
Childhood Celebrated

BY **Jessica Ciparelli** | APR 22, 2010 3:05 AM
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Jessica Ciparelli of the CT Early Childhood Alliance sent in this photo and write-up about the recent celebration of the Week of the Young Child.

Everywhere you turned, young children, parents and early childhood providers were out in force – talking about the importance of early learning and celebrating the great work of New Haven early childhood community.

It started on Saturday, April 10, with the All Our Kin conference – “Teaching from the Heart.” The air was filled with excitement and anticipation. The conference was attended by more than 135 family child care providers – caring for over 800 children – eager to learn and grow in their professional development. The bilingual conference celebrated the work of All Our Kin, a New Haven-based nonprofit that supports family child care providers. The conference began with a presentation by AlecSandria Colchico from the PBS program “A Place of Our Own,” who spoke about successful strategies providers can use to help parents and children transition into the childcare setting. Following the keynote, conference participants attended a variety of workshops designed to build professional excellence and help providers strengthen and develop their skills as child care providers.

The Week of the Young Child continued to soar on Wednesday, April 14, when 120 center- and family-based childcare teachers came together at the Connecticut Children’s Museum in New Haven for a sumptuous potluck dinner and teacher-appreciation event. Organized by the New Haven Early Childhood Council, this event helps to build the early care community and provides support to the important work of teachers. This year, each childhood center was given a special curriculum box called “F ... is for FEELINGS,” created by the CT Children’s Museum staff. Early care teachers had identified a pressing

need for teachers to understand and focus on how young children could better cope and acknowledge the complex array of emotions children have about their day, their lives and their learning environments. The curriculum provides easily adaptable tools and strategies for teachers to strengthen and advance their work with children's feelings and emotional health.

New Haven's Week of the Young Child culminated with a "Celebration of Early Childhood" event at City Hall. Fifty early care providers set up booths and activities for the hundreds of parents and their children who attended this event. Information was available for parents on early learning programs, emergent literacy strategies, health and nutrition and other community services.

"This week has been a huge success" said Sandra Malmquist, Director of the Connecticut Children's Museum and member of the New Haven Early Childhood Council. "We had great participation at our organized events and we distributed 3,400 copies of the bi-lingual book, Read to Me/Vamos a leer, to families in the city through a unique New Haven literacy campaign we called 'The Little Read.' Reading events and activities occurred in early childhood classrooms, family childcare homes, libraries and health clinics. Children, families and our community have been inspired to read to children."

Malmquist said the New Haven Early Childhood Council would be developing a full report on all of the activities that occurred throughout this hugely successful week.

Photo caption: Children took part in a variety of activities on April 17 at New Haven City Hall, at the "Celebration of Early Childhood," where 50 early care providers set up booths for the children to explore and for their parents to pick up important information. The event was a culmination to the national "Week of the Young Child." Photo by Ann Pratt, CT Early Childhood Alliance.

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