CREATING SPACES TO ENHANCE INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Karen DeBord, Shannon Jarrott & Matt Kaplan

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AGENDA

- Introductions – Karen
- Background on intergenerational (IG) programs - Shannon
- Macro aspects of the IG environment – Matt
- Micro aspects of the IG environment – Shannon & Matt
- Discussion, questions and answers – Karen
OBJECTIVES

- To learn how to plan for more effective intergenerational environments
- To understand ways to plan activities and design environments in ways that help participants to communicate, build skills, and establish relationships
- To examine how partnerships between adult and child programs can be negotiated to benefit both children and elders
INTRODUCTIONS

- Karen DeBord
  Cooperative Extension
  Virginia Tech

- Shannon Jarrott
  Dept. of Human Development
  Virginia Tech

- Matt Kaplan
  Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education
  Penn State University
BACKGROUND ON INTERGENERATIONAL (IG) PROGRAMS

Previous CYFERnet webinar:
http://www1.cyfernet.org/onlinepd/05-12-thrive.html
JUST WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “INTERGENERATIONAL”?  

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in:

- purposeful, mutually beneficial activities
- which promote *greater understanding and respect between generations* and
- contributes to building more *cohesive communities*.

Intergenerational practice is *inclusive*, building on the *positive resources* that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

[Beth Johnson Foundation]
INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS:

- Emphasize *what the generations can contribute to one another*.
- Emphasize *collaboration across agencies/systems* that serve different age groups.
- Generate activities that are *mutually beneficial* for the young and older participants.
- Build upon a *lifespan approach to civic engagement* and *community-building*.
THERE ARE UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES
MACRO ASPECTS OF THE IG ENVIRONMENT
Intergenerational Professionals: (Practitioners-Specialists-Researchers)

- We seem to excel at focusing on issues related to communication and relationships;

  BUT

- We need also to understand the physical environment and how it influences social behavior.
Aligning Intergenerational Programs, Policies and Environmental Design

- Environmental Design includes a balance of
  - Place
  - Partners
  - Programs
  - Policies (within space and in community/state)
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

In the context of program objectives and organizational policies
Creating familiar settings helps to reduce the “institutional feel” of human service organizations.

A shared site in Seattle (Dyke Turner)

The FamilyRoom Approach®
Macklin Intergenerational Institute (Vicki Rosebrook)
Flow of space: Provide retreat and dignified exit routes

Need opportunities for safe entry into, as well as escape from, intergenerational spaces.

(Dyke Turner)
LEAVE ROOM FOR SPONTANEITY

- **Times Square** in New York City offers sidewalks and other places that allow for spontaneous events ranging from bands playing on the sidewalk, to impromptu individual performances, to individuals or groups that simply occupy a corner or niche to find people to watch or socialize. (Jawaid Haider)
DYSFUNCTIONAL PUBLIC SPACES

The Julia C. Lathrop Homes. [Chicago]

Security zones and shrinking public space. [University of Colorado at Denver.]
Avoid design elements that pose obstacles for interaction and connection

What modifications would you make to encourage social interaction among children and elders who live in the neighborhood nearby?

[Photo: Dyke Turner]
A Question of VALUES

For this outdoor play area in a retirement facility, what do you think were the likely values that went into the design? Would you change anything?  (Dyke Turner)
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING:
IN SEARCH OF A COLLECTIVE VISION FOR THE SHARED ENVIRONMENT
NEGOTIATING *INTEGRATED PLANS* FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

Model Building: The “Kaneohe All Ages Park”
TAP INTO THE ENVIRONMENT (BUILT AND NATURAL) TO HELP PEOPLE TELL THEIR STORIES

Walk-about talk-about activity in Downtown Honolulu.

Story of local hundred-year old trees (and the personal memories they evoke)
CREATE “Opportunities” for Informal Interaction

Open Space that “invites” gatherings
This space provides an opportunity to play with water in the middle of a larger public place. (Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Jawaid Haider)

Transition spaces
Split waiting area outside a large activity room allows for relaxed, informal intergenerational interaction. (Dyke Turner)
MICRO ASPECTS OF THE IG ENVIRONMENT
THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECTS POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERGENERATIONAL INTERACTION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

- Signs and cues
- Settings (reading area, art area, music)
- Materials such as paper, paint, collage material, clay
- Props such as drums, costuming, plants, cooking utensils
- The flow of the space
SIGNS AND CUES: The physical environment provides “cues” or “messages” about the type of interaction that is expected in a setting.

A mural at the entranceway of My Home Harumi, a shared site facility, Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, Japan.
SIGNS AND CUES: DESENSITIZATION TO PEOPLE IN OTHER AGE GROUPS

Exposing children to geriatric walkers, wheelchairs, and other paraphernalia some older adults bring with them.

Photo: Dyke Turner
MATERIALS AND PROPS
MATERIALS AND PROPS
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

- Staff prepare the setting
  - Optimize space for small groupings
  - Eliminate distractions (such as TV)
  - Limit materials so sharing must occur
  - But, make materials accessible too
  - Mix and alternate old and young
  - Rotate place (child and adult space)
  - Provide adaptive equipment if needed
  - Encourage creativity (not one right way)
  - Display work for further discussion
Optimize space
Limit distractions

Large Group

Small Group
MATERIALS – AMOUNT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Limit amount to encourage sharing

Make materials accessible
LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Alternating IG locales can support comfort, sense of safety

Alternate chairs
What values influenced the design of these 2 chairs?

(From Chris Murray, Furniture designer)
All in the Family
Josephine is part of the group – even the center of attention – not off to the side. (Chris Murray, Murray+Co, Charlottesville, VA)
ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

Adaptive equipment is available everywhere! Online vendors offer specialized equipment. Pinterest offers ideas for fashioning your own equipment.

http://pinterest.com/otconsulting/diy-adapt/
Encourage Creativity

- Lots of right ways to build a house!
- Monitor how models are shared.

Display work

- Inform and invest stakeholders by sharing IG work.
- Encourage reflection on IG partners and activities – extend the benefits!
- Examples:
  - bulletin boards, newsletters, portfolios, website
Staff are key to encouraging interactions

- Monitor and build comfort with both age groups
- Collaborate with a partner
- Encourage interactions
- Model curiosity, exploration, examination
- Comment on interactions
  - Sam, please tell Jo about your trip to New York. She used to live there.
  - Jorge used to build boats. He will help us with our “What floats?” experiment.
  - Decide with your partner which type of seeds you will plant for our garden.
- Step back to promote interaction
USE OBJECTS TO GENERATE INTERGENERATIONAL CURiosity AND ENGAGEMENT

The Memory Chest
A “Neighborhood Reminiscence” Approach
(The Netherlands)

4-H community service project

“Stump Your Relative” Game

Handmade Top from Turkey (The Netherlands)
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

- Sharing spaces (together and apart)
- Sharing supplies
- Sharing staff members’ and participants’ talents
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

- All of us have strengths
- All of us have areas where we need help
- IG relationships achieve synergy by sharing strengths to meet each other’s needs and be better together
MATCHING SKILLS

- Functional levels
  - First in, last out

Children
- Short-Term Memory
- Trusting
- Walking
- Toileting
- Self-feeding
- Exploring
- Creating
- Taking Initiative
- Long-Term Memory

Adults
- Long-Term Memory
- Self-feeding
- Walking
- Toileting
- Exploring
- Creating
- Taking initiative
- New learning
- Short-term memory
Adapting Environments for Different Needs - A Few Examples

- Walking: Pathways, places to go, interesting things along the path

- Independence: Helping self to materials, handrails, benches, devices, tools, motor skills

- Memory: Picture books and manipulatives building on interests
When designing intergenerational settings

- Think beyond “activities” & “programs”

- Align
  - the physical environment,
  - people’s values for intergenerational engagement,
  - intergenerational programs (existing and planned),
  - organizational policies.
LOOKING AHEAD

◆ For intergenerational practitioners:
  ◆ Increase *design literacy* (to understand behavior in the context of the physical environment.)

◆ For environmental designers:
  ◆ Increase *intergenerational literacy*.

◆ Work together to create *intergenerational settings* rather than isolated programs and activities.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Karen DeBord, Ph.D., Extension Specialist
Department of Human Development
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Phone: (540) 238-3327
E-mail: kdebord@vt.edu
CONTACT INFORMATION

Shannon Jarrott, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Director, Neighbors Growing Together
Director of Research, VT Adult Day Services
Department of Human Development (0416)
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Phone: (540) 231-5434
Fax: (540) 231-7012
E-mail: sjarrott@vt.edu
Website: www.intergenerational.clahs.vt.edu
CONTACT INFORMATION

Matt Kaplan, Ph.D., Professor
Intergenerational Programs and Aging
Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education
The Pennsylvania State University
007A Ferguson Building
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: (814) 863-7871
Fax: (814) 863-4753
E-mail: msk15@psu.edu
Website: http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu
QUESTIONS