



## SACC Staff Orientation Kicks Off the School Year

On Monday, August 27, more than 600 SACC staff members attended the program's annual orientation to prepare for the upcoming 2012-2013 School Year. SACC staff from centers across the county and simultaneously attended workshops at two neighboring facilities, the Workhouse Arts Center and the Silo Center in Lorton.

In addition to attending workshops, the staff received two comprehensive resources to support their work throughout the year – “Kaleidoscope of the Arts,” a SACC produced curriculum guide; and “Early Learning Through the Visual Arts,” a resource guide for

educators, produced by the Office for Children, Fairfax Futures, and Fairfax County Public Schools.

Art education specialist, Erin Jacobs, gave an opening presentation on the visual arts guide. This training session introduced ways to successfully integrate the arts into learning opportunities for children ages 5-12 and demonstrated how arts based curriculum experiences align with the FCPS Program of Studies.

Staff participated in a variety of interactive and hands-on trainings. There were opportunities to try new painting and sculpting techniques, make mosaics and stained glass,

and experiment with other visual arts media. There were also music, creative writing, dance, drama and storytelling workshops. Topics ranged from “Spoken Word Poetry for School Age Children” to “Acting in Physical Theatre” to “Hip Hop Strategies and Activities for Children.”

Anne Goldstein, SACC director commented, “This was a great training opportunity for all staff to get firsthand experience in the arts. We are looking forward to a great year of exploring the visual, performing and language arts with children.”



## SACC Curriculum Highlights 2012-2013

# Kaleidoscope of the Arts: Creativity from Every Angle

Look into a kaleidoscope and you will see a vibrant design of colors and shapes created by tiny bits of glass and other objects. Each turn of the kaleidoscope creates a new and unique design as the objects come together in different patterns.

Like the ever changing designs within a kaleidoscope, the 2012-2013 SACC curriculum will take a multi-faceted look at the visual, performing and language arts and engage children in an exploration of "Creativity From Every Angle."

Through the daily curriculum, SACC teachers will inspire and nurture creative thinking and problem solving as they encourage children's creativity to take flight through a fun, innovative, hands-on exploration of the arts.

Opportunities to develop friendships, to work on homework and to participate in favorite indoor and outdoor games and activities will round out each day's experiences.

"The kaleidoscope is the perfect symbol to represent this year's

curriculum. The goal of nurturing creativity will be elevated to a new dimension as SACC teachers inspire children to think outside the box," said SACC Director Anne Goldstein. "Fresh ideas and stunning creations will be just the beginning as SACC explores the endless possibilities of 'Kaleidoscope of the Arts.'"



## Use of Online Child Care Search Soars



About a year ago the Office for Children introduced a new way for the public to search for local child care on the go. Since then thousands of residents have

accessed the Child Care Search database on their personal devices to find child care providers with a county permit or state license, and child care centers, near their home, work site or children's school.

Fairfax County was noted for its innovation in putting several mobile apps including child care search in the hands of the public, as well as a variety of other technological initiatives. As a result the county was recognized as the

best in the nation in the 2012 Digital Counties Survey for all jurisdictions with a population greater than 500,000.

"We are thrilled that the public has found this application to be useful. The use of the child care database has grown tenfold over the past year. We can only attribute its success to its greater accessibility," said OFC Director, Anne-Marie Twohie.

The mobile site gives the user a list of child care programs within a certain radius of a zip code. A user can tap the screen showing the child care program's phone number, and the mobile device will auto-dial that number. The app also allows users to touch the child care program's address

on the screen and retrieve directions to the address through Google Maps.

The Fairfax County Government app is available through the App store for iPhones and iPads and through Google Play store for Android models. Additional information including instructions for downloading to Blackberrys is available [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/mobile](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/mobile).

The Digital Counties Survey evaluates localities on their ability to demonstrate successful outcomes through the strategic use of technology. The evaluation and awards are given through a partnership between the National Association of Counties, "Government Technology" magazine and the Center for Digital Government.



## Bowler Walks a Mile at Gum Springs Head Start

Head Start staff was very excited to have DFS Director Nannette Bowler

continue her Walk-a-Mile series at the Gum Springs Children's Center and Gum Springs Glen on July 30. Bowler assisted Gum Springs' Health Coordinator Natalie Thornock with performing hearing screenings on children.

These screenings are far more advanced than the hearing and vision tests most of us experienced as children. Head Start uses objective screening instruments which can determine hearing and vision ability based on the reactions of the eyes and ears to certain stimuli. Since no response is needed from the child, this means that children as young as 6 months can be tested, enabling

early detection — and early treatment — of any problems that could impair learning.

During Bowler's visit to the center, she helped Thornock get children from the classroom for hearing screenings and record the results.

Anne Taggart, Head Start coordinator, said "Staff was excited and pleased that the Director of Family Services cared about their work and took time to come see what we do every day to support children and their families."

In Head Start, teachers screen children for overall developmental concerns including fine and gross motor, speech and language, and self-help. Health coordinator Natalie Thornock routinely screens for hearing

and vision issues within the first 45 days of a child's enrollment in the program.

If any concern is identified during the screenings, Family Services staff assists parents with a referral to an audiologist, eye doctor or for developmental concerns to Infant and Toddler Connection or Early Childhood Special Education (depending on the child's age).

Thornock explained why this work is so important. "Undiagnosed hearing and vision problems can interfere with a child's development. It meant a lot that the director came to help out so she could see firsthand the impact these screenings make."

## Learning is Fun

On August 1, the Mt. Vernon Community Neighborhood School Readiness Team hosted an event for families with children who will start kindergarten this fall at Riverside, Mount Vernon Woods, or Woodlawn Elementary Schools. Team members worked together to set the stage for families to become actively involved in their child's education from the start.

Families met the principal and several staff members of each school and participated in engaging interactive activities designed to help boost their children's readiness. Several before and after school care programs including SACC were on hand to give information and share a fun, educational activity with the children.

Translators were also on hand to provide assistance with filling out

Fairfax County Public School registration forms.

"We wanted to give families a positive introduction to the school system, and allow them to meet neighbors who will also be sending a child to kindergarten," said Betsi Closter School Readiness coordinator. "We also wanted families to engage in some fun activities that their children can do at home to increase their love of learning and help them succeed in school," Closter continued.

More than 40 adults and children attended the school readiness event held at the Stony Brook Apartments Community Center in Alexandria.



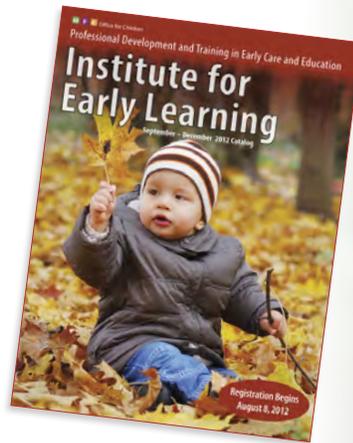
# Early Learning Courses Get Physical

The Institute for Early Learning will offer more than 10 new courses to child care professionals this fall. “Finger Plays Are Not Enough: Let’s Get Physical” and several other new courses were inspired by a NAEYC – recognized book entitled “Big Body Play.” Outdoor activity is also a strong theme among the courses.

Gross motor development is essential for children’s social-emotional, cognitive and physical development. According to the author of “Big Body Play,” Frances Carlson, “Research shows that big body play comes naturally to children. Children all over the world play this way, and that is why it’s so important that adults, both teachers and family members, understand and support it.”

“We want to encourage providers and teachers to integrate movement into the day to day activities, in their programs so that children begin to develop a love for physical activity that will last a lifetime,” said Karen Quist, IFEL director.

New classes like “Yoga for Children” emphasize structured movement; however, classes like “Outdoor Play Every Day,” “Games, Games, Games” and “Explore the



Wonder of Nature” encourage providers to consider the outdoors as a natural playground. After all, outdoors is the natural environment to engage in the running, jumping, rolling, wrestling and other vigorous activities that children love.

IFEL’s annual professional development day is dedicated to physical movement. Scheduled for Dec. 1, this event will allow child care professionals to earn six hours of training credit in one day while attending new workshops in English and Spanish. Child care professionals will learn to use music, drama and other interactive experiences to create opportunities for children to engage in physical play.

“This is just a sample of the classes offered by IFEL this fall,” said Quist. “We are pleased that our instructors develop so many creative new courses each semester to offer to the child care community at no cost.”



## **O F C** Office for Children

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 Angela Morlu at 703-324-7528 or Nancy McDonough at 703-324-8042. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc).



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