



## DFS Directors Walk-a-Mile

### Bowler and Chavarro visit Early Head Start Family Child Care

Sometimes walking a mile involves a little reading. On Monday, June 20, Department of Family Services Director Nannette Bowler and the new DFS Deputy Director Ron Chavarro enjoyed a Walk-a-Mile experience with an Early Head Start family child care partner and the young children in her care.

The EHS family child care partner, Aydee Mauricio, and her assistant and daughter Iliana DeLeon, welcomed Bowler and Chavarro to her home as she and the children were sitting down for lunch. After the children cleaned up, they settled in with Bowler and Chavarro who took turns reading books with the children.

Bowler chose to read the classic “Good Night Moon,” while Chavarro read a gardening book in Spanish. All of the children in Mauricio’s care

are dual language learners who speak Spanish as their first language. After story time, the children brought out puppets and farm animals to share with their guests before heading off for their nap.

Mauricio had the opportunity to talk with her visitors about the work she does as an EHS provider; offering a consistent daily routine, providing nutritious meals and snacks, and planning school readiness learning experiences for the group and each child individually.

“Being able to interact with the children and seeing the richness of the environment provided by such a gifted and loving mother/daughter team was so uplifting. They are truly making a difference in lives of these children,” said Bowler.



# Leadership Academy Grads Tackle Strategic Planning

Cherise Pinto, Jenna Piombo and Marilyn Frost of the Office for Children were among the 24 graduates who recently completed the spring 2016 cohort of the Department of Family Services' Leadership Academy. For several months, they took part in training sessions, and received mentorship and coaching as part of this DFS-wide initiative.

Each cohort of the Leadership Academy provides the opportunity for staff to get to know a variety of employees from across the agency. Employees from different programs are placed in groups to work together on a final assignment from DFS senior management. This assignment is different for each cohort and reflects actual issues that impact the agency at that time.

In anticipation of the strategic planning effort beginning in July 2016, the teams of employees were tasked with developing and presenting a strategic plan for DFS. Each group determined their vision of the future of the organization, and proposed goals, objectives and action steps for achieving that vision in the next three years.

As part of their assignment, the groups used the Health and Human Service Value Curve, which compares several business models in terms of their effectiveness in achieving outcomes.

For instance, one of the groups, the True Transformers, which included Piombo and Pinto, focused their presentation on improving technology through the creation of a client portal



Cherise Pinto and Jenna Piombo of Child Care Assistance and Referral, and Marilyn Frost of Community Education and Provider Services on the day of their graduation from the DFS Leadership Academy.

for families to use to have better access to staff and resources; more education and cross training of staff; and creating more connections between staff across divisions.

Some staff chose a PowerPoint, while others performed skits for their final presentation. Whatever the format, this was a positive experience for everyone involved.



## CEPS Completes Recruitment Videos

Staff in Community Education and Provider Services is always looking for new ways to recruit family child care providers, and to inform families about the importance of choosing regulated child care. As part of this ongoing effort, the program has developed two videos that they plan to use throughout the community to share these important messages.

The family child care recruitment video includes testimonials from family child care providers. It demonstrates that opening a child care business at home is a viable way to make a living, while making a difference in the lives of children and families. It also explains ways that the Office for Children can help develop and support a family child care business.

The parent information video emphasizes the importance of choosing regulated child care due to the requirements for providers. These include health and safety visits, the

provider's professional development, and background checks for residents of the home. The video encourages parents to choose quality child care and shows how family child care providers can support the healthy growth and development of children.

"Video is a natural choice," CEPS Assistant Director Kamini Jassal explained. "It is becoming a dominant form of communication especially on social media. Videos are persuasive and engage the audience in the message. They also present a number of avenues for reaching our target audience." The distribution plan includes waiting rooms of regional DFS offices, Health Department and WIC offices, the OFC website and county YouTube pages by end of fall 2016.

In the future CEPS would like to share these messages further through showing the video in the waiting rooms at private organizations such as Kaiser and INOVA.



# SACC's Middle School Transition Initiative Expands to 24 Sites



The transition from elementary school to middle school is an exciting and important milestone for children and their families. The School Age Child Care program's Middle School Transition Initiative provides a natural support system to help facilitate a positive experience.

Recognizing the importance of this transition, SACC staff partnered with FCPS Middle School After-School Program coordinators to develop a program to help smooth the way for both children and their families. In order to ensure SACC families are informed about the after school program opportunities available, SACC staff work with the middle school coordinators to host a Middle School After-School Program orientation

specifically for fifth and sixth grade SACC children and their families.

The partnership began two years ago with only a few SACC centers and middle schools participating. This year, nearly all 26 FCPS middle schools hosted an orientation for SACC families. The events were held throughout April and May and were well attended by children and their families.

The middle school coordinators shared specific information about their school's program such as what clubs and programs they offer, how to sign up, the calendar of activities, bus routes, pick-up times and procedures, and talked about the leaders of the different clubs.

Children and families enjoyed meeting the coordinator. The opportunity to ask questions helped them to develop a greater awareness of the middle school experience and provided a sense of comfort about this important next step in their lives.

"This initiative has been very successful at helping families transition to middle school," said LaSondra Moore SACC Regional Supervisor. "We have heard from parents about how much they appreciate this opportunity to come together with other SACC families that have the same questions and concerns. The information provided helped ease any worries and knowing what to expect will help both the children and their families be more prepared as they begin middle school."



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1) Children from Groveton, Marshall Road and Armstrong SACC enjoy the running events. 2) Children from Island Creek SACC, with Center Supervisor Jim Little, having a great time with their friends. 3) Children from many SACC centers are excited to demonstrate their skills in the shot put.

## SACC Children and Families Enjoy Track Meet Record Participation at Annual Event

The School Age Child Care program's 6th annual Track and Field Meet was held on Saturday, June 11 on the track of Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield. This event has grown into one of SACC's most anticipated family events. Participation doubled this year to nearly 800 children ages 5-8 from 46 SACC centers throughout the county.

SACC teachers emphasized skill development, good sportsmanship and

fun as they worked with children to prepare for the meet. Children had the opportunity to practice their track and field skills in a variety of ways designed to foster both children's self-confidence and a sense of team work.

On the day of the event, children enthusiastically competed in the 50-yard dash, 100-yard dash, javelin and shot put throw, and 4 x 1 relay.

Families were happy to provide support to the SACC staff by helping to coach and cheer on the children as they participated. The event was a huge success for each child, their proud families and the dedicated SACC staff.

Have fun and run was the spirit of the day. The sheer joy and determination evident on the children's faces said it all!



Participants in one recent course “Let’s Try it Out,” explore hands-on science experiences that encourage children to discover the world around them as they play. The course was taught by Nicole Fauteux, author of the “Let’s Try It Out” book series.

## IFEL Classes Emphasize STEM

The Institute for Early Learning offers courses for early childhood professionals on a wide variety of topics related to child development and school readiness. This summer, IFEL is offering several courses promoting children’s scientific inquiry.

STEM-related courses, including Science for Early Learners, Learning About Nature: Wet is Wild, Math Connections and Exploring Block Play, delve into different aspects of STEM-based exploration. These hands-on courses focus on ways to engage young children’s natural interest in science, engineering and math.

“Math and science are all around us in all aspects of our lives,” said IFEL Director Karen Quist. “During

IFEL class sessions, educators explore ways to help children see these connections through activities that integrate science and math into everyday experiences.”

Participants in IFEL courses test hypotheses by conducting experiments. They also use early learning materials and STEM-vocabulary while engaging in activities. Children’s play naturally incorporates curiosity, innovation and exploration. The experiences in the IFEL courses enhance free exploration by providing guided activities related to problem-solving, spatial awareness, number sense, classification and other STEM concepts.

### **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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