



The Early Care and Education Planning Group

A Project of the Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County

Report Card to the Community

Spring/Summer

2005

Did you know?

- The CCIS Newsletter circulation exceeds 600 subscribers
- The *Early Learning Standards* for pre-school are available on the PDE website: www.pde.state.pa.us (keyword: standards)
- Keystone STARS level 3 has been attained by Grand Beginnings Children's Center

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Second Annual Family Fun Fest Brings Hundreds of Families to Indiana Mall

The Family Fun Fest (FFF) is an event the Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County proudly supports via the Early Care and Education Planning Group. The event has been conducted for two years. The Indiana Mall donates the space for the event. This day is very successful! Over five hundred parents and children attended on March 12, 2005.

Health, human service agencies, Child Care Providers, civic clubs such as the Kiwanis, and others set up informational tables for parents and provided activities for children. Specified areas were designated for the Pittsburgh Zoo, WQED, Mr. McFeely as well as for activities such as games, music, puppet shows and story reading.

Contests included the *Decorated Stroller Contest* and the *Parent Child Look-A-Like Contest*. Pictures of contest winners and other Fun Fest Facts can



Decorated Stroller Contest Winner! (Funniest.) *Mama's Don't Let your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys.*

Marcus Deyarmin. (Mom is Tina Deyarmin)

be found at: www.IndianaCountyCAC.com Click on the Giraffe at the bottom of the page! For 2006 the FFF Planning Committee will expand the Family Fun Fest to contain a structured educational component for the community.

More Family Fun Fest Pictures



Children have a great time playing a parachute game



WQED'S "Clifford" and Maureen Pounds, Family Fun Fest Event Co-Chair



Mr. McFeely & Indiana Mall Manager Sherry Renosky



A 5 ft. tall plush Family Fun Fest Giraffe was one of the prizes given away at the event.

Thanks for Making the Family Fun Fest A Success!

The Family Fun Fest Planning Committee would like to thank the following for donating prizes for the Stroller Parade, Look-A-Like Contest and Raffle Drawing: Jewelry Junction/Lottery, Kay Jewelers, K-Mart, Sharon's School of Dance, JC Penney, JC Penney's Styling Salon, Indiana Ice Rink, Indiana Roller Rink, Hoss's, Al's Satellite, Fezzel's Shop N Save, Martin's, General Nutrition Center, Indiana County Tourist Bureau, the Shoe

Depot, ABC Photo, Bruno's, The Bon Ton, BoRics Hair-care, accessAbilities, Inc., Pizza Hut, Subway, Long John Silver's, Tate's Supermarket, justbreathe Auctions, Wendy's, Auntie Anne's Soft Pretzels, Family Health Council/WIC, H&R Block, Maurice's, Indiana Mall, Bath and Body Works, First Commonwealth Bank, Pittsburgh Zoo, Richard's Enterprises, Inc., Discovery Toys, the Finish Line and Lone Ma-

ple. We would also like to thank the Costume Shop, Indiana Mall Manager Sherry Renosky, The Family Health Council/WIC, ARIN IU 28 and S&T Bank for their in-kind contributions.

A Special Thanks to all of the PMSC/AmeriCorps members who helped that day, to the contest judges and to the volunteers that worked in the Story-Time, Physical Fitness and Music & Dance areas.

Overview of Services Sessions: Another Success!

The free "Overview of Services Sessions" have been quite successful this year. 12 sessions have been offered to human service agency staff, childcare providers, and the community at large. The local newspapers cooperated in announcing the sessions each month. The sessions were presented to provide general information on children's services offered and resources available to staff and residents of Indiana County. During the grant period 03 - 04 a total of 97 participants attended

and felt the sessions were beneficial; this year, (04 - 05) 139 participants have shared and learned about services. Several positive comments have been stated such as: "It was very informative."; "An excellent learning experience that better informed me of services critical to needy children and their parents."; and "Good interchange, comprehensive. Glad a commissioner was here." The majority of participants have been agency staff; however, a few community members have attended. A listing

of sessions offered follows: Indiana County Head Start, Inc., accessAbilities, Inc., ARIN IU #28 Prevention Program, Indiana County Child Day Care, Inc., IUP Child Study Center, New Choices/New Options Career Center, Indiana County Children and Youth Services, Indiana Regional Medical Center's Diabetes Program, the Alice Paul House, the Family Health Council, Inc., ARIN IU #28 Education Center, and the American Cancer Society.

"An excellent learning experience that better informed me of services critical to needy children and their parents."

Goals for FY 2004-2005 CCRD Grant Activities

Core work for FY 04 -05

Goal 1: Parents will become better educated about the importance of high quality childcare and pre-school education. *Accomplished through attending school events, community events, public service announcements, information in the Humans Services Council's newsletter, the CCIS newsletter and the web site.*

Goal 2: Providers will utilize local resources. *Accomplished through provider mailings, training calendars, the CCIS newsletter and the CCIS Lending Library.*

Goal 3: Human Service Personnel, community members and parents and providers will stay abreast of local child care needs and resources. *Accomplished through the Overview of Services Sessions.*



Indiana County Achieves High Percentage of STARS Participants

Keystone STARS is a quality improvement initiative designed to recognize and reward regulated child care providers who exceed state health and safety licensing requirements. Child care providers are awarded a STAR One, STAR Two, STAR Three, or STAR Four quality rating based on their achievement of quality performance standards in the areas of staff education, learning environment, and administration. The star rating reflects standards of quality that are research based and linked to improved outcomes for children as related to social and emotional development, learning skills, and school readiness.

In Indiana County the STARS designation breaks down like this:

| STARS LEVEL | NUMBER OF PROVIDERS AT THIS LEVEL |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Start with STARS | 1 |
| ★ | 16 |
| ★★ | 6 |
| ★★★ | 1 |

Grand Beginnings Children’s Center was the first Child Care Center in the Western Region of Pennsylvania to reach the STARS level 3 status.

The Western Region of the state is comprised of 24 counties: Allegheny; Armstrong; Beaver; Butler; Cameron; Clarion; Clearfield; Crawford; Elk; Erie; Fayette; Forest; Greene; Indiana; Jefferson; Lawrence; McKean; Mercer; Potter; Venango; Warren; Washington; and Westmoreland.

Indiana County has the second highest percentage of Child Care Centers that are participating in STARS in the Western Region: 73% (8 out of 11 Centers). Indiana County’s Group Day Care Homes rank in 4th place in the Western Region, with 75% (9 out of 12) participating. Family Day Care Homes, which have only recently been able to participate in the STARS process, come in at a respectable 9th place in the Western Region with 7 out of 41 participants in Indiana County (17%). To help pass along updated informa-



tion about the STARS initiative, *Stripes For STARS*, a newsletter for Indiana County Regulated Child Care Providers will be published by the Early Care And Education Committee.



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STARS stands for Standards, Training, Assistance, Resources, and Support.



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We're on the web!

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- Listings of PA Pathways training opportunities available in Indiana County
- Articles on child care topics
- Links to CCIS, CCRD, PA Pathways, Keystone Stars, Indiana County Head Start, PAECY, PACCA
- Information on the Family Fun Fest
- Kindergarten readiness information
- ...and more!



A Project of the Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County

The Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County (CAC) received a grant from the Child Care Resource Developers of the Western Region (CCRD) for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The funding for the grant comes from the PA Department of Public Welfare and is administered locally by the Indiana County Department of Human Services.

The Early Care and Education Planning Group (ECEPG) consists of CAC members and others who work in Early Intervention, Child Care, Head Start, Public Education, Parent and Family Services, Indiana County Government, Penn State Cooperative Extension and United Way.

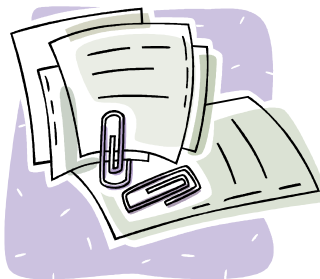
The ECEPG oversees the activities of the Child Care Resource Developers Grant and works to maximize the state and community resources available for improving child care; identify critical needs in the community; gather stakeholders for addressing needs; and, plan strategies to improve child care locally.

How Can YOU Help?

- **Join** the Planning Group! Call the Project Coordinator at 724-463-8200, or send an email expressing your level of interest to: kabakercac@yahoo.com
- **Share** your concerns, issues and ideas.
- **Participate** in the Family Fun Fest and other activities recommended by the Children's

Over 20,000 Informational Documents Distributed

The ECEPG & CCRD Grant staff kept busy this year providing information to childcare providers, parents and community members. **21,400** pieces of information were given out! This included books from the federal *No Child Left Behind* project; staff developed information on kinder-



garten readiness, *Toy Tips*, 04-05 Report Card to the

Community, Family Fun Fest information and Department of Human Services flyers. Information was distributed through school open houses, kindergarten registration, The Salvation Army's *Treasures for Children*, the Family Fun Fest, Stand for Children and other outreach events.

The Early Care and Engagement Grant for 05-06:

Priority Areas

State Requirements for the grant are:

- Promote Keystone STARS
- Conduct Community Event (Family Fun Fest)
- Work on Transition/School Readiness Issues

