

CAREER CHOICES & CHALLENGES

A News Sheet about Montana Early Care and Education Career Development

Fall 2006

Spotlight on Practitioners *Two Towns, Twin Sisters: Committed to Quality*

Angie Jones and Laurie Hopper are twin sisters living almost 300 miles apart, but both share great enthusiasm about providing quality child care to children and families in their communities. Angie is located in Billings and opened a family child care program in her home five years ago. She said with a laugh, "I knew in a week there was no way I could just wing it!" So she enrolled in the twenty-four credit University of Montana-Western early childhood education core courses at the Billings outreach site. Taking classes at night allowed her to keep her child care up and running while she went to college. She believes, "the key to me being able to put this quality child care into my program so that each child can develop at his/her own individual rate of development is due to the education I have received in this field." She is eager to receive her Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

After receiving her Practitioner Registry certificate, she applied for and received her first Mini-Grant three months later! Since then she has added to her program with other Best Beginnings' grant funds, achieved the National Association of Family Child Care Accreditation in April 2006, and became a Montana 2-Star Quality Program one month later. The scholarship for accreditation costs made that milestone possible for her. Infant Toddler Training and Certification came next, and she now receives the Infant Toddler Stipend, additional funds awarded every six months for an eighteen month period.

Angie was honored to be chosen to attend the pilot Infant Toddler II Training Intensive in Dillon this summer as well. She says, "I love that my career allows me to be at home with my own two children. When I first went into child care, it was only to be a temporary career change until my children got into school. However, they are now both in school and my passion to stay in this career could never be stronger. I have grown to love the benefits that I receive from every child that comes into my program. So many times we as adults get so wrapped up with the things around us that we forget to sit back and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Being with children that all have a wonderfully unique

and different personality has made me take the time to stop and not miss out on this opportunity-I get to go back and enjoy being a child once again and have fun while doing it this time (and can you imagine that people even pay me to do this!!!)"

Twin sister, Laurie, lives in Conrad with a population of about 2500 people north of Great Falls. She has operated a group child care home since August 2005. Like her sister in Billings, Laurie is thrilled to be in the early care and education business. Laurie says, "I am ecstatic about the opportunities available to child care providers for training, Mini-Grants, and Merit Pay to help improve our child care and help me pay for my education!" Laurie completed the CDA training program through Family Connections in May 2006 and received her official CDA credential from The Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in September! That puts her at a Level Three on The Practitioner Registry which has enabled her to access Best Beginnings' programs like her sister. Currently Laurie is taking the sixty hour Infant Toddler Training Course. It appears there is no stopping her as she too makes the most of benefits and scholarships available to her. "Montana has such wonderful programs to help us succeed as caregivers. I think Family Connections does an awesome job at providing training that is both useful and inspirational." Laurie has children ages five months to 12 years in her program. She says, "It works really well in my home, my husband is very supportive! My own children are the oldest, and they take the lead at guiding the other children. The Food Program has helped provide the money that makes meals excel nutritionally for the children."

Talking to these two early childhood practitioners makes me want to go visit and experience their programs first hand. Their boundless dedication is contagious and as Laurie exclaimed, "I hope everyone takes advantage of all the programs that are out there for caregivers-I encourage everyone to reach for these great opportunities. It's well worth the effort!"

-Libby Hancock

Way to Go Above and Beyond!

The following professionals have renewed on *The Practitioner Registry* and have far exceeded training requirements for licensing and/or The Registry in the past quarter. We commend you for your ongoing commitment to lifelong learning:

LaRae Sales, Manhattan	93 hours
Penny Hume, Victor	96 hours
Frances Chuter, Helena	69 hours
Joan Kuehn, Missoula	142.5 hours
Christina Lear, Belgrade	96 hours
Heather Andrew, Belgrade	92 hours
Tammy Hill, Plentywood	195 hours
Rhonda Wallis, Antelope	243 hours
Brandi Stevens, East Helena	95 hours
Shana Taylor, Choteau	120 hours
Lois Shipman, Glendive	265.5 hours
Cathy Nash, Lakeside	61 hours
Maureen Karlin, Missoula	82 hours
Pam Blendermann, Seeley Lake	64 hours
Marie Borders, Billings	62 hours
Mary Cascio, Plentywood	240 hours
Heidi Rosenleaf, Butte	392 hours
Trista Johnson, Missoula	115.5 hours
Chistol Williamson, Butte	92 hours
Marcia Ronck, Missoula	62 hours
Amy Snapp, Lewistown	88.5 hours
Ann Klaas, Bozeman	55.5 hours
Dawn Grove, Highwood	70 hours
Ilene Thompson, Helena	173 hours
Mary McEvoy, Polson	111.5 hours
Anne Carpenter, Helena	384 hours
Theresa Smith, Kalispell	119 hours
Rosalie Ferestad, Shelby	124 hours
Crystal Tyler, Moore	129 hours
Jessi Malcolm, Livingston	68.5 hours
Susan Armstrong, Great Falls	182 hours
Grace Phillips, Whitefish	96 hours
Sheri Thompson, Missoula	162.5 hours
Amy Bender, Glendive	353.5 hours
Laurie Hopper, Conrad	115 hours
Becky Littlefair, Great Falls	345 hours
Lucille Praask, Dillon	56 hours
Danette Love, Billings	287 hours
Stephanie Pitman, Helena	52 hours
Shelly McClain, Glendive	70 hours
Carole Pinnell, Kalispell	79 hours
Lauralea Sanks, Missoula	189 hours
Stacy Fischer, Sidney	79 hours
Mayela Koster, Bozeman	325 hours
Penny Hume, Victor	96 hours

Contact the ECP

Mailing Address:
Early Childhood Project
Montana State University
P.O. Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717

Phone:
1-800-213-6310
(406)994-4746

Fax:
(406)994-7555

Email:
ecp@montana.edu

Website:
www.montana.edu/ecp

New Location, Same Address

The Early Childhood Project has moved into its new digs! Our old space on the first floor of Herrick Hall is being remodeled into a handicapped-accessible classroom which has been needed for many years. We have moved upstairs to the second floor, Room 210. Be sure to stop by and see us whenever you come to Bozeman—we love visitors! We owe Montana State University a huge thank you for their continuing support of our work in early childhood career development and improved services in Montana for children and families.

Registry Certificates

Your Practitioner Registry Certificate is valuable, so keep it in a safe place. Make copies if you need them to accompany your Mini-Grants, Merit Pay or other Best Beginnings program applications. We are receiving too many requests for duplicate certificates! The Career Development Advisory Board decided at the October meeting to charge for requested duplicate Practitioner Registry Certificates. This will go into effect on January 1, 2007. Frame your certificate and hang it so parents and others will see your commitment to professionalism!

On the Road: Wall of Honor

Would you like to display the 2006 Early Childhood Wall of Honor in your community, agency, or program? It is a beautiful banner that features names of individuals and programs that have achieved career and program goals that reflect their commitment to standards of excellence, higher education and training. The following achievements are honored: National Association for the Education of Young Children or National Association for Family Child Care accreditation, One or Two Star Quality Program designation, Child Development Associate credentials (and renewals), new Associate, Bachelor's or Master's degrees in Early Childhood Education or with a concentration in ECE, and Montana Child Development Specialist Apprentices. Contact the ECP for your turn to show off early childhood professionalism in your part of the state.

Trainers: Update Your Information

Please check the trainer information posted on the ECP website under Trainer Directory so we can be sure it is current. If you need to make changes, please send an email to ecp@montana.edu. We want this information to be current about you, your education, skills, expertise and email so you will receive invites to Adult Learning I, II and III, the *Training Solutions* articles, and training planners can find you. Thanks for keeping us updated!

Faxes and Sign-In Sheets

Save yourself time and us too! If you fax any application to us or Sign-In Sheet, we must be able to read them. Check for clear printing done in pen so it is legible. If we cannot read what you send us, it will definitely delay processing. Thanks for your cooperation!

Job Board

Post vacancies for early childhood teachers or support positions for children and families on the on-line Job Board or check it to see what jobs are available in other locations. Just send an email to ecp@montana.edu that includes job title and description, location, application requirements, hours, wages, benefits and contact information. Please indicate when the position closes so we can keep the listings current (or contact us when you fill the position!)

*Love, Peace and Joy to All During the Holiday
Season and Always.*

