

# Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers Inc.



September 2024

Fall Newsletter

[www.PACTteachers.org](http://www.PACTteachers.org)

## Letter from the President

Greetings PACT members,

Play. To those of us in the Early Childhood Profession, Play is complex, it's comprehensive, providing opportunities for the child to develop, practice and refine their language, social-emotional and physical skills. It's essential for every child at every age because it IS developmentally appropriate. Play should be the focus of a nursery school's philosophy and curriculum. In short, Play is enough.

Yet play is genuinely misunderstood. The role of the educator as a facilitator and manager of Play is equally underappreciated. At the same time, the world is filled with mixed messages about what kids need. We see catalogs filled with "educational" toys. We feel pressured to have our kids work on their letters and numbers. We feel pressure to show academic learning in classrooms in which play is enough. As professionals we're not only aware of parents' anxiety about who wants to provide the best for their child; but we're also not sure how to communicate effectively the importance of Play.

It is in this context that I am very excited to welcome you to PACT's 2024-25 fall professional development days, which are focused on Play. Our presenters [Stacy Benge](#) and [Mike Huber](#) are both experts in the field and staunch defenders of a child's need to play and focus on the development of their bodies, knowing that brain development will naturally follow. **Please join me at these exciting workshops, which are of course included in a 2024-25 PACT Membership!**

James Scott Mitchell  
PACT President  
[Presidentpact4@gmail.com](mailto:Presidentpact4@gmail.com)

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## Professional Developmental Days: Wednesday, October 16 & Thursday, October 24

PACT is pleased to offer two virtual workshops this Fall 2024: *"The Whole Child Alphabet"* by Stacy Benge and *"Rough and Tumble Play"* by Mike Huber (CWO-162846). We have scheduling options for your convenience; sessions will be held Wednesday, October 16 from 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM, and Thursday, October 24 from 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM. You may choose to attend both of the 3-5 PM sessions, both of the 7-9 PM sessions, or both sessions on a single date! See below for more details about the workshops content and presenters.

### Workshops Content Descriptions:

#### *"The Whole Child Alphabet"* by Stacy Benge

Wednesday, October 16 **3pm to 5pm** OR Thursday, October 24 **7pm to 9pm**

**Description:** Transform how you approach literacy with The Whole Child Alphabet. Based on the book by the same name, this presentation connects movement, play, and child-led activity to the fundamental skills necessary for early literacy. Leave ready to embrace whole child development and play as the best means to build strong foundations for language and literacy.

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discover the developmental stages of visual perception, phonological awareness, and physical development and explain how they support the foundations of language, literacy and alphabet knowledge.
- Implement child centered experiences throughout the learning environment in both teacher and child-directed formats and clarify how they support language, literacy, and alphabet knowledge.
- Evaluate practices moving forward that support language and literacy including sharing information with stakeholders and advocating for child-led play. 1 COK/Curriculum, 1 COK/Child Development

#### *"Rough and Tumble Play"* by Mike Huber

Wednesday, October 16 **7pm to 9pm** OR Thursday, October 24 **3pm to 5pm**

**Description:** Discover how children learn best when using their whole body. Examine ways to create an environment that allows boisterous children to focus and encourage quiet children to move more. Learn how to foster confidence in all children by giving them appropriate challenges.

1. Participants will identify benefits of whole-body play
2. Participants will adapt activities to allow for children to use their whole body if they so choose
3. Participants will learn how to assess risks when allowing for rough and tumble play

2 COK/Child Development

### Presenters' Biography

**Stacy Benge M.S.** is an early childhood speaker who approaches learning in the early years with practicality and common sense. Standing firm on the truth that children learn best through simple, authentic experiences, Stacy advocates for child-led play to build solid foundations for child development. In addition to a Master of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies, Stacy spent 10 years in the early childhood classroom teaching children ages birth to five. As she has for the past 20 years, Stacy shares her passion for child development with fellow early learning professionals with enlightening and informative presentations. Stacy is the author of [The Whole Child Alphabet: How Children Actually Develop Literacy](#) published by Exchange Press. She is available for keynote presentations. Located in Texas, she presents virtually, locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Mike Huber, M.ED** has been in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education since 1992. He is the author of [Inclusion Includes Us: Building Bridges and Removing Barriers in Early Childhood Classrooms](#) (2022), [Embracing Rough and Tumble Play: Teaching with the Body in Mind](#) (2016), and the forthcoming book, [The Power in Pretend: Supporting Young Children's Power, Identity, and Agency through Play](#) (2025). He is the

co-host of the podcast "Teaching with the Body in Mind" and frequent guest on "That Early Childhood Nerd." Mike is the Director of Curriculum at Rise Early Learning Center in St. Louis Park, MN.

### Credit Hours and Core of Knowledge Area

Members who attend **the full two-hour session** of either workshop this Fall 2024 will receive 2 Core of Knowledge credit hours in either Curriculum and/or Child Development.

### Registration

Registration and payment can be completed [HERE](#). Please sign up individually to ensure your email is recorded. Registration should be submitted by **Wednesday, October 9**. By completing the Fall PDD registration, you are also receiving a membership to PACT for the 2024-2025 school year and will have access to our Spring Professional Developmental Days.

### Access to the Zoom Link for Fall Professional Development Days

A Zoom link will be e-mailed to registered members 24 hours prior to each session. Please join your training session at least 15-20 minutes early to check audio/video, sign in, and hear announcements from PACT.

### Assessments and Evaluations

Members will be asked to complete a content assessment and presenter evaluation of the virtual course via a Google form. The link will be e-mailed to participants following the PDD and should be completed within 24 hours. *\*\*Requirements by MSDE also stipulate members from MD must pass the assessment with a score of 70% or higher.*

### Certificates

In accordance with MSDE regulations, **participants MUST attend the full two-hour virtual presentation** and complete a content assessment along with a presenter evaluation before receiving their certificate. Further details about completing the assessment will be covered at the pre-PDD business meeting. Personalized certificates will be emailed within 2 weeks of each Professional Development Day.

### Membership (New or Renewing)

Join PACT (or renew your membership!) by completing the online form [HERE](#). Current members are eligible to attend one or both virtual Professional Development Days in the Fall 2024 and the in-person Professional Development Day in the Spring 2025. The membership fee for the 2024-2025 school year is \$60.

### Award for Devoted Service in Early Childhood Education

Time to recognize the best of us! We are pleased to call for nominations for our annual *PACT award for Devoted Service in Early Childhood Education*! Is there a staff member at your school who stands out for their dedication to the preschool, its families, and the cooperative model? Fill out the [2024-25 PACT Award Nomination form](#) to nominate your staff member for recognition. As noted on the nomination form, two (2) reference letters are required and should be emailed to [pactawards@gmail.com](mailto:pactawards@gmail.com). Nominations are due by **Thursday, February 27, 2025**. Questions? Please email [pactawards@gmail.com](mailto:pactawards@gmail.com). We look forward to reading about all those great staff members!

### Hall of Fame

The PACT Board established a PACT Hall of Fame in 2016 to recognize members who have given exemplary service in the field of Early Childhood Education. The following are the members who have been inducted to date:

**Janise Allyn-Smith** - Teacher/Director, Silver Spring N.S., PACT Board member (2017)

**Jennifer DeBernardis** - Teacher, Silver Spring N.S., PACT Board member (2018)

**Annette Fitzpatrick** - Director (retired), CCUMC Preschool, PACT Board member (2018)

**Edie Mossberg** - Director, Glenbrook N.S., Board member, ECE Consultant (2019)

**Bernadine Occhiuzzo** - Director/Teacher, Cedar Lane N.S. (2019)

Nancy Renner - *Director, Fort Hunt Preschool (2020)*  
Helene Segal-Turner - *Director, Kensington N.S., PACT Board member (2018)*  
Cindy Walsh - *Director (retired) CCPC Weekday N.S., PACT Board member (2018)*  
Fran Warthen - *Director, Suburban N.S. (2018)*  
Angie Zeidenberg - *Teacher, Bannockburn N.S. (2019)*

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### Join the PACT Board!

The PACT Board is run by dedicated volunteer early childhood educators. There are still some open positions, so we need members to step forward! Please check the list below and contact Scott Mitchell if you are interested in joining our team. Information about Board positions can be found in PACT's By-Laws on the website [www.PACTteachers.org](http://www.PACTteachers.org).

### The Proposed 2024-2025 Board Members

#### President

[James Scott Mitchell](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

#### V.P. Programming

[Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

[Doreen Buntin](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

#### V.P. Membership

[Ellen Griffin](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

#### Secretary

[Rebecca Brunson](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

#### Co-Treasurers

[Janise Allyn-Smith](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

[Kristin Wasserzug](#) Spring Knolls Cooperative Preschool, MD

#### Logistics & Hospitality

VA - **OPEN**

MD - [Meghan Ufko](#) Rockville Community Nursery School, MD

#### Professional Development Day Administration

[Jessie Auten](#) Providence Nursery School, VA

Exhibits/Resource Table - **OPEN**

#### Assessments and Evaluations

[Emily Ederer](#) Silver Spring Day School, MD

#### Legislative Contact

MD - [Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#)

DC - **OPEN**

VA - **OPEN**

#### Google Groups

[Magdalena Barry](#) Sleepy Hollow Preschool, VA

#### Web Master & Newsletter Editor

[Meredith Savage-Myers](#) Ashton Christian Preschool, MD

#### Past Co-Presidents

[Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#) Cedar Lane N.S., MD

[Ellen Griffin](#) Cedar Lane N.S., MD

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## Job Postings

Looking for a new teaching position in the Washington, DC area? PACT posts job openings on the website. Check the postings out [HERE](#). Directors wishing to post job openings should e-mail details to [Meredith Savage-Myers](#).

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## Google Groups

**PACT members' Google group:** To stay up-to date on PACT information, the google group is open to current PACT members. To join this Google group, send an e-mail to [vpmembershappact@gmail.com](mailto:vpmembershappact@gmail.com).

**Directors' Google group:** Share resources, ideas, and training opportunities by joining the PACT Directors listserv. PACT membership is not required. To join the Directors' Google group, send an e-mail to [James Scott Mitchell](#).

We hope you are having a great start to your school year!

