

Quality Rating System

The QRS is almost here!

As you know from updates in the newsletter the QRS has been in the works for some time and now it's almost here. The Early Learning Coalition along with other community

organizations has put a great deal of effort into establishing a QRS in Sarasota County because we feel this is the best way to assist providers in achieving and maintaining high quality programs for young children through on-going supports and incentives, including wage supplements. The QRS will also help educate parents on the importance of quality care and provide guidance on evaluating the specific elements within a child care site.

The Coalition asked Lynn Reichmann to conduct a phone survey of centers to find out who would be interested being part of the first group to pilot this project. The results were gratifying! **Sixty-four directors responded that they would like to participate in the pilot and 23 said they might be interested in participating once they had more details.** The Coalition will be holding community meetings to provide detailed information about the QRS and what it will mean in practice to child care providers. We hope to begin implementation in November. We are delighted at the positive response and look forward to supporting all providers in Sarasota County in their efforts to ensure quality programs for young children.

Staff Credential Information

Puzzled by the new designations for the CDA and CDAE? Wondering what the FCCPC and NECC actually are? Need a reminder on renewing credentials? See the attached information sheet that Jill Jacoby, Sarasota County Child Care

Licensing Environmental Specialist II, has prepared to clear up some of the confusion.

Maintaining your credentials is important and necessary. Knowing the renewal requirements, having everything you need in place, and submitting your application and documentation on time will save a stressful last minute rush. You may also want to consider furthering your education. Associate degrees and above never have to be renewed and may eventually become a requirement to be a lead teacher.

Embracing the DECA



This year the Coalition and its contracted partners, SCTI and The Florida Center for Child and Family Development, will be focusing on the DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) program. Some providers are already implementing the DECA at their sites and know what a valuable tool it is in promoting children's social and emotional development, and every provider who has completed the Coalition's self-assessment has some familiarity with the DECA through the Reflective Checklists that are completed for each classroom, a simple but powerful way to assess program quality. **By strengthening children's resilience the DECA approach builds social and emotional skills that are necessary for future success in school and essential to a rewarding and fulfilling life.** The DECA:

- Fosters children's strengths by focusing on initiative, attachment, and self-control
- Gives teachers effective strategies to build their skills and improve their classrooms
- Provides simple assessments to develop plans and chart progress
- Increases parent involvement

SCTI will be offering monthly workshops (flyer included) to present the DECA approach and to support providers as they implement it in their programs. The Florida Center uses the DECA in its work with children with challenging behaviors and helps teachers use these techniques in the classroom. Be sure you call the Florida Center at 371-8820 x1718 if you have concerns about a child. **This is the year to "embrace the DECA."**

ECA Conference

The Coalition is pleased to sponsor **209 teachers and directors** to the Early Childhood Association Conference in Orlando this year, a record number. This is an occasion for early childhood educators to come together to celebrate their profession, learn new things and meet and share experiences with their peers. We look forward to seeing you in Orlando!





VPK NEWS

The 3rd year of VPK is up and running! Currently there are 72 VPK providers and 6 more that are hoping to offer VPK. Most programs are full or close to full, but some providers do have a few openings and are listed on the

"Providers with Openings" list. Parents who are applying now for Certificates of Eligibility are given that list. If you have slots to fill let us know so you can be included.

*** All VPK teachers, including substitutes, must have the Level 2 background screening (which includes FBI fingerprint clearance) current within 5 years.** As you know, getting the results of the FBI screening can take 4 to 6 weeks or longer. Now there is an option of using **Live Scan technology that will deliver the results in less time.** If you have questions about using Live Scan please call **George Seibert at 813-558-1172.**

*** "It's Okay to Play in VPK" workshop will be coming up soon.** This will be a great opportunity to get information you can share with parents on what the expectations are for a VPK program, what activities are appropriate and why, and what are the skills 4 year old children are expected to master. Participants will receive copies of the "It's Okay to Play in VPK" brochures. Watch your mail for more information!



*** "English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom"** More and more early childhood programs have children attending who do not speak English. Some directors and teachers may feel uncertain about the best approach to ensure that these children are included and supported. Coming in mid-September is a **new online course** that will serve as a resource for teachers in this situation. Topics will include information on the role of culture, second language acquisition, classroom organization and management, suggested practices, and planning for instruction, along with interviews from directors and instructors to provide tips and strategies that have been successful in their VPK programs. Go to www.myflorida.com/childcare/training to access this course.



Assessment Trainings Coming Up

Two trainings on conducting assessments, with particular focus on the Creative Curriculum Individual Child Profile, will be held in October - one in **Sarasota on Tuesday, October 2** and the other in **Venice on Wednesday, October 10** (flyer included). Assessment is a crucial component of a quality program and these trainings will explore why assessment is so important, how to conduct objective assessments, how to use the Creative Curriculum assessment tools, and how to use the assessment results in the classroom.



Assessments of children are becoming a required element in many classrooms. VPK legislation expects a pre/post assessment will be completed for all VPK children and the Coalition is required each year to randomly select a group of scholarship children from all age groups to complete a pre/post assessment. Best practice is to conduct assessments of all children. This training will be a useful overview on how to meet that expectation.

~ Resource Room Bulletin *~*

Dianne Rose is offering 3 hours of lesson plan training for .25 CEUs in the Resource Room. Get your lesson planning on track and explore the wealth of materials available for you to use. At your next visit be sure to check out all the new **math materials** - books, manipulatives, activities, and curriculum resources.

Change in hours: Saturdays are by appointment only.

Call the Resource Room at 556-1600 x 118, or email resourceroom@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org.

For Family Child Care Providers



For many family child care providers finding subs is an on-going challenge. If you would like to work on possible solutions to this problem or if you are interested in becoming a family child care substitute yourself call **Sandy Carpenter at 379-5062** to join this effort.

Thank You ! ☺

A big **THANK YOU** to **Susan Klein** for donating boxes of books and materials from the **Sarasota Family YMCA Gold Seal Project** to the Coalition. These resources will be distributed where they are most needed and will greatly benefit child care programs in our community!

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, contact the Coalition at the general email address below.

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