



School Readiness Coalition of Sarasota County, Inc.

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

October 2004 Newsletter

DIRECTORS—PLEASE POST THIS NEWSLETTER AND SHARE WITH YOUR TEACHERS!

SRC Community Meeting on 9/29 & 2004 Report to the Community

On Wednesday evening, September 29th, the School Readiness Coalition held a public Community Meeting at The Landings to present a brief Powerpoint slideshow on "who we are and what we do" and share its 2004 Report to the Community.

The report begins with a letter from the outgoing Chair of the Board and includes the overview and purpose statement of the Coalition, programmatic highlights and accomplishments from the 2003-2004 fiscal year, financial information, and a listing of child care providers who work with the SRC.

One copy of the report is being mailed to providers with this newsletter and updated training calendar. Please post the report and share with staff and parents who might be interested. For additional copies, please call (941) 379-1479 or email sarasotaschoolreadiness@comcast.net.

Notes on the Report to the Community



The Coalition's 2004 Report to the Community lists child care centers by their legal names, as they appear on the state child care website, provided to us by the Department of Health licensing department. We acknowledge that the term "day care" is outdated and typically replaced now by "child care center" or "family child care home". In future reports, we will be using the term "child care" instead of "day care".

We have also learned that a few providers may have been inadvertently left off the list. We apologize for this omission that occurred as we rushed to get our information to the printer on time. Please know that we are grateful to each and every one of you for the services you provide to the children in our community.

Hot Topics



Do you have suggestions or ideas concerning this month's "hot topics"? These are issues that most of you face regularly in the child care field. Please email your ideas to jgasparro@sarasotaschoolreadiness.org or call (941) 685-4290. Suggestions will be shared in upcoming newsletters.

October's Hot Topics:

Hiring and Keeping Qualified Staff Finding and Retaining Substitute Teachers

"WARM LINE"

(941) 412-9186, ext. 18



Do you have questions or concerns regarding children with disabilities, a child in your care who may have special needs or be a particular challenge to work with? Is there a child who needs further evaluation? Help is available and the program is provided by the Coalition.

Please call our "warm line" at the Florida Center for Child and Family Development (FCCFD). The staff person who answers the "warm line" can put you in touch with a specialist who can offer a variety of resources, answer questions about working with children who have special needs or providing an inclusive environment, and can help determine if a child needs to be further evaluated.

If you reach voicemail when you call the "warm line", please leave a message, and a member of the FCCFD staff will return your call within 1-2 business days. (Note: The "warm line" is not a "hot line" because it is not staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.)

(More on back!)



"Who should I call about...?"



A contact information sheet is being mailed to all providers with this newsletter (and was printed in last month's edition). Please call us with questions. We are here to help you!

ECA Conference 2004



The Coalition is proud to have sponsored the participation of over 145 local providers at the 49th Annual Early Childhood Association (ECA) of Florida

Conference that took place September 30th through October 2nd at the Double Tree Hotel in Orlando. Coalition contributions to ECA conference registrations totaled over \$11,000.

Thank you to all of our dedicated providers who chose to participate in this important conference!

Whole Child Sarasota Project



The School Readiness Coalition and the United Way of Sarasota County have joined forces to lead the Whole Child Sarasota project, a community-wide initiative modeled after the Lawton Chiles' Foundation Whole Child Concept. In a Whole Child Community, "everyone works together to make sure children thrive."

Currently, project volunteers are conducting a series of listening groups, in which community members will be invited to share their opinions on a range of issues that affect children in Sarasota County, ages 0-6. Feedback from listening groups will be used in the strategic planning of the Whole Child Project.

Project leaders will be seeking provider and parent involvement in listening groups, so stay tuned for more information. The first provider listening group is planned for Monday, November 1st from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at The Landings, in conjunction with a Coalition provider meeting (see flyer sent with newsletter).

For more information or to volunteer to participate in a listening group, please call (941) 685-4290 or email jgasparro@sarasotaschoolreadiness.org.

Visit our website! Minutes of meetings and scholarship applications are posted. A calendar of meetings is also available, as well as a section for you to exchange information and ideas. Look us up and give us your feedback! If any director or teacher would like to receive a copy of this newsletter via email, please contact Jenn Gasparro or Janet Kahn at the email addresses below and we will add you to the list.

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Coalition activities funded in whole or in part by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and the Sarasota County Government.

DECA Meeting

An introductory meeting for new sites interested in the DECA program is now scheduled. Those of you who have already signed up have been contacted by Mary Wolf. If you are interested in future training on this program, please call Mary at (941) 313-1179.

Curriculum Workshops

Many providers who attended Curriculum Day in July indicated that they are interested in continuing conversations about a variety of curriculums. The first in-depth Galileo workshop is being planned for November. Please contact Tanya Rose at Children First to register (941) 953-3877 ext. 126. Final details will be sent to those who register.

If you are interested in a High Scope training or Creative Curriculum workshop, please contact Mary Wolf at (941) 313-1179.

Tips for Increasing Parental Involvement



A few ways to increase parental involvement, recognizing that a "parent is a child's first teacher."

- ✓ Post photos of children engaged in activities at school so parents have a sense of what goes on during the day.
- ✓ Invite parents to help with field trips.
- ✓ Start a lending library for children and/or parents (some centers have coffee and donuts for parents once a week while they look through books).
- ✓ Encourage parents to volunteer by listing things they could do in the newsletter.
- ✓ Have a newsletter!
- ✓ Create a parent bulletin board!
- ✓ Organize a "What do parents do?" time, when parents can come in and talk about their jobs.
- ✓ Invite parents to have lunch or snack with their child and find out what their child does during the day.
- ✓ Provide parenting tips and advice. Hand-outs on a variety of topics relating to children and parents can be ordered from www.noodlesoup.com (in English and Spanish). Feel free to pick up a few samples from the Child Care Connection office at 2888-D Ringling Boulevard. If you don't want to order them, include some of the tips in your newsletter to parents.
- ✓ Don't forget the small things—always greet parents warmly in the morning and end the day with a positive comment about their child.