

WCFCCA Newsletter

February 2009
Volume 2, Issue 1



Dear Providers

Happy 2009! With the New Year comes different legislative priorities, but we need to ensure that early childhood education remains a priority. The recession has dimmed many hopes to increase funding for childcare, but we can help by contacting our representatives and explaining the importance of what we do in children's lives. For more information about how you can get involved, go to www.childcareworks.org. As always, if you have suggestions for our newsletter, trainings, website, or anything else, please let us know!

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Upcoming Events

All trainings are held on Tuesday nights from 7-9PM at the St. Michael Community Education Building. Trainings are FREE for members, \$15 for non-members. Reserve space by calling or e-mailing us; non-members must register through CCR&R at 1-877-311-2244.

February 17 -- Field Trips Without Leaving Your Neighborhood

You might be asking yourself "how do I take the children on a field trip without leaving the neighborhood when nothing is around me?" This class will give you great ideas of what kinds of field trips you can offer your families that are fun for them and for you. The majority of them will cost next to nothing, you will not have to transport them in your car and all the children can participate.

March 3 -- ADHD: Seeing the Disability Behind the Behavior

Navigating the landscape of a child with AD/HD might be easier if providers had a 'map' to follow! Join other participants in this interactive training in discovering the myths and facts of AD/HD as well as exploring successful and practical strategies for inclusion of children with AD/HD.

April 7 -- Self Esteem

Lots of articles & books talk about the importance of giving a child a great self image. Self esteem is a term that has

been used widely and broadly interpreted. The essence of self-esteem is not knowledge of facts or possession of particular skills, rather, it is an attitude toward the self and it grows in childhood as a child experiences that he or she is valued. Although self-esteem is defined simply, it is connected to two separate areas within a child and both are critical to healthy self-esteem. Come learn what these two areas are & activities that promote good self-esteem in infant, toddler, & preschool children.

Please
remember to
RSVP or CANCEL
in **ADVANCE** as
trainings fill up
quickly!

MLFCCA Report

There are several proposals at the state and national level that will affect family childcares. Gov. Pawlenty has proposed several spending cuts in childcare assistance programs to help eliminate the budget deficit, but early childhood seems to have won over many representatives through workshops and town hall meetings. Go to www.childcareworks.org for a list of locations of these meetings, where residents can voice their concerns and suggestions for cutting the deficit and championing early childhood education! MLFCCA's Week of the Provider Banquet and Conference is May 1-2 in North Mankato. MLFCCA is looking for board members and committee members; if interested call Kathy Baumgart at 763-754-2365 or email her with any questions at Kathy.baumgart@mlfcca.org. For more information on MLFCCA, please visit www.mlfcca.org



Whether you're a childcare provider looking to improve your program, a family searching for childcare, an advocate for better childcare, or anyone with a question, we are here to help you.

Provider Appreciation Day

Did you know that there's an entire week dedicated to Family Child Care? In 1987, people began celebrating the first week of May as the "Week of the Family Child Care Provider." It kicks off at the MLFCCA Statewide Conference May 1-2, while the celebration runs May 3 - 9, with National Provider Appreciation Day on May 8. Some providers take the day off and attend trainings or just relax, while most continue working as they do every day. However, you should mark it on calendar's you give to your parents or in newsletters, not necessarily so they'll shower you with gifts or cards (although they're always welcome), but to make people aware of the impact family child care providers have on our children and, therefore, the world. Use it as an opportunity to educate yourself and others about the difference you, as an early childhood educator, make in their children's world!

Grants

R.E.E.T.A.I.N (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) is a workforce retention program that strives to reduce the turnover rates among child care providers who work with young children. Grant recipients are free to use grant dollars as they choose. Grant dollars are considered additional salary and may be used to pay bills, reinvest in your in your child care setting, or cover personal expenses. The grants range from \$1000 to \$3500 depending upon the level of education attained. The grant application period is June 1 through July 31. REETAIN offers grants to providers who:

- Are licensed or work for a licensed program
- Work at least 30 hours per week directly with the same 1 or 2 groups of children
- Have been working in their current position for at least one year
- Have earned a CDA, Associate Degree, Bachelors degree or higher
- Are willing to commit to staying in their position for one year.

Applications will be available at www.mnstreams.org. For more information, contact Linda Magel at lindam@mncildcare.org or (651) 290-9704 ext. 108.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to WCFCCA:

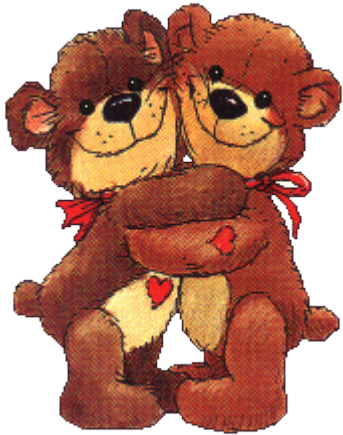
*Sara Bean, Albertville
Tonya Whitton, Waverly
Colleen Hager, St. Michael*

*Marion Bryant, Waverly
Anita Kolstad, Monticello*

New members can join online at <http://www.wcfcca.org/register.php>

Marketing 101

Last month, Kimberly Giles taught us about some effective marketing strategies:



*"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today."
~Stacia Tauscher*

- ◆ Plan ways to reach out to current and former clients, friends and family, and potential clients. You'll need to market to each group differently.
- ◆ How you answer your phone can be a deciding factor for many people when choosing childcare? Answer in a friendly voice using your business name. You can use your cell phone or an extra line solely for childcare, just to limit confusion. Limit call times during childcare hours and explain that you would love to talk more with them, but you have to wait until naptime or after the kids go home. Have a list of points you want to make (near the phone) so you don't forget anything. The same guidelines apply to your voice-mail: make sure you sound clear, positive, and professional!
- ◆ Your home can be a help or hindrance to getting clients. Is it welcoming, safe, clean, and organized (inside and out)? Does the toy area look like a tornado came through, even during drop-off times? Make sure the outside of your house looks clean, uncluttered, and that there aren't any obvious repairs that need to be made. Clean your front windows often, plant flowers or shrubs, and mow the lawn. Eliminate bad odors. Make sure your entryway is warm and inviting for families, especially children.
- ◆ Always explain the features and benefits of your program...what makes you UNIQUE? Features are normally short facts, such as "Food Program member." The benefit would be "Nutritional and home-cooked meals served every day." Make a chart of all your features and benefits and choose which ones you want to include in your marketing.
- ◆ Create a business name and register it with the Secretary of State's office.
- ◆ Business Cards are one of the most important marketing tools! Keep them handy and pass them out often.
- ◆ Use flyers, magnets, pens, t-shirts, letterhead, notecards, etc. with your name and/or logo. There are many online sites that print marketing materials for much less than you think. Place flyers at community bulletin boards, laundromats, grocery stores, hospitals, etc.
- ◆ Ask clients for letters of reference, explaining why they (and their kids) love your program; put them in a binder to show during interviews.
- ◆ Have get-togethers such as ice-cream socials, BBQs, and open houses with current, former, and prospective families to socialize, network, and even show off your program.
- ◆ Offer a finder's fee (i.e. free day of care, Parents' Night Out, or money) if a parent refers someone whom you end up enrolling.
- ◆ Keep in touch with past families by sending birthday and anniversary cards and send congratulations notes to those who have a new baby.
- ◆ Use your Resource & Referral agency and keep your vacancies updated!
- ◆ Despite the poor economy, you should not lower your rates; someone will ALWAYS charge less than you. Your quality of care isn't lower because of economy. Instead, stress the benefits of your childcare. In fact, your policies should state that you review and possibly increase your rates every January. In order to bring in new clients, offer incentives, such as a free week of care or a "buy 3 weeks, get 1 free" incentive for the first few months.

St. Patrick's Day Ideas

Pots of Gold

Take a toilet paper tube and cut it in $\frac{1}{4}$. Paint a $\frac{1}{4}$ tube black. Paint some cotton balls yellow and glue them in the top of the tube to look like gold. Then paint or color a little rainbow and stick it on the "pot" behind the cotton.

Marbled Shamrocks

Cut out a white paper shamrock for each child. Put one in a plastic tub with a lid, add a few marbles, and then add a few drops of paint in colors they choose. Seal it and let the kid shake it up! Voila!

Pudding Shamrocks

Pudding is awesome for painting in any season! For St. Patty's Day, just use pistachio pudding or vanilla pudding with green paint and let the kids get messy!

Rice Shamrocks

Cut out a shamrock for each child. Use green rice or coconut (for rice, just soak in water with green food coloring overnight, then drain and let dry)

Handprint Shamrocks

Paint or stamp each child's hand in green. Keeping the fingers together, turn the hand to make the 3 (or 4) leaves of a shamrock; you might need to repaint between leaves.



I'm a Little Leprechaun (tune: I'm a Little Teapot)

I'm a little leprechaun dressed in green.

The tiniest man you've ever seen.

If you ever catch me, so it's told,

I'll give you my pot of gold.

The Leprechaun Song (tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb)

I'm a little leprechaun, leprechaun, leprechaun;

I'm a little leprechaun who likes to hide my gold.

I dress in green from head to toe, head to toe, head to toe; I dress in green from head to toe, I wear green all day long!

You'll never catch me or my gold, not my gold, not my gold; You'll never catch me or my gold, I hide it much too well!

Leprechaun Where Are You? (tune: Twinkle, Twinkle)

Leprechaun, Leprechaun, where are you?

I tried to catch you, but away you flew.

I'm going to get you just wait and see!

Then all your gold will belong to me!

Easter Ideas

Curious Cottontails

Have the kids each sponge paint a terra cotta pot. Add a little Easter grass, then a styrofoam ball that fits the hole. Cut out little rabbit feet from paper or foam, then hot glue onto the Styrofoam (add little pink toes with marker). Add a pom or cottonball tail and you've got a cute little bunny going into a hole!

Bubble Wrap Eggs

Cut out large egg shapes from white construction paper. Let you kids dip bubble wrap squares in paint and sponge them on the eggs. Very cool effects...

Marbled Eggs

Cut out a white paper egg for each child. Put one in a plastic tub with a lid, add a few marbles, and then add a few drops of paint in colors they choose. Seal it and let the kid shake it up! Voila!

Chalk Eggs

Shave pieces of chalk using a cheese grater. Keep the different-colored shreadings separated. Cut out a large white paper egg for each child. Place it on top of a thin tray of water, then have each child sprinkle some shreadings all over it. Take it out of the water and you'll have one unique swirled egg.

Cupcake Baskets

Make cupcakes as normal, then frost with green frosting. Add green coconut for grass, jellybeans for eggs, and a pipe cleaner for the basket handle.



I'm a Little Bunny (tune: I'm a Little Teapot)

I'm a little bunny, with a cotton tail,

See me hopping down the trail.

When I see a carrot, my ears—they shake!

And then, of course, a bite I take!!! CRUNCH!!!!

All4Kids

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Monticello MN 55362

(763-295-3925)

all4kidsmn@live.com

*We buy and sell new and gently used children's clothing (NB-16), toys, gear and furniture.

-Check us out on Facebook!



Saturday, May 16
7:45am – 3:45pm
Discovery School – Buffalo

Providers, Teachers, Parents, Students...**EVERYONE** is welcome!

SCHEDULE

7:00am - 7:45am	Registration/Continental Breakfast/Vendor Shopping
7:45am - 8:00am	Welcome & Announcements
8:00am - 9:30am	Keynote Speaker
9:30am - 9:45am	Provider of the Year Recognition/Raffle
9:45am - 10:00am	Vendor Shopping/Break
10:00am - 11:30am	Workshop I
11:30am - 12:30pm	Lunch/Vendor Shopping
12:30pm - 2:00pm	Workshop Session II
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Vendor Shopping/Break
2:15pm - 3:45pm	Workshop Session III

Thanks to our co-sponsor:



Workshop Sessions (Descriptions on attached registration flyer):

- A Clap Your Hands & Count Your Toes (Julie Torkelson)
- B Space to Grow: Environments (Hope Doerner)
- C Let's Talk (Karen Bradley)

- D Positive Discipline 1 (Hope Doerner)
- E Tax Issues for Child Care (Sandy Schroder, EA, CPA)
- F Let's Get it Started (Karen Bradley)

- G Positive Discipline 2 (Hope Doerner)
- H Dive Into Science (Julie Worthington)
- I Get it in Writing (Karen Bradley)

BREAKFAST: Croissants, Muffins, Fresh Fruit, Juice, and Coffee

LUNCH: Angeno's Salad, Garlic Bread, Lasagna, Chicken Alfredo, Cheese Tortellini, Cookies, & Beverage.

Visit more than **20 vendors** for curriculum, activities, food program info, craft supplies, resources, & **MUCH MORE!**

All attendees names will be entered into a raffle!

Please check out www.happeehollee.com/wcfcca.html or call 763-463-5909 for more info, directions, and an up-to-date list of vendors.

AA **ADULTS & CHILDRENS ALLIANCE**



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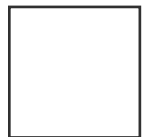
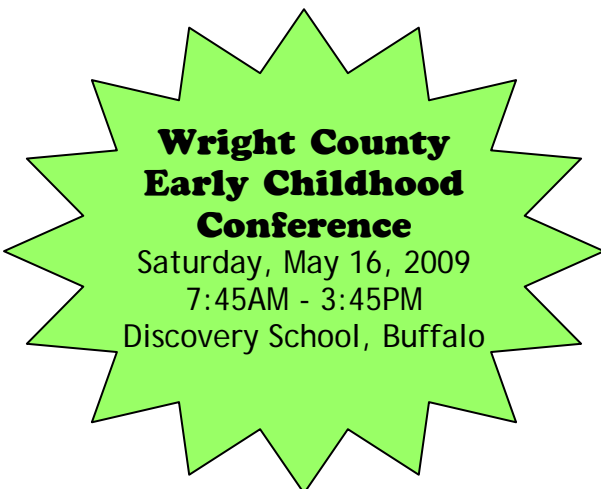
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Wright County Family Child Care Association
 10134 44th Court NE
 St. Michael, MN 55376-8499

Wright County Early Childhood Conference
 Saturday, May 16, 2009
 7:45AM - 3:45PM
 Discovery School, Buffalo