

CNMI Brain Builders NEWSLETTER

January 2023 | Issue 01

2022

YEAR at a GLANCE

Last year 2022, 23 Leaders and 29 child care providers from daycare centers in Saipan and Tinian have successfully completed Mind in the Making: The 7 Essential Life Skills training series. Mind in the Making (MITM) is a program of the Bezos Family Foundation who shares the science of children's brain development and learning through innovative in-depth training and materials geared for action. This program is intended to be shared with our community, families, teachers, child care providers.



MITM Leadership Cohort 1
September 28, 2022



MITM Leadership Cohort 2
November 9, 2022



MITM for Providers Cohort 3
November 12, 2022



MITM for Providers Cohort 4
November 12, 2022

YOU ALREADY HAVE
WHAT IT TAKES!
YOU ARE A CNMI
BRAIN BUILDER!





CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS

MIND IN THE MAKING: THE 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

LIFE SKILL OF THE MONTH

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Promoting Focus and Self Control

Everyday Routines

Clean up time? Boost attention by holding up a toy and encouraging children to find similar ones to put away.

Playful Learning Activities

Dance slowly to fast music and then quickly to slow music to help children focus and use self control!

Learning Strategies

Encourage them to keep trying when they make a mistake so they learn making mistakes is a natural part of learning.



THE LIFE SKILL OF FOCUS AND SELF-CONTROL

Life today can be stressful, and the skill of Focus and Self Control is especially important as we try to get everything done each day. Studies confirm children with this skill are more likely to learn from educational experiences and practice, have better academic achievement, to graduate from college, and experience better health and economic prosperity in adulthood.



WHAT IS FOCUS AND SELF-CONTROL?

Focus and Self Control involves executive function skills, including paying attention (focus); remembering what we need to know so we can use this information (working memory); thinking flexibly so we can respond to the changing circumstances in our lives (cognitive flexibility);

and resisting an automatic response (inhibitory control) so we can think before acting and choose a more appropriate response.



Upcoming Events

Mind in the Making for Providers Cohort 3 and 4 - January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11, 18, 25

Mind in the Making for Providers Cohort 5 - March 4, 11, 18, 25

Mind in the Making for Providers Cohort 6 and 7 - April 15, 22, 29; May 6, 13, 20, 27; June 3

Past Event Photos



How Do We Promote Focus and Self-Control?

An Excerpt from "Promoting Self Control: It Might Not Be What You Think" by Ellen Galinsky

1. It's building on what children are doing to control themselves—not imposing strict discipline.

Even infants, immediately following birth, have ways of regulating themselves when they get over-stimulated. Watch a baby close his or her eyes if the lights are too bright, or turn away if there is too much noise. We need to watch what calms children down and help them build on their own strategies for self control. Obviously as adults, we provide firm guidance, but we are better served by helping children learn to come up with their own strategies beginning in the preschool and extending into the school-age years rather than simply imposing them. For example, Walter Mischel is now looking at what children did to resist the immediate gratification of "one marshmallow now" for the delayed gratification of "two marshmallows later" and helping children learn those techniques (such as thinking of the marshmallows as puffy clouds rather than yummy marshmallows).

2. It's providing children opportunities to engage in physical games and experiences—not making them sit still for long hours.

We tend to think of promoting self control as making children stay still, yet there is increasing evidence that children learn this skill through active games (like Red Light/Green Light or Simon Says, Do the Opposite) and through focused attention in physical activities. In a time when schools are cutting back on recess and physical education, Aarmodt and Wang write, "Though parents often worry that physical education takes time away from the classroom, an analysis of multiple studies instead found strong evidence that physical activity improved academic performance."

3. It's giving children opportunities to play—not just do academics.

Though pretend play may be seen as frivolous, it is an essential building block in learning. Think of the concentration in young children when they play doctor or firefighter. And think of the concentration in older children when they learn about another culture by putting on a play about it.

4. It's encouraging children's interests—not cutting back on them.

I call these interests "lemonade stands" after my daughter's passion for lemonade stands when she was five and six-years-old. Whatever their interests, we do well to promote them and build on them. Increasingly research is showing that the arts and academic success are linked. And sadly, schools today are also cutting back on the arts.

5. It's helping children set and achieve goals—not imposing them.

Self control draws on executive functions of the brain and as such are always goal-driven. We do well to help children set and achieve their own goals, rather than handing goals to them, whether it's making a plan for how they will spend Saturday to making plans for getting a school paper done on time. As Aarmodt and Wang write in the New York Times, "Helping your children learn to manage themselves, rather than rely on external orders, could pay big dividends in adulthood."

Vroom, Vroom

Ages 0-1



Out for a walk with your child? Imitate the sounds the passing cars make as you point to them. "Look at that red car! It makes the sound, 'Vroooooom.' The red car is gone, but here comes a green car, 'Vroooooom!' There's a white one."

Get started today!
vroom.org



See what your child is learning

Brainy Background

Your voice and your face are your child's favorite playthings. They love to listen to what you say and look at what you see. As they enjoy the sounds you make, you're helping them learn to listen carefully and to learn words, long before they're able to say any words themselves.



For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom mobile app!

#VROOMTIP OF THE MONTH

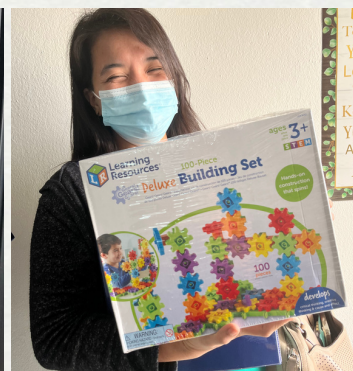
Did you know that #BrainBuilding begins on day 1? We're celebrating the new year with our favorite tips for newborns! There are *so* many easy ways to add early learning to your everyday moments. Try this #VroomTip to get started and join in the fun all month long.

January 2023

Congratulations to the winners of CNMI Brain Builders Christmas Contest!



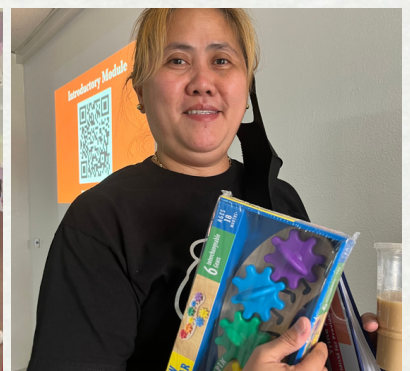
Evelyn Drilon



Jeremy Tubale



Amaleene Ramos



Yrine Angeles

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