

Judy Center Partnerships

Maryland State Department of Education

Newsletter

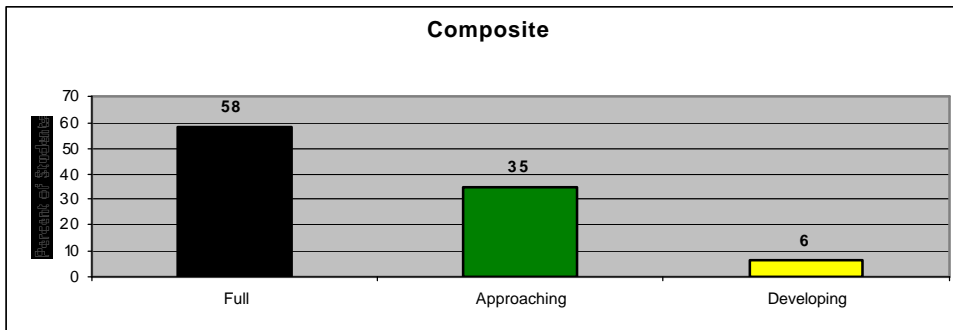
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More Students Entering Maryland Classrooms Prepared to Learn

Maryland students entering kindergarten this school year were better prepared than those in the past. Students entering kindergarten in school year 2004-2005 improved in overall school readiness skills by three percent compared to students who entered kindergarten in the 2003-2004 school year. The percentage of incoming kindergarteners considered by their teachers as "fully ready" increased from 55 percent last year to 58 percent this year.

This upward trend is a substantial increase from school year 2001-2002 (9%) and reflects the statewide efforts of improving the early learning opportunities for young children as they begin their school career. The results for the domain *Language and Literacy* are even more pronounced. According to the teachers' assessment of emergent reading and writing skills, twelve percent more children were rated "fully ready" com-

(Continued on page 2)



Kindergarten Age Waiver Policies Required Under Revised Regulation

The Maryland State Board of Education has approved a regulatory change that requires all 24 local systems to develop local policies allowing early admission to kindergarten.

Under the revision, local school

systems have until January 31, 2006, to develop age waiver policies. The policies would be used to help guide admission to kindergarten for the 2006-2007 school year. Maryland, for the

(Continued on page 8)

Inside this issue:

Kent County Holds Community Fair 2

A Move to Strengthen Maryland's Ability to Provide Quality Early Care and Education Programs 3

Congressman Hoyer and Senator Nelson Reinroduce the Community Schools Act for 2005 3

Judy Center Coordinators Retreat to Ocean City, MD 4

Save Our Sight Foundation Continues Funding for Vision Services at Judy Center Partnerships 5

British Educators Visit Maryland Judy Centers 7

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.



More Students Entering Maryland Classrooms Prepared To Learn

(Continued from page 1)

pared to children who entered kindergarten in 2001-02. The increase from last year was three percent from 45 to 48 percent.

The school readiness information is based on formative and summative evaluation practices. The summative evaluations in the fall include the students' response to the introduction of the kindergarten curriculum. Teachers are trained in the use of specific guidelines, which define fall benchmarks of kindergarten expectations for each of 30 WSS indicators of learning. The indicators of the WSS domains language and literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, as well as social studies are aligned with the Maryland Content Standards and the state's Voluntary State Curriculum.

The data provides a snapshot of school readiness levels of entering kindergarteners for the state and for each local school system in the fall of each year. The school readiness information is designed for purposes of instructional accountability, i.e., the data should inform practitioners and policymakers of how to improve the learning opportunities for young children and to begin the discourse for improving the quality of

early childhood education. In general, the information can be used to:

- Develop a county-wide needs assessment regarding the skill levels of children who are entering kindergarten
- Target federal, state, and local funds to address identified needs in the county
- Develop forums for partnership building
- Modify curricular and intervention programs and to identify resources for kindergarten

The school readiness information for school year 2004-05 is available online at www.marylandpublicschool.org or at the dedicated website for the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) at www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/mmsr. Hard copies of the report are available upon request from the Maryland State Department of Education, Early Learning Office, at 410-767-0335.

Over Two Hundred Families Enjoyed the 2nd Annual Community Fair in Kent County

On Saturday, April 29, 2005 the Kent County Judy Center Partnership held its 2nd annual Community Fair. The fair is sponsored in collaboration with the Henry Highland Garnett Elementary PTA, and the Beyond Program (an on-site after school program). Many community agencies and organizations handed out information about the programs and services that are available to families in Kent County.

Parents also had the opportunity to play games and complete several craft projects with their

children. A health educator from the Kent County Health Department led an activity in which parents and children worked together to create their own healthy and tasty snacks. Despite the rainy weather, over 200 families enjoyed this event. The Community Fair was an excellent opportunity for parents to learn about the many beneficial programs in Kent County.

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A Move To Strengthen Maryland's Ability to Provide High Quality Care and Education

In a move that will have positive effects for the children and families in Maryland, Governor Ehrlich recently relocated three significant early childhood intervention programs from the Department of Human Resources to the Maryland State Department of Education. Upon recommendation from Lt. Governor Michael Steele's "Commission on Quality Education in Maryland," Governor Ehrlich announced his decision to recognize the Maryland "Child Care Resource and Referral Network", and the "Family Support Center Network" as education initiatives for young children.

These programs, administered by the Maryland Committee for Children and Maryland's Friends of the Family serve more than 7,500 young parents and children annually in low-income urban, suburban, and rural communities. The Child Care Resource and Referral networks match working mothers and parents with quality, early intervention childcare. The Family Support Center network addresses the

needs of families by offering free comprehensive services such as parenting classes, adult education and job skills, health education, and childcare while parents are on site. All Family Support Center sites providing early childhood and continuing adult education programs are in partnership with local school systems through the twenty four Judy Center Partnerships statewide.

On May 26, 2005, the governor signed into law the transfer of child care programs and other services to MSDE. All of the responsibilities of the Child Care Administration with the exclusion of the child care subsidy program will transfer to MSDE. In addition, the Homevisiting Consortium, Healthy Families, and school-based Health Centers transfer from the Office of Children, Youth, and Families to MSDE. A transition team has been established with representative from the Department of Human Resources and the Maryland State Department of Education to facilitate the transition of the Child Care Administration.

Representative Hoyer and Senator Nelson Reintroduce the Full-Service Community Schools Act

As reported in the *Community Schools Online Newsletter*, Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) recently reintroduced bill H.R. 2207/S. 986, the Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2005.

If passed, the Act would provide federal incentives and financial support for the development of community schools amounting to approximately \$200 million in grants each year from 2006 to 2010. At a recent press briefing both Maryland's chief state school superintendent, Dr. Nancy Grasmick and the chairman of the Lincoln Community Learning Centers Leadership Council, Bill Johnston, had the opportunity to share the progress of their schools with the congressmen and audience members. Several

other representatives from the Lincoln Community Learning Centers also attended the event, including the Superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools, Susan Gourley, and one of the co-directors of the centers, Cathie Petsch. Community schools are gaining national visibility by showcasing the successes of programs such as the **Judy Centers** in Maryland and Community Learning Centers in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Senator Ben Nelson and Representative Steny Hoyer greet people at a press briefing to reintroduce the Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2005.

Judy Center Coordinators “Retreat” to Ocean City to Focus on Leadership Development and Success

Judy Center Coordinators and Program Managers from across the state came together at the Princess Royale Hotel in Ocean City, MD to share their successes, discuss their challenges and improve their leadership abilities during an annual conference held in late April. The theme of this year’s conference focused on “Reaching for the Stars: Judy Centers of Excellence—Building Leadership in Maryland.”

Representatives from the twenty four Judy Centers spent two half day sessions and one full day session participating in a number of team building activities, round table discussions and benefiting from the powerful messages of three professional speakers.

Yvonne Green, a consultant and technical



Montgomery County, Silver Spring, Judy Center Coordinator Andrea Hall-Bell (left) talks with keynote speaker Yvonne Green during the Judy Center Coordinator’s Annual Retreat in Ocean City, MD

assistance provider for the Children’s Aid Society in Washington, D.C. delivered the keynote. Yvonne’s address entitled “Becoming High Performing Leaders” focused on developing four characteristics of effective leaders: Knowing Yourself, Having a Vision, Building Trust, and Taking Effective Action, and using these characteristics to participate in Core Leadership Functions:

- *Partnership Leadership*
- *Visionary Leadership*
- *Cultural Leadership*
- *Managerial Leadership*
- *Human Resources*

- *Strategic Planning*
- *Fiscal Planning and Advocacy*

MSDE will continue the focus on leadership development for Judy Center Coordinators in FY 06 with an effort to help coordinators continue to mentor each other as they develop effective leadership skills.

Coordinators also enjoyed the message from Carol Moore, an R.N. from the Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, MD. Carol’s message encouraged coordinators to learn to manage the stress of their daily work more effectively. This was Carol’s second appearance at the retreat. She was so well received the first time, the retreat planning committee was asked to bring Carol back for an encore performance. Her presentation provided some lighthearted moments while stressing the important message of taking care of our mind and body to more effectively perform in our work.

The full day’s activities ended with a presentation by D. J. Andrews, Parent Consultant and Father Involvement Specialist with Andrews Training and Communication Consultancy, in Rockville, MD. D.J.’s message to coordinators touched on the effects of families living in poverty as it impacts the father’s ability to be seen as the “breadwinner” of the family. He also discussed ways in which the Judy Center staff could make events and activities more “father friendly” and comfortable for fathers who were not accustomed to the school and classroom settings. D.J. shared many practical ideas that coordinators could begin using right away.

The annual Coordinator’s Retreat continues to be a vehicle that allows coordinators to step away from their daily work, discuss various challenges, and to share their many successes, as the Judy Center Partnerships continue to grow throughout Maryland.



Save Our Sight Foundation Continues to Fund Sight Saving Efforts for Maryland's Children in Judy Center Partnerships

The Save Our Sight Foundation, under the direction of President Robert E. Johnson, has continued its efforts to support vision screening and services for children through its partnership with a number of the Judy Centers in Maryland. To date Mr. Johnson's organization has funded a total of \$32,378 to the Allegany, Garrett, Montgomery, Wicomico, and Worcester County Judy Centers.

The Allegany County Judy Center at Beall Elementary School in Frostburg received a grant from the Save Our Sight foundation that will allow approximately 150 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students to receive vision screenings and glasses if needed. Mr. Johnson presented a check for \$4,440 to Deb Kolb, Judy Center Coordinator. The Judy Center will be working with Dr. Douglas Cook from the Frostburg Vision Center to perform the screenings. According to Mrs. Kolb, "This was an area of service that we wanted to target with our young children because many of them have to travel to Hagerstown for vision screenings due to their insurance coverage. This grant will allow us to screen the children here at school, and those who need additional, more intense screening or glasses will re-

ceive those services at the Frostburg Vision Center. We are thrilled that this grant will allow us to offer this additional free service for our children."

The success of the Worcester County Judy Center's vision screening in the 2004-2005 school year can be attributed to the Save Our Sight Foundation and to a new partnership with Wal-Mart Vision Care. The Wal-Mart Vision Center's optometrist and technicians screened all Snow Hill Elementary School Pre-K and Kindergarten students, and all age four and five year old students at Snow Hill Head Start in January 2005. This screening for 116 students resulted in many students seen for further services to obtain glasses at the Wal-Mart Vision Center. The expense for the screenings and further care was paid for by the Save Our Sight Foundation grant.

The Worcester County Judy Center applied for and received another Save Our Sight Foundation grant for the upcoming 2005-2006 school year. The second grant, in the amount of \$9,000, the largest grant awarded to date, will expand vision services to two additional Title I Elementary Schools and two Head Start Centers in Worcester County, as well as continuing the services provided at Snow Hill Elementary School and Head Start for an estimated 500 students. A commitment from the local Wal-Mart Vision Center to perform all services has been made.

Garrett County's 'Overlook' Judy Center and Infant and Toddlers Program Solidify Partnership

The Overlook Judy Center recently presented a service award to Stephanie Ludle who has served as the Garrett County Infants and Toddlers Program Coordinator since July 2003. Under Ms. Ludle's leadership the partnership between the local Infant & Toddlers (I&T) Program and the Judy Center became successful.

The I & T children, families and staff participate in all programming, training and other services offered by the Judy Center. Joint staff and parent training and activities are coordinated through the collaborative efforts of both programs.



Stephanie Ludle receives a service award from Nancy Fazenbaker, Judy Center Service Coordinator, in recognition for her service and dedication to the Judy Center Partnership.

Montgomery and Charles County Judy Centers Hold Activities to Increase Male Participation

Judy Centers continue their efforts to encourage fathers and other significant males to participate in the academic life of their children by sponsoring events specifically designed with men in mind.

The *Silver Spring Judy Center* at Rolling Terrace Elementary School in Takoma Park, MD invited dads and significant males to join the pre-k, Head Start and Kindergarten classes on June 8, 2005 for “Donuts for Dads” day. Over



Jose Pacheco enjoys “Donuts for Dads” day with daughter, Estefany Pacheco, at the Silver Spring Judy Center in Montgomery County.

52 dads were treated to donuts and juice and participated in the first period of class with their child, with many dads wanting to stay longer. The men, teachers and staff had great things to say about the activity and

hope it will be an annual event.

Fourteen men and twenty one children attended the *Charles County Judy Centers’* first “My Main Man and Me” night. Children were invited to bring their dad, step-dad, foster dad, granddad, uncle, Big Brother, or other special friend for a night of fun and activities.

The evening began with a healthy meal prepared by the schools cafeteria staff after which there were many games and activities for children to participate in with the “Main Man”. A special attraction of the evening was pediatric dentist, Dr. Cynthia Allen-Williams, who took DNA dental prints for child identification. Men were asked to fill out an interest survey to help plan for future events and everyone received a bag full of resource materials, a book and other treats for their child. The event was so popular, a second “My Main Man and Me” event was scheduled for May 19th.

The Charles County Judy Centers are working collaboratively with Head Start on formalizing a Fatherhood Initiative that will kickoff in the Fall. Survey results revealed that men are interested in increasing their knowledge of child development and improving their parenting skills.



Charles County Judy Center “Main Man” John Gibbs, enjoys an evening of fun and learning with his son Joshua at the first annual “My Main Man and Me Night.”

This led to a workshop on “Ages and Stages of Development in Children 3 to 5”, presented by the Charles County Head Start Center Parenting Specialist. The Charles County Judy Center Partnership plans to continue their focus on increasing participation and parenting skills for the significant men involved in the lives of Judy Center children.

Judy Centers Work Continues Through Summer Programming

The Queen Anne’s County Judy Center Partnership, in collaboration with Head Start and Even Start will offer a six week summer school program with a focus on language and literacy, for thirty children who will be entering kindergarten in the fall. Head Start and Even Start will collaborate to provide funding for meals, transportation, staffing, and professional development. The Judy Center support office, with assistance from the Queen Anne’s County Council for Children and Youth, will provide backpacks filled with school supplies, books, a puppet, a writing journal and an activity sheet to help provide early learning support at home. Parents from the Family Play to Learn Center

(Continued on page 7)

National College for School Leadership Students Compare Strategies with Judy Center Coordinators in Maryland

During the month of May, the early learning office at MSDE and Mary Adkins, Talbot County Judy Center Coordinator, hosted a group of students from the United Kingdom's National College for School Leadership, (NCSL) in Nottingham, England. NCSL recently funded a visit to the US for a group of students involved in the *National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership* program. (NPQICL).

NPQICL is the UK's first national program to address the needs of leaders within multi-agency, early years settings. NPQICL is recognized as a qualification for working in multi-agency and multi-disciplinary environments across education, health and social services. Similar to the work of Judy Center Coordinators, NPQICL candidates will serve as leaders, or "deputy equivalents" at Children's Centers or Early Excellence Centers.

During their week long stay, the NPQICL candidates were given the opportunity to visit and tour the Judy Center at Moravia Park Primary in Baltimore City, and Campfield Early Learning Center in Baltimore County, where a luncheon,

discussion and tour was hosted. The students also met with members of the Maryland and Baltimore Leadership in Action Programs where they shared presentations about their particular centers from various places in England.

The trip to the US by the NPQICL candidates, followed a December 2004 visit made by a group of Judy Center Coordinators to the Centres of Excellence in Birmingham and Corby, England.

MSDE hopes to continue the professional relationship and ongoing dialogue with the NPQICL members as they establish their own program for the development of leadership skills for Judy Center Coordinators in Maryland.



Judy Center Coordinators meet with the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership candidates to discuss their shared visions and challenges as leaders of early childhood programs.

Summer Programs Continue Support to Children and Families

(Continued from page 6)

are making Play-doh packets with attached recipe cards for the backpacks. The collaboration of the entire Queen Anne's County partnership is making this program possible.

In Carroll County, the Judy Center at Robert Moton Elementary will offer many summer opportunities for families. A Summer Camp and Enrichment Program will be offered in partnership with Catholic Charities Head Start of Carroll County, Title 1 and Our Community Learning Center (CLC) during the month of July. The Judy Center will directly service 54 students

ages three through five with CLC with Title 1 serving an additional 54 students in first through fourth grade. The summer program will allow students to be exposed to a number of educational opportunities to help prepare them for entering school in the fall.

The Frederick County Judy Center will offer a four week summer camp for rising kindergartners at Waverly Elementary and their satellite site at Hillcrest Elementary with summer child care services to continue at Waverly, Hillcrest and South Frederick Elementary school throughout the summer. All of these services are coordinated by the staff of the Judy Center.



"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
Prince George's County: Judy Hoyer Family Learning Center 301.408.6861 Contact: Carol Reber
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St. Mary's County: Green Holly Elementary 301.863.4065 Contact: Sheila Draper
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Kindergarten Age Waivers..... (Continued from page 1)

past several years, has been phasing in an earlier cutoff date for kindergarten admission. Before the 2002-2003 school year students could enter kindergarten if they turned age 5 by December 31. By the 2006-2007 school year, students must be age 5 before September 1, 2006. When the State Board began phasing in the change, it also said that local systems could develop waiver policies that would allow for the enrollment of 4-year-olds who

were educationally and socially ready for the rigors of kindergarten. Ten systems developed such policies over the past few years; the remaining 14 systems must now begin to do so.

The regulatory revision will not be in place for the 2005-2006 school year. It will be in effect for the following year, allowing local systems sufficient time to develop their policies.

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