Family Involvement is Important for Children’s Success!

“Tour Around the World” Family Night

Family Style Meals at Garfield ECEAP

A Parent Success Story - Darrington Kid’s Place

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Lakewood ECEAP Student Gives Back

WSU Extension Growing Groceries with VOA ECEAP Families

ECEAP Fall 2009 Calendar
The annual spring ECEAP “Celebrate the Successes” volunteer recognition dinner was held April 28, 2009 to pay special tribute to those who donated their time and care on behalf of families and children in the ECEAP Program. The dinner was held in the Weyerhaeuser Room of the Everett Transit Station.

Featured speakers were Snohomish County Sheriff John Lovick and Washington Association of Head Start and ECEAP Director Joel Ryan. Lovick encouraged children and young people to develop honesty, respect, kindness and forgiveness for themselves and others while engaging in lifelong learning and goal setting. Ryan shared legislative updates and encouraged parents to be actively involved in their children’s learning.

*Caring Community Awards* were presented to the following community volunteers in celebration of their donations of time, skill and materials to ECEAP families:

- **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Relief Society** Clothing & toy donations
- **Ms. June Shirey, Principal, Ms. Betty Robertson, Deputy Superintendent Snohomish School District; Tillicum Kiwanis Club** Promoting healthy nutrition
- **Ms. Karen Pickard, Sno-Isle Libraries** Promoting literacy
- **The Old Bags of Arlington** Holiday basket and “napping” quilt donations
- **Ms. Bunny Walters, United Way** Supporting multiple ECEAP activities
- **Ms. Michelle Vogue, RDH** Providing oral health services
Thanks to honored guests, staff and ECEAP parents for making the event possible:

COUNTY STAFF
Beth Mizell
Karyn Smith
Laurie Bain-Smith
Maure Carrier
Kristi Reardon
Bruce Braun
Barb Syre
Tina Nelson
Joe Varano

PARENTS
Todd McNerney
Jody LaRocque
Dionne King
Michelle Hull
Jennifer Cox
Rachelle Holthaus
Brandi Walker
Beth Clark
Jessica Salmeron
Kim Thomas
Heather Gerrard
Lisa Collier
Isis Santana
Describe the work you are planning to do as a Parent Ambassador in Snohomish County ECEAP and throughout the state.

In the fall I will meet with families to talk about the PA’s work and provide legislative updates and information on advocacy work in 2010. I will also conduct an advocacy training to prepare parents for the Advocacy Day in February.

I will help other PA’s organize a statewide fall blitz and work with programs that do not have PA’s. I continue to work with other organizations focusing on advocacy to increase my advocacy skills and resources.

How would you describe the Parent Ambassadors Program?

In 2008, the Washington State Association (WSA) of Head Start/ECEAP received a Peppercorn Foundation grant to create a grassroots advocates program of Head Start and ECEAP parents and grandparents. The yearlong Parent Ambassador’s (PA) Program includes monthly conference calls, meetings with team, program and county staff, parent/council meetings and training events. PA’s work on advocacy activities within their communities including networking with early learning community members, attending State budget hearings and participating in meetings, trainings and other events to educate, advocate and learn for an average of two to eight hours per week.

The program requires passion and a strong desire to become a community leader. The parents and grandparents within the PA Program are also learning their power to speak up and are gaining lifelong skills in advocating for what they believe is right.

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Would you talk a little about the Parent Ambassador training and your activities during the June-July Summer Institute?

Joel Ryan, Executive Director of WSA Head Start and ECEAP gave a comprehensive update on the state and federal legislature. Topics included President Obama’s proposals for early learning and the impact on Head Start Programs, federal and state childcare subsidies and Washington’s inclusion of early learning in its definition of basic education.

PA’s facilitated sessions on communicating and meeting with policy makers, the media and constituents. I co-led sessions on planning/presenting advocacy trainings and giving successful testimonies. PA’s developed their individual strategic plans.

I had the great pleasure of participating in Family Support and Home Visit Panels with Todd McNerney and PA Tafra Jones, where I shared my experiences and gave staff best practice tips for first-time home visits.

Would you share your future professional plans?

I plan to enroll at Edmonds CC in the fall, take Spanish and obtain the Family Support certificate. I am considering a Masters in Public Affairs at the UW. The important work and experience as a PA has added to my skills, abilities and contacts. Thanks to the PA Program, support from ECEAP program and WSA’s Director Joel Ryan’s faith in me I believe a position in the advocacy work I love is not far away. I consider myself blessed to be part of such a wonderful and supportive program.
Imagine walking into an old school gym, seeing more than 200 people and smelling such a variety of ethnic foods you cannot determine a single aroma. Picture yourself walking around the gym, swerving between children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and teachers and stopping at each table to taste the wonderful food the families have created. You hear parents of children, who have never talked to one another before, asking for recipes, sharing stories about their children and talking about where they are from. You smile at a four-year-old child jumping up and down to get her teacher’s attention to tell her about Mommy’s pasta salad. Then imagine a place where many different cultures and languages are joined together to share one very special night. This was the scene at Mukilteo ECEAP’s *Tour Around the World* Family Night on May 13, 2009.

The annual highlight for families is an evening when everyone is center stage, showing who they are, where they are from and how interesting, unique and special their culture is — an evening where children sample foods they would never have tried before and return to the table with big smiles and share experiences of who they met, what they tried and how full they were! One mom said, “I have lived many places in my life and I have never been in a place surrounded by so many cultures.” The families at this night were from around the world! There were families representing Poland, Korea, Mexico, Gambia, Congo, Vietnam, Russia, USA, Iraq, Egypt, China, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and more. The evening was a huge success and meant so much to everyone involved!
One of the benefits of family style meals is the opportunity for children to learn self-help skills. Pictured are children learning to serve themselves. They are developing their small and large muscles, motor skills and learning to make decisions about whether to try a food (thinking skills). Children develop language and social skills by learning the name of the food and asking for food to be passed.

Children learn about nutrition when they learn about food. During the meal children learned that food gives them energy. They discussed how mashed potatoes are made and talked about the texture of food. Darneja said, “Potatoes were the softest,” and Zachary said, “The bread (stick) was the hardest food on my plate.”
A Parent Success Story
Darrington Kid’s Place
Jeniffer Nations, Teacher and Family Support Worker

During a recent parent/teacher conference Steve and Jeniffer talked about Steve's life with four-year-old son Nicholas. Steve said every day his son would tell him to quit smoking. He then said, “You know what I would like to do? Quit smoking.”

Jeniffer acknowledged that Nicholas wanting his dad to quit was a great motivation; she said she could help and gave Steve a number to call. Every two weeks Jeniffer checked with Steve to see how he was doing and he reported his progress. She would tell him to keep on smiling and wearing the patches. The week before July 4, Steve announced he was off the patch, chewing gum and still not smoking!

Snohomish County ECEAP, in collaboration with the Snohomish Health District, will be implementing a Smoking Cessation Project during the 2009-10 program year. The focus of the project will be educating parents and families on ways to decrease their children’s exposure to damaging secondhand smoke by either choosing to quit smoking or changing when and where they smoke. The Family Support staff will be trained in the resources that are available to ECEAP families to help them quit smoking. The 2009 Health Care Institute includes information on smoking cessation.
Family Involvement is Important for Children’s Success!

Every child has the power to succeed in school and in life, and every parent, family member and caregiver can help. The question is: How can we help our children succeed?

We know, for example, that children tend to follow their parents’ lead. Children watch what we say and do. Parents are truly a child’s first teacher and this role lasts a lifetime. When we show our children we value education, it gives them a powerful model for success. We can take steps to support their education at home. Research shows that when parents and families are involved in their children's schools, their children:

⇒ Get better grades and test scores;
⇒ Graduate from high school at higher rates;
⇒ Are more likely to go on to college.

What you can do at home...

As a parent or caregiver, no one should care more about your child's education than you. Get involved in your child's education at home. Here are simple tips that may be useful:

• **Encourage Your Child to Read.** It is the single, most important thing you can do to help your child succeed in school. Read aloud to your baby right from the start and make reading together part of your daily routine.

• **Encourage Healthy Habits.** Research shows that regular sleeping times, good eating habits and physical exercise are critical for student success.

• **Monitor TV Viewing, Computer Use and Video Game Playing.** Have a special place and regular time for your child to study and check to see if your child needs help. Set limits on time spent watching TV, using the computer and/or playing video games.

• **Communicate With Your Child.** Have daily conversations with your child about their school day and listen to what your child has to say.

• **Encourage Your Child.** Provide consistent, encouraging words to help motivate young children.

Working with teachers and schools...

Learn everything you can about your child’s school. You know your children best and understand their needs. Ask for a school handbook and read it. Visit the school’s Web site for more information. Ask for information in your home language.

Talk with your child's teacher early and often - and begin those conversations right at the beginning of the school year. Contact the teacher immediately if you notice a change in your child's behavior, school performance or if you think your child doesn't understand an assignment. If you don't understand a school rule or the teacher's assignments, set up a meeting to talk. Stay involved in your child’s school activities. Attend school events. Go to sports events, back-to-school nights and parent-teacher meetings. Volunteer in your children’s school and classroom.

This information was adapted from the U.S. Department of Education.
When Monserrat Lamas started preschool at Lakewood ECEAP in September, 1995 she was a shy little girl who didn’t speak English. Despite the language barrier, her mother said she loved going to school. By the end of her preschool year, Monserrat was speaking and understanding English. Thirteen years later, an active senior at Lakewood High School, Monserrat is using her gift of two languages to complete her Senior Culminating Project.

In September 2008, Monserrat interpreted for her aunt when enrolling her cousin in Lakewood ECEAP. During the visit, Monserrat mentioned she needed to complete her Senior Project. Different ideas were discussed and the decision was made to have Monserrat translate the *Parent Handbook*. Once her project proposal was approved, Monserrat began creating a Spanish version of the handbook.

Throughout the process, Monserrat demonstrated a conscientious attitude and completed the project producing a professional looking Parent Handbook. Her project will benefit many future families as they enroll in Lakewood ECEAP. It was a rewarding experience working with Monserrat, witnessing the shy little preschooler grow into an accomplished young adult. Staff members wish Monserrat the very best as she graduates from Lakewood High School and begins college in September.

Lakewood ECEAP Student Gives Back

Linda Steinborn, Lakewood ECEAP Manager
WSU Snohomish County Extension’s Healthy Families and Horticultural Programs, in collaboration with the Snohomish County Human Services Department’s CAP (Community Action Partnership), are working with VOA Everett ECEAP families to help promote healthier lives and support more nutritious eating.

The Healthy Families Program, using existing on-site raised beds to grow fresh produce, is one local response to increasing families’ access to resources during this tough economic time of lay-offs and high unemployment rates.

The family/school garden project has been effective in helping families gain more access to affordable, low-cost fresh produce to include in their daily meals. The monthly family garden and nutrition education sessions are facilitated by volunteer mentors from WSU Snohomish County Extension Horticulture, Master Gardeners and community members.

The goal of the Growing Groceries with Families Program is to provide families with additional tools and resources to:

- supplement the family food budget;
- grow, use and preserve fresh produce;
- increase access to and use of fresh produce in daily diets;
- promote and increase physical activities;
- increase and strengthen families’ social and community networking.
Almost tripled the growing space from six existing raised beds to 16 growing spaces, not including multiple containers for tomatoes, peppers and potatoes.

Secured a total of $1,300 in small grants and individual donations.

Secured donations of hand tools and seeds/starts from Home Depot/nursery/individuals.

Families are replicating and transferring their learning into their homes and starting their own gardens.

To date, families have harvested about 55 lbs. of produce.

Monthly garden and nutrition education for families has included cooking demonstrations.

418 volunteer hours have been donated by families and community members toward the garden project via training/garden hours.

418 hrs @ $20.37/hr (for WA) = $8,514.66 in dollar amount (Independent Sector Researcher--sets national volunteer hourly rate).

Cooking demonstration with families using vegetables from the garden.

⇒ sliced radishes with lemon juice
⇒ rhubarb salsa
⇒ cheese enchiladas stuffed with cooked greens (collard greens & kale)
Together, we can make a difference in your child’s education

WHAT IS ECEAP?
• The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a free preschool program for 3, 4 and 5-year-olds and is funded by Washington state.
• ECEAP offers programs throughout Snohomish County (and two programs in Skagit County); we honor and welcome all families.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?
• Educational experiences including language skills, self-help activities, social skills and self-esteem building, field trips and preparation for kindergarten.
• Health and nutrition education including vision and hearing screenings, connections for families to medical and dental resources, well-balanced meals and snacks, health and nutrition education for children and families.
• Family Support including parent education and information for local resources, family fun nights & activities, opportunities for personal growth, leadership development, involvement in your child’s education and involvement in program decision-making.

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ECEAP FALL CALENDAR 2009

ECEAP FALL CALENDAR 2009
September 2009
9/2  Food Worker Class
9/10  Pre-Service for Teachers
9/11  Pre-Service for Teachers
9/18  Pre-Service for Family Support Workers
9/25  Health Training Day
9/29  Mental Health Sub-Committee

October 2009
10/2  Second Step Training
10/6  Policy & Advisory Council
10/14  Health Advisory Committee
10/23  Cooks Training

November 2009
11/3  Policy & Advisory Council
11/6  Family Support Training

December 2009
12/1  Policy & Advisory Council
12/11  Talk About Touching Training
12/15  Mental Health Sub-Committee

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS
The Snohomish County ECEAP Newsletter is published three times a year by the Snohomish County Department of Human Services. We invite your feedback and suggestions on topics of interest and photographs showing ECEAP activities. Please feel free to call Karyn Smith at 425-388-7254.