

CONNECTIONS

Early Educator Support Office, Monthly Newsletter

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Congratulations! YOU did it! The reliability activity is behind you. Believe it or not, the development and implementation of this process has only helped us become stronger, more confident, and more reflective of our practices and of ourselves. Dr. Lambert and I are still talking about the level of your reflection during the recent debriefing session. Do you remember the feelings that were present at the beginning of the year meeting when we discussed how our incredible work positively influenced the confidence of so many teachers? The realization that our focus on building strong, trusting

relationships with those we serve truly does make a difference, and a very powerful one at that. That is what this feels like for us. Your willingness to be open-minded, to push through any and all insecurities that exist in the presence of tension, and to fully engage in this level of empathic collaboration is inspiring. Your support of and commitment to our model of continuous improvement makes a difference, every day. Because you trusted the process, we can continue to encourage teachers to do the same. Because you trusted the process, we have the ability to continue to learn, grow, and better ourselves— further uniting us under our collectively held goal of providing the high quality support services that all educators, children, and families deserve.

What's next, you ask? So many exciting things!

- Presentations of the development, implementation, and results of our interrater reliability study
- Additional studies that extend our work into topics like teacher stress and efficacy
- Continued opportunities to collectively reflect on your participation in the interrater reliability study, including opportunities to help develop and lead next steps
- Professional development (PD) opportunities to support strengths and needs reflected in reliability data
- Exploration of the development of a foundation to highlight and reward teacher innovation in leadership and reflection
- Completion of PD projects (PLC Modules, Formative Assessment Modules, Quick Tips, Standards Modules, Foundations Handouts, PDP Development Module, Effective Post Conference Module) and continued development of additional PD projects that will begin to position us as a PD hub for the state.



Wow! Sounds like a pretty busy, yet extremely invigorating time for us! Thank you for everything you give to this very important work and to this invaluable team, you make it what it is...incredible. I look forward to diving in with you.

Amanda



MENTOR MINUTE

Using Foundations to Plan

Guest Collaborator: Brooke Hough



North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations) is the Standard Course of Study for the teachers and classrooms supported by the Early Educator Support Office. Foundations can be used to:

- Improve teachers' knowledge of child development;
- Guide teachers' plans for implementing curricula;
- Establish goals for children's development and learning that are shared across programs and services;
- Inform families on age-appropriate expectations for children's development and learning"; (*Foundations*, 2013, pg.1)
- Be a resource to advocate for developmentally appropriate practice.

The Guiding Principles (pp.13-14) provide an overview of Foundations to support teachers' growing understanding and connection to "best practice" in early childhood. The 10 Guiding Principles offer evidence-based rationale for the entire document. Understanding the Guiding Principles provides a wide overview of developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom practice (see link to Guiding Principles document).

Foundations is a guide to using age appropriate goals and developmentally appropriate practice that provides teachers with a starting point to find out where children are developmentally. Developmental indicators provide specific information about what children should know or be able to accomplish at each age level. Teachers should use Foundations to find out what developmental steps individual children are taking now and what strategies they might utilize to assist children in progressing across the continuum (*Foundations* pp.2-5).

"Foundations is intended to be a guide for teaching – not a curriculum or checklist used to assess children's learning - but a resource to define the skills and abilities we want to support in the learning experiences we provide for children." (*Foundations*, pg.2)

Strategies for Supporting Teachers



- Utilizing Foundations to walk a teacher through the process of looking at specific goals and considering a child's developmental level and what strategies might encourage children to progress along the developmental continuum.
- Referencing and using Foundations Guiding Principles (see Guiding Principles Document).
Helping teachers understand that lesson plans must address all developmental domains.
- Encouraging teachers to post Foundations goals/indicators around the classroom (This can help teachers be more intentional in using Foundations).
- Supporting teacher conversations in aligning DAP with parent expectations.
- Giving specific examples to teachers to bring Foundations to life (Mentor and Evaluator Roles)
- Making "I noticed" statements. Articulate how teachers may be using Foundations (i.e. "I noticed how you provided authentic feedback on how hard children were working in the block area today to add a roof to their building. This aligns with Foundations APL-9: Children persist at challenging activities. Let's look at the strategies for that goal (pg. 46) and see what other strategies you are using.")

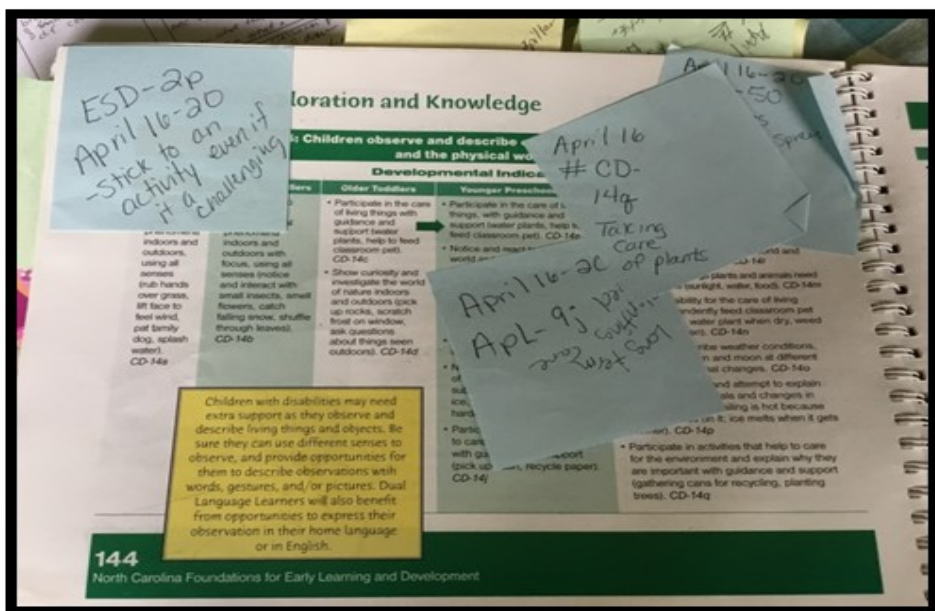


A Mentor/Evaluator assists a teacher in understanding how her instruction aligns to Foundations.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Guiding Questions Mentors/Evaluators might use with Teachers:

- How do you use Foundations as a resource for planning next steps for your children?
- How can you use Foundations to determine if practice, expectations, and planning align with children's developmental level and developmentally appropriate practice?
- What are some ways that Foundations can support teachers in planning for materials in their centers/classrooms?
- How can Foundations support conversations with families?
- How can Foundations support children's approaches to play and learning (how children learn, children's attitudes toward and interest in learning) in order to enhance the classroom environment and teachers' intentional planning to meet the needs of all children? (*Foundations*, pg.28)



One teacher's example of how she used Foundations when planning for her children's needs in her classroom. Her Foundations book is "well-loved" and used!

Useful and Relevant Resources



North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development

https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC_Foundations.pdf

Foundations Guiding Principles Handout

<https://ceme.uncc.edu/sites/ceme.uncc.edu/files/media/Foundations%20Guiding%20Principles%20Handout.pdf>

Foundations Advanced Course– Guiding Questions by Module (1-6)

<https://ceme.uncc.edu/sites/ceme.uncc.edu/files/media/Advance%20Foundations%20Course-Guiding%20Questions%20by%20Module%20%281-6%29.pdf>

Foundations Advanced Course– Guiding Questions by Module (7-11)

<https://ceme.uncc.edu/sites/ceme.uncc.edu/files/media/Advanced%20Foundations%20Course-Guiding%20Questions%20by%20Module%20%287-11%29.pdf>

GUIDED PRACTICE

Possible conversations Mentors and Evaluators may have with teachers on understanding and utilizing Foundations.

Example 1:

Domain: Emotional and Social Development (ESD)

Goal: ESD-4: Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (*Foundations*, pg.57)

Observation: Children are beginning to use appropriate words to influence playmates' behavior. (ESD-4h)



Next Steps: Children demonstrate social skills when interacting with other children (turn-taking, conflict resolutions, sharing). (ESD-4k)

Possible Strategies:

-Help children see the effect of their behavior on others by encouraging them to see others' perspectives and share their ideas about solving problems and social conflicts. (*Foundations*, pg.60, #5)

-Model asking for and understanding the viewpoints and opinions of others. (*Foundations*, pg.60, #7)

Example 2:

Domain: Language Development and Communication (LDC)

Goal: LDC-12: Children begin to develop knowledge of the alphabet and the alphabetic principle. (*Foundations*, pg.108)

Observation: This child makes some sound-to-letter matches, using letter name knowledge. (LDC-12h)



What are possible next steps? What strategies might you use in order to help children move to the next level on the developmental continuum? (*Foundations*, pg.110)

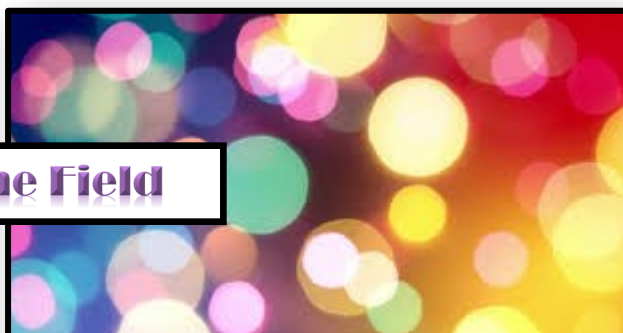


COLLABORATOR CORNER



Starr Batts introduces us to **Elisha Wilson**, the director for The Bethlehem Center of Charlotte. She has been in the field for 19 and a half years and is starting her second year as a partner with the Early Educator Support Office. Ms. Wilson loves collaborating with other professionals who share their passion about the early learning and development of our children and being able to take part in the support, priming, and professional development of our Early Educators. Her favorite book is *Miss Nelson is Missing* by Harry Allard and James Marshall. “This is my favorite of the Miss Nelson trilogy because of the many lessons that are able to be learned from the story; more specifically, the notion of respecting and appreciating who/what you have in life, while they are still there, because you’ll miss them when they’re gone.” Something others may not know about Ms. Wilson is that she “loves poetry and musical dramas; and has a slight addiction to the ‘Talent Show’ scene of *The Five Heartbeats*.”

*Thank you to Starr Batts for introducing us to Elisha!



Highlights from the Field

Niki Sashington highlights one of the MECK Pre-K teachers she serves by sharing her ability to observe a situation and instinctively knowing what to do to address it. If there is an issue with a classroom routine, the teacher immediately puts a plan into place to create a more effective routine. She is reflective in developing individualized plans for children who are struggling; working to meet the needs of all children. The teacher shared that she “spends time reflecting on my teaching, the environment, and so forth to improve for the future.” She believes in leading by example and building up new teachers. The teacher truly appreciates those who have spent time mentoring her and helping her learn and grow, so she strives to do that for other teachers that she works with. One of her beliefs is “because others have held my hand, I am a better teacher.”

Recently during a tree study, the children were very interested in squirrels and how beetles molt; based on a beetle found near a child’s home. The teacher and her assistant spend a great deal of time digging deeper, asking questions, and researching answers using their chrome books or classroom books. The children in their class are naturally interested in sticks, and were asked, “what can you make with the sticks?” The teachers used their research and extensions of learning for plans to follow up on children’s interests about campfires, roasting marshmallows, fishing poles, sorting/comparing, shovels to dig out rocks, and so much more.

Niki shares that the teacher intentionally sets up learning through her centers. “I observed during a recent observation that each center has a specific plan with a set of materials related to a given study or social goals for the children. The intentionality to set up in each center with a sign that states the new materials, learning objective(s), and open-ended questions that both she as well as the TA can reference.” She also intentionally sets up learning for her children by placing words in Spanish around the room to help her communicate in the native language of her ELL children. She has set a goal for herself to learn Spanish to support ALL children and make sure their needs are met and to become successful.



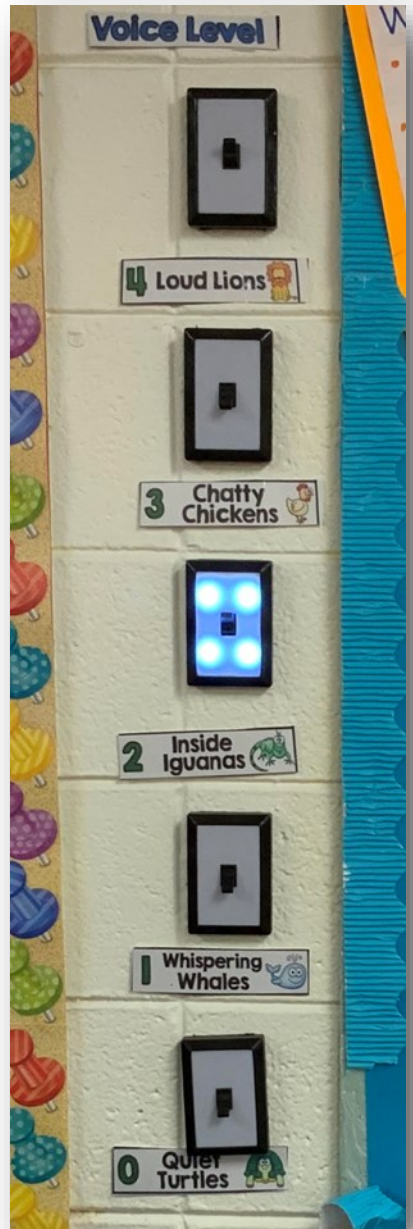
Highlights from the field continued-

The teacher is very intentional in making sure she is taking assessment notes. She created a grid on card stock and writes on the sticky notes throughout the day.



The teacher decided that this school year she wanted to add STEM building block cards and more pictures to provide support for the children in the block area.

The teacher searched for classroom management support tool ideas; then found plastic light switches at the dollar store and voice level templates online to create a voice level visual for the classroom. Before introducing the idea to the children, the teacher read the story *Decibella*, about a little girl who loved to use her loud voice. Decibella discovers that different situations require different voices.



Looking Ahead

Mark Your Calendar

- **January 6th-**
Full Staff Meeting (UNC Charlotte staff only)
- **January 10th-**
Observation 1 locked in NCEES (Continuing)
- **January 10th-**
Observation 2 locked in NCEES (Residency, Initial)
- **Week of January 13th-**
Communities of Practice (4)

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 *	7	8	9	10*	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



— HAPPY NEW YEAR —