

Kohl Children's Museum Grant

I am very happy and proud to inform you that our two classrooms- Junior Kindergarten and the Preschool room (the fours), have been selected to participate in the Early Childhood Connections Child Care Project coordinated by the Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago. The focus of that initiative is to expand the use of the Project Approach in our classroom and our school, thus ensuring fun and meaningful educational experiences for your children.

The project includes three professional development workshops for the teacher, interactive learning experiences for the children both in the home or center and at Kohl Children's Museum, an on-site parent/child activity conducted by a museum educator, a family event and family passes to the museum. Programming content will address NAEYC and Illinois Learning Standards. I am investing three of my Saturdays to be a part of that enriching and fun activity.

As a part of the project, our class will be able to attend two focused field trips to Kohl Children's Museum- first between September 2011 and February 2012, and second between February and June 2012. In addition, another field trip for the Project Celebration will be scheduled on March, 24th or 25th, 2012, where children can bring along an adult. Bus and museum fees will be covered from the Early Childhood Connections Child Care Project. A fun educational parent/child project based activity will need your participation. Moreover, Kohl Children's Museum family passes will be provided to you, so you can enjoy the museum as you wish. Our class will also be awarded with \$ 300 to purchase materials and supplies to assist us in the integration of the project approach into our program.

I have already participated at the first seminar, where I learned more about the philosophy of the project approach, its structure, and the paths to implementation and assessment. I am very excited to start with the Phase I in the classroom soon: it involves questioning about topics of interest to the children, and "messing around with the topics" in order to choose a good project to integrate in our curriculum. Your children will come home talking about "webbing" and "mind mapping"; they will be asked to think and inquire in a different way, which at the end will make learning meaningful and interesting to them. I am thrilled and excited to begin this journey, and will be organizing the first focused field trip to Kohl Children's Museum at the end of October or middle December.

During the project work, I will be documenting the activities all the time, by taking pictures, recording the stories, and making notes. Children will also take part in the project documentation, by making observational drawings, concept webs, painting, creating sculptures, writing journals, etc. At the project celebration day in March, we will present our project portfolio to the Kohl Children's Museum. You will find a picture release form in your children's folders that you can please sign and return to me. I need to bring those permissions to the museum's coordinator at the next workshop, which will be on Saturday, November 12, 2011.

This is a big accomplishment for me personally, and for our school. I hope you will appreciate its merits, and you will have quality and fun time with your children!