

Is Your Disaster Plan in Place??



The definition of a disaster is “a calamitous event, especially one occurring suddenly and causing great damage, hardship or loss of life.” Every child care program is required to have a written plan in place to cope with disasters that could occur in our

area, such as tornadoes, fires, hurricanes, medical events, hazardous material spills or terrorist acts.

A disaster plan should describe exactly what actions will be taken to keep children and staff safe in emergency situations. The plan should be detailed and include who has responsibility for each step.

The plan should specify secure places within the child care facility or home in case of a tornado or lock down and should identify an evacuation site and procedures that will be taken if it is necessary to relocate.

Communicating with parents, local authorities and DCF is vital, and it should be determined in advance how that will be accomplished. Also critical is having a system in place to know who is in the building at all times and contact information for children and staff that is up to date and in format that is accessible and portable, if necessary.

There are many resources available to assist providers in developing a disaster plan. Check out the websites listed for forms, information, and procedures and review the following checklist taken from NACCRRRA (National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies) to see if your plan is on track.

The potentially devastating effects of a disaster can be prevented or mitigated by anticipating what will be needed and preparing for the worst. It takes time, but the lives of children and staff may depend on the plan you have made and put into place.

Steps in Preparing a Child Care Site for a Disaster

- Determine the types of disaster most likely to occur in your area
- Learn about the types of disasters
- Appoint a small group of people to serve on an emergency preparation committee
- Gather the information needed on each staff member
- Gather the information needed on children and families
- Set up a system for knowing who is in the facility at all times
- Set up emergency kits for staying in the facility and for evacuating
- Develop an emergency contacts list
- Decide how vital records and resources will be protected
- Develop and practice an evacuation plan
- Develop a shelter-in-place strategy
- Develop a communications plan
- Complete a written Child Care Program Emergency Plan including the above listed steps

Disaster Plan handout is attached and posted on the Coalition website. Other resources include:

<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/Forms/English/LIC610.PDF>

Emergency Disaster Plan Template

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/yikesplanning.pdf>

Complete planning guide for emergency response in child care facilities,

<http://www.naccrra.org/disaster/> NACCRRRA resources

<http://cclid.ca.gov/Res%5Cpdf%5CDisasterGuideforHomesCenters.pdf>

Disaster Planning Self Assessment for Centers and FCCHs

www.floridadisaster.org Florida’s Emergency Response website and template to create a family disaster plan

May 7th is Provider Appreciation Day!



Everyone at the Early Learning Coalition and its Child Care Connection office **values** and **respects** the **wonderful child care providers in Sarasota County!** **THANK YOU** for your commitment to children and families and for providing safe, nurturing, caring, stimulating places for children to grow!

Birth to 3 Standards Trainings in May



An overview of the revised Florida Early Learning and Developmental Birth to Three Standards will be presented in May.

This training will be of interest to any infant or toddler teacher, even those who may have taken the Standards training several years ago. The Standards provide a framework for understanding and supporting age appropriate development and are a valuable resource

to assist teachers in creating environments and experiences that nurture and engage infants and toddlers. Watch your email for details – trainings will be coming up in May.

STRDE Program Update



The STRDE (Substitute & Teacher Recruitment, Development & Education) program provides an opportunity for participating centers to have skilled, knowledgeable and qualified substitutes when regular staff is out. So far this year 372 substitute days have been used. For more information on the program, contact Valerie Walton at 954-4830 ext. 6.

Just for Family Providers

The **18th Annual Florida Family Child Care Conference** will be held the end of June in Clearwater Beach. Once again the Coalition is offering scholarships for up to **\$350** to family providers who would like to attend this event, a great opportunity to get energized through training and networking.

Applications must be received postmarked no later than May 10th. Priority will be given to first-time attendees.



VPK News

The big news is that thanks to education and advocacy efforts on the part of parents and Florida's early childhood community **VPK funding has been preserved**, with a reduction of only 0.5%. Our voices were heard! The VPK per-child allocation will be approximately \$2,562 for the 2010-2011 school year and \$2,179 for the summer.

Providers planning to offer a VPK school year program in 2010 need to submit all VPK paperwork by May 21st. All VPK documents are posted on the VPK page of the Coalition's website, www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org. Call 954-5480 ext. 4 with any questions.

VPK teachers and directors may also want to take a look at two resources that have just been added to the website – ***What I Learned in VPK Teacher's Guide*** and ***What I Learned in VPK Child Portfolio***. DOE created these resources to help teachers communicate with parents about children's progress in meeting the VPK Standards. The Teacher's Guide has information on completing the Child Portfolio, creating developmentally appropriate learning environments, and using the Standards to help children learn and develop.

Healthy, Fit Children – Our Responsibility



We've all heard the statistics. Childhood obesity is rising, physical fitness is declining, young children don't have the opportunity to play outside the way they used to, we're becoming a fast food nation – the warnings are all around us.

Given this reality, early childhood teachers and directors have a responsibility to promote the health and fitness of children in their care with the same level of support and attention they give to social and emotional development and academic readiness skills.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has developed physical activity guidelines for children from birth to age 5. Its *Active Start* position statement recommends that preschoolers “*should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health related fitness and movement skills.*” Guidelines include the recommendation that toddlers and preschoolers “*should engage in at least 60 minutes – and up to several hours – of unstructured physical activity each day, and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time, except when sleeping.*”

According to Dr. Jane Clark, chair of the NASPE Early Childhood Physical Activity Task Force, the importance of physical activity for infants, toddlers and preschoolers has not been addressed. “*Adopting a physically active lifestyle early in life increases the likelihood that infants and young children will learn to move skillfully,*” said Dr. Clark “*and will help to ensure healthy development and later participation in physical activity.*”

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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The National Association for the Education of Young Children makes a similar point in its article, ***Promoting Physical Activity in Preschoolers*** (Beyond the Journal, May 2006): *Childhood obesity and physical inactivity are clearly major concerns these days, and everyone in the educational community needs to be part of the solution.* The authors go on to make the point that, “*sometimes early childhood classrooms provide little outlet for children's energy... As educators we must realize that physical activity patterns developed in childhood tend to last throughout adulthood. The early years are critical to the development of motor skills and to the development of a disposition for regular physical activity throughout life.*”

Sometimes teachers feel they don't know how to create an environment that promotes active play and physical skill development. However, there are simple ways to incorporate movement activities throughout the day. This is important, because contrary to what many adults believe, most children need to learn fundamental motor skills such as throwing, catching, and skipping in order to become proficient – and the more proficient children become the more they enjoy being active.

If space allows, a motor skills center can be added to a classroom, with equipment of varying levels of difficulty and activity posters demonstrating movement possibilities. Another simple strategy is to take “Move It!” breaks throughout the day. Put on some music and encourage a variety of physical activities that get children's heart pumping.

Use movement as part of your curriculum to reinforce concepts – how does an elephant move? a snake? a turtle? Hold up number cards and have children count as they jump, skip, or touch their toes.

We all want children to grow up to be physically competent. Providing opportunities and encouragement for physical fitness when they are young is the foundation for an active, healthy life.



Some good resources on this topic:

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/teachingTools/upload/brochure.pdf> Kids in Action, Fitness for Children Birth through Age 5
http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/index.html Nemours Kids Health
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/index.html> USDA's My Pyramid page with information on health and fitness for children
<http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/articles.aspx?ArticleID=188> Physical Education & Movement articles, EC News
<http://www.naeyc.org/files/vc/file/200605/GoodwayBTJ.pdf> SKIPing toward an Active Start, Promoting Physical Activity in Preschoolers (NAEYC Beyond the Journal, May 2006)
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalGuidelines/ActiveStart.cfm> National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)



Super Kids + Super Care = Star-Bright Futures

**Look for the Stars
Year 3 Updates Coming Soon !**