



ECEAP NEWSLETTE R

WINTER 2011



Snohomish County
Human Services

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ECEAP Legislative Update

Joe Varano, Snohomish County ECEAP Manager



Governor Gregoire released her budget proposal for the next biennium, July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2013. There will be a new revenue forecast in February 2011, after which the Senate and House of Representatives will release their budget proposals. Then the Legislature will decide the final budget. The budget is not decided until the Legislature votes on it, possibly in April 2011.

The Governor's budget proposes a \$4.5 million annual cut to ECEAP statewide. This would cut 460 slots for three-year-old children from the state program.

The Department of Early Learning is compiling data on poverty rates by community, and number of Head Start and ECEAP slots in each community, to look at saturation rates and help determine cuts.

Our ECEAP/Head Start Advocacy Day will be on February 10, 2011. ECEAP parents will meet with state legislators and also attend a rally. For more information, contact Kristi Reardon, ECEAP County Coordinator, at 425-388-7315.

IMAGINE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM FAMILY NIGHTS

Kim Parker, Program Manager, Mukilteo SD ECEAP



Using string and yarn for shape bubbles!



Standing inside a bubble was a huge hit!



Blowing lots of bubbles!

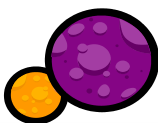
At Mukilteo ECEAP, we held the *Bubble Festival and Adventures in Number Land* family nights in November and December. For both events, we had a total of 298 adults and children; all had a great time playing and learning! Each night we had 10 different stations for the families to visit and actively participate.

The hands-on activities from the **Imagine Children's Museum** match ECEAP's philosophy that children are learning while they play. We find that parents want to know how playing with their children can teach them essential developmental skills; these family nights not only show parents how they can play with their children, but also show them how these activities help them learn concepts and new vocabu-

lary.

These activities also tie into the efforts of the Department of Early Learning and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Pre-school-Three system.

We look forward to our spring event, which will feature the Museum's Zoom Science and Engineering program!



Building with WEDGiTS!



Building with tangrams!



Building domes with toothpicks and gumdrops!





WinterFest at Sky Valley

Dave Wood, Program Manager, Sky Valley ECEAP in Sultan



The children from the Sky Valley ECEAP were invited to perform at the Annual WinterFest Craft Fair at Sultan High School on Dec. 12. This is an annual community gathering where several local crafters set up booths to sell their homemade holiday crafts. During the day, entertainment was provided mostly by Sultan School District programs: Sultan Elementary, Gold Bar Elementary, Sultan Middle School and Sultan High School.

The Sky Valley ECEAP staff talked to parents to see if they would like their children to perform. Two weeks of practice was arranged (and interrupted by an early winter snow storm). On Winterfest Day, the children, dressed in their best, and their parents performed one musical melody and sang four songs. All the children had maracas or tambourines, and a father joined in with his guitar. The crowd was really pleased, giving the children a very warm welcome. During the day, more than 700 people came through the craft fair!

EARLY LEARNING CENTER: GROWING GROCERIES

Julie Polkinghorn, Family Support, EvCC ELC

It is amazing how a garden can spark a memory from childhood, make you recall a favorite recipe or ease the stresses of everyday life by getting fresh soil on your fingertips.

The Early Learning Center Growing Groceries Project is a collaborative effort between Snohomish County Human Services ECEAP, Washington State University Extension Programs, WSU Snohomish County Master Gardeners and Everett Community College Early Learning



Center. The project originated as a local response to help address childhood obesity and health issues. Through the program, parents and children are mentored by

WSU Master Gardeners to prepare the garden, then plant, maintain and harvest produce as a means to supplement their household food budget.

Each month families meet for a work party and cooking demonstration using fresh fruits and vegetables.

Our center is fortunate to have a group of **“green-thumbed” staff who were eager to embrace the idea of turning our under-used patio area into an Early Learning Center family garden.** The momentum grew even more when our campus community expressed interest in supporting our efforts and reached out to offer supplies, partnership ideas and encouragement.

This year’s project started late in the season with six large empty containers and six families interested in learning more about growing their own food. Our first meeting began with a **tour of Everett Community College’s greenhouse and nursery, hosted by EvCC Grounds**

and Nursery Specialist, John Syson. John provided our group with a hose and spray nozzle, hose reel and an additional planter. He also allowed families to pick from a selection



of surplus vegetable starts. A donation of seeds from an Early Learning Center teacher also helped us start our crops. Cedar Grove Compost donated fresh soil to help our new seedlings take root. We were also fortunate to be partnered with Richelle and Rob Taylor from the WSU Extension Snohomish County Master Gardeners Program. Rob and Richelle volunteered to mentor families with gardening techniques and advice. Their expertise helped guide families as they created a vision for our community growing space.



At monthly work parties, parents and children gathered to tend the garden, pull weeds, thin carrots, share gardening tips and see a cooking demonstration funded by Snohomish County ECEAP.

Each month, Bick Hang from WSU Extension provided a nutritious snack using in-season produce. Fruit smoothies, avocado spread tortilla wraps and fresh salsa filled our tummies and our spirits as we **wanted to harvest the “fruits of our labors.”**

Throughout the summer, ELC teachers used the garden as a living science lab where children could visit to check up on watering and taste produce fresh off the vine. To date, we have harvested approximately 3 pounds of green beans, 2 pounds of snap peas, 15 pounds of carrots, bunches of parsley and chives, 15 pounds of tomatoes, 8 pounds of zucchini and many Walla Walla onions and

leeks. We expect more families to join this fall when we plant "cold season crops" such as broccoli and lettuce as well as soil enriching plants such as soy beans.

More than 133 hours of volunteer time have been donated to the garden. Patricia Rodriguez, ECEAP parent at the Early Learning Center, summed things up perfectly when she said, **"It is easy to garden, and all the families wanted to join in. It was very fun; the kids find so much joy in playing in the dirt. We've learned to cook different things with all the goodies we picked!"**



Josephine Sunset Home: *Disney on Ice!*

Desiree Mason, Family Support, Josephine Sunset Home

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

...Walt Disney



While at a home visit, I was talking to a parent about their older child's preschool experience in another state. The mother mentioned that they went to the circus for a family night. The idea inspired me to ask Comcast Arena to donate a set of tickets to use as a door prize for our monthly parent training.

After I contacted Comcast, they were more than willing to donate a family pack of tickets, and mentioned that they would like to do more—I had no idea that "more" meant *80 tickets!*

At our parent training, every family that attended received tickets for *Disney on Ice*. The night was simply magical. I think I spent more time watching those priceless expressions on **the children's faces than watching the show.** The generosity of Comcast Arena has allowed our families a memorable experience that is sure to last a lifetime.





Former ECEAP Student Gives Back

Tracy Souza, Program Manager, Marysville SD ECEAP

When Kendra was four years old, her mother Nelly enrolled her in the Marysville ECEAP housed at Shoultes Elementary School. Nelly would often come in and make fry bread, **not just for Kendra's class but** also for the four other classrooms.

Kendra is now 11 years old and attends Shoultes Elementary. Last month, Kendra and her mother came in to the

ECEAP office to ask if they could donate toys for ECEAP families. Kendra explained that she was having a birthday party and decided to donate her presents to families who really need help for the holidays.

The morning of her birthday Kendra and her mother came to the ECEAP office with three bags full of donated toys. I told Kendra how proud I was

of her and what a generous act this was.

Kendra will be honored at the Snohomish County Celebrate the Successes dinner on April 21 for her generous and kind act. A big **Thank You!** to Kendra, our former ECEAP student.



ARE YOU A PARENT LEADER?

Adapted from "The FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention"

Are you a parent leader? All parents have at least one leadership characteristic. Here is a list of some characteristic traits of parent leaders.

Are you...

- ◆ Trustworthy?
- ◆ Enthusiastic?
- ◆ Confident?
- ◆ Tolerant?
- ◆ Able to problem-solve?
- ◆ Committed to excellence?
- ◆ Caring?
- ◆ Inspiring?
- ◆ Competent?



Here are some signs that you are interested in leading and helping make a difference in your family, school, place of worship, workplace or community.

You...

- ◆ Ask for help.
- ◆ Ask questions about the purpose of the group or agency.
- ◆ Volunteer to take on more tasks or responsibilities.
- ◆ Ask about other parents or families involved in the group or agency.
- ◆ **Voice another parents' concerns.**
- ◆ Notice and encourage progress and growth within yourself and others.
- ◆ Share ideas for activities and projects.
- ◆ Share information and resources.
- ◆ Encourage other parents to take opportunities.
- ◆ Respect and model guidelines of the group or agency.
- ◆ Take on leadership roles.

WINTER CELEBRATION ON CADY ROAD

Estela Carrera-Infante, Program Manager, VOA Cady Road ECEAP



On Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010, the Volunteers of America (VOA) ECEAP Preschool on Cady Road in Everett hosted a Winter Celebration for their children and families. Almost 100 people attended the event. The preschool treated families to a meal of spaghetti, salad, chicken and garlic bread. Families were invited to bring desserts to share. Throughout the event, staff encouraged families to network and get to know one another. During the meal time, staff shared information about State ECEAP **funding and the importance of Advocacy Day.** The preschool's PAC representative, Sharon Hamilton, was introduced and she

said a few words to the crowd about the important role of parents in their children's education. She invited them to connect with her through our staff if they had any suggestions or questions for her. She expressed her gratitude for being involved.

After the meal, the children sang songs for their parents and invited them to sing along to *Frosty the Snowman*, *Jingle Bells*, and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* (in English and in Spanish). After the meal and presentation, the teachers invited parents to tour their children's classrooms and speak further with their teachers. Teachers shared art work that the children had done and parents were able to take their art work home for the holidays.



Each family also received a bag full of toys for their preschoolers as well as some for siblings. The preschool received more than 160 toys from the VOA Stuff-a-Bus Project with Fred Meyer in Lynnwood. In addition, the program staff used funds donated by the Everett Chamber of Commerce to purchase an additional 65 educational and culturally appropriate toys for the children for the holidays.





Funding for Snohomish County ECEAP is provided by the Washington State Department of Early Learning

WHAT IS ECEAP?

- The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a preschool program for 4- and 5-year-olds that is free to income-eligible families. ECEAP is funded by Washington State government.
- ECEAP offers programs throughout Snohomish County and one program in Skagit County. We honor and welcome all families.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

- Educational experiences include language skills, self-help activities, social skills, building self-esteem, field trips and preparation for kindergarten.
- Health and Nutrition includes vision and hearing screenings, connections for families to medical and dental resources, well-balanced meals and snacks, and health and nutrition education for children and families.
- Family Support includes parent education, information about local resources, family fun nights and activities, opportunities for **personal growth, involvement in your child's education and in program decision-making.**

ECEAP WINTER CALENDAR 2011

January 2011

- Jan. 4 Policy and Advisory Council meeting
- Jan. 12 Health Advisory Committee meeting
- Jan. 19 Program Managers meeting

February 2011

- Feb. 1 Policy and Advisory Council meeting
- Feb. 3 Nutrition Subcommittee meeting
- Feb. 10 Advocacy Day in Olympia

March 2011

- Mar. 1 Policy and Advisory Council meeting
- Mar. 16 Program Managers meeting
- Mar. 22 Mental Health Subcommittee meeting

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A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

The Snohomish County ECEAP Newsletter is published three times a year by Snohomish County Human Services. We invite your feedback and suggestions on topics of interest and photographs showing ECEAP activities. Please feel free to call Joe Varano at 425-388-7251.

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