EPCC Newsletter



EPCC, along with the rest of the world, has had the last two years of change and challenges to keep our work alive in this alternate reality of COVID. Flexibility, open mindedness, learning new skills and maintaining the commitment to the work was required and the support that we gave each other helped us to be creative and relevant.

Additionally, reflecting on what is alive in our world and how the news of the day might be impacting children and their families was required. Racial bias, deep and passionate differences of political, and personal values became larger and therefore also affected parenting, teaching and children's sense of security.

There were two major aspects of growth for our organization. First, we needed to learn and become comfortable conducting our organizational work in the virtual world as well as delivering our training to educators and families. Zoom has become our constant companion! We are conducting our meetings and committee work via zoom. In fact, it has improved our communication and development in ways we had not expected. Moving forward we will continue to use zoom as we are located all around the state.

Secondly, we had to look at how and what

we wanted and could deliver to teachers and families. We have done live zoom workshops for schools, at conferences and for other education organizations. Learning how to use live zoom, including the chat and breakout rooms was a big part of our learning curve. We also needed to learn how to prepare ourselves and our environments for the best appearance. We also learned how to record presentations that were then delivered, recorded to the participants. It was a challenge to not be able to interact with participants, as that is a big part of our teaching philosophy.

Now moving forward, we are working to develop a catalogue of workshops of various lengths both recorded and available live on zoom or in person. That has been an exciting endeavor. The additional task at hand is marketing our work to make it available to a wide spectrum of educators and families. We are working to update our website. We have hired a social media intern to boost our presence in a wide range of social media platforms. So watch for us!

As an educational organization we have both educated ourselves for this new reality as well as new ways to share our content. Watch for our new delivery modes and give us your feedback.





Read about Summer 2021 Peace Camp on page 5.

How can I get involved?

We are honored that you have opened and perused our quarterly newsletter.

We value your input and support for our peace education work that is so close to our hearts and minds. There are many ways that you can support our work with educators, families and communities across the country.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- Share your training or workshop experiences with others.
- Think about what you see on our website (<u>educatorsforpeaceful</u> <u>classroomsandcommunities.org</u>) that you might be interested in organizing for your community or sponsoring/funding or participating in yourself
- Tell others about the training opportunities we offer
- Refer others to our website
- Grant writing support, or leads
- Offer leads for training or speaking opportunities
- Offer leads for funding sources
- Offer leads for marketing our project

Please share this newsletter and refer others to our website, <u>educatorsfor</u> <u>peacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org</u>. If you have any questions email us at <u>pambonzvo@gmail.com</u>.

Main image courtesy of Freepik.com.

"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria"

By Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD

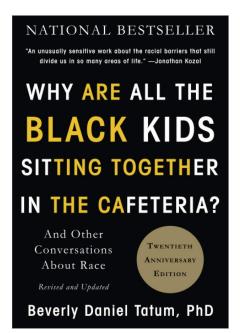
REVIEWED BY JOYCE DANIELS

Beverly Tatum wrote Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria in the late nineties. Why did she decide to revise and update it in 2017? In 2014 there was a survey of young people asking for their thoughts about bias. "Among the key findings was a widespread belief (91 percent) in equality and the idea that everyone should be treated equally." With the election of a Black president there was a belief that "race was no longer a barrier to opportunity for people of color."

So why are people of color still struggling economically, still getting shot at if they walk in the wrong neighborhood – are we ignoring that racism is still prevalent in our society? Are we afraid to talk about it? Tatum says that the "relevant question is not whether all Whites are racist but how we can move more White people from a position of active or passive racism to one of active antiracism."

She writes about the many ways that this can be done. She starts with the early years in a child's life, from what children notice to encouraging discussions about what is fair and unfair in the way we treat people when she cites the importance of anti-bias education. She continues with what happens in adolescence when young people are figuring out their identities, where they belong. When people of color begin to experience microaggressions and more obvious racial discrimination, young people "turn to each other for the much-needed support they are not likely to find anywhere else." This can be seen as a positive coping strategy. But even better would be to see all students as intelligent and capable so there would be no discrimination. The stories of successful people of color that are left out of our schools harm both white people as well as people of color. When both white children and children of color see all people as intelligent and competent, active antiracism is occurring.

Tatum also talks about the importance of allies. "The role of the ally is not to "help" those targeted by racism but to stand in



solidarity with them, speaking up against systems of oppression, and challenging other Whites to do the same." She writes about White ally groups such as Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere - Los Angeles (AWARE-LA) who recognize that ally work is a continuing process of learning.

Throughout the book Tatum tells about research that is being done about racist behavior - both individual and systemic, active and passive. Being aware of the results of research can lead to active antiracism. For instance, a study that struck me was about hiring behavior, done by sociologist Devah Pager. In the study she found that "White applicants were twice as likely to be called back for an interview as matched Black applicants. Surprisingly, even White applicants who indicated they had a criminal record received more callbacks (17 percent) than Black applicants without a criminal record (14 percent)."

This book, in its reflections and stories about racism, provides many stories and examples of how antiracism can occur. It is an honest look at racism, and it provides a hopeful movement toward active antiracism.

"Life is like riding a bicycle, to keep your balance, you must keep moving."

- Albert Einstein



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 Join us for the quarterly meeting!

OUR ORGANIZATION

EDUCATORS FOR PEACEFUL CLASSROOMS AND COMMUNITIES

MAILING ADDRESS 520 Calabasas Rd. Watsonville, Ca 95076 EMAIL: <u>pambonzvo@gmail.com</u>

FIND US ONLINE

<u>educatorsforpeacefulclassrooms</u> <u>andcommunities.org</u>

2021 Fall EPCC Children's Book List

COMPILED BY VERONICA HERNANDEZ



IT'S OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES by Todd Parr.

Ages 2-6 years.

Occasionally, we find that our growing edges can keep us from moving forward. But did you know that to move forward, we must first make mistakes? Todd Parr does it again, in this terrific book, that lets young children everywhere know that it is ok to make mistakes because in the end we will all learn something new that will help us move forward.



ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE by Giulia Belloni.

Ages 3-7 years.

Sheep has a dream of making a flying machine. Wolf, Sheep's friend, does not believe they can make a flying machine, but Sheep feels they can. Curiosity gets the best of the wolf and soon Sheep and the wolf create a plan to build a flying machine together. Through trial and error Wolf soon realizes that anything is possible.



BREATHE by Scott Magoon. Ages 3-8 years.

Sometimes we have so much fun, we forget to stop and enjoy the moment. In this visually beautiful book, we are reminded that sometimes in order to move forward, we need to stop processing the situation and most importantly, breathe.



AFTER THE FALL (HOW HUMPTY DUMPTY GOT BACK UP AGAIN) by Dan Santat.

Ages 4-8 years.

We all know the story of Humpty Dumpty and how all the king's horses helped him get back together again, but did you know that Humpty Dumpty was scared to go back up on the wall, which was one of his favorite things to do? In this classic tale, we read about how Humpty Dumpty conquered his fear of heights, just so we could do the one thing we loved doing, sitting on the wall and watching the world go by.



THE MAGICAL YET by Angela DiTerlizzi.

Ages 4-8 years.

When we are young children, we wonder when we will be able to do certain things, like "when will we learn how to ride a bike?" or "when will I learn how to climb a tree?" In this beautifully illustrated book, we read about how a magical yet can grow with us, it will never leave us, and it will always support us through some of our biggest challenges. A perfect book for all children who wonder.



THE LIST OF THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

by Rebecca Stead. Ages 8-12 years.

Sometimes change can make us feel off balance, but Bea has figured out how to maintain stability during a time where things are changing so often, she has a special book where she keeps a list of things that will not change. And on the top of her list, "mom and dad will always love Bea, and each other." In this book, Bea discovers that she has great strength and finds that she can move forward, if she reminds herself that there are somethings that will never



PAY IT FORWARD by Catherine Ryan Hyde.

Ages 8-13 years.

Imagine living being a twelve-year-old boy who accepts his teacher's challenge to come up with a plan to change the world. Well, that is exactly what happens to Trevor McKinney, and he has the perfect idea: to do a good deed for three people, and then ask them to "pay it forward." This inspiring book demonstrates that we can make a difference in our community, just by being kind, no matter what obstacles stand in our way.



PIECING ME TOGETHER by Renee Watson.

Ages 12-17 years.

Piecing Me Together, is the story of a young girl named Jade who attends a very affluent private school, in hopes of one day being able to leave her poor neighborhood. Unfortunately, not many think she can do this on her own and Jade is tired of people assuming that she is an "at-risk" youth. With the support of her mother, Jade embarks on a journey to show others that she is powerful, and that she will change how people see the world, just by being who she is.



PUNCHING THE AIR by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef

Salaam. Ages 14-17 years.

Amai Shahid, is a sixteen-year-old poet and artist, that attends a diverse art school. His future was shining bright, until one night, when his life would be changed forever. Through his wrongful incarceration, Amai decides to put his anger and despair into words, his preferred art form. It is through his words that he is able to stay grounded, focused and fight against all odds.

Dear Olive Branch

BY OLIVE



THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

Moving Forward ... on Quicksand!

Martin Luther King told us... "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." Martin Luther King Jr.

Only a very few weeks ago we were moving forward through the COVID pandemic to gather again in person, to pick up our favorite activities, to send the children back to their classrooms... and then! With incredible suddenness we watched and listened as the mounting cases of the Delta variant were brought to our attention. Moving forward... oh, no! Some of us have been immobilized by the losses of what we thought we had found again. Some of us merely sad, and many struggling to keep our spirits up because as King said, "...whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." The stories following share our experiences with keeping our spirits up by taking initiative while feeling the losses and restrictions. They speak of kindness, of acknowledging hard things, of celebrating... of moving forward. We share them to offer support in this very unsettled time...

LEARNING THE VALUE OF EMPATHY

Moving forward happens in so many, many ways! The following thoughts support moving forward in social and emotional growth.

Empathy...Caring for each other...how do children learn these values? Modeling? I began helping a child who needed help and saying what I was doing. "I'm helping Katherine put all the babies back in the cradle."

Next step...a container of construction paper hearts. I began giving a heart to a child who helped get another child's jacket on, a child helping another child put the blocks away, two children sharing a book together. I would say things like, "Oh, you helped Mary with her jacket," "Wow, you helped George put the blocks away. That was a lot of blocks!" "You both are reading that book together!"

The children began noticing when a child helped another child and wanted to give a heart, so I had to make the container accessible so children could give them to each other! That's the part that children taught me. Not only were they helping each other - they were noticing when others helped also.

The children were all moving forward in becoming a community that helped each other. Simple, when capable adults help facilitate! (J.D.)

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

In my effort to keep my spirits up in this time of an unknown tomorrow, I celebrate each day, since I only get each day once, and try to make me content, even if it is just for a little while. There is an idea that is circulated called "random acts of kindness," where I have followed the thoughts of making the day a little brighter when I can. Here is my latest episode:

I have a neighbor who is getting on in years that can no longer do what she used to do. She is not as stable on her feet as she once was. I had reason to visit her a couple of weeks ago, and stopped to talk, and observe. I noticed that her brick path was no longer lying flat, as a root had decided that the underside of the bricks was a good place to grow, get water and push the bricks out of

place. My neighbor told me that she tripped and had nearly fallen on the uneven bricks. Friends do not let friends fall. I planned for a day when I had time to stop and do some digging. I brought a bucket of sand to put down under the bricks and my trusty trowel. I did not tell her I was coming, as she would worry about me doing the hard work, since I am no longer a spring chicken. I set to work and dug up the pathway. With difficulty, I dug out the offending roots, cutting some with an axe, and apologizing to the bush. It took a bit of effort, as the roots had firmly established their home under the bricks. I removed the roots, hoping that they will find a happier place to grow elsewhere. Then I tamped down the dirt, and added a layer of sand, and started putting the bricks back. In the meantime, my neighbor had discovered my car was parked across the street, and since she had not heard me, she came out to check. She caught me, dirty handed, in the middle of the bricks. She, of course, fussed at me for working in the heat. She said she had tried to call someone and that they did not return her call. She was very grateful that I fixed the path. She said it is much better. And she gave me cold water and chocolate chip cookies for my labor which made me happy and seemed a reasonable trade. (D.S.)

A NEW FAMILY TREE

In March of 2021 I received heartbreaking news from out-of-state relatives. My niece's 21-year-old son had passed away. Because of Covid-19, the services were limited to just a few close relatives and friends.

My sisters and I talked on the phone a lot. One of our concerns was how to send comfort to our niece and her family. Besides calls, flowers and cards, what else could

(continued, page 7)



YOUR QUESTIONS

Olive's Next Topic: Growth Mindset

We are looking for your questions and/or short stories regarding Growth Mindset With the changes in the pandemic, more children are meeting face-to-face in classrooms. What are your ideas, stories or questions for encouraging children to become friends and for developing a welcoming classroom community? Please submit your ideas to marilynshelton@gmail.com. Please put OLIVE BRANCH in the subject line.

Word range: under 300 words | Submit by: January 5, 2022

FSSAY

Social Emotional Issues and Covid-19

BY SHIRLEY CHEN

How do we communicate and partner with parents about their child's social emotional learning in this "new" world when it can look so different at home and in child care?

Our world has changed drastically in the last couple years. Our basic need for health and safety has been challenged. We have been told and dictated ways in which we should live and work in ways (change to methods) that support the health and safety of ourselves and the communities around us, from our homes to our local communities, to our countries, to the world! Our choices have been limited by external factors, and as adults, we are all navigating through a whole new world!

At the same time, our current infants and toddlers came into this world only knowing this world for the past 1.5 years. Terms are being used for children who were born during the Covid-19 pandemic or coronavirus crisis, including "coronials" and "Generation C".

It has been interesting to have some unfamiliar conversations with parents about ways to support their toddlers in their social emotional learning. When children two and over were required to start wearing masks in child care, our teaching teams had many conversations about how we would support and encourage the parents in my care in this process. We grieved with parents wondering

how the children would be affected by not being able to share and see each other's expressions. We appreciated even more those times when we would eat together and connect and communicate without our masks. We talked about ways to communicate with our bodies and eyes and gestures. Some ideas that I usually share with the parents of ways to support their child's emotions have felt a bit more clinical and theoretical, since there are so many more regulations and precautions that need to be taken when caring for a group of children who are from different homes and spaces! For example, a toddler who joined our group as a twoyear-old already was wearing a mask when he started. It was quite a transition to get to know his cues and expressions with a mask on most of the day. When he cried during a transition or when he was upset, we were finding ourselves as teachers, going into a routine of finding a separate space to be with him and taking off his mask so we could wipe his face and give him that space and room to breathe to calm down and prepare to then put on his mask again to play or interact.

Recently, we have engaged in different role plays and conversations with the children that include wearing masks indoors and staying indoors when the air is not ready for us to play ("It's too smoky! Fire!" said one child). For example, some new choices we are offering the toddlers are, "Do you want to wear your mask outside, or do you want to hang it up while you play?" or "Do you want to wear your blue mask or your rainbow mask?" One child has an older brother who wears a mask and she is not quite two years old, so she wanted to wear a mask to mimic him. For safety reasons, children under two are exempt from wearing a mask, so an idea we had was to use the mask for her as a prop and take that opportunity to talk about why we wear masks and the idea of ages and birthdays.

Parents, care providers and teachers have been pushed to look closely at what is important to them as parents, as a family and as individuals. From an educator perspective, it has been very helpful in our communication with parents and the children to talk about safety for others around them. For the parents, our conversations stay focused on the children. For the older children who are two and older, it has helped to talk about keeping the babies safe! I hope that we can continue to support each other and move forward together in what we are experiencing as a new kind of living, and what most of our children are experiencing as their world.

RECAP

Moving Forward...Ready or Not! Hope and Rainbows: Peace Camp 2021

BY LAURA HYATT



In early June, we were informed that an inperson camp was possible. The theme might as well have been, "ready or not, here they come!" Creating a Covid camp without a Covid guidebook (none exist) in a short time frame was tricky enough. When our hundred year old sacred pine tree had to be removed a week before our nature camp, we had to move forward. When the shade structure did not arrive to support social distancing, we had to move forward. When our staff was dealing with anxiety and post-Covid trauma...we had to move forward. With so many challenges, setbacks, unknowns, and anxieties, we considered canceling camp... but we knew these children needed us to keep moving forward. So we did. Our staff held each other up, literally, stepping up and changing roles, accepting and rolling with the punches and handling challenges for others when needed...because these kids needed this, as much, and more, than we

did. We read Rain Before Rainbows, then watercolored rainbows with them, learning to focus on hope alongside them. A high school youth leader inspired us all, teaching poetry to all of us, processing and pondering our emotions together. A Peace Camp volunteer shared how wooden hearts "bloomed" in one street in one community, bringing hope, art, and inspiration together, showing us how one person and one act can lift an entire community. We danced, we sang, we created and we cried. Most importantly, we laughed... and we looked for the rainbows...together. We all tried to remind ourselves, every moment, that we were together...and that is all that truly mattered. Hope and rainbows. Hope and rainbows.

Impact of COVID-19 on early education and care programs: 5 findings from the literature

BY JULIA CURBERA, <u>INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH</u> IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BIRTH TO THIRD GRADE PARTNERSHIP OF CAMBRIDGE, MA

Early education and care (EEC) programs and educators that families depend on have been deeply impacted at every stage of the pandemic. Even though EEC is a \$99 billion industry that supports workforce participation and the economy, keeping child care centers financially stable and operating safely has proved to be a substantial challenge for programs and the EEC workforce.

The impact of the pandemic has rightly foregrounded EEC as essential infrastructure for our health, as well as our social and economic well-being. Recognizing that support for EEC workers and programs is crucial to our recovery from the pandemic, the Birth to Third Grade Partnership (B-3) in Cambridge, MA, engaged their program evaluator, Institute for Community Health (ICH), to conduct a review of recent literature on the impact of COVID-19 on EEC programs. B-3 supports quality of and access to EEC in Cambridge through coaching, mentoring, and professional development for teachers and directors in family-based programs and center-based programs; and by providing scholarships for families to access highquality preschool education and care.

Through this literature review, ICH identified 5 key findings on how COVID-19 has affected early care program operations that can guide paths forward for EEC in Cambridge and beyond:

1. OPERATING COSTS increased as centers reopened during COVID-19 due to enhanced health and safety requirements and an overall decline in per-child tuition revenue.

Keeping EEC facilities clean and COVID-safe for workers and children doesn't come cheap. The cost of providing center-based child care that meets enhanced health and safety requirements is, on average, 47% higher than the cost of meeting prepandemic requirements, because providers are losing revenue due to reduction in program capacity, enrollment, and thus perchild tuition; and they need to purchase more cleaning supplies. It's no surprise, then, that 56% of child care programs reported losing money with every day they remained open.

2. MANY EEC PROGRAMS have permanently closed during the pandemic due to this growing financial burden, and there is evidence that minority-run and suburban programs have closed at higher rates.

200,000 jobs were lost in early education and care in 2020 - many due to closures, declining enrollment, and increased operating costs

3. FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS, already on the decline before COVID hit, have also closed at higher rates during the pandemic.

While family child care provides affordable, quality, and often culturally reflective care to their surrounding communities, structural barriers (including a lack of support for business development), and declining enrollment due to increased competition from other care options have driven this decline. Given these trends, family child care programs were indeed vulnerable both to closing and experiencing income loss at higher rates than other types of providers during the pandemic.

4. EEC PROGRAMS have struggled to access public support and relief programs despite being significantly impacted by the pandemic. As a result, educators have dipped into their own pockets to stay afloat.

For example, one analysis revealed that PPP Loans issued in 2020 reached fewer than 6% of child care businesses nationally--likely due to difficulty navigating the program. Child care providers have instead taken on debt, spent down savings, cut costs, and sacrificed their own incomes to cover operating cost increases on their own. Meanwhile, relying on personal resources to make up for higher operating costs has exacerbated existing financial and mental health strain in the EEC workforce, who already earn low wages; experience high rates of food insecurity and mental health strain; and often rely on public benefits.

5. Some EEC providers have increased perchild tuition to cover cost increases--but such increases leave low-income families struggling to afford quality child care.

For a family of four living at the poverty level, average tuition increases alone would amount to 8-11% of their annual income. Meanwhile, there has been a decline in enrollment among low -income children: while overall enrollment decreased between pre-and post-pandemic, low-income children experienced the steepest declines.

COVID-19 has amplified concerns for EEC programs and has elevated what many early educators, caregivers, and advocates have been saying for many years: robust public support is needed to foster sustainable and equitable early care programs. Supporting the mental and financial health of EEC workers, low-income families, and family-based care providers is also essential to strengthening the EEC sector into the future.

Several policies have already begun to address the challenges exacerbated by COVID-19. In Massachusetts, Governor Baker recently passed a \$30 million bill providing operational support for center- and family-based programs, and at the federal level, President Biden included provisions for child care support in the March 2021 COVID-19 relief bill.

The Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership also continues to provide resources and support for the EEC community in Cambridge. B3 helped centers navigate the PPP and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) processes; and as centers reopened B3 staff and consultants worked with teachers, directors, and family-based programs to set up their spaces and establish practices that were in line with COVID-related EEC protocols. ICH has also supported B3 by guiding decisions for future support and programming through evaluation work. By working together, and across scales of intervention, we can support and grow early education and care as we continue our recovery from the pandemic.

6 >>>

ADVICE

Dear Olive Branch

continued from page 4

we do? We came up with the idea of planting an Oak Tree in his memory on the family's property. We asked the niece about this and she loved the idea. It happened that some of the young man's friends had given the family a plaque, and they didn't know where to put it. Problem solved; it was decided that putting the plaque on the tree would be the perfect place for it.

We have waited for the weather to be right for planting the oak tree. Now it is scheduled for September. We will try to maintain social distancing by having a family potluck outdoors and then planting the tree.

I have a plane ticket and if the pandemic doesn't get worse at their site, or mine, I will be flying for the first time since the pandemic started. Seeing family in person will be wonderful, I really am looking forward to it. But I guess that it is fair to say, I have a lot of "trip-idation" about going on a plane and gathering with the extended family. It indeed does feel like walking on quicksand.

Addendum for "New Family Tree": We had the potluck outdoors as planned. It was wonderful. My niece and the rest of her family really felt loved and supported (as evidenced by the teary eyes). The plaque was way too big for putting on a tree - so -it will go on a bench that sits under the tree. (M.S.)



NOTE: We chose "Dear Olive Branch" as the title for this column for several reasons - foremost as a sign of peace. Also olives come in many colors, sizes, tastes, uses - a sign of diversity just as there are many types of questions and those who send the questions. We hope "Olive's" responses will help you, the reader - if you have a question for Olive send it to our email address. When Olive isn't available to answer questions, members of EPCC and/or P.E.A.C.E. will step up to help.

RESOURCE

My 5 Favorite Tips for Moving Forward

While looking for resources on moving forward, we stumbled across this blog by Henrik Edberg who is the creator of the Positivity Blog. His tips are:

1. KNOW THE BENEFITS OF LETTING GO OF THE PAST.

Why is it sometimes so hard to let go of something or of the past and move forward in life?

2. GET A BOOST OF OPTIMISM.

Give yourself a kickstart to begin moving forward by getting a boost of optimism.

3. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT.

You do not have control of the past. So don't get stuck in reliving it over and over again and in thinking about what you should have done differently.

4. START WITH JUST A SMALL STEP.

After you have found what you can do to move yourself forward instead of being stuck in worries or regrets ask yourself this: What is one small - or tiny - step I can take today to get started with that?

5. CELEBRATE YOUR SMALL STEP FORWARD AND SUCCESS.

After you have accomplished your first small or tiny step and begun moving forward on your journey then celebrate that win.



CLICK HERE to read the full blog and see the detailed explanations

www.positivityblog.com/moving-forward-quotes

Alumni Corner

SOCIAL STORIES are stories that validate a child's individuality. If you would like to know more about Social Stories. Please join us, Tuesday October 26, 7 PM. Romana Lopez, alumni and Gaby Litsky, alumni committee member will present on the importance of Social Stories. What are they? How do children benefit through Social Stories? They will also tell you how to develop them.

FALL QUARTERLY MEETING This lively presentation will be a part of our Fall Quarterly Meeting. Please join us on Tuesday October 26 by using the zoom link below.



CLICK TO JOIN

The Fall Quarterly Meeting via Zoom Tuesday, October 26 • 7pm

https://bit.ly/3oXaH9C

Meeting ID: 850 1507 2650 | Passcode: 787257

Icons in this document courtesy of The Noun Project.