

WCELI Update

News from the White Center Early Learning Initiative, a Thrive by Five Washington Community

July 2010

In This Issue

Greetings from the staff and partners of the White Center Early Learning Initiative!

In this issue of our WCELI Update, we highlight some recent WCELI activities, accomplishments and opportunities. We hope you enjoy reading it and share it with your neighbors and colleagues.

Be sure to visit our website often for the latest WCELI news, services, class offerings and other opportunities. www.wceli.org. Let us know how we are doing!

For questions about any of the information in this update, please contact Leilani Dela Cruz at (206) 979-6926 or ldelacruz@psed.org.

We've Been Busy! - Leilani Dela Cruz, WCELI Director



Happy "Summer" to all of you...I hope that you are enjoying every last drop of sunshine that you can find!

There is much to report since our last WCELI Update and I'm very excited to share what we've been up to.

Our core services have continued providing home visiting as well as supports for childcare providers through the Seeds to Success program. More information about these programs is provided below.

On Saturday March 27th, we celebrated the grand opening of the Educare Early Learning Center. Approximately 400 people from the White Center community and supporters of the Educare Center attended, including children and families, caregivers, funders, partners, educators, builders and state and local leaders. The festivities included a formal ceremony, ribbon cutting, and many activities for children and families. View pictures of the day on our website: www.wceli.org/educare. The Center is now serving children full day all year long and is an integral component of WCELI's center-based early learning strategy in a high quality setting. Additionally, it is the hub for WCELI, where our offices are located and where we host a variety of trainings, workshops, community meetings, and other community-based early learning activities provided by our community partners.

We have begun providing "Play and Learn Groups" in the Educare building for family, friend and neighbor caregivers in Spanish and Vietnamese and have joined the Play and Learn Network in King County. This expands the number of Play and Learn groups currently being offered in White Center. In addition, we have begun offering a monthly workshop called "Wednesdays with WCELI" focused on different early learning topics. These workshops are open to anyone in the White Center community. For more information about these activities, please contact our Community Engagement Coordinator, Nubia Lopez, (206) 716-8855 or nlopez@psed.org.

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We have also been looking at additional funding opportunities to build on the work we've started. In June, we applied for a grant through Public Health Seattle – King County to develop culturally responsive health and nutrition standards for childcare programs in White Center utilizing a stakeholder process in partnership with content experts.

We are also actively participating in a community process led by Southwest Youth and Family Services in its application for Promise Neighborhoods federal planning grants being provided through the U.S. Department of Education. These grants are aimed at helping distressed communities design a pipeline of programs to support children from birth through college. Several organizations serving White Center have come together to partner in this effort.

We will keep you posted on these efforts and our overall work.

Seeds to Success Evaluation



Washington state is creating a system to help boost the quality of child care, called *Seeds to Success*. Over the past year, WCELI has partnered closely with Child Care Resources and Thrive By Five Washington in field testing the Seeds to Success program in White Center. Our goal was to learn from the implementation and evaluation of the program in order to help inform the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care. At a June 29th community meeting at the Educare Center, Thrive by Five

Washington and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. presented the field test evaluation results carried out over the past year in White Center. Local child care providers who participated in the study, along with their coaches, shared their experiences and how they benefited from the support and resources provided.

The study was conducted using randomized controls, which meant that half of the participants were placed in a control group while the other half were placed in the services group. Both groups were able to access professional development opportunities but the services group was given coaching and quality improvement grants. Key findings that were shared included a statistically significant increase in the observed quality of child care programs as a result of the coaching and quality improvement grants provided. The study also found that a large number of participants in the services group pursued professional development opportunities that included college classes and STARS trainings.

In an effort to design a program that can be taken to scale statewide and remain sustainable, Thrive announced that there will be changes in the program design for year two of the modified field test. One of the major changes is a reallocation of resources in order to support *Seeds* efforts in Clark, Kitsap and Spokane counties, all of whom have also participated in the field test. Additional details are being finalized.

A full copy of the report is available on Thrive By Five WA's website:

http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/EarlyChildhood/seeds_to_success_mft.pdf

Home Visiting Opportunities

Response to the WCELI home visiting services has been great, and most programs are nearing full caseloads. Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) has 93 of 100 available openings filled, and the Partnering with Families for Early Learning (PFEL) has 28 of 30 available openings filled. The Outreach Doula program, which started only in mid-2009 has filled 31 of their 50 available openings for pregnant and new mothers of children up to two years old. NFP and PFEL will soon be graduating clients and will have openings available. Please contact Lois Schipper, Public Health, at (206) 205-7273 to make a referral to any of the Home Visiting services.

Preschool Openings September 2010



Highline Head Start and Educare are actively seeking applications for preschool openings in September. Children must be three- or four- years old before September 1, 2010 to qualify.

Our traditional Head Start program offers quality morning or afternoon preschool four days per week. The program is free and transportation is available to families who live north of 152nd Street.

Our new Educare center offers families the same Head Start services in a full day, full year childcare model. Families must qualify for Working Connections Child Care through DSHS or meet income guidelines and have some other source of funding. To qualify for Working Connections, both parents must be working and family income must be below 200% of Federal Poverty Level.

Educare also provides Early Head Start and childcare for 32 infants and toddlers. These slots are currently full, but families are encouraged to apply and get on the waiting list.

We have a new home-based Early Head Start program as well. Pregnant women, infants, and toddlers up to 30 months old are encouraged to apply for future openings. In this program, a Family Educator visits the family weekly in their home to provide child development, health and family support services. Families also participate in bi-monthly parent/child play groups.

For information on any of these programs, families can call (206) 716-8800 to request an application, or stop by the Educare Early Learning Center Monday through Friday, 7am-6pm to apply.

Applications can also be found here:

English <http://www.wceli.org/docs/EDUCAREApplication20092010English.pdf>

Spanish <http://www.wceli.org/docs/EducareApplication20092010Spanish.pdf>

Kindergarten Transition Program at Beverly Park Elementary School

We are pleased to announce that WCELI will be supporting a new Kindergarten Transition Program at Beverly Park Elementary School, which will run from August 30 to September 3.

WCELI's Kindergarten Transition Program is based on a model developed by Ready by Five, WCELI's sister Thrive by Five Washington demonstration community in East Yakima. The program is designed to give children, families, teachers and other school staff the opportunity to build relationships with one another prior to the official first day of school and without the distraction of the older children present. Children attend half-day sessions in their kindergarten classroom with their teachers for one week.

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The focus of the day for new kindergarten students is to learn routines, procedures, and expectations for school behavior, as well as to establish relationships with their teacher and peers. Families have the chance to meet their child's teacher and staff, set goals together, and understand the expectations for children and parents in supporting learning from home. Teachers spent quality time modeling appropriate behavior prior to the first day of school and develop relationships with their students and their families.

This has been made possible through the generous support of the Norcliffe Foundation and Thrive By Five WA.

Community Advisory Committee

We are in the final stages of redefining the mission, vision and infrastructure of our Community Advisory Committee (CAC). In the next couple of months, we will begin recruiting new members to revitalize the CAC and jumpstart its activities. Stay tuned for more information.

WCELI Partners Receive Awards

Open Arms Perinatal Services received the 2010 Seattle Human Services Coalition's Human Services Award for Innovative Program. The Coalition recognized Open Arms for its "response to an existing need in a new way, its ability to build upon an outstanding program model, its creativity in leveraging resources, and its positive program results."



The Educare Early Learning Center earned a 2010 Civic Design Award from The American Institute of Architects Washington Council (AIA|WA). The annual competition recognizes good and innovative design in civil architecture. The Center received a Citation level award in the Individual Building category for "a demonstrated level of quality and sensitivity."

The Educare Center was built by the Puget Sound Educational Service District through a unique public/private partnership of individuals, foundations, governmental agencies and organizations. The architectural firm was Miller Hayashi Architects LLC.



The White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI) is a partnership of community members and public and private organizations working to create integrated and accessible child development and family support services in White Center. Funded by grants from Thrive by Five Washington and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WCELI provides education and support for parents, caregivers, and child care and early learning staff to help ensure that all children in the community begin school ready to succeed.

For more information on WCELI, visit www.wceli.org, or contact: Leilani DelaCruz, White Center Early Learning Initiative, 625 SW 100th St., Seattle, WA 98146; (206) 716-8851, ldelacruz@psesd.org.