

## From the Director

**G**reetings everyone! It's the season for back-to-school, the first days of Fall, and new beginnings. I could argue that the calendar year should begin in August or September, rather than January. Maybe it's just the educator in me, but doesn't the coming of another school year remind you of all things new and hopeful?

Here at SIG, we've started the fifth and final year of this funding cycle with renewed energy and enthusiasm. Since SIG's inception, our aim has been to improve academic outcomes for all Tennessee stu-



dents. This simple-to-say but hard-to-do goal challenges us each day.

We've recently received an annual evaluation report, and the news is good: professional development is reaching more teachers, and valuable tools are being produced for teachers and parents from preschool through middle school. We've supported teachers to better differentiate instruction so that all students can learn in Tennessee classrooms. But many challenges remain: How do we scale up activities so that the impact is felt statewide? How do we best share what we've

learned, integrating it with professional development, technical assistance structures and other initiatives already underway in the state?

SIG grants should be incubators — nurturing, strengthening and spreading new, good ideas. So even as we gather, streamline and disseminate products and processes that we've developed over the past few years, we continue to cultivate new approaches, strategies and tools to address our goals. We're looking forward to making two new tools on Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI) available to the state this year.

Over the past four years, we've had  
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## Meaningful Parent-Teacher Conferences

**P**arent-Teacher Conferences are a good time to share information, develop personal relationships, and establish partnerships between parents and teachers. Being prepared and having goals for the meeting can help the conference run smoothly for everyone.

Teachers typically prepare for conferences by reviewing the student's grades, checking their work, collecting samples to show parents and thinking about what parents would like to know about their child's progress.

### What preparations can teachers add to those they already undertake?

It is helpful to share with parents some positive remarks about each student: actual student work, detailed information on grades and how the student can improve, specific feedback on student skills that need support, or handouts on what parents can do at home to help. Prepare two or three questions for the student's family; are there any strategies that work at home that you could apply in the class-

room? Families often appreciate information about topics of interest or concern to them. For example, middle school years are often challenging for parents, so information on student self-perception, changes in the adolescent brain and what kind of boundaries parents need to set may be helpful for parents.

### Is there anything parents can do to be better prepared for conferences? The answer is yes!

A parent-teacher conference can flow smoothly if parents know what to expect and what their role is. It may be helpful for parents to identify questions they want to ask and what kinds of information they can share with the teacher. Parents should involve their children in this planning process. Thinking ahead-of-time and talking to their children about these items will help parents to be as prepared for school conferences as the teacher is. Following are some preparations that can be made before the conference takes place, items to address during the



conference, and follow-up ideas for after the conference.

### Before the Conference

- Talk to your child. Ask some good questions:
  - What do you like about school?
  - What do you dislike about school?
  - Is there anything you would like to have me talk to the teacher about or to share with the teacher?
- Think about the questions you would like to ask the teacher.
- Is there a specific issue you would like to discuss with the teacher?

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## Parent-Teacher Conferences,

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- Think about what your son/daughter does well at home.

### During the Conference

- Share with the teacher what you think your son/daughter does well at home.
- As regards school, share your child's likes and dislikes, as well as anything that he's asked you to talk to the teacher about.
- Share anything about your family life that will help him/her understand your child better — family stressors, illnesses, child's medical health, etc.
- Ask about your child's progress:
  - Is my child at grade level with his/her reading, writing and math?
  - What are my child's strengths in class?
  - What are my child's weaknesses in class?
  - What do you expect from children in your class (behavior, work habits, etc.)?
  - What can I do at home to support you and my child in school?
  - How can I reach you if I have any questions or want ideas on how to help my child succeed in school?
  - When will we meet again to discuss my child's progress?

### After the Conference

- Talk about the conference with your child. Praise your child's strengths.
- Decide how you will follow through with any plan that you and your child have agreed upon with the teacher.
- Set goals with your child based on what you have learned about his progress and abilities, and talk about rewards and consequences.
- Check your child's class work and homework every day.
- Keep in touch with the teacher to discuss your child's progress.

Remember that you are your child's most important cheerleader, goal-setter, supporter, guide, and supervisor. Your support and guidance will set your child on the right path! Your hard work and persistence will pay off in the long run!

## Setting the Tone for Treating Each Other With Respect

Many of you expressed interest in our articles about bullying in last year's Winter 2007 issue. The following activity may help you to kick off the new school year in a positive manner. It can be done at school, but can also be adapted to a family activity that can be done at home. **Sticks and stones** has been making the rounds of mailing lists recently: Provide each student (or family member, if you're doing this at home) with a small paper cutout in the shape of a human, or have students cut out their own paper figures. Ask each student to write his or her name on the cutout. Have students form a circle. Then tell students to pass the cutouts to the person on their right. As the cutouts are passed around the circle, have each person make a small crumple or tear in the cutout or add a pencil mark. When the cutouts have made their way around the entire circle, have students try to repair their own cutouts by flattening, erasing, or taping. After the cutouts are repaired, discuss the activity. Ask children, "What are the effects of unkind words and hurt feelings?". You might display the cutouts on a classroom bulletin board as a constant reminder of the effects of hurtful actions.

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an unwavering commitment to bringing parents and teachers together, connecting school and home. We're now piloting two new initiatives designed to strengthen school-home connections: a parent workshop, *Helping Your Child At Home: Reading Strategies Parents Can Use*, and an online class for teachers, *Building Bridges Between School and Family*. Many thanks to Lawrence County Schools, our partners for the online class pilot. A third project is nearing completion as we look forward to the publication later this year of a guidebook for families who are seeking greater involvement in their children's schools.

SIG is moving into the movie business this year with two DVD projects! *Literacy for All* provides families with information to help their children succeed in reading, with a special emphasis on children with disabilities. *Best Practices Using Differentiated Instruction and Response to Intervention* will feature three Tennessee schools and their unique approaches.

Finally, we would like to announce a special place for teachers to learn from teachers. Our *Interactive Teacher Forum*, found at <http://p067.ezboard.com/tennesseesigteacherforum>, is designed to allow teachers to share ideas about differentiated instruction and literacy. You may use the link to go directly there, or go to

the SIG website at <http://sig.cls.utk.edu> and look for the *Interactive Teacher Forum* button.

We will continue to communicate with you through our website and this newsletter. I invite you to spend some time with this issue of SIGnal. The content is developed with both teachers and parents in mind. The "Meaningful Parent-Teacher Conferences" article should help both groups communicate more effectively. Check out the "before, during and after" conference tips: I can just about guarantee that you'll see some ideas there you hadn't thought of — I know I did.

In this issue, SIG staff explore the theme "what we did on our summer vacation" and share more updates than I can list in this brief column. Also, be on the lookout for information on the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary (TAV). You'll want to be well-informed on this statewide initiative, and the article here points you toward valuable resources. A real example from a Tennessee classroom of TAV in use completes the picture.

Please feel free to contact me about SIG if you want to learn more, or to partner with us. No work is more important than your work with Tennessee's children, and I am honored that you invite us to share in your efforts. On behalf of the Tennessee State Improvement Grant, I wish you a wonderful and productive year.

—Kathy Strunk

## The Tennessee Academic Vocabulary

One area on which Tennessee school systems are asking teachers to focus is vocabulary, from first grade through high school. Students need to develop many kinds of vocabulary, especially vocabulary which will allow them to understand certain academic concepts. If students don't understand the vocabulary, it is difficult to understand anything else about what is being said and taught in the classroom.

### Why teach Academic Vocabulary?

In order to better standardize vocabulary used in each grade and content area, Dr. Robert Marzano and teachers from across the state met to develop the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary. According to Marzano (2005), providing direct instruction in the terms that relate to academic content is the strongest action a teacher can take to ensure that students have the academic background knowledge to understand the content they will encounter. When students know how to define the vocabulary terms used in a specific subject, it is easier for them to understand the information they will read and hear about the subject in class. For example, knowing that, in math, a "tessellation" is a pattern that is repeated over and over again will help a student to understand the concept and to recognize different patterns, as well as the shapes that form the patterns.

In order to support the systematic instruction of Academic Vocabulary, staff members of the State Improvement Grant (SIG) have developed teaching strategies and placed them on the SIG website at <http://sig.cls.utk.edu/>. In the section la-

beled "TN Academic Vocabulary", users will find definitions for each vocabulary word, and strategies teachers can employ in the classroom to teach the vocabulary. Such strategies as Acquiring New Vocabulary Through Book Discussion Group; Word Bag; and even games such as Baseball and Web-based Flash Cards can provide teachers with many avenues for reaching different learning styles.

Visitors to the website will also find the research behind the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary, as well as video snapshots of vocabulary theory by Dr. Susan Benner, Professor and Head of Early Childhood/Special/Urban Multicultural Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Dr. Anne McGill Franzen, Professor and Director of the Reading Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and Dr. Sherry Mee Bell, Associate Professor Modified/Early Childhood Special Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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**Mark Jones, 6th grade teacher at Gresham Middle School in Knoxville, Tennessee, has developed several strategies for teaching the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary. One strategy is to have his students wear "vocabulary bracelets"; when the student is able to use the word correctly outside the classroom, the adult he or she is talking with can sign the bracelet. These photos show students actively engaged in using Mr. Jones's strategies as they learn the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary.**

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## Helping Your Children to Succeed in School

Every child has the power to succeed in school and in life, and every parent, family member, and caregiver can help. The question is: How can we help our children succeed? The answer comes from a combination of common sense and research about how children learn and about how to prepare them to learn.

We know, for example, that children tend to do the same things as their parents do. What we say and do in our daily lives can help them to develop positive attitudes toward school and learning and to build confidence in themselves as learners. Showing our children that we both value education and use it in our daily lives provides them with powerful models and con-

tributes greatly to their success in school.

As our children's first and most important teachers, it's important that parents build and keep strong ties to their children's schools. When parents and families are involved, the children do better and have better feelings about going to school. We help our children to succeed by making

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sure they are taking advantage of learning opportunities, both in and out of school.

### Basic Activities for Helping Your Child Succeed in School

If you think about it, although school is very important, it does not really take up much of a child's time. In the United States, the school year averages 180 days. At 8 hours a day for 180 days, that is 1,440 hours per year spent in school. A normal year contains 8760 hours, and even if children sleep for 10 hours a day, that still

leaves 5,110 hours. If children spend 1,440 hours in school, they are outside of the classroom for the remaining 2,210 hours. Clearly, the hours and days that a child is not in school are important for learning, too. Here are some things that you can do to help your child make the most of that time:

#### Encourage Your Child to Read

Helping your child become a reader is one of the most important things that you can do to help him succeed in school—and in life. The importance of reading simply can't be overstated. Reading helps children in all school subjects; more importantly,

it is the key to lifelong learning. Here are some tips on how to help your child become a reader.

■ **Read to your child, even after he learns to read for himself.** As you read, talk with your child. Encourage him to ask questions and to talk about the story. Ask him to predict what will come next. Also, ask your child to read to you.

■ **Make sure that your home has lots of reading materials that are appropriate for your child.** Keep books, magazines and newspapers in the house. Reading materials don't have to be new or expensive. Often, you can find good books and magazines for your child at yard or library

## • SIG HAPPENINGS •

### Preschool Learning:

**Alissa Ongie** spent the majority of her summer planning for East Tennessee State University's (ETSU's) Early Childhood Conference, July 26-28. Approximately 70 SIG preschool teachers and directors attended the pre-conference with early childhood experts **Karen Farmer Wanamaker** or **Mary Jo Huff**, a Literacy Banquet with ETSU's **Rebecca Isbell** as speaker, and two full days of conference sessions.

This year, Alissa will be working intensively with 10 SIG preschools chosen to participate in the ELLCO (Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation) quasi-experimental design research study, providing several professional development workshops at each preschool, based on specific ELLCO items unique to each setting. Subsequent observations will be continued in those schools and others selected for the research study. In addition, Alissa will conduct preschool parent workshops at several SIG preschools.

### School-based Learning:

Over the summer **Gail Cook** presented the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary at the Tennessee Technological University's Summer Literacy Conference and set up the new Interactive Teacher Forum which has been placed on the SIG website.

**Kandy Smith** presented Professional Development to teachers in Macon

County focusing on the Tennessee Academic Vocabulary, Literature Circles and Motivation, to both elementary and secondary teachers. During the month of August, new schools were identified and initial meetings were held with contact personnel to determine service needs for the 2007-08 school year.

Service Schools have been identified for the 2007-08 school year. Initial meetings have been held to determine needs in new and pre-existing schools which still require service. The determination has been made that SIG School Consultants will maintain a continuing presence in the schools as opposed to one-shot Professional Development sessions. This effort will best meet the needs of the faculties in a train-the-trainer scenario, leaving strategies in place that can be sustained as stand alone practices. In scaling up, two new entire school districts have been added to the service list, as well as 17 previously identified schools.

The staff at Vanderbilt's IRIS Center finished up the 5th module in the Response to Intervention (RTI) series this summer. The module, RTI: Considerations for School Leaders, guides school leadership personnel through the systems change process necessary to implement any new process in a school and provides additional information specific to implementing RTI in a school setting.

The last module in the RTI series will focus on Tier 3 interventions and will be posted in late fall of 2007.

### Family Connections:

**Julie Sullivan** and **Donna Graham**, Family Voices of Tennessee, have been collaborating with State Improvement Grant providers in other states, planning several joint parent/teacher training opportunities to help parents and teachers in the IEP process. They have also been working on a guide book for Family Involvement, collecting success stories from across the state.

Staff of Family Voices will be offering training opportunities in future months to parents and teachers on topics such as planning for effective family involvement; the IEP decision-making process; and parent/teacher collaboration in the IEP Process. Each of these workshops is intended to include joint training for parents and teachers.

**Karen Harrison**, **Alena Sampson**, and **Jeness Roth**, of Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP), have been continuing their work on issues related to families whose children have special needs. They have been planning a DVD that shows families how to work with their children to increase literacy skills.

A literacy toolkit workshop was conducted in late September at Scenic Valley Elementary School in southeastern

sales. Ask family members and friends to consider giving books and magazine subscriptions as gifts for birthdays or other special occasions.

■ **Set aside quiet time for family reading.** Some families even enjoy reading aloud to each other, with each family member choosing a book, story, poem, or article to read to the others.

■ **Show that you value reading.** Let your child see you reading for pleasure, as well as for performing your routine activities as an adult—reading letters and recipes, directions and instructions, newspapers, computer screens and so forth.

■ **Get help for your child if he has a read-**

**ing problem.** When a child is having reading difficulties, the reason might be simple to understand and deal with. For example, your child may need glasses, or some extra help with reading skills. Speak with your child's teacher if you have concerns.

### Talk with Your Child

Talking and listening play major roles in children's school success. It's through hearing parents and family members talk, and through responding to that talk, that young children begin to pick up the language skills they will need if they are to do well. For example, children who don't hear a lot of talk and who aren't encour-

aged to talk themselves often have problems learning to read, which can lead to other school problems. In addition, children who haven't learned to listen carefully often have trouble following directions and paying attention in class.

Think of talking with your child as being like a tennis game with words—instead of a ball—bouncing back and forth. Find time to talk wherever you are:

■ **As you walk with your child or ride with her in a car or on a bus, talk with her about what she's doing at school.** Ask her to tell you about a school assembly or a field trip. Point out and talk about things

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## • SIG HAPPENINGS •

Tennessee. The workshop was filmed for future use by other schools in Tennessee, and focused on ways parents can support literacy in children who have special needs.

**Reggie Curran** and **Lisa Crawford**, Center for Literacy Studies (CLS) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, conducted several workshops for parents and teachers about the importance of involving families in children's education. Sites where workshops were given included the Reading First Academies in Knoxville and Memphis, Tennessee; the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga; ETSU Early Education Conference; the Lawrence County, Tennessee School System; and Union County, Tennessee School System.

During the coming school year, Center for Literacy Studies staff will be conducting several types of workshops in Tennessee — strategy workshops for parents who want to help their children with reading comprehension; literacy toolkit workshops for teachers who want to involve families; and an online course about building bridges between home and school. In addition, CLS staff will be maintaining the CLS website <http://sig.cls.utk.edu/>, publishing three newsletters, and helping to conduct ELLCO observations and parent literacy workshops in Tennessee Early Education classrooms.

Keplar Elementary School in Rogersville, Tennessee, started their school year out on August 13th with parent participation. For the second year, school began with parents and students coming to school together, meeting the teachers, and circulating through several fun activities.



**SIG staff member Lee Saeker and third grade teacher Amber Davidson, work with students on a craft to go along with the book they just read, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar."**



**SIG staff member Lisa Crawford and Special Education Assistant Chastity Woods help children play literacy bingo in the school library.**

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that you see as you walk—funny signs, new cars, or interesting people.

■ **As you shop in a store, talk with your child about prices, differences in brands and how to pick out good vegetables and fruit.** Give your child directions about where to find certain items, then have him go get them.

■ **As you fix dinner, ask your child to help you follow the steps in a recipe.** Talk with him about what can happen if you miss a step or leave out an ingredient.

■ **As you fix a sink or repair a broken table, ask your child to hand you the tools that you name.** Talk with her about each step you take to complete the repair. Tell her what you're doing and why you're doing it. Ask her for suggestions about how you should do something.

■ **As you watch TV together, talk with your child about the programs.** If you're watching one of her favorite programs, encourage her to tell you about the background of the characters, which ones she likes and dislikes and who the actors are. Compare the program to a program that you liked when you were her age.

■ **As you read a book with your child, pause occasionally to talk to him about what's happening in the book.** Help him to relate the events in the book to events in his life: "Look at that tall building! Didn't we see that when we were in Chicago?" Ask him to tell in his own words what the book was about. Ask him about new words in a book and help him to figure out what they mean.

It's also important for you to show your child that you're interested in what he has to say. Demonstrate for him how to be a good listener:

When your child talks to you, stop what you're doing and pay attention. Look at him and ask questions to let him know that you've heard what he said: "So when are you going to help your granddad work on his car?"

When your child tells you about something, occasionally repeat what he says to let him know that you're listening closely: "The school bus broke down twice!"

## Monitor Homework

Let your child know that you think doing homework is an important part of a good education:

■ **Have a special place for your child to study.** The homework area doesn't have to be fancy; a desk in the bedroom is nice, but for many children, the kitchen table or a corner of the living room works just fine. The area should have good lighting and it should be fairly quiet. Provide supplies and identify resources. For starters, have available pencils, pens, erasers, writing paper and a dictionary. Other supplies that might be helpful include a stapler, paper clips, maps, a calculator, a pencil sharpener, tape, glue, paste, scissors, a ruler, a calculator, index cards, a thesaurus and an almanac. If possible, keep these items together in one place.

■ **Set a regular time for homework.** Having a regular time to do homework helps children to finish assignments.

■ **Remove distractions.** Turn off the TV and discourage your child from making and receiving social telephone calls during homework time.

■ **Show that you are interested.** Don't expect or demand perfection. If you have criticisms or suggestions, make them in a helpful way.

■ **Monitor homework to be sure it has been completed.**

## Monitor TV Viewing and Video Game Playing

American children on average spend far more time watching TV or playing video games than they do completing homework or other school-related activities. Here are some suggestions for helping your child to use TV and video games wisely:

■ **Limit the time that you let your child watch TV.** Too much television cuts into important activities in a child's life, such as reading, playing with friends and talking with family members.

■ **Model good TV viewing habits.** Remember that children often imitate their parents' behavior. Children who live in homes in which parents and other family members watch a lot of TV are likely to spend their time in the same way. Children who live in homes in which parents and

other family members have "quiet" time away from the TV when they read (either alone or to each other), talk to each other, play games or engage in other activities tend to do the same.

■ **Watch TV with your child when you can.** Talk with him about what you see. Answer his questions. Try to point out the things in TV programs that are like your child's everyday life.

■ **When you can't watch TV with your child, spot check to see what she's watching.** Ask questions after the program ends. See what excites her and what troubles her. Find out what she has learned and remembered.

■ **Limit the amount of time your child spends playing video games.** As with TV programs, be aware of the games he likes to play and discuss his choices with him.

## Encourage Your Child to Be Responsible and to Work Independently

Taking responsibility and working independently are important qualities for school success. Here are some suggestions for helping your child to develop these qualities:

■ **Establish rules.** Every home needs reasonable rules that children know and can depend on. Have your child help you to set rules, then make sure that you enforce the rules consistently.

■ **Make it clear to your child that he has to take responsibility for what he does,** both at home and at school. For example, don't automatically defend your child if his teacher tells you that he is often late to class or is disruptive when he is in class. Ask for his side of the story. If a charge is true, let him take the consequences.

■ **Work with your child to develop a reasonable, consistent schedule of jobs to do around the house.** List them on a calendar. Younger children can help set the table or put away their toys and clothes. Older children can help prepare meals and clean up afterwards.

■ **Show your child how to break a job down into small steps, then to do the job one step at a time.** This works for everything—getting dressed, cleaning a room or doing a big homework assignment.

■ **Make your child responsible for getting ready to go to school each morning** — getting up on time, making sure that he has everything he needs for the school day and so forth. If necessary, make a checklist to help him remember what he has to do.

■ **Monitor what your child does after school, in the evenings and on weekends.** If you can't be there when your child gets home, give her the responsibility of checking in with you by phone to discuss her plans.

### Encourage Active Learning

Children need active learning as well as quiet learning such as reading and doing homework. Active learning involves asking and answering questions, solving problems and exploring interests. Active learning also can take place when your child plays sports, spends time with friends, acts in a school play, plays a musical instrument or visits museums and bookstores.

To promote active learning, listen to your child's ideas and respond to them. Let him jump in with questions and opin-

ions when you read books together. When you encourage this type of give-and-take at home, your child's participation and interest in school is likely to increase.

Most importantly, let your child know that you enjoy spending time with him. Knowing that he is valued will help him want to increase his value by learning to be the best person he can be.

Have a great school year!

*Adapted from US Government Publication:*  
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/succeed/index.html>

## 47th ETSU Early Childhood Conference Fills to Capacity

This year's East Tennessee State University Early Childhood Conference and Preschool Literacy Training Pre-Conference, which draws educators from throughout the region, was filled to capacity.

This 47th annual event, held July 26-28 at The Centre at Millennium Park, was co-sponsored by ETSU's Center of Excellence in Early Childhood Learning and Development, School of Continuing Studies and Office of Professional Development, along with the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The Preschool Literacy Training Project (PLTP) is part of the Tennessee State Improvement Grant (SIG).

This was the first time the conference had reached the maximum number of participants and registration closed ahead of the event, according to conference coordinator Dr. Pamela Evanshen, an Associate Professor of Early Childhood in the Department of Human Development and Learning in ETSU's Claudius G. Clemmer College of Education.

Evanshen attributes the increase in early registration for this ever-popular event to growing "attention throughout the state and nation to the importance of quality early childhood programs for children from birth to age 8, or Pre-K to third grade."

This year, 1,150 educators had pre-registered, primarily from northeast Tennessee and across the state, as well as southwest Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky.

Evanshen pointed out that some of the attending Pre-K teachers provide educational opportunities in programs funded by Gov. Phil Bredesen's Pre-K Initiative.

To accommodate future growth for the conference and allow even more participants to attend, Evanshen says event sponsors will try to increase the number of locations used for sessions and other attractions, including nearby hotels and buildings on the main ETSU campus.

Featured presenters included Elizabeth Sherwood, educator and author of numerous publications for Pre-K and primary teachers focused on integrating science across the curriculum; Charles Smith, educator, author and speaker on issues of self-esteem and social development; and Steven James, internationally known author and "one of the nation's most inspirational" storytellers. Special guest speakers included early childhood educator, author and curriculum designer Karen Farmer Wanamaker, and award-winning author, early childhood educator, storyteller and recording artist Mary Jo Huff.

Wanamaker presented "Do-Tell-Retell," a session filled with age-appropriate techniques for preschoolers; Huff encouraged participants to "Clap, Wiggle, Jiggle,



and Stomp to the Beat of Learning" at the pre-conference session sponsored by the PLTP/SIG.

A Literacy Banquet was hosted by the PLTP/SIG, with ETSU's Dr. Rebecca Isbell as the featured speaker. Isbell, an internationally known Author and Professor of Early Childhood Education, is director of the Center of Excellence in Early Childhood Learning and Development.

The main conference on Friday and Saturday included over 120 sessions in seven tracts: Administrative/Directors; Reggio Emilia; Literacy; Infant/Toddler; Preschool; Primary; and Early Childhood Special Education. In addition, attendees had opportunities to visit exhibits and creative discovery rooms, participate in make-and-take workshops, and tour ETSU's Child Study Center, Little Bucs Student Child Care Center and University School.

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## Websites for Parents and Teachers

■ The **SIG website** has lots of good information for parents, teachers, and school administrators. There are links to take you to other fun, interesting web sites, so check it out at <http://sig.cls.utk.edu/>

■ Information for parents about **food, fun, school, child development**, and much more is available at <http://www.familyeducation.com/home/>

■ **Department of Education Website:** Promoting Educational Excellence for all Americans. This site

contains numerous booklets for parents and teachers about helping children succeed in various subjects.  
<http://www.ed.gov/index.html>

■ **PBS.org** offers parents and teachers lots of information, including child development; supporting learning at school; parent-teacher partnerships; dealing with behavior issues; and many other areas. Go to their main site at <http://www.pbs.org> for information on any of these areas, and check out <http://www.pbs.org/parents/goingtoschool/> to find

out what children are learning in each grade.

<http://sig.cls.utk.edu>

**Check out Tennessee's SIG website for resources and information about the State Improvement Grant, as well as on reading, parenting, and teaching strategies.**



**SIG** Tennessee State  
Improvement Grant

*Advancing the skills of Tennessee students*

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