



July-September

Coalition Connection

Quarterly Newsletter presented by the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County to promote quality services, professional development and awareness within the child care and early childhood education community.

Welcome

Early Learning Providers,

I hope that your 2013-2014 school year is off to a great start! It is hard to believe that summer break has come and gone. Now is the time to get back into school time routines and make the most of the time that you have with our community's littlest learners. Over 4,000 4-year-olds are participating in Brevard County VPK programs this school year. Over 3,000 children a month are receiving School Readiness child care assistance in our community.

We have a great opportunity to make this school year the best ever. Lots of opportunities are available to you through the Early Learning Coalition to assist you with enhancements you may wish to make to your programs. If you would like to focus on making critically important teacher-child interactions the very best they can be, contact us for a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) assessment. Free to you, the CLASS observation will provide you with valuable feedback that you can use to support your teachers in the classroom. If you have questions about

your classroom environments, we can also provide a program assessment using the Environment Rating Scale (ERS). Also free, the feedback provided will enhance the quality of the services you provide. We are always available for technical assistance and for additional training opportunities will be posted to our website soon!

We also continue to work diligently on implementing House Bill 7165 that was recently signed into law. As you know, the new legislation provides some sweeping changes to the state's early learning system. We are working closely with state agencies and other community partners to ensure proper implementation of the law. As we obtain more clarification about the requirements in the law, we will be sure to share the information with you and the families that you serve. As always, keep up the great work and thanks for all you do!

Sky Beard

-Sky Beard
Executive Director, ELC

Provider Services Update

Our passion for meaningful professional development and quality learning environments constantly drives us to search for new training and initiatives to improve upon services provided to you.

In addition to classroom instruction, we offer program support services

such as onsite coaching and assistance to broaden and expand the skills of practitioners.

Please contact your Quality Assurance Specialist if you are interested in receiving program support services including assessments, mentoring, coaching,

technical assistance and materials as it relates to early learning standards, curriculum, lesson planning, classroom management, health and safety, professional development, and parental involvement.

-Jennifer Shields-
Provider Services Administrator

Dates to Remember

Mandatory Provider Meeting
October 2, 2013

Training: Creating Social Stories to Address Classroom Situations
October 16, 2013
6:00-8:00pm

CATCH Roundtable
October 17, 2013
6:30-8:00pm

Please visit the ELCB website or contact our office for additional information.



Ways to Share Books with Babies and Toddlers

Make Sharing Books Part of Every Day

Have Fun

Children can learn from you that books are fun, which is an important ingredient in learning to read.

A few minutes is OK. DON'T worry if you don't finish the story.

Talk or Sing About the Pictures

You do not have to read the words to tell a story.

Let Children Turn the Pages

Babies need board books and help turning pages, but a three year old can do it alone. Remember it is ok to skip pages.

Show Children the Cover Page

Explain what the story is about.

Show Children the Words

Run your finger along the words, from left to right, as you read them.

Make the Story Come Alive

Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story.

Make It Personal

Talk about your own family, pets or community when you are reading about others in a story.

Let Children Tell the Story

Children as young as three years old can memorize a story, and many children love to be creative through storytelling.

- Joanna Nelson

Inclusion Specialist, ELCB

Childhood Obesity Prevention Awareness

According to The National Task Force on Childhood Obesity - Approximately one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday and over half of obese children become overweight at or before age two. The Center for Disease Control states, "obesity in early childhood increases the risk of serious health problems for life."

WOW, think of the effect you- as early care providers - can have on reducing childhood obesity! Just small changes made by teachers and providers help to move the dial in a positive direction.

YOU can help move that dial by reinforcing and rewarding physical activity and healthy eating habits in the children you serve. YOU have the opportunity to change the culture and environment to one of physical activity and healthy choices.

Some of the environmental and behavioral changes we have made at The Children's Center, in Titusville include: purchasing larger refrigerators to keep fruits and vegetable cold and fresh; growing a garden; providing only milk or water during lunch and snack time; ensuring the teachers are eating/drinking healthy in front of the children; sending sugary snacks that parents place in the lunchbox back home; and implementing the CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) early childhood program within our pre-K classes.

CATCH is an evidence-based physical activity, nutrition and gardening program that is integrated into our daily lesson plans. In addition to movement activities, the children learn about "Go" foods and "Whoa" foods and identify healthy snacks.

In August, the Center for Disease Control reported a slight decline in low-income preschooler childhood obesity rates in 19 states, with Florida one of them. "Although obesity remains epidemic, the tide has begun to turn for some kids in some states," said CDC Director Tom Frieden in a statement. "While the changes are small, for the first time in a generation they are going in the right direction."

-Lori Duester and Kathy SimonSen,
The Children's Center



Provider Spotlight

The Children's Center



Home Depot helped the VPK class at Parrish Early Care and Education Start a vegetable garden with a donation of soil, fertilizer, seeds and other gardening supplies. The children prepared, planted, watered and observed plant growth. The ownership the children felt in growing their vegetables prompted healthy eating. Snacks included green beans, cucumbers, broccoli, peas, radishes, lettuce and carrots with a little ranch dressing on the side.



Got Books?

Books About Feelings

ABC Look at Me

by R. Grobel (Infant-4)

Glad Monster, Sad Monster

by E. Emberly & A. Miranda (Infant-5)

The Grouchy Ladybug

by E. Carle (1-6)

How Do I Feel?

By N. Simon (2-7)

When I Feel Frustrated

by M. Leonard (2-6)

See How I Feel

by J. Aigner-Clark (infant-4)

If You Are Happy And You Know It

by Scholastic (Infant-2)

If You Are Happy And You Know It

by D. Carter (2-6)

When I Am Feeling Sad

by T. Moroney (2-5)

Llama Llama Mad at Mama

by A. Dewdney (2-5)

Ann's Biz Quiz

Affordable Care Act (ACA) Update

You will find inserted some information regarding the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I have taken the guidance from the government websites to compile the provisions of the Act by employer size. The facts sheets include a summary of requirements for the following:

- Self-employed (Sole-proprietors)
- Employers with less than 25 employees
- Employers with up to 50 employees
- Employer with more than 50 employees

All employers (except self-employed sole-proprietors) are required by the law to provide to their employees a notice that informs employees about the healthcare exchanges. I have included in the insert the model notices supplied by the Department of Labor (DOL). There are two different notices: one for employers who currently offer health plans, and one for employers who currently do not.

Who Must Give Notices?

Employers that are subject to wage and hour laws (Fair Labor Standards Act - FLSA) must give notices. The FLSA specifically covers several different kinds of employers. Included in the specific employers subject to this requirement are: schools for children who are mentally or physically disabled or gifted and; **preschools, elementary and secondary schools.**

Who Must Receive a Notice?

Employers must provide the Exchange notice to **each** employee, regardless of plan enrollment status or of part-time or full-time status.

What is the Deadline for Providing the Notice?

Employers must provide the notice to each **new hire** at the time of hire beginning **October 1, 2013**. The notice must be provided to **current employees** on or before **October 1, 2013**.

Method of Providing Notice

The notice must be provided in writing. It may be provided by first-class mail. Alternatively, it may be provided electronically to **employees with work-related computer access** and **other participants and beneficiaries (like dependents) who consent to receive disclosures electronically.**

I have also included a DOL model notice to be given to any employees who are continuing benefits under COBRA. Please contact me at abeecham@elcbrevard.org if you have any questions regarding these notices or any other provisions of the ACA. If I don't know the answer - I will find out!

-Ann Beecham,

Director of Human Resources, ELCB



Finance & Reimbursement

The Finance/Reimbursement department welcomes everyone back to another year of VPK! We would like to provide some simple reminders that will make processing your reimbursements much easier:

Parent Signatures Child Attendance & Parental Choice Certificate Forms ("Short" or "Long" forms) can be found in the "Download Central" section of our website.

OEL-VPK O3S (Short Form) Parents sign in/out daily on separate attendance sheet and only sign the certificate once a month. All months are on the same form.

OEL-VPK O3L (Long Form) Individual days attended are marked on the form and parents sign once a month. No separate documentation is needed. The form is for a single month only.

Whether you use the short or long form, the form **MUST BE SIGNED BY THE PARENT EACH MONTH ON OR AFTER THE LAST DAY OF VPK FOR THAT MONTH.** Forms signed prior to the last day of VPK will result in no payment for any days after the signature date.

Enrollments/Terminations

Complete and send in forms **THE SAME DAY** a new child enrolls or is terminated from VPK. Use the **EXACT** name listed on the certificate. **NO** nicknames, shortened names, etc.

Any child that starts VPK after your VPK class has started must have a Delayed Enrollment Form.

Send the Delayed Enrollment Form along with the Provider Enrollment form.

Attendance Sheets Make sure all children you have submitted are included on the monthly attendance sheets and in the correct classroom. If a child does appear on the attendance sheet, please write the child's name as it appears on the certificate on the attendance sheet and mark the days attended appropriately.

Allowable codes for VPK attendance sheets -

- A All Absences (NO E's)
- X Present
- T Terminated
- C Center Closure beyond provider's control (for example, hurricane closure)

NOTE: School Readiness attendance sheets use different codes.

Classroom Transfers-Please complete the Classroom Transfer Form as soon as child is moved and submit it immediately!

If you have any questions, please contact your Reimbursement Specialist.

-Cathie Odom
Director of Business Operations, ELCB

Point 2 Ponder

"If kids come to us from strong, healthy functioning families, it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important."

-Barbara Colorse

Trivia Challenge

Congratulations to Susan Blumenthal, Suntree United Methodist School, winner of the April-June Coalition Connection Trivia Challenge!



Trivia Challenge:

Based on information provided by The National Task Force on Childhood Obesity, about one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday and over half of obese children become overweight at or before what age?

- A) 24 months
- B) 36 months
- C) 5 years
- D) 12 months

Please submit entries to:
CoalitionConnection@elcbrevard.org.
The winner will be announced in the next edition of our newsletter.

Try This!

Take a Nature Walk and Make a Bird Feeder Along the Way!

What do I need?

- Peanut butter
- Pine cones
- Cord/yarn/string
- Bird seed
- Butter knife
- Newspaper/plate/pan

What do I do?

Take children on a nature walk and gather pine cones to take back to class. While on your walk, talk about nature along the way.

How do I make a Bird Feeder?

1. Tie cord/yarn/string around the top third of the pine cone.
2. Spread peanut butter around the pine cone
3. Spread bird seed on newspaper/plate/

pan

4. Roll pine cone in bird seed until thoroughly covered
5. Have children select a location for the bird feeder outside and hang it by the string
6. Talk about the activity as a part of your lesson plans.

