

VPI Provides Professional Development



VQRIS Regional Coordinator Stephanie Kent, VPI and VQRIS Mentor Judy Yavit, VQRIS Mentor Susan Martin, and VPI Teacher Henrietta Banning exploring curriculum materials.

In preparation for the upcoming program year, the Office for Children's Virginia Preschool Initiative is supporting curriculum implementation in participating programs through professional development.

The Virginia Preschool Initiative is a state funded program that provides access to high quality preschool programs for 4-year-olds from families with eligible incomes. VPI is currently located in 21 child care centers and 95 Fairfax County Public School classrooms. The program's total projected fall enrollment is 1,628 children.

Each program selects its own curriculum which is research and evidenced based, developmentally appropriate, state approved and aligned with the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning. The Fairfax County Preschool Program of Studies, Creative Curriculum, and HighScope for Preschool all meet

these criteria. One or the other is used in most local VPI programs.

Early childhood professionals from community based programs recently participated in workshops providing insight into the Creative Curriculum and HighScope. The workshops provided an opportunity to practice using the tools and materials from each curriculum.

Follow-up workshops are planned in August to help teachers learn to utilize the assessment tools for each of these curricula. In addition, professional development opportunities are being offered to early childhood educators in the Fairfax County Preschool Program of Studies.

As VPI Director Rhonda Houck explained, "One of the many roles of VPI is to support curriculum implementation and promote positive child outcomes."



Teaching Strategies Trainer Carol Bellamy explains how the weekly resources and materials can be organized.



VPI Mentors Joyce Yang and Tina Lee enjoying the workshop.

Brochure Explains Legislative Changes

Federal and state laws have recently been changed that make important strides to protect the health and safety of children in child care programs. To keep family child care providers informed about these changes, Community Education and Provider Services has produced a brochure that summarizes the new pieces of legislation and how they affect Fairfax County family child care providers.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal grant program that provides child care assistance for income-eligible families and funds child care quality initiatives. On November 19, 2014, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 was signed into law, reauthorizing the CCDBG for the first time since 1996. The act makes significant advancements in health and safety requirements for child care and requires improvements in consumer education of child care options for the general public. The CCDBG Act also emphasizes increased investment in activities to improve the quality of care.

Subsequently, on April 30, 2015, state legislation was signed into law that will improve the safety of child care programs in Virginia, and will change the requirement for licensure of family child care.

These legislative changes will impact family child care providers in Fairfax County in several ways such as:

- An additional unannounced permit monitoring visit will be required approximately six months before the permit expiration date. (This is in addition to the renewal inspection.)
- Starting on July 1, 2016, the Fairfax County home child care permit will change to allow providers to care for up to four children in their homes, not including the provider's own children or any resident children. A state license will be required to care for five or more children.
- By July 1, 2017, a national background check, which includes a fingerprint check, will be required for all permitted child care providers and all adult residents of the home.

- By November 19, 2017, families will be able to access results of permit visits and monitoring reports for permitted family child care providers on the Office for Children website.

The brochure, "Understanding Recent Changes to Federal and State Laws for Family Child Care Providers in Fairfax County," is available in English and Spanish and has been

mailed to all permitted and state licensed family child care providers in Fairfax. Child Care Specialists will share additional copies with providers on home visits. The Office for Children will continue to share information with providers about the changes and timelines for implementation of the legislation as it becomes available.



As part of its ongoing community outreach work, the Office for Children has produced three radio PSAs emphasizing the importance of choosing regulated child care for families considering family child care for their children. In Fairfax County, family child care providers are required to have a current county permit or state license. To help

OFC Produces Public Service Announcements

families with choosing quality care, OFC provides information for families about child care options, which include both center based child care and family child care.

For families considering different child care options, the PSAs explain that family child care providers with a permit or license receive regular health and safety inspections, have first aid and CPR certification, TB and background checks and are required to participate in ongoing professional learning.

OFC Director Anne-Marie Twohie explained, "One of the most important decisions parents make is choosing care for their children. Family child care can be a good option for many families and we want to ensure that parents have the information they need when choosing child care."

The 15, 30 or 45 second PSAs are available in English or Spanish on the county's SoundCloud page at www.soundcloud.com/fairfaxcounty/sets/choosing-qualified-child-care for download for use on area radio programs.

Eat and Run Wins International Award

The Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts announced the winners of the 2015 Communicator Awards, and “Eat and Run” was a Distinction Winner in the category of Public Relations Communications-Community Awareness Program. AIVA is composed of leading professionals from various disciplines of the visual arts dedicated to embracing progress and the evolving nature of

traditional and interactive media.

With over 6000 entries received from across the US and around the world, the Communicator Awards claims to be “the largest and most competitive awards program honoring the creative excellence for communications professionals.”



from the “EAT and RUN” book.

“Anecdotally, we know this program works. In our six-month follow up survey, providers still report that they are using ‘EAT and RUN’ activities at least once or twice a week” said Community Education and Providers Services Director Jene Moore. “We are just honored that ‘EAT and RUN’ continues to be recognized for its innovative design and message encouraging healthier choices.”



Participants in USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program recently took part in an Eat and Run workshop.

“EAT and RUN” is a book developed by Community Education and Provider Services to help family child care providers bring good nutrition and physical activity into their daily programs. Through workshops and follow up home visits with the providers, CEPS is working with family child care providers to help them implement strategies

Celebrating Children’s Accomplishments in Head Start

The Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start program recently celebrated a successful program year. Rising kindergarteners proudly received certificates recognizing their accomplishments in Head Start.

Head Start is a federal program that serves children up to the age of five, and pregnant women, from income-eligible families. Head Start helps prepare children for success

in school through high-quality education, health and family services.

“One of Head Start’s areas of focus is family and community engagement, and building relationships with families,” explained Center Director Anne Taggart. “Our families look forward to this opportunity each year to celebrate their children’s successes in Head Start during the year.”



Gardening Bridges the Generation Gap



In July, several volunteers from the Gum Springs Senior program pitched in with staff and children from the Gum Springs Glen Early Head Start program to establish a vegetable garden at the children's playground. The children ages 1-3 years old were excited to help the older adults assemble four Earth Boxes, spread fertilizer and dirt, then plant and water cherry tomato plants.

Throughout the summer, children will water their garden daily and the seniors will visit once a week to tend the garden with the children. When the tomatoes are harvested, a Virginia

Cooperative Extension Master Food Volunteer will provide the children and seniors with a recipe demonstration, nutrition education, and recipes for the participants to take home and share with their families. Teaching gardening principles is just one way that these programs are working to reduce food insecurity and improve access to healthy fruits and vegetables.

The intergenerational garden is a joint agency initiative coordinated by Area Agency on Agency Senior Nutritionist Maria Loh, Neighborhood and Community Services Program Director

Karisma Horne, Gum Springs Glen Administrator Claudine Christy, Greater Mount Vernon EHS and HS Nutritionist Daniela Sensini, and Office for Children EHS and HS Nutritionist Everludis Lopez.

As Lopez explained, "We hope that the garden will provide an avenue for forming positive intergenerational relationships that will encourage healthy social-emotional development for the children and general well-being for the seniors."



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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