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## Teaching Tots Focus of New Program

The nearly \$1 million grant will provide specialized behavioral training to early childhood educators.

The EC-SEBRIS certificate program begins this fall.

By **Gina Jacobs**

Finding the right preschool or daycare for young children can often be difficult for families, especially when that child can't quite communicate.

As a result, unexpected behavioral problems are common and can be challenging to deal with. In fact, children between the ages of infant to 5 years old are expelled from the preschool setting three times more often than kindergarten through 12th grade all together.

### Focus on the early years

With that in mind, SDSU will offer a new certificate program this fall to help prepare early childhood educators and daycare providers to work with children during these challenging early years. A four-year, nearly \$1 million grant from **San Diego County Health and Human Services** will allow SDSU to train at least 30 professionals each year.

"Providing the proper environment and relationship base early on will ensure the child's ability to reach its full potential," said Shulamit Ritblatt, chair of SDSU's **Department of Child and Family Development**, which will run the certificate program.

### Reading socio-emotional cues

The one-year Early Childhood Socio-Emotional & Behavior Regulation Intervention Specialist (EC-SEBRIS) program is for professionals already in the field who can immediately put the training to work in their classrooms. In particular, the program will focus on how to read the socio-emotional cues of young children and teach them skills to self-regulate and manage their emotions.

“These are not ‘problem children,’ these are everyday problems of all children,” Ritblatt said.

“It starts with a child not sharing, throwing things, yelling or throwing a tantrum, to a child who cries inconsolably or bites or hits other children. With the right types of interaction and responsiveness, a child will learn to self-regulate, which will help them develop other critical skills necessary for them to be successful in the classroom.”

The program will also teach professionals how to set expectations and provide a structure that allows youngsters to learn how to focus and be attentive, to listen, follow directions and wait their turn.

Students in the program will complete four courses, as well as a supervised internship either in their current place of work or elsewhere.

### **Providing a foundation for educational success**

“It is very important to invest in the people who are interacting with our children on a daily basis,” said Yael Koenig with San Diego County’s Health and Human Services **Child Mental Health Services**.

“By providing these skills and enhancing the infant/early childhood profession, our young kids will have the right foundation for educational success.”

The program's curriculum aligns with the infant and early childhood competencies required by the state and can also be applied towards a master’s degree in child and family development. A combination of field study, group work, one-on-one training and on-site coaching utilizing reflective facilitation practice will be required.

The certificate program, which is already full for the upcoming semester, will accept applications for fall 2011 later this year. To learn more about the program, visit

<http://coe.sdsu.edu/cfd/prospective/certificate.php>