



## Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

### March 2006 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

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



### Resource Room Grand Opening!

The Coalition's Resource Room will be ready to welcome visitors on March 14! Special activities and door prizes are planned during opening week, March 14, 15, and 16

so please drop by and see what a comprehensive collection of resources the Coalition has assembled. Attached flyer has more details.

After the opening week the Resource Room will have a set schedule with specific hours, including at least one Saturday per month. We are also planning to incorporate the needs you identified in your self assessments with the activities and materials available in the resource room.

Give us ideas of what other materials you would like to see in the resource room, bring examples of children's work to help decorate the bulletin boards, and share any other suggestions you have to make it a viable tool for you!

### Literacy Mentoring Training Underway!

We have 17 individuals set to begin a Literacy Mentoring and Training Program, which will run March through June. The goal is to train mentors in the best ways to build literacy skills in young children and to give them the tools they need to create literacy rich environments in the classroom.



Once the mentors have been trained they will go into the classroom and train and mentor a teacher in the skills they have learned. This approach uses children's books as a starting point to building literacy and each classroom in the program will receive a set of 20 books. If this pilot program is successful the Coalition will offer an expanded version next year. Dr. Virginia Myers has been contracted by the Coalition to direct this project.

### How An Infant Sleeps is Crucial!

Please see the attached article from our local Healthy Start Coalition on the importance of having babies sleep on their backs in a crib that is free of clutter, toys and blankets. Sadly, in our community last year an infant died while in care because he rolled over and suffocated in the crib. We all want to prevent these tragic accidents and the Healthy Start article gives the most current recommendations on how to put babies safely to bed.

### Infant Toddler Morning Workshop

Myra McPherson was such a hit at the Provider Conference in January that we promised we would have her back for a longer workshop, and we've done it! She will present a 3 hour Infant Toddler training on Saturday, March 18, 2006 from 9-12 at the SCTI cafeteria. If you work with infants or toddlers you won't want to miss this opportunity to hear a dynamic, engaging and knowledgeable presenter. See the attached flyer for more details.



### Speaking of the Provider Conference...

Thank you for your evaluations and comments about our 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference! We had a record crowd this year, and judging from participants' feedback it was a great success. We are already scouting out larger locations so we can accommodate all who want to attend next year. As we look ahead to planning next year's conference we welcome any ideas and suggestions you have.

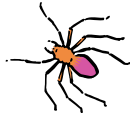
## VPK NEWS



Several VPK events are scheduled in the next few months. On Thursday, March 9, at the Landings we will have an **orientation** for new VPK providers and for VPK providers who started late last year and missed the Coalition's initial planning meetings. Other VPK providers

are welcome to join us to share their wisdom, lessons learned, and/or to have a refresher course in VPK!

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.

Finally, we are planning a **Celebration of VPK, the First Year on May 23<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!

### Training Dates:

**March 9**, Thursday from 6:30 to 8:00  
The Landings Blue Awning Building, Rm. 101  
VPK Orientation

**April 20 & 26** from 6:30 to 8:30  
VPK Standards Training Part II  
Locations to be announced

**May 15** from 6:30 to 8:30  
VPK Standards Training Part III  
SCTI Cafeteria Building 5

**May 17** from 6:30 to 8:30  
VPK Standards Training Part III  
Location to be announced

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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Note to VPK Providers: Please contact us at 954-4830 ext. 2 if your site has a space large enough for 50 people that we could use for the Standards Trainings. Thanks!

Dianne Rose has been busy delivering VPK Standards and visiting all of the VPK sites. Remember that Dianne is available to provide technical assistance regarding your VPK classroom. Please contact her at 954-4830, ext. 3.

For information on the VPK "movement" across the country and to keep up with the hot issues related to quality VPK visit the Pre-K Now website:  
[www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org)



## Please Give Input for Coalition Plan and Activities

The Coalition is developing its new program plan and we need your input! Please share your ideas by completing and returning the simple questionnaire enclosed with this newsletter.

In addition, we will host a **Provider Focus Group** on April 11, 2006 from 6:30 to 8:00. We are in the process of locating a suitable space to hold this meeting to get your feedback on how we can improve services and/or other ways we can support you in your work! We hope you will join us. Call 954-4830 ext. 4 for more information.

## Borders Books Recognizes the Importance of Teachers!

Borders Books & Music stores will honor local educators during "Educator Savings Days," Thursday-Tuesday, March 23-28. Each store will offer a 25 percent discount on books, music and gift items and a 20 percent discount on DVDs to teachers, librarians, principals, support staff, homeschoolers and other educators. To receive the discount just bring proof that you are a teacher (paystub or ID, etc). The discount also applies to non-classroom items. Borders will host a reception on Friday, March 24 from 4 until 8pm with food, door prizes and give-aways.

Child Care Connection of Sarasota  
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