



# School Readiness Coalition Of Sarasota County, Inc.

## Newsletter-May 2003

***Hello to all Early Childhood Educators!***

*It was requested that the Coalition create and distribute a monthly newsletter to keep county childcare providers informed of the activities of the School Readiness Coalition. This is our second edition.*

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION INCENTIVE**

We are committed to exploring ways to improve the salaries and benefits of local child care workers. One way this is done in some communities is to offer bonuses for continuing education. We currently do that on a small scale by awarding bonuses to those workers at sites in the North County Gold Seal Program who achieve their CDA. The Coalition would like to participate in a new statewide program that will be looking at ways to implement a bonus award program on a broader scale. Included in this mailing is a fact sheet on what is called the "WAGES" program that is being administered by the Florida Children's Forum. Also Included is a survey that is the first step in this process. We need to know what the current educational status of childcare providers in our community is so we can know where to go from here. Please take the time to complete the survey and return it to the Coalition, in the pre-stamped envelope, provided no later than June 13<sup>th</sup>. We will share the results of the survey with you and outline the next steps for our community in coming newsletters!

Congratulations to those who applied for and received a mini-grant through the Coalition! 27 providers applied for and received grants from the Coalition to improve the quality of their centers and homes. In addition, the Coalition helped the YMCA fund all appropriate grant requests for its mini-grant program. Good luck with the many interesting and exciting projects described. We look forward to hearing (and seeing through pictures) how your projects turned out.

Effective July 1, 2003, the Coalition will implement a new payment policy. All providers will receive a letter in the mail explaining this procedure in more detail. In order to improve our payment processes and better manage our funds to ensure that we are serving the maximum number of children during the year, all provider attendance sheets and request for payments must be submitted to the YMCA no later than 30 days following the month that children were served. If you have questions about this new procedure please feel free to contact us.

The Coalition thanks all of our providers for their hard work in caring for and educating our young children and preparing them for school! We have issued new Voucher Agreements effective for the new year beginning July 2003 that reflect this important partnership between the Coalition and the many providers who accept school readiness children.

We have held two provider focus groups meetings so far to hear from providers. In addition, the Coalition's Executive Director has attended many of Family Child Care Association meetings and has visited many sites to get to know providers better and to better understand your issues and concerns. Please keep the dialogue and communication going. Many issues are being worked on to ensure good communication and easier processes between the providers and the YMCA. New procedures and being discussed and tested. Give us your feedback and any additional ideas. The next provider meeting will be held at the end of June. Details as to date and place will be sent in a separate mailing.

Our Website for the Sarasota School Readiness is now up and running! Minutes of meetings and scholarship applications are posted. There will be a calendar of meetings posted and a section for providers to exchange information and ideas. Look us up and give us feedback and ideas. [www.sarasotaschoolreadiness.org](http://www.sarasotaschoolreadiness.org)

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