

Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers Inc.



February 2025

Spring Newsletter

www.PACTeachers.org

Letter from the President

Dear PACT Members,

I am very excited to welcome back a legendary PACT presenter for our spring professional development day, Jacky Howell. Jacky will be revisiting a topic she first shared with us many years ago and has been revising and updating since: Creating Experiential Curriculum. If you are like me, you are probably constantly trying to balance the push for boxed curricula with the need for a curriculum that is responsive to the children that you have in your classroom today, that allows them to learn in ways that are truly best for early learners.

I am also excited to be bringing an in-person PACT workshop back to Virginia at a new location, the Providence Presbyterian Church, which is home to one of our member schools.

Lastly, please take a moment to reflect on whether the current PACT format of a virtual fall session with time options of 3-5pm or 7-9pm and an in-person spring session from 9am-1pm works for you, or you have a suggestion for something different. There will be questions in the workshop evaluation to help us to gather feedback.

I look forward to seeing you at our spring workshop on March 27th!

Scott Mitchell
PACT president

Professional Developmental Day: Thursday, March 27 8:45am-12:45pm

PACT is pleased to offer an in-person workshop this Spring 2025.

"Creating Experiential Curriculum for Young Children: Play, Joy, Explore, Grow!" by Jacky Howell

The workshop will be held at [Providence Presbyterian Church](#) located at 9019 Little River Turnpike Fairfax, VA 22031.

Schedule of Events:

8:45 Registration and Hospitality Tables Open

9:25 PACT Business Meeting

9:30 Workshop begins

11:00 Break

11:15 Workshop resumes

12:45 Workshop ends

Workshop Description:

This workshop is designed for early childhood educators, caregivers, and curriculum developers who seek to create rich, engaging, and joyful learning experiences for preschoolers through real experiences. The focus is on designing an experiential curriculum that emphasizes play, exploration, and hands-on learning as opposed to pre-cut activities. By immersing children in real-world activities, educators will discover how to foster creativity, critical thinking, and emotional growth in young learners. Through this approach, children will grow in all areas of development and also experience the joy and excitement of learning through meaningful, interactive engagement with each other and the world. The workshop will emphasize how an experiential curriculum nurtures curiosity, promotes self-expression, and supports emotional well-being in young children. Educators will leave with many ideas to grow their classrooms into vibrant, joyful learning environments that inspire children to explore and learn with enthusiasm through meaningful experiences.

COK hours: Child Development 1.5, Curriculum/1.5

Presenters' Biography

Jacky Howell, MA has over 50 years of experience as an early childhood teacher, consultant, coach, and administrator. In addition, she has over 30 years' experience as a course instructor and presenter on topics related to early childhood development and curriculum. She is a published author with 2 books, *Rituals and Traditions: Fostering a Sense of Community in Preschool* and in April 2024, *Reflection, Perspective-Taking, and Social Justice: Stories of Empathy and Kindness in the Early Childhood Classroom*. She has published many articles in early education journals. She received her master's degree in human development from Pacific Oaks College. Currently she is a consultant, coach, mentor, and presenter with her own business, Azspire LLC and works with a variety of programs in the DC Metro Area as well as across the country. She has done webinars, workshops and presentations locally and nationally. Jacky believes strongly that all children deserve the highest quality early childhood experience and strives to work with others in creating places worthy of young children, families, and staff. Her website is <https://www.azspire.com/>.

Credit Hours and Core of Knowledge Area

Members who attend the full session 8:45am-12:45pm this Spring 2025 will receive 3 Core of Knowledge credit hours. *COK hours: Child Development 1.5, Curriculum/1.5*

Registration

Registration and payment can be completed [HERE](#). Please sign up individually to ensure your email is recorded. Registration should be submitted by [Friday, March 21](#).

Current Members (dues paid for the 2024-2025 school year): There is no additional fee to attend this spring's professional development day. You are still required to complete the registration using the link above.

New and Returning Members: There will be a \$40 fee to attend this spring's professional developmental day. You must complete the registration using the link above and pay the \$40 fee. *By completing the Spring PDD registration, you are also receiving a membership to PACT for the remainder of this school year.*

Assessments and Evaluations

Members will be asked to complete a content assessment and presenter evaluation via a Google form. QR codes for the assessment and survey will be provided at the conclusion of the workshop. For those of you who prefer to do the assessment and evaluation at home, links will be emailed in the evening.

***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 three-hour presentation and complete a content assessment along with a presenter evaluation before receiving their certificate. Personalized certificates will be emailed to participants within 7-10 business days.

Membership (New or Renewing)

Join PACT (or renew your membership!) by completing the online form [HERE](#). To join PACT now, the membership fee for the remainder of 2023-2024 school year is prorated at \$40 which includes the spring professional development day on March 27, 2025.

***** \

Award for Devoted Service in Early Childhood Education

We are pleased to announce the return of the 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? Please fill out this Google Form to nominate your staff member for recognition! (The two reference letters may be emailed to the address provided in this form.) Please submit a [Service Award Nomination](#) by Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Hall of Fame

The PACT Board established a PACT Hall of Fame in 2016 to recognize members who have given exemplary service in Early Childhood Education. 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)*

James Scott Mitchell-*Teacher, Silver Spring Nursery School, PACT Board President (2022)*

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.

The 2023-2024 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

Treasurer

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

Logistics & Hospitality

VA - [Joan Morales](#) Spring Knolls, VA

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**

Listserv

[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

Job Postings

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

VPMembershipPACT@gmail.com.

Member Groups

PACT members' email list: Registered PACT members receive periodic email updates from PACT. To add or update an email address, please contact vpmembershippact@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 school year!

