



OFC and the Health Department: Moving and Grooving

The Institute for Early Learning recently hosted its fifth annual professional development day, Finger Plays are Not Enough: Let's Get Physical! More than 200 child care professionals attended the event at the Government Center on Dec. 1.

IFEL Director Karen Quist explained that, "the focus of the event was about transforming finger plays, songs, and stories from being sedentary to being more active by children integrating the use of large muscles. The goal is to enhance the children's learning by incorporating physically active movement into the experience."

The featured presenter was Kofi Dennis - a nationally known speaker and performer, and creative drama teacher. He led a group of early childhood learning professionals through the process of using movement and action to bring to life the classic book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." He conveyed how much more vibrant a story can become when infused with action.

In the afternoon, participants selected two of the five break-out sessions offered, including two well-attended Spanish workshops. Sessions were for professionals caring for children from infancy through the school age years.

IFEL also partnered with the Health Department to host a vaccine clinic during the event. Tdap vaccinations were given to early child care educators who opted to receive the vaccine.



"Offering vaccines to early care educators at a convenient setting like this event is a good a way to reduce the chances of adults becoming carriers of infectious diseases. Based on the positive response at this professional development day, we will definitely offer a health clinic again," Quist explained.

Opportunity Neighborhood Event

Jody Withrow of Child Care Assistance and Referral recently had the chance to represent the Office for Children at the first Opportunity Neighborhood community event. A partnership between the county, Fairfax County Public Schools, and the community, Opportunity Neighborhood's mission is to help every child succeed through all stages of life from infancy through graduation and into post-secondary careers.

Currently the initiative's focus is on a portion of the 22309 ZIP code in Mount Vernon, which includes Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School, Woodlawn Elementary School, Riverside Elementary School, Whitman Middle School, and Mount Vernon High School.

The schools and their neighborhoods were selected based on several factors, including SOL scores and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

The Office for Children was one of several partners at the event sharing pamphlets and contact information with families about their services and programs. More than 100 people attended the event. In addition to families, family child care providers and other DFS staff visited the OFC table and took information with



them to share with families in the community. Withrow said, "Some of the children were excited to recognize friends in the SACC photos on display at our table."

"We were glad to be able to participate in this event and to help Opportunity Neighborhood as it begins the vital work of supporting the success of every child in this neighborhood" said CCAR Director Carol Keil.

A State of Emergency



The county has developed emergency procedures and emphasizes the importance of planning and preparing for any emergency, be it weather, health or safety related.

Each county agency is required to have an emergency operations plan. There is an overall OFC emergency operations plan, as well as emergency plans for Child

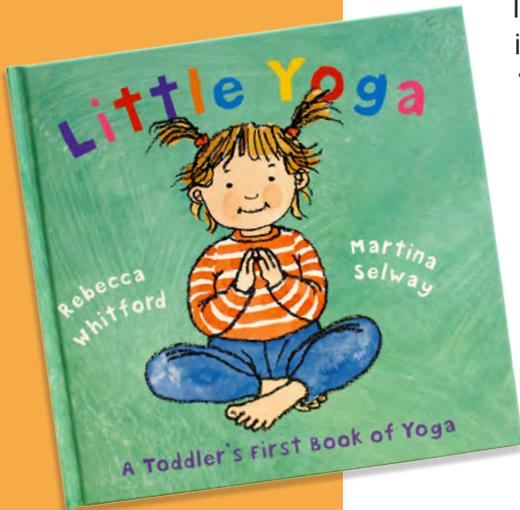
Care Assistance and Referral, Community Education and Provider Services, the Employee Child Care Center, Head Start and SACC. If you are not familiar with your program's plan, ask your supervisor to see a copy. Review it carefully so that you're aware of the roles, responsibilities and procedures to follow in an emergency. Additionally, emergency response plans for each human services building are available on the Internal DFS pages on Fairfaxnet. Look under Emergency Planning on the Policies, Procedures and Forms page.

If an incident occurs that makes your work site unsuitable for use, you'll be notified about alternate work sites to which you're being temporarily reassigned. Please

make sure your supervisor always has accurate contact information for you so that you can be reached in case of an emergency. Also, be sure to keep your phone number in Outlook up-to-date. If you have questions about how to do it, ask your program's business analyst.

Please sign up with the county's Emergency Alert Network. This will help to make sure that you receive messages about community emergencies, hazardous weather conditions, or the closing of county facilities. EAN alerts can be sent to any communication device that receives text-based messages, such as cell phones, smart phones, email accounts, pagers, etc. You can sign up for this free service on FairfaxNet.

“Little Yoga” Encourages Movement



The Early Head Start program is sharing copies of the book “Little Yoga” with nearly 30 family child care providers who are a part of the program. “Our goal with this initiative is to encourage a new avenue for physical activity and safe play among children in family child care homes,” said Family Child Care Manager Bonnie Arjona.

awareness and confidence. Children, even babies, can copy and practice yoga with mom, dad and their child care provider. “Little Yoga” offers an introduction to a balanced yoga sequence for toddlers that can easily be implemented in child care programs.

This program supports Let’s Move! Child Care, a nationwide campaign initiated by First Lady Michelle Obama to motivate child care centers and family child care providers to make positive health changes in the lives of children early on that could last a lifetime.

Yoga is a great way to improve physical coordination and concentration while increasing self-

Ordinance Changes Will Affect Family Child Care Providers

Recently, the Board of Supervisors approved changes to the Home Child Care Facilities Ordinance which regulates family child care homes. The changes had been proposed to the board after a comprehensive review of the ordinance was conducted by OFC and the county’s Child Care Advisory Council, working in partnership with the Office of the County Attorney, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Health Department and the Department of Planning and Zoning. Community Education and Provider Services staff also held a number of community outreach events and received helpful feedback from family child care providers.

Beginning Feb. 1, 2013, family child care providers will be required to take additional training classes,

follow current nutrition guidelines and adhere to revised safety regulations. In addition, the ordinance will allow for substitute care to be provided while the provider is out of the home. These and other revisions to the ordinance reflect best practices in the field and current health and safety regulations. For a detailed summary of the ordinance revisions visit the OFC website.

CEPS staff is offering training sessions in January throughout the county to help family child care



providers to understand and implement the new requirements.

“The updated regulations will help us to support family child care providers and the important work they do caring for our community’s children,” said CEPS director Catherine Sauer. “We truly appreciate the work of the CCAC and our partner agencies throughout this process.”

Making Spirits Bright!

Head Start children, families and staff enjoyed participating in the Firefighters and Friends Annual Toy Drive in December. The event's founder, Capt. Willie Bailey of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, said "Words can't describe the way the children's faces lit up when they saw a toy and realized it was theirs to keep." With the help of local businesses and individuals, the annual toy drive, now in its 15th year collected and distributed 4,000 toys in the community.

While a small group of Head Start children were able to attend the Annual Firefighters Holiday Rescuer's Toy Distribution at Penn Daw Fire and Rescue Station 11 on Tuesday, Dec. 18, the next day Gum Springs Children's Center hosted an open house for parents, community members and firefighters. Firefighters were on hand to assist 192 children in selecting a toy to take home with them. Staff and parents at Gum Springs are very appreciative of all the contributions the firefighters make to the community.



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.



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