning Center. The Center's Director, Elizabeth Devaney and Children's Institute's Executive Director, Dirk Hightower will speak on the Center's goal to facilitate a transformation in settings where children and youth grow, learn, and play, so that all adults intentionally foster the social and emotional skills young people need to be successful. This event is open to the community and gives Children's Institute the opportunity to share the impact of our work and to celebrate those who have made that work possible.

We wish you all the best in the new school year and look forward to working with you!

Creative Ways to Celebrate



How will you celebrate 60 years of Primary Project?

Rochester City School District child associates and supervisors recently shared some creative ways schools can join in the celebration of Primary Project's 60th birthday. Celebrate using one of these ideas or perhaps one that your team comes up with! Keep us posted on how you decide to celebrate throughout the year.

1. Display blank posters near/at the entrance of the school building and ask parents and visitors to share their own personal ways that they play.
2. Place a "memory jar" where students and staff can share a favorite memory about Primary Project.
3. Include in the school/district newsletter a 60th birthday announcement for Primary Project, highlighting the importance of play and the positive impact it has on young children.
4. Designate a special week or period of time during the year where classrooms take a special "play break."
5. Celebrate with cake! Personalize it by including the 60th logo. Invite both school staff and parents.
6. At school events (i.e. open houses) display a large poster celebrating 60 years of Primary Project. During the event offer ways to promote and highlight the importance of play.
7. Display a collage of Primary Project pictures taken over the years.
8. "Where are they now?" Ask that past Primary Project students write/share their experiences with Primary Project and how they found it to be valuable.
9. Have students create a banner for the school in celebration of 60 years.
10. Sing happy birthday to Primary Project at a school assembly or during morning announcements.
11. Have a traditional birthday party for Primary Project and invite the school community/parents to come and learn more about Primary Project and how it helps to support student's adjustment to school.
12. Designate a day to celebrate with extended recess/play time.
13. Use opportunities later in the year (i.e. field days) to keep the celebration going by connecting Primary Project with school-wide activities that already possess a natural "play" connection.
14. Include Primary Project along with the 60th logo on the school's website.
15. Display 60th balloons outside of the playroom.
16. Have students create birthday cards or drawings to display in the hallway where the playroom is located.

(continued on page 3)

How will you celebrate 60 years of Primary Project?

(continued from page 2)

17. Bring toys to school that were created or popular in 1957 and incorporate them into school events, gym class, recess, etc.
18. Craft a poem for the 60th birthday.
19. Display a large basket filled with expressive toys and sell raffle tickets. Proceeds help support the purchase of playroom supplies for Primary Project.
20. Coordinate a school bake sale in support of Primary Project with proceeds to purchase playroom items.
21. Gather students to spell out "Happy Birthday Primary Project" on the school lawn and take a photograph.
22. Host a parent play date to allow parents an opportunity to experience what their children do in the playroom. Share with parents what specific activities their child engages in during their time in Primary Project (i.e. sand, Legos, play-doh, etc.), emphasizing the value of play.
23. Connect with Children's Institute via Facebook and see how other schools are celebrating.
24. Decorate the door to the playroom in a birthday theme.
25. Dedicate a garden project to 60 years of Primary Project.
26. Have students develop skits or video montages to share what they love about Primary Project.
27. Include Primary Project or a play activity during Spirit Week.
28. Post on your school's social media page (Facebook, Twitter) about how you are celebrating Primary Project's 60th birthday.
29. Host a 60 day "play" challenge at your school!
30. Bring your team and join us at the Primary Project conference celebrating 60 years of Primary Project in Rochester, NY on October 26 & 27.



Congratulations to newly certified schools:

Barnard Early Childhood Center	New Rochelle, New York
Columbus Avenue School	Freeport, New York
Discovery Charter School	Rochester, New York
Dr. Charles T. Lunsford School No. 19	Rochester, New York
Lantana Elementary School	Lantana, Florida
Liberty Elementary School	Valley Cottage, New York
Montessori Academy	Rochester, New York
New Visions School	Freeport, New York
Seminole Trails Elementary School	West Palm Beach, Florida
South Olive Elementary School	West Palm Beach, Florida
South Seneca Elementary School	Interlaken, New York
The Renaissance Charter School	Jackson Heights, New York
Trinity Elementary School	New Rochelle, New York
Valley Cottage Elementary School	Valley Cottage, New York

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

Remembering When...



My Experience with Primary Project: Looking Back After 25 Years

A perspective from Lisa McGary – a parent, educator, and leader

Today, Jeff is 31 years old. He is successfully employed full-time in a technology related field. His father and I have seen him grow into an independent, confident, and responsible adult.

When Jeff entered kindergarten, I received a call from his school about giving permission for Jeff to participate in Primary Project. I freaked. I was a young parent, young educator, and truth be told, firmly of the belief that I was going to do a better job as a parent and educator than my own parents and educators. My reaction was further complicated by a previous experience with Primary Project that had lead me to the assumption that the program was for children suffering from a lack of parenting. Put on the brakes! Are you suggesting that my parenting skills are not what they ought to be?

For neither the first nor last time, the school staff made it about Jeff (teaching me valuable lessons about how keeping issues child-centered is the key to home/school communication). My memory of the process is that Jeff's teacher had filled out a survey about all of the students in the class, including Jeff, and results indicated that he did not participate actively in school. The teacher was concerned that this could compromise overall engagement and well-being. It was explained to me that Primary Project was an engagement strategy; Jeff would have one-on-one time playing and creating opportunities to create connections within the context of the school day.

Jeff's school career was ultimately successful. As I look back at Jeff's experience with Primary Project, I believe that this support contributed to his overall success. Primary Project was the vehicle by which Jeff's teacher was able to effectively communicate to both myself and his father in terms of what Jeff's experience in school was like. Primary Project was a responsive intervention that valued communication with the family and created an opportunity to problem solve together.

I asked Jeff what, if anything, he remembers about Primary Project. He doesn't remember much, but enjoyed reading my memories of his experience. Now as an educator in a leadership role, I took the first step in my district to explore the feasibility of establishing Primary Project at my school. It helped Jeff, and it can help young students who are in need of additional support connecting to school. We believe that Primary Project could be a viable, effective intervention in our mental health toolbox of tiered supports.

Honoring Primary Project



The sculpture pictured below was created by Achille Fongione and gifted to Children's Institute many years ago honoring the work of Primary Project and its support to school age children.

The piece depicts a boy walking along a fence, with one foot firmly grounded on top of the fence and the other stretched ahead but not yet sure of the path, maybe with a feeling of apprehension. His face, pleasant with a slight smile and his eyes closed, shows some skepticism about how this is all going to occur. His arms are held out at his sides, providing balance and stability.

As the new school year begins, may this statue be a reminder to us as teachers, principals, school-based mental health professionals, and parents of how some students start the year – tentative, cautious, uncertain, and attempting to find their way and make their own path. Children rely on their own abilities to help them along the way, however for some, additional support is needed. Many schools in New York State and nationally have experienced the benefits of Primary Project and how children's relationships with their child associate or special friend helps to transform them into confident, buoyant, students who embrace new tasks, relate with peers, and express themselves better.





A FAMILY EVENT!

at Frontier Field VIP Lot

Climb aboard and explore
ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF TRUCKS!

**Saturday & Sunday
September 23 & 24, 2017**

Saturday, 10am-4pm • Sunday, 10am-3pm
New this year: Horn-free hour, 10-11am Sunday

Purchase tickets at www.childrensinstitute.net
PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

Join us for a
Community Update

CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE INTRODUCES THE



*Transforming the settings
where children
grow, learn, and play*

Thursday, October 26, 2017
4:30-6:00 pm

Woodcliff Hotel and Spa
199 Woodcliff Dr, Fairport, NY 14450

Register at www.childrensinstitute.net



*Meeting the needs of today's
children through Social and
Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Wednesday, November 8, 2017
5:30-7:30 pm

St. John Fisher College,
3690 East Ave, Rochester, NY 14618

Purchase tickets at www.childrensinstitute.net

FOR ONLINE TICKETS, REGISTRATION, AND MORE INFORMATION visit www.childrensinstitute.net

Mark your calendars...

Sept 23 & 24, 2017	Kids & Trucks Frontier Field VIP Lot, Rochester, NY Donate to Kids & Trucks – Sponsor children and families who otherwise cannot afford to attend this incredible event. Visit www.childrensinstitute.net/kids-and-trucks/donate
Oct 26, 2017	Community Update Woodcliff Hotel & Spa, Fairport, NY
Oct 26 & 27, 2017	Prevention Goes a Long Way: 60 Years of Primary Project Woodcliff Hotel & Spa, Fairport, NY
Oct 12, Nov 15, 2017 Jan 9, Feb 7, Mar 13, 2018	2017-2018 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Training Series Children's Institute, Rochester, NY
Nov 8, 2017	Children's Institute Spotlight Series St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY
Nov 28, 2017	ROC the Day – Please consider making an online donation to Children's Institute



Stay current with Children's Institute – follow us on Facebook and visit our website at www.childrensinstitute.net for more detailed information about our events and training opportunities, or for more information on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

A publication of Children's Institute, Inc.

www.childrensinstitute.net

Editor: Lynn Smith, LMSW • Designer: Mary Maiolo

Children's Institute is affiliated with the University of Rochester



The Primary Project 60 Years logo is available for use on your website and printed materials.

Visit our website to download the image.