RSA Winter Institute

This year the Deaf Blind Institute, Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities, and the RSA Winter Institute all were held one after the other. Several RSAs were able to participate in one activity, but not others due to budget constraints.

Eight RSAs from Kosrae, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, Ebeye, and Majuro, plus three friends of RSAs participated in the RSA Winter Institute. Kathy Ratliffe and Kitty O’Reilly led the institute. We worked together to develop a new tool for RSAs called the Functional Inventory of Pacific Skills (FIPS). Together we designed and tested the tool using videos of children from Chuuk and Kosrae that were taken on recent RSA mentorship visits in February and March. On the second day of the Institute, RSAs were able to visit community sites where related services were taking place for children. Sites included Jefferson Elementary School in Honolulu, Sultan Easter Seals School, and Lanakila Early Childhood Services Program.

Kathy hosted a party at her house on Wednesday night

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Functional Inventory of Pacific Skills (FIPS)

This tool will help RSAs and the teams they work with identify functional skill areas for children that fit with cultural expectations, and plan RSA intervention. Skill areas are broken down into specific tasks that are organized into developmental domains (motor, communication, social, adaptive, and cognitive skills). “Readiness Skills” are skills needed in order to progress to more advanced skill areas. They include reaching for objects, visually tracking, communicating needs and wants, and responding to sounds.

Advanced skill areas chosen by the RSAs to focus on include weaving, fishing, and raking/sweeping. Many other areas were identified as potential skill areas to address in the future including cooking, going to school, sewing, gathering food from the mountain, raising pigs, making handicrafts, and carving.

The FIPS will soon be available on the RSA website at www.hawaii.edu/rsa. It will be updated and improved as we work with it over the next few years to ensure that it meets the needs of RSAs as well as children and families in the Pacific. Below is a schematic of the FIPS. More skill areas will be added.
RSA Mentorship Visits to Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap

The new year of 2004 started out with a BANG as most of the Hawaii based RSA mentorship team headed out to the Pacific to visit RSAs in their home states.

Kitty O’Reilly visited Yap and Pohnpei in February. Irene Stetkevich accompanied her to Yap, and Melinda Kohr accompanied her to Pohnpei. Kitty’s husband Joe also went along so he could see enjoy the islands while Kitty worked. Kitty and Joe started their trip in Palau, and then island hopped on the way home to visit Kosrae and Majuro.

Kathy Ratliffe visited Kosrae and Chuuk in March, accompanied by a new mentorship team member, occupational therapist Barbara Sher. Barbara lives in Saipan and assists with training new RSTs in CNMI. Kitty and Joe happened to be in Kosrae for a weekend overlapping with Kathy and Barbara. Their weekend meeting fostered the germination of the Functional Inventory of Pacific Skills tool that we all worked on at the RSA Winter Institute in Honolulu. Kosrae and Chuukese RSAs played a big role in helping to develop this tool and the videos to help train others in its use.

Mentorship Visits in 2004

Florina and Melinda work with a young boy in Pohnpei.

It’s all work and no play in Pohnpei!

Irene instructing Yapese teachers and family members during their workshop in Yap.

Paul shows his RSA talents as he helps a young child to walk.
RSAs On The Move

with our old friends Mellanie Lee and Jan Fried providing most of the refreshments. We all enjoyed the views of Honolulu city lights, great food, music, and the companionship of our friends. We missed those who were not able to be with us.

NewsNotes
Mellanie Lee and her husband John are now living in Honolulu. Mellanie is working for the University of Hawaii.

RSA Televideo Conference

Schedule for 2004
Televideo conferences have been scheduled through July, 2004. They are scheduled for Tuesdays in Hawaii and Wednesdays in the Pacific at the following dates and times:

April 20/21, 2004
May 25/26, 2004
July 20/21, 2004

Hawaii time: 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM
Majuro time: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM
Pohnpei/Kosrae time: 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Chuuk/Yap time: 9:30 AM – 12:00 noon.

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Games to Support Related Services Needs

Try to come up with ideas that not only help children get stronger and learn functional skills- make the activities fun too! Here are some examples adapted from Barbara Sher’s book, *Self Esteem Games* (published in 1998 by John Wiley and Sons, and available through Amazon.com). You can do these in Head Start classrooms or family homes or school classrooms. Explain to the teacher or parent what the children will learn through this game.

Games for more than one child.

A. **GUESS WHO.** Chant “Who is this, who is this? Can you tell me who is this? (in your own language)” One player is blindfolded. Everyone chants the chant and you guide one child in front of the child who is blindfolded. The blindfolded person feels the other person and tries to guess who it is.

*What do children learn?* Identifying body parts, using both hands, social skills, sitting balance, standing balance (depending on what position the child is in), names of other children, following directions, etc. Children with poor mobility and motor skills can use hand over hand assistance.

B. **SOUND ORCHESTRA.** Each child chooses a sound to make. Possibilities include: animal sounds, car or truck sounds, crying or laughing, tongue clicking, whistling, or a made up sound. Take turns being the conductor, pointing a “baton” (or finger) to indicate who or what group gets to make their sound. The conductor can indicate with hand gestures which sounds she wants to be loud or soft, drawn-out or staccato. She can also intersperse various solos, duos, or trios, or let the entire orchestra play together.

*What do children learn?* Following directions, taking turns, giving directions clearly, paying attention, making specific sounds. Children who are not verbal can make any sounds they are capable of making.

C. **FREEZE RUN.** Everyone moves (runs, jumps hops, dances, skips backward, etc.) until you say “FREEZE!” Encourage everyone to stop instantly. They have to hold that frozen position until you say “Thaw.” You can take turns who gets to freeze and thaw the others. Instead of using words, you can use different sounds to indicate “Freeze,” and “Thaw.”

*What do children learn?* Following directions, taking turns, vocalizing (making sounds), verbalizing (saying words), motor control, holding still, motor skills (running, jumping, etc.). Children using wheelchairs can move their wheelchair or arms or head or legs rather than running.