



CCCC E-Newsletter February, 2007 Issue

Greetings from Community Connection for Child Care. It is that time again...tax time! Do the parents in your program know they qualify for certain tax credits? Help your

parents make tax time pay!

Because a parent pays a provider to care for a child or a dependent so she and/or her spouse can work, the family may be able to reduce their federal and state income taxes by claiming the credit for child and dependent care expenses on their tax return, according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), while the provider/ daycare centers must claim those same funds received as income for child care services. The Federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and California Child and Dependent Care Expenses Credit are available to families with earned income who, in order to work or to look for work, have to pay for child care services for their children under age 13. The federal government also offers families the Earned Income Credit and Child Tax Credit for those who qualify and meet the requirements.

Earned Income Credit

<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p596.pdf#search='Earned%20Income%20Credit'>

Child Tax Credit

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0%2C%2Cid=106182%2C00.html>

There are many opportunities to raise awareness about the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and to help eligible working families and individuals claim these important tax benefits. Remember, both parents and staff may be eligible. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities offers these tips on how child care programs can promote the Earned Income Credit and the Child Tax Credit to their families:

1. Display the EIC/CTC poster in your child care center, Head Start center, or family day care home. Keep EIC/CTC fact sheets and the appropriate tax forms - including Schedule EIC and Form 8812 on hand at the center for interested parents and staff.
2. Think about the things that go home with children. Artwork? Lunch menus? Send EIC/CTC materials along.
3. Publish an article about the EIC and the CTC in your newsletter.
4. Insert EIC/CTC information in staff paychecks.
5. Make the tax credits the featured topic at your next parent meeting or your next staff inservice training.
6. Organize a free tax-help day for parents and staff. You can find volunteers to help participants fill out tax forms by contacting the local VITA program (sponsored by the IRS), a local accounting firm, or a college or university that has an accounting program.
7. Share EIC/CTC information with other community organizations, such as the local school district, the county WIC program, or the library.
8. Think about your business partners, such as companies that provide food, classroom supplies or other items for your program. Ask them to help share information about the EIC and the CTC with their other customers and their own employees.
9. Parents and staff can become ATax Credit Ambassadors. They can distribute EIC/CTC information in their own workplaces, at church, or at schools their older children attend.
10. Don't forget about grandparents who are raising children or about foster parents. They may be eligible for the credits, too. Make sure they receive EIC/CTC information.

Parents can obtain Form W-10, a Dependent Care Provider's Identification and Certification, from your provider so that you can complete your Child and Dependent Care Expenses with your tax return. Providers are responsible to provide requested information on Form W-10 per

IRS and can be subject to a fine of \$50 for failure to provide information. Form W-10 is also available from the IRS office or www.irs.gov/formspubs/list/0,,id=97817,00.html if the provider does not have any on hand.

If you or the families you know cannot afford assistance with taxes, the Franchise Tax Board's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteer sites provide assistance to taxpayers regardless of age. IRS and FTB trained volunteers prepare basic personal income tax returns for low to moderate income taxpayers free of charge. Visit this list of English and Spanish speaking VITA reps throughout Kern County [http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader\\$1185](http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/stories/storyReader$1185)

Until next time, our best to you and yours --
The staff of Community Connection for Child Care

~~~~~THIS MONTH'S FEATURES~~~~~

**\*CCCC PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT\***

Do You Have Your Tickets for Greg & Steve?

Tickets are now on sale for the 2007 Greg & Steve concert series in March 2007! A Bakersfield favorite for more than 20 years, the concerts will be held at Valley Baptist Church (get directions to 4800 Fruitvale Ave in Rosedale) from Tuesday, March 13 to Friday, March 16, 2007. The new venue features a greater seating capacity than previous venues, ample parking for buses, large video screens and great sound. Please note that the Monday concert is not available.

Greg & Steve's singable lyrics and catchy melodies are set to a contemporary beat. Their motto is "Educate, Motivate, Enrich, and Entertain." Parents and teachers find Greg & Steve's tunes a fun way to teach children basic concepts such as colors and numbers, as well as friendship and cooperation. Makes a great field trip!

Last year's concerts sold out! Purchase or reserve your tickets today by visiting the CCCC office at 2000 24th Street in Bakersfield. Tickets are \$6 and children ages 2 years and under are free. Purchase orders, checks and money orders will only be accepted.

**\*UPCOMING TRAINING\***

March 10, 2007

The Power of Play: A Child-Centered Approach to Learning (KCSOS School Readiness Program)

Presented by the Ooey Gooey Lady, Lisa Murphy

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: St. Francis Hall, 900 H Street in Bakersfield

Cost: \$35 check payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office

Contact: Sheri McWilliams at 636.4739

**TV Training**

CCCC along with KCSOS broadcasts training programs and videos for viewing every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (English) and 2:00 p.m. (Spanish). The broadcast can be viewed on the KETN Network.

**March 2007: The Whole Child Series**

#1 Creativity & Play: The relationship of creativity to self-worth and self-expression.

#2 Let's Talk About It: The process of language acquisition and methods for increasing language competence.

April 2007: The Whole Child Series

#1 Growing Minds: Two approaches to developing mental ability; the conventional approach and what is currently known as emergent curriculum.

**\*FEATURED QUESTION\***

"I heard that some providers make "parent folders" for when parents come in for an interview and tour of their program. Can you tell me how to make one and what to put in it?" Leslie, Family Child Care Home Provider

Parent folders are a great communication and marketing tool that contains important information about your child care home program or center that parents can take back home after meeting you for the first time. To give parents a condensed overview of your program, a parent folder contains the following materials:

- Monthly newsletter
- Calendar
- Three written references
- Copies of the following pages from your parent handbook: mission statement, school history and description, admission policy, teacher credentials, daily routine description
- Copies of several pages of photos of children on field trips and enjoying a variety of activities. Remember to get the signed permission from each child's parent to use these photos. Some providers include a photo release form in their parent handbook.
- A forms packet that includes all necessary enrollment forms
- Consumer guides and checklists to quality child care
- Your brochure
- Two business cards (one for each parent)

Two pocket folders with work well in a color that matches your program's logo or color scheme. Glue one business card on the outside of the folder and place two inside the pocket. Information about rates or a contract is not necessary. You can give the folder to the parents at the end of the interview while you thank them for visiting your program. Don't forget to encourage them to contact you with any questions they may have.

Source: From Babysitter To Business Owner: Getting The Most Out Of Your Home Child Care Business, Patricia Discher, 2005

From Babysitter To Business Owner: Getting The Most Out Of Your Home Child Care Business is just one of many books on the business of child care available for check out at the CCCC Resource Library!

~~~~~CHECK THIS OUT~~~~~

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Green Eggs and Ham

Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday on March 2!

- 1-2 tbsp. of butter or margarine
- 4 slices of ham
- 8 eggs
- 2 tbsp. of milk
- 1-2 drops of green food coloring
- 1/4 tsp. each of salt and pepper

Melt a teaspoon of butter in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add sliced ham and brown until edges are slightly crisp. Remove ham from pan, cover with aluminum foil, and set aside. In a medium-size mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Whisk until frothy. Then add 1-2 drops of green food coloring until you reach desired shade of green. Heat a tablespoon of butter or margarine in a large frying pan over medium heat then add the egg mixture to the pan.

Stir egg mixture with spatula until eggs are firm and not too runny. Makes four servings. Serve with toast or warm rolls and favorite Dr. Seuss books. For more recipe ideas, check out our Get Ready, Get Set, Get Fit 4 Life website at [http://www.everydaylearning.net/stories/storyReader\\$95](http://www.everydaylearning.net/stories/storyReader$95)

MOVIN' & GROOVIN'

Activity 1

Jump the Moat

This game needs at least six players and two jump ropes. Two people create the moat by holding the jump ropes low to the ground about a foot apart. Jumpers attempt to jump the moat without landing in or on the moat. If the jumper misses, they are "out." Once everyone has jumped once, then players move the ropes about six inches more apart. Players continue jumping the moat until only one player is left. The player that is able to jump the farthest, wins.

Activity 2 (Share with families)

Beanbag Balance

Developing balance and coordination are just as important as strengthening little muscles. This exercise works well with all ages. Place a beanbag, or soft toy, on the child's head. Ask the child to walk from one place to another without dropping the beanbag. To make it easier, have the child hold the beanbag in place. To make it harder have the child walk under or around things. For variation, place the beanbag on another body part, like the back of the hand, shoulder, or elbow. Use a different toy or more than one toy.

For more fun physical activity ideas, visit our Get Ready, Get Set, Get Fit 4 Life website at [http://kcsos.kern.org/everydaylearning/stories/storyReader\\$40](http://kcsos.kern.org/everydaylearning/stories/storyReader$40)

INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

Simple steps to facilitate peer interactions between toddlers with disabilities and typically developing peers include:

- Ensuring that sand and water tables are accessible to all the children
- Providing toys and materials that encourage social interaction, such as games that require more than one child to complete
- Modeling ways to children of how they can help their friend with special needs

For more activities and resources for working with children with special needs check out the 2006 Literacy Calendar at <http://www.everydaylearning.net/literacycalendar>

SCHOOL READINESS

Parents and Caregivers Working Together for Kindergarten (ages 4 & 5)

Carefree, creative dramatic play promotes cognitive development and helps children learn how to share, communicate and cooperate with each other.

Picture Menu

Source: The RIF Guide to Encouraging Young Readers (www.rif.org)

Create a menu and play restaurant with paper, magazines, scissors, glue and color markers. Talk about the different food categories on a menu -- sandwiches, side dishes, drinks, desserts, and so forth. Then give kids a collection of magazines that generally have food features, like McCall's or Good Housekeeping. Help cut out pictures of foods that look appetizing, then have youngsters sort the items into the categories you talked about. Write each category on a piece of paper and let the children glue the appropriate pictures underneath. If necessary, tape two pieces of paper together to make a larger menu. Ask the children to name the restaurant and write that, too, on top of the menu.

Now kids can play restaurant. They can set a place for you with toy dishes while you go over the menu, they can take orders, and they can serve an imaginary full-course meal. Bon appetit!

WORKING WITH SCHOOL AGE

Finding the Right Words

Source: The RIF Guide to Encouraging Young Readers (www.rif.org)

For your beginning readers and older readers, ask the children how would they describe their best friend? With that question in mind, your children go on a search through newspapers and magazines for descriptive words to use in a collage to share with their friend. You will need paper and pencil, dictionary or thesaurus, construction paper, newspaper and magazines, advertising mail, scissors, glue. It's better to have some words in mind before charging off with a scissors, so provide your children with paper and pencil for a list. Offer a dictionary also, and a thesaurus if you have one.

Offer help when it comes time to look for the words on the list. While you scan the headlines and copy in the newspaper, your children can search through magazines. Advertising mail, with all its hype, may provide a rich source of flattering words. When you have accumulated a small pile of words, and maybe a few appropriate pictures, your children can arrange and glue the cutouts on construction paper.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Your First Telephone Conversation With A Parent

Your first phone conversation with a potential family is the beginning of your relationship with a parent. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Be the kind of person you would like to talk to if you were looking for care for your child.
- Be generous with your time and your patience.
- Do you sound friendly and professional?
- Are you comfortable answering questions about your child care?
- Can you describe why your child care program is a good place for their child?

Parents will have many questions, and they should. They are looking for someone they can trust and will work. The questions that parents ask will help you identify what the parents' priorities are for their children. Think about the questions you would ask if you were a parent looking for care. For example, "Do you offer curriculum?" "Do the kids watch television?"

- Write down your answers to these questions.
- Keep the answers so you can refer to them if needed while talking with a potential parent.
- Practice having conversations about your business with friends or family members.
- Keep the conversation open. "What questions can I answer for you?"

You might start your conversation like this:

- "I am glad you called to find out more about my child care."
- "I became a child care provider five years ago because I enjoy caring for young children and helping them learn."
- "Also I have taken workshops about caring for children."
- "Some of the activities I do with the children are: (name them)"
- "I participate in the CCCC Food Program and am certified in First Aid and CPR."

You might ask about where the parent lives and identify your location.

- "Where do you live? I am located near (your area or neighborhood and School)"
- You would want to ask the age of the child.
- "How old is your child? I have openings for (ages of child you can care for.)"

You would want to find out what kind of care the family needs."

- "What hours do you need child care?"

- "I am open (days of week) from (times)"

- "I can also take care of children part-time."

Developed by the Fairfax County Office for Children