



Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

October 2005 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

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

It is *Mini-Grant* Time Again

It is time again for our Mini-Grant program. Enclosed with this newsletter is an updated application and a reminder of the requirements. Given the state requirement that the Coalition places all orders, we are only using Kaplan for this mini-grant cycle. **Grants are available for up to \$500.** All child care providers (both centers and homes) who have signed the Coalition's Provider Agreement, completed the Self Assessment process, and returned the forms by the extended due date of **October 5th** are eligible. Let us know if you have any questions. **Applications are due no later than October 30, 2005**, and Mini-Grants will be awarded by the third week of November.

Early Learning Coalition Provider Agreements and Self Assessments are for ALL Sarasota Providers

Although you will not be eligible for a Mini-Grant if you miss the October 5th extended deadline (so get those in!), you can still submit your Provider Agreement and Self Assessment after that date and be eligible for Coalition sponsored activities for the second part of the year.



Welcome your New Faith Based Representative to the Coalition Board

Afer careful consideration of applicants for the faith based provider position on the Board, Sue Loncaric, the Director of the Early Care Center at First United Methodist Church, was elected to the Board effective September 21st. The faith based provider representative is one of the legislatively mandated seats on the Board. Sue is here to not only share her expertise but to represents providers' voices as well. We thank Sue for her willingness to be a part of the Coalition Board.

Insurance Workshop

Tuesday, October 18th

We heard you loud and clear! Based on the overwhelming response to our health insurance survey we learned that this is one of the most important areas of concern for you. We followed up and the Coalition worked with The Florida Center's administrative staff to find an affordable option that may work for many of you.

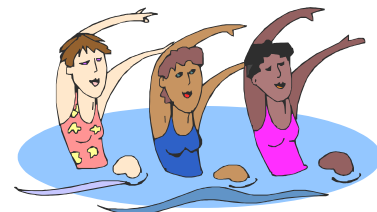
On October 18th come and hear about a customized program that lets you pick and choose the type of insurance to meet your specific needs, including coverage for your family. **This is not your typical health insurance plan!** Plans can be customized for both individuals and for sites. There is something for everyone! We hope to see teachers, directors, and family child care operators at this meeting!

See Flyer enclosed with this newsletter for more information!

Substitute Pool Project Update

The Coalition is aware that another critical issue facing local child care providers is the problem of finding substitutes. Turnover is a big challenge and having a skilled and trained substitute ready to step into the classroom is almost impossible these days. The Coalition is committed to helping with this issue!

We have applied for funding to start a substitute recruitment pilot project, and will know by the end of the month if this grant has been approved. Watch for details on this exciting new project that will recruit, train, background screen and orient substitutes for providers to have access to for a reasonable fee. Then you would directly pay the sub your normal rate. Stay tuned for more details!



How Many Years Have You Been A Preschool Teacher??

The Coalition is looking at ways that we can honor and reward those of you who have made the commitment to serving in the crucial role of teaching our youngest children. In order to do so, we will be asking you to submit information as to how many years you have been in the field, what level of education you have, if you are interested in pursuing further education, etc. When you register for the Coalition's 5th Annual Provider Conference in January, we will include that mini-survey as part of the registration process. We also want to know what assistance is important to you:

- Scholarships for education?
- Bonuses for a certain number of years in the field?
- Stipends to assist you to pay for health insurance?
- Materials for your classrooms?

Let us know what sort of support the Coalition could offer that would be most helpful and meaningful.

One More Time - How to Reach Us

For questions relating to **attendance sheets, scholarship child care, provider payments, rate increases, and child enrollment for VPK** contact the Coalition's Child Care Connection office (yes, it is also part of the Coalition!) where the drop box is located:

Child Care Connection

2886-C Ringling Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 34237
556-1600
556-1606 Fax

For questions relating to other Coalition activities such as **trainings, grants, scholarships, VPK provider questions, etc.**, contact:

The Early Learning Coalition - *new address*

1750 17th Street, Unit K-1
Sarasota, FL 34234
954-4830
954-4831 Fax

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 the Coalition at the general email address below.

Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
Coalition Administrative Office
1750 17th Street, Unit K-1 Sarasota, FL 34234
phone 941.954-4830 fax 941.954-4831
mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

<http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org>

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SAVE THE DATE!

The Coalition's 5th Annual Provider Conference is **planned for Saturday, January 28, 2006!** The theme this year is "Embracing the Profession of Early Childhood Education". The keynote speaker will be Myra McPherson. Mark your calendars now for a jam packed event and be on the lookout for more details soon.

Resource Room Ready Soon



The Coalition has been working on setting up a resource room for child care providers in our new space downstairs at Gold Tree Plaza (where the Child Care Connection is located). Walls have been painted, new carpet is being installed, and resources are being sorted and ordered.

The Coalition wants the Resource Room to be a place providers can come to for information and ideas on many aspects of early childhood education, child development, and the business of running a child care program. Resources will include samples of curriculums, ideas for staff development and training, suggestions on lesson plans and room arrangement, information on health and safety, ways to increase parent involvement, resources available on the web, and information on other community programs, to name a few.

We look forward to announcing the *grand opening* of the Resource Room in our next newsletter!



Trainings, Trainings, Trainings

As you can see from the flyers enclosed with this newsletter, a lot is going on this year! There are workshops on curriculum, motor skills, story time, and behavior managements, but you will also find less familiar topics such as sensory integration, a licensing overview, how to incorporate Montessori in your classroom, and "floor time" basics. **Take advantage of all the great resources offered to early childhood educators in our community!**

Child Care Connection of Sarasota
(Resource & Referral, Scholarship Child Care Program, Provider Payments)
2886-C Ringling Boulevard Sarasota, FL 34237
phone 941.556.1600 fax 941.556.1606