

## **Media Advisory – Sept. 17, 2008**

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### **Early childhood program expands healthcare training**

Snohomish County’s Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is partnering with UCLA/Johnson & Johnson to launch the *Health Care Institute Health Improvement Project*, which will help more than 200 underserved families in Snohomish County improve their health-care knowledge.

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.

Under the Health Care Institute Improvement Project, 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, know when to call a health-care provider, minimize or avoid costly medical bills and learn how to effectively communicate with a health-care provider.

“The better we prepare parents to raise their children, the more promising their prospects will be, which provides an overall benefit to them as individuals and this community,” said County Executive Aaron Reardon. “The addition of new healthcare training only enhances an already successful program.”

Beginning with the 2009 school year, Reardon has recommended the county begin investing funding in ECEAP. Funding now comes from state and federal sources only. Additional funding from the county will allow more families to utilize the program.

“These are the workers, leaders and decision-makers of tomorrow, so we have a responsibility to be sure they’re prepared,” he said.

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.

The Health Care Improvement Parent Trainings will be held at 17 sites during October and November for enrolled families.

The UCLA/Johnson & Johnson Health Care Institute Improvement Project began in 2002. During the past five years, the program has successfully reduced national

emergency room visits by 57 percent, reduced school days missed by 29 percent, and reduced working days missed by 42 percent. Additionally, there has been a \$554-per-family savings in Medicaid costs.

For more information on Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, contact Melinda Marine at 425-388-7491 or [Melinda.marine@snoco.org](mailto:Melinda.marine@snoco.org).

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