Effective December 18, 2015 the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) will resume responsibility for the eligibility determination of Priority 1 (Temporary Cash Assistance) cases under the State’s Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program. The eligibility determination for Priority 2 (Transitioning Child Care) and 3 (Non-TCA) cases will remain with CCS Central which is operated under a vendor agreement by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The Department of Human Resources (DHR) and MSDE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which defines the coordination of CCS case management.

In light of this decision, it is extremely important that child care providers and families make note of the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Case</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Where to Submit/Send</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application (new or redetermination)</td>
<td>LDSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCA</td>
<td>Documentation/Verifications</td>
<td>LDSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in Circumstance/Activity</td>
<td>LDSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request for new Voucher</td>
<td>LDSS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request for Hearing/Appeal</td>
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<td>Voucher</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCC and NON-TCA</td>
<td>Application (new or redetermination)</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation/Verifications</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in Circumstance/Activity</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request for new Voucher/Voucher Extension</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request for Hearing/Appeal</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>CCS Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inquiries concerning families on TCA should be directed to the local department of social services. CCS Central will no longer be able to provide information on any new application, pending or active case.
Voucher Submission

ALL vouchers signed by the parent and provider must be sent to CCS Central for receipting to ensure timely payment. LDSS offices are not authorized to receipt vouchers, therefore submitting completed vouchers to the LDSS office will result in reimbursement delays. Completed vouchers can be faxed to 410-229-0053 or mailed to P.O. Box 17015, Baltimore, MD 21297.

Invoice Submission

There is no change in how invoices will be issued, submitted and processed. All invoices for payment must be submitted to CCS Central by fax to 410-229-0010 or mail to P.O. Box 17543, Baltimore, MD 21297.

Announcement Regarding Maryland EXCELS Program Bonuses

Maryland EXCELS program bonuses were funded under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant through 2015. There are no funds available to support the EXCELS bonuses after December 31, 2015. Should funds become available in the future, bonus payments will again be made to eligible providers.

December 2015

5,388 programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS. 2,778 programs have published a quality rating on MarylandEXCELS.org.

Published programs can be searched for by families on the Find A Program page of MarylandEXCELS.org and on the MarylandEXCELS free mobile app.

Keep your participation current by publishing a quality rating within 12 months of acceptance into Maryland EXCELS, and by updating your published rating before the expiration date.

The Maryland EXCELS system sends courtesy reminders when your 12 months expiration date is approaching.
Early Learning Assessment Training for Child Care Providers

MSDE is working with Johns Hopkins Center for Technology in Education to roll out the new Early Learning Assessment (ELA). The ELA is aligned with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and the Maryland Early Learning Standards. It can be used for children ages 3 to 5. Beginning in 2016, training will be offered to interested child care providers.

The ELA provides child care providers an opportunity to measure a child’s development across the seven learning domains that have been found to be critical for a child’s success in school and life: Fine Arts, Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Well-being and Motor Development. The ELA is a type of formative assessment that allows the teacher flexibility in selecting what skills to access; skills can be assessed over multiple points in time to measure a child’s progress.

The training will provide the core knowledge necessary to train child care providers of young children ages 36 - 72 months in preschool, child care and kindergarten settings to implement the Early Learning Assessment. Training topics include:

- The role of formative assessment
- Observing young children for the ELA
- Integrating the ELA into early childhood curricula
- Practicing ELA administration and using the Ready for Kindergarten Online system

The training for child care providers is estimated to take 12 content hours of face-to-face training. Information about the ELA and training will be publicized in various publications and the MSDE website under the Division of Early Childhood Development.

New & Improved MSDE and Early Childhood Websites: Coming Soon!

Look for the new and improved MSDE and DECD Websites to launch in January 2016.

The improved sites come with totally new looks and tons of new features including improved functionality and easier navigation.

Visit http://marylandpublicschools.org/ to view the improved sites.

The Cost of Child Care in 2015

Find out how Maryland child care costs stack up against the rest of the country.

Child Care Aware of America’s 2015 report, Parents and the High Cost of Child Care, summarizes the cost of child care across the country, examines the importance of child care as a workforce support and as an early learning program, and explores the effect of high costs on families’ child care options.

This year’s report continues to expose child care as one of the most significant expenses in a family budget, often exceeding the cost of housing, college tuition, transportation or food.

Download the report to see how child care costs in Maryland compare to costs in other states and find child care resources, including an interactive cost map by state, and data highlights for five key urban counties around the country at http://usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare.
Changes to Maryland Child Care Credential Program

The transition to a "centralized processing system" for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is complete.

As of Monday, November 2, 2015, the Maryland Child Care Credential Program was transitioned to Child Care (CC) Central. Providers currently participating or interested in the Maryland Child Care Credential program send their application packets to a centralized location and use a toll free number for inquiries pertaining to application status.

There has been a delay in the processing of the backlog applications due to State procurement requirements. The previous vendor contract ended on May 31, 2015. During the interim period (June 1 - October 31), we received 4,800 applications, which resulted in a six month backlog. The solicitation for the proposal did not include additional requirements for the vendor to process backlog applications because there wasn’t a backlog at that time. Therefore, processing of the backlog applications is outside the scope of the contract.

We are working to ensure that these applications are processed; please be aware that there may be an extended delay in processing backlogged applications. The vendor has submitted an amendment to the contract including the processing of the backlog applications. This amendment, which is a price proposal, is pending State approval. We were hopeful that the vendor could start processing the backlog applications, however we were advised by State procurement that they could not process these applications until the price proposal is approved. Child Care Central will continue to process applications submitted on and after November 2.

For all inquiries pertaining to the credentialing program, call the toll-free number 866-243-8796 or email cccredential@xerox.com. Credential application packets can be faxed to 410-229-0145 or mailed to CC Central P.O. Box 598, Baltimore, MD 21203.

Credentialing Branch Updates

Training Voucher and Reimbursement

The processing of training voucher and reimbursement applications has not been affected by the transition. Please continue to send applications for training vouchers and reimbursement to CCCentral. Credentialing participants who are first time applicants, updating an expired credential, or upgrading from level 1-2 are not eligible for training voucher/reimbursement until credential application is processed. Renewal applicants are eligible to participate once a renewal application has been received by the Office.

Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPF)

As of January 1, 2016, CCCPDF will be transitioned to LaTanya Taylor, Credentialing Specialist. Vanessa Jones, Assistant Branch Chief, has headed this program for the past six years. Ms. Jones has been transferred to the Maryland EXCELS Branch and will continue to coordinate the Accreditation Project and Accreditation Support program. Through the years she has connected with prospective colleges and students, welcomed new participants into the program and built and maintained relationships with participating college coordinators and students.

Training Approval Program

Traci Verzi, Training Approval Coordinator, has been transferred to the Office of Child Care; she will continue to coordinate the Training Approval program.

Continued Training

Child Care Education Institute (CCEI) offers 1 hour trainings. These trainings can only be used to maintain a credential level and will not count toward Core of Knowledge training hours.
### MSDE Approved Training

As of January 1, 2016, Directors and Teachers of all licensed programs as well as all Registered Family Child Care Providers must obtain "Including All Children and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)" training. New providers must obtain these training titles as part of their pre-service requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Organization or Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Linda Bratcher</td>
<td>410-688-3949</td>
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<td>Allegany Co.</td>
<td>APPLES for Children</td>
<td>301-733-0000</td>
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<td>Anne Arundel Co.</td>
<td>Arundel Child Care Connections</td>
<td>410-222-1712</td>
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<td>Baltimore (City)</td>
<td>Adrienne Suggs-Coleman</td>
<td>410-889-8731</td>
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<td>Baltimore (City)</td>
<td>Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center</td>
<td>410-685-5150</td>
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<td>Baltimore (City)</td>
<td>Playkeepers</td>
<td>410-484-6220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore (City)</td>
<td>TRAIN Educational and Community Services</td>
<td>301-257-7297</td>
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<td>Child Care Links</td>
<td>410-288-4900</td>
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<td>Baltimore Co.</td>
<td>Child Resource Center Baltimore County/Abilities Network/Project ACT</td>
<td>443-900-6458</td>
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<td>Charles Co.</td>
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<td>Columbia Association</td>
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<td>Family Services Agency</td>
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<td>Petrea Fletcher</td>
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<td>410-370-2837</td>
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<td>Ijamsville</td>
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<td>240-446-1874</td>
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<td>Kent Co.</td>
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<td>Sandra Peyser</td>
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<td>Donna Satterlee</td>
<td>410-651-7997</td>
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<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>Dianna Aguirre</td>
<td>410-749-6365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Maryland Family Network</td>
<td>410-659-7701</td>
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</table>
MSDE has decided to delay a proposed developmental screening regulation until July of 2017. This change will enable more providers to take required training prior to the regulation taking effect. It will also help the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services to better plan for a potential increase in referrals and services. MSDE strongly encourages providers who have taken training and received their free developmental screening tool to begin screening now. This will ensure children in need of instructional supports or referrals for intervention are getting the help they need now.

The online training will remain free through December of 2016. After that time providers can use training reimbursement to help pay for training. Face-to-face training is also available now and providers may also use training reimbursement toward that cost.}

**Development Screening**

**PAST EVENTS**

**Prince George’s Child Resource Center Celebrates 25 Years**

Neither a Nor’easter nor the threat of a hurricane stopped Prince George’s Child Resource Center from celebrating its' 25th anniversary. One-thousand four hundred child care providers, families and children made October 7 a glorious day at Watkins Regional Park. Festivities were all about the “children.” Resource Center staff and board members made sure everyone had a great time. The Center created a pumpkin patch, had fun activities along with a hayride, carousel and the incredible Wizard of Oz playground.

MSDE Office for Child Care staff members attended the VIP Breakfast and helped celebrate the day. County Executive Rushern Baker attended and praised the Resource Center for being a terrific asset to the community for the past 25 years.

**Western Maryland Goes Full STEAM Ahead with Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math**

The 3rd Annual Western Maryland Early Childhood Conference held on Saturday, September 26th at Hagerstown Community College brought together more than 100 early childhood educators from Frederick, Washington, Allegany and Garrett counties and Waynesboro, PA. The conference theme was Full STEAM Ahead: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math in Early Childhood Education, and attendees participated in breakout sessions with presenters from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Frederick County Public Schools, Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum’s Department of Education, as well as other local and national speakers.

Judy Walker, Early Learning Branch Chief for MSDE, provided the conference welcome and emphasized the important role that providers in child care centers and family care homes play in the community of early childhood educators. During the welcome, Ms. Walker shared information about the new Early Learning Standards for birth to grade 2 and the Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) assessments that include the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) that was used during the fall of 2014 and the Early Learning Assessment for PreK that will be available next spring.

The conference keynote address was presented by Hedda
Sharapan from The Fred Rogers Company. Her presentation, *How Did Fred Rogers Approach STEAM Concepts and How Can We Build on That in Our Work with Children*, shared how Fred Rogers incorporated many elements of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math into every one of his programs, and provided ideas for early childhood educators to do the same. Participants were able to see how everyday experiences can be infused with these concepts. Ms. Sharapan also stressed the importance of allowing children to learn these concepts through play, stating, “You never know where a child’s play will lead them.”

Participants were able to choose from 13 breakout sessions addressing STEAM topics such as light and shadows, teaching math with homemade games, exploring executive function through math and, developmentally appropriate art. Other sessions included Maryland EXCELS and how to include STEAM concepts throughout the curriculum. Kathleen Forrest, Principal at Ruth Ann Monroe Primary School noted, “The break-out sessions...provided the attendees with resources that are inexpensive, user friendly, developmentally age appropriate, and ready to implement in their centers.”

Dee Harne, Assistant Director of Head Start of Washington County, gave this overall review of the conference, “What I liked about the conference was the focus on “wonder”. Children are naturally curious, and as Early Childhood educators, the opportunities we have to expand on their sense of wonder is so important to their future educational achievement.”

The conference was co-sponsored by the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children - Western Maryland Chapter, APPLES for Children, Inc., the Judy Center of Washington County, the Washington County Early Childhood Advisory Council, and Hagerstown Community College.

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**Kick Off to Summer Fun!**

For family child care providers summer time is a very busy season; it is not always easy to find fun outdoor group activities to do with our children throughout the summer. That’s why, during this past summer, the Child Care Leadership Team of SEIU Local 500 Child Care Division hosted a great day of fun for Maryland family child care providers and the children that for whom they care. On June 19, 2015 providers in Baltimore came together to celebrate the first day of summer at Druid Hill Park for SEIU Local 500 Child Care Division’s Kick Off to Summer Cookout. At this event child care providers had a chance to network with other providers around the City and surrounding counties. The children enjoyed fun, age appropriate activities provided for them, such as an egg hunt, a relay race and a potato sack race which included participation from a few providers. The children enjoyed wholesome nutritious food and lots of fun outdoor games and activities to get them moving. Providers received educational door prizes that could be used with the children such as educational learning activities, books, safety items, resource information and much more.
The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible working families through Child Care Subsidy Central (CCS Central). As a trusted source for reliable child care information, your families may look to you for help understanding or completing the subsidy process, as well as renewing vouchers. Here are SIX things providers need to know:

1. Effective June 29, 2015 any child care provider accepting child care subsidy is required to participate in Maryland EXCELS. It is important to know the rules for participation and publishing. To review the requirements, please go to MarylandEXCELS.org for more information.

2. Take note of the information on a voucher. What is the type of case (TCA, TCC or Non-TCA)? This information is also on the invoice detail report. This is important for tracking the expiration date of the voucher and to know which agency to contact if there is an issue. Take note of the expiration date on the voucher and check in with families to ensure they are submitting the necessary information to CCS Central prior to the expiration date.

3. Assist your families in filling out the application, gathering the necessary documentation, and faxing the information to CCS Central at 410-229-0053.

4. Encourage your families to be proactive and not wait until the voucher is ready to expire. Vouchers may be issued in advance of the current one expiring, so providers can have a new voucher in place before the current one expires.

5. Providers cannot be reimbursed for services if there is no active voucher in place. Some LDSS offices may issue a letter of guarantee; this is not a voucher and should not be accepted as such. The only guarantee of payment is an active voucher.

6. Refer to the chart above to ensure information is submitted timely and to the appropriate location. Failure to submit information timely or to the correct location may result in a break in eligibility, lapse of voucher or payments being interrupted.

Call 1-866-243-8796 for information about an application, documentation or status.

Inclusive Child Care Videos Now Available!

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is excited to announce that two new videos are now available as a part of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council’s ongoing efforts to increase access to child care for children with disabilities.

Produced by Eddyline Media with funding from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the videos tell the stories of Jayla, Brendan, and Shaun, their families, and the three respective child care providers who use inclusive practices for children with and without disabilities to learn and play together.

The videos address the challenges and benefits of including children with disabilities in child care, and are a new resource available to child care providers, families, trainers, and others. They will be disseminated widely and will be a part of the newly developed and state-mandated training on the ADA and Inclusive Practices that all Maryland child care providers will receive. Ultimately, these videos, along with other efforts and initiatives, will help improve the quality of child care programs and build capacity to support children with disabilities.

These two new videos and other video resources are available on the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOnwUQdSNzdvscpre9VOWw
**Top 5 Reasons to join the Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA)**

**Did You Know:**

**ONE** MSCCA membership is the ONLY association providing a comprehensive center membership, not an individual membership! All staff members employed at the center will be considered MSCCA members when your center joins.

**TWO** Many of MSCCA Member Benefits are directly related to MD EXCELS and Credentialing! Pay one affordable center membership fee and gain Professional Activity Units (PAU) for your full staff! Members of a state association receive a PAU for becoming a member of a professional organization. (Also accumulate additional PAU’s for attending our statewide conferences, facilitating classes at our conference, contributing to our semi-annual newsletters and attending our Advocacy Night in Annapolis.)

**THREE** MSCCA members have a dedicated, registered state lobbyist along with an active MSCCA Board of Directors who monitor Senate and House bills each legislative session related to your professional interests and submit testimony on behalf of our members to advocate strongly for children, teachers and families.

**FOUR** Continuous, cutting edge communication emailed to members about relevant child care issues and topics.

**FIVE** Discounts for members on quality training conferences and new annual MSCCA/ Jennifer Nizer Grant/Scholarship opportunities offered for members only.

MSCCA Vision Statement: To be recognized as the premier nonprofit organization for the advancement of professional licensed child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA Mission Statement: To promote the growth and development of professional licensed child care and learning centers in Maryland.

Visit [www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org) to join MSCCA. For more info contact Christina Peusch, Executive Director at mscca1@comcast.net or call 410-820-9196

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### Ready to Learn: Fact Checking Social Media Posts

There is a wealth of information available on the Internet, some of it is extremely high-quality, valuable and useful; however, some of it can be unreliable, biased, misleading, and outright false. We can’t always believe and trust everything we see or hear online and especially on social media. Social media posts, blogs, and videos found on sites like YouTube, Vimeo, etc. may be entertaining, intriguing and thought provoking but may not be credible.

Best practice is not to trust information you find on the Internet until you can determine the origin of its information. When evaluating and trying to figure out the validity and credibility of a post seen online or on social media, here are some tips from federal government officials:

- Who? Who runs the Website? Do you know them? Have you heard of them? Can you trust them?
- What? What does the site say? Do its claims seem too good to be true? Is it based on academic/scientific research?
- When? When was the information posted or reviewed? Is it up-to-date?
- Where? Where did the information come from? Is it based on academic/scientific research?
- Why? Why does the site exist? Is it selling something?

The most credible Internet sites come from recognized experts, like government agencies, academic institutions and reputable educational organizations. One way to spot a credible source is the site's domain. The domains .gov and .edu can only be registered by government and educational institutions. For this reason, they reflect a higher order of authority than .com, .org or .net sites. Credible social media posts and websites should cite the source of the information shared.

Examples of sources that are considered the most credible:

- Official government websites (e.g., www.ed.gov and www.msde.maryland.gov)
- Institutional sites that represent universities, regulatory agencies, governing bodies, and respected organizations with specific expertise (e.g., Ready at Five, NAYEC and Johns Hopkins School of Education)
- Peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Journal of Early Childhood Research)
- Reputable news sources (e.g., Baltimore Sun and Washington Post)

Social media posts, blogs, and videos can be sources of great information, but remember that the best and most credible ones contain information that can be checked and verified.
The Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF) invited philanthropists, political officials, education leaders, community members, parents and students to Liberty Elementary/Middle School on November 16th to announce and celebrate the opening of nine new Judy Centers in Baltimore City.

Based on the demonstrated success of Judy Centers in increasing school readiness, BCF set a goal in 2012 to raise funds to open five Judy Centers in five years. The expansion plan included raising private funds for launching new centers and a memorandum of understanding with City Schools and MSDE for ongoing public funding for the centers after the first three years of operation. A 2014 federal grant helped leverage philanthropic contributions, allowing BCF to significantly accelerate its timeline and raise $6 million in private support enough to open nine centers in only three years and fund a citywide coordinator position within the Baltimore City Public Schools system.

We are thrilled for the children and the future of Baltimore, said Thomas E. Wilcox, BCF’s President and CEO. “With more students ready for school our young people will thrive, and we will have the workforce necessary to competing in a global economy. Public-private partnerships are essential to create lasting and sustainable change and Baltimore’s philanthropists are passionate about ensuring the city’s children are ready for school.”

The first BCF-funded site opened at Commodore John Rodgers Elementary/Middle School in 2013. The event location - Liberty Elementary, also a BCF-funded site - opened in 2014 along with Arundel Elementary. The six centers opening in the 2015-16 school year are located within Harbor Heights Elementary School, John Ruhrah Elementary School, Curtis Bay Elementary/Middle School, Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School, Arlington Elementary/Middle School and Henderson-Hopkins School. The event was also attended by U.S. Congressman Steny H. Hoyer; Judy Centers are named after his late wife.

Before the cold weather hit, the Frederick County Judy Center partnered with The Knights of Columbus to make sure Judy Center children in came to school warm and ready to learn. More than 100 children and adults were provided with coats for the winter. The partnership also provided the children with hats and gloves. There were lots of happy smiles on the faces of the children as they walked out the door with their new coats.
Learning Parties Headline Fall Activities in Worcester

October was a very successful month for the Worcester County Judy Center. The Judy Center was able to provide a series of four meetings to engage families at Learning Parties created by Ready At Five. The families enjoyed a meal, parent training with interactive elements, childcare and activities for children from birth through five. The families that participated enjoyed the hands-on activities and that encourage further interaction at home. The children were actively engaged making healthy snacks, homemade play dough, singing and dancing to hokey pokey, Head to Toe Simon Says and other fun activities to promote healthy eating and focus on the development of large and small muscle development. The parents and grandparents each took home a new idea or a new item of information from each session. Each parent/grandparent was provided with a folder for the take-home materials. The families will be provided with a book each week related to their child’s physical development, well-being and supplies for home activities. This was a positive experience for all attendees and the staff looks forward to providing another series in the spring.

Somerset County Partners Collaborate for Community Baby Shower

The Somerset County Judy Center Partnership hosted the first annual Community Baby Shower (Princess Anne and Crisfield) for new parents and parents to be. The event was a great way to introduce families to the idea of school readiness and was a great way for the Judy Center to get to know families even before babies are born! The fun and educational event included special guests Corporal Smith from the Princess Anne Police Department and Gail Sheldon from the Somerset County Library System. Attendees learned the importance of car seat safety, reading to their babies and how to shop for baby items on a budget. Moms and dads were given board books and other baby items to enjoy with their little ones as well as a healthy lunch. Many Judy Center Partners in attendance were on hand to provide information about local community programs. They played fun baby shower games, such as the car seat relay and the Price is Right. This was a true collaborative effort as members of our local community donated new baby gifts which were distributed at the end of the event.
Learning Parties: Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness

The Montgomery County Judy Centers support parents as their child’s first teacher by offering weekly parent and child training sessions called Family Literacy Learning Parties developed by Ready At Five. Learning Parties are 90-minute sessions that focus on six domains of learning: language and literacy, math, science, social and emotional development, physical development, and the arts. In separate sessions, parents learn skills and at-home strategies specific to each domain, while their children play and practice concepts related to what parents are learning. After the parent session, parents and children come together to practice newly-learned skills in a joint activity while the trainer gives feedback and suggestions. The learning atmosphere is filled with fun as families engage in school readiness tips and practices!

Both Montgomery County Judy Centers offer Learning Parties in the evenings to accommodate parents’ work schedules. The sessions are provided bilingually in English and Spanish with healthy meals and free books too.

- The Gaithersburg Judy Center averages 15 parents and 21 children at each session. Overall, 51 parents and 65 children have participated in the Learning Parties this year.
- At the Silver Spring Judy Center, 13 families have registered to participate, with an average of 11 parents and 9 children at each session.

Charles County Judy Center 2015 Wrap Up: New & Improved Partnerships

The Charles County Judy Center has always been fortunate to have strong partnerships. Over the past year however, there have been opportunities to grow existing alliances as well as establish new ones. Tried and true partners have been willing to support the Judy Center in a new capacity. The Our Babies Matter Program through the County Health Department focuses on education and support of preconception health through the first year of a baby’s life; reducing infant mortality is their primary goal. The support is mutual, each offers regular referrals to the other’s program, as well as attend and spread the word regarding upcoming events with future plans to offer a co-sponsored family fitness event during the 2015-2016 school year. Through Our Babies Matter, a relationship has been developed with the Health Department’s Health Officer, Dr. Abney a popular, local pediatrician who treats many of the Judy Center children. She displays literature such as Judy Center Newsletters and Take Home Activities in her office and attends Steering Committee Meetings. Dr. Abney copies these items at her expense and sends them home with families to encourage all parents visiting her office to engage in learning opportunities with their children.

The Charles County Public Schools Infants and Toddler’s (I&T)
In the Community

Judy Center News

Program has also increased their support and participation. The Center started an infant playgroup, led by an I&T Specialist. The program has been beneficial in helping new moms understand the benefits of “tummy time”, talking to your baby and identifying age appropriate toys for infants. In addition to the strengthened partnerships, the Judy Center also developed three new business relationships that have proven to be beneficial to families. St. Charles Town Center, Maredith Management, L.L.C. and Babies R Us have become friends that the Judy Center turns to for in-kind support. St. Charles Town Center allowed the Judy Center to set up a wall display during the month of May to showcase “Everything Judy Center”. The Center also hosted an information table during the month and reached out to the shoppers to tell them about the services offered by the Judy Center. The Facilitator of the Children's Program at the shopping mall and the Judy Center Coordinator are working together to identify opportunities to partner in the future. The positive relationship with the St. Charles property developers led to another positive relationship with Maredith (Property) Management, L.L.C. Maredith acts a liaison in obtaining consent from the Home Owners Associations to use the Neighborhood Community Centers for the Judy Center's annual Harvest Festival. Usage of the lovely facilities is completely free thanks to the negotiations arranged by Maredith.

Another business relationship the Judy Center was able to create is with Babies R Us. In an effort to celebrate, as well as identify new and soon to be Judy Center babies, the Center hosts an annual expectant mothers’ event. For 2015 of the event was hosted at Babies R Us; moms loved it. The Babies R Us Staff was enthusiastic, welcoming, and gave away wonderful prizes to enhance the Judy Center provided giveaways. Plans for this event are already in the works for 2016.

Continued from Pg. 12

It's All Fun and Games at 2nd Annual Fall Festival

On October 28, 2015 the Judy Center at Magnolia Elementary School in Harford County opened its doors to the community for its 2nd Annual Fall Festival. The festival gave the 317 people in attendance an opportunity to participate in fall carnival games, get a good book from the PTA Scholastic Book Fair and meet different agencies within the community. Title 1 School Readiness, Harford Community College, Harford County Public Library, Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Council, Catholic Charities Early Head Start, Jaylen’s Journey, Joppa Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company, and Apostolic Voice of Truth Church were on hand to share their resources with attendees. Physical educational teachers, Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Peaco, provided cosmic bowling in the gymnasium with a performance by DJ JPLEX (Mr. Peaco) from Party 4 Life Entertainment. Dinner was served in the cafeteria for families to enjoy a nutritious meal.
Training to Support Children with Developmental Disabilities in Child Care Programs

The online training module, Supporting Children with Developmental Disabilities in Child Care Programs*, is a comprehensive online training developed for child care providers, families & others interested in high, quality inclusive child care. Developed with funding from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, it is offered in English and Spanish. The training is available nationwide from the Maryland Family Network (http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/training/) and Child Care Aware of America (http://naccra.smarthorizons.org/).

* Child care providers who successfully complete this training will earn 0.3 continuing education credits. Maryland child care providers will also earn 3 Core of Knowledge hours.

“Core of Knowledge” versus “Continued/Elective” Training

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development – Office of Child Care reviews and approves three different types of training: Pre-Service, Core of Knowledge and, Continued/Elective Training. Each type of training has value and can be used to satisfy different requirements.

Core of knowledge training is training developed using theories and practices that are essential for professionals working with children and youth in family child care homes and child and youth care centers. This type of training can be used to satisfy the yearly ongoing training requirement for licensed and registered staff. Core of Knowledge training can also be used to move up in levels 1 -4+ of the Maryland Child Care Staff Credential and levels 1 & 2 of the Maryland Child Care Administrators Credential. Core of knowledge training must be a minimum of two (2) hours in duration and participants must successfully complete an assessment. An example of a Core of Knowledge training title is: “Developmentally Appropriate Practice”.

Continued/Elective training is ongoing training for the child care community offered through workshops and awarded in clock hours. This type of training does not require an assessment and can be less than two (2) hours in duration. This training will meet half of the ongoing yearly professional development training requirements for licensed and registered staff. Continued/Elective training can be used to maintain a credential level for the purpose of renewal. Continued training cannot be used to move up in levels of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program. An example of a Continued/Elective Training title is: “Using Puppets in Play – Make and Take”.

**Volunteer to Be an ERS Training/Practice Site**

Maryland EXCELS is seeking programs to conduct “practice” assessments by Environment Rating Scales Assessors (ERS). Two hours of Professional Activity Units (PAUs) are available for the Director and the teacher(s) of assessed classrooms, or for the family child care provider. Trainees will conduct three-hour “practice” assessments, and the results will not be shared with anyone. **We are especially in need of Family Child Care sites and programs with School-Age Classrooms.** Contact Andrea Zabel, MSDE Quality Measurement Specialist at andrea.zabel@maryland.gov or 410-767-7863. Tiered Reimbursement/EXCELS Payments will continue to be paid to programs published at Levels 3, 4, and 5 who serve children whose families are eligible for Child Care Subsidy.
Mr. Paca’s Backyard Preschool Program

Mr. Paca’s Backyard Preschool Program is a fun, engaging and educational program nestled in Historic Annapolis for preschoolers, ages three and four. Using famous children’s stories, young learners explore the 18th century garden of former state Governor William Paca during the winter, spring and summer.

Discretely located behind the five-part Georgian mansion built in the 1760s by William Paca - one of Maryland’s four Signers of the Declaration of Independence and the state’s third Governor - the William Paca Garden is not your average garden; it’s a two acre oasis of natural beauty. It features multi-tier upper terraces, a pond crossed by a Chinese Chippendale bridge, a wilderness area, formal arrangements and a two-story summerhouse.

Every second and fourth Tuesday and Wednesday the program hosts a room full of eager and excited preschoolers. The Preschool Program incorporates the garden and all of its elements into each fun activity. Each session includes exploration in the garden, story time, and art project, movement activity (dance, games, etc) and of course snack time! The 1.25 hour session begins with individualized drawing time, visitors are free to draw whatever they like, followed by story time. This is when the real fun and learning begins.

Story time is the first element of the program. The books used in each session introduce and support the theme of day. Preschoolers then participate in theme-related craft, art and exploration exercises to bring the books to life. Mr. Paca’s backyard becomes more than a backyard; it becomes a place to see, explore and experience the wonders found in the story time books.

To register for or more information about Mr. Paca’s Backyard Preschool Program, visit www.annapolis.org.
## Upcoming Conferences

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Mark your calendars and plan your professional development around the opportunity to earn more than 17 hours of Core of Knowledge MSDE approved, quality training at the beach! Use your MSDE training voucher and get all of the continued training hours needed while you climb the credentialing ladder. Enjoy exhibitors, prizes, networking and fun. **Become a member and pay less!**

**REGISTRATION BEGINS JANUARY 2016**

VISIT US AT [www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org) or call 410-820-9196

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Conference will feature nationally recognized expert and Prince George’s County native, William C. Killebrew, IV. Workshops will feature information on the impact of trauma on early childhood, how to create an environment that fosters psychological safety for young children, and how to help build resilience for children who have experienced trauma.

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