

**January
2010**

**Sierra Nevada Children's Services
Family Resource Center**

Parent Newsletter

**Be Informed
Get Involved**

**Know your
resources**

***HAPPY NEW YEAR
2010!***

**Sierra Nevada Children's Services
Bringing in the New Year
with Fun, Excitement and Learning.**

At SNCS we are prepared to start the New Year with some programs that are guaranteed to get your energy flowing and your mind learning.

First of all it is important for you to know that **starting in January SNCS Grass Valley Family Resource Center (FRC) services will be limited due to funding cuts.** We will be referring families to the Hennessy School FRC where Amanda Scheerer will be available or you may contact her at 273-4039. Although the Hennessey School FRC will not have all services available in January, please be patient as we work to create a seamless transition in an effort to meet your needs-- and stay tuned!

What will be continuing at SNCS?

- ☺ Back by popular demand our **Tots and Twos** class will continue to be held every Thursday from 10-11:30 in the Family Resource Center. Starting in January there will be a small fee to attend. Payments must be made prior to attending class.
- ☺ **P.L.A.Y. activities** are open to drop in visits at any time. Come in out of the cold and enjoy our child friendly space, use our computers, access our toy and book lending library, enjoy time with your friends while gathering resources. Facilitated sessions will be held during spring break and summer.
- ☺ **Nurturing Parenting/Educator workshops** will be held the 3rd Tuesday of each month starting on January 19th from 6-8pm. This highly requested workshop series will utilize the Nurturing Parenting curriculum with a hands-on approach that is fun and really works. Learn more about how children learn, strategies to help them take ownership of their actions and create environments where children and families can be successful. (continued on page2)



- ☺ **Want to learn how to keep your early care and education program full? Want to be ready for the state Quality Rating System? The Partnership Project** is our "make it happen" approach that will link the state requirements to trainings that support your efforts to improve your Early Care and Education programs. We will bring current information about what is happening in education and present information in a meaningful way to ensure success.

Workshops and on site visits will occur to bring the concepts right to the programs that participate.

Components of this project include:

- Social Emotional Development
- Language development
- Cognitive Development
- Perceptual and Motor Development.
- Behavior Concerns



To sign up for the January 26 orientation contact: **Cindy Santa Cruz-Reed**

The Partnership Project Parent Component will engage parents in their child's learning by addressing the Early Learning Foundations of quality care and education. Learn how children develop, learn skills to advocate for your children, and network with other parents to create your own systems of support. Learn how the state will be enforcing a quality rating scale on early care and education programs as you discover how to look for quality and advocate for change. Starting February 3rd, 6-8pm-child care will be provided for a \$5 fee per child.

- ☺ **The Promotora Program** is a home-based culturally and linguistically appropriate program designed to incorporate strategies to bridge language barriers and promote child health and development through a holistic family strengthening and self sufficiency approach.



Free Webinars



Child Care Aware Parent Network webinars are presented by child care experts to give you information about high-quality child care and other topics that are of interest to you. They are designed specifically for busy parents, grandparents, advocates, and professionals who to learn more but have very little time. Our educational Webinars are FREE exclusive content for our members. **Website is:**
www.CCAParentNetwork.org

Wednesday, January 20th 8:00 pm EDT

Presenters: Richard Cohen, Jessica Dahan

Will You Know High-Quality Child Care When You See It? Wednesday, January 20th 8 pm EDT

Choosing good child care is one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your child. How will you know which child care center setting best meets your family's needs? How will you assess their quality? Join Child Care Aware Parent Network and two of our outstanding Child Care Aware Specialists, **Molly O'Keefe and Jessica Dahan**, for an informative session about what you should look for when you choose a child care center or family child care home.

Our presenters work in Child Care Aware, an initiative of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and partially funded by the Child Care Bureau, a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Both talk with hundreds of parents each week in order to provide advice about how to assess and find high-quality child care.

Subsidy Updates for Parents.....

Recertification Process

Parents receiving child care and development services must complete a recertification at least once a year. At the recertification parents will be required to provide documentation verifying need and eligibility for services. If any changes occur prior to recertification parents must report the change to their Family Support Specialist within 5 days of that change. See below for a guide on how the recertification process works.

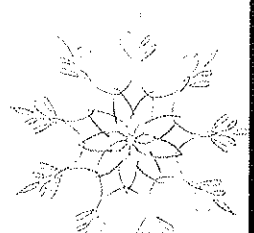
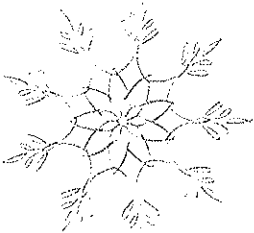
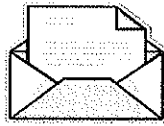
Step 1: You will receive a letter with a list of requested documentation and a due date to return it by. You will also receive a schedule for group orientation which you will be required to attend in order to complete your recertification

Step 5: Your certification is complete. Any changes to your family size, income, need for services, etc. must be reported to your FSS within 5 days of the change, for services to continue. Even if nothing changes, recertification for services still happens once a year.

Step 2: You must select a date to attend group orientation and return that with your need and eligibility documentation. This documentation must be returned on or prior to the due date that was indicated in the letter.

Step 3: At the orientation meeting, the rules and regulations of the programs will be reviewed and you will receive important updates.

Step 4: You may meet with your Family Support Specialist if needed, otherwise your recertification is complete when your FSS signs the application for services.





Quality Rating Systems in California: An Investment with Lifelong Returns for our Children, Families and Communities.

By Stephanie Blume

Through its newly launched Partnership Project, Sierra Nevada Children's Services is making an even stronger commitment to both families and early care professionals in our communities (see p.2 for more information on this project!). A component of this program revolves around an assessment tool called a Quality Rating System (QRS).

Quality Rating Systems (QRS) were first developed and introduced by professionals in the field of early care and education in the late 1990s. As of June 2009, 19 states have implemented a QRS. California is currently developing its own.

A QRS is usually administered by a state child care and education agency. A QRS helps early care educators to voluntarily meet quality standards and earn a designation, such as a "star rating," which helps parents identify quality early care and education programs. An agency that provides a QRS may also offer early care educators incentives and supports to encourage them towards a higher level of quality within their business. Sierra Nevada Children's Services is actively working on a project to support this movement to increase the quality of early care and education in California.

The National Child Care Information Center defines a QRS as a system that includes the following elements:

- **Standards above licensing regulations.**
- **Accountability through assessment and monitoring.**
- **Program and practitioner outreach and support.**
- **Financing incentives specifically linked to compliance with quality standards.**
- **Parent education on how to understand and use the QRS.**

For more information please visit:

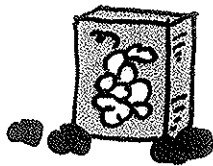
National Child Care Information Center <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm>

The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) provides a clearinghouse of resources on QRS, including information on the planning process, the development of quality indicators, and research studies exploring the impact of QRS.

Healthy Banana

Snowman

You'll Need:



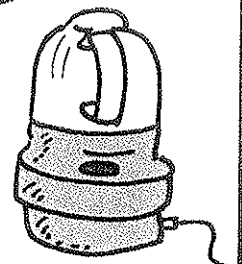
2 cups raisins



2 bananas



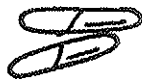
shredded coconut



blender or food processor

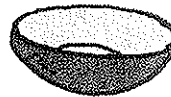


measuring cup



plastic knives

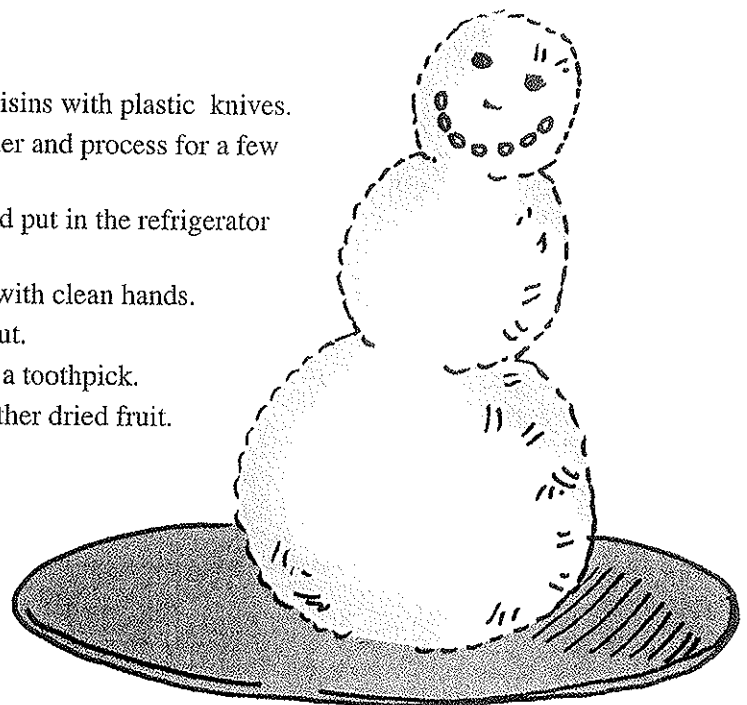
bowls



What to Do:

1. Help children chop up the bananas and raisins with plastic knives.
2. Place the bananas and raisins in the blender and process for a few seconds.
3. Place the chopped mixture into a bowl and put in the refrigerator for 10 minutes.
4. Let children shape the mixture into balls with clean hands.
5. Roll the balls in a dish of shredded coconut.
6. Stack three balls together and fasten with a toothpick.
7. If you wish, make a face with raisins or other dried fruit.

CACFP Credit= vegetable/fruit for snack



MOVIN' OUT

INDOOR OBSTACLE COURSE

You'll Need: wastebasket ♦ pillow ♦ chair
♦ ball ♦ pail ♦ cereal box ♦ book ♦ toy
♦ plant or other large items

What to Do:

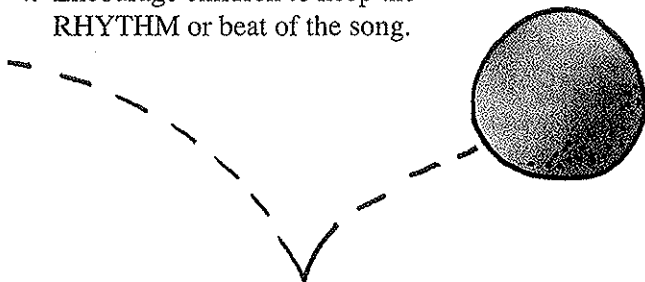
1. Decide whether children will move around, over, behind, through or on the obstacles. For example: tell children to go around the wastebasket, over the pillow, on the chair, around the ball, between the book and plant.
2. Place objects so there is enough space for children to go between them.
3. Walk them through each challenge.
4. Invite children to perform the activity as quickly as possible without touching anything.
5. Put on some music and challenge the group to move to the beat or complete the course before the song ends.

BOUNCE THE BALL

You'll Need: large rubber balls

What to Do:

1. Give each child a large ball.
2. Sing this song (Tune: "Lazy Mary, Will You Get Up?" or "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush").
*This is the way we bounce the ball,
Bounce the ball, bounce the ball.
This is the way we bounce the ball,
As we sing and play.*
3. Sing the song together and challenge children to try to bounce their ball to it rhythm: "This is the way we bounce the ball..."
4. Encourage children to keep the RHYTHM or beat of the song.



SKATING IN SOCKS

You'll Need: stocking feet
♦ bare floor (wood or tile) ♦ music

What to Do:

1. Have children take off their shoes and prepare to skate on the bare floor (no carpet) with socks on.
2. Play some music and let them slip and slide across the floor as they "skate" around the room.



EXERCISE IT!

What to Do:

1. Invite children to stand and raise their arms to shoulder level.
2. Ask children to stretch their arms up over their heads—first one, then the other—as far as they can reach. Do this 10 times.
3. Invite the group to run in place, bending their knees, 20 times.
4. Challenge children to stand tall with arms extended to the sides, palms facing up. At your signal, ask them to move their arms forward in small circles, making windmills.
5. Then ask children to reverse direction and do backward windmills 20 times.
6. Encourage the group to cool down by stretching in any direction 10 times.

RAISING EMOTIONALLY STRONG CHILDREN

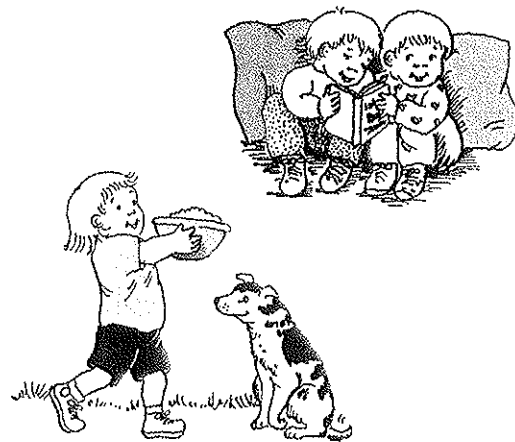
by Kathy Faggella

The children in our care are really very fragile. Not so much fragile in a physical sense, but in a social and emotional way. We often don't stop to realize that what we say, how we say it, and how we behave with these children can have long term effects for each of them. We need to stop, think, say and do the things that will help children grow in the healthiest way possible in every way.

Raising children who have a strong sense of themselves and their feelings keeps getting harder and harder. Today's children have to deal with so much. Their lives are often full of stress—being poor, divorced parents, physical, emotional or sexual abuse; hearing about crimes committed against children; fearing the vague yet ever-present, threat of terrorism; and now, the very real threats posed by Mother Nature.

Young children need basic skills for coping with the real world. But we need to be careful. For example, we used to think that we were building self-esteem by saying, "Good job!" for everything. Today we realize that when we say "Good job," over and over, children figure out that is just something said to everyone. It loses its meaning and doesn't help develop self-esteem.

We also used to teach children about "Stranger Danger." But now we realize that teaching them about "Stranger Danger"



warns them about something that might never happen, makes them fearful of people, and puts a burden of responsibility on them that they are not ready for.

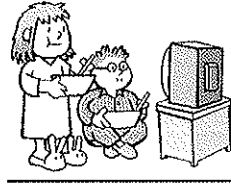
We need to teach children skills that will help them become strong and able to solve the problems they face now and will face in the future. Robert Brooks, MD, co-author of *Raising Resilient Children* (Contemporary Books) says that we need to handle mistakes better by letting children see that mistakes can be corrected. This will help them be more confident, not only to keep trying, but to recover quickly when something goes wrong. We need to help children find solutions and have good problem-solving skills so that they will not give up easily or depend on others to solve problems for them.

Resilient children learn how to get support from a nurturing person when they need it. They use an interest or hobby for comfort and for building skills and pride. Resilient children are helpful to others, doing chores not just as jobs, but to contribute to their communities.

Finally, resilient children communicate well. Psychologist Maurice Elias suggests that caring adults need to teach children all about their emotions, what causes them, and how feelings affect others and themselves. Along with knowing about feelings, children need to learn to recognize other people's feelings. Children can learn to "read" others' body language, tone, and the expressions on their faces. Children who do this well can solve conflicts so that everyone "feels good."

Children learn these skills by watching us. As Dr. Elias noticed, children observe not only how we speak to them, but they also watch how we deal with others. So we need to admit when we make mistakes and apologize to children and others when we are wrong. And we need to make children responsible and accountable for their actions and decisions. **WE NEED TO TREAT CHILDREN AS WE WANT THEM TO TREAT OTHERS!** In this way, we will be raising emotionally strong children with good social skills.

Is Watching TV Really Harmful for Kids?



With the weather turning and the days getting shorter, many of us find ourselves more likely to turn to the TV to entertain both ourselves and our children. Before you touch that remote though, you may want to consider these facts: The average American child watches about 4 hours of television a day. Yet, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one to two hours of “quality” television a day and children under the age of two should not watch television at all. There are many reasons for these recommendations. Several studies have shown that television viewing really can negatively impact a child’s physical, mental and social/emotional health.

The effect of TV violence on kids- Flip through the TV channels for only a few moments and chances are you will witness several acts of violence. Even shows specifically designed for children are not immune. Over a quarter of children’s shows contain four or more incidents of violence per show. Hundreds of studies on the effects of TV violence on children and teenagers have found that depending on the degree of violence and the number of violent programs watched, children are more likely to become numb to violence, accept violence as a way to solve problems, imitate the violence they observe, and identify with either the victims or the victimizers.

The effects of TV on the developing brain- Very young children’s brains are particularly affected by environmental experiences. Time spent passively watching TV deprives children of opportunities to engage in positive experiences such as close interaction with peers and loving caregivers, creative play, reflection and the development of language and problem solving skills. The jazzy visual effects of TV are purposefully created to engage children’s brains involuntarily. These experiences deprive children of the practice of using their own brain independently. Not surprisingly, it has been found that higher levels of TV viewing are linked to attention problems and lowered academic performance in children.

TV viewing and childhood obesity- Studies show that the more TV a child watches the more likely they are going to be obese. If you think about it, it makes sense. If children are sitting around passively watching TV they are not getting out there and burning up calories and are more likely to unconsciously consume too many calories staring at the screen while being exposed to numerous “junk food” advertisements.

So what can families do?-

- Do not allow TV sets in children’s bedrooms. Limit TV viewing to no more than 1-2 hours a day.
- Choose shows with your children that are more educational and avoid those with violent or sexual content.
- Choose quality childcare programs that limit TV viewing and provide rich educational experiences.
- Do not use the TV as a babysitter; instead watch the show with our child. Younger children often have difficulty telling the difference between fantasy and reality; you may need to explain things to them.
- Avoid eating in front of the TV and encourage your children to get out there and ride their bikes, go to the park, do art projects, play with friends, build forts and just have fun.

References: American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP News, May 1998, *Children and TV Violence*, retrieved, Dec. 2009. US National Library of Medicine, August 2001, *Television Viewing and childhood obesity*. Miller, Daphne, MD, August 20, 1999, *Television’s Effects on Kids, It can be Harmful*, Retrieved , Dec, 2009. Healy, Jane M. PhD. May, 1998, retrieved, Dec, 2009.

Resource Links for Families

***Children's Advocate* articles for parents**

(Early care and education teachers and providers may also be interested)

Links are to the English version of the article in MS Word, which in turn has links to the article in Spanish and Chinese, if available, and to a pdf version with layout and photos suitable for reproducing and distributing. If you reproduce an article, either as a handout or in your newsletter, please credit the Children's Advocate and let us know.

AD/HD

Helping kids with AD/HD, July-Aug 2000

<http://www.4children.org/news/700adhd.htm>

Anger

What to do when you're angry at your kid, July-Aug 2005 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/705hoc.htm>

Helping kids manage anger, Sept-Oct 2004 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/904made.htm>

Asthma and environmental health

Dealing with allergies, May-Jun 2006 (in English, Spanish, and Chinese)

<http://www.4children.org/news/506rke.htm>

Asthma tips, Nov-Dec 2004 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/1104asme.htm>

Protecting kids from toxic chemicals in plastic, Nov-Dec 2005 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/1105hoc.htm>

Protect your family from environmental hazards, Sept-Oct 2001

<http://www.4children.org/news/901haz.htm>

Autism

Helping kids with autism, Jan-Feb 2003 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/103aute.htm>

Behavior and discipline

Finding solutions to problem behavior, Mar-Apr 2004.

<http://www.4children.org/news/304solve.htm>

Discipline success stories, Jan-Feb 2000.

<http://www.4children.org/news/100disci.htm>

Nurturing spirited children, Mar-Apr 2005 (in English and Spanish)

<http://www.4children.org/news/305intse.htm>

SNCS Statement of Non-Discrimination or Sexual Harassment

Sierra Nevada Children's Services is proud of its tradition of a collegial work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has a right to work in a professional atmosphere, which promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices. Thus, Sierra Nevada Children's Services is committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment. The organization expressly prohibits sexual harassment and any other harassment or discrimination protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance. Unlawful harassment is a form of employee misconduct, which undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. It is the policy of this organization that sexual harassment, or any unlawful harassment, will not be tolerated. Violators of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.