

UP-CLOSE

A Look At Children Services

Volume 21 OCTOBER 2011

Money for Illinois?

Keep your fingers crossed – Illinois has the potential to receive up to \$70 million. In May 2011, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced a new \$500 million state-level grant competition, the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) to improve their early childhood care and education systems for children from birth to age five. This challenge grant will reward states that create comprehensive plans to transform early learning systems with better coordination, clearer learning standards, and meaningful workforce development. The maximum amount each state may apply for is based on its relative population of low-income young children.



Current research shows that high-quality early learning programs lead to long-lasting positive outcomes for children, including increased rates of high school graduation, college attendance and college completion. However, just 40 percent of four year olds in America are currently enrolled in preschool programs. The most recent report from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) indicates that, for the first time in a decade, **states are reducing some of their key investments in early learning.** The grants will encourage states to make the best possible use of current federal and state investments in child care and early learning.

States applying for challenge grants will be encouraged to:

- increase access to quality early learning programs for low income and disadvantaged children,
- design integrated and transparent systems that align their early care and education programs,
- bolster training and support for the early learning workforce,
- create robust evaluation systems to document and share effective practices and successful programs, and
- help parents make informed decisions about care for their children.

Awards in RTT-ELC will go to States that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive early learning education reform. The RTT-ELC grant period is from December 31, 2011 to December 31, 2015. The reforms and improvements must be designed to be sustainable after the grant period ends.

(Continued on page 7)

“ To win the future, our children need a strong start. The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge encourages states to develop bold and comprehensive plans for raising the quality of early learning programs across America. ”

- Arne Duncan
U.S. Secretary of Education

“ This Challenge represents the Obama Administration’s commitment to helping vulnerable children and families reach their full potential. Our collective health and financial security as a nation will depend on high quality investments during the critical early years of a child’s life. ”

- Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services

ADORE 2011



The annual **ADORE**, “A Day Of REcognition for Parents of Children with Special Needs” was held in mid-September at Malcolm X College. The theme for the special day was “Power Up: Resiliency, Resources and Respite.” This event is held each year to recognize the efforts and dedication that parents of children with special needs display.

This family and community partnership affair is sponsored by the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) along with Starnet/Chicago Public Schools, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Easter Seals of Metropolitan Chicago, Gads Hill, Illinois Action for Children and The Chicago Parent and Special Parent Magazines.

The fun-filled and informative day for parents is always a chance to meet and greet new and old friends, as well as receive messages of encouragement, inspiration and motivation. A number of vendors participated in a Resource Fair and provided informational and educational material as well as, hand-outs and gifts for the parents. Representatives from DFSS gave remarks and the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities read and presented a proclamation from the Mayor. Advance registration was required but ADORE is absolutely free.



Parents were able to participate in the following workshops:

- Brothers & Sisters of Children with Special Needs: Unique Opportunities and Interesting Challenges
- De-Stress with Dance
- Healthy Eating
- Journaling
- Special Education and Your Child
- Taking Care of Yourself : Strengthening Families Parent Cafe
- Yoga

Additional highlights of ADORE included massages, manicures, a luncheon, raffle prizes and live musical entertainment provided by Jugo de Mango. Volunteers provided on-site child care and meaningful play activities for children in separate rooms so that parents could take a little time-out for themselves and spend a worry-free day from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at ADORE 2011.

Parents expressed gratitude and appreciation for the excellent opportunity to network and for all of the activities and workshops presented that day. If you have never attended this event, ADORE is always held in September – mark your 2012 calendar.

It's Time for...



OCTOBER

IDHS/DCFS MILESTONES

- ❑ Submit August’s supplemental billing by the end of the month
- ❑ School age only: Submit scheduled opportunities for children 8 and older to work on long term projects (4th quarter)
- ❑ Certify and justify spending rate to CSD and governance entities (board, pc, supervisors, etc.) if substantially over or under 33.33%



Free Legal Assistance for Nonprofits



Take advantage of a great opportunity! If your center needs legal advice and/or counsel, The Law Project (TLP) will provide legal assistance to DFSS/CSD delegate agencies. TLP a program of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights provides pro bono (free) legal assistance to nonprofit organizations working in low-income communities in the greater Chicago area. Since 1985, TLP has provided services to clients in the areas of childcare, job training and placement, as well as affordable housing among other community development strategies.

Specifically, TLP's Child Care Initiative, with the law firm of DLA Piper provides services including reviewing key documents and policies as part of a comprehensive legal assessment. The legal assessment includes the following activities:

- Organization, Governance and Risk Management Issues
- Human Resources Issues
- Head Start Compliance Issues
- Exempt Organization Issues
- Real Estate, Contract and Permit Issues
- Privacy and Information Technology Issues



A simple application must be filled out to apply for services. Website information is available on page eight.

Mark Your
Calendar...



OCTOBER

SUPPORT SERVICES MILESTONES

- ❑ **FCP:** Certify identification and progress toward completion of family goals and family partnership agreements and document input into COPA by October 31st.
- ❑ **DISABILITIES:** Complete certification of developmental screenings within 45 days and submit to CSD, governing bodies/management.
- ❑ **DISABILITIES:** Complete CPS and CFC referral status report and submit to CSD, governing bodies/management.



VR's Corner

Welcome to our corner of the world. It seems as though time is always running out and there are so many things to do. We're preparing for the end-of-the-year activities and looking ahead to 2012. I know that everyone is feeling the "crunch." I'm passing on to you a quote that I think about and then attempt to put into action. John F. Kennedy was quoted as saying, "We must use time as a tool, not as a crutch."

September was officially National Preparedness Month but as we all know every month of the year, people who care for children must be prepared for anything and everything. In a memo sent by Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director of the Office of Head Start concerning National Preparedness Month she stated, "In the wake of recent disasters, it is important to make sure you have taken the necessary steps towards emergency preparedness. As a Head Start program, you are a trusted voice in your

community – you play a key role in making sure your organization and community are prepared for any emergency." Please make sure your center emergency plans and procedures are up-to-date.

October is a busy month. First, I want to mention that it's National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I encourage you to make sure that you, your staff and parents are aware of the importance of annual mammograms and check-ups. The website (see page eight) has a lot of information and resources. Second, once again we all need to be vigilant all of the time but October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Think about hosting an informational session at your center – if not in October as soon as possible. Contact Bea Nichols for additional information.

As much as we try to get information to you in a timely fashion I certainly hope that

you will take time to keep yourself up-to-date. Make sure that you check the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC) on a regular basis for a variety of resources, all types of information, schedules for webinars, What's New, Upcoming Conferences and much more.

Last thoughts about the month – leaves change to beautiful colors in October and then begin to fall (a great time for children) and also the first frost usually occurs in October. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the Region V Head Start conference at the end of the month.

Vanessa Rich
Managing Editor

North Avenue Day Nursery

A CHILDREN SERVICES DELEGATE AGENCY



North Avenue Day Nursery (NADN) a single-site agency has provided early education and care services to the community for over 100 years and now continues the mission to create the best possible early childhood environment for all children. When NADN opened its doors in 1908, it was to provide childcare services for immigrant families working in factories. Today, the NADN continues this vital commitment through comprehensive, high quality educational and childcare services for low-income families in Chicago's West Town neighborhood and surrounding communities.

The organization's Vision Statement is "To profoundly touch and transform the lives of each and every child that walks through our doors. Our hope is to be known and remembered by our families as a place that:

- Fosters a life-long love of learning
- Leaves no child behind
- Recognizes the uniqueness of each individual
- Shapes the character of children to fully embrace life
- Allows children to be children
- Teaches and reinforces the importance of family and the concept of community
- Builds trusting relationships among staff, parents and children

Our greatest reward is to be fondly remembered as the place that was always there, 'a home away from home' for our families when they needed us."

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), NADN is comprised of Preschool Day Care, School-Age Day Care, and Day Care Homes. 100-110 children from three to five years of age participate in the Preschool Day Care Program.

The NADN Family Child Care Homes Program cares for children birth to three years old in 40 Day Care Homes. This unique child care program serves infants and toddlers in home environment settings. Each home is an independent business providing employment for women as care-givers. NADN provides on-going support and training for each home provider and conducts regularly scheduled monitoring visits. All of the licensed providers involved in this program are running their own business. Special emphasis is placed on helping home providers in acquiring best practice



expertise to assist infants and toddlers with language, social, emotional and physical development. Executive Director, Steve Koll comments, "The benefit of a network is that they can all come together and we provide support services for them. The providers can grow professionally and the settings are good for early child care for young children. These homes that we support and manage are feeders into our pre-school program at the center."

Steve Koll comments about being a single-site agency, "Today small single-site agencies are at risk but we'd like to be around for another 100 years. As a small agency I think we look as good as any major agency with our teacher's credentials. Our staff is very dedicated and has an amazing record of longevity – we have people that have been here for 25 years. A lot of them live in the neighborhood and they are totally committed to North Avenue Day Nursery."

Don't Forget...



OCTOBER

MANAGEMENT MILESTONES

- ❑ **MANAGEMENT:** Participate in Work Program Roundtables at the Office of CSD
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT:** Certify the input of all child/families data into COPA by the last operating day of the month to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT:** Certify the completion of internal monitoring procedures to Office of CSD
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Certify that former and current Head Start parents serve on the Board
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Submit parent committee/policy committee tracking form to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Certify Policy Committee has been established to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Present independent audit findings and corrective action plan to the policy committee and Board
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Submit approved modifications to the sub-grant agreements for the program year to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Submit meeting and planning calendar changes to the Office of CSD and governance entities
- ❑ **ERSEA:** Submit attendance analysis report to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **SAFE ENVIRONMENTS:** Replenish First Aid Kit Supplies and replace carbon-monoxide and smoke alarm batteries
- ❑ **SAFE ENVIRONMENTS:** Certify emergency bus evacuation drills are conducted

MEET – Rhonda Gumbel-Thomas



This past September, Rhonda Gumbel-Thomas started a new assignment as the Department of Family and Support Services/Chicago Public Schools (DFSS/CPS) Head Start Facilitator. She will work closely with the CPS central office to support a more efficient process of Head Start children receiving and enrolling in CPS Special Services programs. She will also be hands-on to facilitate the creation of referrals for timely evaluation. The goal is for every child to be processed in a manner that will ensure they will complete their evaluations and start receiving services this school year. Last year, 952 children received services and with Rhonda assigned to this strategic position there are high expectations that even more children will be served this program year. When talking about her new duties Rhonda commented, “This is a great opportunity for me to assist with CPS/DFSS in this wonderful collaboration. It’s a great design and plan, and I’m happy to be a part of implementing it.”

Prior to her new position she was the CPS/DFSS Disability Team Facilitator for four years and she managed services provided by speech pathologists and special education teachers servicing the DFSS Head Start population. She had four teams and each team consisted of a speech pathologist and a special education teacher. She spent a great deal of time out in the field with the teams. Rhonda mentions, “It was a joy being able

to work with the Disability Teams, they are a great group of professionals – they all work hard to help the children and their families.” She was also responsible for educating staff and families in the areas of speech and language development and disorders.

Additionally she was the Supervisor of the DFSS Head Start Paraprofessional Program and was very interested in them having quality on-going education. She is proud that the Paraprofessionals were offered monthly quality workshops through STARNET.

In 2000 she started her career at DFSS as a Disability Team Speech Pathologist responsible for observations of Head Start aged children. Commenting about rewarding aspects of her career, “The families that I’ve met along the way have made it all worthwhile. They have so many questions about the development of their children and it’s a pleasure being able to assist them.”

Rhonda holds a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Communication Disorders/Education from Mundelein College in Chicago and a Master’s of Science in Speech and Hearing Disorders from Bradley University in Peoria. She is a Licensed Speech and Language Pathologist and began her professional career as a school speech pathologist at CPS.

She has been a volunteer at La Rabida Children’s Hospital for over ten years. When asked about her role there she responded, “I play with children that don’t have any visitors or family coming in to see them. There’s a workshop room filled with toys, computer games, art supplies, books and puzzles so I just do whatever the children want to do. I let them lead me. The staff is so grateful for the assistance and the children always want to know, “Will you be back tomorrow?”

A Chicago native, Rhonda Gumbel-Thomas has been married for 31 years and has two adult children – a son and daughter. She’s an avid tennis player, enjoys Zumba workouts and she loves to walk – normally doing an eight mile walk, three times a week in the summer.

Don't Forget...



OCTOBER

HEALTH SERVICES MILESTONES

- ☐ MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTH:** Complete required child screenings, including vision/hearing and submit COPA documentation within 45 days.
- ☐ MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Complete dental examinations/schedule follow-up and submit COPA documentation.
- ☐ MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Complete COPA health case notes with a minimum of 1 follow up contact with families.
- ☐ MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Complete health data analysis for the new Program Year and submit report and action plan for remediation to CSD and governing bodies and management.
- ☐ NUTRITION:** Complete first quarter COPA growth assessment documentation.
- ☐ NUTRITION:** Document Go Slow Whoa/IMIL implementation and submit monthly reports to CSD.
- ☐ MENTAL HEALTH:** Complete and submit plan for parent and staff services to CSD, governing bodies/management.
- ☐ MENTAL HEALTH:** Complete first classroom observation .
- ☐ MENTAL HEALTH:** Certify social/emotional screening within 45 days and submit to CSD, governing bodies/management.
- ☐ MENTAL HEALTH:** Mental health activity plans completed and posted.
- ☐ MENTAL HEALTH:** Conduct staff workshop.
- ☐ MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTH/NUTRITION:** Monitor Health services reports in COPA.

Dates to Remember



OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

OCT 4	Developing Lesson Plans
OCT 5, 19	Class UCF Workshop A
OCT 5	CPPC Executive Committee Mtg.
OCT 6, 20	Class UCF Workshop B
OCT 6	FCP in COPA
OCT 6	Health Records in COPA
OCT 7, 14, 21, 28	Fall CLASS Course
OCT 13	CLASS Celebration
OCT 14	ERSEA in COPA
OCT 14	Policy Committee Leadership Trg.
OCT 14	Resources Room Day
OCT 18	Observation Training
OCT 18, 19	Observation and Fact Collection
OCT 18, 19	Using GOLD for Home Base
OCT 19	Education Advisory
OCT 20	ECD/HSAC
OCT 20	Policy Group Leadership Trg.
OCT 21	New Mental Health Provider Orientation
OCT 21	Parliamentary Procedures: Train-the-Trainer
OCT 25, 26, 27	School Readiness
OCT 28	Parliamentary Procedures: Parent/Policy Committee

GO TO COPA FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION.

Upcoming Events

1 HEAD START SYMPOSIUM ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

This two-day symposium is designed to support delegate agency board members in their respective roles and to enhance their understanding and awareness on good governance, best practices and principles. Workshop topics include: The Board's Role in Early Childhood Programming; Financial What "Ifs"; Fund Raising Factors for Board Members; Board Assessments, and The Executive Director's Evaluation. The symposium dates are November 17 & 18, from 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM each day at the Washington Park Refectory, 5531 S. Russell Drive in Chicago.



2 27TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUNG CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES

If you are working in early intervention or early childhood special education you may want to consider going to this conference. Presented by The Division for Early Childhood (DEC), the conference material states, "This comprehensive professional development experience offers something for everyone on all the topics you need: policy, autism, recommended practices, tiered interventions, challenging behavior, personnel development, research, assessment, cultural diversity, and more!" The annual conference will be held November 17-19 at the Gaylord National Hotel (just south of Washington, DC) in National Harbor, Maryland.

3 REGION V LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE FOR HEAD START

This conference is hosted by the Ohio Head Start Association in partnership with the Region V Head Start Association. Region V consists of six states including Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. This year's theme is "Charting Your Course To Excellence" and the conference will convene at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers from October 31st -November 3rd in downtown Chicago.



"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."

- JAMES BALDWIN

continued from p. 1

The final application was released on August 23rd and it detailed requirements, priorities, selection criteria, and definitions. The deadline for state applications is October 19th. Grants will be awarded to states no later than December 31, 2011. The RTT-ELC will be administered jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius have also challenged the broader innovation community—leading researchers, high-tech entrepreneurs, foundations, non-profits and others—to engage with the early learning community to close the school readiness gap. Additionally, both agencies are encouraging business, law enforcement and military leaders who have advocated for increased investments in early learning to reduce crime, strengthen national security, and boost U.S. competitiveness to get involved as well. The RTT-ELC tasks states with engaging a diverse group of community stakeholders.

We will follow-up and keep you informed in up-coming issues of Up-Close on the progress and results of the State of Illinois RTT-ELC grant application process.

“For kids, high quality early learning programs mean they will enter school better prepared with a greater chance of finishing high school and college. Expanding access to such early education and child care programs will also make it easier for working parents to hold down a job—a key priority of the Middle Class Task Force—giving them peace of mind that their children are in a high quality learning environment while they are at work.”

**Vice President Joseph Biden
Chairman
Administration’s Middle Class Task Force**



“Forget leftovers, I want the left-unders!”

Just a Reminder...



OCTOBER

EDUCATION MILESTONES

- Complete Classroom observation and provide feedback.
- Review lesson plans using criteria for child appropriate planning. Provide feedback.
- Review COPA and Creative Curriculum GOLD information to ensure data entered is accurate (classroom & HR).
- Plan & schedule with Mental Health specialists training and support needed for staff and parents/children. Schedule classroom observations.
- Review/update holiday celebration policy...Halloween, etc...
- Participate & complete the review of special need referrals.
- Complete developmental, social emotional screenings and continuums (within 45 days of child’s start date).
- Schedule and begin Family/Child Reviews.
- Enter completed fall continuums into cc.net. (Nov. 1st).
- Review “Rolling Out the GOLD Assessment/2010-2011” activities and/or training scheduled for the month of October.



RECRUITMENT TIP

Keep Head Start on the minds of families in your community throughout the year. Participate in events in and/or near your neighborhood.



USEFUL WEBSITES:

- The Law Project: www.thelawproject.org
- Emergency Preparedness: www.community.fema.gov
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month: www.nbcam.org
- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC): www.eclkc.ohs
- ChildCare Education Institute (CCEI): www.cceionline.com
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: www.naeyc.org
- National Head Start: www.nhsa.org
- Illinois Head Start: www.ilheadstart.org
- Chicago Center for Early Education (CCEE): www.uic.edu
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS): www.state.il.us
- Illinois Action for Children: www.actforchildren.org
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRA): www.inccra.org
- Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

WHAT DO THESE AGENCIES HAVE IN COMMON?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Northwestern University Settlement House | Better Boys Foundation |
| Chicago Commons | Home of Life |
| Albany Park | Henry Booth House |
| Centers for New Horizons | The Salvation Army |
| Gads Hill Center | Erie Neighborhood House |
| YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago | Marcy-Newberry |
| Howard Area Community Center | El Valor |
| Onward House | Lutheran Social Services of Illinois |
| North Avenue Day Nursery | |

The answer is that all of the above agencies have been featured in the “Focus On” section of Up-Close. Many of the agencies reported that they have copied and distributed their feature stories to staff, parents, community groups and their boards. Let us know if you’d like to be included in this list. We’re looking for agencies to showcase in 2012.

Now, you can subscribe to Up-Close on-line and also download any or all of the previous 2011 issues of the newsletter on the COPA website: www.childrenserviceschicago.com

As always, we welcome and encourage your involvement in *Up-Close, A Look At Children Services!* Thank you in advance.

Please contact us at:

FSSCSD_upclose@cityofchicago.org

Include your name, organization, e-mail address along with your idea, photo or comments and a telephone number where you can be reached during business hours.

UP-CLOSE

A Look At Children Services

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