



# School Readiness Coalition Of Sarasota County, Inc.

Newsletter – September 2003

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

## **NEW PROCESS FOR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

The School Readiness Coalition's Staff Development and Training Committee has developed new procedures for the distribution of the Coalition's scholarship assistance funds. These funds are now available to support classes for potential childcare professionals who are thinking of entering the field, or for experienced child care teachers, with continuing education or professional development such as conferences or specialized trainings. The funds are no longer available for state-mandated courses for child care agency employees. The new forms are available on our website. The Coalition will also continue to support and sponsor specific community-wide training opportunities and the Coalition's Annual Provider Conference.

### **New Program Using the DECA assessment tool is now being Implemented!**

**The School Readiness Coalition is ready to implement its new project using the DECA assessment that measures social and emotional protective factors in children!**

**We will be using this exciting tool to conduct pre and post tests on three year olds in both centers and family child care homes.**

**Come and learn about the complete DECA program that builds protective factors in children.**

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

**If you have three year old children in your care, accept School Readiness scholarship children, and are interested in being a part of this exciting new project,**

**please join us for the initial training on:**

**Tuesday September 30, 2003 from 6:30PM to 8:00PM**

**The Landings, Blue Awning Building, Room 220**

**All other providers are also welcome to participate in this meeting to learn how the DECA can be helpful to you and your children!**

### **Sunrise Skill Builders, Florida Performance Standards, and Resource Guides still available.**

Please contact the Coalition office at 379-1479 and place your order.

These items are free to Sarasota child care providers on a "first come basis."

We would be glad to bring them to you if you cannot arrange to pick them up!

### **The ASQ-Ages and Stages Developmental Screening is an Important Activity!**

It has come to the attention of the Coalition that several providers are not sending in the ASQ's on School Readiness scholarship children in their care. This is an important required action, and one that helps us identify early-on those children that may need additional assistance to grow and develop on track, and ultimately be successful in school and life! We need your assistance with these ongoing routine screenings of children. If there is a reason you cannot complete these screenings, please contact the Coalition's office at 379-1479 and let us know what the problems or barriers are. If you need additional training this can be provided.

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

**Thank you to all who have participated in the WAGES surveys!**

We are almost there! However, we still need more surveys in order to reach the minimum required to participate in this statewide program through the Florida Children’s Forum. We will keep you posted as the process develops.

**NEW COORDINATED TRAINING CALENDAR**

A new training calendar, that will be updated monthly, is being debuted this month and sent along with this Newsletter. It will also be posted on the Coalition’s website. It is designed to list all relevant training opportunities in the Sarasota area that may be of interest to local providers on one page!

It is still a work in progress! We know that we do not yet have all the information on all trainings offered. Please let us know what is missing or what else you like to see on this calendar. If your association is offering training, let us know that too! Any feedback is welcome and encouraged.

**Coalition Still Working on Development of Project to Link Community Volunteers with Providers**

*Are you in need of any repairs, painting, cleanup, or fixing up of your facility or play ground? Could you use assistance from a business mentor? Help with developing a parent involvement program? School Readiness Coalition of Sarasota County is putting together a volunteer program to assist you!!! In order for us to reach out to our community and match volunteers with providers, we need to know what you need. We have heard from several of you. Please continue to email or fax us your requests, and a staff member will contact you. This program is scheduled to begin after the new year.*



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**Contracted Sites to Receive Literacy Materials**

As a “thank you” to our contracted sites, the Coalition is providing them all with special Literacy Kits and/or literacy games and materials. We will be contacting you in the next few weeks to distribute these items to you.

**SOME CHANGES TO WATCH FOR:**

The Coalition is committed to focusing on 0-5 year-old children eligible for scholarship child care and to supporting the providers who serve them. Unfortunately, we do not have enough funds to serve all of the children who need preschool care, and so we will be gradually phasing out serving school-age children, except those in Protective Services and a few other specialized categories. There are other organizations in the community that focus on service to school-age children, and we will be alerting them to the change in our funding priorities. We will also be notifying parents of these changes shortly and offering them information about other resources for their school-age children.

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**YES! MINI-GRANTS WILL BE OFFERED**

The Coalition has set aside limited funds to offer mini-grants for providers in the Spring of 2004. The criteria and details will be worked out, and information will be sent to all providers at that time. Start up mini-grants for new Family Child Care homes will be offered on a limited basis throughout the year.

New Staff member at the Coalition: Many of you have already met or at least spoken to Chandra Ryan. She has been contacting you about the WAGES surveys, voucher agreements, delivering materials to you, etc. Chandra is the Coalition’s Program Specialist. She will be working on all of the Coalition’s program initiatives: working with providers on the DECA pre/post test, providing mentoring assistance, helping to coordinate the Mobile Therapy project that is continuing this year, facilitating the volunteer program, and other projects in the works. The other Coalition staff are: Janet Kahn, the Executive Director, who many of you have also met by this time, and Mike Miller, the Coalition’s Business Manager, who many of you have spoken to when you contact the Coalition office.

**The Coalition Office Can Be Reached At: 4727 Elder Berry Drive, Sarasota, 34241**

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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)