WELCOME to the first issue of the CHILD ASSESSMENT BRIEF produced by Early Childhood Associates for the MA Department of Early Education and Care. Each issue of the Brief will include these features:

- Lead article on child assessment practices including techniques for gathering information in a developmental domain
- UPK program highlight that showcases local practices in child assessment
- Discussion of issues related to gathering, interpreting, using and sharing child assessment information
- Promising practices, child assessment resources and web links.

**Using Child Assessment to Guide Instruction**

Assessment is an ongoing process to answer questions about children's growth and learning so we can support their development. Ongoing assessment and teaching go hand in hand. Effective accurate assessments help us to individualize instruction and document children’s progress toward identified goals and outcomes.

To assess a child’s knowledge and skills we must document what we see. Ideally programs will use established assessment instruments as well as other methods to gather ongoing assessment information. Observation notes, portfolios, and checklists are all documentation methods that programs can use. These methods provide the information necessary to rate the developmental skills and learning needs of individual children.

One of the best ways to assess young children is to observe them while they are doing typical tasks. For example, we might observe children while they are playing with other children, completing puzzles, building in the block corner or listening to stories.
A key question is how will you use the information. Once you have gathered assessment information, rated each child’s development in all domains and developed profiles of their strengths and skills, it is critical to share this information with parents and use the information to plan appropriate activities.

In early childhood programs, quality is never an accident. It is always the result of careful planning, consistent effort and thoughtful teaching. Often children’s knowledge and skills do not improve simply by engaging in classroom activities and routines—teachers and providers must provide the necessary materials, supportive environment, intentional instruction, and appropriate classroom supports to ensure the school readiness of all children.

Good assessment must be integrated into good teaching across developmental domains. One developmental area of assessment is fine motor development. Children need to develop certain fine motor skills so they can become independent at dressing and feeding themselves and, eventually, to communicate their ideas through writing. The preschool years are a time for all children to participate in daily activities that require using and strengthening their hands. Children need to learn to use their hands as a tool. Children also need to develop good eye-hand coordination or the ability to control the direction that their hands move.

Most children entering kindergarten can hold a pencil or crayon appropriately, cut with scissors, put together simple puzzles, turn the pages of a book, copy shapes (circle, square, triangle) and write their name. If a preschooler in your classroom has difficulty with fine motor tasks or avoids drawing activities, you can support his/her development by engaging him/her in activities that strengthen eye-hand skills. Building with blocks, playing with toy cars, shaking noise makers, ripping and folding paper, catching a ball, bowling, typing on a keyboard and banging a peg board are all activities that improve children’s hand skills. Some children who avoid drawing activities may be interested in tearing pictures out of a magazine, making a collage or finger painting a mural.

Parents can support their child’s fine motor development by encouraging them to dress and eat independently and asking them to help with chores (cooking, clean up) that require manual activity.
Program Highlight: Using Technology to Manage Assessment Data

This article highlights one UPK Assessment Planning grantee that has started to integrate technology in its child assessment system.

The Daniel Feeney Preschool Center in Walpole includes five inclusive classrooms that serve up to 80 children between the ages of 3 and 5. Since receiving a UPK Assessment Planning Grant in the spring of 2008, Director Jennifer Bernard has been providing training, support and resources to enhance the skills her staff needs to effectively and efficiently use technology to manage child assessment data.

Funding from the grant allowed the center to purchase two new PCs, a printer, and five Palm Pilots for the preschool teachers. The staff were involved in the decision to use High Scope COR as their child assessment system and a CD version of the COR was installed on computers. The first training on the COR was held in the spring and was followed-up by a workshop and practice session for staff in the Fall.

The expectation for this school year is for teachers to enter anecdotal data about children using the CD version of the COR and to generate a printout of child skills for the Parent Conference in Spring 2009. While teachers were uncomfortable at first with entering data, they had an opportunity at the Fall refresher training to work in teams and practice this skill. Staff were impressed by the professional look of the reports generated by the electronic version of COR. But there have been challenges. In addition to dealing with time constraints, staff had to make the switch from using Apple computers to PCs.

Reflecting on the process, Jennifer recommends giving staff an opportunity to review all four assessment instrument options prior to choosing which they would implement and ample time to learn and practice using the computer software. From an administrative point of view, careful allocation of time, money and effort is essential. Staff must understand the purposes of assessment and be clear on their respective roles and responsibilities in the assessment process. Professional development is a crucial support in the UPK Assessment Planning initiative. Teachers need time to administer and interpret child assessments and reflect on the implication of child assessment information on program quality and practice.

This year, teachers continue to focus on systematic collection of assessment information and data analysis. They are using Palm Pilots (hand held computers) to capture anecdotal observations of children. If additional funding becomes available, Walpole plans to purchase additional computers and upgrade the online version of the COR to allow universal access by teachers and specialists.

Jennifer can be reached at jbernard@walpole.k12.ma.us.
Q & A

Should I Assess a Child Who Already Has an IEP?

YES, you should assess the skills and monitor the progress of all preschool children in your program, including children with disabilities and special needs.

Massachusetts programs that are participating in the UPK program are using a developmental assessment instrument to monitor the progress of all of the children in their programs. The four (4) instruments that are being used (Work Sampling, High Scope, Creative Curriculum and Ages and Stages) assess children’s language, cognitive, motor and social skills.

If a child has an IEP, the special education department of the public school assumes primary responsibility for monitoring the child’s performance, particularly in the area(s) s/he has a delay. The special education team meets periodically and may ask staff (with parent permission) for your participation, including your observations or assessments of the child. The information you collect for the developmental assessment will be valuable data to share with the special education team and parent.

Look at the whole child and not just the disability. It is important to assess all areas of a child’s development to identify strengths and any other learning challenges.

For example, a preschool child may have speech and language delays which effect his daily conversations and interactions. However, the same child may have age appropriate cognitive and motor skills. All of the information is necessary to effectively plan daily activities.
Ideally you will have access to the child’s IEP and can carryover recommended strategies or modifications into your classroom. You may also provide accommodations for the child, such as using simple sign language, a picture schedule or choice cards, which will provide an alternative avenue of communication.

The time you spend observing the child’s behavior and performance in learning and play situations with typically developing peers will be valuable information for the special education team.

**Sharing Information with Parents: Do’s and Don’ts**

**DO**
Involving parents in the assessment process. Discussing children’s progress with their parents is an important part of ongoing assessment. Parents provide a unique perspective on their child’s functioning. Involve them in conversations about their child. Avoid questions that can be answered with yes or no. Ask questions that allow parents to tell you what they have seen.

**DO**
Be a good listener. Provide parents time and a comfortable environment in which to share their assessment of their child’s skills, interests, preferences and challenges.

**DO**
Engage parents in supporting their child’s development by suggesting learning activities to do at home. (Example: Suggest that parents read the same story book over time and ask the child to predict what will happen. Encourage parents to teach their child new vocabulary words).

**DO**
Build a relationship with parents based on honesty, respect, open communication, confidentiality and support. Working with parents is a “craft that can be learned and perfected.” (Dunst, 1988).

**DON’T**
Assume that children’s challenging behaviors are the fault of “bad parenting”. Children who are impulsive, have short attention spans, communication and social skill problems may be impacted by a neurological or biochemical disability (ADHD, PDD, Surgeon General’s Report 1999) or something that is not completely in the family’s control.
Plans for the second annual Child Assessment Institute are underway for the spring of 2009. The Assessment Institute will be a full day professional development opportunity for enhancing your skills in implementing a child assessment system. Please help us in creating an Institute that will be most meaningful and helpful to you. Send your ideas and preferences to Linda Warren at Early Childhood Associates (ECA) for topics to address, successes or challenges you face in gathering and using child assessment data, and what you hope to learn from the Institute. The e-mail address is lwarren@earlychildhoodassociates.com or call (508) 788 3444. All UPK grantees will be receiving detailed information about the institute via e-mail in mid-February.

WEB SITE BOOKMARKS

**Early Childhood News**  [www.earlychildhoodnews.com](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com)
Presented latest news and ideas about child development, developmentally appropriate practices, health and safety, behavior and guidance, assessment and much more. Distributes a FREE newsletter including new articles, events impacting early childhood education, developmentally appropriate classroom activities, and arts and crafts projects.

**National Child Care Information Center**  [www.nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/assess-eval1.html](http://www.nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/assess-eval1.html)
Provides comprehensive child care information resources.

**Early Childhood Outcomes Center**  [www.the-ECO-center.org](http://www.the-ECO-center.org)
Provides leadership in the implementation of high-quality outcome systems for early intervention and early childhood special education programs. Offers a framework for addressing key components of an early childhood outcomes measurement system, including data collection, quality assurance procedures, data analysis, interpretation and use, and professional development.

**Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children**  [www.dec-sp ed.org](http://www.dec-sp ed.org)
Promotes policies and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.

**Harvard Family Research Project**  [www.hfp.org](http://www.hfp.org)
Offers information on effective ways to support family involvement in children’s learning and development.
National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org  Dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) offers information about language instruction for English language learners and related programs.  www.n cela.gwu.edu

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) Ensures that children with disabilities (birth through 5 years) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate and family-centered supports and services. www.nectac.org

Family Ties of Massachusetts offers information about early intervention and support for families of children with special needs and chronic illness. http://massfamilyties.org


CHILD ASSESSMENT BRIEF

If you have any questions about the CHILD ASSESSMENT BRIEF or suggestions for articles please call Early Childhood Associates, Inc. at (508) 788 3444. We look forward to answering your needs and questions and creating a way for you and your colleagues to share your challenges and successes and communicate with one another.
Lead article on child assessment practices, including techniques for gathering information in a particular developmental domain.

UPK program highlight that showcases local practices in child assessment.

Discussion of issues related to gathering, interpreting, using and sharing child assessment information.

Child assessment promising practices, resources, and web links.

**INTERPRETING CHILD ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

Linking specific practices to children’s learning is at the heart of good teaching, and doing so effectively requires us to combine different kinds of knowledge. It is important to recognize and understand the development, culture, temperament, and interests of each child as well as parents’ expectations for their children. It is also necessary to know about curriculum and types of activities that will contribute to children’s optimal development and learning. Everyone who works with young children should think about child development milestones in the context of their developmental stage or phase in the preschool continuum.

The use of assessment data in planning is a complex process. Understanding the link between your program’s assessment system, curriculum, and expected child outcomes helps teachers/providers
to navigate the process. When these connections are clear, you can more easily use assessment information to plan instruction.

To move from gathering child assessment information to using it for instructional planning, consider the following steps:

**Step 1.** Look at the assessment information as a whole. Does it come from a variety of sources over a period of time?

**Step 2.** Examine the data and try to find out what it tells you about children’s development. Look for patterns in a group of children. Look for children who do not fit the pattern. For example, you might find that many children exhibit an emerging and varied expressive vocabulary but cannot engage in extended conversations. Expressive vocabulary refers to words a child uses. A good expressive vocabulary means that the child uses a lot of different words appropriately. While preschool children can build vocabulary very rapidly, conversational skill requires an understanding of the social rules for interacting with conversational partners. In conversations, participants take turns, stay on topic and move the topic along. Participating in conversations is both a social skill and a language skill. Young preschoolers need guided opportunities to participate in conversations if they are to develop these skills.

**Step 3.** Look at differences in child assessment data. How does the child assessment data compare with the teachers’ and parents’ understanding and expectations? How do each child’s preferences, skills and abilities vary across different developmental areas?

**Step 4.** Make instructional decisions for the group and children based on multiple sources of information and thoughtful reflection. Review assessment data regularly with staff. Use your knowledge about current development of the group and individual children to identify developmental goals and to plan instruction.

**BY ASSESSING CHILDREN’S LEARNING, YOU GAIN INSIGHTS INTO CHILDREN’S STRENGTHS, KNOWLEDGE, INTERESTS AND SKILLS. YOU REFLECT ON YOUR PROGRAM ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES AND MAKE ADAPTATIONS THAT ENABLE CHILDREN TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND BUILD ON WHAT THEY KNOW AND DO WELL. BY USING WHAT YOU LEARN FROM ASSESSMENT, YOU CAN FOSTER EACH CHILD’S COMPETENCE AND SUCCESS AND CREATE AND MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM FOR ALL CHILDREN.**
ASSESSING AND SUPPORTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language development is one of the most important tasks during the first five years of a child’s life. “Language” refers to listening to and comprehending what we hear, producing speech, and using it to communicate a wide variety of diverse messages. The ability to use language is a strong predictor of children’s later success in learning to read and write. Language development is highly dependent on interactions with adults. Language rich environments at home and at school play a significant role in the development of preschoolers’ language skills.

During the preschool years children’s language develops rapidly, and children are capable of acquiring a vocabulary of 5,000 words before entering kindergarten. They speak in more complex sentences using different parts of speech and begin to understand and answer more complex questions like “What would you do if...?” or, “How many different ways can you think of to....?” Most preschool children can use language to think, learn and play with others, recall past events and experiences, and imagine what might happen in the future.

Research demonstrates that preschool children need opportunities for extended talk, conversations, stories, directions and explanations. Quantity matters. The more children hear, the more they learn. They need repeated exposure to words and concepts, opportunities to use language, and to engage in conversations that extend over multiple turns (Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002). Quality also matters. Children should see teachers as conversational partners, view their peers as conversationalists and share their own experiences. To promote language and cognitive development, research says “strive for five” or five back and forth exchanges between a teacher/caregiver and child on a single topic made up of questions and comments that build off of one another (Justice & Vukelich, 2008).

Research-based strategies that promote language development include: inviting preschoolers to retell and dramatize stories, reading a book repeatedly and inserting short definitions for some words, using props when introducing activities, and providing commentary for children about what you are doing (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; McGee, 2007).

As you assess children, think about what you know about children’s language development and how this can affect your curriculum. A first step is to analyze curriculum goals and standards and make a list of the knowledge, skills and dispositions children need to learn. Next, determine the routines and activities in the day that present authentic opportunities for children to explore and practice knowledge and skills and develop dispositions. Create explicit instructional activities or learning experiences that are engaging, accessible and interesting to children. Keep track of the knowledge and skills you have introduced and what children are and are not learning. Just because a learning experience occurs does not mean that all children have acquired the anticipated learning outcomes. Plan for documentation. Observe to be sure that children are learning, acquiring knowledge and skills and that children are moving toward the learning outcome. When assessing language development, NAEYC guidelines recommend talking and interacting with individual children to learn how they use language. The information gathered can be used to plan and modify curriculum and teaching (Helm, 2008).
The Lowell Public School’s UPK Assessment Planning grant represents 10 public schools that serve 512 children, including children with IEPs and English Language learners. The project is completing its first full year of using the Creative Curriculum online child assessment system, cc.net. In the spring of 2008, the project earmarked funds to hire an independent consultant/trainer to lead its UPK professional development. Following introductory sessions for teachers and administrators, the consultant provided multiple group trainings and one-on-one assistance for teachers to enhance their skills in observation and recording and to increase computer skill proficiency. Currently, teachers are beginning to apply these skills to create many different assessment reports and to upload classroom photographs and anecdotes into child portfolios. According to Carolyn Rocheleau, the administrator of the UPK grant, the impact is great. “We now have a system that uses technology to link child assessment data to instructional decision making.” We spoke with the grant administrator and consultant about their work and their thoughts are summarized below.

The main focus of professional development has been to help programs incorporate technology into their system from the initial set-up to the implementation of the system. As Carolyn shared, “When we first started talking about using a technology-based child assessment system we knew that our early childhood staff’s technology skills were quite varied; some had only basic computer knowledge, while others were computer savvy. All teachers, however, were very familiar with the practice of assessment in general. Some were very experienced with Creative Curriculum so they were able to make a smooth transition to cc.net.”

Central to the success of this professional development program has been the consultant, Stan Schwartz’s, success in relating to learners in their own learning style and with different levels of computer skills. According to Stan, “I approach them as adult learners, who are motivated. Once they are comfortable, they begin to see the magic that technology creates in helping programs make better decisions about children’s learning.”

The UPK supported classes have completed the first two check points in using CC.net. Early into the process, the programs decided to create a local “map of curriculum” that links the EEC standards and program guidelines with the Scholastic Building Blocks curriculum and assessment. The map is a central roadmap for looking at children’s progress and for establishing the link between standards, curriculum and assessment.

Staff’s technology skill levels have improved enormously, and they see the new system as a time-saver. Before teachers/providers had to use a pen and paper for everything; now they have computer generated reports. Providers are more adept at gathering information. Teachers/providers use and understand many different methods for recording observational data including digital cameras. Also, Carolyn noted that, “the teachers are able to communicate better with parents and routinely show them research based child progress reports.”

The program has had some challenges along the way. A continuing challenge has been working with different assessment and curriculum frameworks. According to Carolyn, blending the two (Scholastic and Creative Curriculum) and linking them with the preschool guidelines and standards is a complex process and not easily understood or accessed by all staff. Another challenge that Carolyn shared is locating sufficient funds for the professional development needed to continue with cc.net. Staff and administrators alike hope to gain proficiency with all cc.net resources and to continue to work with a consultant to look at assessment data more critically and learn new uses for it.

For more information about this program, please contact Carolyn at crocheleau@lowell.k12.ma.us.
There are lots of ways to help experienced staff incorporate new approaches. All staff, new and experienced, appreciate and deserve validation of their work:

- Encourage staff to talk about their teaching experiences and learn about their strengths and interests.
- Validate and extend staff thinking about their practices.
- Support them by asking open-ended questions, questions that promote reflection.
- Reinforce the link between assessment, instruction and outcomes.
- Invite teachers to discuss the early language and literacy needs of each child.

Teachers can support children’s oral language development by:

- Explicitly encouraging children to use language to express ideas and opinions, share experiences, ask questions, act out stories and problem solve;
- Introducing new and challenging vocabulary words linked to curriculum themes and story book reading;
- Listening attentively to children, encouraging them to listen and respond to each other;
- Planning for and addressing oral language needs of individual children during free choice time, recess and other free play times; and
- Scaffolding language activities for individual children to move from single word responses to phrases to complex sentences (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; McGee, 2007, and Justice & Vukelich, 2008)

Invite staff to bring assessment data to meetings. Ask questions about individual children such as “What do you think is contributing to this child’s behaviors? What can you do to support him or her?” Offer to collect more data on children through observations and videotape. Share curriculum plans and explore ways to refine teaching based on assessment data. Remember that change occurs in stages. People change at their own paces and meet and leap different hurdles along the way. Offer lots of encouragement.

Finally, find ways for your experienced staff to share their wisdom and to shine. Encourage them to take a leadership role, and support their continued growth.
Parents and guardians need information on how language and literacy develop and how they can help at home. When parents have access to information and activities, they become partners in their children’s language and literacy development and ongoing learning.

Participation in assessment draws staff, parents and other adults together around children’s progress. Administrators can help teachers reflect on identifying ways to help families better understand children’s language skills. They can work together to develop questions that encourage joint problem solving and information sharing between teachers and adults in a child’s family.

Teachers can engage parents in conversations to better understand their expectations for children’s development. They can gather information from the family about the child’s language and literacy skills, interests and preferences.

As a child’s day unfolds, a variety of home routines and activities occur. When staff share progress reports with parents, they can together explore ways that families can interact with their children to support language development at home. For example, a simple trip to the grocery store is a routine that can provide language development through categorizing items on a shopping list and parents talking with and asking questions to their children. Teachers can use assessment information to help parents identify existing daily routines in the home or develop routines that can support children’s language development.
**Promising Practices**

**Planning a book reading to build language**

Reflect on when, why and how you read to children. Is book reading a transition activity? Do you introduce children to poetry, myths, fiction, and non-fiction? Do you read developmentally appropriate and stimulating books from varied genres? Do the books reflect children’s home language, culture and identity?

The most effective book readings (or read alouds) are those in which children are actively involved in asking and answering questions rather than passively listening. Plan book reading sessions that feature a variety of books, focus on key story concepts, highlight new vocabulary words and include thought provoking discussion points. Read to children one to one or in small groups where children can see and touch the book and develop positive feelings about reading. Actively engage children in reading time—asking questions about the book before reading it, posing questions that ask them to predict what will happen, and noticing cause and effect relationships. Select and teach words that stretch children’s vocabulary and that can be used in everyday conversation. Re-read books to children and give clear word definitions and demonstrations of meaning.

**Creating a language rich environment in family child care homes**

If you are a family child care provider, it may be difficult to maintain a language rich environment. To address this challenge, many providers make use of “borrowed space” by creating portable word walls. Providers laminate file folders to make posters for words tied to a theme or concept. During the year, they can write or paste children’s names and other focus words on the inside of the folders. Then they hang a group of the posters to form a word wall. The walls can be a great opportunity for learning. Many children enjoy copying the words from the posters on the refrigerator using magnet letters or adding new words from magazines or product boxes.
Downloadable Video Series on Early Childhood Assessment
http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries.htm
The Colorado Department of Education’s Results Matter Program is pleased to share a collection of videos that help providers better understand ways to use observation, documentation, and assessment to inform practice. Two styles of videos are provided: 1) practitioners discussing and illustrating their exemplary practices; and 2) clips for practicing observation, documentation and assessment skills, showing children participating in typical routines and activities. You can watch the videos online or download the free clips for use in educational and professional development activities. Additional clips are added periodically, so check back from time-to-time.

Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children with Disabilities
Webinar on DEC’s New Recommendations for Curriculum, Assessment & Program Evaluation
DATE/TIME: May 7, 2009, 3 p.m.
CONTENT: This useful webinar, chaired by Dr. Beth Rous and Dr. Marilou Hyson, will give participants an overview of the Division for Early Childhood/Council for Exceptional Children paper on Recommendations for Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation for Young Children with Disabilities and its alignment with other recommendations for children with and without disabilities.
TO REGISTER: Go to: http://uky.premiereglobal.com/attendee/RegisterLogin.aspx?hubconfID=511235&qtID=1&act=reg
MATERIALS: Information about how to access the system will be provided with your registration confirmation. Participants may:
- Download a free copy of DEC’s paper on Recommendations for Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation for Young Children with Disabilities from the registration system pages; or
- Purchase a bound copy for $10 from DEC at: http://www.dec-sped.org/index.aspx/Store/Additional_Resources
FOR MORE INFORMATION: If you have logistical questions or require more information about how to register, please contact DEC at dec@dec-sped.org or (406) 543-0872. If you have questions about the paper or the presenters, please include them with your registration.

Hanen Institute
www.hanen.org
The Hanen Institute provides the important people in a young child’s life with the knowledge and training they need to help the child develop the best possible language, social and literacy skills. The Institute houses a variety of books, assessments, videos and other resources on language development.
BOOKSHELF & REFERENCES


Dickinson, D. K., & Tabors, P. O. (Eds.). (2001). Beginning Literacy with Language. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. In this book, you'll travel into the homes and schools of over 70 young children from diverse backgrounds and observe parent-child and teacher-child interactions. Through research gathered in the Home School Study of Language and Literacy Development, the authors share with you the relationship they've found between these critical, early interactions and children's kindergarten language and literacy skills. [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

Helm, J. H. (2007). Got Standards? Don’t Give up on Engaged Learning. Beyond the Journal. NAEYC. This article focuses on the challenges of incorporating standards into engaging learning experiences, such as projects, for young children. [http://journal.naeyc.org](http://journal.naeyc.org)


McGee, L. (2007). Transforming Literacy Practices in Preschool. Scholastic. When preschool children receive high-quality literacy instruction, it benefits their emotional and cognitive development enormously. But what does "high-quality literacy instruction" look like? In this research-based, yet practical resource, Lea McGee answers this important question. She shares five guidelines that can help transform preschool programs. [www2.scholastic.com](http://www2.scholastic.com)


If you have any questions about the CHILD ASSESSMENT BRIEF or suggestions for articles please call Early Childhood Associates, Inc. at 508-788-3444. We look forward to answering your questions and creating a way for you and your colleagues to share your challenges and successes.