



# The Front Page



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Takeaways

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From the Early Childhood Summit ~

*Bridging the Gap in Early Learning: Preschool through Grade 3*

*"The earliest investments in human development have tremendous returns, which have proven to influence society in positive lasting fashion."*

*Michael Salvatore, Ph. D., Superintendent*

New Jersey ASCD, the NJ State Department of Education, and the NJ Principals & Supervisors Association/ Foundation for Education Administration sponsored a summit on Early Childhood. A keynote presentation provided by Dr. Michael Salvatore, Superintendent, Long Branch Public Schools, was followed by ten offerings addressing key areas of early learning: Improving Outcomes, Kindergarten Readiness, Dual Language Learners, Social Emotional Learning, and Assessing Learning in Diverse Young Children. For over 230 educators, the day provided rich information about young learners, enhanced curriculum and experiences, and the importance of high quality preschool for the development and success of students as they progress throughout school and life. From language to knowledge to performance, quality early learning impacts the potential to alter the destinies of many children. To these ends, the following *Takeaways* are offered. We hope that you will find them meaningful!

*Marie M. Adair, Executive Director, New Jersey ASCD*

*~On supporting a developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous primary school~*

- ◆ *Developmentally appropriate academic rigor is possible in classrooms and can be supported throughout the entire PreK-3 continuum to reach academic standards in a manner that is individually appropriate, age-appropriate, and culturally appropriate.*
- ◆ *Focusing on the quality of K-3 teaching and learning is critical to sustaining the gains made with a high-quality preschool experience.*
- ◆ *A continuous improvement cycle approach is the most effective method to accomplish lasting change. In this approach, data are used to highlight areas needing attention and then interventions are implemented and practices are re-evaluated to gauge improvement.*

Shannon Ayers, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor, National Institute for Early Education Research, Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes



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~ On improving outcomes for Dual Language Learners in preschool~

To improve learning outcomes for young dual language learners, education leaders should support programs, practices, and materials that focus on these research-based goals:

1) helping children understand and learn content with home language supports, play-based explorations, visuals and props; 2) intentionally helping children learn English; 3) explaining connections between home language knowledge and new English words; and 4) supporting meaningful oral language interactions in home language and English.

Karen Nemeth, Ed. M., Language Castle LLC

~ On addressing the word gap: high expectations and meaningful connections~

Let's talk . . . Vocabulary rich discussions where children can make meaningful connections and build their background knowledge benefits all our children substantially, especially for children entering school with gaps in vocabulary development and usage. Through an **assessment** of current realities and needs, a **target** or focus on how to address them, and through a **connected** approach with the family, community and school – thoughtful, systematic, and sustainable initiatives can positively impact children's literacy development. Examples such as home visits and a family literacy series have helped families and educators connect deeper than a typical one-time event. This type of connection between school and home helps to maximize children's learning.

Renee Whelan, Ed. D., Director of Early Childhood, Long Branch Public Schools

~On improving outcomes in an inclusive classroom~

A well written, logical (and compliant) IEP, implemented in a high quality least restrictive environment, is the key to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The IEP should be the cornerstone of special education. Writing the great IEP is only one part – implementing that IEP is just as important. The disconnect between the written IEP and the implemented IEP is a problem.

What Schools Can Do:

- Teach all teachers more about teaching students with disabilities, especially identifying potential learning issues in young children.
- Provide instructional supports that maximize students with disabilities participation in the general education curriculum and their engagement with their typically developing peers.
- Use a variety of strategies, including curriculum and instructional adaptations, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and more . . . .

Pam Brillante, Ed. D., Assistant Professor, William Paterson University



*~On creating alignment from Play to PARCC for Dual Language Learners/English Learners ~*

*In order to prepare Dual Language Learners/English Learners (DLLs/ELs) for the rigor of PARCC testing in grade 3, the following factors should be considered.*

- ◆ *Even though the administrative codes are not aligned on the topic of language delivery systems from preschool to kindergarten, districts are encouraged to match their programs (e.g. dual language, transitional bilingual programs) to smooth the transition.*
- ◆ *Programs for English learners in K-3 are urged to continue to focus on intentional academic vocabulary and language development while building requisite background knowledge through thematic-based language-rich activities, read-alouds, and discussions.*
- ◆ *Phonemic awareness and phonics instruction should be meaning-based with an awareness of simultaneously developing vocabulary.*

Elizabeth Franks, Ed. D. & Barbara Tedesco, M.A.T., NJTESOL/NJBE, Language & Literacy Associates for Multilingual and Multicultural Education, LLC

*~On implementing a high quality preschool program in a mixed delivery system~*

*The opportunity to offer a high quality preschool program in a mixed delivery system (in-district preschool classrooms and classrooms in private providers) is a win-win for all students in local school districts.*

- ◆ *Unifying the preschool program with all stakeholders is key through the implementation of CHASE (Collaboration, High quality, Accountability, Strategies and support, and Expectations).*
- ◆ *The components of CHASE can be successfully implemented no matter what your budget and/or staffing challenges may be in your school district.*
- ◆ *Consistent implementation of CHASE by school leaders throughout all preschool classrooms and with all preschool staff will help to ensure a high quality preschool experience for all students.*

Nancee Bleistine, Independent Consultant, former Principal, Vineland, NJ Preschool Program

*~On linguistic nutrition in Early Childhood~*

*When you engage our youngest learners in language-rich interactions, their brain development and communication skills are forever impacted. Early childhood expansion is imperative and a game-changer for children living in impoverished environments.*

Michael Salvatore, Ph. D., Superintendent, Long Branch, New Jersey School District





*~On beyond what the eye can see: uncovering the risk factors, protective factors, and resilience of children in poverty~*

*Why are feelings important? Feelings are at the root of all behavior. When children have good feelings at their roots, positive behavior will grow like a healthy tree.*

What we can do:

- ◆ *Build protective factors!*
- ◆ *Find one-on-one time with children every day. In the classroom: during group work time, having lunch or during recess, etc. At home: during dinner, before bedtime or wherever we can make a few moments!*
- ◆ *Listen deeply and attentively to what the children have to say.*
- ◆ *Insure that each and every child knows, "you matter!"*
- ◆ *Enjoy being a teacher, a mom, a dad, a member of the village.*

Nefertiti B. Poyner, Ed. D., Early Childhood Specialist & National Trainer  
Devereux Center for Resilient Children

***In summary~***

*Children and families cannot benefit from interventions they do not experience. Through strong and meaningful partnerships with school districts, higher education, and professional organizations, we have designed our preschool through third grade research and supports to help educators fuse academic and social development.*

***Our goal is simple:*** *Ensure that families experience schools that prepare children for the world of today as well as the future.*

***Our vision is clear:*** *We should not wait until students are in high school to enjoy the types of experiences that assist children when working with others or persisting through challenges.*

***This much is certain:*** *Without our partners, implementing practices that are academically rigorous and developmentally appropriate would be an illusion. The first Early Childhood Summit highlighted that preschool through third grade supports are a reality in New Jersey.*

Vincent J. Costanza, Ed. D., Executive Director, Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge  
Co-Administrator, Division of Early Childhood Education & Family Engagement  
New Jersey Department of Education

