



Early Learning Coalition  
of Sarasota County

## Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

### April 2006 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

**DIRECTORS—PLEASE COPY BLACK & WHITE VERSION OF NEWSLETTER TO SHARE WITH TEACHERS!**

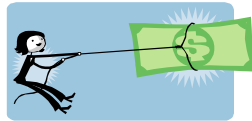


### Successful Grand Opening Of the Resource Room!

Many of you have already visited the Coalition's **Resource Room**. It is up and running and we had a feature in the Sarasota Herald Tribune! Second

sets of books have been ordered so they can be lent out, the copier is there, a computer has been ordered and the laminator is on the way - we know that will be a valued item. There are Theme Boxes with books and ideas for activities that can be checked out and put to use right away in your classrooms. If you cannot make it during the regular hours, please contact Dianne Rose and she will try to accommodate requests for alternative times, especially for groups of teachers. Starting April 1 the Resource Room will be open by Heather Wasil the first **Saturday** of every month from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. See you there!

### Coalition Approves Payment Increases



The Coalition recently approved a payment rate increase for scholarship child care, and AWI has authorized us to implement it. If your rates were already at the maximum allowable level, you automatically received a form to request your increase. Please remember to keep the Coalition's Child Care Connection office informed when you modify any of your rates. We want to make sure that you are being paid the maximum that we can legally offer you. There have been several instances over this past year when a provider did not inform the Coalition that their public rates had increased and they continued to receive a lower payment rate than they were entitled to.

### Is Your Classroom Literacy-Friendly?!

Take a moment to evaluate your classrooms' literacy environments with the enclosed checklist. Literacy is a key issue that all providers, *even those with years of experience*, need be sure is implemented appropriately in their classrooms. It is the area of the standards that has been modified for VPK, incorporating new expectations based on more recent research. Literacy and a focus on creating literacy rich environments will be an ongoing theme with the Coalition now, as a very important component of your curriculum.



### Family Child Care Roundtable

We have planned a special evening, on Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 to 8:30pm, for **Family Child Care providers** to offer a range of information in a roundtable forum event. Many family child care providers indicated on their self assessments that they would like more information on curriculum appropriate for family child care home, parent involvement, incorporating literacy within the family child care home setting, etc. This event is open to all Family Child Care homes, and is a good opportunity to receive



valuable information to improve your sites, especially for those of you who may not be able to attend your state conference later this summer. Join us for this exciting event!

### Transition to Kindergarten!



We are launching a new tool to help with the transition to Kindergarten. Many people have been involved in creating a **Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten Transition Checklist** that both teachers and parents will complete on each child who will be entering Kindergarten (as long as the parent agrees). It is based on both specific areas that kindergarten teachers identified as being important and benchmarks identified in the Florida Standards. It also allows for the parent and pre-K teacher to provide some additional information so that the kindergarten teacher will have a better sense of each child's unique personality. Once these forms are completed, they will be sent to the Coalition, which will then make sure they are given to the correct Kindergarten teacher for each child.

**Please look for your copy included with this newsletter and read the cover letter for further instructions. Plan to complete the checklist for your children soon!**

Remember also to encourage the parents of your children who are transitioning to Kindergarten to attend the **Kindergarten Orientation Round-Up** at the school where they will be going. **A list of dates is included with this newsletter.**




## VPK NEWS



Several VPK events are scheduled in the next few months.

Terri Konczak, VPK Regional Facilitator, will present the **VPK Standards Trainings Part II** in April and **Part III** in May. These trainings will have lots of hands-on activities and suggestions for

how teachers can incorporate the standards into their program. Everyone who attends the **Part II Training** will receive the Creative Curriculum Literacy book, the CD "The Wide Mouthed Bullfrog" by Music with Mar, and *spider rings* for their class! 

The **VPK Standards Trainings Part III** will focus on literacy - how to create a literacy rich environment and ways to enhance literacy skills in young children. Having a strong literacy program is essential for VPK!

Please call the Coalition at 954-4830 ext. 4 to reserve a space.

**Training Dates: Attend one Part II and one Part III**

**April 20** from 6:30 to 8:30

VPK Standards Training Part II  
Grace United Methodist Church  
400 E. Field Ave, Venice

**April 26** from 6:30 to 8:30

VPK Standards Training Part II  
Jewish Community Center  
582 McIntosh Road, Sarasota

**May 15** from 6:30 to 8:30

VPK Standards Training Part III  
SCTI Cafeteria Building 5  
Corner of Beneva Road & Proctor Road, Sarasota



**May 17** from 6:30 to 8:30

VPK Standards Training Part III  
Preschool in the Pines (formerly  
Venice Presbyterian Early Care Center)  
111 E. Firenze Avenue, Venice

We have a **new date** for our **Celebration of VPK, the First Year - Thursday, May 25<sup>rd</sup>**, so save the date and plan to join us! We have a lot to celebrate and we want to acknowledge and thank all of you - our true VPK pioneers!

Visit our website! Minutes of meetings and scholarship applications are posted. A calendar of meetings is also available, as well as the community training calendar. 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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## Provider Focus Group



Remember, there is a **Coalition Provider Meeting on April 11, at Twin Lakes Park, in the Green building, Clark Rd exit off of I-75, from 6:00 to 7:30Pm.** This is not a required meeting. It is simply an opportunity to either learn more about the role of the Coalition, for those of you who may be new, or for others, to share any concerns, or ideas and suggestions for how the Coalition can assist you in your important work and in meeting legislative mandates for children in your care.

## Thoughts for Teachers:



### *Are You the Sunshine or the Rain?*

*"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. My daily mood makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child happy or make his day miserable."*

*Unknown*

Teachers **are** like the weather. They can create a climate of joy, fun and learning for children or they can create a classroom that is uninviting and negative. A teacher's positive attitude is like a ray of sunshine that provides an example for children and creates a calming relaxing classroom environment for children to learn and grow. Always remember the powerful role you have as a teacher.  
*Edited from the DECA email newsletter, The Mentor*

## Infant and Toddler News



You requested it and we brought her back! Forty-four teachers and directors came to the follow up training conducted by Myra McPherson last week. Those who attended came away rejuvenated and motivated to provide the best possible care to our youngest children.



Sarasota County recently received an exciting new federal grant that will offer a wide range of intensive services to families and children up to age 8, who exhibit mental health concerns. We will keep you informed on this exciting new program as the details are developed.

Child Care Connection of Sarasota  
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