

New Child Care Management System Live! Improved Usability for Staff and Public

After nearly three years of behind-the-scenes work by a multi-agency team, the new Fairfax County Child Care Management System is up and running on OFC's website.

OFC's project leader, Michael Asihene, said, "This is a very exciting time. CCMS-IS improves the functionality of the previous system. It is customized for our needs and was built on the county's technology platform which allows for a greater capacity for adaptation and greater support from county DIT. We designed the workflow system to be more efficient and eliminate redundancies."

CCMS-IS features four applications:

1. CCMS-IS Internal Web Application:

Child Care Assistance and Referral, Community Education and Provider Services and the Department of Administration of Human Services Finance group will use this internal application day-to-day to manage their work, as well as to support the other three applications. CCAR is using the new system for eligibility determination and case

management. The new system provides a financial interface to county payment systems. CEPS staff are using it to manage the permitting process.

2. The Child Care Search engine on the public website has been enhanced to provide some additional features for those searching for child care.
3. The Inspection Tablet Application allows OFC staff to use a tablet to electronically document home safety inspections and other visits with family child care providers in real time. These electronic records sync with CCMS-IS, increasing staff efficiency.
4. The Provider Access Portal's enhanced features allow providers to:
 - Manage their contact information in the Child Care Search.
 - Track the status of permit requirements such as inspections and background checks.
 - Correspond with staff and make payments.



CCMS-IS Team Members, front to back: Rachel Copeland, Marissa Younts, Lizanne Jilg, Kamini Jassal, Michael Asihene, Maggie Chavarria, Cindy Osborne, Megan McClafferty, and Lynn Thompson. Cherise Pinto and Jody Withrow are not pictured.

- Directly input and manage child care subsidy program attendance information.

CCAR Director Flor Philips and CEPS Director Jene Moore expressed their gratitude to the team that has worked to bring this project to completion. Moore said, "The project team has done a great job designing a system that is tailored to the needs of our agency and the county residents we work with." Philips expressed gratitude to "all the employees who have taken on additional work and provided support to those on the team so this initiative could succeed."

Head Start Hosts Family Workshop!

Kofi Dennis of Wolf Trap Teaches with Stories and Songs



This spring, the Office for Children's Early Head Start Family Child Care Program hosted a Family Involvement Workshop presented by The Wolf Trap Institute of Early Learning through the Arts. Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist, Kofi Dennis, engaged the Early Head Start children and their families in a workshop called "Journey to Africa: Sharing Family Experiences."

This workshop introduced families to exciting ways to adapt songs, rituals and activities from different cultures into families' daily routines. Through the use of drums, Dennis had the group of parents and their children dancing and singing.

Participants were invited to take an imaginary journey of West Africa, through traditional movement, songs and instruments. He also brought along traditional clothing from West Africa that participants modeled for the group. Kofi encouraged parents to share their culture within their own family.

Early Head Start offers educational opportunities throughout the year for families as a way to engage them in the program, and to encourage them in their role as their child's primary teacher.



VPI and VPI+ Recruitment for 2016 – 2017 In Full Swing

This is the time of year when parents are making plans for preschool in the fall. In our community many parents with low income struggle to determine ways to afford a quality early childhood program that will prepare their children for success in school and beyond.

The purpose of the Virginia Preschool Initiative and VPI+ is to provide a quality early childhood experience for eligible 4-year-old children.

VPI and VPI+ support children and families by:

- Implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with kindergarten experiences.
- Screening children for hearing, vision, development, and dental and mental health.
- Providing family engagement opportunities and support.

In addition to being offered in Fairfax County Public Schools, VPI is administered by the Office for Children in 21 center-based locations in Fairfax County and the city of Fairfax. VPI+ is administered by FCPS and OFC in two center-based locations:

To qualify children must:

- Be 4 years-old by September 30, 2016.
- Be residents of Fairfax County or the city of Fairfax.
- Meet income or other eligibility criteria.

"Recruitment is a year-round process," said VPI Director Rhonda Houck, "and it becomes especially busy in spring and summer as we get the word out to families in the community that this program is available. Working with partners in the community helps to reach eligible children and their families."



SACC Celebrates Earth Day!

On Friday, April 22, many SACC centers across the county participated in activities to celebrate Earth Day. Children at Bren Mar Park SACC formed a Garden Club and are excited to learn more about growing and caring for their garden. At Forestville SACC, children collected and worked with recycled materials to create robots and other innovative designs.



ECCC Families and Staff Enjoy Annual Picnic

Burke Lake Park Offers Lots of Amenities



This spring, more than 150 people attended the Employees' Child Care Center picnic held at Burke Lake Park. This annual picnic provides the opportunity for families of children currently attending ECCC and families of ECCC "graduates" to spend time together with teachers in the idyllic outdoor setting. Many families return for this event again and again even after their children have begun elementary school.



Families explored the wooded trails and waterfront area together. Children enjoyed the playground and a variety of

games, and had fun playing with their friends.

Many children also enjoyed having their faces painted.

"The picnic is a wonderful family engagement opportunity that ECCC families look forward to attending each year," said ECCC Director Ruth Stover. "It's also a great way for the children and teachers to keep in touch through the years. We could not have asked for a more beautiful day for our picnic in the park."



Head Start Supports Father Engagement

Fathers Bond with Children through Male Involvement Program

Across the country, Father's Day is celebrated in June, and fathers and father figures are recognized for their meaningful contributions in children's lives. At Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start fathers are celebrated year-round through the Male Involvement Program.

Focused on the significance of male figures in the lives of young children, The Male Involvement Program helps to encourage and promote fathering skills. The program is open to fathers, uncles, brothers and any other significant male figures with children in Head Start and Early Head Start.

Head Start Facilities and Transportation Manager Tom Collins explained that the program was founded more than 20 years ago. Collins began in 1994 as a volunteer with the Male Involvement Program, and now as an employee, he coordinates it.

A major goal of the program is to equip men to support the development and well-being of their children. This year, as the

national Head Start office has increased its focus on School Readiness activities, Collins has tailored the monthly events to reflect that. Activities have included:

- Participating in the classroom through Read-alongs with Dad and Art Expression through painting.
- Attending educational family field trips such as a recent visit to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.
- Participating in community workshops on empowering topics such as health and wellness, employment, and housing.
- Attending the Nurturing Program to help fathers grow as parents.

The Male Involvement Program supports a safe environment where men can gather to discuss mutual concerns, spend time with their children, and access community resources. It provides something for men of all ages.



Fairfax County

O F C Office for Children



A Fairfax County, VA Publication

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.

 Reasonable accommodations made upon request; call 703-324-8000 or TTY 711.