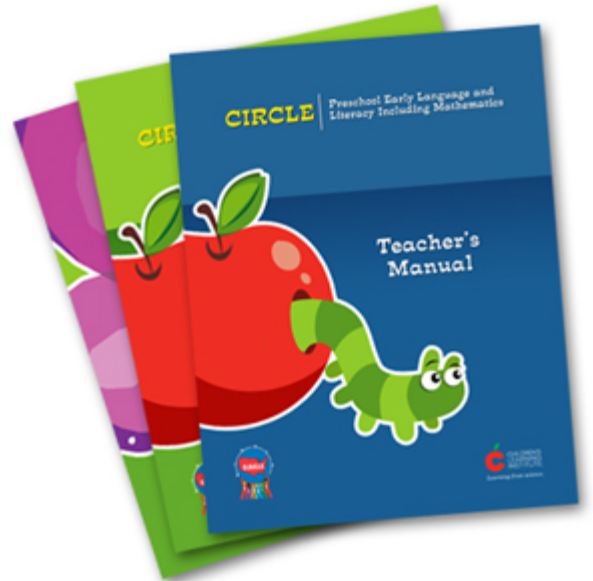


# CLI STAFF EMBARK ON COMPREHENSIVE REWRITE OF MANUAL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

By Davy Kong

In 1999, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed and announced pre-K guidelines to help educators make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction in classrooms. With a grant from TEA, The Children's Learning Institute (CLI), known at the time as the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE), developed a research-based interactive training and manual for teachers to support implementation of the pre-K guidelines and to promote early language and literacy. This summer, staff at CLI embarked on an ambitious effort to update the ten year old CIRCLE Preschool Early Language and Literacy training and manual.



For nearly a decade, all teachers involved in the TEA Head Start grants and later the *Texas School Ready! Project*, formerly known as TEEM, grants have received this training and manual. Although the training has been updated on a regular basis, the manual has not been revised from the original. In May 2008, TEA's revision of the pre-k guidelines initiated a review of the manual's content. Layne Waxley, CLI's Project Director for the *Texas School Ready! Project* explained, "TEA's revised pre-K guidelines, coupled with teachers' feedback and classroom observations, prompted our desire to update the manual to reflect the latest research in early literacy."

Barbara Tuynman, a 15 year veteran in the field of education and one of eight Project Managers at CLI added, "In addition to updating each section of the manual, we added a subcategory to the Best Practices section called Social and Emotional Development. This new feature provides teachers with activities, strategies, and background knowledge on how to support social and emotional development in young children."



CLI's team of education experts – Linda Aston, Sonya Coffey, Pauline Monsegue-Bailey, Linda Morgan, Tracy Osborn, Beverly Reed, and Barbara Tuynman—worked to complete the manual revisions for the 2009

to 2010 school year. As a result of these manual revisions, additional revisions to the training have also been made.

Since the training is hands- on and interactive, a wealth of materials are used to allow teachers time to practice the procedures they learn. Materials are kept in a set of six suitcases. Each suitcase includes materials for each one of the training components. CLI houses several sets of suitcases and ships them to training sites as needed. Several Education Service Centers and *Texas School Ready! Project* lead agencies across Texas have purchased a set of training materials and are able to offer this training to meet the needs in their area.

In order to ensure uniform and consistent trainings of teachers statewide, CLI offers a CIRCLE Training of Trainers. During this three day training, participants are involved in learning about the early literacy components and how to effectively conduct a training session. When these newly trained instructors return to their communities, they will facilitate CIRCLE training with the support and feedback of a CLI project manager. Following successful observations and assessments by a project manager during a minimum of three sessions, trainers are certified.

With the significant increase of new classrooms participating in the *Texas School Ready! Project* in the next school year, a large number of new teachers will need the CIRCLE Preschool Early Language and Literacy training and manual. In preparation for this expansion, CLI is in the process of assembling 70 training suitcases. These training suitcases will be made available to Education Service Centers who do not currently own a set.

Linda Aston, a Project Manager with over 25 years of expertise in education said, "We are continuously trying to improve our professional development for teachers. With this latest training and manual revisions, teachers will be more equipped to provide quality instruction to children so that they can have a strong foundation to be successful in Kindergarten."

