

Family Child Care Providers Support Kindergarten Readiness

Family child care providers play a vital role in partnering with families to support young children's school readiness. A new workshop series offered by the Office for Children and Fairfax Futures provides practical strategies that help ease the transition to school for rising kindergarteners.

Presenters Offer Strategies to Support Smooth Transition to Kindergarten

Earlier this summer, 35 family child care providers gathered for the first session of the two-workshop series, Getting Ready for Kindergarten. Participants heard from several speakers including:

- Mari Blaustein, an instructor and mentor with the Institute for Early Learning.
- Dr. Zubair Saeed of the Fairfax County Health Department.
- Former FCPS Lynnwood Elementary School Principal Mary Mcnamee who works with OFC's Neighborhood School Readiness Project.
- Wolf Trap and John F. Kennedy Center Consultant, Marcia Daft.

Speakers emphasized the challenges young children may face as they leave a home-based family child care setting to enter into a

new, more formal school environment. Saeed and Mcnamee shared ways to prepare and support young children as they transition into kindergarten.

Blaustein discussed practical strategies to help rising kindergarteners learn collaboration, communication and self-regulation skills. These abilities will be essential to ensure their smooth transition into a kindergarten classroom. She also encouraged providers to offer children more developmentally appropriate learning activities such as drawing, designing and creating.

Marcia Daft demonstrated how to use chanting and rhythms to help children learn to take turns and listen to others. She also highlighted techniques to help young children learn to respect others' personal space.

Providers to Apply Strategies and Evaluate Success

Family child care providers are using these resources and strategies with the rising kindergarteners in their care this summer. At the second workshop



Workshop participants practice using chanting and rhythms that can help children learn to take turns and listen to others.

on August 20, they will share how they integrated what they learned in the first workshop into their home-based programs and how this affected the children in their care.

Once participants complete the second workshop, they will receive backpacks filled with school supplies for each of the rising kindergarteners in their care.

Fairfax Futures teamed up with Office for Children Community Education and Provider Services, and the Institute for Early Learning to present Getting Ready for Kindergarten. The two workshops, backpacks and materials participants receive through this program are made possible through generous support from Apple Federal Credit Union Education Foundation and Wells Fargo.



OFC Holds Infant Nutrition Workshop for Staff

On Wednesday, June 29, 2016, OFC staff members participated in an Infant Nutrition Workshop presented by CEPS Assistant Director Kamini Jassal. The hands-on workshop educated participants about infant development, feeding choices, and feeding practices. Jassal also previewed the upcoming changes to the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program Infant Meal Pattern.

This is important information that child care specialists can use in their work with child care programs in the community.

The first part of the workshop focused on infant development during the first 12 months. Jassal also presented recommendations for breastfeeding and formula feeding, such as:

- Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, if possible.
- Support breastfeeding mothers by offering a quiet, comfortable place to breastfeed.
- The best substitute for breast milk is iron-fortified formula.
- Warm infant formula by running warm water over the bottle; never use a microwave.
- Feed only breast milk or formula in a bottle.

- Only offer the bottle at feeding time.

The workshop also covered the introduction of solid foods around 6 months of age, as developmentally appropriate. Jassal engaged workshop participants in a food jar challenge that emphasized the following guidelines for choosing and serving solid food to infants:

- Only serve single-ingredient jar food.
- Jar food fortified with DHA is acceptable.
- Allow a one week interval before introducing new foods.

At the end of the workshop, Jassal provided an overview of the CACFP's revised Infant Meal Pattern. Changes to the Infant Meal Pattern support healthy and age-appropriate meals by encouraging breastfeeding and the consumption of vegetables and fruit. All CACFP centers and family child care homes must comply with the new guidelines by October 1, 2017. For a full description of the revised Infant Meal Pattern, visit the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service website. If you have questions or want more information, contact CEPS.



Highlights of the Changes to the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern:

- Infants are divided into two age groups: 0-5 months and 6-11 months.
- Providers may receive reimbursement for meals when a breastfeeding mother comes to the child care center or family child care home and breastfeeds her infant.
- A vegetable or fruit, or both, must be served at each meal including snacks for infants 6 through 11 months old. Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.



Head Start Parent and Staff Awarded the 2016 Nancy Elmore Scholarship

Each year the Virginia Head Start Association, Inc. awards the Nancy Elmore Scholarship to assist a current Head Start employee and a current Head Start parent in pursuing a college education. The Nancy Elmore Scholarship Fund was established in June 2010 to honor the work of Region III Program Manager Nancy Elmore, upon her retirement.

Alicia Doe, chair of the Fairfax County Head Start Policy Council, was awarded the parent scholarship. Doe has been actively involved in Early Head Start/Head Start for approximately three years. Her children have been enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start

at the Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start Program.

Doe has been involved in the parent committee/council and attended local and national Head Start conferences. She also helped interview prospective staff at Greater Mount Vernon.

The scholarship will assist Doe with paying for required course work for an associate degree in nursing from Global Health College. Doe hopes to work in the field of pediatrics and the NICU.

Fairfax County Public Schools Head Start Instructional Assistant Asma Sultana was awarded the staff scholarship. Sultana works at Beech Tree Elementary and is



Alicia Doe, chair of the Fairfax County Head Start Policy Council, is using the Nancy Elmore parent scholarship to pursue a degree in nursing.

pursuing her teaching certificate in elementary education at George Mason University.

Congratulations to both recipients!



Children and teachers from the School Age Child Care program worked together to create boats representing Global Adventures for the 27th Annual Springfield Days Cardboard Boat Regatta at Lake Accotink. The event was rescheduled to June 18 due to inclement weather, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of SACC families, friends and staff as they cheered the children on.

Nearly 200 children from 21 centers came to this year's wet and wild event, and a record number 14 SACC boats lasted until the very end.

SACC Teams Enjoy Global Adventure at Boat Regatta

This was the 15th year SACC children and staff worked together to create cardboard boats that reflect SACC's school year curriculum. Following the theme of Global Adventurers, boat designs included a slice of German Chocolate Cake, the Brazilian Flag with children dressed as Olympians, and the Sphinx with children dressed in Roman period clothing.

"The children learn a lot through this experience and have fun in the process," said Kali Pellegrino, Kings Glen head teacher and SACC boat regatta coordinator. "Over the course of several months, it takes a lot of team work, persistence and creativity to

think of a concept, then design, build, and make their boats watertight."

The SACC children paddled their boats in several heats. Winners and Judges Awards included:

- Waples Mill's "Chinese Pandas" for the SACC heat.
- Graham Road's "Sweetness" for the School/Civic Groups heat.
- Team Spirit for Island Creek's "Jamaican Croc Bobsled."
- Most Appetizing for Halley's, "Fre-Sha-Voca-Do."

What a great event! Everyone involved will have fond memories that will last a lifetime.



OFC Director Appointed to State School Readiness Committee

Office for Children Director Anne-Marie Twohie has been appointed to serve on the Commonwealth of Virginia’s newly-created School Readiness Committee. Established by the 2016 General Assembly, the committee’s intent is to ensure that early childhood educators have the skills they need to support student success throughout the state.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on the Commonwealth’s School Readiness Committee,” Twohie said. “Skilled early childhood educators are essential partners

with families and help ensure that children enter kindergarten with cognitive and social-emotional skills that provide a strong foundation for learning.”

Twohie has worked for more than 25-years in the field of early childhood education. Throughout her career, she has been a strong proponent of effective public policies at the state and local levels that ensure an equitable opportunity for all young children to thrive and succeed in school.

Members of the School Readiness Committee were selected by former Virginia Secretary of Education Anne

Holton in consultation with Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Dr. Bill Hazel.

The committee’s first goal is to develop recommendations for state policymakers for ways to enhance and align early childhood education professional development and credentialing to support the needs of young children.

“I look forward to drawing upon the expertise of my colleagues in OFC and the community to inform my work on the state committee,” said Twohie.



OFC Outreach to County Staff

Nosheen Khan of Child Care Assistance and Referral and Sharon Gamache of Community Education and Provider Services at the LiveWell Summer Safety Expo. Recently Khan and Gamache represented the Office for Children at a Summer Safety Expo for county staff. A variety of county agencies were also there. OFC provided information about keeping children safe in the summer, alongside information about OFC programs and services.



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.