



SMART START MATTERS

A publication of Richmond County Partnership for Children

Study shows recession tough on children

A new report reveals that even temporary spells of poverty have lifelong health effects for children.

The report – *The Effect of the Recession on Child Well-Being* – reviews the relationship of health, food security, housing stability and maltreatment to the well-being of children during recessions. Authored by researchers from PolicyLab at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and commissioned by First Focus, the report shows that it will take years for families to recover to pre-recession income levels, with low-income families struggling even longer to rebound.

As a result of increased poverty, approximately 43 percent of families with children report struggling to afford stable housing.

The study also found a dramatic increase in households classified as “food insecure” during this recession. Almost a quarter of households with children fell into this category in 2008, the highest percentage since 1995 and a nearly 25 percent increase from 2007.

Please see *Recession on Page 6*



Partnership hosts classes for teachers and public events

Top: Brittany Grant and daughter Kaylee have fun at a Holiday Make 'n' Take. (More on Page 3.)

Middle: Alice Peterkin of Cyber Ed in Moore County builds blocks for her center. (More on Page 7.)

Bottom: Mae Smith, left, and Sabrina Marsh, both of Creative Beginnings Child Care Center in Ellerbee learn new treats to make for students. (More on Page 6.)



8 child care facilities earn Quality Improvement Grants

Eight local child care facilities are receiving Quality Enhancement Grants this year. The grant program funded by the Partnership helps facilities improve their educational program for children.

Last year, four of the five facilities that participated increased their star ratings, which is the state system that ranks licensed facilities from one to five stars. Kids Crossing, Kiddie Korner and Romper Room increased their rating from three stars to four and Precious Hands increased from two to three stars.

Currently, the average star rating for pre-kindergarten child care facilities is 3.46 in Richmond County, which exceeds the state standard of 3.25. In 2002, the average rating was 2.51.

Subsidized child care placements exceed the high performing

standard with an average of 3.83 stars and 67 percent of children in four or five star facilities. In 2002, the average rating was 2.63 stars.

This year, Kidz Konstruction and Kids Zone will receive Quality Improvement Grants and Quality Enhancement Facility Bonus for Staff Education.

Little Kingdom, Romper Room, Kid's World, Sandy's Creative Kids, Kidz First and CLG child care will receive the Infant/Toddler Improvement

A look at the different grants

Quality Improvement Grants help facilities increase their star rating through materials and/or training.

Based on availability and findings of environment rating scales, facilities may receive a grant for educational supplies and materials based upon a quality improvement plan.



Two students at Kiddie Korner enjoy "free" time to play together. Kiddie Korner increased its star rating from three stars to four stars last year after participating in the Quality Improvement Grant program.

Grant amounts are based on individual facility needs, with the maximum grant being \$10,000 for a center and \$4,000 for a family child care home.

The Quality Enhancement Infant/Toddler Grant helps facilities maintain their star rating through educational supplies and materials, based on a quality improvement plan. Grants of up to \$3,000 are given. Grants are given to facilities approaching state reassessment.

Quality Enhancement Facility Bonus for Staff Education provides

an incentive for facility staff to further their education. Centers of one to three stars may receive a bonus based on successful completion of college credit courses related to an early childhood education degree by staff. A facility can earn a bonus up to \$400 for each class by a full-time employed staff member per semester or up to \$200 for each part-time employee. Specific grade and employment requirements are required.

For each grant, Darlene Burris, the Partnership's quality enhancement coordinator, and a board committee assess each facility to identify its program strengths and needs and to develop a quality improvement plan. Burris meets with each teacher to review the improvement plan and conducts multiple workshops to help staff

implement the plan.

Complementary program materials are ordered, and each classroom is arranged to best meet the program goals as well as state guidelines. A post-program assessment ensures that scores will improve when the facility is reassessed by the state.

Partnership staff and facility employees work together for a year to implement the grant objectives.

We are looking forward to another great year for increased star ratings in child care centers and homes.



Winter Make 'n' Take draws crowd of parents, children



Maybe it was the upcoming holidays or maybe it was the cool weather. Or maybe it was just the opportunity for parents and children to have fun together. Whatever the reason, a crowd joined in the fun at our Winter Arts & Crafts Parent-Child Make-n-Take.

Top left: Aaron Smith shows his skill in crafts.

Top right: Nikki Keyes helps her son Thomas create a holiday craft. In the background are Lisa Crowley with grandson Damon Bryant.

Above: Jackie Blue with daughter Janiya are hard at work with their project.

Right: Hailey Solomon is in deep concentration as she creates a holiday craft.

Another free Make 'n' Take is set for February 8. See Page 6 for details.

January - March Training Calendar

Taking Care of the Caregiver

Tuesday, Jan. 11
6:15 p.m. -7:15 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$3
Taught by Marsha Williams

This class will provide light-hearted ways to deal with the everyday stress of an early childhood professional and the importance of “caring for the caregiver.”

Register by Jan. 7 at 4 p.m.

CPR and/or First Aid

Saturday, January 15
CPR - 8 a.m. – noon
First Aid – 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$20 for CPR, \$15 for first aid or \$30 for both
Taught by Frank McKay

Learn how to perform CPR and first aid to potentially save the live of co-workers and children at your facility.

Register by Jan. 10 at 4 p.m.

Oral Health & Young Children

Tuesday, Feb. 1
6:15 p.m. -7:15 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$3
Taught by Marsha Williams

Using the curriculum developed by Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc. CHIPR, participants will be able to state the importance of teeth, including primary (baby) teeth; demonstrate how to clean the teeth and gums of infants; describe how to incorporate tooth brushing in the early education setting; describe ways to prevent and treat oral injuries.



Register by Jan. 28 at 4 p.m.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Tuesday, Feb. 22
6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$3
Taught by Brandi Covington and Michell Kocan

Learn the signs and symptoms of SIDS and tools to help prevent the syndrome in your facility.

Register by Feb. 17 at 4 p.m.

Poisoning Prevention

Tuesday, March 1
6:15 p.m. -7:15 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$3
Taught by Marsha Williams

Utilizing the curriculum developed by Healthy Childcare Consultants, Inc. CHIPR, participants will be able to identify potentially toxic substances, such as cleaners, medicines, and plants; list places where toxic substances are commonly found in and around the home or early care facility.



Register by Feb. 24 at 4 p.m.

More for Less

Tuesday, March 29
6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
At the Partnership
Cost is \$3
Taught by Brandi Covington and Michell Kocan

Come learn how to turn your everyday trash into toys for your classroom. Participants will see how to make musical instruments and math materials, plus create science experiments. Participants will make items to use in their classroom.

Register by March 24 at 4 p.m.

Registration sheet for classes

Session Title	Date	Number Attending	Fee	Total Amount
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Taking Care of the Caregiver	Jan. 11	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

CPR	Jan. 15	_____	\$20	_____
First Aid		_____	\$15	_____
CPR and First Aid		_____	\$30	_____
Names _____				

Oral Health & Young Children	Feb. 1	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

SIDS	Feb. 22	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Poisoning Prevention	March 1	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

More For Less	March 29	_____	\$3	_____
Names _____				

Registration only valid with cash or check payable to Richmond County Partnership for Children. Forms and payments can be delivered or mailed to PO Box 1944, Rockingham, NC 28380. Registration is due two business days before training; refunds only if a session is canceled. Children are not allowed at training classes. If you bring a child, you will be asked to leave. Participants who arrive more than 15 minutes late will not receive a certificate of completion. However, you may still participate.

Amount Enclosed _____



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Kid's Crossing for achieving a four-star license! That's a significant achievement.

Recession

Continued from Page 1

In housing, better safety nets are needed. In 2008, nearly two out of every five renters spent 35 percent or more of their income on housing. The number of homeless families with children in a shelter rose by 30 percent between 2007 and 2009.

“While there has been much discussion about housing issues for families during this recession, I’m not sure many people know how profound the food insecurity issues have been, where as many as 74 percent of children in some of our communities are now relying on food stamps to put dinner on the table,” said David Rubin, MD, director of PolicyLab.

The report also shows the benefit of government programs.

“Despite serious increases in child poverty as a result of the economic downturn and an increasingly high number of adults without health insurance, the uninsured rate for children has remained flat,” said Bruce Lesley, president of First Focus, a bipartisan child advocacy organization.

“This is entirely due to the overwhelming success of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and highlights that targeted federal investments in the health care safety net make a huge difference in the lives of children.”



Fun With Food

Child care providers learned some exciting and nutritional ways to incorporate food into their lesson plans during a recent workshop sponsored by the Partnership. Here, they are dipping pretzels in melted white chocolate and rolling them in sprinkles. Above, from left, are Letisha Perdue, Dean Hammond, Katrina McCrimmon, Tammy Honeycutt and Katie Fox. Below left, Katie Fox and Tammy Honeycutt enjoy a moment of humor with the finished product before they bite in. Below right, the product in process.



Free Make 'n' Take for parent, child

The Partnership is holding a free parent-child Make-n-Take on Feb. 8 at the Partnership for Children office.

Set for 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the event offers quick, easy and inexpensive crafts and experiments parents can do at home with their child.

Plus everyone has an opportunity to make crafts and games to take home. The evening is a lot of fun for everyone – from child to parent and even grandparents!

Light snacks will be served. Registration is not required.

Making block play not just fun, but also a learning experience



Child care teachers attending a workshop recently created boxes for their facilities to use in block play. In addition, the teachers learned how to use block play to teach children concepts such as quantity, patterns, sorting, counting, adding and subtracting, area, volume and measurement. At left, Martie Polston of Kid's World, left, creates blocks for her center.. Above from left, Jewell Bullard and Letisha Perdue from Second Baptist and Mary McCall of Cyber Ed create boxes for their facilities.

Briefly

Day of Training for child care providers is set for March 19 at Washington Street School. Look for registration materials soon.

Obesity can be detected in infants as young as 6 months, according to a study at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

By analyzing medical records of babies at routine "well-child" visits, investigators found that about 16 percent of 6-month-olds were considered obese.

Further analysis showed that obese 2-year-olds were much more likely to have been obese at 6 months than 2-year-olds who were not obese. "Until very recently, pediatricians really haven't been focusing on obesity in babies," said Dr. David McCormick, UTMB clinical professor of pediatrics.

Latino children are doing a little bit better than three years ago, according to a report by Action for Children, Latino Children in N.C.

"There are strong protective factors in the Latino community that help offset risks for children. Most Latino babies are born healthy and thrive. Latino children and youth are positively engaged with their families and have high self-esteem. Most Latino children have at least one parent who works," the report states, adding that too many Latino children are denied access to health care, high quality education, safety, and family economic security.

January is



Birth Defects Prevention Month



... but any month is the month to prevent birth defects.

- ◆ Take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
- ◆ Don't smoke or drink alcohol.
- ◆ See your health care professional regularly.
- ◆ Talk to your doctor about vaccinations (shots).
- ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and water to prevent infections.

Whether or not you are planning a pregnancy, now is the time to prevent birth defects.

Visit www.cdc.gov/ncbddd to learn more about preventing birth defects.

This poster was developed in partnership with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities



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Visit us at www.richmondsmartstart.org

Rockingham, 28380-1944

PO Box 1944

*Partnership
for Children*
RICHMOND COUNTY