



CONNECTICUT  
BIRTH TO THREE  
SYSTEM

PRESCHOOL SPECIAL  
EDUCATION

# BIRTH through news

• *Working together for children with disabilities* • INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

FALL 2004, VOL. 6 NO. 1

## Growing to Read

By Early Childhood Consultants  
State Department of Education

*Good Night Moon, Green Eggs and Ham, James and the Giant Peach* ... The names of these books and others probably bring memories of being read to, looking at colorful pictures, learning about new things or places – and so much



*This article is translated into Spanish on page 2. Ver la versión española de este artículo en la página 2, y todos los artículos a [www.birth23.org](http://www.birth23.org)*

Produced by the  
State Department of Education  
and the  
Connecticut Birth to Three System  
in collaboration with the



University of  
Connecticut

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM  
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

more. The books and their stories remind us of when we read those books, where and with whom. We remember the enjoyment we had of learning to read and eventually reading to learn. As adults, whether we are a parent or professional, it is up to us to continue to instill that enjoyment of books and provide those opportunities for all our young children – with or without disabilities.

Why such a focus on books and early literacy some of you may be asking ... Isn't it too early to learn to read? Actually, no. While formal reading and reading instruction is not developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers and some preschool children, we do know children gain significant knowledge of early language, reading and writing long before they enter school. In the last couple of years we have learned a lot about a young child's brain development and ability to learn. We have come to understand that children are far more competent and capable than we ever knew. Early language and literacy development begins in the first three years of life, continues through the preschool years and is closely tied to a child's earliest experiences with books and the adults in their lives. The interactions that young children have with literacy materials and with the adults in their lives are actually the building blocks for language, reading and writing. Early literacy is the natural development of skills through the enjoyment of books, the positive interactions between children and the

adults in their lives and the critical importance of literacy rich experiences from the child's environment. Literacy rich experiences are those that build children's understanding of the world around them through the learning of new words, how to use them and what they mean. It also reflects an environment where children can see print all around them – on cereal boxes, on toys, restaurant signs and the like.

As parents, we are our child's first teacher. We support our children's early literacy experiences by reading to them often starting when they are infants. And we need to read the same book over and over and over again, especially for toddlers. Young children love repetition. When books and their stories are repeated they become familiar and loved, just like old friends. Be patient with your child when reading a book. Let the child take their time looking at and finding objects and people on the pages. Talk together about what you see and help children focus on the meaning of words and objects that might be new to them. Let children turn the pages as the story moves on. Keep books in places where a child can easily reach them and make books be a part of what a child does every day. Bring your child's attention to letters and words on toys, on signs, even on food. Let children pretend read you a story, write or draw a story for you.

As adults working with infants and toddlers we can:

*(Continued on page 2...)*

- Read to children as part of our daily routine activity with them
- Help a child hold a book right side up and turn the pages right to left
- Have children look through books, pay attention to the pages and story, recognize and show recognition of pictures by pointing to and naming objects
- Support a child's understanding of events in books, such as a story's sequence, by asking questions such as "what do you think happens next?"
- Support story-reading behaviors such as babbling in imitation of reading or running fingers along the text from left to right

As adults working with pre-

school children, we can:

- Use a child's play to facilitate reading and writing development by creating classroom areas that support the development of skills, for example in the dramatic play area provide a cookbook, shopping coupons or empty food containers
- Establish a positive climate that supports early reading and ensure that the environment reflects books and materials that are culturally and linguistically diverse because children and their families are all unique
- Create a physical environment that promotes reading and writing – like having construction signs in the

block area, pencils and markers in the art area, menus in the snack area

- Create an environment where all children can participate with adequate supports and adaptations including making sure that children can see, hear and use the books and materials available to them
- Make reading and writing part of a child's daily routine at home and at school by using symbols, letters and words
- Encourage children to read and write to one another

So find a time today to make a book a part of your special time with a child.



## Crecer leyendo

Por Asesores de la temprana infancia  
Departamento Estatal de Educación

*Buenas noches Luna...*, *Huevos verdes y jamón...*, *Jacobo y el durazno gigante...* El nombre de estos y otros libros probablemente nos traiga memorias de cuando nos los leían, de los coloridos grabados que mirábamos, de cómo aprendíamos de cosas y lugares – y tanto más. Los libros y sus historias nos traen recuerdos de cuándo, dónde y con quién los leímos. Nos recuerdan el placer de aprender a leer, y eventualmente el de leer para aprender. De adultos, como padres o como profesionales, tenemos la responsabilidad de inculcar en todos los niños pequeños, tengan o no incapacidades, el goce de la lectura.

Algunos podrían preguntar ¿libros y alfabetización... a tan corta edad? ¿No es prematuro? Realmente no. Aunque los infantes, párvulos y algunos preescolares no

estén aun mentalmente desarrollados para el aprendizaje formal de la lectura,

se sabe que los niños pueden ganar un conocimiento significativo del lenguaje, de la lectura y de la escritura mucho antes de llegar a la escuela. En el último par de años hemos aprendido mucho del desarrollo del cerebro del niño y de su capacidad para leer. Hemos llegado a comprender que los niños son mucho más competentes y capaces que lo que solíamos creer. El desarrollo del lenguaje y la alfabetización comienza en los primeros tres años de vida, continúa durante los años preescolares y está estrechamente vinculado a las experiencias más tempranas con libros y con los adultos. Las interacciones de los niños pequeños con materiales de alfabetización y con los adultos en su vida son realmente sus fundamentos del lenguaje, y de la lectura y escritura. La alfabetización temprana es un



desarrollo natural de habilidades mediante el disfrute de los libros, las interacciones

positivas con adultos y las experiencias ricas en alfabetización, de crítica importancia en el desarrollo del niño. Son ricas en alfabetización las experiencias que edifican en el niño la comprensión del mundo que lo rodea mediante el aprendizaje de palabras, de cómo se usan y qué significan. También reflejan un ambiente en que los niños pueden ver letra impresa a su alrededor – en cajas de cereales, en juguetes, letreros en restaurantes etc.

Como padres somos los primeros maestros de nuestros hijos. Apoyamos las experiencias de alfabetización leyéndoles a menudo desde cuando son infantes. Y necesitamos leer el mismo libro una y otra vez, especialmente a los párvulos. A los niños pequeños les gusta la repetición. Al repetirles los libros y sus historias ellos se familiarizan y

se encariñan con ellas; cada cuento, cada personaje, se vuelve un viejo amigo. Sea paciente con su hijo al leerle. Deje que el niño se tome su tiempo mirando y encontrando objetos y personas en las láminas. Hablen juntos de lo que ven, ayude al niño a fijarse en el significado de palabras y objetos que pudieran ser nuevos para él. Deje que el niño pase las páginas según progresa la historia. Tenga los libros en lugares donde el niño pueda llegar con facilidad y haga de los libros parte de lo que el niño hace todos los días. Ayúdelo a fijarse en las letras y palabras que aparecen en juguetes, letreros, hasta en la comida. Deje que el niño simule leer una historia, o escribirla o representarla con dibujos.

Como adultos que trabajamos con infantes y párvulos podemos:

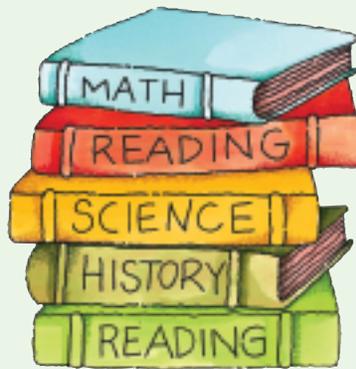
- Leerles como parte de nuestra rutina diaria
- Ayudar a un niño a tomar un libro al derecho y pasar las páginas de derecha a izquierda
- Hacer que los niños miren 'a través' de los libros, prestando atención a las páginas y a la narración, reconociendo y demostrando reconocer grabados señalándolos y nombrando objetos.
- Apoyar la comprensión de los niños de los sucesos en los libros, tales como la secuencia de un cuento, haciéndoles preguntas como "¿qué crees que va a pasar ahora?"
- Apoyar comportamientos como balbucear en imitación de verdadera lectura o pasar los dedos a lo largo del texto de izquierda a derecha

Como adultos que trabajamos con niños preescolares, podemos:

- Usar el juego para facilitar el desarrollo de la lectura y escritura

ra creando áreas en el aula que apoyen el desarrollo de facultades, por ejemplo en el área donde juegan al ama de casa tener un libro de cocina, cupones de compras o envases de comida vacíos.

- Establecer un clima positivo en apoyo de la lectura temprana y asegurar que el ambiente refleja libros y materiales cultural y lingüísticamente diversos porque los niños y sus familias son todos únicos
- Crear un ambiente físico que promueva la lectura y escritura –



como tener letreros de construcción en el área de bloques, lápices y marcadores en el área de arte, menús en el área de la merienda

- Crear un ambiente donde todos los niños puedan participar con apoyos adecuados y adaptaciones, que incluyan asegurarse que los niños puedan ver, oír y usar los libros y materiales a su disposición
- Hacer de la lectura y escritura parte de la rutina diaria del niño en el hogar y en el colegio usando símbolos, letras y palabras
- Estimular a los niños a leerse y escribirse unos a otros

Así que encuentre hoy tiempo para hacer de un libro una parte de su tiempo especial con un niño.

# BIRTH through 5 News

## Information for Families and Professionals

is published quarterly by the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System in collaboration with the Connecticut Birth to Three System, the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Newsletter Advisory Board. We welcome readers' comments and contributions related to the special needs of infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. Please mail correspondence to the editor at 67 Stony Hill Road, Bethel, CT 06801.

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# Babble, Talk, Sing, Rhyme, Read; Delightful Stepping Stones to Reading

By Patricia H. Estill, Connecticut  
Commission on Children

Before entering formal reading in school, all children should:

Have more than 1,000 hours of experiences with books, alphabet games, storybook reading and activities.

Have been included in conversation and treated as successful speakers and listeners.

Understand how to handle books and know that print moves left to right.

A child with delayed language development may need extra language practice. Take every opportunity to talk with your child. Your language can really help your child's language development. This is the big step to reading.

Speak slowly. Children who have trouble learning language often have difficulty understanding

fast speech. Speaking slowly will make it easier for your child to understand you. Reading slower can help too.

Talk out loud about what you are doing. Everyday events help your child learn language. While a child is getting dressed say, "You are putting on socks. What color are your socks? What are you putting on next? Do you need to wear a sweater?"

Sing. Sing simple songs. Encourage your child to sing, clap, dance, and keep the beat with you. Have fun. Get your whole family involved. Music is another helpful step to reading.

Rhyme. Nursery rhymes, silly poems, make up poems including your child's name. Rhyming trains your child's ear to hear word endings, an important reading skill.

## READ! READ! READ!

Choose simple books. Look for simple, clear illustrations or photographs. Point to the pictures. Name the pictures. Ask your child to tell you what he or she

sees. Make up a story about the pictures.

Choose stories that you like. Children love to hear the same story repeated again and again. This is one way they internalize a story.

Board books are good for early readers. They help children learn to turn pages.

ABC books are good for talking to your child about words and letters. These books also help children learn or collect words. Books have more language than television. Television programming for children uses fewer than 5000 words. Vocabulary in first grade is 5,500 to 32,000 words.

You do not need to buy a lot of expensive books. Look for books at tag sales. Buy some paperback books. The best source, and it is free, is your public library. 



## JOURNAL SERIES

Connecticut Division for Early Childhood, Council for Exceptional Children, announces a free Journal Series.

Join early intervention and early childhood special education colleagues to discuss professional practice articles and how they relate to your work with young children and their families.

Sessions are 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on September 22, October 27, and December 1, 2004.

For more information or to register and receive your articles, contact Bonnie Keilty, CT DEC President, at [keiltyeisman@att.net](mailto:keiltyeisman@att.net). 



## Birth to Three System Update



By Linda Goodman, Director  
CT Birth to Three System

Families enrolled in the Birth to Three System should have noticed a change in the monthly fee structure this past July. Fees are now adjusted for family size and fees were reduced for all families with annual incomes less than \$85,001. In addition, fami-

lies whose children began receiving services after July 1 do not begin paying until after the second full month of receiving services. Therefore, a family whose child receives services beginning in the middle of September will not be billed for September (partial month), will not be billed for October (first full month), will not be billed for November (second full month) and will be billed for December. That bill would be received in mid-January and due by February 15. We hope that this new procedure that is being adopted into regulation will make it easier for families to continue their participation. For more information, please visit the Birth to Three website at [www.birth23.org](http://www.birth23.org).

Even though the House passed its bill over a year ago and the Senate passed its bill this spring, Congress will most likely not act

on reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, the federal law that governs both early intervention and special education) before adjourning this fall and after the November elections. It is also not likely that a lame duck congress will take it up. That means that when the new 109th Congress convenes, IDEA reauthorization will begin again with new bills in the House and Senate. Although the IDEA is supposed to be reauthorized every five years, the last reauthorization occurred in 1997.

The Birth to Three System got through a very difficult fiscal year from July 2003 through June 2004. Although we had to ask the legislature for an additional \$850,000, we are hoping that this year's insurance payments, fees from parents, and enrollment numbers will have us operating within budget. 

## State ICC Monitors the Impact of Changes to the Birth to Three System

By Lolli Ross, Acting ICC Chair

The State Interagency Coordinating Council has been monitoring recent changes in the Birth to Three System designed to contain costs and the impact they have had on children, families, and providers. Changes include:

Tighter eligibility criteria - effective July 2003

Non-payment to programs for services not provided in a month - effective July 2003

Family Cost Participation fees -

families notified in September 2003, implemented in February 2004, modified July, 2004

Family services discontinued after three months of non-payment - activated May 2004

Changes regarding insurance company reimbursements - July 2003 and June 2004

The ICC advises and assists the lead agency, and has taken an active role in ensuring that appropriate cost saving measures are implemented which have the least impact on Connecticut's families. ICC members have emphasized the need to pursue any and all efforts to increase insurance revenue. The Department of Insurance has worked closely with the Birth to Three System to streamline insurance billing procedures for providers and to make sure that insurance companies fulfill their requirement to participate in the

payment for Birth to Three services. The ICC also worked with the Department of Mental Retardation to amend family cost participation to account for family size and to reduce family participation fees. These changes went into effect July 1, 2004.

Another focus area is children who would have been eligible before July of 2003. The ICC will continue to focus discussion here and work with other stakeholders to make sure that families and their young children who are at risk for delay or later school failure have access to services and supports to help them.

The ICC is concerned about the impact these changes have had on the programs that provide Birth to Three services and will explore possible solutions and strategies to help programs continue to provide

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Preschool Special Education Update

By Maria Synodi, Coordinator  
Preschool Special Education

Welcome to the 2004-2005 school year. Let's talk about what's up this year. For starters, Birth to Three and Preschool Special Education have once again joined together to bring parents and professionals a number of professional development events through the Special Education Resource Center (SERC). Events will include the annual Together We Will Conference planned for April 8, 2005, at the Marriott Hotel in Trumbull, Connecticut. The conference agenda this year focuses on "Meeting the Needs of Young Children with Challenging Behaviors." We are very excited about our keynote speaker, Mary Louise Hemmeter from the University of Illinois and hope that all of you, parents and professionals, will join us on that day. So mark your calendars now!

Also on the professional development calendar for 2004-2005 is the Birth to Five Autism Series, including an autism consortia for birth to three providers and school districts focused on yearlong program improvement in serving children within the autism spectrum. A host of other planned events will focus on literacy, transition and other hot topics. For more information, please go to [www.sercct.org](http://www.sercct.org) or call 860-635-1485 for an early childhood menu book of professional development events.

Preschool Special Education and the Department of Children and Families have a new joint project this year. The two state agencies are working together to support a project focused on "Early Childhood Behavioral Consultation and Support." The goal of the project is to ensure that preschool-age children with disabilities, who are at risk of suspension or expulsion, are supported and maintained in their community-based early childhood program. The project will work collaboratively with the child's preschool special education program, the community-based early childhood program and the child's parents. Keep your eyes

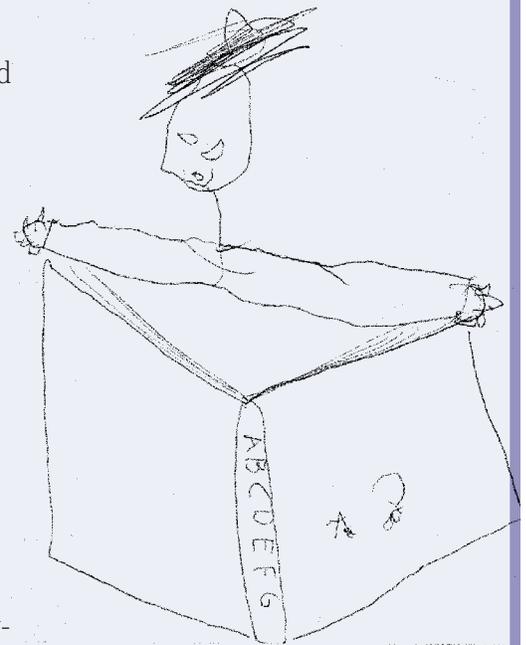
open for the launch of this initiative.

So ... outside of Connecticut, what is new? Well, the U.S. Department of Education has recently funded an Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO). The task of the Center is to identify child and family outcomes upon which both the Birth to Three System and Preschool Special Education will be measured. This is part of ensuring national standards and accountability working towards positive outcomes for the children and families served by these programs.

Information about the Center can be found at

[www.the-eco-center.org](http://www.the-eco-center.org).

I wish all of you the best for the start of this new school year. 🍎



"Me Reading a Book"  
By Aidan, age 4 1/2

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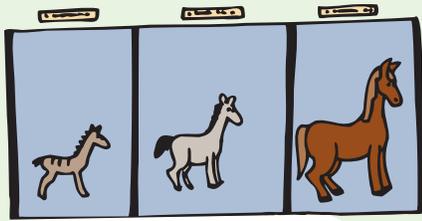
## State ICC (Continued from page 5)

quality services to children and their families.

The ICC is closely watching the possible impact that the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act will have on the Birth to Three System. This law states that all children under three who are victims of substantiated abuse or neglect should be referred to Birth to Three. It is estimated that the resulting increase in referrals could approach 3,200 additional children each year. The ICC plans to take an active role in identifying meas-

ures that help the Department for Children and Families and the Birth to Three System to work together to support these children.

ICC meetings are open to everyone and public comment is welcomed at each meeting. Please consider attending and sharing your concerns and suggestions to help improve services to the children and families we serve. Future meetings are set for September 20 and December 13, 2004. Call 860-418-6134 for more information. 🍎



# Save the Date Training Calendar

Contact the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) at [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org) or at 860-632-1485 for information on these events:

## **Strategies for Addressing Challenging Behavior in Young Children**

Mary Louise Hemmeter, Ph.D.  
Session A: 10/12/04 – SERC Classroom  
Session B: 1/14/05 – Keeney Center, Wethersfield  
Session C: 2/8/05 – Keeney Center, Wethersfield

## **Designing Effective Functional Behavior Supports for Young Children, Birth to Five**

Pamelizita Buschbacher, Ed.D.  
10/21/04  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **ASD: The SCERTS Model for Enhancing Communication and Socio-Emotional Competence, Birth to Five**

Barry Prizant, Ph.D.  
10/26/04  
Marriott Courtyard, Cromwell

## **Families and Autism, “Rolling Over and Looking Up”**

Vickie Gayhardt  
11/3/04 and 11/4/04  
SERC Classroom, Middletown

## **Legal Issues Specific to Educational Programs for Young Children with Autism: A Workshop for Administrators, Birth to Five**

Perry Zirkel, Ph.D., J.D., LL.M.  
12/9/04  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Designing and Evaluating Discrete Trials Intervention for Young Children with Autism: A Workshop for Experienced Practitioners, Birth to Five**

Kathleen Dyer, Ph.D.  
1/11/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Welcoming All Children: Including Children with Special Needs in Preschool Programs**

Philippa Campbell, Ph.D.  
1/13/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Partnering With Families Who Experience Multiple Stressors**

Angela Tomlin, Ph.D.  
1/19/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Home Visiting: Supporting Families through the Coaching Model**

Dathan Rush, M.Ed.  
M’Lisa Sheldon, Ph.D.  
1/27/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Building Blocks**

Susan Sandall, Ph.D.  
2/18/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Assessing Three to Five-Year-Old Children with Special Needs: Why Assess? What is the Most Appropriate Tool?**

Marianne Barton Ph.D.  
3/9/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **Strategies for Responding to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood**

Isuara Barrera, Ph.D.  
Lucinda Krammer  
3/10/05 and 3/11/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## **LRE and Due Process: Implications of IDEA as Related to Preschool Age Children, Birth to Five**

Rutheford Turnbull, J.D., LL.M.  
5/6/05  
Radisson, Cromwell

## Resources

*Every Grownup Is a Famous Storyteller* booklet available from the Connecticut Commission on Children. Call 860-240-0024 for a copy.

*100 Plus Books Every Young Child Should Know* is recommended by the New York Public Library and the Connecticut State Library and is available online at [www.cga.state.ct.us/coc/LiteracyArchives.htm](http://www.cga.state.ct.us/coc/LiteracyArchives.htm). Here is a sampling:

*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros, Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. Dutton.

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst.

Illustrated by Ray Cruz. Atheneum.

*Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* by Judi Barrett, Illustrated by Ron Barrett. Atheneum.

*Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock* by Eric A. Kimmel, Illustrated by Janet Stevens. Holiday House.

*Andy and the Lion* by James Daugherty. Viking.

*Benny Bakes a Cake* by Eve Rice. Greenwillow.

*Ben's Trumpet* by Rachel Isadora. Greenwillow.

*Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey. Viking.

*Raising a Reader, Raising a Writer: How Parents Can Help* brochure is available

from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) at [www.naeyc.org/resources](http://www.naeyc.org/resources).

The following website includes information on what early literacy means for children from birth to age three:

[www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/EarlyLiteracy/earlyliteracy.pdf](http://www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/EarlyLiteracy/earlyliteracy.pdf) 



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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM  
1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4036  
Storrs, CT 06269-4036

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BIRTH *through* 5 NEWS • Fall 2004 • Volume 6 • Number 1  
The feature article is translated into Spanish on page 2.  
Ver la versión española del artículo primero en la página 2.  
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