



July - August 2006



Child Care Links News

Child Care Links Honors Tri-Valley Child Care Providers!



Child Care Links, in collaboration with Directors of the Valley, also known as DOV, and Valley Family Child Care Association, also known as VFCCA, honored child care providers in the Tri Valley area in recognition of their work with children. During the early evening of May 16, 2006, approximately 180 staff from local child care centers, family child care providers, Las Positas College and Child Care Links celebrated fiesta style at the Pleasanton Senior Center. Child care professionals spent the evening enjoying each other's company, food catered by El Balazo and a comedy show through Laugh-A-Lot Productions, highlighting Maggie Newcomb. The event was sponsored by the City of Pleasanton and by Every Child Counts, First Five Alameda County. This annual event allows child care professionals to network with other child care providers in their area and recognize the importance of their work.

Child Care Links Celebrates 30 Years of Service

It seems like just yesterday that Child Care Links was known as Resources for Family Development and the agency was located only in Livermore. Now with offices in Oakland, Fremont, and Pleasanton, Child Care Links has grown to serve many families in all of Alameda County!

On behalf of the staff here at Child Care Links we are pleased and excited to invite you to save the date for the agency's 30th anniversary celebration! That's right, Child Care Links has been serving families and children in Alameda County for 30 years and the agency would like to celebrate and thank the community for 30 years of success and for many more to come! Please come out and join us at Val Vista Park, located in Pleasanton, from 10am to 3pm on October 14th, 2006. So make sure that you put that date on your calendar and get ready for some fun times with staff of Child Care Links!



Child Care Links

Child Care Links currently serves participants out of three offices located in Alameda County: Pleasanton, Fremont and Oakland. We are a Resource & Referral agency and an Alternative Payment/Cal WORKS Program, providing resources to the community by offering the following services:

- Subsidized Child Care Services
- Referrals to Licensed Child Care
- Family Education and Support Services
- Training and Support for Child Care Providers
- Inclusion Project
- Family Read Night

Child Care Links News is a bi-monthly publication.

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Celebrating 30 Years of Service to the Community

Congratulations Bernie Billen

Child Care Links would like to congratulate Bernie Billen, Vice President of Business Development at Valley Community Bank, as the first ambassador to be recognized as the Ambassador of the Quarter for the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce. Bernie Billen serves as a member of the Child Care Links Board of Directors.

Growing, Learning and Caring

Child Care Links welcomes Nicole Roman, Provider Services Specialist, to the Community Services team. Nicole will coordinate the Exempt Provider Outreach and Training Project, with assistance from Donnamarie Fuller, Project Specialist. Please join Child Care Links in welcoming Nicole to this new and exciting project.

Please Help Us Spread the Word!

In order to increase the quality of care for all children in all child care settings, Child Care Links is now offering training and play group activities for individuals providing license exempt care. Who provides license exempt care? Grandparents, nannies, babysitters, neighbors and friends, to name a few. Trainings will be advertised in the community and the Child Care Links News mailed out bi-monthly. If you know someone providing license exempt care, please let them know about our program. Similar to the Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP), license exempt participants will have the opportunity to earn incentives based on their participation in the program.

To learn more about the activities of the Growing, Learning and Caring Program, and ways you can participate— please contact Nicole Roman at (925) 249-3942.

Exempt Provider Outreach and Training Project

Play groups are scheduled twice a month in the Child Care Links conference room in Pleasanton. The Play Groups are the second and fourth Friday of every month from 10am to 11:15am. Play groups will include all of the following such as a short story, art activity, movement, and a healthy snack. During the play group sessions the children will learn socialization, fine/ gross motor skills, cognitive and language development. Adults must remain with the children at all times. Everyone must register for each play group session. For information regarding play groups please contact Nicole Roman at (925) 249-3942.

Orientations are now available!

Orientations are available once a month in our Pleasanton office. Orientations will consist of information about health, safety, and nutrition just to name a few. It is a great way to talk with other LEP providers to share ideas and learn new ones. For more information or to register please contact Nicole Roman at (925)249-3942.

All participants are eligible to receive incentives based on attendance at one or more of our programs. If you know someone providing license exempt care such as a nanny, relative, babysitter, neighbor, or a friend, please let them know about our services.

Help us spread the word!

Recipe for Homemade Fingerpaint

Summer time is here and we have a great idea to keep the kids busy. Also, a special recipe for homemade fingerpaint, for adults to make for the kids. Have fun!!!

Painted Rocks:

Invite your toddlers on a walk to gather large, smooth rocks. Then set out small containers of liquid tempera paint and paintbrushes. Let the children paint their special rocks however they wish. As they work, talk about the texture and color of the rocks.

Homemade Fingerpaint:

2 Tbsp. Cornstarch
2 Tbsp. Cold water
1 Cup boiling water

Combine cornstarch and cold water in a small bowl and mix until smooth. Pour in boiling water and mix again. Add powdered tempera paint or food coloring until the desired color is achieved. Chill to thicken.

Recipes for Fun Healthy Snack Time

Apple Walnut Muffins

Ingredients:

1 ½ cup flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup buttermilk
3 tablespoon vegetable oil
¼ cup brown sugar
1 egg
½ cup peeled apples
½ cup golden raisins



Please note: Mattie Henderson is no longer at the Pleasanton office. Please call Kim Judge (925) 249-3941, with any questions you may have, or if you need assistance with paperwork.

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
Grease a 12 cup muffin pan.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt.

In a large bowl, stir together the buttermilk, oil, brown sugar, and egg. Stir in the flour mixture until just combined. Do not over mix. Stir in the apples and raisins.

Divide the batter evenly among the prepared muffin cups, filling them about two-thirds full. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on a rack for 5 minutes. Remove from rack to cool completely.

The Health and Nutrition Program

The Health and Nutrition Department has enjoyed working with all of the providers who participated in the Child Care Food Program. Child Care Links will be discontinuing this program on June 30, 2006. Due to increased regulations and requirements, limited funding and increased workload for staff, the Child Care Links Board of Directors has decided it is in the best interest of the agency to discontinue the sponsorship of the Child Care Food Program. Child Care Links will continue to offer nutrition articles for the newsletter as well as trainings and workshops for providers. The agency is continuously committed to making sure children and families are receiving information about the importance of good nutrition.

Current providers can still claim through the end of June 2006. Please make sure you contact another sponsor from the list of sponsors provided by the state prior to June 30, 2006. If you have further questions, please contact Kim Judge.

Breast Feeding is Best

By Sally Maier, MS, RD, CDE-Registered Dietitian

Breast milk is the ideal food for infants. Unfortunately many new mothers give up on breastfeeding in the first few weeks due to sore nipples and feeding difficulties. There are many reasons to continue to breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of an infant's life. Keep in mind breastfeeding is a learned behavior and consulting with a lactation specialist can be invaluable if you have problems. Some babies learn to breastfeed more quickly and easily than others.

Breast milk and colostrum both provide antibodies that protect infants from disease. Breastfed babies have fewer colds, ear infections, allergies, urinary tract infections, and less diarrhea and bowel disorders. Even one bottle of formula can sensitize a newborn to cow's milk protein and increase chance of food allergies! Breastfeeding a newborn early and often reduces risk of jaundice and helps maintain the baby's blood sugar. The combination of nutrients in breast milk are important for infant brain and

organ development. Some studies suggest breastfed children have higher IQs and less risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), asthma, and cancer. Breastfeeding allows babies to determine how much they eat at a time. This natural baby-led portion control is believed to decrease the risk of overweight and type 2 diabetes in children.

Breastfeeding is definitely more convenient and economical for moms. There's nothing to buy or mix. You don't have to get up and get a bottle of formula ready in the middle of the night. Making breastmilk uses up about 200-500 calories a day which is helpful in losing weight after childbirth. Women who breastfeed regain their prepregnancy shape sooner. They also have reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer. The hormones produced during breastfeeding contribute to relaxation and stress relief. Breastfeeding can be a relaxing and gratifying time for mother and baby bonding.

Support is essential to help new mothers have success with breastfeeding. Taking classes, reading books, and identifying local resources are useful. It also helps to avoid using pacifiers and bottles during the first 4-6 weeks of breastfeeding to prevent nipple confusion.

Director's Corner

The child care field can be proud of its visibility this past six months in bringing to the forefront issues concerning children and their need for safe, quality child care. Many victories have resulted in our legislators in Sacramento being educated about child care issues and adopting budget language for the 2006-2007 fiscal year that will increase the opportunities for families and child care providers.

Several of these victories are as follows: State Median Income Schedule has been "defrosted" and the income eligibility for subsidized child care will go up to the "true" 75% of State Median Income. The current schedule has been outdated for several years and parents are being terminated from child care services and/or denied services based on old income levels. Increasing the median income for California will allow more parents to qualify for subsidized services and remain on programs for a longer period of time. This will offer more stability for low income families as they transition into employment and become more financially stable.

Another positive issue that the field anticipates occurring in the next fiscal year is the long awaited implementation of a new Regional Market Rate (RMR) that caps the amount a child care provider may charge for subsidized

child care services. The implementation of the new RMR will allow agencies to make payments to providers that more realistically reflect the true market rate for child care in the community.

Additional programs and services that deserve a heartfelt cheer is additional funding for Community Care Licensing in order to provide for a comprehensive licensing reform initiative and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state licensing program. After-school programs are also anticipated to receive additional funding in the new fiscal year to allow for more after school child care.

While all of the above items are not a "done deal" until the state budget is finalized, there is definitely a cause for celebration and congratulations to all who have tirelessly given of their time to keep child care issues uppermost in the minds of our legislative leaders. Ongoing visibility and education on children's issues is vital to securing adequate funding to provide the very best services for our state's children. Thank you from Child Care Links staff and families for all you have done to bring this visibility and awareness forward. We must continue to speak out for children lest they get lost in the shuffle of politics and other projects.

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