On April 13th of 2007, I had the opportunity to attend a highly anticipated convention for teachers, parents, and students. The Indiana Association for Educating Young Children strives to help various caregivers in areas that are hard to approach or just needs a little fine tuning. There are over one hundred different conventions to choose from ranging from every day problems such as art project to more serious issues involving childhood obesity. While at the convention, I had the opportunity to attend three different and interesting segments which included; *Oodles of Art with Lori Shaver, Preventing Childhood Obesity, and What Do I Do With the Mad that I Feel?*. 

During the presentation with Lori Shaver, she introduced many techniques to incorporate art into everyday class activities. She explained that art was one of the most important ways children can express themselves and plus it is fun! Lori also made many comments on how each child learns in different ways, and many children can learn better because of the hands on involvement of art. The most exhibiting thing that happened in the convention was when Lori introduced paints called Bio-colors. They come in standard colors and can be used on virtually everything. The bottles resemble that of fabric paint. The difference with Bio-colors is fascinating. There is some kind of chemical that does not allow colors to mix which works out well for young children because they always want to mix colors and it then turns brown. Another interesting thing about Bio-colors is you can stick them to a window and it can easily be peeled off. Using Bio-colors for Christmas decorations and gifts is easy and look great. You can use the paints to study vocabulary or learn spelling words. Using art as a learning tool can disguise learning as fun.
Preventing Childhood Obesity stressed the importance of healthy children. The instructor of the assembly was adamant about keeping gym in schools. Recreation is being cut short more and more and in some places is not required. Exercise is an important daily activity children need to participate in. Video games, television and computer use is limiting the imagination and outside play of children around the world. Parents and teachers need to make it a point to involve children in regular activity everyday. Some things parents can do to eliminate junk food in a child’s diet is pack a lunch. Many time is a school cafeteria, the meals are all sugar and high in sodium. If a parent took some time the night before to pack a lunch for the next day, we would have much healthier children. For some parents this is not an option due to hectic schedules. In cases like that it is easier to do simple things such as serving milk instead of juice. Many juices are almost no juice and all sugar and calories. Some juices that claim to be healthful are packed with as many or more calories and sugar as a can of soda. Fast food should be limited to once a month, but once again for busy parents sometimes this is unavoidable. In this instance, opt for more healthful decisions at fast food restaurants. Instead of fries, choose apple dippers. Get milk, water, or orange juice instead of pop. All of these choices will benefit children in the long run and prevent the development of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke in later years. Health classes are an excellent option for schools to get children involved in. The instructor suggested teaching children about the food pyramid and what groups should be the most and least consumed.

While attending the What Do I Do with the Mad that I Feel, the “bad children” were addressed. In fact, the terms bad children were stressed as an incorrect statement. There is no such thing as a bad child, but a person that makes bad decisions. These decisions can stem from a bad home life or just the fact that children make mistakes just as adults. As caregivers, our job
is to help these troubled decision makers make better choices, according to the instructor. A song was implemented and sung by Mr. Rogers to describe what should be done about the mad feelings that these children are having. Mr. Roger’s sung about how it was okay to feel mad and angry, and it’s even okay to release these feelings by punching a bag or running as fast as you can. Some things parents can do to help children that are expressing angry hurt emotions is to tell them it is okay to be mad but not okay to hurt. Planning for warm get together times is key to providing children with the tools to make good decisions. Talking about angry feelings is also a major factor in expressing emotion. Parents and caregivers need to help children develop control skills. Children do not like when they are out of control, therefore the reason most children cry after acting out in anger. Finding healthy outlets for children is essential for proper behavior skills. Some important play objects can be clay for pounding, crayons for expressive drawing, and punching bags for release of emotion.

If I had to choose one assembly I liked best it would be what to do With the Mad that I Feel. The instructor was so friendly and made anger an okay emotion. She explained that caregivers need to be involved in every aspect of children's lives but especially their emotional wellbeing. I learned new ideas during the presentation that I never knew were possible and some that were common knowledge. The instructor showed many videos and books that could be read to the children to provide a Childs point of view on anger and frustration.