

PARTNERS

Spring 2016 / Maryland State Department of Education / Division of Early Childhood Development

2015-16 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Report is Released

The 2015-2016 KRA results for the state of Maryland and each school system were recently released to the public. The KRA Individual Student Reports for each kindergartner who was assessed were shared with the parents in the fall. **Readiness Matters: The 2015-2016 Maryland School Readiness Report** shares the school readiness results of Maryland's children – statewide, by subgroups, and for each of Maryland's 24 local school systems.

The results for this second year are:

- Nearly half of entering kindergartners in school year 2015-2016 (45%) are demonstrating that they possess the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for the curriculum that is based on Maryland's new more rigorous kindergarten standards.
- There are a significant number of children identified – 10,881 (18%) – who lack most of the foundational skills and behaviors to prepare them for kindergarten. They need significant curriculum support and interventions to close their achievement gap.
- 52% of females are demonstrating readiness compared to 39% of the males.
- More than half of Asian kindergartners (52%), white kindergartners (56%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander kindergartners (51%) are demonstrating this new level of readiness. American Indian/Alaska Native (44%), African American (41%), and Hispanic (27%) kindergartners are below the state average of kindergartners (45%) demonstrating readiness.
- Kindergartners with disabilities, those learning the English Language, and those from low-income households have much fewer students demonstrating readiness than Maryland kindergartners as a whole.
- Children who attended child care centers (54%) and non-public nursery schools (66%) the year prior to entering kindergarten exceed the statewide readiness average.



These results are used to:

- **Help teachers** by providing them rich information about each child's skills, abilities, and any learning gaps that will be used to guide their instruction and support to students.
- **Advise early childhood programs and school leaders** so they can address the achievement gaps of children, provide professional development to teachers, and improve their curriculum.
- **Inform families** by providing them with an Individual Student Report with suggestions on ways to support their child's strengths and areas of need.
- **Instruct community leaders and policy makers** on how well-prepared children in their communities are for kindergarten, which helps them make well-informed decisions.

You can see the full report at <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Maryland Child Care Credential Program Application Backlog Update

Effective January 25, 2016 Child Care (CC) Central was approved to begin processing backlogged applications - CC Central is the centralized location that processes all credential applications and the call center for inquiries. Applications that were received in March and April of 2015 have been processed. To date a total of 1,015 backlog

applications have been processed. Child Care Central will process all backlog and incoming applications concurrently. All backlog applications will be processed by July 25, 2016.

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This means that:

- A backlogged application that has not been processed will be processed concurrently with a renewal application. Both applications will be processed.
- You will receive a bonus if you are eligible to receive a bonus for 2015.

For all inquiries pertaining to the Maryland Child Care Credential program, including application status, e-mail CCcredential@Xerox.com or call Child Care Central Help Desk at **1-866-243-8796**. (Select option 4 for information.) Please note that the Credentialing Branch at MSDE is no longer able to provide information on your application status or on a letter received from Child Care Central.

Secretary of Education Visits Montgomery County School

JoAnn Leleck Elementary School at Broad Acres, located in Silver Spring, welcomed then Acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Dr. John King for the first school visit of his tenure. On January 5th, King visited classrooms, read to students, and highlighted his top goals for 2016.

During his visit Pre-K Plus Teacher Jennifer Romero hosted Dr. King in her class. "It was truly an honor to be the first school Dr. John King visited," said Romero. "It was exciting that we were able to showcase our dedicated staff and motivated learners. Our school is such an amazing place to learn, to teach and a unique community to be a part of."

Jennifer has been impacted by and a part of the early childhood development community in Montgomery County her entire life. The daughter of a paraeducator in Head Start for Montgomery County Public Schools, followed in her mother's footsteps and became an educator. Volunteering at her mother's school helped Jennifer to realize that she too loved teaching; it gives her an opportunity to help others and give back to the community.

On March 14, King was confirmed as the permanent Secretary of Education and intends to continue to focus on the goals he highlighted at JoAnn Leleck; college readiness, professional supports for teachers, and equality and excellence in all schools.

"I think it (his visit) makes parents, and the community, feel a sense of appreciation that we have a leader in education who is genuine and real," added Romero. "On behalf of teachers, we are able to feel more connected to him...he is making an effort to experience what it means to be a public school student today."



News

You Are Getting Noticed!

If you are one of the nearly 3,300 programs that has achieved and published a quality rating on MarylandEXCELS.org, take a look at this news!

There have been **301,000** downloads of the Maryland EXCELS mobile app via Google Play and iTunes. Families searching for quality child care and early education providers are using the mobile app to locate programs and contact programs like yours regarding enrollment. They are also searching for programs on the Maryland EXCELS website using 'Find A Program'.

Take advantage of this FREE advertising, and publish your rating as you work to meet higher levels in Maryland EXCELS.



NEED HELP

with Maryland EXCELS?

Think you're stuck at Level 1? Want to receive additional Subsidy quality dollars for publishing Levels 3, 4, or 5? We are here to help you. Whether you are just getting started or moving to higher levels, take advantage of the free workgroups and trainings offered by MSDE Quality Assurance Specialists throughout the state. Find a training or workgroup session near you by clicking on this link or copying it into your browser, and look for Training and Workgroups under Resources. marylandexcels.org/olms2/321776



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Maryland EXCELS by the Numbers

72%

of child care centers, including programs serving only school-age children, are participating

43%

of all Family Child Care Homes, including Large Family Child Care Homes, are participating

53%

of all family child care homes and child care centers are participating in Maryland EXCELS

9%

of Public Prekindergarten programs are participating

3,300 programs have achieved and published a quality rating on MarylandEXCELS.org

Washington Co. ECAC Launches Public Awareness Campaign

The Washington County ECAC launched a public awareness campaign to promote kindergarten readiness and early school registration. Posters with tear-off information containing school readiness tips and dates for early registration were distributed throughout the county in early March. Flyers in both English and Spanish were also disseminated through Judy Centers, on-line newsletters, at Learning Parties, and in Head Start locations. In addition, ECAC partnerships with Head Start, Washington County Family Center, Kid's Clubs, and APPLES for Children provided funding for full-page newspaper ads that were printed in February and early March.



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A billboard marketing campaign will run from April - June, promoting the concept that learning begins at birth and providing the ECAC website address for resources and additional information.

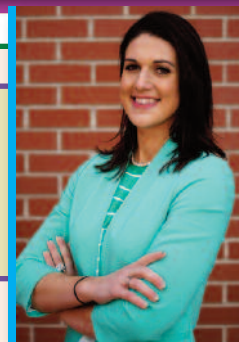


Two Maryland EXCELS QA Specialists Earn National Recognition

Sara Ott (Martin) and Petrea Hicks of Maryland EXCELS

were named Exceptional Emerging Leader and Master Leader, respectively, by *Childcare Exchange Magazine* (a bi-monthly publication that focuses on the administration of programs for young children). Hundreds of early childhood professionals worldwide submitted applications to meet criteria in the areas of Leadership, Roles, Knowledge Base and Spirit. Applicants were reviewed on the basis of these specific criteria by members of the Leaders Review Team, a panel of current, highly-respected and experienced leaders in the early childhood field. Emerging and Master Leaders are currently engaged in writing articles for Exchange magazine, participating in surveys about the field, connecting in-person at conferences and gatherings, and advising and creating a presence through social media. We are proud of their accomplishments and appreciate all of their hard work and dedication to the children in the State of Maryland.

Sara began her early child care and education career in the classroom and now serves as a Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS). In her role as a QAS, Sara encourages and supports all licensed programs in Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's and Anne Arundel counties. She has held positions as a teacher, Assistant Director, and Director. Sara is a member of Early Childhood Advisory Councils, School Readiness Councils, and our State Public Policy Committee, in addition to other advocacy groups. The saying "It takes a village to raise a child," is Sara's



personal philosophy toward success. This village includes stakeholders, families, teachers, hygiene and mental health professionals, child care resource and referral centers, and department of education representatives. She believes that collaboration between all stakeholders is vital to the well-being and success for children of all diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Petrea has over 20 years of experience that began in the classroom. She has held positions as an Elementary teacher, Head Start teacher, Family Care provider, Department of Defense preschool teacher, MSDE approved trainer, mentor and coach. In her QAS position she concentrates on the early childhood programs in Frederick and Washington County.

In addition to her QAS duties, she is a National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation observer and conducts Environment Rating Scale training and reliability visits. Petrea was recently approached by Redleaf Press to submit a book proposal on teacher efficacy and the Pygmalion effect; she agreed to submit the proposal. This spring she will serve as a presenter during Virginia's 2016 annual early childhood conferences in Richmond and Fredericksburg and the Abilities Network Early Childhood Conference in September. Check out the profiles for and learn more about the work that Sara and Petrea are doing at

www.childcareexchange.com/leadership/.

Child Care Credential Program Application Basics



Child Care Central
PO Box 598
Baltimore, MD 21203
Fax Number: 410.229.0146

You can now fax your Maryland Child Care Credential program application to Child Care Central or mail your Maryland Child Care Credential program application to Child Care Central.

**Do not mail your application packet to MSDE. Applications received at the Maryland State Department of Education for the Maryland Child Care Credential program will be returned.*

Professional Activity Units (PAUs) Basics

Child Care Central will only accept PAUs that are in the Maryland Child Care Credential program booklet.

DO:

For any professional activity unit which is not listed on the chart, a Professional Activity Request form must be completed and submitted to MSDE. The Credentialing Branch will review the information submitted and make a determination within 60 days of receipt.

DON'T:

Do not submit this form with your application packet to Child Care Central.

Credentialing Branch Updates

Training Voucher and Reimbursement

Have you checked out the new DECD website?! There is now an option to submit an application for Training Voucher and Reimbursement online. Participants who choose to submit applications online must be able to upload required documents along with each application. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Fillable PDF versions of each application are also available. For more information, visit: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Please continue to send hard copies of Training Voucher and Reimbursement applications to:
MSDE-Credentialing Branch / 200 West Baltimore St. 10th Floor / Baltimore, MD 21201

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 their credential application is processed. Renewal applicants are eligible to participate once a renewal application has been received by the office.

A new Training Voucher and Reimbursement brochure is now available on the DECD website:
<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund CCCPDF

The deadline to submit new applications for CCCPDF, March 1st, has passed. Submissions are currently being reviewed. Applicants were notified of a decision by April 30th. Current participants in the Fund must submit a continuation application by June 30th. If the CCCPDF participant has a credential application that is part of the backlog, please notify Child Care Central. Child Care

Central will verify participation in the Fund before expediting credential processing. If the credential has not been processed and a current credential certificate cannot be included with continuation application, provide a copy of an old credential certificate and an email from Child Care Central confirming date the credential application was received.

A new CCCPDF brochure is now available on new DECD website: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Continued Training

The one (1) hour training sessions offered by Child Care Education Institute (CCEI) can be used to maintain a current credential level but cannot be used to move up to higher levels.

MSDE Approved Training

As of April 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.

Location	Organization or Name	Phone
ASQ-3 (online incl.)= 🗂 ADA= ♿ Breastfeeding COK= 🍌 or CT= 🍌 Developmental = 🗂 Brigrance = 🗂 Dial 4/ESI-R = 🗂		
Online: Penn State Better Kid Care (🍌) http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare/lessons/		
Online: Texas A&M Agrilife Extension (🍌) https://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child_care.php		
Allegany Co.	APPLES for Children 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-733-0000
Anne Arundel Co.	Arundel Child Care Connections 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-222-1712
Baltimore (City)	Adrienne Suggs-Coleman ♿	410-889-8731
Baltimore (City)	Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-685-5150
Baltimore (City)	Playkeepers ♿	410-484-6220
Baltimore (City)	TRAIN Educational and Community Services ♿	301-257-7297
Baltimore Co.	Child Care Links ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-288-4900
Baltimore Co.	Child Resource Center Baltimore County/Abilities Network/Project ACT ♿ 🍌	443-900-6458
Calvert Co.	Brainerific, LLC ♿	443-624-5745
Calvert Co.	The Promise Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-290-0040
Caroline Co.	Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-822-5400
Carroll Co.	Child Care Choices 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-751-2917
Cecil Co.	Child Resource Center Harford Cecil County/Abilities Network/Project ACT ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	443-761-0206
Cecil Co.	Child Care Links ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-288-4900
Charles Co.	The Promise Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-290-0040
Columbia	Columbia Association ♿	410-715-3000
College Park	Instituto de Educacion Infantil, Inc. ♿	301-982-1596
Dorchester Co.	Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-822-5400
Frederick Co.	Child Care Choices 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-662-4549
Fulton	Columbia Academy ♿	301-497-8610
Gaithersburg	Bright Eyes, Inc. 🍌	301-928-7201
Gaithersburg	Family Services Agency ♿	301-840-3248
Gaithersburg	Petrea Fletcher ♿	561-801-1363
Garrett Co.	APPLES for Children 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-733-0000
Germantown	H&H Child Care Training Center ♿ 🍌	301-237-1414
Harford Co.	Linda Bratcher ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-688-3949
Harford Co.	Child Care Links ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-288-4900
Harford Co.	Lite Brite, LLC 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-652-8450
Harford Co.	First Connection ♿	410-258-3201
Harford Co.	Child Resource Center Harford Cecil County/Abilities Network/Project ACT ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	443-761-0206
Howard Co.	Howard County Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-313-1940
Howard Co.	Innovations in Education, LLC. ♿	410-370-2837
Ijamsville	Laura Suguiyama ♿	240-446-1874
Kent Co.	Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-822-5400
Montgomery Co.	Montgomery County Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	240-777-3110
Montgomery Co.	Montgomery Child Care Association Training Institute 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂	240-426-9258
Odenton	Kathlene McClain ♿	410-703-1323
Pikesville	Sandra Peyser ♿	301-789-1707
Princess Anne	Donna Satterlee ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-651-7997
Prince George's Co.	Child Care Management Solutions ♿	301-203-7648
Prince George's Co.	Focus on Children ♿	301-772-6882
Prince George's Co.	Prince George's Child Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-772-8420
Queen Anne's Co.	Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-822-5400
Rockville	Ayoco Educational Services ♿ 🗂	301-231-9608
Rockville	Liran Laor ♿	240-426-9258
Rockville	Montgomery Child Care Association Training Institute ♿	240-428-7723
Saint Mary's Co.	The Promise Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-290-0040
Silver Spring	Silver Spring Day School ♿	301-593-6581
Somerset Co.	Lower Shore Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-543-6650
Talbot Co.	Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-822-5400
Towson	Abilities Network/Project ACT ♿ 🗂	410-828-7700
Upper Marlboro	Quality Care Early Learning Services, LLC 🍌	301-404-9047
Washington Co.	APPLES for Children 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	301-733-0000
Wicomico Co.	Lower Shore Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-543-6650
Windsor Mill	Creative Minds 🍌	410-922-2051
Worcester Co.	Lower Shore Child Care Resource Center 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂 🗂 🗂 🗂	410-543-6650
Salisbury	Dianna Aguirre 🗂 ♿ 🍌 🗂	410-749-6365
Statewide	Maryland Family Network ♿ 🗂	410-659-7701
McLean, VA	CARE Courses School, Inc. 🍌 🗂	800-685-7610

Judy Center News

Allegany



Allegany County Judy Center at South Penn Sponsors Healthy Cooking Night

On Wednesday, February 3, the Allegany County Judy Center at South Penn Elementary School joined with the Allegany County Head Start Program to provide a "Healthy Cooking Night" for families. The event was held in the cafeteria of the HRDC/Head Start Administration Building. Judy Center and Head Start staff provided crock pot meals with recipes. Kathy Kinsman from the University of MD Extension Office showed families how to properly use a knife and cutting board to chop fresh fruits and vegetables. Families went from table to table making healthy snacks, guided by the Head Start teachers.

At the end of the night all families had their choice of either a free crock pot or a free cutting board and knife. This is a very popular event every year and hundreds of people attend.



Pictured left to right: Carrie Beeman and Autumn Wilson, Head Start Lead Teachers; Jessica Painter holding her child Austin; Brayden Painter; Casey Deatelhauser; William "Liam" Deatelhauser and Aaron Scott enjoy Health Cooking Night.

Baltimore City



Judy Center at Arlington Elementary School Engages Men

The Judy Center at Arlington Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore City has hit the ground running since opening in Fall 2015.

After meeting with parents/guardians of the prekindergarten classes and observing their social trends, the Judy Center identified an efficient and economical approach to educating and communicating with parents, staying current with technology and social trends, and encouraging and promoting family engagement opportunities.



Ayden Alford enjoying quality time at a restaurant with dad.



Kelena Roberson and dad at home making silly faces!

Continued on Pg. 8

Judy Center News

Continued From Pg. 7



Adrianna Dixon and her dad snap a selfie before they head to church!

Selfie with Dad is a fun, innovative, and cultivating way to promote positive role-modeling behaviors and interactions between students and their dads/male guardians. Each week, Keisha Wizzart, Family Service Coordinator, sends out a Facebook and Twitter request for students and their dads/male

guardians to snap a selfie together engaging in some form of bonding activity. This activity could be reading a bedtime story, running weekend errands, or simply having family dinner. The pair that completes the most activities and submits their selfies to the Judy Center wins a FREE haircut from Rallin's Professional Cuts, Arlington's neighborhood barbershop, or a gift certificate to Applebee's located near the school. Additionally, all participants of Selfie with Dad will be invited to the Father's Day Celebration held at Rallin's Professional Cuts on Saturday, June 11 and will receive free books and other great incentives provided by the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse!

The Judy Center at John Ruhrah Elementary School is off to a Roaring Start

The Judy Center at John Ruhrah Elementary School is in its first year of programming and has opened its doors with great success in the Southeast district of Baltimore City. This section of the city has a very high Latino population with 75 percent of all families speaking Spanish in the home. The Judy Center has been able to create bilingual programming to help support all families in the area. Here are some highlights!

With a focus on Healthy Living, the Judy Center quickly learned that access to health care and health-related education was very low in the area. They partnered with B'More for Healthy Babies, Baltimore Medical Systems, MD Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, and Centro Sol (a Latino Public Health outreach center) to assist families with their health needs. Through these partnerships, a Baby Basics class, lactation support groups, Smoke Free Homes Workshops, nutrition classes for adults and children, Diabetes and Heart Disease prevention classes, and a large Health Fair have been offered.

During the health fair, through the partnership with Centro Sol the Judy Center was able to screen and provide dental, vision and hearing services for adults and children for free. Adults were also screened for heart disease, diabetes and other diseases. All families were connected with a medical provider or health program that could help them based on the screening results. In addition, there were Zumba classes during the middle of the event to promote physical fitness.



Fifty families pre-registered for the event but a total of 200 families attended and were able to receive medical services as a result of the Health Fair. Thanks to the health fair, entire families were connected with health services that they otherwise would not have had access to. Many providers have been able to give free health services and have donated time to assist adults and children with a variety of health needs, including dental, vision and hearing.

The Mommy, Daddy and Me-Born to Move group meets on Tuesdays for children age 0-3 and utilizes the Born To Move program sponsored by Brick Bodies Fitness Center. This program allows parents to join their children in a physical program designed for very young children. Parents come ready to sing, dance and play!

The 0-3 Fun Club meets every Wednesday and is a playgroup that models learning-based games and crafts that families can play at home with their children. Mothers of young children in the community are excited for strategies they can use at home. During these playgroups, activities are modeled that families can use at home and materials are also provided. The 0-3 Fun Club is a place for adults to learn new strategies to help prepare their children for school, while also giving the children an opportunity to meet peers and play at the Judy Center!

Judy Center News

Calvert

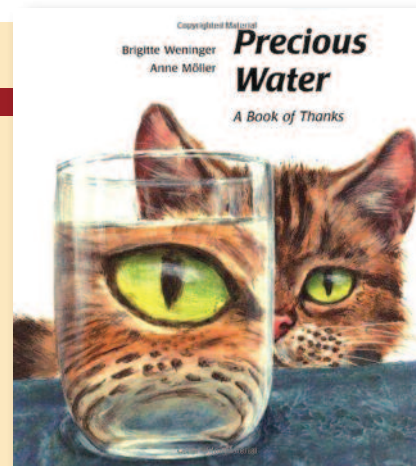


The Calvert County Judy Center 4-H Blooming Clover Buds Send Water to Flint, Michigan

Each year the 4-H Blooming Clover Buds at Patuxent-Appeal Campus (PAC) in Lusby, take on a community outreach project; it can be something that benefits children inside or outside the local community. This year the Clover Buds started a project in Calvert County to collect water for the community of Flint, Michigan. They partnered with the Prince George's County Fire Department. The families of the children and some staff members at PAC donated a total of 53 cases of water.

Parents and volunteers used the water collection efforts to help

the children understand the value of clean water. On March 3, a University of Maryland Master Gardener and retired Calvert County Public School teacher, Nancy Radcliff, read the book **Precious Water** by Brigitte Weninger and Anne Moller. Clover Buds Group Leaders, Naomi Watkins and Donna McLaughlin provided pictures to compare the differences between the water of Flint and Lusby.



Prince George's



Dr. Maxell, CEO of Prince George's County Public Schools, engages the children at the Judy Center at Samuel Chase Elementary School while reading *What Pet Should I Get?* by Dr. Seuss on Read Across America Day.

Prince George's County Judy Centers Celebrate Read Across America Day

The Raising A Reader program helps families develop, practice, and sustain home literacy routines. It provides prekindergarten children with a bright red book bag filled with award-winning books to take home each week for families to enjoy together. The celebration for Read Across America Day supports the vision and mission of the Judy Centers - to promote lifelong literacy enjoyment for children and their families.

The Judy Center at Samuel Chase Elementary School celebrated Read Across America Day with Prince George's County Public Schools Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr. Kevin Maxwell. Dr. Maxwell read Dr. Seuss' latest publication, *What Pet Should I Get?* The children and the CEO had a wonderful opportunity to share what pets they have or would love to own one day. The day ended with the children sharing with the CEO that at the Samuel Chase Judy Center, "We are Raising Readers!"

The three Judy Centers in Prince George's County located at Samuel Chase, Carmody Hills and Cool Spring Elementary Schools collaborated with families and community partners to promote literacy through a variety of family literacy engagement activities. On March 2, the Centers celebrated Read Across America Day in partnership with Early Childhood Programs of Prince George's County Public Schools using Raising A Reader at all three sites.

Judy Center News

Somerset



New Dental Initiatives Come to Somerset County

The Somerset County Judy Center recently partnered with the Office of Oral Health to provide a new dental care program in the county. Beginning in February, the Judy Center began providing **Brushing in the Classroom**. For the first time, prekindergarten and kindergarten children are now brushing their teeth every day right in their classrooms! Initially there was some reluctance because of the busy days filled with activities but Chris Leo from the Office of Oral Health explained how this could easily fit into the regular school day.

A kindergarten teacher at Greenwood Elementary School was the first to reach out and request the program and it has taken off. The program is now in all three Judy Center schools, impacting over 200 children. Many of the local child care centers have decided to implement the Brushing in the Classroom program too. The Office of Oral Health provided free toothbrushes, cups and toothpaste while the Judy Center provided toothbrush storage cases and books for all prekindergarten and kindergarten children. A local dental clinic is also providing dental exams and



Ryleigh Joseph gets her dental screening and teeth varnished while attending the Judy Center Play Pals group at the Woodrow Wilson Community Center in Crisfield.



The Tooth Fairy's Helper pays a visit to kindergarten students at Greenwood Elementary School.

varnishing to the children. In addition, the Tooth Fairy's Helper paid a visit to Judy Center students to explain the importance of brushing and caring for their teeth.

The Judy Center is working in other ways to ensure healthy teeth in Somerset County; children Birth-3 are also receiving a dental screening and varnishing. Recently a dental hygienist attended Play Pals (Birth-3 playgroups) in Crisfield and in Princess Anne. She also visited several of the child care centers and family providers in the Judy Center catchment areas. The Judy Center will continue to provide this service every six months.

Although February is officially Dental Health Awareness Month, for the Somerset County Judy Center Partnership, there is now dental health awareness all year long!

PAST EVENTS



Sandra Balbuena, Kim Halsey, Andrea Semler, and Kelsey Green from Washington County discuss roles and strategies for presenting.

Parent Café Facilitator Training a Success in Washington County

The Washington County ECAC and the Washington County Judy Center collaborated to sponsor Parent Café Facilitator Training through Maryland Family Network. More than 30 people from Washington, Frederick, Garrett, Carroll and Baltimore counties attended the two-day training in early March. Attendees received training to qualify them as both Table Hosts and Facilitators to promote the Parent Café model to families throughout their respective counties. In addition, attendees were eligible to receive Core of Knowledge hours for successfully completing the training.

Washington County participants included representatives from Head Start, Hagerstown Community College's Children's Learning Center, Birth through Five, Bester Community of Hope, Potomac Case Management Services, Hagerstown Area Religious Council and The Hub@USMH. These agencies have already begun collaborating to schedule three Parent Cafés in May in various areas in the county.

RESOURCES

Maryland Libraries Play Role in Helping Parents in Role as First Teacher

A signature initiative of the public libraries, Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) @ your library, enlists parents and caregivers as partners in preparing young children to read. The research-based early literacy outreach education program puts library resources into the hands of parents and caregivers at 4,000 libraries nationwide. The program connects families to their communities and provides parents and caregivers with effective tools and strategies to support families as lifelong educators of their children.

Every Child Ready to Read not only is designed to make sure that all at-risk children arrive at school ready to learn, but it also is helping libraries emerge as a key resource for ELL preschoolers and their families. Using the principles identified in ECRR, Maryland libraries are seizing opportunities to inform parents and caregivers of the value of the skills that are developed at every program they attend with their child. Through a series of workshops, parents and caregivers learn strategies for developing pre-reading skills through engaging parent-child activities that incorporate singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing.

The popular workshop format, Library Family Café, focus discussion and activities on the excitement of learning—specifically through singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing. Learning stations provide hands-on fun activities that can be done at home and easily integrated into everyday activities. Sometimes offer meals or snacks are offered at workshops. Each library



designs their café programs to fit their community needs.

Libraries are reaching out to community partners to help. "We partnered with the Judy Center, the early learning division at our local school system focused on Title I areas," said Barbara Graham, youth services coordinator, Wicomico County (MD) Library. "Many of the families had not been to the library before."

In the February 2016 issue of Educational Leadership: Helping ELLs Excel, Peg Pond, an outreach supervisor in Carroll County, Maryland, spoke on how workshops are helping Hispanic parents feel more at ease with using library resources. As their children grow, parents return to tell the librarians of their children's progress. "The parents talk about their children's successes now," Pond says. "They talk about how they always talk and read to their child in their native language. And they are proud."

Check out your local branch for workshops and ideas!

Navigating the New DECD Website

We have had a great response to our new website. The site will continue to be a work in progress as we fine tune pages and links, but overall we are excited about the new capabilities and information that the website provides.

In the meantime, here are a few helpful hints and tricks to ensure you can access the information you need:

- ◆ Start your navigation of the site by using the bar menu or clicking on one of the icons. Select the option that best fits your need for information as a family, care provider or school-age education.
- ◆ Below the header at the top of every page you'll find a menu. This menu has links to all the main areas of our site. The items with small right-pointing arrows next to them expand to show more links.
- ◆ The site has been designed to work with mobile devices such as tablets and phones. When viewing the site on one of these devices the menu will show up as three lines; when clicked it will expand to show all the link options.

If you're looking for something specific—like a document, form or application—try these search methods:

- ◆ Check the Resource Library. Type in a keyword or title to find all of the content related to your search.
- ◆ Use the search function. On the top left of each page is a search box. To find a specific topic or program, type in a word or phrase.





Professional Development



Early Learning Assessment Announcement

We are nearing completion of the third part of Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System- **Ready 4 Kindergarten (R4K)**!



R4K has 3 parts:

- 1. Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** - which is given at the beginning of the Kindergarten year in all public Kindergarten classrooms
- 2. Developmental Screening** - which provides a choice of several screening tools to be used by child care providers
- 3. Early Learning Assessment (ELA)** - which is a free, voluntary formative assessment tool available for use in Child Care, Head Start, and public PreK and Kindergarten classrooms for children 36-72 months

If you are interested in learning how to use the new Early Learning Assessment in your program, Maryland Family Network (MFN), through a grant with the Maryland State Department of Education, will provide low-cost Early Learning Assessment training and a free Early Learning Assessment kit to you. The kit contains the paper version of the formative assessment materials. The assessment materials are also available online. If you are interested in taking the ELA training, please contact Jennifer Lentz at MFN jlentz@marylandfamilynetwork.org. Participants will earn Core of Knowledge hours for the 12-hour training. Information and dates for training will be publicized later this spring with a variety of training dates and times available during the summer and fall. The Early Learning Assessment (ELA) will have many benefits to child care providers. It is a formative assessment, meaning it has activities that you can use that will help you identify a child’s skills, knowledge and behaviors between the ages of 36 and 72 months. You can then plan instruction that matches where a child currently is developmentally as well as plan additional support for children who may be behind what is expected for a child around that age. The ELA is aligned to the **Maryland Early Learning Standards** in seven domains which establish the expectations for all children as the foundation for school readiness and life-long success.

Benefits of Using the Early Learning Assessment

- You can use the ELA to learn what a child already knows or does well so you can plan instruction to take them to the next step. You will become familiar with what a child should be learning as they become ready to enter Kindergarten in the future.
- The ELA can help you measure a child’s growth over points of time that you can also share with their family.
- Child care providers can use the ELA to meet the requirement for Level 5 in Maryland EXCELS and/or meet accreditation requirements.

- There is minimal cost since most of the training and the ELA kit costs are being paid for by MSDE.
- There is no cost involved once training has occurred. The use of the online version of the assessment and the professional learning materials is free.
- Special educators use the ELA for gathering information for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Communication with Parents and Schools

- The ELA provides information to teachers and parents of a child’s progress in Maryland’s seven (7) different domains of learning.
- The online system allows you to see, print and share information that shows a child’s growth over a period of time. This is great information to share at parent teacher conferences.

Choice

- Child care providers can choose which skills and in what domain(s) to assess based on the needs of the child and your program.
- The ELA can be completed online – all of the child’s scores can be entered on a computer or tablet device. A paper version is also available.
- All of the assessment items on the ELA can be completed by observing the child during your regular classroom activities.
- The online system will also provide you with many useful professional development resources to use for planning learning activities and for addressing the individual needs of children. There is even a Pinterest page!



Take Courses Anytime and Anywhere with Online Training

The Office of Child Care understands the importance of the work providers and educators do, and it wants to help produce the best providers and facilities possible for Maryland families. We know that child care is a tough profession and with a very busy schedule making time for a child care course can be stressful to your career and life at home. You can participate in online child care training when you need it, without leaving the comfort of your own home. Child care courses are no longer restricted to classroom and practical lessons; online courses are designed to accommodate the busy schedules of early childhood professionals.

Online training, also known as computer based training (CBT), e-learning, or distance learning, is a form of training that takes place entirely on the internet. Online training is web-based so you can log in from anywhere: home, training center, library or anywhere else you have access to the internet. It includes a variety of multimedia elements, such as graphics, audio, video, and web-links.

Online training is generally self-paced; users can throughout a course learn at their own pace and maintain control of learning. Therefore, online training can be conducted at almost any time and place, provided there is a computer with high-speed internet access. This makes training convenient for users, who can modify their training to fit into their work and life schedules.

To use online training, users should have a basic knowledge of computers. This should include, but is not limited to, the ability to use a mouse; the ability to open and close documents and web pages; and the ability to navigate a website and web pages. Those with no computer experience at all, may have trouble using online trainings and, for their own benefit, may want to take a basic computer training class before enrolling in online courses.

Consider online training as an alternative to classroom and practical lessons for completing pre-service and continued training requirements. A collection of early childhood online courses is available at www.thinkport.org/msde-clock-hours.html.



Maryland Program Accreditation

What is Maryland Program Accreditation? Are you wondering how to get started? The first step to answering these questions is to attend an accreditation orientation. We've added another resource to assist in providing accreditation orientation sessions throughout the State. Approved Validators, local child care resource centers, and **NOW** Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists can help you with the details. Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists have been trained and are available to provide an orientation for you and your staff!

Steps to Maryland Program Accreditation:

- Step One:** Orientation
 - Step Two:** Register for a Maryland EXCELS account or log-in to your existing account & Click "Participate in MSDE Accreditation"
 - Step Three:** Click "Begin Accreditation"
 - Step Four:** Conduct Self-Appraisal
 - Step Five:** Program Improvement Visit
 - Step Six:** Program Improvement & Final Self-Appraisal Rating
 - Step Seven:** Validation Visit
 - Step Eight:** Accreditation Decision
- ▶ **Let's get started!!** For more information please contact Vanessa Jones at vanessa.jones1@maryland.gov, your Quality Assurance Specialist or local child care resource center.

We want to hear from you!



Fill out our survey

The PARTNERS Newsletter is currently distributed to the licensed child and early care communities and education agencies four times per year. The newsletter highlights DECD news/updates, current events and trainings, and informs providers of the latest in rules/laws and regulations.

Since this newsletter is made especially for you, we would like to get your feedback and suggestions on the newsletter content, frequency, and preferred format. If you would, please take a few minutes to answer a few questions on the DECD website <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/partners-survey>

Thank you for your help,

Alexis Washington
Communications and Outreach Specialist

Careers & Training:

MSDE has released *Careers in Early Childhood Education: A MARYLAND GUIDE*. The guide provides clear educational pathways for potential and current early childhood professionals to acquire the training and experience they need to be effective and advance. It's available on the DECD website: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Fishing, Finding & Fun at Flag Ponds Nature Park in Calvert County

Flag Ponds Nature Park programs introduce families with young children to the natural world. It is home to one of the most spectacular beaches in Southern Maryland. The nature preserve is located in Lusby, Maryland along the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Named after the abundant Blue Flag Iris, the nature park offers a variety of trails to explore the park and two fresh-water ponds.

The journey starts at the Visitor's Center to check out the fossil cases displaying sharks teeth, porpoise bones and scallop shell fossils found in the park. Visitor's test their beachcombing skills by searching for Miocene fossils on Flag Ponds' beach, where visitors are encouraged to take home their fossil treasures.

The trails through the wooded areas are likely to lead visitors to face-to-face encounters with woodchucks, rabbits, and raccoons that inhabit the preserve. It's also not uncommon to catch an occasional glimpse of a bald eagle, as well as ducks and other water fowl. To view the turtles, muskrats and great blue herons that call the park home, visitors climb the observation platforms. Fishing is a popular pastime at Flag Ponds, and the park's 100-foot fishing pier offers kids the chance to reel in some stripers or bluefish straight from the Chesapeake Bay. Swimming is permit-

ted on the beach but no lifeguard is on duty.

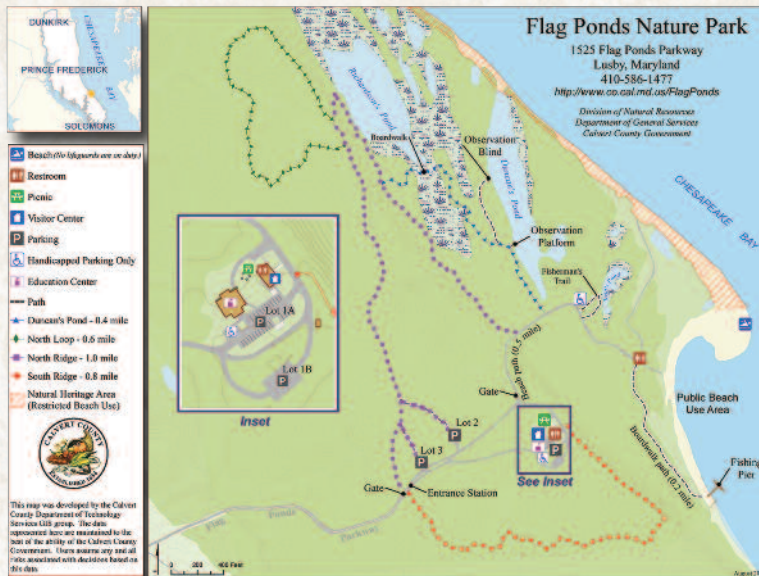
Flag Pond offers two great programs for 3-5 years old. Registration is required; be sure to sign up early.

1. Counting Crabs - Take an up close look at crabs and learn how they move around and live in the bay. Be prepared to go in the water as we gather up crabs to study.

2. Leaves Everywhere - Big leaves, small ones, fuzzy ones, ones that smell - Do leaves all look the same? Bring your preschooler for this closer look at the diversity of leaves in our park.

Flag Ponds also offers a series of environmental education programs, *Homeschool First Fridays*, developed especially for homeschoolers ages 4 to

12. Each two-hour program consists of indoor and outdoor hands-on learning. They are a great way to get hands-on science and nature lessons, receive help on projects and research and network with other homeschooling families. Depending on the topic, students may observe live animals, collect aquatic creatures, take measurements of water quality, or play games.



To register for or more information about Flag Ponds Nature Park programs visit <http://www.calvertparks.org/page-1461821>





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Upcoming Conferences

Save the Date

September 24, 2016

Howard County Office of
Children's Services Annual Conference
The Sheraton Columbia Town Center

"Supporting EACH and EVERY Child"

This year's conference focuses on providing quality early childhood education for EACH and EVERY child. Sessions will address meeting the needs of all learners including children with special needs, varied backgrounds, genders and learning styles. Registration materials will be available mid-June and conference updates will be posted at www.howardcountymd.gov/training.

Please contact Nikki Pierre at mail to: npierre@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-1923 for more information.

Save the Date

**All for One,
One for All!**

4th Annual Western MD
Early Childhood Conference

**September 30 -
October 1, 2016**

Registration opens
July 15th

Hagerstown
Community College

Email
ecacwashcmd@gmail.com
for more info

Save the Date

October 14 - 15, 2016

Carousel Oceanfront Hotel and Condos,
Ocean City, Maryland

Maryland State
Family Child Care Association

24th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Join MSFCCA for a conference filled with education, networking and friends. Don't miss out on this fun, refreshing, inspiring weekend where you can receive up to 12 hours of training, including 10 hours of Core of Knowledge training.

For more info visit
<http://www.msfccca.org>
www.msfccca.org
or email
mailto:jacqueline.n.grant@gmail.com
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