

Global Impact

The Office for Children's website is designed to inform local families and members of the child care community about child care, early education, and specific OFC resources. However, it turns out that more than just Fairfax County residents are interested in accessing our information online.

WebTrends, the application that tracks activity on county web pages, reveals that almost 10 percent of the 200,000 visits to OFC's website so far this year have been from outside the U.S.

For example, there were 401 visits from Beijing and 719 from Amsterdam. More than 1,000 were from Iran. Readers from Australia to Zimbabwe visited OFC's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.

"We have a number of excellent resources on our website that can be used by people almost anywhere in the world, and evidently our international visitors are finding them," said **Lois Kirkpatrick**, who manages OFC's web content.

One of the resources offered on our website is "The Early Learning Guidelines." The 35-page booklet describes developmental milestones in children

from birth to age 5. The Spanish version of the guide was downloaded from our website more than 14,000 times just in the month of May.

Another resource is OFC's catalog of classes offered to child care professionals.

The summer edition of the Institute for Early Learning's catalog was downloaded more than 24,000 times.

The county-specific information on OFC's website is also popular. Our #1 most-visited page is an overview of the SACC program. The Head Start overview page has had more than 1,000 visits per month this year, and there were an average of 2,700 child care searches each month from January to June.

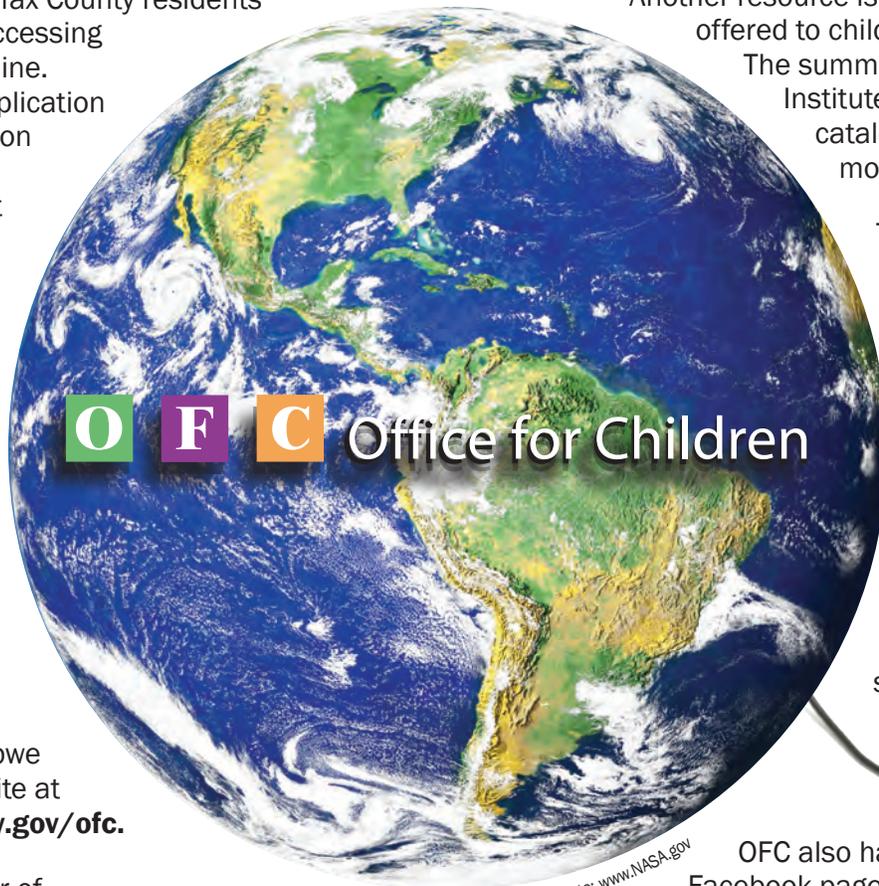


Photo: www.nasa.gov

OFC also has a Facebook page, which gets accessed hundreds of times each week. It can be viewed on non-county computers by clicking on the Facebook link at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.

Hear, Hear

For the past two years the Fairfax County Head Start program has been involved in the Early Childhood Hearing Outreach project, which uses new technology to identify children who may have hearing loss. The national ECHO project is updating the video that shows Early Head Start staff how to use the new equipment. Fairfax County's Gum Springs Glen Early Head Start site (pictured) and a Fairfax County family child provider home were chosen as filming locations. The new video will be used throughout the U.S.

"The ear emits a sound in response to a series of sounds from the equipment," explained **Marna Zok**, OFC's Head Start health services specialist. The testing device detects these sounds, so a child doesn't have to raise his or her hand as with traditional hearing tests. The new devices are used with newborns and even children who are asleep.

Zok and a local audiologist on the ECHO team have trained health coordinators, family service workers, teachers, family child care specialists, and home



visitors in the use of the equipment. All Fairfax County Early Head Start and Head Start children have been screened using the new equipment, and approximately five percent of more than 1,700 children have been identified with hearing loss and are receiving treatment.

ITSN's First Year



The ITSN team, from left to right: **Karen Quist**, **Jennifer Miller**, **Helen Webster** and **Betsi Closter**.

The Office for Children has completed its first year providing services to the Northern Region of the Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network. ITSN

helps strengthen the ability of child care programs to deliver high quality services to young children.

Over the past year, OFC's two ITSN specialists have worked with programs in Fairfax, Loudoun, Arlington and the City of Alexandria. The support Jennifer Miller and Helen Webster have provided to child care programs includes intensive on-site coaching and mentoring of child care center staff and family child care providers. They have also presented a number of classes and hosted one of four state audio conferences.

These services have been enthusiastically received by the child care community. Here are a few of their comments:

"Our specialist provided a very substantive, focused conversation about toddler group activities and how they could be more developmentally appropriate."

"It has been helpful for us to know what to expect at each age level. Our specialist was very knowledgeable."

"Our new room arrangement provides more space for children working with teachers on open-ended art activities. It also provides for smoother transitions."

SACC Guide Goes Techno

Every August, SACC holds a teacher orientation for the upcoming school year. It's a day for staff to explore the curriculum focus and share ideas for creating in-depth learning experiences for children. In the past, SACC teachers received a printed curriculum guide during the annual orientation. This year, SACC's curriculum guide goes techno, in keeping with the school year's focus.

SACC teachers will watch a 19-minute video that explores this year's science and technology curriculum, "Fast Forward: What Lies Ahead," which focuses on inventions, robotics and techno art. The video will also be available on the SACC teacher website throughout the year. Regional supervisors and field staff involved in the development of the curriculum know that this year's

technology focus will be of great interest to children and families.

"If you look around and talk to the children, you'll often see them involved in things that deal with technology. Children are texting on their cell phones; they're listening to their MP3 players; they're playing their favorite video game. They're going to be naturally excited because technology is an integral part of their lives today," said **Art Cole**, a SACC regional supervisor involved in the production of the video.



Summer Fun at Camp Discovery

SACC's Summer 2010 Camp Discovery engages children in a wide variety of fun indoor and outdoor experiences that allow them to continue building skills, knowledge and relationships over the summer.

Children are enjoying a variety of art experiences such as painting with acrylics, clay sculpture and woodworking. They also have the opportunity to discover their hidden talents and learn to express themselves through dancing, acting and storytelling. Children can also participate in various sports such as baseball, basket-

ball, soccer and volleyball. Outdoor experiences such as nature hikes and bird watching help reveal what children can do to help preserve local habitats. The culinary camp allows children to explore food safety, measurement and healthy eating.

Children enrolled in this summer's SACC program also go on a variety of field trips. Recently the Key SACC center went swimming at the Lee Recreation Center, and the Kilmer SACC center visited Bowl America in Fairfax.



Survey Says

The Office for Children is updating all of its customer satisfaction surveys. One of the first programs to complete a new survey is Child Care Assistance and Referral, which provides child care subsidies to low and moderate-income families.

Ninety-five percent of the survey respondents rated CCAR's service good or excellent. This was despite the fact that 42 percent spent time on the waiting list, and of those respondents, 32 percent waited a year or more.

Eighty-one percent rated staff as helpful. Many took the time to specifically compliment members of the CCAR staff. Others wrote about how much they appreciated the program:

"Because of this program I was able to better myself and overcome homelessness."

"I am a referral through Family Preservation Services and I am so grateful for the help and assistance."

"Excellent workers and program - I am a foster parent."

"Excellent program! Without it, I'd be working two jobs, as I am a single parent. Thank you!"

"Because of your help, I (mom) was able to go back to school and graduated from college."



Channel 10 Video

The Fairfax Cable Access Corporation, which broadcasts on channel 10 in northern Virginia, has produced a 30-second public service announcement for the Office for Children. The video will run on cable TV for several months. It has also been posted on OFC's Facebook page, which you can access on a non-county computer. The link to OFC's Facebook page can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.

The short video invites Fairfax County residents to become family child care providers. It points out that child care providers earn an income and tax credits for running a home-based business. It also gives viewers contact information to find out more about obtaining a Fairfax County child care permit.

"This video is part of our ongoing efforts to encourage residents to get a license or permit if they care for children in their homes," explained **Moe Gaines**, director of OFC's Community Education and Provider Services. CEPS issues permits to providers who care for five or fewer children in their homes; residents who care for six or more children must get a license from the state.



This employee newsletter is published by the Office for Children, a division of the Fairfax County Dept. of Family Services. If you have any questions, contact Lois Kirkpatrick at 703-324-7162 or Nancy McDonough at 703-324-8042. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.



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