



Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

September 2005 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

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

New Staff at the Coalition!

Dianne Rose is a new Program Manager with the Coalition. She will work with the Coalition on all of the various projects we do and she will also provide technical assistance and support to our VPK sites.

Dianne recently moved here from New York and has years of experience as a preschool teacher, director and as a CDA instructor. She has worked with childcare, Universal Pre-Kindergarten (similar to VPK) and Head Start programs. Dianne has been busy visiting VPK sites and getting to know everyone.

Provider Agreements and Self Assessments are for ALL Sarasota Providers

Some providers have asked, "Should I complete the Agreement and Self Assessment if I don't have scholarship children?" The answer is **YES!** - we expect all Sarasota County providers to sign the Agreement and do the Self Assessment. Remember, it is the Early Learning Coalition's responsibility to ensure that child care providers are meeting state standards and have appropriate program activities in place, and this is the process that we chose to use in our community. By signing and completing the Agreement and Self Assessment you demonstrate your commitment to quality programs for children, and you become eligible to receive mini-grants, scholarships for trainings, additional program materials, on-site assistance and any other services offered by the Coalition during the year. **We thank all of you for cooperating.**

140 ECA Scholarships provided by the Coalition this year!

The Coalition is pleased to be able to sponsor so many of you to attend the ECA conference this year! There will be a large Sarasota contingent. Postcards are being sent to you this week to confirm your registration. When you sign in at the conference, your registration confirmation will be *listed under the name of the Coalition: Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County.*

Pre-Post Assessments Using Creative Curriculum Child Profile

It's that time again - time to start the assessments of our three year old scholarship children. This year the Coalition chose the Creative Curriculum Individual Child Profile since so many of you are now using the Creative Curriculum in some manner within your programs, and we want to be as consistent as possible with what you are already doing. This project is administered by Children First through a contract with the Early Learning Coalition. If you accept scholarship children you will be contacted this month by Jaana Swanson at Children First to arrange for the pre-assessments to be completed on your three year old children. Two trainings are being offered this month - **September 19th and 20th** (separate flyer enclosed.) **Providers who serve scholarship three year old children should attend one of these trainings.** The trainings are open to all providers and would be useful for anyone interested in implementing this valuable assessment.



Resources Available to You!

A reminder of the training resources available through the Coalition

Providers interested in a training or consultation can complete a *Provider Training Request Form* (available at www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org) and submit it to the Coalition. We will forward it to either the Florida Center or SCTI to follow up on. Please indicate on the form if you are specifically requesting Naptime Trainings. Use the same form to request a consultation or screening of any child you are concerned about, or call the Warm Line at 412-9186 x 18 and staff from the Florida Center will be available to assist you.

If you would like to be reimbursed for a training conference you attended, please use our *Conference Scholarship Form*, available on our website.

Except for inclusion services and screenings for individual children, these training resources are available only to those providers who have signed and returned the Agreement and Self Assessment.

Participate In Family Day! September 26, 2005

Across the state and within Sarasota County, individuals and organizations are participating in **Family Day: Gather Around the Family**. We encourage all of our child care providers to join in, and encourage parents to become involved as well. Family Day emphasizes the importance of regular family activities and encourages Americans to make family dinners a regular feature of their lives.

Visit www.floridafamilyday.com for ideas on how to promote parent involvement in fun and engaging ways and for links to other parenting web sites.

Let's Play Outdoors!

We are lucky - living in Florida makes it easy to go outdoors almost every day. As we all know, outdoor experiences are a vital part of the daily routine for young children. Children need space to exercise and develop their gross motor skills, they need the opportunity for hands-on exploration, experimentation, and observation with natural materials, and they need time to discover the sheer pleasure of being outside - to smell the flowers, feel the warm breeze, and marvel at the beauty of birds, butterflies, and insects.

Things children like in their natural environment include:

- Enough space to move and be active
- Water
- Vegetation, including trees, bushes, flowers
- Sand, best if it can be mixed with water
- Places and features to sit in, on, under, lean against, and provide shelter and shade
- Different levels and nooks and crannies, places that offer privacy and views
- Structures, equipment and materials that can be changed (actually, or in their imagination), and things to push, pull and move around

Materials to Enhance Outdoor Play

Nature:

- Magnifying glasses, bug catchers, bug books,
- Real gardening tools, including shovels for digging
- Bird feeders, bird guide book, binoculars
- Blanket to sit on outside

Active Play:

- Balls, hula hoops, ropes for pulling
- Tricycles, riding toys, wagons, push toys, riding path
- Climbers, swings, slides, balance beams
- Appropriately sized basketball hoops

"Inside" activities like dramatic play, painting and construction can be experienced in an entirely different way when they are taken outside.

Indoors to Outdoors:

- Dress up materials, fire and other hats, plates, bowls, pans, spoons, forks, kitchen utensils
- Paint, brushes, large paper, chalk, play dough, crayons
- Hollow blocks, cardboard boxes, sheets, blankets

Adapted from: *Alliance for Childhood, Time to Play, Every Day and Creative Curriculum for Preschool*



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.

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