



BEAM Newsletter

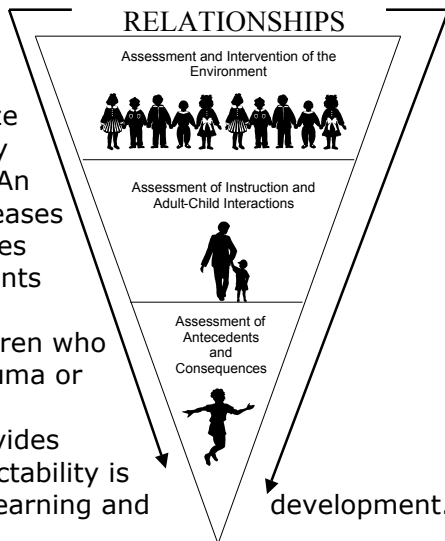
Bridging Education and Mental Health



BEAM topic: Environment

The BEAM Model organizes intervention options using the inverted pyramid found below. As you can see, relationships come first and are a common theme throughout all subsequent areas of intervention. In the November newsletter, project staff featured relationships. This month we'll feature *Assessment and Intervention of the Environment*.

Interventions for the environment involve procedures which systematically organize all aspects of the early childhood classroom. An organized classroom eases management, promotes interaction, and prevents challenging behavior. Furthermore, for children who have experienced trauma or neglect, an organized environment that provides consistency and predictability is essential to a child's learning and



development. Environmental arrangement can be delineated into three components 1) physical arrangement, 2) organizational aspects, and 3) instructional components. For this newsletter, we'll focus on organizational aspects.

Organizational aspects include scheduling, planning transitions, arranging staffing patterns, and considering social interactions. One example is using a picture schedule to provide structure and predictability.

Classroom schedules teach children to trust their teachers. Children know they can always rely on certain things (teachers, availability of food, favorite activities) because these times are posted on the schedule and followed on a regular basis. One way to promote social interactions is to teach children appropriate ways to resolve conflicts. The thumbs-up poster is one strategy used at Noah's Ark to teach children appropriate ways to resolve conflicts.

Featured BEAM program

Noah's Ark Child Development Center

Noah's Ark has been participating in the BEAM project since last winter. Noah's Ark is located in downtown Minneapolis and serves approximately 60 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Six Noah's Ark staff completed the BEAM training course and four teachers have participated in coaching. The teachers have been working with BEAM coach, Shelley Neilsen Gatti to make their classrooms and center more consistent and predictable for children. In particular, the teachers have incorporated a variety of visual strategies to teach the daily schedule, classroom rules, and conflict resolution skills.



Rules used in a Noah's Ark classroom



Thumbs-up Choice poster at Noah's Ark

Featured BEAM coach: Shelley Neilsen Gatti



Shelley coaching with Daryl at Noah's Ark

Shelley Neilsen Gatti, Ph.D., is a behavioral consultant for Minneapolis Public Schools and an adjunct instructor for the University of Minnesota. She completed her Ph.D. in educational psychology under the guidance of Dr. Mary McEvoy. Shelley's areas of interest include assessment and intervention for children with challenging behavior, teacher-child interactions, and setting up environments for success. Before beginning her doctoral work, she was an early childhood special education teacher in Montana. Shelley is a coach at Noah's Ark Child Development Center.

BEAM Tips & Resources:

Book: Curious George Rides a Bike by H. A. Rey (1973) - Houghton Mifflin

Book: Young Exceptional Children – Practical ideas for Addressing Challenging Behaviors. Monograph Series No. 1. The Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. (1999).

Article: Examining the Role of the Classroom Environment in the Prevention of Problem Behaviors. Judy Lawry (M.S.Ed.), Cassandra D. Danko (M.S. Ed.) Philip S. Strain, Ph.D. Young Exceptional Children, Monograph Series No 1. (1999).



Upcoming BEAM events:

BEAM staff will be holding a training workshop on February 23rd and 24th. Watch for updates – we look forward to seeing you there!

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Thank You for your participation in BEAM in 2005!

More newsletters to come in 2006...

BEAM is a program at the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota. The mission of CEED is to improve developmental outcomes for children through applied research, training, and outreach. BEAM is funded by the FY04 federal Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) Grant provided to the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board. The pilots will run in 2005-2006, with evaluation results available in late 2006.