

SMART START MATTERS

A Publication of Richmond County Partnership for Children

October-December 2019

September is designated as Attendance Awareness Month

Missing school is a big deal whether your child is in Pre-K, 3rd grade, 7th grade or a senior! North Carolina defines '*chronically absent*' as missing 10% of school days during the academic year. Students who are chronically absent from school are more likely to read below grade level and not graduate on time. Chronically absent students are also at a greater risk for a number of negative long-term consequences such as being more likely to experience poverty, diminished mental and physical health, and involvement in the criminal justice system as an adult. **U.S. Department of Education (DOE) 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection**

Regular school attendance puts children on track for becoming proficient readers by the end of third grade. About one in nine young students in North Carolina misses more than 15 days of school every year—a rate of school absence that research shows can hinder learning—and there are large disparities among school districts and demographic groups. In some school districts and for some populations, as many as 23 percent of students are chronically absent in the early grades. Richmond County's chronic absence rate is 13%.

What can parents and families do to encourage regular school attendance:

1. Set school attendance as an expectation and non-negotiable in your home.
2. Talk about the importance of education with your child.
3. Send your children to school when they are not sick.
4. Be involved! Help your children experience school success.



October is Fire Prevention Month

Did you know...

- You have no more than 3 minutes to escape a burning building?
- More people die from smoke inhalation than from fire itself?
- Fire creates so much smoke that a room turns pitch black in minutes?
- The toxic fumes created by a fire can kill you within a few breaths?
- Heat produced by a fire can exceed temperatures of more than 1000 degrees F, yet temperatures of more than 150 degrees F can cause your body to shut down?

Keeping Safe

The first step in any fire prevention plan is to ensure all fire alarms, sprinkler systems and extinguishers are fully operational. Follow this with a detailed escape route from every room in your home or facility. Use a piece of graph paper and draw the outline of your home or facility marking each room, window, door and stairwell. Use arrows to make exit points. Practice your escape routes monthly to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do should a fire occur.

It is equally important to teach children fire safety. Some simple tips include:

- Showing the children how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire—have them practice doing this
- Teaching them to alert an adult if they see smoke or fire
- Showing them the safe spot (where to go) once they are outside a burning building
- Borrowing books from the library that explain fire safety
- Visiting your local fire station

And of course, saving lives begins by preventing fires. You need to :

- Keep all matches and flammables away from a child's reach
- Keep exits, doorways, and stairwells free of clutter at all times
- Ensure curtains, blankets and bedspreads are not close to heat sources such as the stove, space heaters, radiators, heat vents, etc.

As with anything, how much you know is not as important as what you do with what you know. Please take a moment and call your local fire department for more lifesaving fire tips.

Richmond County

North Carolina

Child Population: 2,312,886
Percent under age six: 31%
Number of live births: 120,099

Richmond

Child Population: 13,444
Percent under age six: 30%
Number of live births: 574

Women who receive early prenatal care:

60.1%

2017

56.6% 2016

Babies born at a low birthweight:

15.0%

2017

10.6% 2016

Babies born pre-term:

15.5%

2017

11.6% 2016

Children living in poor or low-income homes:

64.8%

2017

64.1% 2016

Children in households that are food insecure:

27.0%

2016

27.9% 2015

Median family income:

\$33,607

2013-2017

\$35,526 2012-2016

Children in foster care per 1,000:

3.3

2017

3.5 2016

Children assessed for abuse or neglect per 1,000:

60.0

2017

47.1 2016

Teen births per 1,000 girls ages 15-17:

--

2017

-- 2016

3rd grade students scoring proficient in reading:

46.4%

2017-2018

50.7% 2016-2017

High school students graduating on time:

81%

2018

76.7% 2017

Residents with bachelor's degree or higher:

14.3%

2017

13.8% 2016

Children without health insurance:

4.9%

2017

4.3% 2016

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births:

13.9

2017

9.7 2016

Child deaths per 100,000:

66.2

2017

70.7 2016

Inspiring Healthy Eating Habits for Kids

The Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) works with organizations to eliminate the problem of childhood obesity, and complements the [Let's Move! Initiative](#) started by former First Lady Michelle Obama.

Getting children to consume a healthier diet can be tough; below you'll find ten suggestions from PHA on making it easier.

1. **Set the example.** Children tend to mimic what we do. Make meals a pleasant time and serve a wide variety of healthy foods. Let your children see that you enjoy eating a varied diet, including fruits and vegetables.
2. **Make food a family affair.** Children are more likely to eat meals to which they've contributed in some way. This might mean helping make the weekly meal plan, shopping at a farmer's market, washing vegetables for a salad, or even cooking some of the meal, depending on your child's age.
3. **Substitute healthier choices.** Replace regular fries with sweet potatoes or try hummus, salsa, or chutney instead of high-fat sauces. Serve yogurt, fruit, or dark chocolate instead of rich desserts.
4. **Plant a garden.** Home-grown vegetables always taste better and the accomplishment children feel in growing them is highly motivating. Try easy to grow vegetables like radishes, carrots, peas, greens, or compact, determinate tomato varieties. Many of these plants can be grown in containers on a patio if space is limited.
5. **Try the "polite bite" rule.** Studies show that many children don't like a food until they've tried it at least 20 times. So keep serving vegetables and ask your child to take one "polite bite." This practice respects a child's preferences while giving them opportunity to try new foods. Still no luck? Many children dislike the texture of steamed vegetables, but they'll try them raw with a dip, or roasted. Another option is to introduce veggies in a smoothie or sauce.
6. **Teach healthy attitudes about food.** Try to approach food and meals as a joyful part of life; de-emphasize conversations that promote certain foods as healthy and other foods as unhealthy. Instead, serve a variety of delicious foods, including occasional sweets or desserts. Don't use food as a weapon or bribe. Let your child serve herself, taking just the right portion.
7. **Bring back the family dinner.** Today's families are feeling the pinch of busy schedules and routines, but there's something very special about eating a meal at home as a family. Try to have family dinner at least a couple nights a week, or family breakfast on the weekends. Turn off the television and other distractions, and really focus on the food and each other.
8. **Be thoughtful about snacks.** There's nothing wrong with an afternoon snack, but don't let it sabotage dinner. Serve snacks at least two hours before a meal. Offer healthy snacks such as cheese and whole-grain crackers, sliced veggies, or a piece of fruit. Provide water instead of juice or milk between meals.
9. **Learn to love water.** Liquids don't offer the same sense of fullness that solid foods do, so it's easy to consume a lot of calories through them. Skip juice, soda, and even milk for most meals and offer water instead.

Respect food preferences. Some researchers theorize that picky eating is an evolutionary response going back to a time when overly adventurous young children could actually die from eating poisonous berries or plants. Take picky eating in stride, don't make a big deal out of it, and don't use food as a bribe or reward.

KidsHealth.org offers "Go, Slow, and Whoa!" as another approach to healthy eating:

- "Go" foods are the healthiest options for kids and can be eaten almost anytime.
- "Slow" foods are those you can eat sometimes but not every day.
- "Whoa" foods should make you think, "Wait, should my child eat that?" These are the least nutritious and should only be eaten occasionally.





Halloween Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe on Halloween.

Everyone loves a good scare on Halloween, but not when it comes to child safety. There are several easy and effective behaviors that parents can share with kids to help reduce their risk of injury.

Walk Safely

- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Look left, right and left again when crossing and keep looking as you cross.
- Put electronic devices down and keep heads up and walk, don't run, across the street.
- Teach children to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- Watch for cars that are turning or backing up. Teach children to never dart out into the street or cross between parked cars.



Trick or Treat With an Adult

- Children under the age of 12 should not be alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be out without supervision, remind them to stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.

Keep Costumes Both Creative and Safe

- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Choose face paint and makeup whenever possible instead of masks, which can obstruct a child's vision.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.
- When selecting a costume, make sure it is the right size to prevent trips and falls.



Drive Extra Safely on Halloween

- Slow down and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods. Children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.
- Eliminate any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.
- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert for kids during those hours.



On average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year.

Parent Corner

Life Cycle Models



These materials are appropriate for ages 18 months & up. The life cycle models are a great way to introduce life cycle concepts to your children. This set includes the life cycle of a ladybug, a chicken, and a butterfly.

Looking for materials to enhance lessons on the upcoming holiday seasons, let us help you out. Come by to see all the resources we have available.



Early Literacy

Today's Readers Are Tomorrow's Leaders



Reach Out and Read Is Expanding

Currently, Reach Out and Read, an evidence-based early literacy program, partners with local medical providers serving children ages 6 months to five years of age. ROR provides new, age-appropriate books to children within this target population. However, in an effort to promote healthy early brain development (which lays the foundation for children's future success in school and life); ROR will begin providing age-appropriate books to children beginning at birth to 6 months of age. In reaching children earlier, it is known that early intervention: 1) will have a greater impact than later intervention; 2) will enhance family engagement; 3) will impact a child's health; and 4) will foster brain development.

If you have or know a child that is under the age of 5 who is not participating in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program contact our office to find out how to register them for the program.



October-December 2019 Training Calendar

**Linking NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development
to Curriculum Planning for Infants and Toddlers**

**Tuesday, October 22 & Tuesday, October 29
6:30pm-9:00pm**

Cost: \$25.00 Location: RCPC

Taught by: Tonya McCall

Do you want to understand how to align your infant and toddler activity plans with the Foundations for Early Learning and Development? Then this CEU course is for you. This 5-hour course will provide participants with an introduction to the Foundations, help you navigate your way through the document and identify strategies that support children's development and learning. Participants will spend time observing children in their classroom setting to create intentional activity plans that align with the five developmental domains.

**Participants MUST attend BOTH nights to
receive CEU certificate**

Must register by 4:00pm October 15, 2019

**Social/Emotional Milestones-Birth to 36
Months: Building Blocks for Future Learning**

Tuesday, November 12, 2019 6:30pm-8:30pm

Cost: \$5.00 Location: RCPC

Taught by: Tonya McCall

First, everything is "mine", then children learn to take turns, and eventually they learn to share. For infants and toddlers this learning happens through relationships and includes developing a sense of self, a sense of self with others, and learning about feelings. All children need an emotionally secure environment that supports healthy development in this learning domain.

This workshop examines social/emotional competence as a vital component of later school readiness. Participants will learn how a responsive care giver can help the youngest of our children form secure attachments, learn to navigate feelings and emotions, and begin to develop self-regulation and social skills, the building blocks for future learning.

Must register by 4:00pm November 5, 2019

ITS-SIDS

Monday, November 18, 2019

6:30pm-8:30pm

Cost: \$5.00 Location: RCPC

Taught by: Michell Kocan

In this session you will be introduced to infant/toddler safe sleep standards in North Carolina, and best practices. We will discuss adopting safe sleep practices and creating a safe sleep environment to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Must register by 4:00pm Monday, November 11, 2019

**Looking for self-paced online
trainings? Visit**

www.swcdcinc.org and check

**their registration page for
available trainings that you
can do from the comfort of
your home at your leisure.**

North Carolina T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program Announces New Certificate Scholarship for Early Childhood Educators

The North Carolina T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program announces a new Certificate Scholarship Program designed to support Infant-Toddler and Preschool Certificate attainment

Chapel Hill, N.C., August 29, 2019: The North Carolina T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program (T.E.A.C.H.) of Child Care Services Association (CCSA) is pleased to announce the addition of its new Certificate Scholarship Program for early childhood educators.

This comprehensive scholarship is specially designed to support Infant-Toddler and Preschool certificate attainment. The coursework offered through the early childhood Infant-Toddler Certificate Program has a clear emphasis on children birth through two years of age. The Preschool Certificate Program provides a series of courses for early childhood professionals working with young children three through five years of age. The scholarship program offers a package of supports for recipients to take courses toward an Early Childhood Certificate up to 19 credit hours at any of North Carolina's 58 community colleges.

T.E.A.C.H. scholarship applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Scholarship applications are currently being accepted for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. There is only one application needed to apply for this scholarship to attain two potential certificates.

Current recipients who are already participating in the associate degree scholarship program through T.E.A.C.H. do not need to submit a separate scholarship application for the certificate program. T.E.A.C.H. will be awarding retroactive scholarships to eligible, already enrolled applicants as of July 1, 2019.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program creates access to higher education for early educators (teachers, directors and home-based professionals) who are already working with young children in licensed facilities. The program offers a comprehensive package of supports that pay for college education, reward achievement and retain better qualified early educators in the field. Scholarships are accepted at each of the state's 58 community colleges.

To learn more about the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program and how to apply for the new Certificate Scholarship Program, visit www.childcareservices.org/teach-nc.

About Child Care Services Association:

Founded in 1974, Child Care Services Association's mission is to ensure affordable, accessible, high-quality child care for all young children and their families. Using a holistic approach, CCSA supports children and families, helps child care professionals improve the quality of early education children receive and ensures that all families can afford and access the high-quality early care and education that is so important for a child's early development. Through its Meal Services Program, CCSA also provides nutritious meals to children at child care centers, where they may eat 50-100 percent of their meals. Our T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, Child Care WAGE\$® and Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ programs give child care professionals the means to obtain an education and supplement their salary based that education. CCSA also licenses T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ across the U.S. and conducts early childhood systems research and policy development statewide and nationally. For more information, visit www.childcareservices.org.

What You Can Do to Avoid the Flu

Fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, nausea: If these symptoms hit, you may have been bitten by the flu bug.

Who is Most Vulnerable?

People over age 65 comprised about 70% to 90% of all cases of flu in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children younger than 5 also are at high risk.

An Epidemic Every Year

Flu season occurs in the fall and winter, peaking between late November and early March, and it's an epidemic every year. The makeup of flu viruses can change from year to year, making it difficult to predict. Flu spreads through droplets when people sneeze or cough, and on surfaces. People are contagious one day before symptoms appear and up to a week after. When you don't feel well, it's best to take care of yourself and co-workers by staying home. And don't go back to work (or school) for at least 24 hours after a fever is gone.

You Can Stay Healthy

CDC recommends everyone older than 6 months get an annual flu vaccine as soon as the vaccine becomes available; October is the ideal time to get vaccinated, but it's never too late

- If you don't like needles, ask your doctor if a nasal flu spray is available
- Avoid being around sick people if possible
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, preferably with the inside of your arm rather than your hand
- Avoid touching your face

Disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated

Death Rate From Flu is Hard to Calculate

It is difficult to calculate the number of flu deaths annually, according to the CDC. States are not required to report flu deaths, not everyone who dies with flu symptoms is tested for flu, and the virus can cause death when other health conditions are present. About 5% to 20% of people in the U.S. get the flu each year, and an average of 200,000 people are hospitalized for it annually. Flu-related deaths range from about 12,000 to 56,000 a year, depending on the severity of the outbreak.

Keep yourself and others safer by getting a flu shot. Vaccines do not give people the flu. For more information about how flu vaccines work, visit the CDC website. To see a weekly report on flu activity across the U.S., check out FluView.



American Health Center

Address: 1640 N Arlington Heights Road,
Suite 210
Arlington Heights IL 60004
Tel No: 847-255-7474

December is National Safe Toys & Gift Month

Children play a vital role in our lives no matter if you're a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or a family friend. They are our priority and their happiness is the key to our happiness. However, providing them safety is critical. Therefore, before purchasing their favorite toy this holiday season, take a look at some tips for selecting safe toys.

Safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season:

Consider child's age, interests, skill level, and developmental appropriateness of the toy before allowing them to be played with.

Follow age and safety recommendations on labels.

Look for quality and construction of the toy. A toy should be sturdy enough to withstand impact without breaking, being crushed or pulled apart easily.

Children under age 3 tend to put everything in their mouths. Therefore, avoid buying toys that may have small parts that pose a choking danger.

When choosing crayons and/or paint sets look for "ASTM D-4236" which means the product has been reviewed for chronic health hazards and met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards. ***Do not give crayons or markers to children unless they are labeled "nontoxic."***

Avoid toys with; heating elements strings, cords longer than 7 inches that may pose a risk for strangulation for young children.

Keep kids safe from lead in toys.

Avoid toys constructed with thin, brittle plastic which may easily break into small pieces; that shoot or include parts that fly off or have sharp edges and points.

When buying; a toy gun make sure it's brightly colored so it's not mistaken for a real gun.

When buying skateboards, skates, or bicycles buy protective gear too. Falls could be deadly.

Adults should check all toys periodically for potential hazards and breakage. Anything damaged should be repaired or thrown away.

Explain to the child how to use the toy. Supervise children while playing. Teach older children to keep their toys away from younger siblings. Teach all children to put toys away when they're finished playing to avoid tripping over them and/or falling.

Dispose of uninflated or broke balloons immediately because of the choking danger and once gifts are open, immediately discard toy packaging and wrapping.

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We are on the web!

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Board Meetings Dates

October 16, 2019 @ 12:00pm

November 13, 2019 @ 12:00pm

All meetings are held at Richmond County Partnership for Children

315 South Lawrence Street Rockingham, NC 28379

The public is invited to attend these meetings.

Yes! I would like to make a contribution to the

Richmond County Partnership for Children

My donation will be used to ensure all Richmond County children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number, Fax Number, or E-Mail _____

Make checks payable to Richmond County Partnership for Children and mail to:

P. O. Box 1944, Rockingham, NC 28380