

The World is Our Playground....But Are We Ready to Play?

The theme of this fall's FKC Conference is "*The World is Our Playground*". This theme has multiple meanings, especially when one considers the children and schools who are served by the Florida Kindergarten Council.

One possible meaning for this theme is the idea that this current generation of children with whom we work will truly be considered **global citizens** by the time they enter the workforce. Recently, the National Intelligence Council released a report called "Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds" (December, 2012). In this report, the authors name four "Megatrends" for the future. The four Megatrends are important to think about as they may provide guidance with respect to specific skills and dispositions that will be critical for success in the future.

In general, the Megatrends suggest that there will be:

- 1) an increase in **individual empowerment** and a larger middle class due to a number of factors ~ not the least of which will be advances in communication, manufacturing technologies, and health care
- 2) no longer one hegemonic world power, but rather a **coalition of countries working together**
- 3) a **change in demographics** with 60% of people living in urban areas, an economic decline in "aging" countries, and increasing migration
- 4) a **water, food and energy nexus** due to the increase of the middle class resulting in a greater demand for resources

This is the fifth time since 1996-97 that this report has been published, and the authors have been able to review previous reports to see how accurate the predictions have been. Interestingly enough, their predictions have very much been on target with one notable exception. The changes have occurred at a *faster pace* than expected.

The children in our kindergarten classes this year will graduate from college in 2030. We need to be thinking about how we are preparing them for the world they will inherit. As we continue to focus on developmentally appropriate practices for young children, are we also giving thought to the development of the four **Global Competencies** of Investigating the World, Recognizing Perspectives, Communicating Ideas, and Taking Action? Or are we trying to find ways to integrate the **21st Century Skills** of Critical and Creative Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration in our classrooms and playgrounds each day?

As we look forward to the October 12, 2013 conference, share with us how you are implementing these changes in your classrooms. Be a presenter at this year's conference by clicking on the Workshops & Events tab at the top of the FKC website and filling out the call for proposals. How can we help each other? Are we really awake and watching the changes that our students will be going through? Are we really preparing them for their future?

Author Heidi Hayes Jacobs, speaking at the 2013 ASCD Conference in Chicago in March, said she no longer refers these skills as "21st Century Skills". She calls them "NOW skills".

Maybe we should do the same?