

# CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2023 | ISSUE 06

June

is  
**CNMI Children  
Matter Month**



On June 01, 2023, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang signed a proclamation designing June as CNMI Children Matter Month to honor early-childhood education.

The 2023 Children Matter Month Symposium was also held on June 17, 2023 at World Resort, Susupe Saipan. At the event were children, early childhood educators, parents, community partners, and officials of the DCCA-Child Care & Development Fund.



"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."



**PROCLAMATION  
CNMI CHILDREN MATTER MONTH  
June 2023**

**WHEREAS**, all young children in the CNMI deserve quality early learning environments that support them as capable and competent lifelong learners; and

**WHEREAS**, the CNMI is dedicated to increasing the awareness of the importance of relationships and social and emotional development in the early years and to celebrate the important caregivers who raise our island communities' children; and

**WHEREAS**, nurturing parenting, quality and accessible childcare, and early education programs build strong brains during the critical years from birth to age 5; and

**WHEREAS**, the future of our community and islands depends on the quality of early childhood experiences provided to CNMI's young children today;

**WHEREAS**, we must work together as a CNMI community to increase awareness and public understanding of the critical importance of the first five years in setting the foundation for our children's future academic and personal success and the direct role we all play in building their young brains;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD I. PALACIOS**, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **AND I, DAVID M. APATANG**, Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by virtue of the authority vested in us by the Constitution and Laws of the Commonwealth, do hereby proclaim **June 2023** as

**CNMI CHILDREN MATTER MONTH**

We encourage the Commonwealth to come together in fostering an environment that promotes the growth, development, and well-being of our children. Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to the children of the CNMI to ensure they are protected and that we strive to be a society that cherishes and uplifts every child. As a community, we shall recognize the essential roles that caregivers play in creating a nurturing foundation in which our children can successfully grow from.



# Children Matter Month Proclamation Signing



# SAIPAN



## ROADSIDE WAVING



"Seeing a child happy is one of the best feelings in the world."  
- Hapi the Clown

CNMI Brain Builders would like thank FitBeat Familia for energizing the crowd with their fun Zumba session.

We'd also like to thank Hapi D' Clown for making it a day filled with laughter and fun for the children!

# ROTA



## ROADSIDE WAVING



# TINIAN



## ROADSIDE WAVING



# Partners Presentations



# Partners Exhibits



# Thank you

for your continuous collaboration!



Child Care Development Fund Program



Early Intervention Services



CHCC - System of Care & Healthy Transitions



Division of Youth Services



CHCC, MICA



CHCC, CNMI WIC



CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities



CNMI University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



CHCC, H.O.M.E. Visiting Program



DICE Pacific Professional Solutions, LLC



CHCC, Family 2 Family Health Information Center





## Mind in the Making for Parents and Community Cohort 2

On June 10, 2023, parents from NMIS completed Mind in the Making Life Skill 5: Critical Thinking. This Life Skill is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions. Critical Thinking involves executive function skills, including using what you know to search for information (working memory); seeing information in new ways as you seek to deepen your understanding (cognitive flexibility); and not going on automatic and reverting to outdated information but using the information you have obtained (inhibitory control).

This training is available through CCDF’s Science of Early Learning Initiative, also known as CNMI Brain Builders. It is made possible through funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care, CNMI CCDF Program under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.



CONGRATULATIONS!



CONGRATULATIONS!

Our big congratulations to MITM Cohort 6 for completing the *Mind in the Making* Training Series last June 10, 2023!

We'd also like to congratulate CHCC H.O.M.E. Visiting Program for successfully completing *The Growing Brain: From Zero to Five* Training Series last June 16, 2023!



CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS

MIND IN THE MAKING: THE 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

# LIFE SKILL OF THE MONTH

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## Taking on Challenges

### Everyday Routines

Everyday routines can be challenging. Choose peaceful moments to help children plan for what to do when they're stressed. Try creating a story together that includes ideas for how children can handle these challenges—such as creating a fun song to sing when saying goodbye. Then try out the plan when things get stressful.

### Playful Learning Activities

Help children to manage their emotions if they lose a game. Remind them that doing their personal best is the real win.

### Learning Strategies

Encourage children to ask a trusted person for help with handling a tough situation.



## THE LIFE SKILL OF TAKING ON CHALLENGES

Life is filled with stresses and challenges. All adults and children will benefit from the Life Skill of Taking on Challenges by learning how to manage stressful experiences proactively. It calls upon executive functions, including not going on automatic (inhibitory control) but rather reflecting on the experience or situation (reflection) and being flexible in thinking about solutions to the problem (cognitive flexibility).



Children who take on challenges instead of avoiding or simply coping with them achieve better in school and in life.

# THE LIFE SKILL OF TAKING ON CHALLENGES



## Past Event Photos



In their guidebook, *Bright Futures*, the American Academy of Pediatrics writes,

**“Infants as young as four to five months may be anxious when they are separated from their parents, to meet strangers or even familiar relatives. Even grandparents need to allow the infant to warm up to them before taking the infant. This anxiety peaks at about eight months. This is not a rejection, but a normal developmental phase.”**

### 1. Remember this is a normal part of child development.

Anxiety in the face of separation from a parent, no matter how brief, is a typical reaction for an 8-month-old. This emotional response is actually a good sign that your baby feels secure and connected with you and knows the difference between you and other people.

Babies will differ in the intensity of their reactions and in the amount of time it takes for them to calm down and return to normal. So, you need to pay attention to whether your baby is enthusiastic or cautious about new experiences. You will want to provide more support to a baby who tends to be cautious.

Babies also differ in the intensity of their reactions as they get older. As they gain more experience in being away from you and in calming themselves down, they are less likely to get upset. Instead of thinking of separation in a negative way, think of it as an opportunity to teach your child to venture out into new experiences and to learn skills in Taking on Challenges.

### 2. Create support for your baby in learning to calm down.

The key is to recognize your baby’s natural tendencies and to build on these. Look for ways that your baby already tries to calm down by asking yourself what is helpful to her.

- “Does your baby use a pacifier or suck a finger?”
- “Does your baby calm down when you sing or hold her?”
- “Does your baby respond to new people better when they approach slowly and quietly? Or is she ready for active play right away?” You will help your baby through this transition by doing what helps best.

### 3. Send messages of confidence.

Taking on Challenges includes believing that you can do things even when they are hard. Your child is looking to you for signals on how to respond based on your actions, words and non-verbal communication. Be reassuring by showing confidence in your child’s ability to make the separation.

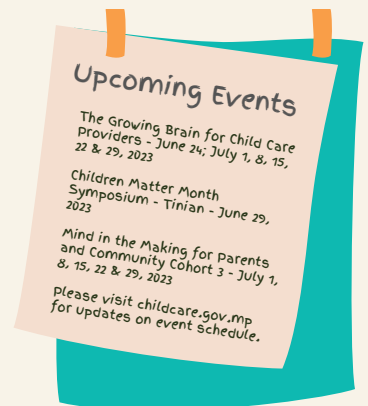
For example, you can say:

- “You can do this. I will come back and pick you up.”
- You can also remind your baby of the skills that she has: “Grandma is here to take care of you. You have your blanket, and I will come back to pick you up.” Even at a very young age, your child can understand the message you are sending with all of the things you say (and don’t say).

### 4. Be clear. It is best to be clear.

For example, give a kiss, assure your child that you will come back, and then leave. Although it’s hard, it works best to leave once you have said goodbye and not to linger. When the transition is prolonged, it is often more difficult on both you and your baby. If babies are with loving and sensitive adults, they typically calm down soon after their parent leaves.

When you help your child be with other loving adults, you are modeling a skill you want your child to learn and giving her a skill for life.



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

**Featured Researcher:  
Catherine Elizabeth Snow Ph.D.**



**Educational  
Psychologist  
and Language  
Acquisition  
Researcher,  
Harvard  
University**

***"If children are not  
making mistakes,  
then they are missing  
out on opportunities  
to learn."***

**New to You**  
Ages 3-5



When they are playing, help your child do things they haven't done before. Try out the swings or the slide at a playground, or even feel the different textures on the ground. As long as they're safe, let them try new things, with a helping hand if they need it. How do they respond? Celebrate what they say and do!

**See what your  
child is learning**

Brainy Background

Giving your child the chance to do safe things by themselves helps them feel confident and to learn to take on challenges.

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 May Contest!**



Evangeline Rosalita



Charytie Castro



Mary Grace Billedo



Chelle JT

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