SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR EARLY LEARNING SUCCESS

Mississippi Early Childhood Summit

Natchez, MS

July 20, 2015

Jim Squires, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes/
National Institute for Early Education Research

Agenda

- Childhood in Transition: A Tale of Two Systems

- Benefits & Challenges of School – Community Partnerships

- Ingredients for Success

- Responsibilities of Principals and Administrators

- Resources

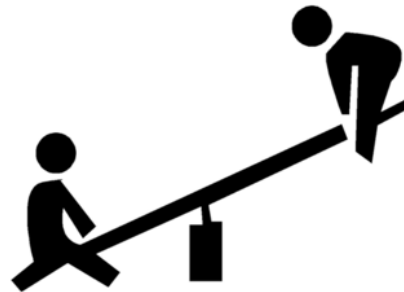- Q & A

Children Haven't Changed; Childhood Has

"NEXT YEAR, WE HAVE TO START TO SCHOOL... YOU REALIZE THAT'LL BE THE END OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT."
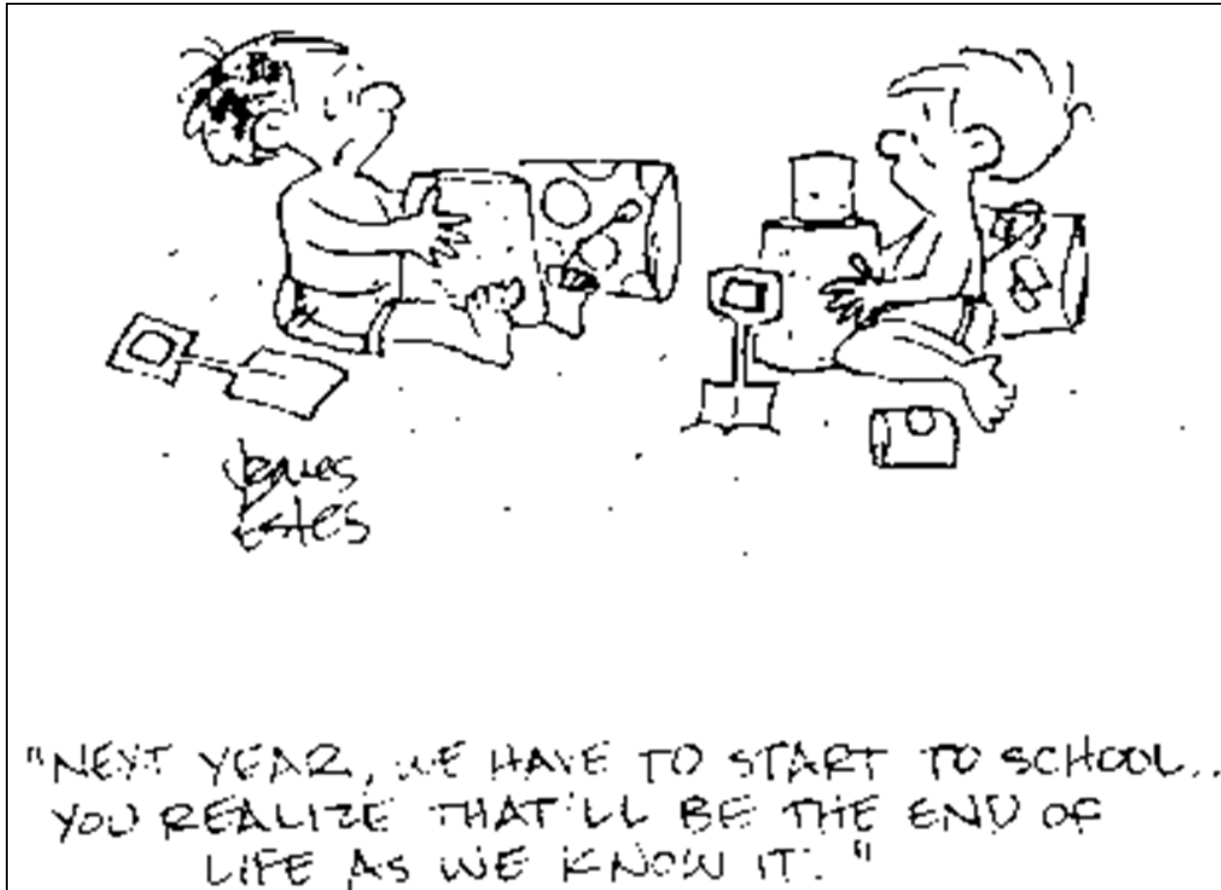
Are You Tuned to WIFM?

K – 12 is 20th Century Thinking

- Agricultural/industrial vs. custodial care model

- Early care and education vs. babysitting

- At-risk/struggling Kers support

- P-3 as an organizational and mental model for community leaders to bridge the 0-5 and K-12 divide
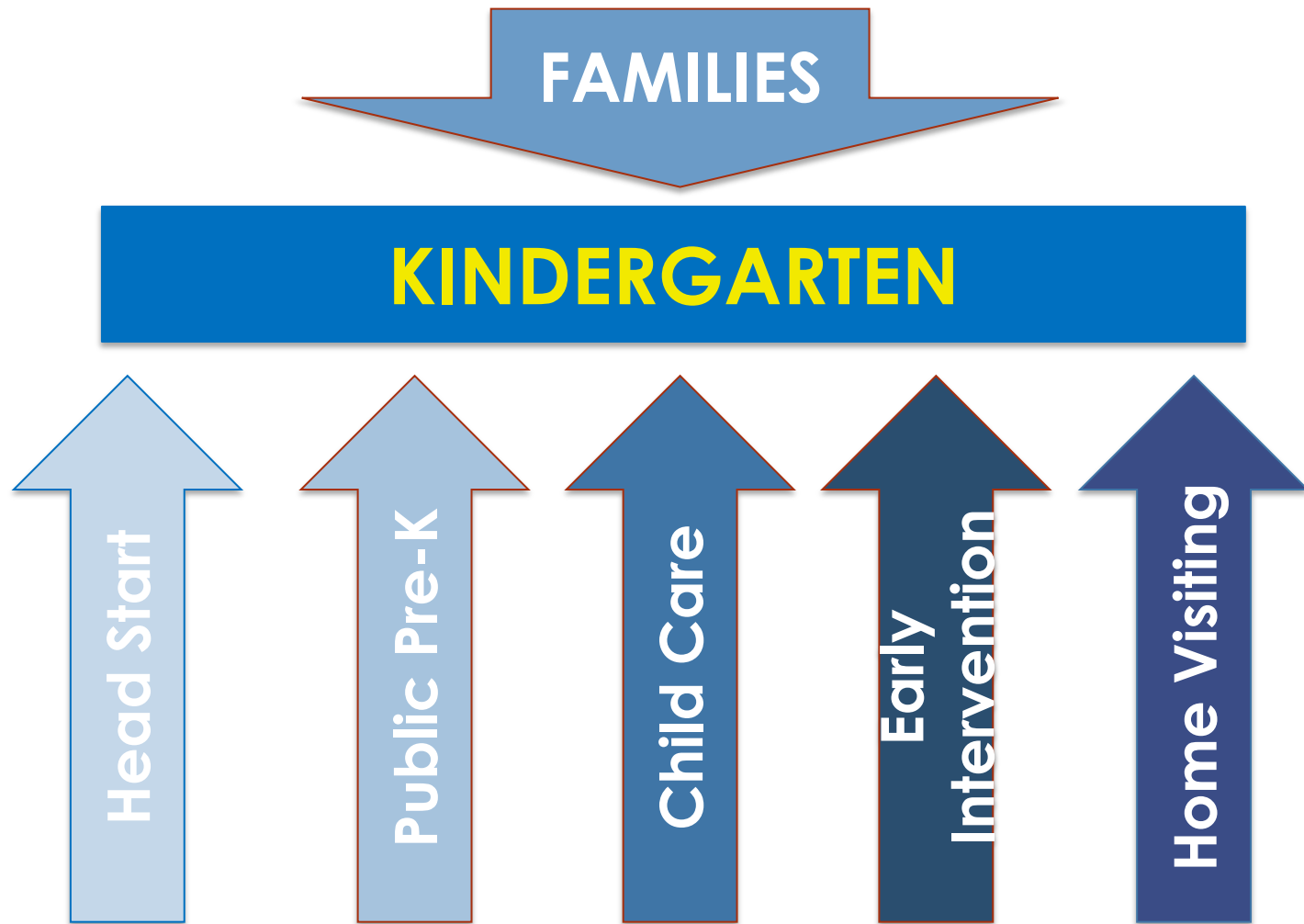
- Kindergarten as fulcrum

Two Systems - Same and Different

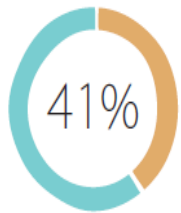|	Birth-5	K-12
Approach	• Developmental	• Academic
Enrollment	• Choice/optional • Targeted • Universal	• Universal • Mandatory
Governance	• Federal, State, District, private • Health/Human Services/Education, other entity	• State Board of Education • DOE • Local school board
Standards	• State: Birth – 3, Pre-K, Birth – K • Federal: Head Start Child Outcomes • Comprehensive domains	• K-12 Curriculum Frameworks • Common Core/CCR/Next Gen • Content-specific
Curriculum	• Self-selection • 180 days or year-round	• State or local required • 180 days (PDK/FDK)
Assessment	• Required and optional • Variety of Measures	• Defined points; required • Prescribed measures
Teacher Qual.	• Varied by auspice (HS -> MA)	• Defined by SEA or PSB (BA min)
Accountability	• Varies from none or basic health/safety compliance to student/program outcomes	• Student-outcome based • School-/district performance • Teacher/prin. evaluation • SLDS
Resources	• Parent fees, federal, state, local	• Local, state, federal

41% STUDENTS NOT KINDERGARTEN READY

TOP TEACHER CHALLENGES

- 25% STUDENTS NOT SCHOOL READY
- 23% CLASS SIZES TOO BIG
- 14% STUDENT BEHAVIOR

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Many Children Are Not School Ready:** When asked to estimate the percentage of children in their current classes whom they believed were not "kindergarten ready", teachers responded that 41% of their students were not adequately prepared. Indicators included the lack of basic skills such as name, color, and shape recognition as well as fine motor skills (holding a crayon, pencil or scissors).

- **"High Number of New Kindergarten Students Who Are Not School Ready" Is Teachers' Number One Challenge:** Among twelve options, the lack of school readiness was identified as the top challenge facing kindergarten teachers, with one quarter (25.2%) of teachers choosing this option, followed by a "high number of students in the classroom" (chosen by 22.8%) and "high number of kindergarten students who misbehave/are difficult to manage" (chosen by 13.9%).

- **Children Are Repeating Kindergarten:** Seventy-one percent of the teachers had at least one child in their classroom repeating kindergarten.
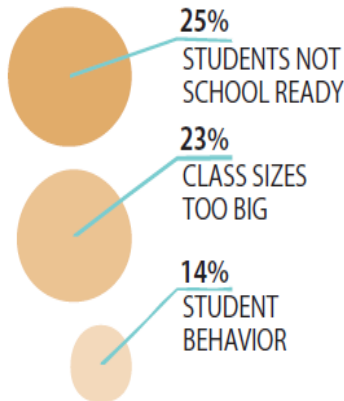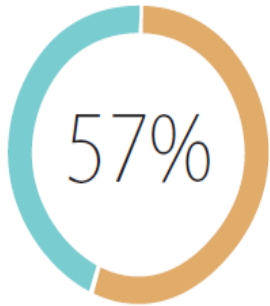
Retrieved from http://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/KindergartenBooklet_Final_WEB-1.pdf

TEACHERS WHO
USE EDUCATIONAL
LEARNING CENTERS

57%

- **Teachers Believe Their Schools Are Ready for Children:** Even though teachers reported almost half their students were not school ready, a high percentage (88.5%) of teachers felt their schools were "ready" for children entering kindergarten. Among annual activities noted to ease the transition were:
  - Kindergarten open house for new students and parents (81.9%)
  - Appropriate curriculum and adequate classroom resources provided to students and parents (80.2%)
  - Welcome letter and/or information packet describing kindergarten sent to students and parents before the first day of school (71.8%)
  - Preschool/daycare/Pre-K class visits to kindergarten in the spring or summer before children enter kindergarten (60.9%)
  - Parent/child teacher conferences (46.1%)
  - Transition planning for children with special needs (40.7%)
  - Questionnaires sent to all parents of incoming kindergarten students to gather useful information about them (40.5%)
  - Telephone calls to all parents of kindergarten students (37.4%)
  - Transition conversations between preschool/daycare/Pre-K teacher and kindergarten teacher (32.9%)

- **Teachers Want Improved Communication With Preschool Teachers:** Teachers suggested that enhanced communication between kindergarten and preschool teachers on Common Core objectives could alleviate problems down the road. As reported, 32.9% of the teachers surveyed currently have transition conversations with preschool teachers on a specific list of topics:

Why should public schools be involved with children before kindergarten?

- The line between early care and education is blurry.
- Schools have a vested interest in school readiness.
- Every community has an elementary school.
- All children have access to public schools.
- Schools can help child care and Head Start programs.
- Child care and Head Start programs can help public schools.

Hinkle, D. (2000). School Involvement in Early Childhood. Washington, DC: US Dept. of Education.

What roles should school-community partnerships play in early childhood?

- Partnerships support a seamless system of care and education, ensuring a smooth transition.

- Partnerships can help coordinate community resources to help all children achieve to high standards.

- Schools and community programs can help families develop and maintain social networks.

What facilitates school-community involvement in early childhood?

- School and community leaders can be influential organizers and supporters in partnership with other program leaders.

- Financial incentives can motivate leaders to overcome barriers.

- Families can help leaders understand the importance of preschool and kindergarten-elementary linkages.

- Shared professional development facilitates coordination.

- Federal leadership can motivate states and communities.

What challenges do school-community partnerships face in early childhood?

- Teachers may not be prepared to work with children.

- Administrators may not be prepared to work with children, families, or teachers.

- Programs view each other as competitors for limited resources and children.

- Differences in credentials and compensation can create barriers.

- Coordination can be complicated and time-consuming.

What are the key issues for partnership development?

- Preschool and kindergarten teachers need training in early childhood education.

- School and preschool administrators need training in early childhood development and learning.

- Preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators need training in family engagement and cultural/ linguistic/economic diversity.

- Program administrators and teachers must understand and use common data to improve services/outcomes.

- Teachers and administrators need training and time to work across programs.

One Rural School-Community Partnership: Grand Isle Elementary School (VT)

Problems: rural isolation; limited resources; limited facilities; kids "not ready" for kindergarten; competition for students

Drivers: common problems; same families; same kids; available facility; "out of the box" leadership; shared commitment; complementary needs for school district, childcare providers, Head Start, and families

Solution: School-community partnership as a community resource

How Grand Isle Approached It

Process:

1) One person had a contagious vision.

2) District superintendent supportive of the concept of a school-based public-private partnership. School board presentation met with approval.

3) Principal and school's EC coordinator convened community forum on ECE needs and resources; reaches out to EC providers through R & R and Head Start.
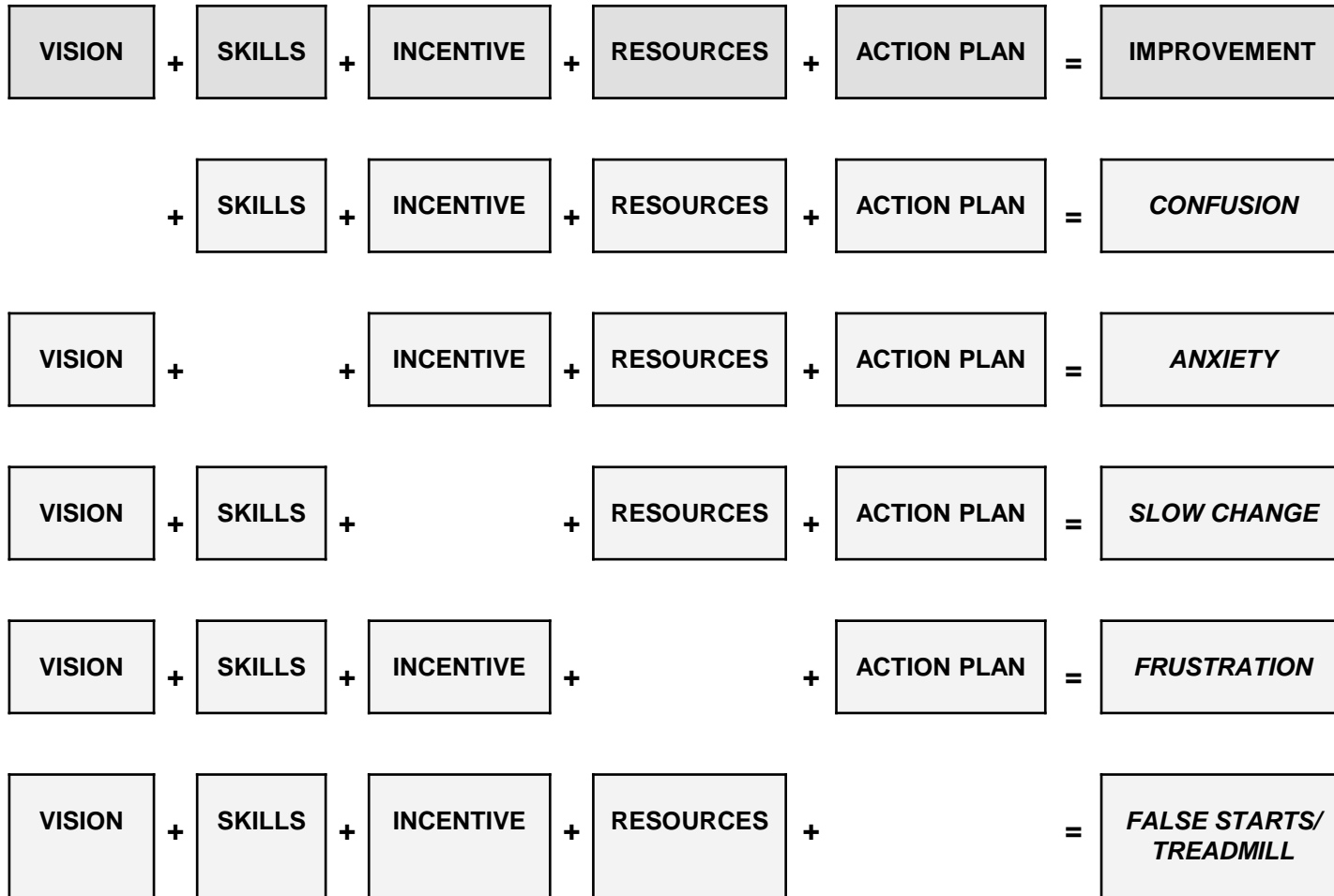
4) School develops RFP with following criteria:
   - School will provide classroom year-round <u>free of charge</u>.
   - AM program will be inclusive, reserving slots for EC SpEd/EEI.
   - Staffing will be collaboratively arranged based on needs (AM- certified teacher, EC SpEd, CC provider; PM- CC providers); later included Head Start
   - $ (school contributes facility, Title I), SpEd, transportation; CC charges fees for non-AM portion, CC subsidy, CAFNP; HS wrap-around support services for eligible children and staff, inc. home visitor

5) Proposals solicited from interested CBOs reviewed by community panel (conflict of interest addressed as a barrier)

6) Collaborative developmental screening and enrollment process

7) Consistent assessment tools and reporting protocols

8) Joint professional development as a learning community

9) Collaborative communication to families

Ingredients For Improvement

|									
VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVE	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	IMPROVEMENT
	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVE	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	*CONFUSION*
VISION	+		+	INCENTIVE	+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	*ANXIETY*
VISION	+	SKILLS	+		+	RESOURCES	+	ACTION PLAN	=	*SLOW CHANGE*
VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVE	+		+	ACTION PLAN	=	*FRUSTRATION*
VISION	+	SKILLS	+	INCENTIVE	+	RESOURCES	+		=	*FALSE STARTS/ TREADMILL*

From T. Knoster (1991)/ Enterprise Group Ltd.

National Assoc. of Elementary School Principals suggests that Principals:

- Embrace the pre-K-3 early-learning continuum;

- Ensure developmentally appropriate teaching;

- Provide personalized learning environments;

- Use multiple measures of assessment to guide student learning growth;

- Build professional capacity across the learning community; and

- Make schools a hub of pre-K-3 learning for families and communities.

What Do You See?

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes | www.ceelo.org
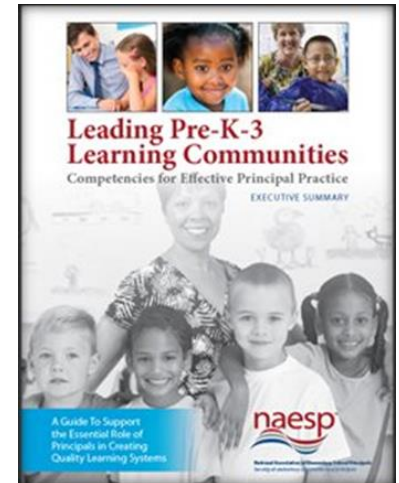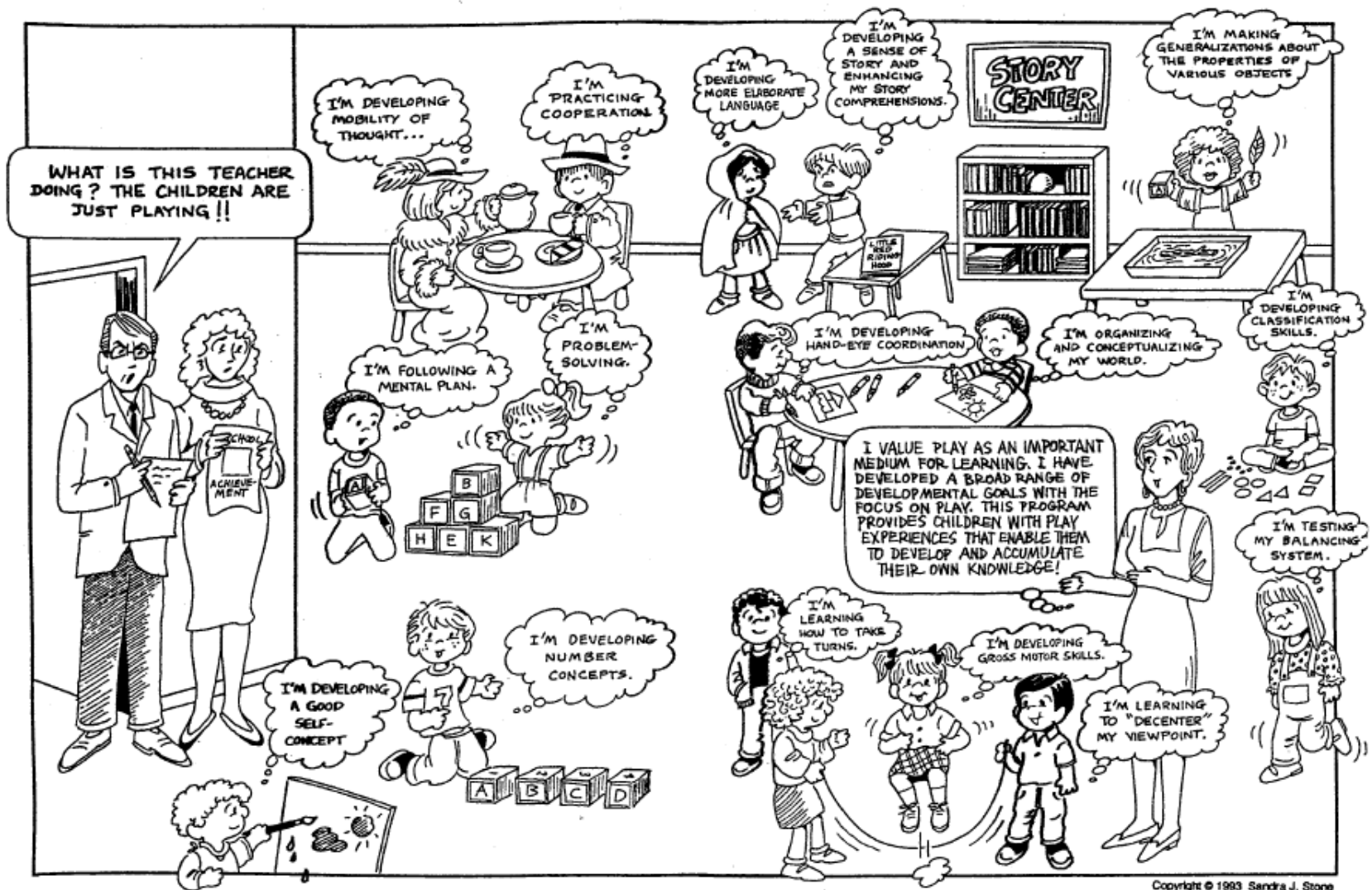
Tools for Supporting Leaders in Recognizing and Improving Quality

- Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS)
  - Instructional Support
  - Emotional Support
  - Classroom Management

- Danielson Framework for Teaching

- Early Childhood /School Age Environmental Rating Scales (ERS)

- Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)

- Performance-Based Assessment (TS GOLD, WSS, COR, KEA)

Selected Resources

- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

- Leading for Early Success: Building School Principals' Capacity to Lead High-Quality Early Education (National Governor's Assoc., 2013)

- Guidance on Serving Preschool Children Through Title I (US Education Department, 2012)

- Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013)

- Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)

www.ceelo.org

info@ceelo.org