



**Kindergarten teachers
are invited to enroll in a
FREE pilot online course!**

Teachers that Make a Difference

► Why an online course on child centered education?

While all educators make a difference in the lives of children, teachers and caregivers in preschools and kindergartens play a crucial role in shaping the way children will learn and think throughout their lives. Current research shows that young children that attend high quality early childhood programs achieve higher outcomes in academic subjects throughout their school careers and can live more fulfilling, productive lives. Improving the quality of your work with children is actually not more work for you, it is about being more intentional in what you really want to accomplish. It is about aligning the kinds of activities you do with children in your classroom to your dreams and goals for these children.

► How is this online course organized?

This course is comprised of 12 modules designed to help you become more intentional in your teaching. The course consists of activities to try with children, videos to watch, short readings packed with ideas and suggestions, space for reflection, and online forums where both a course facilitator and other colleagues taking the course support you in thinking more deeply about what you are really trying to accomplish with your children.

► Who is running the online course?

With funding from IBM, through the IBM Global Work/Life Fund, the International Step by Step Association/The Netherlands (ISSA) and the Wide Open School Foundation/Slovakia are looking for two small groups of preschool/kindergarten teachers to pilot this course in English and Slovak. ISSA and its member NGOs have more than 15 years of experience in providing in-service training to early childhood teachers. We now want to share what we have learned about high quality early childhood services with more teachers in an online format.

► How much time will the course take?

We believe that we have designed a course that will be informative as well as enjoyable for you, that will provide you greater pleasure and satisfaction in your day to day teaching. In return, we ask you to commit to approximately 36 hours of your time over 4 months.

► What kind of activities can you expect in the course?

Some examples of the kinds of activities you will do in the course include:

- 1) Create a learning portfolio.
- 2) Watch and reflect on videos that show you the future of education.
- 3) Enhance the design of the classroom environment, so that the environment itself serves as an additional “teacher.”
- 4) Record yourself to understand how you actually are interacting with children.
- 5) Observe children to assess their levels of well-being and involvement.
- 6) Build more effective partnerships with families.
- 7) Try out different kinds of lesson plans and thematic units.
- 8) Use self-assessment tools, such as surveys and continuums of practice.
- 9) Get feedback from the course moderator as you try out new things in the classroom.
- 10) Talk with other course participants as well as your work-colleagues about new ideas.

If you want to try an activity, visit the ISSA Website: www.issa.nl/resources

► Who can participate and what will be the benefits?

This course is open to all early childhood educators who are interested in deepening their skills so that their work with children provides a foundation that will better prepare them to live and work in the 21st century, who want to feel more joy and satisfaction in their work with children and their families, and who want to interact with their peers and learn about high quality programs. Those who choose to participate in this professional development experience will benefit from learning from the diversity that exists in our different settings and circumstances. The course will offer you the possibility of networking and creating professional partnerships with other educators and preschools. We are looking for teachers who are willing to be active participants in the course, who are eager to contribute both to their own learning process and the learning of other participants through discussion and sharing of experiences. The feedback from participants will allow ISSA to refine the course.

In order to join the course, participants will need reliable internet access.

Every participant who finishes the course will receive a certificate of completion from ISSA.

► When do we start?

The course will begin in mid-September 2011 and will go through February 2012. Although the course is designed to be self-paced, it will be expected that everyone will finish the coursework by mid-February 2012. In order to accomplish this, we expect participants to complete approximately 2-3 modules per month. It is also beneficial to keep to this schedule in order to have more meaningful interactions with your fellow participants in the forums and activities.

► **The deadline for registration is July 15, 2011.** ◀

Hurry! We can only accept 15 participants each for the English and Slovak groups.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity and/or would like to register, please contact:

Dawn Tankersley from ISSA at dtankersley@attglobal.net for the **English** group
or

Eva Koncokova from Wide Open School Foundation at nsd@nsd.sk for the **Slovak** group.