



Early Learning Coalition
of Sarasota County

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May 2007 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

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



Quality Rating System Update

The Quality Rating System is almost ready! As has been discussed in the Newsletter in previous months, the Early Learning Coalition and Quality Child Care Council have been working on designing and implementing a quality rating system for child care providers in Sarasota County. Now the details and criteria for assessing quality at each tier of the rating system are being finalized. Child care providers will have an opportunity to review the QRS and learn about the process in meetings the Coalition will hold this summer. **Remember, the QRS is intended to improve and support quality, and includes many elements to assist providers in their efforts.** The purpose of the QRS is to inform and educate parent about quality care and to ensure that child care providers are able to offer quality care. This is an exciting program that can make a real difference in our child care community!

Disaster Preparedness Training on Saturday June 9th

See attached flyer for information on the "Preparing for a Disaster" workshop for directors and teachers:

Saturday, June 9

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Twin Lakes Park, Green Room
(6700 Clark Road, Sarasota,
east of I-75)



Presenters are **Dr. Ilene Berson**, a faculty member of USF with expertise in children's mental health and disaster planning, and **Jill Jacoby** and **Eva Balcar**, our Child Care Licensing inspectors.

Don't miss this important workshop!

Family Child Care Conference

The 15th Annual Family Child Care Conference will be held the end of June in Clearwater Beach. **The Coalition is sponsoring 7 family child care providers to attend this informative and fun event.** Scholarships are for up to \$300. Next year we hope many more of you will take advantage of this great opportunity to learn and share experiences at a professional conference designed specifically to meet the unique needs of family child care providers.



Teachers' Talk: *Simple* but Essential



Would you be surprised to learn that teachers' "math talk" may boost preschool children's math skills? Preschool teachers who use numbers in their everyday speech may aid their students' math abilities, is the research finding published in January's *Developmental Psychology*. "Even seemingly trivial instances of teachers' 'math talk,' such as saying 'You two get your coats,' instead of 'You guys get your coats,' may be related to improvement in four- and five-year-olds' math skills," says study author Raquel Klibanoff, PhD.



The researchers attached microphones to 26 preschool teachers' lapels and recorded their speech during a randomly selected hour of class instruction, including circle time. Although the teachers typically did not lead planned math activities during the recorded hour, many incorporated counting and even calculation into their speech. For instance, one teacher asked the students to figure out how many of their classmates were present after noting one was absent that day. Those students who were in classrooms where the teachers used many instances of math talk tended to improve more over the course of the school year than students who were less exposed to math vocabulary.



What's more, the improvements were unrelated to general teacher quality, the complexity of the teachers' sentence structure or student socioeconomic status. The researchers' advice? Work math into your daily activities. Now we have shown there really is a connection there," says Klibanoff, "I want to cheer teachers on to keep doing what they have been doing all along, and inspire them to do it even more."



The news that teachers' "math talk" can increase children's math skills should not really come as a surprise. Children learn a great many concepts in the informal give and take of conversation, discussion and exploration. Think of how children learn letters and colors, "I like your red shirt." "What letter does your name start with?" While it may not be surprising, this research is a powerful reminder of the enormous influence every teacher has every day on the children in her care.



VPK NEWS

Readiness Rates Released May 15th

for the first year of VPK, 2005/2006. The good news is that in Sarasota County readiness scores for 38% of VPK providers were in the

top quartile, among the highest percentage in the state. However, there was quite a range in the scores, and it is important to bear in mind that the group size for each provider varied a great deal - from a high of 101 to as few as 4. Since the scores are averages of all the children attending each provider's VPK program, the group size is an important factor. The readiness rate results also showed that throughout the state the kindergarten readiness rate increased for children attending VPK, even attending for only part of the program, compared to children who did not attend VPK.



The Coalition commends our VPK providers whose scores reflected their work in getting children ready for kindergarten, acknowledges that the readiness scores are one measure - not the only measure - of a VPK program's quality, and assures all our VPK providers that the Coalition is here to support your efforts and will work with you to ensure that high quality, developmentally appropriate programs that are in line with the VPK Standards are in place in all VPK classrooms. We are looking forward to another busy, productive year of VPK, and thank all of you for your hard work in preparing our four year old children for success in kindergarten.

Attention VPK Providers

- All VPK Providers need to submit a new VPK Form 10 and a VPK Form 11 for each VPK Class along with the VPK Statewide Agreement by **June 1st**. 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. Go to the Coalition website to download forms.
- **VPK providers must also fill out a calendar**, indicating start and end dates and non-VPK days. Call 954-4830 ext. 4 to request that a calendar be faxed to you or email your request with your fax number to jsmirnov@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org.

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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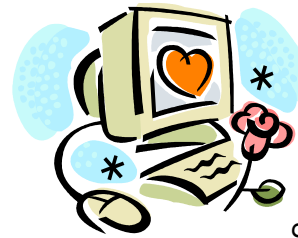
VPK Standards Training

Next **VPK Standards Training** will be held in South County. Date and location to be announced soon! Information will be emailed or call Dianne Rose at 954-4830 ext. 3



Get Our Newsletter In Your Inbox!

You can receive the Early Learning Coalition's Newsletter and training calendar by email or download it off our website,



www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org. To be added to our email list call 954-4830 ext. 4 or send your request and email address to jsmirnov@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org. We want everyone in our early childhood community to have access to this information.

>Resource Room Bulletin>>

*The Resource Room will be available during the summer for staff planning and training sessions. Interested directors call Dianne Rose at contact information below.



*Starting in June in the Resource Room, Dianne Rose will offer 3 hours of training and assistance on developing lesson plans for .25 CEUs. To accommodate teacher's schedules the 3 hours can be divided into 2 or 3 sessions. This is a great chance to explore the many ideas and approaches available in the Resource Room and get your lesson planning for next year off to a good start! Call Dianne Rose at the Resource Room, 556-1600 x 118 or email resourceroom@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org.

2007/2008 Child Care Provider Agreement and Self-Assessment Coming in June

The Coalition will be mailing out Agreements and Self Assessments soon. As you know, the Coalition has the responsibility of ensuring that **all providers** meet state standards and have appropriate program activities in place. **We appreciate your cooperation with this process!**

Child Care Connection of Sarasota
(Resource & Referral, Scholarship Child Care Program, VPK, Provider Payments)
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