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○ WINTER | ○ 2010

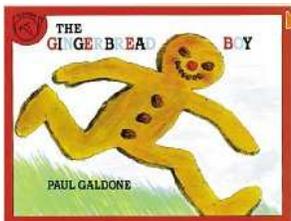
# Snohomish County Human Services

# ECEAP

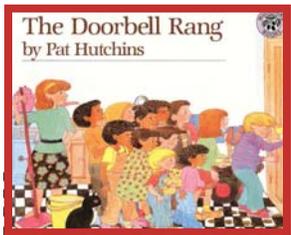
AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

## Snohomish County Executive Reardon Supports ECEAP Funding

 Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon highlighted the importance of giving as well as the importance of the state's Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) during a recent visit to Hawthorne Elementary School (one of 21 ECEAP classrooms operated by Snohomish County). Reardon read *The Gingerbread Boy* and *The Doorbell Rang*, to the class of three- and four-year-olds, shared gingerbread cookies and talked about the need to share with others.



to the class of three- and four-year-olds, shared gingerbread cookies and talked about the need to share with others.



"The earlier we prepare children and families for school, the more successful they will be, benefiting themselves and their community," Reardon said. "These are our future workers, leaders and decision-makers.

We must be sure they're prepared."



With deep state cuts on the horizon, the ECEAP Program is under threat of losing funding and potentially having to eliminate three-year-old children from the program. More than 1,100 children and their families participated in ECEAP in Snohomish County during 2009. Snohomish County could potentially lose 162 slots or \$1.1M.

After talking to the children about giving, Reardon said, "We need to make sure that the state continues to give enough funding to this incredibly successful program and we should encourage state officials to increase that funding."

Snohomish County currently has a waiting list of 707 children needing ECEAP Services.

# Snohomish County Expands Early Learning Programs

 Snohomish County will receive \$2.45 million in federal stimulus funds to provide comprehensive, high-quality Early Head Start services during the next two years. Funding will allow the county to provide services to 82 infants, toddlers and pregnant women in Marysville, Arlington, Granite Falls and Sultan.

Early Head Start provides family-centered services for low-income families with very young children and is designed to promote child development and enable parents to fulfill their parental roles while moving toward self-sufficiency. The program provides families with parent education, health and dental screenings, social services, nutrition, and developmental assessments.

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon remarked, "This project will help us meet our goal of providing early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services that enhance the physical, language, social-emotional and intellectual development of participating children. Ensuring that infants and toddlers have good health, strong families and positive early learning experiences will lay the foundation for success throughout their lives."

The inclusion of Early Head Start in county government provides an opportunity to bring public health, early intervention, housing assistance and a strong comprehensive early childhood program to wrap around Early Head Start families. Strong community partnerships including school districts, nonprofit agencies and community colleges will provide intensive services that nurture children and promote self-sufficiency in parents.

Snohomish County also provides state-funded Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) services to nearly 1,000 preschool students.

 For more information on the county's early learning programs, call Snohomish County ECEAP Manager Joe Varano, 425-388-7251.



## Jumpstart's Read for the Record Campaign

Mukilteo ECEAP

 On October 8, 2009, the International Reading Association and the Pearson Foundation sponsored the reading of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle for Jumpstart's Read for the Record Campaign to draw attention to early education and at-risk children in preschool classrooms. On this day in October, in thousands of settings across the world, readers of all ages joined together to break the record for the number of people reading the same book on the same day. The book was also read by Matt Lauer and Meredith Vieira on NBC's Today Show on the book's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



Mukilteo ECEAP participated in the effort, inviting important grown-ups to read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in their classrooms. Mr. Don, the wonderful custodian, read the book to the children in English and one of the children's moms read the book in Spanish. Everyone enjoyed the special time together.



For more information on the Read for the Record Campaign, visit [www.readfortherecord.org](http://www.readfortherecord.org) and [www.pearsonfoundation.org](http://www.pearsonfoundation.org).

# Keeping Your Child's TV and Media Viewing Balanced



Child Care Resources of King County released the following list of tips after a recent study found that children in home-based childcare are watching more and more TV.

- **Limit children's total media (screen time) time to no more than 1-2 hours of quality programming per day.** Be firm. Help your child find things to do instead of watching TV, such as sports, reading, hobbies or family activities. [afterschoollearning.org](http://afterschoollearning.org)
- **Discourage television viewing for children younger than two years.** Encourage more interactive activities that will promote proper brain development, such as talking, playing, singing and reading together. [zerotothree.org](http://zerotothree.org)

- **Watch TV with your child.** Young children may have a difficult time discerning from what they see and what is real. Help your child understand what they are watching.
- **Remove television sets from children's bedrooms.** When a child watches TV in their own bedroom, it is harder for parents to direct program choices. Your child may get less sleep, causing them to be tired at school.
- **Turn off the television during meal times.** Meal time is a great time of day for families to spend meaningful time together. Use the time to connect and talk with one other.
- **Set an example with your own behavior.** Keep books,

magazines and board games easily accessible. Visit the library often with your child; help them select books instead of watching TV. Make going outdoors for physical activity part of an enjoyable family exercise program.

- **Use videos and recordings to guide the quality of programming viewed and avoid commercials.** Choose programming and news items to initiate discussions regarding your family's values about violence, sex, substance abuse and self image.

Many thanks to *Child Care Resources* of King County for sharing these great tips!



Read for the Record

# Nurturing Creativity

 Children are naturally creative! They see the world through eyes very different than those of most adults and use what they see in inventive and ingenious ways. Creativity is critical to a child's development. It allows children to express themselves and grow socially as they pretend and play with one another. Creativity also helps with a child's intellectual growth. As children explore their world through language, imaginative play, artistic expression and concrete experiences, their knowledge is increased. Children's reasoning and problem-solving skills are developed when they are engaged in fun activities while they experiment, wonder, create and discover.

Linda Hartzell, of Seattle Children's Museum, shares five things parents can do to encourage creativity:



Incorporate one or two of these fun ideas into time with your child. You will be inspired by your child's creativity!

# ECEAP PAC

 On the first Tuesday evening of every month, the Snohomish County ECEAP Policy Council (PAC) meets on the county campus. PAC, comprised of current and former ECEAP parents, is led by a team of elected officers supported by Joe Varano, Snohomish County ECEAP Program Manager. The purpose of PAC is to develop parent empowerment and leadership skills. PAC members serve as a link between the sites and county ECEAP administration. Additionally, PAC representatives assist the County by reviewing programs, completing an ECEAP Standards compliance self assessment, recruiting families and advocating for ECEAP with Washington State legislators.

Please join us in congratulating ECEAP's new Policy Council officers for 2009-2010:

- Chair .....Heather Lindal
- Vice Chair .....Jennifer Cox
- Secretary .....Dionne King
- Treasurer .....Isis Santana
- WSA Representatives .....Jennifer Cox  
.....Nicole Osborn
- WSA Alternates .....Angel Maine  
.....Kara Simonson

We look forward to working with these committed individuals as we continually improve our services to children and families throughout Snohomish County!



## “Dads of Great Students”

### WatchD.O.G.S.

Marysville ECEAP began a new program this year with the goal of increasing the number of men involved in their ECEAP classrooms: WatchD.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students). WatchD.O.G.S. is an innovative program that focuses on safety and education in schools by using the positive influence of fathers and father-figures. Through one-on-one support, working in small groups, reading to students, “playing” at recess, etc., these important men support the school. The national program was recognized by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

In mid-October, Marysville kicked-off the program by hosting a Pizza and Dads Party. Eighty-three significant men in the lives of ECEAP children attended the event and 46 committed to coming in at least one day out of the school year to volunteer in their child’s classroom. Every man making the commitment and his ECEAP child will receive a special WatchD.O.G.S. T-shirt - a huge hit for children and adults alike. More and more men are stepping forward to volunteer as families see the WatchDogs at school and notice the t-shirts.

One such volunteer is Rodney Munson, the custodian for Shoultes Elementary (housing the Marysville program). Rodney volunteers for an hour once a week in an ECEAP classroom before his Shoultes shift begins. When asked why he decided to be a WatchDog, Rodney simply said, “I really enjoy being with the students.” On his first day as a WatchDog, Rodney read the book *The Happy Custodian* (written by Marysville School District custodians) and took the students on a tour of his office. Rodney wanted the children to see what he did everyday when he came to work. Several of the children now recognize and greet Rodney when they see him at school and Rodney proudly wears his WatchD.O.G.S. t-shirt.

## MEET MEGAN

*“We are pleased to have Megan volunteer in our classroom this year!”*

**Lakewood  
ECEAP**



Megan is a student in Lake Steven School District’s Transition Program. She is the daughter of Colleen Stringer, a kindergarten teacher at Lakewood Elementary. According to Megan’s mom, Tuesdays can’t come often or fast enough for Megan. She “loves spending time in the ECEAP classroom!”

Mrs. Stringer discussed the importance of finding job placements that are a “good fit” for individuals with disabilities, saying in her previous job, Megan did not have an opportunity to interact with others. Megan’s new job with ECEAP has given her a sense of purpose. When asked what she likes best about working in ECEAP, Megan said, “*I love being with Teacher Janet and Miss Kay, and the kids get so excited when they see me*”.

Staff members reported they “*benefit from having Megan available to work and play with the kids*” in their room and “*the pre-schoolers love the attention they receive from Megan. She brings a great deal of happiness and joy to our classroom*”

Mrs. Stringer expressed her gratitude saying, “*I am so thankful Megan has been given the chance to show what she is capable of.*”

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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 Spring Calendar 2010**

### **February 2010**

- 2/2 Policy & Advisory Council
- 2/18 Advocacy Trip to Olympia
- 2/26 Teacher Training

### **March 2010**

- 3/2 Policy & Advisory Council
- 3/12 Cooks Training
- 3/17 Program Manager Meeting
- 3/19 Family Support Training
- 3/26 Mental Health Sub-Committee

### **April 2010**

- 4/6 Policy and Advisory Council
- 4/14 Health Advisory Committee
- 4/22 Celebrate the Successes Dinner

## **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.