



# EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY RESOURCE KORNER

STEP, Inc. Central Regional Key

May/June 2010

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## KEEP AN EYE OUT

Central Regional Key's  
Customer Service Survey  
To be mailed by June 15<sup>th</sup>

The first 200 programs completing and returning the survey will receive 5 PD Coupons. Each coupon will be able to be redeemed for 3 FREE hours of Professional Development.



## OCDEL Family Survey

Over the past two fiscal years, a workgroup has developed survey tools and an implementation plan for an OCDEL cross-program family survey. The purpose of this survey is to provide family members the opportunity to let us know about their experiences. By gathering information directly from the families, we can identify areas of program excellence as well as areas to improve.

The results of the family survey will be analyzed at the statewide and regional levels to identify potential trends and needs. OCDEL and PA Key staff, specialists from the Regional Keys, the Preschool Program Specialists and technical assistance and professional development staff will utilize the information to develop supportive practices and to plan for professional development that supports family engagement. This information will assist identified programs, by assuring that professional development related to family engagement that meets needs is available. In addition, other information from the family survey can be used at the local level to assist in continuous program improvement efforts. This can also assist communication with families and other stakeholders to convey the benefits that families are experiencing by their participation in OCDEL programs.

The survey design and initial implementation process was completed last fiscal year 08-09. This fiscal year, we are moving forward with the family survey process by adding additional programs to the implementation stage. The new programs include: Head Start Supplemental and Keystone STARS 3&4 Centers. These programs will join Early Intervention Infant/Toddler and Preschool programs, Pa Pre K Counts and Child Care Works in the implementation stages of the survey. For families that are enrolled in multiple programs (Pa Pre K Counts, Head Start State Supplemental and Keystone STARS), they will only receive one OCDEL family survey.

Surveys were mailed directly to families via postal mail. The survey contained a cover letter, survey and a postage paid return address envelope. Families in need of assistance with the survey and/or language translation services were asked to call CONNECT information services for assistance toll free at: **1-800-692-7288**.

Providers are asked to encourage families to fill out and return the survey that is mailed to them.

Each survey mailed to a family contained a coding system that allows returned surveys to be linked with the program it was received from and some basic demographic information of the respondent. In addition, the surveys were printed by a specific type of printer and on special paper, so that they may be scanned by an optical scanner. Because of the unique qualities of each survey, programs will not be able to make copies of the survey for their families. If a family loses their survey, or needs a replacement, families are asked to call CONNECT information services and a replacement copy will be mailed to them.

OCDEL is interested in a high level of participation from **all** families of children enrolled in OCDEL programs. However, they ask that programs specifically help them in assuring that families that are traditionally underrepresented have their voice included. In particular, this refers to families who are not native English language speakers, families that have a low literacy level and those who are racially and ethnically diverse. Programs are asked to reach out to these families and provide them encouragement and assistance as you are able, as well as, refer them to CONNECT if necessary. CONNECT information service is available to assist families, explain the survey and provide language translation services.

## Professional Development Opportunities in the Central Region

<a href="#">Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) 202</a>	6/2/2010 1:00-3:00PM	Courtyard Marriott, State College PA 16801
<a href="#">Environment Rating Scale (ERS) 101 - Foundations</a>	6/2/2010 10:00AM-12:00PM	Courtyard Marriott, State College PA 16801
<a href="#">Increasing Fiber Intake in Pre-school Age Children</a>	6/2/2010 6:30-8:30PM	The Becky Sheetz Center, Altoona PA 16602
<a href="#">Positive Discipline</a>	6/2/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Pennsylvania Highlands Community College - Richland Site
<a href="#">Shake Rattle and Roll (Part 3 of 3)</a>	6/4/2010 6:30-8:30PM	Penn State Coop Ext. - Centre, Bellefonte PA 16823
<a href="#">Module 5: Guiding School-Age Children in Groups</a>	6/5/2010 8:00AM-11:00PM	Penn State Cooperative Extension Union County, Mifflinburg
<a href="#">Module 6: Guiding the Behavior of Individual Children</a>	6/5/2010 11:30AM-2:30PM	Penn State Cooperative Extension Union County, Mifflinburg
<a href="#">The Work Sampling System</a>	6/9/2010 6:00-9:00PM	St. Francis University, Loretto PA 15940
<a href="#">Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) 202</a>	6/10/2010 1:00-3:00PM	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), Milton PA
<a href="#">Environment Rating Scale (ERS) 101 - Foundations</a>	6/10/2010 10:00-12:00AM	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), Milton PA
<a href="#">The Ounce Scale System</a>	6/12/2010 9:00AM-4:00PM	Penn State University, University Park PA 16802
<a href="#">The Ounce Scale System</a>	6/12/2010 9:00AM-4:00PM	St. Francis University, Loretto PA 15940
<a href="#">The Ounce Scale System</a>	6/14/2010 6:00-9:00PM	Kids First, Altoona PA 16602
<a href="#">Common Childhood Illnesses and Management of Asthma, Food Allergies, and Anaphylaxis</a>	6/15/2010 6:00-8:00pm	Abba's House, State College PA 16801
<a href="#">Increasing Fiber Intake in Pre-school Age Children</a>	6/15/2010 6:30-8:30PM	Penn State Extension Office, Ebensburg PA 15931
<a href="#">The Work Sampling System</a>	6/19/2010 8:30AM-4:00PM	Country Cupboard, Lewisburg PA 17837
<a href="#">Infant/toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) 201</a>	6/22/2010 1:00-3:00pm	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), Milton PA
<a href="#">School-age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) 203</a>	6/22/2010 10:00AM-12:00PM	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), Milton PA
<a href="#">The Work Sampling System</a>	6/22/2010 5:30-8:30PM	ALSM Children's Services, Bedford PA 15522
<a href="#">Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) 201</a>	6/23/2010 1:00-3:00PM	Courtyard Marriott, State College PA 16801
<a href="#">The Work Sampling System</a>	6/26/2010 9:00AM-4:00PM	Penn State University, University Park PA 16802

The Central Regional Key is conducting a Family Day Care Home Conference in Lewisburg Friday and Saturday, June 18 and 19.

The schedule is as follows:

Friday Evening 6:30 - 9:30

**FCCERS** or **OUNCE Paper** (Part 1)

Saturday Morning 7:30 - 11:30

**Pediatric First Aid**

Saturday Morning 8:30 - 11:30

**Work Sampling Paper** (Part 1)

Saturday Afternoon 1:00 - 4:00

**OUNCE Paper** (Part 2) or **Work Sampling Paper** (Part 2)

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

## ONLINE MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### Program Descriptions:

The **Teaching and Learning** program is designed to provide in-service teachers and other education professionals with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge of instructional design, assessment, classroom management, and technology integration.

The **Alternative Education** program focuses on providing you with the skills and knowledge to work with behaviorally and academically at-risk students in the classroom.

**Early Childhood Education Concentration** courses will meet the new requirements for continuing education for PreK Early Childhood Educators. These courses can be taken separately or can be taken as the elective coursework for one of our other online Masters Programs.

### Program Benefits:

The MED Programs are fully accredited by the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher

Education, aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, meets PA continuing education requirements, and leads to a Masters Degree that will enable you to receive advanced certification within the education profession. The programs are very practical in nature. You will find that the content learned in the Masters courses will be applicable and easily incorporated into the classroom or other work environments.

### On-line Delivery:

Our programs are unique in that they are offered completely on-line. The on-line format provides you the flexibility to work where and when it is most convenient for you. No driving to and from graduate school and no predetermined class schedules! The use of our powerful online course management software provides user friendly interaction, a variety of digital resources, and the ability to receive personalized instruction. If you ever need it, 24 hour tech support is available.

### Admissions and Application Process:

There are three entry points for enrollment in our MED programs (Fall, Spring, and Summer).

Fall and spring semesters are 15 weeks in length. We offer two five-week condensed summer sessions. Students are admitted on a space available basis. Class space has been filling earlier each semester. Early applications are strongly encouraged. To complete the admissions procedure, students must submit an application, three letters of recommendation, a writing sample, official college transcripts, and a copy of the teaching certificate if one is possessed.

To complete the on-line application, please visit our website at:

<http://www.lhup.edu/graduatestudies/application.htm>



**LOCK  
HAVEN  
UNIVERSITY**  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Early Childhood Education Coursework and the Master of Education Programs are delivered 100% online.

## Early Childhood Education

Concentration within the  
Master of Education Programs

### Professional Preparation:

The ECED concentration is appropriate for those with current PA ECED certification or certification in another area who are interested in increasing the depth and breadth of their knowledge and skills as early childhood educators.

Those from a variety of other disciplines may benefit from these courses as well (sociology, social work, psychology, etc.).

### Program Benefits:

- Nationally Accredited Through NCATE
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Alignment
- Meets Continuing Education Requirements
- Convenience of Online Delivery
- Low Out of Pocket Expenses

### T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarships:

If you teach in a PreK setting and are required to take coursework in order to maintain your Pennsylvania Early Childhood Education certification, you may be eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship. The Scholarship covers most of the cost of tuition and books.

Further information is available at:

[www.pacca.org/teach.aspx](http://www.pacca.org/teach.aspx)

### For More Information Contact:

Lock Haven University, Office of Graduate Admissions  
Phone: 570-484-3869 Toll Free: 800-332-8900 Ext 3869  
Fax: 570-484-2981  
E-mail: [gradadmissions@lhup.edu](mailto:gradadmissions@lhup.edu)  
[www.lhup.edu/graduatestudies](http://www.lhup.edu/graduatestudies)



Brian C. Johnson and Early Education Practitioners learn how to juggle the many responsibilities that leaders face daily at the Central Regional Key's 2nd annual Leadership Conference held at Susquehanna University on May 21, 2010.

## STARS Technical Assistance

### Technical Assistance

So where can you find some help to work through the Keystone STARS sTAndards? TAke it from me, there is help available. A kind, compassionate consulTAnt is ready to travel to meet with you on site to assist you as you work through the sTAndards for STARS.

Need help TApping into ERS resources? A consulTAnt can do a side-by-side assessment with you using the ITERS, ECERS, SACERS or FCCERS tool(s). Room arrangement is right up our alley. No job is too TAlL for our consulTAnts.

Maybe you need help with business practices. The hardest part is determining where to sTArt. Take time to fill out an application for Technical Assistance. Everyone has a different TAlent and your consulTAnt can help you determine how to best TAp into yours.

Asking for help shouldn't be a TAbboo. Your consulTAnt will come to you...in a car, by train or TAxI. We offer support in any of the sTAndards that relate to Keystone STARS. Sit down at the TAbLe and fill out your application now. We can even help you with that—write down any questions you have on your TAbLeT and give us a call at 1-800-346-3020.

### ERS Article [Preparing for an ERS Visit.....](#) by Julie Townsend

You have spent months considering new practices and policies to improve quality and now it's time for the ERS assessment. Teachers are ready but nervous! Having a stranger come into your program and follow you around for a few hours can seem nerve-racking. What is important to do is let staff know what to expect when an assessor comes to the program and their purpose for being there.

In order to get an accurate assessment of the program it is necessary for the assessor to have limited interaction with the staff and children during the observation. The less the assessor disturbs the classroom the better they can observe a "typical day". Assessors understand that a typical day in early childhood programs can have many twists and turns and a new adult the room is not typical. However it is important for everyone to do their best to perform as usual and understand the assessor is there to provide information related to the strides the program has made, as well as areas that can assist the program in being even stronger. As educators we all want to be providing the best services we can for the families in our care and the ERS assessment provides more information to help you accomplish this goal.

Assessors will spend anywhere from three to four hours in a room and will do their best to stay out of your way. It is important assessors have access to all areas children may utilize both indoors and outdoors. Assessors may also open any unlocked cabinets or drawers located in these spaces. Children are generally curious about the assessor so it's a good idea to prepare them ahead of time and explain that the assessor's job is to watch them "play" but that the assessor cannot play with them. If children approach an assessor, the assessor will generally try to have very little interaction with them. The assessor will briefly explain her role and walk away so the child is encouraged to return to normal classroom activities. Assessors spend a good deal of time writing on their tablet computers because they need to record what they have observed and heard. This also includes logging materials in the room and documenting the spaces used by children; as much information as possible must be noted during the observation to provide an accurate summary report.

At the end of the observation the assessor will need to meet with one of the primary teachers in the classroom. The interview process consists of questions the assessor needs clarity on because not all practices are readily observable. The conversation that takes place may cover scheduling, materials, program policies and other information teachers will be familiar with. It may be helpful to do a mock interview with teachers during self-assessments or in staff meetings to help staff feel more comfortable and have a better understanding of the types of questions that will be asked.

The most important thing to remember is that the assessor's role is to help programs meet quality goals. After all it's all about what is best for the children!

## Grant News

**Shopping was fun. What is my next step for my grant?**

**Within 90 days of receipt of your award check, your completed expense report should be returned to the Key. Note that if a circumstance prohibits this from happening, contact your STARS Manager before the deadline so that a budget revision can be submitted.**

**As you receive invoices for goods purchased, it is a good idea to mark the items, and the category the materials are reflected (i.e. Learning Materials/Infant Toddler) in to ensure smooth sailing if you are in the 25% random selection for fiscal monitoring. Remember that grant categories can only be changed with a budget revision.**

**In the event of monitoring, be prepared to show verification of hire and compensation for ERA awards.**



## 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

#### Sounds, Sounds All Around

Listen to various types of music with your infant. Move the baby to the beat. Fast, slow and up and down. When out on a walk, listen to the car horns, dogs barking and other sounds around your town.

#### Hot and Cold Playdough

Toddlers love to play with homemade play dough. Have them help you mix and make it. After it is made, put some in the refrigerator for just a little while until cold. Put some other play dough over a heat vent or in the sun for a short time 'til it warms. Have the children play with both and explore hot and cold.

### School Age SPRING/SUMMER SEEDS

Warmer months are here. Before and after school programs are now full day programs. How do we keep our children busy and motivated? Below are quick and easy “planting and growing projects” that can be accomplished and stored inside or outside.

#### Flower Art

Go on a nature walk.

Collect weeds, flowers, seeds, nuts and other types of nature growths in your community. Place all items on a table. Gently take apart the items you have collected. Separate the pedals, leaves, stems, pollen, etc. Try to make a new “type of flora” by mixing the different parts of the flower and recreating a new bloom. Gently glue the items on construction paper and name your new creation.

#### Sponge Seeds

Cut a sponge in different shapes. Gently moisten. Place flower or vegetable seeds into the holes of the sponge. Place in a tin pie plate. Water daily and place in a sunny area. Watch for stems popping thru the holes. Plant the sponges in dirt and watch them grow. Give the flowers to someone you love and eat the vegetables you have grown.

#### Rainbow Flowers

Place white carnations in a glass of water with food coloring. Watch the white flower change to the color of the water. This can also be done with celery.

### Preschool Construct a Paper Plate Wind Spinner

Want to make your play yard, patio, or other favorite outdoor spot sparkle with personality? As the weather grows warmer, this project is a perfect way to brighten things up!

The children will create a homemade wind spinner that represents their favorite elements of summertime. Not only will it add an adorable decoration, but as they watch their spinners twirl in the breeze, they'll learn how even the gentlest wind can make a lightweight object dance!

#### What You Need:

Paper plate	Pencil	String
Scissors	Markers, stickers, glitter glue	

#### What You Do:

1. Ask the children to start at the outer edge, and use a pencil to draw a two-inch wide spiral inwards toward the center of the plate. This marks where the plate will be cut after it is decorated.
2. Talk to them about their favorite outdoor activities and locations. Invite them to use markers to draw their favorite representations of summertime on the paper plate. Encourage them to embellish her creations with glitter, stickers, or other art supplies to make the plate look festive.
3. When the decorations are complete, cut along the pencil line.
4. Next, invite them to make a hole in the center of the plate.

**Finally, select the perfect spot to hang the spinner!**



## Early Childhood Mental Health

### Problem-Solving

James wants a wagon Amy is pulling. He asks Amy why he can't have it, and Amy says, "Because I need it. I'm pulling rocks." "I can help you pull the rocks," says James, and the two play together happily. Imagine another scenario: James wants the wagon and tries to grab it from Amy; Amy grabs it back, James hits her, and she cries. The teacher (or parent) tells James to leave Amy alone and go find something else to play with. Everyone would probably agree that the first scenario is much better than the second because James and Amy solved their own problem.

Learning to solve problems on their own not only helps children develop self-confidence and feel more in control of their own lives (when so many things are beyond their control); it also helps prevent more significant issues like aggression and more violent behavior.

#### **Helping children talk to each other when they have a conflict:**

- Be firm ("I won't let you hit.")
- Be empathetic ("I know how much you want to play with the wagon.")
- Maintain a positive attitude ("She might give it to you if you ask.")

Encourage persistence ("Well, that didn't work. What else could you try?")<sup>1</sup>

#### **Questions to ask to help children think through a problem and possible solution:**

- What's the problem?
- How do you think s/he feels when you hit?
- What happened (or might happen) when you did (do) that?
- Can you think of a different way to solve the problem?

Do you think that is or is not a good idea? Why?<sup>2</sup>

#### **A problem-solving model**

- Identify the problem (e.g., the real reason James is hitting Amy)
- Brainstorm two or three different solutions
- Choose one solution and try it

Evaluate what happened (whether the solution worked and why or why not)<sup>3</sup>

#### **Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> "Teaching Young Children Problem-Solving Skills," by Janet Gonzalez-Mena; [www.education.com/print/teach-young-children-problem-solving](http://www.education.com/print/teach-young-children-problem-solving)

<sup>2</sup> "How to Think, Not What to Think: A Cognitive Approach to Prevention of Early High-Risk Behaviors in Children," by Myrna B. Shure; [http://www.parecovery.org/documents/Early\\_High\\_Risk\\_1997.pdf](http://www.parecovery.org/documents/Early_High_Risk_1997.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> "Problem Solving in Early Childhood Classrooms"; [www.ericdigests.org/1993/early.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/early.htm)

## SACC UPDATE

### \*\*\*SUMMER LEARNING DAY\*\*\*

Plan for SUMMER LEARNING DAY - JUNE 21, 2010

Now is the time to start planning your SUMMER LEARNING DAY event. This national advocacy day is a great opportunity to showcase your program and get the word out about the importance of summer learning.

Host an event during the week of June 21 or any time during the month of June. During this national showcase summer learning programs can highlight how they work to -

Support working families

Keep children safe and healthy

HAVE FUN while learning

Enhance social opportunities between age groups

To help prepare for SUMMER LEARNING DAY go to [www.summerlearnong.org](http://www.summerlearnong.org) for helpful information and tools to make this activity a summertime success.

## A word from a STAR— Lee Hollenbach, Director Little Blossoms

Little Blossoms Day Care in Snyder County started on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009 as a family day care. As time went on, the demand for child care was so great that October 10, 2009 we applied to be certified as a group day care. At the same time, my family wanted to provide the children and their families a high quality child care setting, so we decided to join Keystone STARS to help in this process. Each step of the way Keystone STARS gave direction on how to start building a high quality child care setting. The first building block was to apply for a Start with STARS Grant. With this grant, we had to review our environment if there were any needs that were unmet. There were several areas that needed to be addressed. To meet those needs, we purchased the following items with our grant: wireless smoke detectors, stools, office equipment and supplies, toys and equipment, and a crib. This grant helped us to both to improve our environment and move to a group designation.

After applying the first block, we are now ready to work on the second block STARS 1. For a STAR 1, we looked at the primary staff qualifications, child observation/curriculum/assessment, community resources/family involvement, transition, business practices, continuous quality improvement, and staff communication/support. After completing all the requirements, we were designated a STAR 1 on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. We are now using the STAR 1 grant monies to help with obtaining a STAR 2. The grant money helped with providing training, membership in a professional organization, and the development of a business plan and a policy/procedure handbook. We are continuing building a high quality child care for our families and children because THEY DESERVE IT!

Thank you Keystone STARS staff for showing us how to build a high quality learning environment. Also, for being there to answer our questions, giving us support through the ups and downs, and the kindness that you have shown to me and my staff.

## Look who’s Moving to a Higher STAR

### STAR 1

- Kid’s Korner Learning - Northumberland
- Gym Starz Day Care - Northumberland
- Cradle to Krayons - Huntingdon

### STAR 2

- Pitter - Patter Day School (Muncy) - Lycoming
- Bostley’s Preschool Learning Center (Walnut St.)- Lycoming
- Foundations for Learning - Bedford

### STAR 3

- First Southern Baptist Church– Lycoming
- Easter Seals Child Development Center– Centre
- The Learning Lamp Center (GJCTC) - Cambria

### STAR 4

- Lily Pond at Logan - Blair

### \*\*\*\*REMINDER\*\*\*\*

SACC Focus Meeting for SACC Directors  
 Tuesday, June 8, 2010 - 10:30 am - 1:00 pm  
 Toftrees Golf and Hotel Resort  
 1 Country Club Lane  
 State College, PA 16803

[www.toftrees.com](http://www.toftrees.com) for directions

Please RSVP to Eileen Okkelberg 1-800-346-2030 ext. 9738 by June 4