



Connections

Emily Fenichel Award Presented

Evelyn Davis is Honored Recipient

At our spring 2009 Conference, Evelyn Davis, MD was presented with our 3rd Annual Emily Fenichel Award. Dr. Davis was chosen because of her commitment to the health and wellbeing of children throughout her career. Her involvement began in 1969 when she started a four-year assignment as a Public Health Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia, West Africa.

Upon her return to the States, she enrolled in a two-year Post-Med Graduate Program at Columbia University. In 1979, she received her MD from New York University School of Medicine. Dr. Davis received her residency training in Pediatrics and fellowship training in Behavioral Developmental Pediatrics at Babies Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center.

Dr. Davis joined Harlem Hospital Center in 1984 and stayed there until her retirement in 2006. She provided primary medical and psychiatric care to thousands of patients and specialized in caring for children with special needs, both physical and mental. In addition to direct patient care and teaching residents, she took on other roles, all aimed at bettering the lives of at-risk children and their families. She also founded and directed the innovative Grandparents Program in Child Psychiatry and co-founded the Family Friends Program in which elder volunteers make

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New York Zero-to-Three's Spring Conference Hailed As Success

Suzi Tortora Explores Baby's World in Keynote Address

On Friday, May 15, 2009, over 160 people joined us for our 13th Annual Spring Conference entitled "The Mind-Body Connection in the World of the Young Child: From Development to Intervention" featuring keynote speaker Suzi Tortora, EdD, LCAT, CMA. Tortora, author of the book *Dancing Dialogue*, gave a talk entitled "From Alchemy to Scientific Discipline: Mind-Body-Emotion Connections in the Development and Health of Young Children."

Tortora provided an integrative approach for infant development and health using the mind-body paradigm based on 40 years of research.

She discussed how development and experience are rooted in the body, shaping how we feel, think and communicate. She traced the roots of this development to John Bowlby's theory of attachment, which highlights the paramount role the mother has in securing the baby's sense of safety through her ability to accurately read and respond to the baby's non-verbal cues. Bowlby postulates that the mother must provide the protective container to support the baby's developing emotional self-regulation. This occurs through spontaneous dynamic interactions.

These interactions organize the baby's experience creating mental representations

that secure the emotional bond between baby and mother.

Tortora highlighted the important role of non-verbal body-based behaviors and the ability to communicate non-verbally, (through play), in the developing infant's sense of self and other. She cited such research discoveries as:



- "Hidden regulators" established through the nurturing mother-baby interaction that effect the infant's psycho-neurobiological development (Hofer, 1981)
- The concept of "intersubjectivity," defined as mental structures that underlie perception and action and that motivate the infant to seek emotional engagement with others by reading nonverbal cues (Trevarthen, 1980)

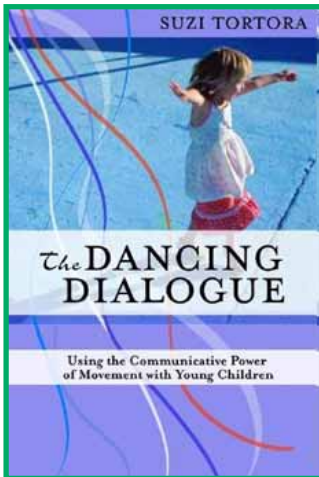
• The newborn and young infant's ability to imitate (Meltzoff & Moore, 1977)

- Mirror neurons (Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Gallese, & Fogassi, 1996)
- The role of spontaneous movement-oriented play (Thelen & Smith, 1994)
- A sense of self from birth (Stern, 1985) that supports the infant's implicit knowledge, which is nonverbal and non-symbolic (Stern, 2008)

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Conference Continued ...

Suzi Tortora ...



- The infant's first perception of the world from a multisensorial, somatic, visceral, non-verbal perspective, described as a "Sense of Body" (Tortora, 2006)

Dr. Tortora demonstrated how this research supports the importance of nonverbal experiences and activities that integrate the mind, body and emotions. She illustrated these points through numerous videos and photographs from her Ways of Seeing parent-infant creative dance and dance movement psychotherapy programs.

Following the keynote talk, conference participants attended two breakout sessions, and had a chance to purchase books written by our New York Zero-to-Three members and published by Brooks Publishing. The breakout sessions were so popular and rated so highly on the conference evaluation forms that you'll be seeing some familiar names and speakers on our 2009-2010 Clinical Roundtable schedule!

We're busy compiling our conference handouts so you can download them on our new and improved website! ■

Emily Fenichel Award Continued ...

Evelyn Davis ...

to families caring for medically fragile children to give respite and support to burdened families

She also founded and directed the innovative Grandparents Program in Child Psychiatry and co-founded The Family Friends Program, in which, elder volunteers make home visits to families caring for medically fragile children to give respite and support to burdened families.

Her research interest has focused on the effects of cocaine and alcohol on the developing fetus. Dr. Davis has been a champion of the most vulnerable preschool children in New York City. She has been a nurturer, a researcher, a program director, a doctor and an advocate.

Previous Emily Fenichel Leadership Award recipients have included Mary Byrne and Margaret Kaplan, PhD, OTR. The Emily Fenichel Leadership Award is presented each year by New York Zero-to-Three Network to an individual whose contributions to infants and toddlers through practice, research, leadership or advocacy are deemed exemplary by a panel of judges. The award honors the memory of Emily Fenichel, who served as Associate Director of Zero to Three: The National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families until her tragic death in 2006 in an auto accident.

If you have someone in mind for our 2010 Emily Fenichel Award, send your written nomination to info@nyzerotothree.org. Winners will be announced in May 2010. ■

“Evelyn Davis is an unsung hero in the fight for services of excellence in underserved communities.”

Judy Rogers, LCSW-R



Judy Rogers, LCSW-R (left), Evelyn Davis, MD (center) and Priscilla Lincoln, RN, PhD (right)

New York Zero-to-Three Network
Fostering collaboration among those who work with babies, toddlers and their families

Save the Date!

Thursday, October 8, 2009
Clinical Roundtable with
Justine Joan Sheppard, PhD, CCC-SLP, GRS-S
“Brain Plasticity, Experience and the
Development of Motivation and Skills for Eating”

Thursday, November 5, 2009
11th Annual Hedi Levenback Lecture
With a Zero-to-Three Pioneer
An Interview with Jacqueline Jankoff-Ershaw

Thursday, December 3, 2009
Clinical Roundtable with
Lisa Spiegel, MA, LMHC
“Sleep: The First Developmental Task in
Establishing the Parental Hierarchy”

Register today by e-mail: [nyzerotothree@gmail.com!](mailto:nyzerotothree@gmail.com)
Forms also available on our website
(www.nyzerotothree.org) to download and mail.
(Paypal is coming soon!)

Evelyn J. Blanck, LCSW, Co-President



Evelyn Blanck joined New York Zero-to-Three Network in 2004 and has been a long time advocate for children’s mental health issues and the integration of mental health in education, primary care and all child serving systems. Ms. Blanck was recently appointed by New York State Governor David Patterson to the Early Childhood Advisory Council of New York State. The Council advises the New York State Children’s Cabinet on supports and services for young children and their families in New York State with a goal of building a comprehensive system. “I am pleased to have this opportunity to work with others committed to the needs of New York children in helping to advocate for better services for children,” she said, “and particularly for children at risk.” She has also been appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to the Community Services Board Subcommittee on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. She also serves on several advisory committees to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, including Co-Chair of the Federation Executive Committee and Chair of the Citywide Children’s Committee.

Ms. Blanck is also the founder and chair of the New York City Early Childhood Mental Health Strategic Work Group, an advisory group to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene comprised of leading experts in the area of early childhood. In 2005, the Workgroup published a White Paper, “Promoting the Mental Health and Healthy Development of New York’s Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers, A Call to Action,” that has been used to effectively advocate for mental health services for children from birth to age 5 across all child-serving systems in New York City and State. As was demonstrated in New York Zero-to-Three’s 2008 landmark report *Unequal From the Start: A Check-Up on New York City’s Infants and Toddlers*, there are significant disparities on critical indicators of child wellbeing that exist from the beginning of life in terms of health, family supports, early learning, and access and utilization of services based on income and neighborhood. Ms. Blanck has worked actively with the New York Zero-to-Three Network to address these disparities.

“ I have always been impressed by the caliber of the leadership of New York Zero to Three. NYZTT has created a learning community that brings together professionals from across disciplines and child serving systems with the aim of providing cutting edge professional development opportunities and improving policies and practice for infants and toddlers. I have found my involvement with NYZTT to be a rich and rewarding experience. ”

Evelyn Blanck is the Associate Executive Director of the New York Center for Child Development and the Program Director of New York Center’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Treatment Program, a model demonstration project serving East and Central Harlem. She enjoys tennis and traveling. ■

Board Members In The News

Newsworthy

Former NYZTT Board Member **Daniel Schechter, MD**, co-authored an article entitled “Mothers with Severe Psychiatric Illness and Their Newborns: A Hospital Based Model of Perinatal Consultation” in the May 2009 issue of the National Zero-to-Three Journal. See www.nyzerotothree.org.

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE

We are in the process of updating our database and membership files. If you haven’t heard from us in a while, give us a call or drop us an e-mail to make sure we have the right contact information for you in our files. And watch your e-mail / postal mail for a membership mailing this fall!

e-mail: nyzerotothree@gmail.com
phone: 718.678.7788

www.nyzerotothree.org has a new look!

Not only is our site now easier to navigate, but we’re constantly improving it to make it more useful to you - you’ll find helpful links and job information, and soon you’ll have the ability to register online and pay with PayPal! Check out the new site today and while you’re there, don’t forget to download information for our Levenback Lecture or a Clinical Roundtable!

New York Zero-to-Three Network



Join the Infancy Policy Leadership Circle

Developed in spring 2008, the Infancy Policy Leadership Circle was formed by the New York Zero-to-Three Network to be the voice for infants and toddlers in New York State’s policy and advocacy work. The goal is to help develop and advocate for policies and services that improve the lives of our youngest children and their families. The Infancy Policy Leadership Circle is a cross-disciplinary group that reflects diversity in a variety of ways geographic, cultural, political. It is open to all who have a passion for babies. It is staffed by two ZERO TO THREE Policy Center-appointed Birth-to-Three State Advocates as part of the Creating Connections for Babies Project in conjunction with Winning Beginning New York.

The overarching goal of the Infancy Policy Leadership Circle is to broaden the scope of systems and services that serve young children. To do this we plan to: