



# School Readiness Coalition Of Sarasota County, Inc.

## Newsletter – October 2003

*Hello to all Early Childhood Educators! This is the fifth edition of a Newsletter to keep childcare providers informed of the activities of the School Readiness Coalition.*

**DIRECTORS: PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR TEACHERS**

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### **The Role of School Readiness Coalition**

Many providers continue to ask about the role of the School Readiness Coalition, what do we do, how can we be helpful to providers, how are we different from the YMCA, to name a few of the questions. The Coalitions were established throughout the state in 1999 by the Florida Legislature in order to bring together a local group of individuals, a coalition, to oversee the state funds that come to the community to provide scholarships for early education and childcare programs for low income families, and to coordinate the local efforts toward ensuring that all children are ready for school. This also includes working on improving the overall quality of our early education system

So with that purpose, we have many different roles, and we need to have many partners in order to accomplish our goals. Providers are crucial partners in that you are the ones caring for and teaching the children. We need to work together with you to ensure that the regulations are being met, that appropriate practices are in place, and that every provider is working on the same goals: ensuring that children are socially and emotionally healthy, have the tools for success in life, and are ready for school.

While the Coalition has a leadership and oversight role, and makes certain decisions regarding childcare in this community, we want the Coalition to be a resource and support to *all providers* in achieving these goals, including those who do not currently serve School Readiness children (“scholarship”, “subsidized”, “kids from the Y”). The Coalition therefore, offers a range of services to local providers through its scholarships, bonuses for CDA graduates in Gold Seal sites, enhanced rate for Gold Seal sites, mini-grants for quality enhancements, the mobile therapy project, annual Provider Conference, the sponsoring of other community trainings throughout the year, the DECA project, bringing resources to you, this newsletter, etc.

Another major partner is the Sarasota Family YMCA. This has been confusing to many in the community, our role compared to that of the YMCA with regard to child care issues. The Coalition contracts with the YMCA to provide a number of services including processing the families for the child care scholarships, making the payments to providers each month, and offering specific activities to support providers as well as help providers improve the quality of their sites. The Coalition has the responsibility and is the decision maker. It oversees and monitors the YMCA in carrying out these activities. But we do work together on a number of projects, because as stated above, all partners need to work together to achieve our important goals.

Other community partners include Head Start, and all of the other organizations that hold seats on our Coalition: Healthy Start Coalition, DCF, Workforce, the School Board, EIP, local county government, licensing, and private business members. To strengthen our community involvement, we have recently formed a new partnership with Success by 6, an initiative out of the United Way that has a comparable mission focusing on the important early childhood years.

We hope this helps to clarify some issues. Please feel free to contact us anytime with questions, ideas and suggestions. We welcome and value your input. Please join us at the monthly Coalition meetings, held on the third Wednesday of each month, at 6:00PM, at the School Board Landings complex, Brown Awning Building. Hope to see you there!

Newsletter continued on the next page...Keep reading!

**DECA Program Implementation A Big Success!**

The School Readiness Coalition implemented its new DECA project last month.

This is a program that promotes the development of strong social and emotional protective factors in children.

For the initial training session, we had 38 participants! We now have 19 sites enrolled in the project, with over 200 children being served.

We are in the final stages of the enrollment process, but we can still accommodate a few more sites. If you are interested, it is not too late if you act now!

Contact the Coalition no later than November 5<sup>th</sup> to be included.

Participating sites receive free training and on-site mentoring, assessment materials, and both classroom and parent guide strategy books will be provided.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**January 24, 2003 is the date of the Coalition's Annual "Ready, Set, Grow" Provider Conference**

*The Overall Theme this year is Character Development. The Keynote Speaker is Sharron Krull. Flyer and Registration forms coming soon.*

**Notice: Healthy Start Coalition Looking for Providers to Offer Respite Care**

The Healthy Start Coalition is searching for local child care agencies or family child care homes who could occasionally accommodate an infant or children of clients in the Healthy Start Program for 2 hours up to a few full days. The purpose is to allow temporary respite care for pregnant women or new mothers or allow them to attend prenatal care or other necessary health-related appointments. The Healthy Start Coalition will reimburse the provider \$3 per hour.

Please contact Jennifer Highland or Sarah Gorman of Healthy Start directly at 373-7070 if you are interested or have questions.



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**Ideas Received from Providers:**



- Start a Provider Exchange column in our newsletter for providers to share teaching tips, tools and techniques that they have found useful.
- Offer more "Hands On" training opportunities to make what is learned in a workshop more real and relevant to actual day-to-day activities
- Create opportunities for a provider to shadow another provider for a day to gain ideas and insights

*Please continue to share your ideas with us, or if you have thoughts on how we can implement these ideas let us know! Staff and committee members will also explore how we can implement your suggestions. We would also like to encourage you to submit articles for future newsletters.*

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See Our Website for the Sarasota School Readiness Coalition! Minutes of meetings and scholarship applications are posted. A calendar of meetings will be posted, and also a section for you to exchange information and ideas. Look us up and give us your feedback. [www.sarasotaschoolreadiness.org](http://www.sarasotaschoolreadiness.org)