



# EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY RESOURCE KORNER

STEP, Inc. Central Regional Key

March 2010

**Inside this issue:**

Professional Development Calendar	2
PD Conferences	3
PD Opportunity	3
STARS Management	4
Technical Assistance	4
Science for Everyday	5
School Age	6
Early Childhood Mental Health	6
STARS	7



## One Book, Every Young Child Reading Initiative.

What a Treasure!, a picture book by Jane and Will Hillenbrand for children ages 3 to 6, is Pennsylvania's One Book, Every Young Child 2010 selection. Since the book was published in 2006, children have been accompanying Mole on his dig as he discovers exciting treasures for both his animal friends and for himself.

This is the fifth year of this important program to highlight the importance of early literacy development in preschoolers. In its inaugural year, the One Book, Every Young Child program won the coveted, national John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award.

The collaborating agencies all support early childhood literacy efforts and emphasize the importance of reading early and often to children, as well as engaging them in conversation and other activities around books. They are working together to develop a multi-faceted program accessible to all areas and populations of the state.

One Book, Every Young Child is made possible through a collaboration of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Please Touch Museum, State Museum of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Library Association, Pennsylvania Center for the Book, Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children, The Pennsylvania Child Care Association, PennSERVE, HSLC/Access PA and Verizon. This program was supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by Pennsylvania's Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

**Central Regional Key staff will be sharing this year's One Book throughout the region during the week of the young child April 12-16, 2010.**

Be sure to check out the PA Key website for resources related to early education at [www.pakeys.org!](http://www.pakeys.org!)

**Enhanced Family Child Care Home standards are now available on the PA Key and Central Regional Key websites. The new Standards go in to effect July 1, 2010.**

The CPSC and Graco issued a major recall of high chairs .

Please see: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml10/10171.html>

## Professional Development Opportunities in the Central Region

Using Observations and Learning Standards to Plan (Part 2 of Observation, Assessment, Planning Series)	3/30/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Lewisburg Children's Center, Lewisburg PA 17837
Incorporating Cultural Diversity into your Program	3/31/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Ebensburg PA 15931
Environment Rating Scale (ERS) 101 - Foundations	4/7/2010 10:00AM- 12:00PM	Penn State Cooperative Ext., New Bloomfield PA 17068
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) 202	4/7/2010 1:00-3:00PM	Penn State Cooperative Ext., New Bloomfield PA 17068
Environment Rating Scale (ERS) 101 - Foundations	4/8/2010 10:00-12:00AM	Tokishi Training Center, Wellsboro PA 16901
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) 202	4/8/2010 1:00-3:00PM	Tokishi Training Center, Wellsboro PA 16901
Every Child Ready to Read	4/8/2010 5:00-7:30PM	Jersey Shore Area Public Library, Jersey Shore PA 17740
Art Ideas: Using Inspiration from Illustrators of Children's Books	4/12/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Ebensburg PA
Read Your Way Through the Pyramid	4/12/2010 6:00-8:00PM	Tender Love for Children Childcare and School, Altoona PA
Play: The Essence of Children's Development (Part 1 of Play and Creativity Series)	4/13/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Lewisburg Children's Center, Lewisburg PA 17837
Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development-Implications for Programming	4/13/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Johnstown City Center Head Start, Johnstown PA 15906
Differentiated Instruction: Teaching ALL Children the Way They Learn (Part 2)	4/14/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Pleasant Gap United Methodist Church, Pleasant Gap PA
STARS Orientation I	4/15/2010 6:30-9:30PM	Columbia County Cooperative Extension, Bloomsburg PA
Moving Toward Best Practice: STARS Orientation Pt 2	4/15/2010 1:00-4:00PM	Columbia County Cooperative Extension, Bloomsburg PA
Art With Children: Creating With Paper (Part 4 of Art Series)	4/17/2010 9:00AM-12:00PM	Pennsylvania College of Technology, Alvin Bush Campus Center, Williamsport PA 17701
Special Quest-Working with Families	4/17/2010 9:00AM-3:00PM	Regional Business Center Lewistown, Lewistown PA 17044
The Art of Books (Part 5 of Art Series)	4/17/2010 1:00-4:00PM	Pennsylvania College of Technology, Alvin Bush Campus Center, Williamsport PA 17701
Summer Programming	4/19/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Ebensburg PA
Infant/toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) 201	4/20/2010 1:00-3:00pm	Lycoming-Clinton Head Start Building, Williamsport PA
School-age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) 203	4/20/2010 10:00AM- 12:00PM	Lycoming-Clinton Head Start Building, Williamsport PA
Creating Creative Classrooms: Art (Part 2 of Play and Creativity Series)	4/20/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Lewisburg Children's Center, Lewisburg PA 17837
Art With Children: Creating With Clay (Part 3 of Art Series)	4/24/2010 1:00-4:00PM	Pennsylvania College of Technology, Alvin Bush Campus Center, Williamsport PA 17701
Exploring the Continuum of Developmental Tasks of School Age Children from 5-12-Implications for Programming	4/24/2010 8:30-11:30AM	Kids First Blair County, Altoona PA 16602
Mother Goose: What's the Big Idea	4/24/2010 10:00AM- 12:30PM	Muncy Public Library, Muncy PA 17756
Exploring Four Areas of School Age Development: Implications for Programming	4/24/2010 12:30-3:30PM	Kids First Blair County, Altoona PA 16602

**A current comprehensive calendar can be found at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org)**

Upcoming Professional Development

**Leadership Conference**

Friday, May 21, 2010  
Susquehanna University

**Family Child Care Conference**

June 18 & 19, 2010  
Lewisburg, PA

State College Professional Development Conference

Thank you to all of the providers that attended our recent professional development conference in State College.

We had 150 registrants both Friday and Saturday and offered 119 professional development hours in a variety of knowledge areas. You have made these conferences one of the most successful ways of receiving professional development in the state.

Your input is important as we begin to work on next year's conferences. If you have a great idea, call Patty Cohick, Professional Development Specialist at 1-800-346-3020, Ext. 9723. See you next Fall!

**Other Conferences**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Bedford CEG	The Arena Bedford, PA 15522	April 10, 2010
CSAEYC 15th Annual	Pennsylvania College of Technology Williamsport, PA 17701	April 10, 2010

PD Opportunity

**HEALTH CAPSULE - Obesity Prevention**

Obesity is epidemic in the United States. Learning healthy fitness behaviors during early childhood is much better than trying to change poor habits later in life. Recent studies indicate that children are not active enough in both center-based and home-based child care settings.

Also, frequent meals and snacks that children eat in early learning programs are opportunities to foster healthy behaviors necessary to prevent obesity. ECELS has a new Self-Learning Module Online available on the ECELS website. It is called Moving and Munching - Supporting Physical Activity and Nutrition in Early Learning Programs. This module allows users to assess their program's physical activity and nutrition policies and practices for children ages 3-5 using the research-tested Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC). The module includes developing an action plan to make improvements based on the self-assessment. In addition, the module covers how to create a nutritious menu and evaluate the menu according to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. There are resources for staff and parents too. This self-learning module addresses some specific subscales in ECERS-ITERS: Personal Care Routines, Space and Furnishings, Activities, and Interaction. It meets the Core Body of Knowledge Areas K7 C2 84 or K8 C3 96. Successful completion earns 3 hours of Pennsylvania-authorized professional development credit and can be applied toward the STAR Level 2 Performance Standard for Health and Safety. Find this new online self-learning on the ECELS website at [www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org](http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org) <<http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org>/ Select "Child Care Provider Training," and then either select "Self-Learning Modules" from the drop down menu in the heading for that section or scroll down to the Self-Learning Modules. Look for "SLM Online - Fitness and Nutrition: Moving and Munching-Supporting Physical Activity and Nutrition in Early Learning Programs <<http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org/content/Moving%20and%20Munching-3-11-10.pdf>>."

## STARS Technical Assistance

### Maintaining that Keystone STAR 1, 2, 3, or 4.

#### *Who can do it?*

YOU CAN DO IT!

Remember your STARS Manager is available to answer questions. Technical Assistance can help you with any area of the standards where you need a consultant to come to your site to assist you.

#### *What is it?*

A process of continuous quality improvement  
Am I reviewing the standards to ensure I am keeping up with everything?

#### *Where to start?*

Be sure to read through the STAR worksheet you receive in your renewal packet.  
Are there any changes to the worksheet/standards that weren't there last year?  
Call your STARS Manager with questions.

#### *When?*

THIS IS AN ONGOING PROCESS—Schedule to look at your Keystone STARS worksheet one day each month.  
Update your required documentation that is outdated.

#### *How?*

ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE  
Technical Assistance can help you get a process in place for review of STARS requirements and updating documentation on an ongoing basis.  
Call for an application 1-800-346-3020 x 9735—Shannon Cohick/Michele Johnson

## Grant Reminders

- Deadline for Start With STARS and Support Grant Award Request is March 31, 2010.
- Send in the final expense reports for the grants when you have finished spending all funds.
- Call Dana DeVito (570-601-9724) if you need a budget revision, there is a budget revision form which needs to be signed and returned to the Central Regional Key office.



## ERS News

### *FDC ERS expectations at STAR 2*

The new environment rating standard at STAR 2 reads "FCCERS-R assessment completed" (page 7 of standards).

The assessment noted will continue to be conducted by an ERS assessor-this is NOT a self-assessment conducted by the provider.

Although the wording may be different from previous standards, the standard itself has not changed

## Family Standards Focus Group

Denise Cressman-Montour County

Tonia Mitchell-Cambria County

Karen Ulp-Northumberland CEG

A hearty thanks for participating in the meeting and/or conference call for the Family Standards Focus Group for review of the draft Family Child Care Home Keystone STARS Standards for 2010-2011.

## *Lead - reminder new rule applies to child care and schools*

Federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renovating six square feet or more of painted surfaces in a room for interior projects or more than twenty square feet of painted surfaces for exterior projects in housing, child care facilities and schools built before 1978.

**Homeowners and tenants: renovators must give you a pamphlet (copy on CRK website documents) before starting work.**

**Child care facilities, including preschools and kindergarten classrooms, and the families of children under the age of six that attend those facilities: renovators must provide a copy of the pamphlet (copy on CRK website documents) to child-care facilities and general renovation information to families whose children attend those facilities.**

Also, *beginning April 2010*, federal law will require contractors that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities and schools, built before 1978 to be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. Therefore beginning in April 2010, ask to see your contractor's certification.



## SCIENCE FOR EVERYDAY



**Be the first to share your experience with the following activities and win a prize.**

Send a picture with description to [mjohnson@stepcorp.org](mailto:mjohnson@stepcorp.org)

One winner for each age group.

### Infant/Toddler

#### Stroll Through a Garden (infant/toddler)

Flowers and plants offer your baby sensory and aesthetic pleasures. Provide opportunity to admire the colors, sights, sounds and textures of nature.

#### Encourage Touching (infant/toddler)

Introduce your baby to a great variety of nature's textures—feel grass and pinecones. Touch many smooth, bumpy and grainy textures.

#### Enjoy All Kinds Of Weather (toddler)

Help children explore all types of weather. Go out even for short times in hot, cold weather. Run in the rain. Tromp through the snow. Enjoy the blustery, windy days of fall and the warm sunshine of spring.



### School Age *How Do You Glue?*

This activity illustrates how to make your own glue using common household materials.

#### SUPPLIES

¼ cup of skim milk	coffee filters	paper cup
1 tbsp. of vinegar	pinch of baking soda	
ice cream stick	funnel	2-8 oz. cups

Mix the vinegar and skim milk in an 8 oz cup and mix with the ice cream stick.

Place the coffee filter in the funnel and place in the other 8 oz. cup.

Pour the vinegar solution slowly in the funnel and let it filter into the cup. This may take as long as 15 min. to filter down.

Carefully scrape the coffee filter. The curds should be placed in the smaller cup.

Add a pinch of baking soda to the paper cup with the coffee filter scrapings and stir with the ice cream stick.

Add a drop of water and mix if the solution is too thick.

### Preschool *Bird Feeders*

Springtime is a great time to be outdoors with children. The weather is nice, the colors are beautiful, and the birds are making their nests. With this easy and rewarding activity, children will contribute to the beauty of spring while learning about birds and practicing fine motor skills.

This activity introduces children to the scientific method by encouraging them to make a hypothesis, do the research, make observations and compare the concluding results with their original hypothesis.

#### **What You Need:**

Wire coat hanger	Yarn	Ribbon pieces
String	Cloth scraps	Mesh material
Masking tape		

#### **What You Do:**

1. Ask the children how birds make their nests. What makes good nesting material? Where do they get the materials? What size pieces can they carry?
2. Pull the coat hanger into an oval or a rectangle shape. You don't need to dismantle the hanger or bend the hook.
3. Cover the hanger with mesh material. Tape or tie the mesh to the hanger frame.
4. Gather yarn, ribbon pieces, string and cloth scraps. Use bright colors to attract different birds!
5. Put the coat hanger with the mesh on it in a tray and place the basket beside it.
6. Children choose a piece of cloth or ribbon and thread it through the mesh, leaving about half of the piece on either side of the mesh. Repeat.
7. When the coat hanger mesh is full of ribbon, yarn, string and cloth scraps, take it outside.
8. Using the hook end, hang it in a tree for the birds to gather material for their nests.
9. Ask what will happen to the colorful pieces. Which ones might the birds like best? What will the nests look like? How far away might the birds take them? Have the children draw some ideas or write them down.

Several weeks later, take a walk around the neighborhood and see if any of the materials can be seen in the nests in the trees nearby. Do they look the way the children expected them to? Don't forget to enjoy the bright color and beautiful weather while you're engaging in all of this important science! Whether your children's predictions are correct or not, they'll learn a lot and give the birds a colorful spring gift.

## Early Childhood Mental Health

### Handling Transitions

Every day when his mother drops him off at child care, Sammy cries, and then when she comes to pick him up, he throws a tantrum because he doesn't want to stop playing with his friends and go home. Sammy's mother says he does the same thing at home: whenever she tells him it's time to do something else or go somewhere, he resists. Unlike some children who can easily go with the flow of whatever's happening, Sammy has a hard time with transitions and his resistance is disruptive and frustrating.

#### The importance of routines:

Routines help make transitions easier. In addition, they:

- Play an important role in the development of young children and help children learn about normal human interaction
- Provide predictability and are comforting
- Reduce power struggles between caregivers and children

#### Tips for helping children handle transitions from one activity to another:

- Create a ritual that the child can expect: at bedtime, brush teeth, read a story, sing a song, hug and kiss.
- When you leave your child, give him or her something to keep until you come back, such as a picture or other small object.
- Give advance warning: "You can finish playing your game and then it will be time for bed."
- Make transitions fun: for cleaning up toys before bed, sing a song: "This is the way we pick up toys."
- Let the child choose how to make the transition: "Do you want to play one more game before we get ready for bed?"
- Especially in a child care setting with lots of children, help children develop the skills they need to transition from one activity to another more quickly: putting on and taking off coats, lining up, cleaning up toys. Less time spent in waiting for everyone else might help decrease problem behaviors during transition times.

- 

Resources:

- "Helping Children Make Transition between Activities," What Works Brief #4, Center for the Emotional and Social Foundations of Early Learning; [www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel).
- "Helping Children Make Changes: Big and Small," ChildCareAware; [www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org)
- "Temperament Characteristics: Reaction to Change," Zero to Three; [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- "Transition Times," Family Communications (Mister Rogers' Neighborhood), [www.fci.org](http://www.fci.org)

## SACC UPDATE

First Lady Michelle Obama has set a national goal to solve the childhood obesity challenge within a generation. She will serve as the Honorary Chair of the Partnership for a Healthier Generation. Her plan offers four pillars:

- Offering parents the tools and information they need to make healthy choices for their kids;
  - Getting healthier food into our nation's schools;
  - Ensuring that all our families have access to healthy, affordable food in their communities;
- Increasing opportunities for kids to be physically active, both in and out of school

*Let's Move! is a national public awareness effort to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity.*

*By engaging the public and private sectors, Let's Move! aims to provide solutions to children, parents, families, schools and communities which will help improve the health of kids through healthier eating and increased activity.*

[www.ahealthieramerica.org](http://www.ahealthieramerica.org)

### \*\*\*\*REMEMBER\*\*\*\*

The 2010 National After School Association (NAA) Convention will be held in Washington DC on April 19-21, 2010.

At our small child care center in rural Juniata County, it seems that the term Keystone STARS is synonymous with the word money. However, over the past two-and-a-half years as the director, I've learned that it is really so much more than that. If you are reading this, then you are aware that child care has a never-ending battle in the financial department. It seems there is never quite enough money to go around to purchase what you need, when you need it. Not to mention, it's hard to find exceptional staff when we are only able to pay them such an inadequate wage. I'm happy to say that because of Keystone STARS our kids are well taken care of with educational materials and exceptional staff. Here's our story.

When I became the director in October of 2007, the center was at that time already designated as a Star one. The center was in need of some new materials and equipment, and in order for us to achieve a Star two, we needed to improve on some policies and hire educated staff or have current staff attain more education. After talking with the employees and explaining the perks of furthering their education, two staff decided to pursue their CDA's. I also learned about the technical assistance program provided by the Central Regional Key. T.A. has been a wonderful learning experience for me on both a personal and professional level, and I believe that my staff found it very valuable as well. Just as a mother holds her child's hands as he learns how to walk, so goes Stars T.A. Through lots of technical assistance visits, hard work, and prayer, we achieved our Star two designation in April 2008 and received a grant. In October 2008, we renewed our Star two and received another grant. By this time, we had decided to shoot for the stars and go for our Star three designation, so back to T.A. we went. We used the practice Environmental Rating Scale opportunity and learned that our Star three was well within our reach based on our environment. After a few more T.A. visits, I learned that you can receive an additional Star two grant as long as you have an action plan to attain your Star three in the near future, so that's just what we did. In October of 2009, we received yet another grant, and we are currently enjoying opening the boxes when they arrive. Also, next week the fence company is installing our infant/toddler playground fence. Finally, to make a long story short, we attained our Star three designation on January 7, 2010, just eight days before I gave birth to my son. Talk about a great time to go on maternity leave because when I came back, my grant was waiting for me and my first task was to spend money on our program. I'm so thankful that the Stars program exists because without it our program would suffer. After all, you know what they say... reach for the stars because at least you'll land in the clouds. And let me tell you, we are proud to be a Star three and have the right to say we are the highest designated center in our county. Thanks CRK and thanks Pennsylvania for making young kids such a high priority.

**Look who's Moving to a Higher STAR**

<p><b>STAR 1</b> Foundations for Learning, Bedford County</p> <p><b>STAR 2</b> SUMCD Brown Elementary, Mifflin County SUMCD Lewistown Elementary SACC, Mifflin County</p>	<p><b>STAR 2</b> SUMCD Strodes Mills SACC, Mifflin County SUMCD Armagh Elementary, Mifflin County</p> <p><b>STAR 4</b> Bellefonte Family YMCA– Benner, Centre County</p>
---	--