

Title of Training: Exploring the Explorers Curriculum: Responsive Circle

Board Present: Jennifer Bowman – President, Rebecca Dunahoo – President Elect, Emma Tempest – Secretary, Nicole Bedard – Benton County Member-at-Large, Anna Cannon – Washington Count Member-at-Large, Terri Teters - Ex-Officio

Participants in attendance: 23

The meeting was called to order at 6.30pm by Jennifer Bowman. Jennifer welcomed the participants to the NWAECA meeting. She thanked Marcy White for hosting the meeting last month and for being here for our Responsive Circle.

Business:

1. We invite you to share any videos you have of your programs – we miss seeing your setting when we have our in-person meetings so we would love to visit with you virtually! Please email nwaeca@gmail.com to share!
2. Our Treasurer's Report shows a balance of \$912.11 with no outstanding charges.
3. **Program Shout Out!** Do you know an early childhood program you would like to nominate that needs an extra show of appreciation? Share your messages via our Google form or submit a photo/video [here](#).
4. **Women's History Month** – AECA is celebrating women who are making history in the lives of children across Arkansas. Who do you work with or admire that needs celebrating? Who do you notice day in and day out making change happen? Nominate them [here](#).
5. **Arkansas Children's Week** is April 10-16: Make Amazing Things Happen

Speaker: Marcy White

Marcy asked the attendees what things the children in their programs have been interested in and how they showed that interest. We talked about how children's curiosities can be fueled when the adult is tuned in – when we notice where their attention is, what they are asking questions about, when the 'lightbulb moment' happens. When we invite children to look closer at an interest, when we provide a few more invitations to play and materials to support it can sustain their interest, so it becomes more than just a passing fleeting moment. Then you can enhance and extend their interest through further projects, play invitations, books, tools and artifacts and discussions. When we pay attention to and respond to children's interests, explorations, and curiosities we send the message 'I see you!'. We can further support children's explorations through providing access to materials for children to record their own discoveries and representations of their learning and understanding.

If we see more traditional curriculum activities and ideas (on Pinterest for example), we may have an initial reaction of "That's cute!" or "That's so cool!". Marcy invited everyone to add 'and' to your thought. "That's cute AND..." – how will this apply to the children in

my program? Marcy talked about how we can challenge our own perspective about children's learning by asking, "What makes this a fit for us?". Maybe the activity is not actually developmentally appropriate for the age in my room? Maybe this activity would work brilliantly with one or two children, but not a whole group? Use the 'and' to figure out the deeper meaning you can get beyond that single activity. Once you start thinking about it, ideas start to emerge – especially if you can brainstorm with colleagues and the children themselves. Their points of view, ideas and questions can spark amazing projects and interests!

Sometimes we can anticipate what interests might pop up – seasons is a common theme as the children notice the changes in the world around them. Others are more random! Marcy encourages everyone to pick and choose the topics in the Explorers Curriculum that appeal to the children you have in front of you right now. Here is the link again: <http://asuchildhoodservices.org/#!/preschoolexp>
Marcy's email is MWhite@AState.edu

We invite you to share your observations from the curriculum over in our [Facebook group](#)! We would love to hear what your children are currently interested in and maybe you can inspire some other people!

Meeting was adjourned by Jennifer Bowman

Next Meeting: Tuesday 13th April 6.30-7.30pm

Topic: The Power of Loose Parts for Social and Emotional Development

Minutes shared by Emma Tempest