

## **Media Advisory – Sept. 30, 2009**

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### **County education program offers healthcare training**

Snohomish County’s Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) has again partnered with UCLA/Johnson & Johnson to deliver the Health Care Institute to more than 300 underserved families in Snohomish County.

ECEAP is a free, comprehensive, family focused school-readiness program preparing three- and four-year-old children for school while teaching parents the tools they need to raise healthier children.

“The earlier we prepare children and families for school, the more successful they will be, ultimately benefiting themselves and this community,” Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said.

Through the Health Care Institute, parents will receive additional training on how to best respond to their child’s illnesses.

Specifically, the program is focused on educating and training parents how to recognize and address common health problems at home, to know when to call a healthcare provider, how to minimize or avoid costly medical bills and to learn how to effectively communicate with a health-care provider.

During the health-care training, ECEAP parents will receive a health-care reference book, first-aid kit and more. In the months following training, ECEAP family support staff will follow up with families to see how the program is helping them improve their child’s health-care needs.

“Our mission is to enable child/family focused organizations to effectively increase the health literacy of parents through a training and support program that gives them the knowledge, confidence and resources to care for common childhood ailments at home,” said Dr. Ariella Herman, Ph.D., research director of UCLA’s Health Care Institute.

Since it began operations in 2001, the Health Care Institute has taught thousands of parents how to treat everyday childhood illnesses at home, easing the burden on local emergency rooms and clinics.

During its first five years, the program has successfully reduced national emergency room visits by 58 percent, reduced school days missed by 29 percent and reduced working days missed by 42 percent.

Last year in Snohomish County, the project helped achieve a 36-percent decrease in the number of doctor visits for common illnesses. There was also a 55-percent decrease in the number of emergency room visits for the same common illnesses.

The Health Care Institute Parent Trainings will be held at 21 ECEAP sites during October and November, beginning Oct. 6, for enrolled families.

For more information on the county's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, contact Joe Varano at 425-388-7251 or [joe.varano@snoco.org](mailto:joe.varano@snoco.org).

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