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The Imagine Children’s Museum in Everett is a favorite destination of many families. Recently, families from Sultan Early Head Start visited together and shared these pictures. Adventures included story time in a tree house! The families also dressed up in costumes and performed for each other in the theater. Some of the children, dressed for the job, built in the construction studio.

Children learn while they play. Like Early Head Start and ECEAP, the museum has many opportunities for children of all ages to play. When families play together, relationships are strengthened and children build essential developmental skills.

Visiting new places including museums and parks gives children an opportunity to learn new things. We meet new people, and hear new sounds. New vocabulary words may be added. A toddler may wear a hard hat for the first time. Different textures and colors are available.

New learning opportunities are important for several reasons. We all learn through our senses. Our brains get information as we see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. Children learn best in secure and loving relationships. So, get out and enjoy! Feed your child's brain.

Parents from our early learning programs who have visited recommend the following ideas for a successful family trip:

- Bring an extra shirt,
- Bring a snack or sack lunch, and
- Free night is crowded, and fun.
Greetings to all of you. My hope is that your child and family are enjoying your early learning program. Snohomish County is pleased to have your family with us.

This fall, Snohomish County formed an Early Learning Division to serve you and the community better. The county’s goal for the change was to formalize the range of early learning services we offer. Between North Snohomish County Early Head Start (NSC-EHS) and ECEAP, we serve pregnant mothers and children from babies through age five. The staff of both programs work and learn together. We combine current science and caring relationships to create, with you, opportunities for your children to learn and thrive. Snohomish County is one of the few counties with an Early Learning Division and I’m happy to be managing it. We will continue to bring you the high-quality learning environments and relationships that you value.

This year is an exciting one for ECEAP! ECEAP’s 25th anniversary is being celebrated all over the state. I hope you’ve had time to participate in the celebration at your family’s center.

Thank you for your participation in your child’s education. Your role makes all the difference! I wish you and your family well.

Healthy Teeth and Happy Smiles

- Eat healthy foods.
- Brush teeth twice a day (morning and night).
- Floss once a day.
- Visit your dentist twice a year.
- For help, call the Dental Resource Line at 425.339.5219

Introducing the Oral Health Institute

Learn about:
Preventing cavities.
When to call the dentist.
How to take care of your baby’s teeth.
What is a dental emergency and what should I do?

Ask at your ECEAP school about the schedule. Ask your Infant Toddler Specialist about participating.

The program is like the Health Care Institute and is also from UCLA Johnson & Johnson.
Preschool children often love to tell stories, draw pictures, and learn to write. Teachers from preschool through third grade are learning together about a new way of teaching literacy developed by David Matteson. He is an educational consultant whose work is supported by research.

Using this method, teachers actively teach children how to draw a story. They show how to pick a story and organize ideas. This is called "modeled writing" and the steps are shown in the photos. Modeled writing helps children tie together reading and writing, using their own stories.

Children learn to tell their own stories, based on their experiences and interests. This is called "narrative writing." Children draw a picture and tell their story aloud for an adult to write down. Teachers encourage the children to think about the story they want to tell.

Important details include:

- Where the story happened (setting).
- Who were in the story (characters).
- What happened in the story (plot).
- How the child felt.

By talking about the story, children learn to recognize names (their own, family, and friends). Labeling their pictures and saying aloud their stories help the children learn to recognize basic sight words. Basic sight words are frequently used words (mom, dad, love, I, me, my, the, is, it, in, a, at, to, went, was, we, and go.)
Foundations in Literacy, Continued

Teachers use Writing Benchmarks PreK-3rd Grade to help them teach and assess progress. Both the benchmarks and children’s work samples are also helpful tools during parent/teacher conferences to discuss how children are developing.

Children’s use and knowledge of language as they start kindergarten helps them become strong readers and writers by 3rd grade. These readers and writers are also more likely to graduate from high school. Teachers learning together and teaching in a similar way from preschool through 3rd grade is called “P-3 Alignment.”

ECEAP teachers from Everett Public Schools and Volunteers of America are participating in training with teachers in grades through 3rd grade this year. More ECEAP teachers will be trained next year.

Snohomish County ECEAP is part of a P-3 Alignment partnership to help children reach their full potential as readers and writers. The other partners are Northwest Educational Service District 189, Volunteers of America – Western Washington, Snohomish County Head Start, Everett Community College Early Learning Center, United Way of Snohomish County, and Everett Public Schools.

Families support literacy at home by talking with and reading to children (even with small babies). Talk with and read to your children in the language(s) you usually use at home. As you read, talk about the pictures and the story. Notice feelings and add in feeling words. Tell stories. Listen to your child’s stories. Ask open-ended questions like “then what happened?” Sno-Isle Libraries has a list of wordless books, which have pictures but no words. These are great for all ages and encourage children to tell stories and use their imagination.
Many children in Snohomish County and all over the world successfully learn more than one language. Research supports many benefits of learning two languages. Generally, experts recommend that parents speak with children in the language the parents are most comfortable with. A family’s job is to raise happy and healthy children. The important thing is to talk with your child while you teach them all the skills they need for living. Talk and laugh with your child during diaper changes, and while you fix dinner. Language is the foundation of relationships.

Talking is natural and children’s motivation to talk is high. Humans are social and love to interact.

Scientists think that a ‘window’ of learning language ‘opens’ at about the age of 10 months. Babies can hear much earlier, even in the womb. Talking with babies right from birth is important. During the next two years, babies quickly learn language. By the age of three, they have generally learned sentence structure, basic grammar (the ‘rules’ of the language,) and a large vocabulary of basic words necessary to their physical and emotional survival.
Children who are familiar with one language and then are introduced to another language, typically follow four stages of learning.

- **Stage 1 — Home Language Use:** Children use the language they know.
- **Stage 2 — Silent Period:** Children realize the first language is not working and barely speak. They use non-verbal communication, for example pointing. The younger the child, the longer this period may last.
- **Stage 3 — Sound Experimentation & Telegraphic Speech:** Children start to use the new language. They use one word (“book”) or short sentences (“me down”) or repeat the words of others.
- **Stage 4 — Productive Language:** Children use sentences and express their own thoughts. Sentences may be basic. Grammar improves over time. Children (and adults) may begin a sentence in one language and end in another. This is called “mixing” and is not a sign of confusion.

Every child is an individual. If you worry that your child is 'late' learning to talk, be sure to rule out all possible physical causes, including possible deafness, and then wait. Sometimes, children do need help with anxiety or speech concerns. Speech concerns will show up in both (or all) languages.

Learning language is both fun and hard work for most children. Support from their families is important. Talking, reading (books, recipes, and signs), providing books, and attending early learning programs are all helpful.
By Suzy Monteith, Sauk-Suiattle Lead Teacher

Sauk-Suiattle Preschool’s annual eagle watching hike was tremendous fun! We visited the eagles at Howard Miller Steelhead Park in Rockport.

The Monday/Wednesday class was thrilled to be able to see 10 Bald Eagles in their natural habitat. One mature eagle even flew right by us as we were walking over the bridge!

After the hike, we enjoyed our trail mix that the kids had made earlier in the day. Then we played in the park. It was a beautiful day to spend outside with friends and family!
By Kim Parker, Program Manager

Forty-five parents and family members visited the Mukilteo Nutrition Expo in November. Handouts on snacks, portion sizes, and sugar content in food were available. Information on MyPlate, which replaced the Food Pyramid, was also available. Food samples were available for everyone and a few lucky people took home door prizes.

By Pam Guilford, Program Manager

What do you call a friendly, dedicated group of preschool parents who enjoy cooking, learning together, and helping children develop healthy habits? We call it APPLE Preschool’s Calendar Committee!

APPLE Preschool’s parents created a school calendar this year with family favorite recipes and fun activities. Parents tested recipes, cooking together in our school kitchen. Children cooked and sampled in the classroom.

This dedicated group of parents coaxed recipes and ideas from other families. They edited the recipes to produce a beautiful calendar called Caring and Sharing at APPLE Preschool. Beautiful photos of the children in the classroom fill the calendar along with lots of fabulous recipes reflecting our community.
Literacy Night at Mukilteo was an action-packed event. Nearly 160 adults and children listened to Firefighter Aaron read *The Very Sleepy Sloth*. He also answered all the great questions about his job!

Each child chose a book and took home lots of arts and craft activities. Family photos were taken. Our Librarian, Joy Feldman, brought library resources and checked out books for those who had their Sno-Isle Library card. Cookies and milk were enjoyed.
By Desiree Mason, Family Support

A half hour before preschool ended, 36 eager children greeted their loved ones: dads, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, mothers, and grandmothers. Handmade invitations had gone home the day before. The tables were set with small cake donuts, icing, and candy toppings.

Thirty-one dads and other loved ones came to the party. Everyone had so much fun that our center had similar family events: “Moms and Muffins” in November and “Grandparents’ Tea” in December.

Generosity was evident. No child sat alone if their special loved one was unable to come. As they could, dads, moms, grandparents and others stayed after the donuts were decorated. They read to and played with their children.
Your family may enjoy making play dough at home. Young children enjoy mixing the dry ingredients. Here are two recipes to try.

**Play Dough Recipe**
From Debbie Sztain, Infant Toddler Specialist

**Ingredients:**
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- Food Coloring (add a few drops to the water)
- 2 cups of boiling water (very important that it is boiling when you put it in) with food coloring added to it.

**Directions:**
Mix all the ingredients in a bowl except for the water. (Young children love helping with this part.) Add the water to the rest of the ingredients and stir until all the ingredients are mixed. Be careful as it will be really hot. Put the dough on a table. Knead it until it is elastic and smooth.

**Play Dough Recipe**
(without Cream of Tartar and Oil)

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of salt
- 1/2 cup of flour
- Food coloring (add to water)

**Directions:**
Mix ingredients in pan. Set it to low heat and stir. When dough forms, remove it from the heat. Allow to cool and then enjoy!

Both recipes last about one month when stored in an airtight container. Both recipes will dry out your hands because of the salt. Remember to wash hands and use lotion after playing with the dough.

**EHS Visits Jump Rattle and Roll**

By Debbie Sztain, EHS Infant Toddler Specialist

In November, the Sultan Early Head Start families visited Jump, Rattle and Roll, which is a bouncy house in Monroe. It was truly a family event. Everyone seemed to enjoy the bouncy toys. There was a variety of activities for everyone. Babies played with a pool full of soft blocks and climbed through tunnels. Toddlers enjoyed push cars, riding toys, and building blocks. School-aged children played air hockey and Wii games. The massage chair was very popular with adults.

At one point it was hard to tell who was having more fun: the children or the dads who were bouncing around each other and playing with their little ones. The families all felt that this was an activity that they may repeat for several reasons:
- Monroe is near Sultan.
- No charge for adults who bring children.
- Everyone had fun!
In October, the Sultan NSC-EHS Parent Committee decided to have a holiday meal together in December. We cooked together using recipes from “Delisioso Y Sano” (“Tasty and Healthy”). During home visits, parents picked out a recipe that they would like to cook.

When we were done cooking, we all sat together to enjoy our meal. Teacher Debbie made play dough with the older children. Some of the play dough was used as a mold for the children’s hand prints. These hand molds were then filled with plaster of Paris.

Five families including moms, dads, kids, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins all joined in the fun. Children played together and adults sat and chatted with each other. The evening had a warm feeling of community.
Kid’s Place Has A New Van!

Kid’s Place Early Learning Center in Darrington was awarded a van by Community Transit’s Van GO program! They applied for the eight-passenger van in the fall, in partnership with the Darrington Family Resource Center.

Community Transit’s Van GO program awards vans to nonprofit organizations. Kid’s Place, and others who received vans, showed that they can use the vans to provided needed transportation in their community. They also made the commitment to serve local residents.

In addition to ECEAP, Kid’s Place Early Learning Center serves the children and families of Darrington with three other programs. Kid’s Place will use its Van GO van to provide transportation to these children and their families for extracurricular activities, transportation to school, field trips, food services, and other programs. Kid’s Place is willing to provide transportation for anyone in need and estimates it will provide more than 1,100 rides this year.

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ECEAP Celebrate the Successes Awards Dinner

Please plan to have dinner with us on April 19th (adults only). Celebrate the Successes is a party for ECEAP parents and caregivers, staff and community friends. This year is very special. We are celebrating 25 years of ECEAP in Washington state.

Families will have an opportunity to talk about their experiences in ECEAP. Your school is choosing people and organizations to honor for their contributions with “Caring Community Awards.” The ECEAP Policy Advisory Council will also be introduced and honored. Dinner and dessert will be provided. This event is for adults. It will be held at the Everett Station’s beautiful Weyerhaeuser Room, with a view of the Cascades. Connect with your school for details. We hope to see you there!

Celebrate the Successes Dinner
on April 19, 2012!
5:30 to 8 p.m.
Popular Parenting Classes at ECEAP

Have you ever wondered, “Why does my child do that?” Most parents and caregivers have! ECEAP offers “Ages & Stages” classes at your school that may help. Materials are available in Spanish and English languages. Rick Pribbernow, from Compass Health, teaches the classes. Rick’s favorite way to teach at ECEAP is to come back to the same center twice so that parents and caregivers have an opportunity to ask questions about their child.

In “Ages & Stages,” you will learn practical skills and ways to parent, including:

- developmental stages including brain development.
- parent and child communication skills.
- the difference between punishment and discipline.
- skills to interact positively.

A Family Support Specialist says,

“Every year we invite Rick out to do a parent training, and usually by the end of the night, parents ask if we can have him back and how they can see him privately. If I could suggest only one training for families to attend all year, this would be it. I recommend the training even if you feel confident in your parenting techniques. I would suggest Rick to even the most seasoned parents/caregivers, he has something for everyone. Rick has amazing tricks and tips when working with children. His presentation is captivating and informative. We all complain that our kids don’t come with an instruction manual. Rick’s training is the closest thing you will ever get!”

Parents and caregivers say:

“I was almost disappointed when he left because I wanted more.”
“Great for grandparents, things have changed so much from back in my day when kids didn’t behave they got a spanking. I was able to learn new things.”
“Very insightful, informative and engaging… wish I could speak to him privately.”
“Information was easy to apply to real life.”
“Very insightful, could listen to him for hours.”
“Puts you at ease, great explanations.”

Loved the Q-TIP (Quit Taking It Personally)
Our children don’t sit up at night plotting ways to make us crazy, there is a reason for what they are doing...
Parents, caregivers and staff from Snohomish County’s ECEAP and EHS programs travel to Olympia each spring. We join with other early learning programs from Washington. Snohomish County’s Early Learning Division often has one of the largest numbers of groups traveling to the state’s Capitol.

Your thoughts and feelings about early learning are important. Legislators need to hear from you to represent you and your family well.

Participants will:

- Attend a morning Advocacy Workshop with inspirational speakers, and information on talking with legislators,
- Enjoy a boxed lunch, and
- Meet with state legislators in the afternoon.

Please see your site Advocacy Coordinator for more information and to sign up.

- Transportation is provided.
- Dress for cool weather and for comfort. Wear walking shoes.
- Wear red to show solidarity.
- Advocacy Day is for adults. Childcare expenses are not reimbursed.
Relaxation Thermometer

Mad

Take 3 deep breaths 1...2...3

Relaxed

Adapted from Incredible Years Dinosaur School
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/
WHAT IS EHS?
North Snohomish County Early Head Start (NSC-EHS) is a free early learning program for children birth to three years old and pregnant women.
NSC-EHS serves families in the following cities and surrounding areas: Arlington, Granite Falls, Marysville and Sultan. We welcome and respect all families.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?
- Child Development:
  - Fun activities to strengthen your baby’s and toddler’s social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development.
  - One-on-one support with parent-child relationships and parenting education in the comfort of your home.
  - Get together with other families with children.
- Health and developmental screenings
- Family Development
- Community Connections

For enrollment information, please call Ramona at 425.388.6439

WHAT IS ECEAP?
- The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a free preschool program for 4 year olds, and 3 year olds as space allows.
- Funded by Washington’s Department of Early Learning.
- Programs throughout Snohomish County and one program in Skagit County.
- We welcome and honor all families.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?
- Educational experiences to support kindergarten readiness.
- Health & Nutrition screenings for children. A well-balanced meal is provided during the school day.
- Family Support including parent education, family activities, and opportunities for involvement in your child’s education and family’s school.

For enrollment information, please call 425.388.7268.