

Judy Center Partnerships

Maryland State Department of Education

Newsletter

Early Childhood Accreditation in its Fourth Year and Counting

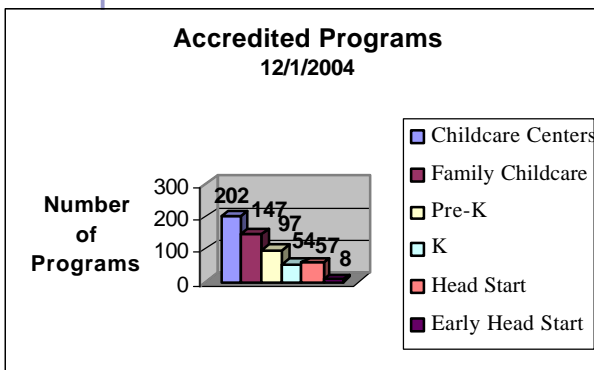
The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recently issued revised Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs which guide early childhood programs in Maryland to pursue voluntary state program accreditation. The Standards underwent revision as a result of new early childhood initiatives (e.g., Reading First; Bridge to Excellence Act) and a general need to update the Standards which were developed in 1998.

In late 2000, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) established the Early Childhood Accreditation Project which was designed to be the state's clearinghouse on voluntary program accreditation for early care and education programs serving children, birth to six. In addition to the Project, the Governor provided grant funding for private providers of early care and education services to pursue and complete program accreditation. Private childcare providers may pursue

national or state program accreditation with this grant.

The Early Childhood Accreditation Project developed program standards for center-based child care and Head Start programs pursuing MSDE accreditation. These standards were aligned with the existing standards for public school prekindergarten and kindergarten. Since 2001, a total of 565 programs have successfully completed the accreditation process and received MSDE or national accreditation. (Note: MSDE's early childhood program

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Annie E. Casey Foundation Recognizes Five Judy Center Partners

On the occasion of the Casey Foundation's tenth year in Baltimore, seven agencies from around the state were named FAMILIES COUNT MARYLAND honorees. Five of these agencies are partnered with the Judy Center located in their county. Each organization will receive a \$500,000 unrestricted award, paid over the next five years, to recog-

nize the work they do to strengthen low-income families and communities.

CASA of Maryland, located in Takoma Park, MD and partnered with the Silver Spring Judy Center, helps immigrant families find services that move them forward, including legal

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Judy Hoyer dedicated her life to improving the lives



of young children and their families. Her legacy continues because of the work of the twenty four Maryland Judy Centers that strive to promote school readiness through the development and expansion of collaborative approaches to the delivery of high quality, comprehensive, full-day, full-year early child care and education programs and family support services.



Fatherhood Initiatives Increase at Judy Centers



Above, Mr. Z. Joyner with daughter Kyesha and Physical Education teacher Mr. Charles at the DRU Judy Center. Below, *Magnificent Men* take part in a Thanksgiving Feast at the Howard County Judy Center located at the Cradlerock School.



Many Judy Centers are making a special effort to include fathers exclusively in on-going training and activities for families. Recently two Judy Centers had great success with a father focused event.

On Wednesday, November 17, 2004 the DRU Judy Center and John Eager Howard Elementary School joined the Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers Program in hosting a parenting session and basketball game as part of American Education Week. This year's theme was "Celebrating the American Dream".

Mr. G. Lee Sykes, Jr. of Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers presented a commanding motivational and thought-provoking session focusing on the importance of men nurturing their children and becoming better fathers. The topic generated a great response from the fathers who were still discussing the information they received when the gymnasium began to fill with staff, children and parents eager to watch as more than 50 fathers, grandfathers and uncles participated in the basketball game.

Mr. Sylvester Charles, Physical Education teacher at John Eager Howard, was instrumental in organizing the basketball game, which provided a real

learning experience for the children in the Judy Center programs, as they saw their role models actively involved in teamwork, positive communication, and cooperation.

Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers, a Baltimore City organization, provides a multitude of services to men of varying ages, with children. Services include educational counseling, vocational and career training, job placement assistance, family counseling, and childhood development education.

On November 18, 2004, the Judy Center Partnership at Cradlerock School in Howard County held its first annual *Meals with Magnificent Men* for Kindergarten children and the significant males in their lives. Fifty-nine dads, step dads, brothers, uncles and grandfathers responded with their attendance at the Thanksgiving Feast prepared by the school food services staff. Six of the Judy Center staff helped to serve lunch to students and several male teachers and Howard County Central Office staff volunteered to attend so that every child shared a meal with a *Magnificent Man*.

The Judy Center, in partnership with Head Start hopes to continue their outreach to significant males as they plan for a celebration to be held in June,

Early Childhood Accreditation Program

accreditation is different from MSDE non-public school approval process.)

In addition, another 91 programs are currently pursuing program accreditation (as of 12/1/04).

All Judy Centers have completed national or state program accreditation for all of their early care and education programs, including prekindergarten, kindergarten, Head Start, and child care.

"The accreditation process," says Cathy Perry, Judy Center Coordinator in Frederick, "while often time consuming and difficult, focuses an early learning program on research-based best practices." "The self study, she said, that intensive look at all aspects of a program by a

team of stake holders, is the most valuable part of the process." "The richest discussions about change happen when the team comes together to discuss the strengths and areas of need of the program. It also becomes the team's responsibility to be the change agent and to help the program become the best place for children. Each time the program goes through this process the discussions are new and different and the early learning program is enriched and strengthened," said Ms. Perry.

Any early childhood program pursuing state program accreditation may receive information and materials from Ms. Joyce Nixon, Accreditation Specialist, at 410-747-4441, or jnixon1@msde.state.md.us.

Five Judy Center Partners Honored

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assistance, language classes, job training and job placement.....**The Family Center** of the Cumberland YMCA, partners of the Judy Center in Frostburg MD, focuses on young families. Young parents find confidence, parenting skills and earning potential, while early childhood development programs help their children thrive.....**The Garrett County Community Action Committee** brings community leaders together to create new opportunities for families by increasing economic development. Parents are offered opportunities to build savings, buy their first homes, gain parenting support and learn new job skills.....**The Kent Family Center**, partners of the Judy Center in Chestertown MD, create a safe haven for families by offering com-

munity building activities such as a community garden, high-quality child care and after-school programs, and classes about parenting and financial management.....**The Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee** serving Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties, offers programs that help low-income families participate in the building of their own homes where affordable housing is lacking. Parents are also offered an array of educational programs and community-building activities to help strengthen their families.

FAMILIES COUNT-MARYLAND "celebrates these organizations as they improve the odds for our state's most vulnerable children by giving them what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families."

Lt. Governor Steele visits Federalsburg Judy Center during tour of Caroline County Public Schools

On Tuesday, December 7, 2004, Lt. Governor Steele visited the Federalsburg Judy Center during a tour of Caroline County Public Schools. As chair of the *Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland*, Lt. Governor Steele has visited schools across the state to meet with educators, parents, administrators, students, business and community leaders to discuss issues relevant to the *Commission's* work.

After spending time touring and visiting with faculty, staff and students at Federalsburg Elementary School, Lt. Governor Steele ended his tour by visiting the new Federalsburg Judy Center facility. Seeking information on funding sources, community needs including expansion of services into other schools as well as increasing participation at the Federalsburg Judy Center, and the challenges of children entering school ready to learn, Lt. Governor Steele met with members of the Judy Center Partnership Steering Committee. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the importance of engaging multi-challenged families to support

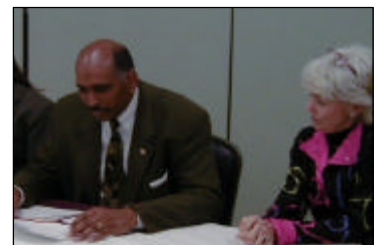
them in their role as primary educators and parents. Lt. Gov. Steele was impressed with how the Judy Center works with Federalsburg Elementary School to provide a smooth and natural transition from Prekindergarten into the Kindergarten classroom located in the school.

Before concluding his visit, the Lt. Governor met with parents attending an adult education class. They shared with him their concerns regarding the barriers to becoming economically self-sufficient. Lt. Gov. Steele told the young parents of his own early experiences and how he was able to reach success, in part, due to the dedication of his mother who also struggled financially as a single parent. Also in attendance were Dr. Edward Shirley, Superintendent of Schools, Delegates Addie Eckhardt and Jeanne Haddaway, Senator Richard Colburn, Betty Ballas, Mayor of Federalsburg, Margaret Williams, from Friends of the Family and Valerie Kaufmann, Judy Center Coordinator at MSDE.



The Kent Family Center offers high-quality child care and after-school programs for children.

Below, Garrett County Community Action Council works to provide many opportunities for families in Western MD.



Lt. Governor Steele met with Judy Center Partnership Steering Committee members, school officials and local delegates at a recent visit to the Judy Center located in Federalsburg, MD

"The most crucial responsibility of any community is the protection, education and mentoring of its children." Judith P. Hoyer



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Gaithersburg: Summit Hall/Rosemont Elementary 301.548.8287 Contact: Martha Monks
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Queen Anne's County: Grasonville Elementary 410.827.4629 Contact: Geri Stubbs
St. Mary's County: Green Holly Elementary 301.863.4065 Contact: Sheila Draper
Talbot County: Easton Elementary 410.820.7468 Contact: Mary Adkins
Washington County: Bester Elementary 301.766.8005 Contact: Dana Peake
Wicomico County: Pemberton Elementary 410.677.5817 Contact: Katrena Bailey
Worcester County: Snow Hill Elementary 410.632.1155 Contact: Chris Welch

GARRETT COUNTY OVERLOOK JUDY CENTER BRANCHES OUT

In an attempt to take the "Judy Center" to other areas of Garrett County, Overlook Judy Center is assisting three Community Action Head Start centers in the MSDE accreditation process. According to Barbara Hornyak, Overlook Judy Center Director, "The Judy Center was limited to working with pre-school programs and family child care providers in the Dennett Road and Yough Glades areas. In April, we received a MSDE Enhancement Grant for Private Providers of Early Care and Education Services and were able to branch out to other areas of Garrett County. Now more children will enter school ready to learn because of a Judy Center!" Garrett County Judy Center is also assisting St. Mark's Christian Early Learning Center and one family child-care provider to become accredited and provide quality early care and education services. St. Mark's has added learning centers, aligning their curriculum with

the public prekindergarten programs, using the WSS assessment, and providing on-site vision and hearing screenings through a partnership with Garrett County Healthy Families. The Partners benefit by receiving, training, tuition reimbursements, and classroom supplies. "The Judy Center staff may have additional responsibilities now, but we're very excited about our ability to share what we know about quality care and education with more pre-school teachers", stated Ms. Hornyak. The Enhancement Grant has been the impetus for increasing partnerships and making the Judy Center a more viable educational program in Garrett County. Garrett College, an integral partner in the process, has worked with Overlook Judy Center to offer college credit to staff attending the Maryland Model for School Readiness Training. Technical assistance for the teachers is being provided through a contract with APPLES for Children, Inc.