

Service Learning Homeland Security Program

Supporting Actions for Engagement (SAFE)

Instructor: Joanne Labish Taylor, Ed.D.

Course: Foundations of Early Childhood Education

Course Description: Changes in regulations governing child care centers will require centers to have written plans to deal with emergency situations. The emergency plans should include generic types of situations which could involve the need to evacuate the building and relocate to a temporary type of sheltered location, or to remain in the building for extended periods of time beyond the regular operating hours, including overnight. These concepts are difficult for adults to understand, and can be terrifying for young children.

Number of Students: 25

Student Profile: The first step of the process involves researching the literature to become aware of the social and emotional needs of young children in the time of disaster or crisis. The students will work in small groups of approximately 4 students. Each group will conduct a literature review of the impact of crisis and disasters on the social and emotional well-being of preschool age children. Each individual student is participating in observations at a community child care center. Using that child care center, the students will simultaneously interview child care center directors, teachers, and parents and discuss emergency planning. The students will ascertain the perceived needs of child care centers and parents.

Project Title: Preparing Children in Child Care Centers for Disasters

Project Description: Using the information from the literature review, each group of students will develop a unit plans for preschool environments to help develop the social and emotional competences of children to face crises or emergencies. Each unit plan will contain a minimum of 8 activities. Each activity plan will contain: goal, objectives, materials needs, step by step instructions for the teacher, and a time frame. Each activity plan will also contain a link to the community or the home. Each unit plan will also contain a list of additional resources which are

appropriate for the director, teachers, or parents. The list shall identify at least two children's books appropriate for preschool age children, internet sites with a description of the material available, articles on the topic of social-emotional development of young children and coping with crises, and other printed materials available to the public.

The unit plans will be shared with child care centers at a workshop session of Raritan Valley Community College's spring Child Care Conference on April 17th, 2004. This will be coupled with the keynote address, "Coping in Young Children" given by G. Gordon Williamson, PhD. Dr. Williamson is Director of Professional Development at Manhattan Center for early Learning, which provides early intervention and preschool services for children with special needs. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of **Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families.**