

## Summer 2009 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

**DIRECTORS: PRINT NEWSLETTER FROM COALITION WEBSITE TO COPY AND SHARE WITH TEACHERS!**



### The Newsletter Is Going **PAPERLESS!**

This is the last copy of the Coalition newsletter that will be sent to providers as a hard copy. Because of budget constraints and to conserve our natural resources future issues of the newsletter will be **emailed** to everyone on our distribution list and will continue to be posted on our website. If you currently do not get email updates and information from the Coalition contact us at [info@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](mailto:info@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org) to be added to the list. **We want to be sure we reach all directors and teachers in Sarasota County!**



### Time to DECA!

The Coalition presented 4 days of DECA workshops the first week of June with Nefertiti Bruce of the Devereux Early Childhood Initiative in Pennsylvania, an inspiring communicator on the importance of strengthening social emotional resiliency in children. The training generated lots of positive energy and a determination to see the DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) fully implemented in early childhood programs this year. Through on-going prior trainings offered by the Coalition on the DECA, many directors and teachers have some knowledge of the assessment tool and approach. However, to get the full benefit the DECA should be used comprehensively to assess children, guide classroom activities, individualize lesson plans and engage parents.

The Coalition has been such a strong proponent of the DECA because it is a strength-based system designed to support young children's social and emotional development and promote resilience by enhancing the overall quality of early childhood programs. The DECA encourages collaboration, supports partnerships between teachers and families, and recommends strategies that fit within an early childhood program's current practices.

The DECA training series will be offered again this year with additional incentives to support programs that are committed to full implementation. Stay tuned for more specific information on this opportunity and check out the enclosed Attachment-Building Strategies.



### New Procedures for Coalition Trainings

There are lots of trainings planned for the upcoming school year. Once again many trainings will be presented as a series in order to cover topics more comprehensively and to support classroom implementation.

To better manage the training registration process for participants and for trainers, the Coalition is setting some new procedures. These include:

- First and last name required to register.
- Teachers and directors are responsible for their own registration.
- Registration for trainings must be received 2 days prior to the training, at which time registration will be closed.
- Registration by email is preferred. Attendees will receive a confirmation, *only if RSVP is received by email*.
- When leaving a voicemail registration, clearly state first and last name, site name, contact information, and the training title. *Voicemail RSVPs will not receive a confirmation phone call.*
- An RSVP is required to attend trainings. Those not on the RSVP list will not be able to attend.
- To receive in-service hours or CEUs follow up activities are required for all trainings and must be completed within the time set by the instructor

As a courtesy to the trainer and other participants, please take note of these friendly reminders:

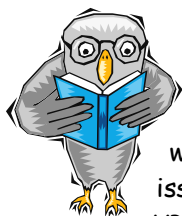
- On time arrival is expected (if over 10 minutes late, admission is at the discretion of the trainer).
- Participants who leave before the training is over may not receive full credit.
- No cell phone use or texting during the training.

***Your cooperation is appreciated!***

## \*FAMILY\*FAIR\*

**Saturday, July 25**

The **Ready, Set, Grow!** infant to kindergarten family fair will be held at Robarts Arena in Sarasota on Saturday, July 25 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. This is an opportunity to learn about community resources, pick up information on child development, health issues, early literacy and early education. For kids there will be activities, therapy dogs, stage shows, snacks, and a play area. The Fair is free and fun! Please help spread the word by posting the notice you will receive by email for parents at your center. The Fair is coordinated by the United Way Success by Six, the Early Learning Coalition, Healthy Start, and Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health. \*\*\*



## VPK NEWS

VPK Parent Registration for 2009/2010 school year is well under way with over **900 VPK Certificates of Eligibility** issued and **92 VPK providers** planning to offer VPK programs in the fall.

### **2009-2010 VPK Reimbursement Rates**

- The 2009-2010 VPK reimbursement will be: **\$2,593.28**, which comes to **\$4.80** an hour. (This is less of a reduction than feared.)

### **Wrap Around**

- Remember, parents may not be required to enroll in wrap-around services as a condition of enrollment in VPK.**
- If your program depends on parents choosing a full day program with wrap around hours, you need to be sure you have enough parents who want those services to fill your VPK class.

### **VPK Attendance Policy Revised**

- The new VPK attendance rule is in its final stages. As soon as AWI releases this information the Coalition will email VPK providers with an update. One change is that VPK students will be allowed to change VPK providers one time only.
- Another proposed change is that **20% of VPK students' absences will be paid**, rather than continuing to use the system currently in place, which allows a certain number of unexcused and excused absences a month, with a parent note.

### **Pre-payment Revisited**

- AWI is considering revisiting the pre-payment option for VPK providers. In our Coalition, issuing VPK and school readiness payments at the same time as a reimbursement has worked very well, and avoided the problems created with the pre-payment process the first year of VPK, when many providers ended the year owing money to the Coalition.

**NOTE:** Any provider who does not receive Coalition VPK updates by email should contact the Coalition right away. **This is the primary way the Coalition shares VPK information with directors and teachers.**

## **Thank You to Children First!**

Children First generously donated furniture and equipment from one its sites that is closing to programs that could benefit from these materials!




See the *Look for the Stars* insert for an update and more information.

## Look for the Stars Scholarships

The Look for the Stars scholarship program is off to a good start this year. So far, the Coalition has awarded a total of **32 scholarships**, **19 to MCC**, **11 to SCTI** and **2 to USF**.


All teachers and directors currently employed at participating Look for the Stars sites are eligible. If you are interested in pursuing studies in early childhood education please contact Valerie Walton at 954-4830 X 6 for information on how to take advantage of this opportunity. Starting in July Yvette Robison will offer individual consultation to teachers and directors to assist in exploring career options and setting educational goals.

## Resource Room Bulletin

 Please return all books to the resource room by July 2<sup>nd</sup> for inventory. All borrowing will be suspended until July 14, but other services will be available. New titles will be in the Resource Room as of July 14<sup>th</sup>.

Dianne Lawrence will be visiting VPK classrooms during the summer to help with the room arrangement and set up. Call to make an appointment!

## 2009/2010 Contract Agreement

 **Thanks to all of you who completed and returned your Coalition Contract Agreement by the due date of June 19!** Without a **signed contract in place** the Coalition will **not be able to process July payments**. Providers who were not sure how to answer the questions on curriculum, character development, screening and assessment will have an opportunity to attend trainings on these topics. All directors and family providers must be able to demonstrate how their programs are meeting these mandated requirements. The targeted trainings will offer guidance to assist you in program implementation.



## **ECA Conference Time**

ECA Conference scholarships will be offered again this year! Information coming soon!

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.

Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County  
Coalition Administrative Office  
1750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit K-1 Sarasota, FL 34234  
phone 941.954-4830 fax 941.954-4831  
[mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](mailto:mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)

Early Learning Coalition's Child Care Connection  
(Resource & Referral, Scholarship Child Care Program, Provider Payments)  
2886-C Ringling Boulevard Sarasota, FL 34237  
phone 941.556.1600 fax 941.556.1606  
[www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)

Sponsorship by Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County, Agency for Workforce Innovation, State of Florida, Sarasota County Government