

CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS NEWSLETTER



JULY 2023 | ISSUE 07

July

at a
GLANCE



On July 15, 2023, a total of 13 participants completed the Brain Builders Training, Module 1: Brain Development. The training topics included Brain Basics, what Science of Early Learning says about brain and cognitive development, and what Science of Early Learning tells us about when and how children learn.

Child Care Providers Cohort 1 of *The Growing Brain: From Birth to Five* are also half-way into completing the series. They are set to complete the training modules on July 29, 2023.



CNMI Brain Builders Team warmly welcomes Parent and Community Cohort 3 of *Mind in the Making*. They completed the Introductory Module last July 15, 2023.



"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

MIND IN THE MAKING: THE 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

LIFE SKILL OF THE MONTH

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Promoting Self Directed, Engaged Learning

- Help children establish trusting relationships that promote learning. Relationships are the fuel of learning.
- Help children set and work toward their own goals or wishes, beginning with an exploration of what interests them.
- Involve children in learning in ways that draw on their social, emotional and cognitive capacities. Children learn best when they're fully engaged.
- Help elaborate and extend children's learning by stretching their thinking and offering new experiences and information that builds on their interests.
- Help children practice, synthesize, generalize and share what they have learning to bring together different ideas and use what they have learned.
- Help children become increasingly accountable for their own learning by creating safe spaces where they can learn in ways that build on their strengths, instead of focusing on weaknesses.
- Create a community of learners and model your learning by sharing something new or how you've learned from a mistake.



THE LIFE SKILL OF SELF DIRECTED, ENGAGED LEARNING

Setting goals and strategies for learning fosters children's innate curiosity to learn and helps them be better prepared to change as the world changes. It's through learning that we can realize our potential.



The Life Skill of Self-Directed, Engaged Learning calls upon the executive function skills, including not going on automatic but instead reflecting upon the experience or situation and setting goals and working toward them (inhibitory control); and being flexible in thinking about how to learn something in a new way (cognitive flexibility).

THE LIFE SKILL OF SELF-DIRECTED, ENGAGED LEARNING



Past Event Photos



Encouraging Your Child to Develop Interests

1. Look for a glimmer in your child’s eyes that reflects an interest.

Patricia Kuhl, a scientist at the University of Washington, notes the importance of looking for what makes your child’s eyes light up:

“As I’ve watched my own child grow, there are various times and various things that light her up. As parents and as caretakers of a whole generation of kids, we have to be tuned in to the engagement process.”

Are there clues that might shine a light on what your son is noticing or thinking about? With your encouragement and support, something as small as him watching a car on the street can turn into an interest in cars that leads to a passion for understanding how the objects in our lives work. Or, watching the rain make patterns on windows might lead to a passion for photography.

2. Jump-start your child’s imagination.

Look for ways to deepen his experiences. This will help him discover new interests. What’s happening in his life? Did he or another family member recently take a trip somewhere? Does he have a favorite character from a movie or video game? Use these ideas as starting points for discussions and activities.

- Take a trip to your local library and look for books about some of these subjects. Encourage your child to find different types of reading material, like books with photographs, storybooks and magazines.

- Give your child a subject or question to think about, like: “What will the world be like in 50 years?” Then, ask him to write or tell a story, paint, draw or use some other kind of creative way to express himself.

3. Offer your child experiences that involve his brain, his body, his feelings and his relationships.

Emotional learning, social learning and academic learning are all connected when children are really absorbed in learning. Look for experiences or activities that engage your child on all of these levels.

Consider these questions to brainstorm ideas:

- Does he seem to like one-on-one activities, or does he like to be around a lot of people?
- Does he do well in one particular subject at school?
- Does he like to be active or to participate in calmer activities?
- What are his friends interested in?

Remember that many children have schedules jam-packed with after-school activities, homework and other responsibilities. Make sure your child has enough time to relax and enjoy unstructured playtime during the week. Find a schedule that works for your entire family.

4. Ask your child open-ended questions.

Ask questions that use the words “who,” “what,” “where,” “when” and “why.” Questions like these ask your child to elaborate, to come up with more than simple yes or no answers. Try asking questions like:

- “What is one new thing you did today?”
- “When was a time you laughed today?”
- “What is something you learned today?”

Make these questions part of your routine at the beginning or end of the day. Remember to share your own answers to the questions with your child. This is a great way to connect every day and learn more about what’s on his mind.

5. Talk to your child about the things that interest you.

When you keep your own fire for learning alive, your child is likely to follow your lead. When your child sees you doing something that interests you, like reading a book or playing a sport, he learns from your example. You will also benefit from taking time for yourself to do something you enjoy! Point out the things you’re interested in and what you do to learn more. Say something like: “The story in the newspaper about the history of our community interested me. I am going to talk with some of our older friends and neighbors to see what they remember about this community when they were growing up.” Give your child the chance to join you.



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**Featured Researcher:
Andrew N. Meltzoff, Ph.D.**



**Professor,
Department of
Psychology**

**Co-Director, UW
Institute for
Learning & Brain
Sciences**

"In the child's world, the caretaker is powerful, almost magical being. Let's use our magic to engender love and spark life-long learning in the hearts and minds of our children."

Moving Steps

Ages 1-3



On the go? Involve your child every step of the way. See if they can lead the way to the train or bus stop and give the money or ticket. Talk through the steps together: "First we wait at the bus stop. Then we walk up the steps when the driver opens the doors. What do we do next?"

See what your child is learning

Brainy Background

Your child is using their memory to hold the steps of getting on the bus or train in their mind. By breaking big tasks down into smaller steps, they feel a sense of control. This helps them take on challenges and supports problem-solving now and in the future.

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



vroom

**#vroomtip
of the
month**

Congratulations to the winners of CNMI Brain Builders June Contest!



Anabel Nucum Samson



Mariecris Allas Cabrera



Vicky Inacay Pecson



Alexia Lady Cenelle Zaya

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