



Early

Childhood

Department
MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education Members
CC: Sue Zurvalec
FROM: Nancy Ely, Director of Early Childhood
RE: Evidence of Excellence Report: April the Month of the Young Child
DATE: April 20, 2010

Evidence of Excellence Report

Each April, child advocates throughout our state celebrate the Month of the Young Child (MOYC). This is a time when we recognize the needs and rights of young children and their families. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the quality standard for early childhood programs across the nation and was first established in 1971 recognizing that the early childhood years lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. In 1985 The NAEYC developed a voluntary, national accreditation system that outlined stringent criteria and gave programs the tools to build and maintain high-quality care and education.

Highly professional programs demand highly professional service and value which is demonstrated through accreditation by the NAEYC. We are proud to report to you that our two Farmington Public School Preschool Centers remain the only Early Childhood programs in Farmington and Farmington to hold this prestigious accreditation! Throughout the United States, only 12% of early childhood programs are able to boast of this!

NAEYC Accreditation is a mark of quality that assures parents that their child will be safe, healthy, and learning each day. Accredited programs have demonstrated high quality in each of the following 10 NAEYC standards:

- Positive Relationships
- Curriculum
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Ongoing Assessments
- Nutrition and Health
- Teaching Staff
- Family Relationships
- Community Relationships
- Physical Environment
- High-Quality Experiences

We know that communication with parents about NAEYC Accreditation is extremely important, and what better time than in April during the Month of The Young Child! We want them to know that programs that are accredited by the NAEYC have demonstrated that they provide a safe and healthy environment for children, have teachers who are well trained, have access to excellent teaching materials, and work with a curriculum that is appropriately challenging and developmentally sound. Your packet contains the following two NAEYC brochures to assist our families in finding a quality program for their child:

- <http://www.rightchoiceforkids.org/docs/FamilyGuide.pdf> - NAEYC, A Guide for Families
- http://www.rightchoiceforkids.org/docs/NAEYC_Accreditation_Brochure.pdf - NAEYC, The Right Choice for Kids

Current research tells us that gaps in learning start before a child is even 3 years old! This research identifies the extreme importance parent child relationships have on early brain development. The amount of communication between parent and child, the tone and positivity of the communication are what build a young

child's vocabulary. We have provided a document relating to early brain development and the effects poverty and privilege have on development. We have also provided a link to an early childhood activity calendar for the month of April that is designed to give parents ideas of simple daily activities to do with their children. Each activity listed in the calendar is designed to stimulate language, creativity, and of course brain development! This calendar has been provided to all of our early childhood families, and has been posted on our web page for all families to enjoy.

- <http://www.miaeyc.com/documents/moyc/Calendar.pdf> - 2010 April MOTYC Calendar
- http://www.psych.upenn.edu/~mfarah/farah_SES_05.pdf - Poverty, Privilege and Brain Development: Empirical Findings and Ethical Implications, Farah M., Nobel K., Hurt, H (2005)

There is new information and research indicating that our children from middle class families are also at risk. Because of the lack of funding for early education, many middle class families do not qualify for funded preschool and can not afford tuition. We have provided you with a link to a National Public Radio interview that discusses this topic with the Deputy Executive Director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Jerlean Daniel. We have also provided you with a link to an article from pre[k]now discussing this topic, and testimony from Senior Economist Timothy J. Bartlik on Boosting Michigan's Economy Through Educational Improvements:

- <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6902570> – NPR Interview with Jerlean Daniel
- http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewcenteronthestatesorg/Pre-k_Pinch.pdf - The Pre-K Pinch: Early Education and the Middle Class, Pre[k]now (2008)
- http://www.upjohninst.org/bartik_testimony_12-14-09.pdf - Boosting Michigan's Economy Through Educational Improvements, Bartlik, T. (2009)

Finally we have provided you with a link to a short video clip "The First Five Years." This 3 minute video expertly details, from a child's perspective, the difference between quality and inferior early education and care.

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbSp88PBe9E> – The First Five Years, The Ounce of Prevention

We have come to you tonight with information detailing the importance of quality early childhood education, but also to celebrate and advocate for our youngest Farmington students! At our centers and programs we have several MOYC celebrations for our students and families. At Alameda we will have purple parades, and kite flying; at Hillside and Wood Creek the children will paint with purple, wear purple and have a parade; at Farmington Community School we have a parent night and purple parade; and at Eagle, we are tie-dyeing purple t-shirts! Our staff will show their support by wearing a purple ribbon to signify that they care about young children and are aware of their needs. We have given you a purple lapel pin to wear to show your care and support for about young children!

In closing, we want to thank you for your support of our Early Childhood as it truly makes a difference for our youngest learners!