Updates from Beth - High Quality Preschool

In the perfect state of the union address, President Obama has called on Congress to help fund preschool for every child in the United States. The research shows that one of the best investments we can make is a child’s future – a full-quality early education. President Obama told Congress in January of 2013 that it is commonly accepted that children who attend a high-quality preschool are more likely to succeed in kindergarten than those who do not. However, it is important to note, that in order for children – particularly children from lower-income backgrounds – to benefit from preschool, it must be of high quality.

What is high-quality preschool? What is happening in the nation’s best preschool programs? What should parents and caregivers look for when selecting a preschool?

A high-quality program is measured in two key areas: process and structure. Quality process is typically measured by observing the experience in the classroom, teacher-child interaction, type of instruction, room environment, materials, relationships with parents and health and safety routines. Structural quality is represented by teacher-child ratios, class size, qualifications and compensation of teachers and staff and square footage.

These two sets of indicators, process and structure, are related. For example, in a center where group size is smaller, teachers tend to have more positive, supportive and stimulating interactions with the children. These warm and nurturing interactions are directly linked to children’s social and emotional competence and such interactions are essential to high-quality education.

Children thrive when they are respected, nurtured and challenged. Children succeed when they are exposed to language and literacy skills, when they are given the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and number concepts, and when they are given the opportunity to “talk like scientists.” Ongoing opportunities to learn new skills and make meaningful decisions help to develop both knowledge and executive functioning skills.

Unfortunately, throughout the nation many of our most vulnerable children attend the lowest quality preschools, or are not given the opportunity to attend preschool at all. Although it is estimated that in our region are dedicated to the professional development of preschool teachers, there is a great deal of turnover. The truth is, many of the educators in these preschool settings are barely making above minimum wage. We know the quality of early education and care can have a significant influence on future academic and social success, which leads to a sense of urgency to improve the quality of preschool education in our communities and beyond.

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) is proud to be working with the leadership of the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County and the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County and many other interested agencies in our region to make a difference for our children.

~ Beth Duda, The Patterson Foundation, Director, SCGLR

Moving the Needle

Students “PLAY” Their Way to Building Skills and Learning

This year, the Association of Florida Teaching Artists, Inc. is collaborating with the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading – with support from the Patterson Foundation -- to bring reading and learning through the arts! Using Emma E. Booker Elementary’s Summer Reading Enrichment Program, Emma E. Booker Elementary teachers read with the first, second and third-grade students each day while teaching artists partner with the teachers to incorporate an arts-integrated approach that mitigates summer-learning loss for students.

Click here to read more in a recent blog from Mary Kelly, Chair of the Association of Florida Teaching Artists.

Kiwanis Christmas in August

On Saturday, August 6, the Kiwanis Club of Bradenton will join together with over 20 local agencies to host Christmas in August at McCarthus Field.

The event provides homeless children with basic assistance needed to prepare for school including free school backpacks, school supplies, haircuts, toiletry products, medical and dental exams and gift cards to purchase shoes and clothing.

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) will also be onsite sharing about Vroom.

To learn more, click here.

Learning & Sharing

Summer Learning Day

Summer Learning Days are an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to highlight the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer.

This year, Summer Learning Day fell on July 14 and was packed full of engaging, learning-rich activities for the Suncoast!

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) supported Summer Learning Day by distributing 32,000 books throughout numerous locations in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

The Patterson Foundation (TPF) provided 3,000 books and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC) donated over 29,000 books.

The books were obtained from FirstBook, a nonprofit social enterprise founded in 1992 that provides new books and educational resources to children from low-income families.

The CFSC coordinated hours of volunteer work by Booker High School Band members and volunteers from the community to sort, label, and distribute the books. Click here to read more.

Books were distributed to the following locations:


Other Summer Day Learning events included:

• The Glasser Schoenbaum Human Services Center held a literacy open house where books were distributed and read, faces were painted and bar-b-que food was enjoyed by families.

• United Way of Manatee County distributed books and food to children in numerous See Spelled Out locations.

• Van Weel Performing Arts Education Program distributed 180 Pete the Cat books which aligned with their Summer Learning program, underwritten by TPF and the CFSC.

• The Association of Florida Teaching Artists (AFTA) distributed books as part of their Summer Learning programs and workshops.

To learn more, click here.

JUNE 2016

Winter Learning Day: Grovetown High School

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) will also be onsite sharing about Vroom!
Mind In The Making is Underway!

There are six facilitators in Manatee and Sarasota counties currently leading three full-sessions of Mind in the Making (MITM) module workshops. Two of the sessions are being held in English and one in Spanish.

The MITM module workshops are part of an unprecedented effort to build the capacity of families, teachers and educators to understand how children’s executive function impacts social, emotional and cognitive growth. MITM module workshops focus on the 7 essential life skills highlighted in Ellen Galinsky’s groundbreaking book, Mind in the Making.

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) is excited that the first sessions have kicked off and look forward to more groups starting their sessions soon. Stay tuned for more exciting news and more sessions to be announced!

If you are interested in attending MITM module workshops, contact Kelli Karen at KelliKaren74@hotmail.com.

SCGLR Has Speakers!

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) is eager to speak at your next event! Do you have a club that meets regularly and likes to get involved in the community? Perhaps you have a group of neighbors, colleagues or friends who are interested in learning more about SCGLR? If you’re looking for a speaker for an upcoming event and are interested in learning more about SCGLR, complete the speaker request form below.

SCGLR has several team members who stand ready to come speak about SCGLR at your next event. And if you’re looking for a presentation in Spanish, the SCGLR team can do that too!

For more information, click here.

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