



SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES

May - June 2011

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Committed to Children Succeeding

Children succeeding is a core value for SELF and our partners. It's the reason we do what we do every day. When we think about what children need to succeed, we often think of what parents or teachers need to do. We seldom take the time to reflect on the role the community plays in the lives of young children.

Recently, I was reading the 2007 report Supporting Parents-Promising City Efforts to Help Young Children Succeed from the National League of Cities (NLC), Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. The report states "Cities and neighborhoods thrive by attracting, retaining, and supporting strong families. In turn, family success typically depends on the ability of parents to provide for their children and give them, especially during the critical first years of life, the resources and opportunities they need to grow and develop." The report shares the stories of six U.S. cities that have examined how government and private agencies each play a role in supporting families so that children in their community thrive.

Mayor Thomas J. George of Lakewood, Ohio states: "The toughest and most rewarding job anyone can have is that of being a parent. Children come without manuals or sets of directions attached. Progressive communities that assist

and nurture young parents stand to benefit from this investment by way of well-adjusted children and good parents."

What does that mean for us? How can we ensure that all children in Clark County will succeed in life? The first step is that we become an informed community. Knowledge fuels action which is why SELF is committed to teaching our community what children need, then together we can support and nurture our youngest citizens. Our children can't wait; we must begin today to look at our current practices seeking opportunities for creative partnerships. We need to develop strategies such as: communication campaigns; initiatives to connect families with high-quality early childhood resources; and programs to engage and empower parents. Finally, we must make the commitment to our children that we will do whatever it takes to build a community where all young children thrive.

If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much -- Marian Wright Edelman

SELF
Debbie Ham
Director of SELF

SUMMER FUN

Summer is in the air. Schools are closed or almost closed for the school year and it is time to crank up the summer fun. Consider camps, classes and exploring the wonderful place we live in:

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District's newest early learning offering is, of course, the new downtown library located on Evergreen and C Street. This 4,000 square foot space on the third floor is dedicated to early learners. Opening July 17, this state of the art center for preschoolers is a must do on your journey this summer.

OMSI -- Oregon Museum of Science and Industry
Admittedly these camps lean toward older children. However, time and again, these are excellent camps and experiences for children that love science.

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District Summer Programs
Reading programs for preteens and teens are available.
360-695-1566 / 866-546-2707

Regal Cinemas, Stadium 11, Highway 99 Location
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m., movies will be \$1

Beginning June 21 through August 25 Regal will feature a 10 a.m. movie on the above promotional days. Go to the Vancouver Family Magazine website to view movies for the summer. Be sure to print the schedule out and post with all the other refrigerator art.

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation

Battle Ground Parks and Recreation
360-342-5380

Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium Summer Sleuths

Portland Children's Museum Camps and Classes

Child Care Resource & Referral

There's lots to do this summer. Don't forget the Oregon Zoo, swimming, skipping rocks on the water and sitting around a camp fire at night. Get out and have some fun with your children!

RECENT INVESTMENTS IN EARLY LEARNING

Despite the struggling economy and the state and national budget challenges, there are bright spots for early learning. Some highlights from a recent Early Learning Action Alliance Newsletter:

Washington State has been awarded \$1.7 million over three years to support our State's Early Learning Advisory Council, convened by the Department of Early Learning.

Statewide expansion of Seeds to Success (Quality Rating Improvement System for child care) begins in August.

The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services announced a new \$500 million grant competition for the states called the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced June 1st that up to \$99 million in additional competitive grants would be available to states to enhance existing maternal, infant and early childhood home visitation programs. The Department of Early Learning is working on the Washington State application.

For more detailed information and other updates, you can view the Early Learning Action Alliance Newsletter.

DOZER DAYS

Once again, on May 21 and 22, the ground was shaking in East County as Dozer Days celebrated its annual big equipment extravaganza.

Thanks to the Nutter Foundation, producers of this wonderful event, for donating 300 tickets to SELF partners who then distributed the tickets to children and families who otherwise would not have been able to attend.

If you would like to see a short video from Dozer Days, go to <http://www.nutterfoundation.org/index.html>

REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN

If you have a child entering kindergarten in the fall, it is important to register them for kindergarten. SELF's last newsletter featured an article about kindergarten roundup. If you would like to read the previous article for specific information on your school district, go to <http://www.selfwa.org/newsletter.php>