

# CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2023 | ISSUE 03

## March

at a  
**GLANCE**



On March 4th, Child Care Providers Cohorts 3 and 4 completed a training series on Mind in the Making (MITM) – Seven Essential Life Skills. Additionally on that day, Mind in the Making for Child Care Providers Cohort 5 began.

Parents from Gana Day Care Center and from the community also continue with Mind in the Making Life Skill 4: Making Connections and are halfway through the series.



"All children in the CNMI will be safe, healthy, and thriving members of a culturally diverse community. Their families will have access to the high quality supports they need to achieve their potential."







CNMI BRAIN  
BUILDERS

### Promoting Communicating

#### Everyday Routines

Throughout the day, act like a sportscaster and narrate what you are doing so the children can attach words and meaning to everyday experiences.

#### Playful Learning Activities

Ask children to retell an experience by making a drawing or telling a story.

#### Learning Strategies

Have children listen to others and practice “give and take” conversations where they take turns talking.



MIND IN THE MAKING: THE 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

# LIFE SKILL OF THE MONTH

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## THE LIFE SKILL OF COMMUNICATING

Children are primed to communicate at birth. Communication skills continue to develop as they grow and learn. Communicating calls on executive function skills, including paying attention in order to determine what we want to communicate (focus); thinking about how our communications will be understood by others (cognitive flexibility); and by substituting what we want to say for another way of expressing ourselves, especially if our original approach isn't the most effective way to communicate (inhibitory control).



Children build the Life Skill of Communicating when they engage in back and forth conversations – through words, gestures or symbols to indicate what they want to convey – and pay attention to how it will be understood by others so they can continue the conversation. It is the skill teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.



# THE LIFE SKILL OF COMMUNICATING



## Past Event Photos



## Having Family Conversations

We understand that family time is precious, especially for mealtimes. And there are many simple and fun things to do—wherever you are—to encourage family conversations. These activities will also help your child develop the life skill of Communicating.

### 1. Use touch and facial expressions

Susan Goldin-Meadow of the University of Chicago has found that talking without words — using gestures and touch — are crucial to Communicating. She says: “I like to say that children enter language hands first!”

### 2. Share stories and use rich and diverse language.

Stories are what bind us together; they show us that we are part of a family or community. They convey our traditions and our favorite memories. Family stories are often connected in our experience with laughter or other emotions and, thus, become more strongly embedded in our memories.

### 3. Create family traditions around talking together.

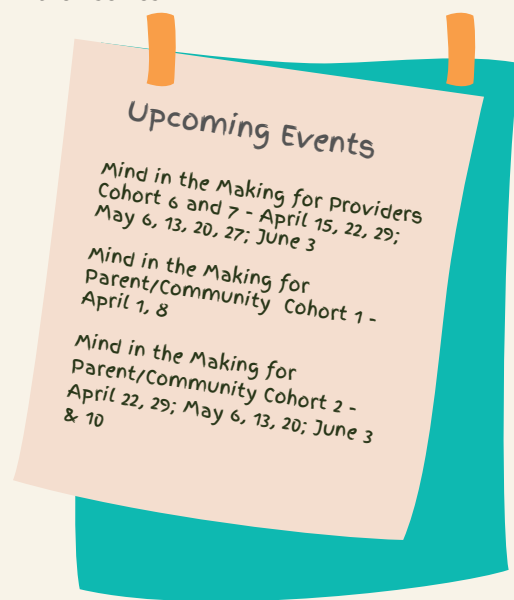
Introduce a tradition during a time you are usually together, by using conversation starters that everyone, including you, answers. For example, a. “What was the best thing that happened today?”, b. “What was the worst thing that happened today?”, c. “What are you most excited about today?” Or, start conversations with other prompts like, “Once upon a time ...”, “If I had one dream come true, it would be ...” Let your child have a turn at choosing the questions and prompts.

### 4. Keep the conversation going.

The best conversations and interactions involve taking turns—you or your child does something and the other responds, back and forth, taking turns. Researchers call these conversations “fluid and connected,” meaning that the ideas being discussed build on each other.

### 5. Play word games.

Word games make language fun and contribute to your child’s “phonemic awareness,” or their understanding of the sounds of letters. Games like these also encourage conversation and introduce new vocabulary. After all, as Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Roberta Golinkoff and their colleagues say: “Learning takes place best when young children are engaged and enjoying themselves.”



LEARN MORE AT [WWW.MINDINTHEMAKING.ORG](http://WWW.MINDINTHEMAKING.ORG)



**Featured Researcher:  
Patricia Kuhl, Ph.D.**



**Professor  
Co-Director, UW  
Institute for  
Learning and  
Brain Sciences**

## WHAT IS PARENTESE?

*"Infant-directed speech, commonly called parentese, is a higher-pitched and exaggerated way of speaking that people use when talking to babies. Compared to standard, adult-directed speech, parentese uses a sing-song tone of voice with an ample amount of social cues. This helps babies know you are talking to them. When using parentese, your voice is higher in pitch, and your speech is slower. You also use exaggerated intonation and vowels. Our research indicates that babies tend to pay attention and prefer it over "normal" or adult-directed speech, and it helps them learn language over time."*

## Hide and Hunt

Ages 2-3



Hide an object under one of two or three containers, like a cup or bowl. Ask your child, "Where is it?" When they find it, say, "There it is! Hello!" Cover it up and say, "Bye-bye!" As they get better at the game, increase the number of containers or try hiding more than one object underneath.

## See what your child is learning

Brainy Background

Your child is using their skills of focus and their self-control to pay close attention and achieve their goal of finding the object. When they take on this simple challenge, they're learning persistence, as well as developing good reasoning skills.

**vroom**

**#vroomtip  
of the  
month**

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



## Congratulations to the winners of CNMI Brain Builders February Contest!



Carmela Valdez



Jolie Garcia



Laarnie Sagpao



Ma. Isabel D. Estanislao

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