



Early Learning Coalition
of Sarasota County

Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

February 2007 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

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



Provider Conference a "Community" Event!

The biggest crowd ever attended the Coalition's 6th Annual Provider Conference on Saturday, January 27th! Over 340 teachers, directors and early childhood educators came together to consider ways to *"Create Classroom Communities that Support Social and Emotional Development"* and to celebrate our profession and the dedicated teachers and directors in our community. Evaluations and comments on the keynote and workshops were very positive - the focus on social and emotional development seemed to really strike a chord with conference participants.

Circle Time for Toddlers and Twos??

This popular conference workshop topic prompted some interesting discussions. **Is Circle Time appropriate for toddlers and two year olds? It's a matter of definition:**

NO, if by Circle Time you mean sitting in circle, talking about the weather and the date, taking attendance, looking at who is doing what on the job chart, and discussing projects for the day - all of which are very appropriate circle time activities for three and four year olds, along with stories, songs, finger plays, and games

YES, if you mean teachers and toddlers sitting on the floor together in a group looking at a book about dump trucks, talking about dump trucks, and playing with dump trucks; or a teacher sitting on the floor with a large bucket and talking with children about filling it up, and then everyone helps to fill it up; or everyone singing a song about parts of the body and pointing to each part, and doing the same thing with a doll.

Dr. Tracy Jaekel at the Florida Center for Child and Family Development, who administers the Coalition's Infant and Toddler Initiative says: *"Circle time' for toddlers and twos means hands-on activities, songs, simple books, lots of conversation and interaction, and lasts only as long as children are interested. Age appropriate small group activities like these provide important social experiences and prepare children in small steps to be able to sit and attend for longer periods when they enter preschool."*



So the answer is YES, when it's done the right way!

CELEBRATE CHILDREN'S WEEK

March 25 - March 31, 2007



Handprints and hand cut outs displayed in the Capitol Rotunda

We need your hands!

Children's Week is an opportunity to remind our community and elected officials of the importance of honoring children and families as the foundation of our community.

To demonstrate the commitment teachers and directors have to the well being and education of young children, please **send children's hand artwork** to be displayed in the Capitol Rotunda in Tallahassee and in our community. This "hanging of hands" has become a tradition of Children's Week to remind our legislators that all children deserve the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential. The Coalition will celebrate Children's Week locally in the **Child Care Connection** lobby with small gifts for children and families and a display of the hand artwork.

Instructions for artwork:

Children's hand prints should be stapled onto string or ribbon vertically for easy hanging. Call Juanita Shaw at 556-1600 ext. 106 for more information. Art work must be received by

**Monday, March 12 at: Child Care Connection
2886-C Ringling Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 34237**



VPK NEWS

Kindergarten Readiness Rate Update!

DOE will not release Readiness Rates until April to allow providers to verify children and attendance **VPK providers will receive a letter from DOE shortly explaining the process!**

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The Child Care Connection will begin **VPK Open Enrollment for Parents** for this year's Summer Program and for 2007/2008 School Year program the **week of March 12.**

Information for Parents:

- ✓ Please let parents know that they do not need to call or make appointments at the Ringling Office to register. The Child Care Connection is focusing resources there to provide fast and efficient walk-in service to parents.
- ✓ However, to register in Venice or North Port parents will need to call Pam Waller at 486-2682 ext 112 for the next available intake times.

Information for VPK Providers:

Parents will receive a list of all VPK Providers when they are issued the Certificate of Eligibility for their child. The Coalition assumes that current VPK Providers will continue to offer VPK in the 2007/2008 School Year Program. You must notify the Coalition by March 1, in the following circumstances:

- ✓ If you are a current VPK provider and you do not plan to offer VPK in the 2007/2008 School Year Program
- ✓ If you plan to offer a VPK Summer Program
- ✓ If you plan to offer VPK for the first time

All VPK Providers will need to submit a VPK Form 11 for each VPK Class. All teachers must be approved by the Coalition, have appropriate education credentials and **must** have their level 2 background screening, including FBI fingerprint clearance, current within 5 years before they start.



Important! Let us know if you plan to offer VPK-only classes, with no wraparound care.

That information will be given to parents when they register. Remember to be mindful to structure your VPK Program so that it meets the needs of the families you serve. **More information on the VPK process will be sent soon by email, so stay tuned!**

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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Note: CEUs for the Provider Conference...

If you attended the Provider Conference and would like to apply for CEUs go to the Coalition website to print the SCTI CEU Application Form:

www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org. Click on the ELC Documents page, then on CEU Application, or call the Coalition at 954-4830 ext. 4 to request a copy.

THANK YOU to CHILDREN FIRST

Children First has been replacing furniture in many of its preschool classrooms and **generously donated** used tables, chairs and shelves to 12 child care centers that were identified by the Coalition as needing additional equipment.

Special thanks to Candy Exline, SCTI Mentor through a Coalition contract, for coordinating this!



~* Resource Room Happenings *~

Raffle Winners are: Lesley Smith, Children's First
Roslyn VanEtten, Weekday School
Winners may pick up their prizes at the Resource Room!

New Arrival - DECA DVD Set

Classroom Moments and Facing the Challenge: Working with Children Who Use Challenging Behaviors
This set contains explanations, videos, examples and clear, easy-to-follow techniques to use in difficult situations.

Upcoming Trainings!

Check out the enclosed flyers and mark your calendars for upcoming workshops.

- * **Implementing assessment results in the classroom**
- * **Strengthening family involvement by making parents partners**
- * **Using the *Teaching Tools for Young Children* CD to find strategies that work with challenging behavior**

