Women’s Business Center and OFC Co-host Conference

Saturday, Sept. 13, nearly 300 county-permitted and state-licensed family child care providers filled the Fairfax County Government Center for Family Child Care: A Business of Caring, a conference focused on helping these small business owners develop essential financial and business management skills. The event was hosted by the Office for Children’s Community Education and Provider Services Division in partnership with Community Business Partnership’s Women’s Business Center of Northern Virginia.

“The idea for this conference grew out of a long standing partnership with Community Business Partnership’s Women’s Business Center,” explained CEPS child care specialist and conference organizer Cindy Gonzales. The Women’s Business Center has provided business workshops for new family child care providers in partnership with OFC since the early 1990s. The workshops help family child care providers establish a good foundation for operating and growing their businesses while earning required professional development hours.

Several speakers focused on how positive relationships with children and families help create and sustain the best programs for young children. Other topics included insurance, how to access health care, the benefits of joining the USDA Food Program, marketing strategies, using technology for networking and social media engagement, financial tools for business, and financial planning for retirement. Presenters included OFC staff, Cindy Osborn, Maggie Chavarria, Kamini Jassal, Abeba Tzeggai, Cynthia Brandt and Greta Chacon, as well as several industry experts who work with the Women’s Business Center.

Keynote speaker Juli Monroe of 1 to 1 Discovery (center) with CEPS Director Catherine Sauer, and Assistant Director Jene Moore.

Event organizers: Community Business Partnership President & CEO Kathy Wheeler, CEPS Child Care Specialist Cindy Gonzales, and Women’s Business Center Assistant Director Sonja Caison.
VAECE Newsletter Includes Focus on Out-of-School Time

Throughout the coming year, “Viewpoint,” the newsletter of the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education will have a column dedicated to supporting the out-of-school time workforce. In the fall issue, SACC Director Anne Goldstein’s article “Back to School – A Great Time to Focus on Children’s Before- and After-School Time,” discusses the significant role school age child care programs play in supporting positive child and youth development.

The article provides links to research findings showing that children who have access to high quality out-of-school-time activities, designed and staffed by professionals and based on youth development research, enjoy greater positive outcomes.

Goldstein cites Deborah Lowe Vandell’s research linking consistent participation in quality out-of-school-time activities as a factor in positive outcomes for children including:

- Improvement in overall student achievement.
- Increased school attendance and improved work habits.
- Positive effects on behavior.

Vandell’s research also identified a correlation between supportive and caring staff and a positive assessment of the out-of-school-time program. Furthermore, when children like their afterschool program, they show improvement in the classroom.

Quality afterschool programs provide an invaluable service to families and play a significant role in supporting children’s development.

Welcome Back, Vera!

Vera Steiner Blore is the new executive director of Fairfax Futures. After a five year hiatus during which she relocated to Seattle and pursued other professional opportunities, Steiner Blore is excited to be back at the helm of the organization that she led successfully from 2004 to 2009.

Office for Children Director Anne-Marie Twohie commented, “Vera is a passionate advocate, committed to engaging business, government, early childhood and community leaders in support of quality early childhood education and school readiness in Fairfax County.”

Through funding from foundations and corporations, Fairfax Futures supports initiatives including professional development of early childhood educators, the Annual School Readiness Symposium and support of the Neighborhood School Readiness Project.

Steiner Blore commented “I appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with so many talented and dedicated leaders in the Greater Metropolitan Washington area who share a commitment to making a difference in the lives of our county’s youngest children and their families.”

Steiner Blore has more than 26 years of experience working in the nonprofit, private and public sectors. This includes strategic planning, board development, fundraising and evaluation for a variety of nonprofit clients such as the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation, the Texas State Aquarium, and the Art Museum of South Texas. She also served as Manager of Governor Dukakis’ International Trade Advisory Board, as adjunct instructor at Texas A&M’s Business School and as Director of International Trade Policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
Families Rank CCAR Service a Success

OFC’s Child Care Assistance and Referral program recently conducted a customer satisfaction survey of families who have received program services. CCAR services include providing child care subsidies to income-eligible families who are working, in school or participating in an approved activity. CCAR also provides resource and referral assistance for families in the community seeking child care.

This year ninety-eight percent of the respondents to the survey rated CCAR’s services as good or excellent. In addition to these positive results, many respondents specifically complimented members of the CCAR staff or wrote about their appreciation for the program:

They described staff as being helpful, friendly, fair and providing “excellent service.”

Other positive comments included:

“I appreciate the help paying for child care. My sons are ready for kindergarten.”

“I am very thankful and appreciate all the help you all have done for me and my child.”

Carol Keil, director of CCAR, said, “Our staff is dedicated to helping families achieve their goals and supporting families who need quality child care in order to work or seek an education.”

Video Developed for Neighborhood School Readiness Project

Fairfax Futures, in partnership with the Office for Children and Fairfax County Public Schools has developed a new video highlighting the Neighborhood School Readiness Project. Neighborhood teams, composed of early childhood educators, school and county staff, and community members, work together to engage and collaborate with families in support of children’s school readiness. The project pursues creative solutions to help close the achievement gap before children enter kindergarten.

“We had several goals in mind while working on this video,” said School Readiness Coordinator Betsi Closter. “We hope to use it to increase participation on the teams and as an introductory video to help new team members acclimate to the teams. Fairfax Futures also will use the video to reach out to potential funders interested in supporting systemic change that increases young children’s opportunity for academic and lifelong success.”

Interviews in the video demonstrate the importance of this project and feature Congressman Gerry Connolly, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, and FCPS Superintendent Karen Garza. Current NSRP team members, including teachers, program administrators and family child care providers discuss successes.

Currently, there are a total of 17 elementary schools connected to 10 teams. When communities work together in support of children’s success in school and beyond, children experience less stress and are likely to show progress more quickly when they enter kindergarten. Interest in the NSRP’s work continues to grow in the county and across the region. Additions to existing teams and the creation of new teams are anticipated in the 2014-2015 school year.

For more information about teams or to view the video visit: www.fairfax-futures.org.
SACC Turns 40!

This year we celebrate SACC’s 40th anniversary! In the fall of 1974, SACC programs opened their doors to children and families in eight elementary schools serving 160 children daily. Today the program serves more than 10,600 children each day in 137 Fairfax County Public Schools and one recreation center. SACC provides high quality school-age child care, helping families succeed and children thrive.

At SACC’s annual teacher orientation this fall, staff discussed plans for a series of small celebrations to be held throughout the year to commemorate the 40th anniversary. Teachers were encouraged to engage children in planning activities related to the anniversary at their centers. “SACC’s curriculum focus this year, Amazing Kids: Discovering the WOW! in every child, is an inspiration to children to celebrate 40 years of SACC in unique ways,” said SACC Program Administrator Beth Leggat. “We can’t wait to see how children and teachers at the centers put their own creative spin on celebrating 40 years.”

Erin Ramsey of the Families and Work Institute was the keynote speaker to a crowd of nearly 700 SACC teachers at the orientation. Ramsey presented information from Ellen Galinsky’s book “Mind in the Making: Seven Essential Life Skills for Children,” which provided teachers with the background of how SACC’s curriculum focus encourages the development of children’s executive functioning skills.

In addition, representatives from a variety of county and community organizations provided staff development opportunities and ideas to help teachers inspire children to identify and explore their unique talents.

We are very excited to embark on our 40th year of service to children and families in the community,” said SACC Director Anne Goldstein. “We look forward to continuing our successful partnership with families, the community, our county colleagues and Fairfax County Public Schools.”

Bonnie Brae SACC joins the celebration of SACC’s 40 Years.