

# Compass

Your quarterly guide to Keystone STARS



Reaching higher for  
quality early learning

Fall 2011

## 2011-2012 Guide

### Up To date With Grants

Accountability is the key word for this fiscal year's grants and that is reflected in procedural changes of which all providers should be aware.

This year, with submission of your expense report, you are required to submit receipts and the new accompanying receipt tracking spreadsheet which itemizes expenses by category. The purpose of this new tool is to assist you with summary documentation and verification of grant expenses and will assist you with organization of files in preparation for grant monitoring or a financial audit.



All receipts and invoices must be referenced to and submitted with the Receipts Summary Form and Final Expense Report. Receipts and invoices should be submitted as copies on 8 1/2 x 11 paper and may be submitted electronically or manually. For your convenience, all new forms are listed on the PA Keys website by type of grant received and, as always, your Keystone STARS Specialist is available to coach you through the process.

Accountability starts with the justification of your grant request. How will outcomes for children or quality of the program be improved as a result of this award? How will this be evaluated? Your justification should include your sources of evidence, such as ERS assessment, self assessments, surveys, site safety reviews, financial reviews or inspection reports and should address which quality standards are addressed by your request.

Spending the STARS financial award should be a part of your long term plan that moves the program toward higher levels of quality, addressing the concept of Continued Quality Improvement. This year's grant expenses should be a building block in your plan to provide change, year after year.

Check the PA Keys website for tools that will assist you with grant preparation, including Best Practices In Keystone STARS Financial Award Spending-Updated, and links to sites that will help you to consider the best possible use for funds.

Review the new receipt tracking tools at the time of your grant submission to be prepared to begin the tracking process with your first purchase. Remember that you will be expected to complete and submit the appropriate Receipts Summary Form with the Final Expense Report. And, remember that copies of receipts and invoices for all expenditures excluding payroll, benefits and education and retention awards (ERA) must be submitted in clear and legible form. Proper accounting and accountability starts today!

Final note: if you renewed or were designated in July, Aug, Sept or Oct, your grant is now past due! Complete the paperwork and submit today.

*It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.* — Henry David Thoreau

### Good To Know...

Change your clothes, change your address, change your mind...but don't change your grant without counsel from your Specialist and approval from the Key. Your grant is a legal contract for pre-approved spending towards specific items. Any change that may be necessitated as a result of product discontinuations, shifts in priorities or other factors must be requested in writing and must receive authorization. Upon approval, a new grant packet with updated expense report will be issued, a reflection of approved changes. If you must make a change, be prepared to offer written justification for shifts in spending and allow time for proper approvals before you expend funds.

### Inside this issue...

See page 12 for information on the new contest and details on how you can involve families and introduce them to STARS.



**Become proactive in your approach to supervision!**  
**Celebrate supervision with new techniques, tips, and activities each week.**

### February Staff Meeting Agenda

- View YouTube clip
- Discuss Supervision Talking Points
- Participate in Sneak Peek Teambuilding Activity
- Review Supervision article

### March 5<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup>: DEFINITIONS AND RATIOS

Answer the question: How many children do you have? Which children are you responsible for?

### March 12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>: COUNT, COUNT, COUNT/POSITIONING

Jelly Bean Jar Counting Contest

### March 19<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>: OUT OF CLASSROOM

#### SUPERVISION

Implement a Supervision System and Post the STOP Poster

### March 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>: TEAM TALK

Team Talk Scavenger Hunt

*Watch for it  
 Supervision Awareness Month  
 is coming in March*

## CQI—What It Is and What Does It Look Like?

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) takes as many different shapes and variations as there are children in our early learning programs. CQI can benefit each of us – as staff and administrators in our personal and professional growth, and the program services we provide, as well as benefitting the children and families we serve through positive child growth and learning outcomes and family communication and involvement.

Here are some ideas of what CQI looks like:

Being a Lifelong Learner – means saying “Yes” to achieving your CDA or School-age Professional credential, your ECE degree, the Director Credential, participating in Mind in the Making as a program, attending annual conferences, and taking advantage of the many trainings that are available on a continual basis.

Using the Learning Standards – gives teachers the confidence that their lesson plans are on track with the ages of the children they serve. The Learning Standards for Early Childhood (for infants through 2<sup>nd</sup> graders) and the Academic Standards (for school –age chil-

dren) are research-based guidelines to use as a resource in developing weekly lesson plans. These standards inform both teachers and parents what are appropriate expectations for children in each age level. The standards offer lots of examples of activities that can be easily offered in our classrooms.

Cultural Competence – is having the training and intentionality to search for a variety of ways to support and include a variety of cultures in your program policies, curriculum, environment and family engagement practices. Having discussions as an interested and committed program staff with parents, children and the community in which you work and live, is all part of the continual learning and serving process.

Requesting Support Specialists – gives you the advantage of having wonderful, free supports that are available to all Keystone STARS programs. You have your

choice of requesting services from a Health and Safety Specialist, an Infant/Toddler Specialist, a School-age Specialist, an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist, and a STARS Technical Assistance Consultant. Each will give you guidance and support on best practices in their area of expertise for your program. You have a wonderful resource in your STARS Specialists as well, whenever you have a question or are looking for STARS guidance.

This list is just a start and will grow with each early learning program’s particular area of strengths and areas in need of improvement. Make CQI a topic of discussion in your next staff meeting and at your next parents’ meeting. Tap on the resources and interests of the individuals who are connected to your program and see where your focus on CQI leads.



## How Basic Needs Determine Behavior

According to William Glasser, human beings have five basic needs: survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Those five needs affect what we do and how we behave. When we're hungry or tired, we get grumpy or irritable; when we feel trapped, we lash out; when we're lonely we withdraw or try to draw attention to ourselves. If as adults we understand how not having these five basic needs met affects the way we act, as parents and caregivers we should be able to consider what unmet needs might be causing a young child's challenging behavior. Chances are the child isn't misbehaving just to annoy us!

### The five basic needs:

**Survival:** physical needs for food, water, shelter, sleep and safety/security

**Belonging:** relationships and friendships and feeling accepted, cared for and loved by others

**Power:** feeling capable, worthy, and having pride in accomplishments

**Freedom:** the need for independence and the ability to make choices, create and explore

**Fun:** laughter, pleasure, enjoyment, humor

Understanding these basic needs can help parents and caregivers think differently about behavior and not assume that a child is deliberately trying to be difficult. Each child responds differently to an unmet need so it is important to treat children as individuals and empathetically teach them better ways to satisfy their needs.

**Example of how behavior is related to unmet needs:** The child who runs around and bothers other children during circle time might be hungry because he didn't have breakfast that morning or he doesn't feel secure enough to focus (survival); she might want to play with and talk to her friends (belonging); he is bored by what's going on in circle time and wants something challenging to do (power); she doesn't like being forced to sit down in a certain place at a certain time (freedom); he prefers hands-on activities that are enjoyable (fun). Take the time to examine the behavior, when and how often it occurs, and what the child may need but not be receiving. Then help him or her to find socially acceptable ways to meet those needs. Doing this may not only improve the child's behavior but also demonstrate to the child that you care about him or her as an individual.

### Resources

- Adapted from "Our Five Basic Needs: Application for Understanding the Function of Behavior," by L. Frey and K. Wilhite, *Intervention in School and Clinic*, January 2005.
- "Helping Children Express Their Wants and Needs," What Works Brief #19, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning; [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what\\_works.html](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html)
- Related FOCUS on ECMH factsheets: "The Meaning of Behavior" and "Understanding Aggressive Behavior" (available at [www.parecovery.org](http://www.parecovery.org); click on Statewide Initiatives/Early Childhood Mental Health)



**Just a call away, help is on the way.....**

### Technical Assistance Available for All STAR Levels

A major benefit of Keystone STARS is the availability of technical assistance for sites at any STAR level. Whether you are preparing for a move to a higher STAR, working to address a specific area for improvement, or want assistance in assessing current quality, a

technical assistant is on call to visit with you and assess and address your needs.

To access technical assistance, your STARS Specialist can provide you with the new form for request and guidance to submit for help and consultation.

Technical assistance provides multiple visits to address your request, which may be your request for assistance with staff involvement with PDR's, room arrangements, linking learning standards to lesson plans or preparation for an upcoming ERS visit.

## FOCUS on Early Childhood Mental Health



Pennsylvania Key

Early Childhood Mental Health  
Consultation Project

### Check Out Our New Look!

Take a minute to visit [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) to see the new grid system that makes it faster and easier to locate tools that will assist you, including forms and resources to reach families and your community. Don't forget to read the many CQI success stories that will inspire...and don't be shy about adding your own!

## Home Sweet Home

## News For Family Child Care Home Providers

Resources and professional development designed specifically for Family Home Child Care providers offers information directly targeted to your specific needs. In

return for your time to review tools, you will benefit by strengthening the quality of care and early learning offered at your site. Building upon strengths you al-

ready possess, trainings and tools can help you focus on next steps for continuing quality improvements and help you accurately assess needs and address concerns.

### Watch For PD Opportunities To Help You

#### Understand a Quality Continuum

If you are a Start with STARS site moving to STAR 1, you will need FCCH Orientation Part I. If you are a STAR 2 site moving to STAR 3, you will need FCCH Orientation PART II.

SWS Orientation Part I is an introduction to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), which is the basic premise for the Keystone STARS Quality Rating System. In addition to the philosophy of

CQI, the process of and the issues associated with change will be discussed. An overview of the Keystone STARS system is given.

The STARS Orientation Part II workshop builds on the learning from part one to take a deeper look at the CQI process and how it affects the FCCH program. Characteristics of effective leadership and professionalism are explored as well, offering information and guidance to make and sustain changes.



**Hot Tips For Home Care:** Winter brings challenges for outdoor play in family care sites. Make arrangements for alternatives when ice and snow block stroller routes. Do you have space available for children to step outside twice a day to benefit from fresh air and to enjoy winter's pleasures? Do you have large bins available to "bring the outdoors in" with containers of snow for building and play? And, don't forget to make arrangements to shovel walks for easy access to your home and exit in case of emergencies.

### Good Better Best (GBB)

Once upon a time, there was only a GBB for Groups and Centers. The FCCH Good, Better, Best document was designed to help you continue to develop—even if movement to the next STAR level isn't possible. Sometimes taking "baby-steps", avoiding the overwhelming "giant" movement step is more feasible. FCCH's are unique and because of this the document was created to maintain the things that make you special while continuing to work toward recognized standards of quality. STAR standards reflect what is known nationally about the best outcomes for young children!

### FCCH Mini Conferences

The FCCH Mini Conference provides training needed in support of the STAR standards. All sessions provide DPW training hours. Training is provided in areas of leadership, curriculum, special needs inclusion, and behavior management. On October 1, 2011, we held a successful Fall Conference with 4 sessions available, 2 held in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

#### SAVE THE DATE:

The FCCH Spring Mini Conference— Saturday, March 3, 2012, Camp Hill

Make a note on your calendar and watch for details.

### Workgroups

Specialists regularly schedule workgroups to highlight news and important information, and most importantly, to solicit your feedback on areas that you would like assistance or further information. Workgroups, scheduled throughout the year offer the opportunity to network and share information with peers, and to strengthen relationships among practitioners and your STARS team which will provide a cohesive child care community that works together for the benefit of the children. Watch for information on the next workgroup in your area and make every effort to attend.



## On The Move

Congratulations to those who have demonstrated their commitment to quality through a move to a higher STAR Level. In the first quarter of the new fiscal year, centers, groups and families moved forward with improvements and are recognized for their efforts.

### STAR 1

King Street Kids Club  
 Loving Handz Family DayCare  
 Little Blessings Early Learning  
 Downingtown Academy East  
 Kera's Kids  
 Carlisle Family YMCA SACC  
 Watch Me Grow CDC  
 Stepping Stone Inc.  
 Bountiful Blessings Early Ed.  
 Hermon Mussie  
 Luz E. Rodriguez  
 Scheivert Family Daycare

### STAR 2

Hildebrandt LC-Fritz Elem.  
 Watch Me Grow CDC

Phoenixville Area Children II  
 York Hospital Child Care

### STAR 3

Bright Futures Learning Centers  
 Bright Beginnings Child Care  
 Bright Futures Learning III  
 Columbia Child Care

### STAR 4

Chesterbrook Academy, Lanc.  
 Hildebrandt Learning PSU Hbg  
 Steps To Success  
 Magic Memories  
 Hanover Area YMCA CLC

### STAR 4A

Creative Roots Early Learning

### Welcome to those who joined the STARS program, July, August and September:

Shamars Cradle Home Daycare  
 Jennysem Gonzalez  
 Our Place To Grow  
 Barbara Campbell  
 Kiddie Academy of Shrewsbury  
 York YMCA-Ferguson Kids Club  
 York YMCA-Devers Kids Club  
 Chesterbrook Academy  
 Beannie's Day Care  
 Barbara Jane Jestes  
 Iris Y Rodriguez

## Authentic Assessments

Authentic assessment is a term that describes a process of using on-going observations from multiple sources to provide a well-rounded picture of a child. Children are observed in a naturalistic environment throughout the day, observed across many routines and in daily circumstances. Just as the word describes, "authentic" assessments don't stage environments, but take advantage of daily activities to better gauge a child's participation, interests, strengths or areas needing guidance. Teachers welcome assessments by assistants, parents, and other sources to combine multiple perspectives for a complete understanding of the child. The result is that teachers are able to tailor plans to suit individual needs, to guide children towards mastery of goals and to celebrate each child's successes. Visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/media/ResultsMatter/RMSeries/WhatIsAuthenticAssessment\\_SA.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/media/ResultsMatter/RMSeries/WhatIsAuthenticAssessment_SA.asp). This video runs 3:02 and describes what authentic assessment is, and provides multiple perspectives on the goals of assessment, including its connections to curriculum, instruction, and family involvement.

### Will We See You There?

**Early Childhood Education Summit**      **Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2011**  
 Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel      State College, PA

[http://paprom.convio.net/site/R?i=Zd3ti\\_7wznYqcUOfiG4OZw](http://paprom.convio.net/site/R?i=Zd3ti_7wznYqcUOfiG4OZw)

Coming Soon

## “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year”



Celebrate all or none, like it or not, here they come. It's the holiday season and with that, celebrations, excitement and stress, stress for teachers and the children.

A little pre-planning and forethought can ease the way to a happier less stressful couple of months. Firstly, consider what and why. What holidays do you wish to recognize—and why? Will you celebrate just those celebrated by the children in your care or will you use this opportunity to embrace diversity and to stretch a child's thinking

away from egocentrism?

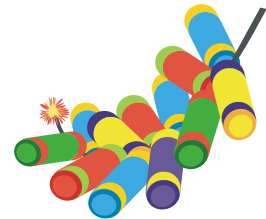
Consider how you will recognize the holidays. Are you planning parties or will holidays be handled as teaching themes? Consider that children endure stress even during happy holiday times, because of lack of sleep, poor nutrition, expectations of parents, and parents' stress. Avoid adding to stress with your own pre-set expectations and over-emphasis of celebrations.

If you choose to recognize a range of holidays as a learning experience for the children, know that the “why” of a holiday is too

abstract for young children and therefore developmentally out of reach, so stick to the basics.

Encourage staff to relax and enjoy. Guide them to find pleasure in a child's delight and to dismiss pre-determined expectations. After all, it's the holiday season!

Thanks for guidance from *Training Teachers*, Margie Carter and Deb Curtis, Redleaf Press.



### Winter Checklist

- ✓**Provide** airtight containers to store all foods at least 6 inches off floor surfaces.
- ✓**Check** timers and availability of outdoor lighting. Daylight savings is gone until March!
- ✓**Check** phone chain lists for snowy mornings. Alert parents to your procedures.
- ✓**Check** furnace/boiler filters and contracts for fuel.
- ✓**Purchase** ice melt and arrange for storage close to needed use but inaccessible to children.
- ✓**Remind** parents to check change of clothes for seasonality.
- ✓**Review** outdoor play policies with staff. Remind each that fresh air is healthy.



### Professional Growth

#### Adds To Professional Experience

Outlined at the back of every STARS 2, 3, 4 and 4A worksheet are suggested Professional Growth activities and you will notice that each is intended to build understanding or involvement in early care and childhood education. For example, organizing a site visit for community leaders, attending national, nationally affiliated or statewide early learning conferences or active participation in local early childhood education organizations are counted because these activities contribute to an individual's growth and contribution to his/her profession. As a practitioner, counsel staff to select professional growth activities that do more than fulfill a requirement: look for opportunities that build understanding and personal and professional growth, experiences that will help professionals reflect on themselves and the community and to assess their contributions and goals. Please note that membership in accepted professional organizations requires “active membership”, which means that newsletters are actively perused by all staff (PACCA), memberships are current, and each staff understands and can articulate the benefits of membership.

## Supervision.....An ERS Perspective



Condi-  
tions in  
this world  
have  
changed,  
and per-  
haps not  
for the  
better.

Neighborhood concern for others is often something of the past as we hustle about concerned with me, myself and I. It would seem that we no longer look out for others but only ourselves. In fact today, neighbors rarely even know one another. Children playing in the neighborhood are sometimes seen as a nuisance as they walk through yards and block roads with hockey games.

Years ago things were different, safer as more neighbors looked out for one another. Children ate dinner wherever they happened to be and knew they could be in just as much trouble with the parent down the street or the mailman as their own parents if they misbehaved. And, they knew that these individuals would take care of them if they were in trouble. Now, children don't have as many of these guarantees.

Keeping children safe... it all boils down to supervision. It's not that supervision is more or less important from one generation to the next; it's always critical to those who are incapable of predicting or handling

dangers. Children have not changed; society has changed. Today, children are growing up in a world that seems more dangerous, where we hear more about intentional harm, neglect and lack of supervision. With less adult awareness and supervision, children are left to make decisions and learn to self-regulate with fewer positive role models.

Thankfully, in child care settings there are precautions in place to ensure child safety, such as maintaining teacher child ratios at all times, and by having coded doors in all entrances. Yet, quality supervision is not merely the teacher being present with the children; it is about having a deeper awareness and intention for their good. This is the difference between active and passive supervision.

The ERS rating scales include items related to supervision. Part of supervision is always maintaining ratios to ensure that the responsibility of supervision is manageable; the fewer children to watch the better. Yet maintaining ratios is only a part of the whole. A teacher can passively watch her group of children; she can watch for problems and react when necessary. Minimal scores are achieved if we keep the children safe and stop problems as they happen. Good and excellent scores are achieved if teachers use their supervision more intentionally; to prevent problems to begin with.

Teachers who play with the children, notice what the children like to do, what they are capable of doing, and what is challenging for them are supervising in a deeper way. Taking part in activities, extending children's learning through bringing out materials that take it to greater levels, and supporting their attempts at learning to regulate their own actions or making wise choices in dangerous situations – these are all examples of excellent teacher supervision. The Environment Rating Scales recognize this level of supervision with higher scores.

The bottom line is that children have an innate need to feel safe and secure. Adults can and should provide this comfort for them. Children thirst for caregivers and teachers who aren't just there to put on the band-aid when boo boos happen. They need adults who are so involved that boo boos rarely happen, and when they do they learn how to handle themselves safely. We must remind ourselves of the important, integral role teachers' play in the life of a child. Supervision shelters them from so many dangers...physical and emotional. The world can be a scary place. We can be that comfort; be that role model; be that active participant/supervisor in their lives, and as a result children can grow to be capable adults who will carry their experiences on to the next generation.

**Good and excellent scores are achieved if teachers use their supervision more intentionally; to prevent problems to begin with.**

### Everything Related to the Scales

A new quarterly newsletter with notes and news of everything relating to ERS, including great information, ideas and even a contest or two! Visit [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) and download from the Home Page, Announcements.

## Quick Tips and Easy Ideas.....

News from Sara Bosley, Infant/Toddler Specialist

### Literacy and Infants

(adapted from The Center For Early Literacy and Language)

Many everyday family and community activities are good opportunities to expose infants to literacy-rich learning for the first time. The places that infants visit and the people they meet on outings are great

sources of literacy learning. This practice guide includes everyday routines and activities for learning communication, language, and the early stages of reading and writing, which can be something as simple as looking at a

cereal box at breakfast, or something more formal, like infant story times at a public library. Parents should consider that learning is everywhere and look for opportunities to expose infants to multiple opportunities to build literacy skills.

#### Watch for Ques And Build Upon Them:

- Does being involved in an activity get the child to communicate using gestures or sounds?
- Does the child seem to understand or get excited when you use words to describe what he is doing?
- Does he show more interest in starting or continuing an activity?

#### Enhance Pleasure and Opportunity Through Involvement:

- Join in on the activities with the child. Become aware of what he is most likely to do and what interests him most. Listen for the noises/responses he may make. Watch for pointing, reaching, excitement and other behaviors that show interest and delight in an activity and acknowledge those responses.
- Talk about what the child is doing. Describe the things at which he is looking, touching, and with which he is playing. Use short, descriptive sentences ("You see the kitty? Nice kitty! Her fur feels soft").
- Respond to any attempt on the part of the child to communicate or vocalize. Repeat what he does or says. This teaches him that his attempts to communicate with you are working.

#### Take It One Step Further:

- Point out interesting things as you take a walk through the park or the mall.
- Ask questions and listen for responses.
- Talk to your child and let her experience differences in your voice inflections and cadence.
- Use music by singing, CD's or radio to introduce new sounds and methods of communication.
- Allow your child to respond when others talk to her. Respond and let him experience two-way communication.



### Infant Toddler Resource Spotlight

The National Association for the Education Young Children publishes a bi-monthly peer reviewed journal entitled "Young Children." Each month is packed with current research on a variety of topics, such as "Learn to Say Yes When You Want to Say No". The authors describe ways to respond positively to children even when we want to use negative language. The highlighted techniques can be extremely helpful in dealing with the "terrible" twos. Contact your Specialist if you would like more information.

### Sign Up For Recall Alerts

Sign up for CPSC email alerts at:  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx> When you sign up, you are able to identify a topic that you want to receive - one of the choices is "Only those recalls involving infant/child products"(list name: child). You can also get a lists of CPSC recalled items at:  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html>

### Zero to Three

#### National Conference

Sponsored by the National Training Institute to Promote Health and Well-being of Infants and Toddlers  
 Friday, December 9-Sunday, December 11  
 National Harbor, Washington, DC  
 For complete information and registration,  
<http://www.ztnticonference.org/>

## Involving Families and the Community

# Building Support Networks

Pennsylvania's **Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN) Teams** build support networks in every county for organizations and individuals interested in quality early education. LEARN Teams bring together early childhood programs, parents, school districts, and child-serving organizations to assess what quality early learning programs are currently available in the community and to develop ways to encourage quality early learning. They also work with school districts and community-based early learning programs to develop ways to make smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten for children, parents, and teachers.

For **OCDEL Community Education Resources** to help you communicate the value of quality early education and your program, visit the Tools & Resources page on the [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

For information about opportunities to get involved and to involve families, watch for information from your local LEARN Team (formerly Community Engagement).



## Welcome, Lisa Zortman

SCRK Grant Assistant



Lisa joined the STARS team in October and in a position new to the Key, she will review grants as they are received, assist with the compilation of detail necessary to approve a grant, and, all in all, expedite

the process.

Lisa's experience in administration with a local university lends to her orientation to detail. Her organization skills and calm manner are welcome additions to the Specialists' office.

Attention to detail will serve her well at home, too, as she plans a May wedding for the oldest of three college-aged daughters. From her Red Lion home with husband, Jay, and Harley the Labrador Retriever, she enjoys a busy lifestyle. Yoga, Zumba and walking...all part of her routine.

Join us in welcoming Lisa as she looks forward to supporting South Central Regional Key providers.

## Welcome Christina Ford

STARS Specialist

Christina joined the STARS team in November, anxious to begin serving practitioners. Her experience in early childhood care and education provide a foundation for working with centers at every STAR level.

Next month Christina will graduate from Shippensburg University with a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education. Using her education and experience in STARS centers, she is looking forward to assisting centers to develop and meet goals for continuous quality improvement.

With husband and a stepdaughter, Christina lives just outside of Gettysburg, convenient to the centers with whom she will work. In February she is expecting a baby, adding to her experience with young children! In her spare time, she enjoys scrapbooking, reading, interior design and spending time with friends and family.

Welcome Christina to the Key by calling:

717-854-3539 X299

Or email: [cfordstars@yahoo.com](mailto:cfordstars@yahoo.com)



## Health & Safety News

From the desk of Anne Dodds, Health & Safety Specialist

Recent news regarding recalls and food borne illness has heightened concerns regarding the safety of fresh produce. Because fruits and vegetables should remain a major portion of healthy diet, it is worthwhile to review the facts and to discuss recommended safe handling of fresh foods.

First of all, what causes contamination of foods? The Food and Drug Administration explains that during the growing phase, fruits and veggies may be contaminated by animals, harmful substances in the soil or water, and poor hygiene among workers. After produce is harvested, it passes through many hands which increases the risks of contamination. And, contamination can occur even after the produce has been pur-

chased, during food preparation or through inadequate storage.

To reduce health risks, the FDA recommends the following:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm water before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas before preparing or eating.
- Gently rub produce while holding under plain running water. There's no need to use soap or a produce wash.
- Wash produce before you peel or slice so dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from the knife, rind or skin into the fruit or vegetable.
- Use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm produce such as melons

and cucumbers.

- Dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- Throw away the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.
- Clean countertops before and after handling.
- Soak for 2 minutes vegetables with nooks and crannies, such as cauliflower and broccoli.

Further, the FDA reminds us that perishable produce should be stored in a refrigerator at 40 degrees or below. Do not purchase cut produce that is not refrigerated, and be aware that the same rules apply for fruits and vegetables homegrown or purchased at farm stands.

### Reminder—Site Safety Reviews

How often do you conduct a site safety review? While annual reviews are necessary to identify potential risks, it is recommended that checklists are used for daily and weekly checks. Daily, for instance, are electrical cords and cords for blinds out of reach? Are outlets covered and hazards or animal feces removed from playgrounds. Weekly, check to be sure that all screws are tight and screw threads are covered, loose carpeting and other tripping hazards are eliminated and chipping paint is repaired. Plan ahead. Prepare checklists for use in every space accessible to children.



### ECELS Self Learning Modules Offer Practitioners Flexible Opportunities To Learn

New 15 on-line modules are now accessible, making high quality health and safety professional development easy and efficient. New interactive media-rich material is the highlight. Look for these and other topics: ([www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org](http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org))

Asthma—K7C2 84 (2 hrs.)

Managing Behavior in School Age Children—K7C2 84 (1 hr.)

Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Center—K7C2 84 (2 hrs.)

Head Bumps Matter-Protecting Your Brain—K7C2 84 (2 hrs.)

Obesity Audioconference—K7C2 84 (2 hrs.)

SIDS—K7C2 84 (1 hr.)

Oral Health—K7C1 (2 hrs.)

Family Child Care Health & Safety—K7C2 84 (2 hrs.)

#### Optimists are.....

- 9% less likely to develop heart disease.
- Only 77% as likely to be re-hospitalized after some major surgeries.
- Have blood pressure that's 5 points lower, on average.
- Live an average of 9-5 years longer.

Reminder ...It's not too late to schedule your flu vaccine!



## News For School Age Programs

From the desk of Mary Jane Hostetter, School Age Specialist

Programs that serve school age children face unique challenges. While these children are often in our care for minimal hours, programs serve an important need in bridging between home and school in the mornings, and school and home in the afternoon. Given this fact, the importance of a well-planned and intentioned program is evident.

The good news is that lots of tools are available to assist in planning and running a program that is beneficial to the kids and a program that fulfills important needs.

The first step is to take inventory: who are the families that you

serve? What are their needs? Who is your staff and what training do they have to lead this program? What facility and materials do you have available, and what relationships do you have with the school and community? Most importantly, consider the needs and preferences of the children in your care.

There are lots of websites that are available to assist with curriculum and activities and provide guidance for developing a program that enriches and enhances a child's school experiences. Visit [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org) or [www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits](http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits)

for resources, and find a wealth of information on everything from activities and program structure to how you can partner with families at: [www.pdesas.org/ocdel](http://www.pdesas.org/ocdel).

Successful programs pay close attention to staff credentials and trainings specific to after school care which is why trainings specific to these older children are scheduled throughout the year. Encourage staff, whether they are long-term employees or college students filling hours around classes to attend, to learn strategies to engage children...tools to entertain, to interest, involve and to serve their families.

*Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.* —Henry Ford

### You're Invited.....

Take a few minutes to visit for resources: [www.pdesas.org/ocdel](http://www.pdesas.org/ocdel). Useful tools and information are available by tabs listed to the left, and a click on Curriculum Framework, then Resources for After-School, will refer you to the SEDL website that provides ideas for building on math, science, literacy, technology and more. Build your site toolbox with lots of ideas to engage kids, early to middle grades.

And look for links here and on the PA Keys website for New Staff Orientation specifically designed for School Age Staff.

Visit SEDL directly at:  
<http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/resources/curriculum.html>.



### Career Enhancements

The School Age Professional Credential includes 120 hours of coursework that addresses 13 functional areas important to quality programming. Working towards the credential staff will have the opportunity to examine his/her work in relation to the PA School-Age Care Competency Statements, get feedback and support from experts in the field, improve knowledge and skill, and plan an educational pathway through the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice. Completion of the coursework and evaluations leads to a professional credential that is recognized throughout the state, a valued addition to his/her personnel resume and PDR. To access information, visit the PA Keys website and look under Professional Development, Degrees and Credentials. Check this website for a variety of trainings, conferences and opportunities available in your area to address specific needs.

Technical assistance is available! Do you have a question about programming, assessments, observations? Need resources? Call Mary Jane Hostetter at 1-800-864-4925, 717-8543272, x250, cell phone 717- 968-3938. E-mail: [maryjanehostetter@yahoo.com](mailto:maryjanehostetter@yahoo.com).

Keystone STARS  
 South Central Regional Key  
 13 West Market Street  
 York, PA 17401



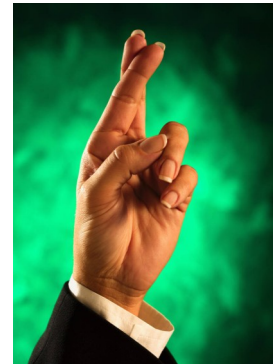
We'd like to hear from you. . .

**1-717-854-3273 1-800-864-4925**

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**Cumberland/Franklin Specialist** Tara Barr x291  
**Dauphin Specialist** Sally Melder x289  
**Home-Based/Center Specialist** Jennifer DeStephano x292  
**Home-Based Specialist/Designator** Tammy Maskulyak x290  
**Home-Based/Center Specialist** Teresa Sampson x238  
**Corporate -All Counties Specialist** Bill Dodds x288  
**Lancaster/Lebanon Specialist** Heidi Keene x231  
**Community Partner Specialist** Stephanie Spitz x300  
**Recruitment Specialist & Designator** Dorsey Blaine x293  
**Health & Safety Specialist** Anne Dodds x239  
**School-Age Specialist** Mary Jane Hostetter x250  
**Program Assistant** Stephanie Mundorf x225  
**Administrative Assistant** Gretchen Knuth x252  
**Infant/Toddler Specialist** Sara Bossley x224

## Who Will Win?

Will a family that you serve be this year's winner of a gift pack for their child? Will your site win a basket of resources?



Announcing a fun and unique way to tell families that you go the extra mile to deliver a high quality experience for their children. For the first time, a new contest will give them an understanding of STARS and enroll them in your quest towards continued quality improvement. Contest sheets are available from your Specialist for distribution to families and include directions for return to us for election of winners. It's easy, it's fun, it's a way to let parents share your mission.

Three fun activities are included. The contest deadline is December 16th with winners to be announced after New Years.

Center, Groups and Family Child Care Sites can participate and your chances of winning are equal.

Don't delay. Distribute Contest Sheets to each family that you serve. And, Good Luck!