

# Virginia Cooperative Extension

*A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University*



School of Agriculture  
Virginia State University

## **InterCounty Childcare Connection**

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## **InterCounty Childcare Connection Annual Program Report Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck Region May 2008**

### **Program Components/Overview:**

*InterCounty Childcare Connection* is a child care resource and referral program of *Virginia Cooperative Extension* serving Planning Districts 17 and 18 covering nearly 2200 square miles of rural communities of the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck region of Virginia. ICCC is a member agency of the Virginia Child Care Resource and Referral Network (VACCRRN) a non-profit, statewide network under contract with the Virginia Department of Social Services to collect, maintain and disseminate standardized child care data through the use of a nationally known online software program called NACCRRAware, now being used by much of the nation. In addition, this contract includes the provision of resources and referrals throughout our communities delivered within a quality controlled framework to support the early care and education needs of parents, providers and communities.

InterCounty Childcare Connection provides services to families, child care programs and community agencies through a variety of program activities as well as a variety of service delivery systems. Services may include consumer information, technical assistance, referrals and resources and may be accessed through our website, or via email, fax, toll free phone and in person. Examples of program services may range from families accessing a list of local child care programs, providers accessing training workshop schedules or community agencies collecting data on slots available of various types of child care.

**Kathy Sauter**, child care educator and consultant, serves as the Program Coordinator along with **Debbie Leonard**, our program assistant who handles much of the referral work, both supervised by Alinda Uzel, Unit Coordinator and FCS agent, King and Queen Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Like many other rural area programs, ICCC is a **regional program** unique to this area. Funding for ICCC's services is a collaboration of grants and contributions from multiple sources serving the region with a broad range of needs and a broad range of program components. Program funding is primarily to support staff in delivering services. Quality Initiative funds account for approximately 65% of our funding (region-wide), VACCRRN supports approximately 15% with the remaining 20% from other contributions and in kind donations.

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## Strategies accomplished 2007-2008:

### **TRAINING-- QUALITY INITIATIVE GRANT**

Social Emotional --In partnership with VACCRRN, ICCC accessed a train the trainer event to deliver evidence based training in social development for preschoolers. This training entitled “**Promoting Social and Emotional Competencies**,” was delivered in partnership with Rappahannock Community College through their Workforce Development Program, and provided strategies for dealing with challenging behavior related to social emotional development. Saturday trainings took place at RCC on 2/16 and 2/23, training 30 providers and conducting over 12 hours of training. Certificates were awarded to all 30 participants; eleven participants applied for and were awarded Continuing Education Units (CEU). Evaluative tools included pre and post tests as well as subjective evaluations. All tools indicated gains in knowledge and skills as well as reports of application and relevance. Comments included “will use in my classroom” and “will post rules” and “will change schedule to work better for children.”

MAT training--In response to licensing regulation changes ICCC continues to partner with Three Rivers Health District’s Regional Child Care Health Consultants to offer **Medication Administration Training** to 35 local child care professionals to date with one additional quarterly training scheduled in June. ICCC has served as local technical assistance to providers in linking them with MAT trainings outside our scheduled deliveries, and has also had inquiries from outside our area for training and technical assistance.

CPR/FA--In response to local need ICCC has continued to develop and expand CPR/FA services to caregivers in our region. We provide information on our website and via phone/email to promote this training and offer providers multiple sources to obtain training. ICCC has developed a listing of 16 sources for training and additionally offers this training on demand. This year we hosted 19 **CPR/FA** classes and trained 76 participants. Because of the increased demand, ICCC is in the process of developing an online renewal course which will allow recertification through the online course; however this will be finalized with a one-on-one skills challenge with an instructor.

Foundations--Also in response to local concerns from parents, center providers, VDSS staff and subsidy caregivers, ICCC developed a new workshop entitled **Foundations in Early Care and Education**, intended to meet the needs of entry level child care workers to ensure a basic level of knowledge in core areas which can also be tailored to include a staff orientation training for center employees. This course can be tailored to meet the needs of individuals exploring child care as a profession, subsidy caregivers for their required annual training hours or to meet the orientation training needs of entry level center employees.

ICCC again collaborated with a Virginia Cooperative Extension pilot that brought **Mighty Moves**, a research based physical education/exercise preschool curriculum from Colorado State University to our region. This program is designed to help child care professionals increase 3-5 year olds education and awareness of physical exercise. This is an extension of the previous *Food Friends* we partnered with last year. This program was piloted in 8 preschool programs across the region. Results are pending reports.

123 READ--ICCC staff has worked in partnership with Child Development Resources to bring **123 Read Virginia**, an early literacy program for child care professionals to promote pre-reading skills for infants and toddlers, to regions around the state. Staff of ICCC completed train the trainer workshops and presented the first wave of 123 READ in Fredericksburg, VA in October training 35 program participants. Onsite technical assistance is an added feature of this grant program and staff is currently a trained consultant working with this aspect of the grant and has conducted T/A at one local program. Two local programs have already participated in the 123 READ initiative and two more programs are scheduled to participate in this wonderful statewide training opportunity.

## ***OUTREACH/ CONSUMER EDUCATION—RECRUITMENT***

**OUTREACH/CONSUMER EDUCATION:** ICCC's goal this year was to improve access to CCRR services and we focused on three avenues to improve outreach in our community: Community events, community agencies and advertising. Strategies included participation in three **community events** including the Northern Neck Community Health Fair (Warsaw), King & Queen Community Pride Day (King & Queen Courthouse) and Celebrate Families (Gloucester). Overall it is estimated over 5000 people attended these events offering us great public contact, especially the networking that occurs between agencies who serve similar populations.

During the past year, we have conducted site visits and/or staff inservice for the following **agencies/counties** during which we are shared information and resources of ICCC, including one or more of the following: brochures, brochure stand, posters, bookmarks, VACCRRN brochures, etc.

- ◆ Virginia Dept. of Health: Gloucester, Lancaster, Richmond, Westmoreland, Essex, King & Queen
- ◆ Virginia Dept. of Social Services: Gloucester, Essex, King & Queen, Richmond, Westmoreland, Lancaster
- ◆ Virginia Cooperative Extension Offices
- ◆ Public Libraries: Lancaster, Gloucester, Richmond, King & Queen
- ◆ Early Intervention Program

Marketing directly to our consumers through **public newspapers/internet** has shown an increase in services access. We were able to access funds through a grant to place recruitment ads in 9 papers serving all ten counties. We saw a direct increase in inquiries related to these ads. During the past year our database added 62 programs. Our **website** has more than doubled in use during the current fiscal year, serving around 800 visitors in 2007. Parents can now conduct an online search themselves, can fill out an online form to have us conduct their search or can call or email us to arrange a search over the phone or internet. Online follow up forms allow parents to provide us timely feedback on referrals they receive. Online listing forms allow child care programs to list and/or update their information including vacancy/rate updates into our database, improving accuracy. Training information is listed as well as links to the VDSS state TIPS training site. Our website is linked from well-known sites such as VACCRRN, Child Care Aware and Rappahannock Connect Network. In addition, our list serve, the **ChildNet Connection**, hosted through Rappahannock Connect Network, has grown from 56 members when it was launched in May, 2007 to over 300 members across our region as of May 2008.

Goals this next year will include expanding links to our website and allowing people to register and pay online for training workshops.

**RECRUITMENT**—ICCC participated in a statewide **recruitment stipend initiative** to recruit caregivers by providing grant funds targeted to support the increase in the number of regulated programs. Out of the 62 programs added to the database, eight of those programs are already regulated (several are centers with high capacity), and several more are in the process of Voluntary Registration or Licensing. By the end of this grant year we expect to fully expend this money to support these programs in completing their training and/or licensing process.

### **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

ICCC held its first **Leadership Council** meeting in October 2007. Participants discussed how ICCC can proceed to expand its leadership council and begin defining a strategic plan for its growth and development.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE—VACCRRN**

ICCC continues to be a member agency of the **VACCRRN**, Virginia's statewide CCR&R which is under contract with VDSS to provide standardized cost-free referrals to families and low-cost accessible training to professionals. This relationship ensures standardized statewide data collection, delivery and reporting. ICCC provides quarterly reports to VACCRRN and completes data checks monthly to ensure complete and accurate data collection. Staff participates on the VACCRRN Advisory Council, and additionally serves on the Board of VACCRRN as an Advisory Council representative. VACCRRN sponsors training for staff in quality assurance and technical assistance.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS**

InterCounty Childcare Connection is networked throughout the region and is looked to for their ability to provide support in reaching out to the child care programs of the area as well as reaching families to provide resources and support. In the past year ICCC has participated in programs and/or provided support/technical assistance in the following arenas:

**Lancaster Initiative For Early Childhood Education, The Wiley Foundation, April 2008**  
**Bridges Head Start, Policy Council Member**  
**Bridges Head Start, Advisory Council Member**  
**Gloucester Resource Council, Member**  
**Three Rivers Healthy Families Board, Member**

In addition, ICCC has developed an ongoing partnership with **Rappahannock Community College Workforce Development** to establish and promote an **Early Care and Education Certificate Program** for Child Care Professionals. This collaborative program was piloted during the current grant year with local/state funding support as we delivered *Promoting Social and Emotional Competency* in partnership with RCC offering participants training, CEU's and credit toward the developing certificate program which will premier in fall, 2008. These eight classes will be based upon the state's recent publishing of the Milestones for Early Development and the Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. Participants will have

the opportunity to attend Saturday classes monthly at either the RCC Glenns or Warsaw location and accumulate credit for a basic or advanced certificate.

ICCC continues to partner with local Child Care Health Consultants of **Virginia Department of Health** in the delivery of **Medication Administration Training**. Virginia Dept. of Health is a key player in the state's Early Childhood Initiatives.

ICCC attended Gloucester VDSS Provider Exchange program in April 2008 to share ICCC resources and services.

## **STATE COLLABORATION/RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

ICCC participates in all statewide activities surrounding the Governor's Early Childhood Initiatives and is included on multiple list serves promoting the sharing of research and resources relevant to child care and early education. ICCC is participating in the discussions surrounding the RFP for Infant Toddler Specialists recently released.

### **Outcomes for 2008:**

ICCC defines our service population/database as ChildNet which includes providers, clients, and community contacts. During this fiscal year **62 newly identified** child care and education programs have been added to our ChildNet database, which now serves **269 childcare programs** throughout the region with a capacity of over 5000 children (not considering turnover). **Over 92% of these programs have had direct contact with our agency.** Over 55% of the programs listed are unregulated family, friend and neighbor care. For these particular providers, ICCC is most often the only professional point of contact and source of support. ICCC can provide a detailed NACCRRAware report of providers by county, by type of care and by license type upon request.

ICCC has conducted more than **812 child care program contacts** in the current year. This number reflects documented and recorded entries in NCW including program information updates, training inquiries, technical assistance inquiries, complaints, etc. with services provided by internet, phone, email, fax, mail or in person. In addition, we estimate 50 or more phone calls per month do not get recorded in NCW due to the large volume of telephone contacts and limited staff. In addition, average **outgoing emails average 434** per month, a 50% increase over last year indicating a large increase in program activity as this has become a primary channel of communication as well as a valuable and efficient source of support for many providers, parents and community professionals.

In the current grant year we have had more than 705 resource and referral contacts with families serving at least **179 families**, a **76% increase** over last year's client service data. This reflects a continued rise in internet access, but also reflects multiple contacts with 42 families served and adding 137 new families.

A total of **42 new community** contacts were added to the database this year bring our community networking to 261 agencies/individuals. We have responded to at least 128 community contacts (i.e. agencies, government, general inquiries not including parents or child care professionals) for resource and referral services, which additionally serves our community's child care needs by internet, phone,

email, fax, mail or in person. ICCC can provide a detailed NACCRRAware report of services to providers, clients and community upon request.

A total of **35 educational workshops** have been carried out locally this grant year with at least 2 more scheduled in the coming month. Locations have included Gloucester, King William, King & Queen, Middlesex, Essex, Richmond, Lancaster and Westmoreland counties. A total of **217 local professionals** have been trained and **49 programs** (nearly 20% of our currently active programs) have accessed training. Trainings have included *Orientation to the Business of Family Child Care—Beyond Babysitting*; *CPR/FA Certification*; *Medication Administration Training*; *Mighty Moves*; *Foundations in Early Care and Education*; and *Promoting Social and Emotional Competency*. The addition of MAT training and CPR/FA has had a significant impact for providers.

For families, ICCC conducted a special presentation to a newly formed parent group of 22 families of children with special needs in Gloucester to discuss relevant child care issues for their children. ICCC shared information from an article submitted by Coordinator of ICCC for the statewide publication *Celebrating Special Children* entitled “**Finding Special Care for Your Special Child.**”

Through statewide training venues, ICCC has additionally presented training and information on CCR&R services to **36 additional professionals** outside of our region who work with children or child care professionals.

**SUMMARY:** InterCounty Childcare Connection continues to provide quality CCR&R services to our region and serves as a liaison to statewide initiatives. Through both local and state collaborations, ICCC has added multiple training resources to our program and diversified funding sources. We are committed to identifying resources/collaborations to impact the quality and availability of child care in our region and look ahead to support Early Care and Education Initiatives in our region to improve quality and accessibility of child care through our networking, training and advocacy efforts.

Submitted by Kathy Sauter, Coordinator, InterCounty Childcare Connection