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Snohomish County Human Services *ECEAP*

AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

Memorable “Celebrate the Successes” Dinner

Dionne King

On April 22, parents, staff and honored guests gathered for a magical evening of food and sharing personal stories about the people who matter the most: our children. The evening began with a delicious dinner catered by Cristiano’s of Marysville and continued with several ECEAP parents and staff members sharing their favorite memories of the 2009-2010 school year. Many stories were about the marvelous achievements that our children and families have experienced and witnessed throughout the past year. Honored at this year’s dinner were many local community members who dedicated countless hours to the ECEAP children and families. Recipients of the “Caring Community Awards” went to Pat Timko, Kathy Smargiassi, the staff of Operation School Bell, Joel Carter, the Council Members of Bethany Lutheran Church, Bob Hughes, Raisa Pavlus, Nataliya Derkach, and Alf’s Pizza of Granite Falls.

Time was also taken to thank the PAC (Parent Advisory Council) members and ECEAP staff members at the Snohomish County office.

We thank all the individuals who helped make the dinner such a memorable event: the PAC members for organizing and helping with setting



up the dinner; Snohomish County ECEAP staff for their hard work in preparing for and making the event possible, and, most importantly, to the parents and community members for their devotion and selfless contributions toward the future of our children. We look forward to watching our children achieve the goals they set in ECEAP.



Possibilities for Children

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Henri Wilson, director of the Arts Council of Snohomish County's Denney Art Program. Having been away from Snohomish County for six years, I was unfamiliar with the four children's books created by youth in the project.

The most recently published "Possible Creature Questions" features darting dragonflies and snakes slithering across bright and lively pages. The illustrations, inspired by artist Eric Carle (author of "The Hungry Caterpillar"), are images of animals from around the world. The colors are rich and the poetry tells of the inner life of the child - mystery, a little fear and the joy of play. "Mr Hyena, I heard you howl. Is that a laugh, or did you growl?"

They sound like smart writers of children's books to me! Ms. Wilson discussed the history of the program and how the youth in the program see themselves involved in literacy for young children. She told me she was teaching at Denney in 2003 when she and her assistant Sharon Dittenberger took a class creating collage illustrations in Eric Carle's style. Originally Ms. Wilson intended to print 60-70 copies of "Possible Creature Questions" but with support from Snohomish ECEAP, the Arts Council's board and other funders, the first printing grew to 5,000 copies! The books are very popular with early childcare providers and physicians' offices throughout the county. Students involved in the Denney Project will also distribute and read their books in kindergarten classrooms.

Ms. Wilson uses positive memories from the writers' childhoods for brainstorming book ideas to create. They also talk about favorite books they read as children. Ms. Wilson believes that the youth she works with "get right away" the fact they have a positive influence on young children and in turn benefit from improved self-esteem. As they look back on their own childhood and think ahead to one day becoming parents, they understand and take

pride in the fact their collaborative efforts are creating healthy tools for young children.



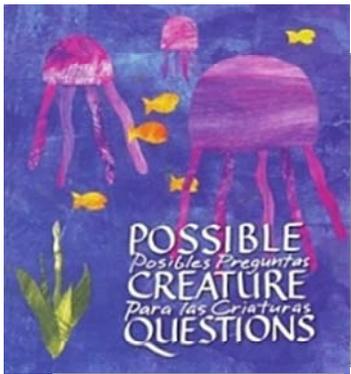
Food and Medical Assistance

Basic Food, the state's food stamp program, helps people in Washington make

ends meet by providing monthly benefits to buy food. Participating in Basic Food also has other benefits such as:

- enrollment in free school meals for school-aged children;
- qualification for low-cost local phone service and;
- meeting the income guidelines for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

Citrine Health (425-259-9899 or 808-651-3931) is an organization that can help families and individuals get connected to the Basic Food program. They can help fill out the application over the phone as well as help with questions or concerns over Basic Food assistance the family already receives. Citrine Health can also help families apply for the Children's Medical Health Program.



Getting Ready for School



One of the most important goals of ECEAP is to prepare children for success in school. There are many skills and attitudes that help children become successful academically. Some of the most important include:

Social Emotional Skills
Attitude about Learning
Pre-Academic Skills, and
Fine Motor Skills and Gross
Motor Skills



Here's what they look like!

Social and Emotional Skills
Being excited about kindergarten;



knowing how to get along with others; knowing how to ask for help; feeling good about one's self; knowing how to talk with others and how to listen.

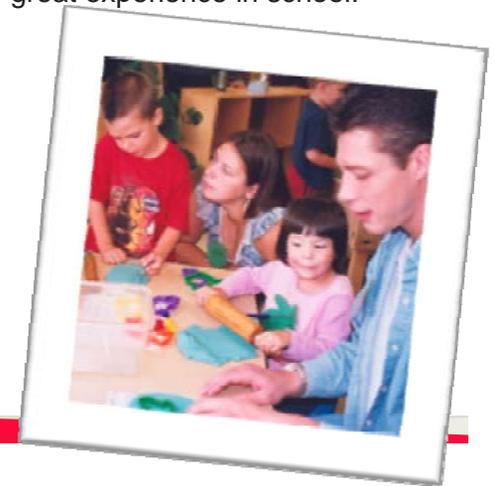
Attitude about Learning
Being excited about learning; trying new things; enjoying challenges; feeling good about one's family and culture and being interested in other cultures.

Pre-Academic Skills
Familiarity with words and books; knowledge of shapes, sizes and colors and the ability to count and understand that numbers have meaning.

Fine Motor Skills and Gross Motor Skills:

Using hands and fingers to do small tasks like puzzles and drawings; using arms and legs to run and dance; taking care of personal needs such as eating, dressing, and using the bathroom.

By watching and supporting these skills and attitudes in their growing children, parents can feel good about knowing they are active partners in preparing them for a great experience in school.



Success Story

Antonio Gonzalez, Marysville ECEAP

I came to the United States from Huajuapán de León, Oaxaca, Mexico, in 1986. My wife, Maria, came in 2002. Esperanza, my oldest daughter, was born in 2003 and another daughter, Perla, was born in 2004. My son, Irving, was born in 2007.

Some friends told us about ECEAP. We enrolled Esperanza when she was 4 years old. We were nervous for Esperanza's first day at school. I took the afternoon off to meet the bus. Esperanza came off the bus with a big smile. She was very happy and enjoyed her year at ECEAP. She learned a lot and now has been tested and qualified for Hi Cap.

Perla was able to begin ECEAP when she was 3 years old. She spent two years with Mrs. Richey and has shown that she is now ready for kindergarten.

Our son Irving is 3 years old now and can't wait to get on the bus and go to ECEAP!

My wife and I enjoyed the home visits and the family support we received while in ECEAP. We believe that ECEAP has prepared our children to succeed in school and we are very thankful for the help we have received.



Winning Wheels

Dave Wood, manager of the Sky Valley ECEAP Preschool, is proud to announce that the Sky Valley ECEAP Bus took third place in the Non-Commercial Vehicle Category at the Shindig Parade in July. Dave usually enters the bus as a way of marketing ECEAP, but this was the first time he put the signs on the bus. Good idea, Dave! Lots of ECEAP kids were in the crowd of approximately 2,000 people watching the parade, and they could be heard shouting, "There's my school bus!"



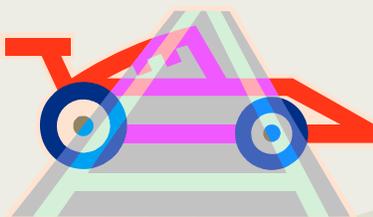
Derby Night at Kids Place!

Jeniffer Nations



On April 29, Kid's Place enjoyed a fantastic evening racing derby cars down a three-lane track provided by one of the children's grandparents. A week prior to the race, staff members distributed derby car kits to every child. Dads, moms, grandparents and children collaborated on painting their derby car for the race on family night. Kid's Place extends their "Thank You!" to the special grandparent who built the track for the evening's derby.

Children had a blast racing their own car and lots of giggles, ooh's and aah's could be heard throughout the night as the races took place and prizes were awarded for each age group. Everyone went home with a chocolate race car! What a great experience for Kid's Place staff, parents, and children!



Early Childhood Education Programs' Effects on Families

Mari Taylor



Many parents see great benefits to their children through participation in ECEAP. We watch our children strengthen social skills, develop early literacy abilities and gain a greater understanding of the world

illness, unemployment, family conflict or grief, ECE programs and social services not only help us cope at the time of crisis, but also help us learn to deal with future stress. In ECEAP, teachers and family support staff partner with

future success. These families' stories illustrate ways in which ECEAP has provided opportunities to strengthen skills around:

- maintaining a positive outlook and understanding the role of personal agency and perseverance and contextualizing the challenges families are facing,
- problem-solving skills and resourcefulness by linking families to available social and economic resources and to the larger community, including building leadership and initiative skills in parents,
- reinforcing and improving positive communications strategies at home and within the larger community.



around them. This common experience may also be related to family participation in ECEAP.

Long-term studies have shown that families of children enrolled in quality early childhood education programs may experience benefits such as higher incomes and increased education levels for parents. To help understand other ways in which families benefit from ECEAP, we set out to hear the stories of families of children enrolled in the program.

Everyone has strengths and faces challenges. Different challenges (risk factors) increase our vulnerability to stress and our strengths (protective factors) buffer against those stressors. At any point in time, we are all more or less susceptible to the impacts of life stresses depending upon the balance of these factors. When we face challenges like poverty,

families to build on their existing strengths and increase resiliency.

Resiliency is often described as the ability to bounce back from life's challenges, but it might be better understood as "bouncing forward" or emerging from difficulties stronger than before. Our resiliency increases each time we succeed through a difficult challenge.

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year we interviewed 12 families of children enrolled in ECEAP in four public elementary schools. Their stories revealed a great deal about ECEAP's effects on families. Many study participants credited their ECEAP staff and program with strengthening their child's academic and social skills, and also with helping to build on family strengths and to increase capacity for their own

I would like to express my gratitude to the wonderful families who volunteered to participate in this study. I found each participant to be warm and welcoming, generous with their time and with their stories and genuinely eager to share their experiences. They have inspired me with their courage and compassion.

Ramey, C., Campbell, F., Burchinal, , Skinner, M., Gardner, D., & Ramey, S. (2000). Persistent effects of early childhood education on high-risk children and their mothers. Applied Developmental Science, 4(1), 2-2.

Walsh, Froma. (2006). Strengthening Family Resilience. New York, NY: The Guilford Press

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*Together
we can make a difference
in your child's education*



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What is ECEAP?

- The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a free preschool program for four and five year olds and is funded by Washington state.
- ECEAP offers programs in Snohomish and Skagit Counties. We honor and welcome all families.

What Services are Provided?

- Educational experiences including language skills, self-help activities, social skills and self-esteem building, field trips and preparation for kindergarten.
- Health and nutrition education for children and families including vision and hearing screenings, connections for families to medical and dental resources, well-balanced meals and snacks.
- Family support including parent education, information about local resources, family fun nights and activities, opportunities for personal growth, involvement in your child's education and involvement in program decision-making.

ECEAP

Fall Calendar 2010

September

9/7 Teacher Pre-service

9/8 Teacher Pre-service

9/9 Teacher Pre-service half day

9/17 Family Support Pre-Service

9/21 Mental Health Subcommittee

9/24 Health Training Day

October

10/5 PAC Meeting

10/8 Second Step Training

10/8 Right Response Certification - Group A

10/13 HAC Meeting - Head Start

10/15, 22

Right Response Certification for New Staff Part 1/2

November

11/2 PAC Meeting

11/5 Right Response Re-Certification; Group B

December

12/7 PAC Meeting

12/10 Talking About Touching Training

12/10 Right Response Re-Certification Group C

12/14 Mental Health Subcommittee Meeting

A Newsletter for Parents

The Snohomish County ECEAP Newsletter is published three times a year by the Snohomish County Department of Human Services. We invite your feedback and suggestions on topics of interest and welcome your photographs showing ECEAP activities. Please feel free to call Joe Varano at 425-388-7251.

