Spring News from the STARS Office

In this edition we are featuring the Hartford AHS district. Thank you to the Orange County Parent Child Center in Tunbridge, VT for being this quarter’s spotlight provider!

The STARS office would like to share that we have a multi-year phase-in transition plan from the ECERS-R to the ECERS-3. The ECERS-3 will only affect licensed centers that have preschool age children, ages 3–5. The FCCERS (Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale) and the ITERS (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale) are not affected. STARS assessors will continue to use the ECERS-R until they have had training on the updated tool. We will keep programs informed as we move forward with this transition, beginning in Fall/Winter 2016, so please stay tuned…

We also want to remind providers to participate in the STARS Evaluation Survey! The survey was emailed to participating STARS programs by Jennifer Cleveland of Child Trends in early April, and will only be available until May 5th. Your time and feedback will help us understand what is working with STARS and to identify areas for change or improvement. If you haven’t received a link to the survey and would like to participate, please let us know! Thank you in advance for taking the time to help Child Trends and Vermont as a whole to evaluate STARS.

— Johanna Vaczy and Tierney O’Meara, STARS Coordinators
Gabrielle Pozzani of Orange County Parent Child Center

How did you decide to become an early care and education provider?
In 1994 I entered UVM with the intention of becoming a pediatric nurse, as I knew at a young age I wanted to work with kids. During my freshman year I landed a work study job as a classroom aide at the UVM Campus Children’s center. It was in this setting that my passion for working with kids was ignited (never to burn out). I had also been volunteering at the hospital to “get my hands wet.” I quickly found my experience at the hospital to be less than “fulfilling” and very emotionally draining. During winter break I thought long and hard about what direction I wanted to be moving in, and found myself hungry for more theoretical discussions while working. Upon returning for my second semester I immediately switched majors and began an amazing and rewarding career path in early education. I was my happiest in a classroom setting.

While working in various settings and roles I have been a part of some really amazing things happening with kids, families and the communities I served. These experiences caused me to dream, and dream really big with the hopes of someday leading an entire early education program down a path that brings them the same wonderfully rewarding and fulfilling experiences I had without the need to leave the state.

What inspires you?
The knowledge that I have positively impacted not only the present moment for the families I serve, but most importantly, the future of those families, and the future of the community that they live in. The children left in our care for many hours a week will eventually grow up and lead these communities, so it is in everyone’s best interest to be invested, be inspired and take great care. Children really are the future!

What is a favorite activity in your program?
Project work! I love long term projects that are inspired by children’s thinking, theories, wonderments and discoveries. It is being part of and supporting the children’s process of creating, problem solving, collaborating, and developing that I am my most effective at “teaching”. However, I consider myself more a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher. The word teaching implies a passive experience for the learner and in my career I have learned education should not be passive.

What do you like best about working with children and families?
Everything, from playing silly games and making deep explorations to supporting families through hard times...this really is my dream job! But if I had to choose one thing, I would say being part of and witnessing the growth that everyone in our program will experience. No one leaves the same as they came in. Everyone benefits from being here, not just the children.