

the ESC Community Connection

Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County

SPRING 2013

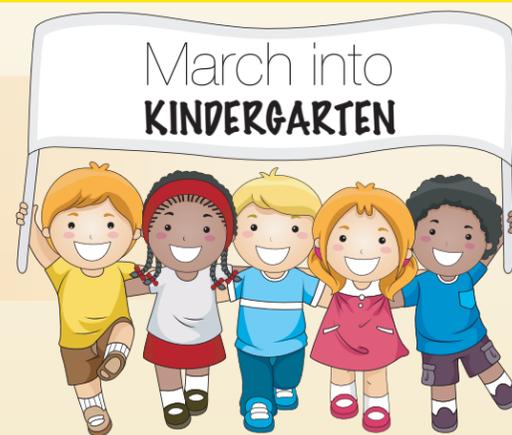


Now is the Time to “March into Kindergarten” Public Information Campaign Continues to Urge Parents to Register their Child for Kindergarten

The first day of kindergarten can be both exciting and overwhelming for students, parents, and the teacher. A public information campaign is underway, called “March into Kindergarten,” to inform and urge all parents in Cuyahoga County that they should register their child for kindergarten as early as March. Registration provides their child with a smooth transition and helps schools be adequately prepared to educate all children and understand each child’s strengths and needs before the first day of school.

Why is Early Registration for Kindergarten Important?

- A smooth transition to kindergarten depends on good communication between early childhood professionals, parents, and primary school professionals.
- Transition is a change that involves a process of adjustment. The move from preschool to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes in a child’s life and the life of the family.
- Transition can cause stress and anxiety for the pre-kindergarten child and parents.
- Learning about what is expected in kindergarten and how to register lowers anxiety and stress while paving the way for a more positive start to the new experience.
- Children’s success in school can be linked, in part, to effective transition practices and activities. Supportive transition practices encourage children to like school and look forward to attending.
- When parents are supported, they are more likely to become actively involved in their children’s education. When parents are involved in their children’s learning, the children have a higher chance of succeeding in school and developing a love of learning.



The campaign is a collaborative partnership among the ESC of Cuyahoga County, Invest in Children, Starting Point, United Way 2-1-1, Family & Children First Council of Cuyahoga County, MyCom, and the State Support Team for Region 3.

“There is a growing concern that parents are waiting too long, and in many cases until the first day of school, to register their child(ren) for kindergarten,” said Billie Osborne Fears, Executive Director, Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education. “There are many benefits to parents, children, and schools for not waiting that long and this campaign aims to educate parents on the reasons why they should register now.”

To register a child for kindergarten, parents need to complete necessary paperwork including medical information related to immunizations and physicals. By registering in March, this gives families more time to learn about and complete the necessary paperwork to avoid any delays in starting school.

While we want to prepare children to be as ready as possible for kindergarten, it is just as important for schools to be ready for all children. From screenings, parent information and feedback from early childhood settings, educators spend time before school starts learning about their incoming kindergarteners to ensure their classroom instruction is designed to reach all students’ needs. In addition, schools need to know how many students to expect on the first day of school within each building for the proper assignment of teachers, establishment of class sizes, and ordering of classroom materials and supplies.

For families, early registration allows them to prepare their child and themselves for the specific school he/she will be attending—its building, people, programs, and protocols. The family has a chance to learn the building, become familiar with where everything is, and also obtain policies, procedures, and schedules. Most importantly, the child will be able to meet the kindergarten teacher and

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Student Programs Offered by ESC . . .

Beck Center Peaceful Solutions

This fall, high school students from Richmond Heights Local Schools, along with several other districts, learned how the arts could actually help young adults to get through life peacefully during a one-day workshop at the Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood. Through songwriting, playing instruments, painting, or molding with clay, everyone learned how cultural arts can have a positive impact.



Beck Center Explore the Arts

"The Explore the Arts Workshop is a great experience for our young middle school artists to extend out of their comfort zones and try new areas of artistic expression. They get about a half hour of hands on training in seven different art forms with professionals in that field. Suddenly, I have 11 seventh graders who love improv, mime, or drumming, and have never tried these before! The information is presented to them in a way they can understand, and they are grouped with students who they do not know so they are less inhibited and get to hear or see some new ideas. The bus ride back is full of conversation about their favorite parts of the day, and what they want to do and be a part of now because of it. I have eighth graders who went last year telling the seventh graders they are going to love it, saying, 'Oh that was my favorite field trip!' I like to get in there and participate with the kids, and I learn something a little different each time I go, too!"

Gretchen Obrovac, Teacher, Independence Middle School



Financial Literacy

This past fall, students from Richmond Heights Local Schools participated in a workshop on Financial Literacy at the ESC offices. The workshop was in partnership with the Financial Planning Association of Northeast Ohio. Students were exposed to such topics as financial responsibility, budgeting and money management, and credit/debit cards.

Leadership Workshop

A high school leadership workshop conducted by Paul Pendleton was held on October 25th at the ESC offices. Students from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools, as well as other districts, attended and learned about leadership styles, importance of vision, reaching consensus, team building, and creating positive environments for success.



Mr. Presidents Competition Tests Middle School Students on Knowledge of our Nation's Past Leaders



With the inauguration of our President Barack Obama on January 21, 2013, and Presidents' Day being celebrated February 18th, our United States Presidents were top of mind for students at many school districts across Cuyahoga County.

On January 23rd, students in grades 4-8 from Richmond Heights Local Schools and from other districts were invited to the ESC to compete in the 6th annual Northeast Regional Academic Games Mr. Presidents Competition.

Since September, students have been preparing an individual resource file on the Presidents of the 20th and 21st centuries in their individual classrooms. Weighted questions were asked and the students identified the President by secret ballot using their resource file.

North Coast Academy Students Give Back to the Community

On February 28th, the North Coast Academy (NCA) students went to the adult day program located on the campus of Park Synagogue Main in Cleveland Heights to celebrate the adults' birthdays in the month of February. The students decorated and assisted with the party.

This past winter, students also participated in a blood drive, volunteered in the kindergarten classroom at Mercer Elementary School in Shaker Heights, partnered with the Jewish Family Service Association to work with multi-handicapped children at Brush High School in South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools, and mentored students at Memorial Junior High School in Lyndhurst.

At Memorial, the NCA students explained to the 7th and 8th grade students the choices they had made earlier in their school experiences that led to the need to go to an alternative school. The NCA students encouraged the younger students to make better choices than they had made. The NCA students have also worked with students in Orange High Schools' classroom for students with multiple disabilities acting as peer models to engage the students as they cook lunch together and converse about common interests of sports, music and movies.



A Look into ESC's Online Learning Program

The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently launched an online learning program for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Two students, Alyssa Tepfenhart and Kimberly Puleo, are currently enrolled in the online community school.



Alyssa, 18, lives in Broadview Heights and has been an online student for the past two years. She is currently taking American literature, global mythology, creative writing, astronomy, cinematic review, and introduction to screenwriting.

Even as a senior, Alyssa can still be a part of the North Royalton City School District. She is planning on attending prom and graduating with people she's been going to school with since 6th grade. Alyssa is also scheduled to

attend college in the fall, with hopes of majoring in commercial photography and minoring in theater.

"I am very fortunate to be alive in the digital age where online school has become a positive option for many students. I have been suffering with chronic Lyme disease throughout my adolescence and the online school has given me the opportunity to go to school in a laid back environment. I strongly encourage online school to students and especially to students who suffer from illness," said Alyssa.



Kimberly, 15, is a sophomore living in Independence and recently began taking classes online. She started her online education by taking courses in Spanish, history, geometry and biology. She has a love of music and has found that online education worked better with her busy schedule. "An online educational community makes it easier for me to understand what I'm learning," said Kimberly.

Although Kimberly is only a sophomore, she hopes to take post-secondary classes at either Cuyahoga Community College or Baldwin Wallace University in the near future.

A variety of online and hands-on approaches accommodates different types of learners enrolled in the online learning community through the ESC of Cuyahoga County. Both students have the opportunity to experience webcasts, experiments, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and learning games.

Details of Ohio Online Learning can be found at www.OhioOnlineLearning.org.

Students Learn how to "Master the Art of Public Speaking"

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools, Richmond Heights Local Schools, and several other school districts participated in a public speaking workshop at the ESC of Cuyahoga County on February 5th. The workshop, "Speaking to Win: How Mastering the Art of Public Speaking Will Help You in School and in Life," featured keynote speaker Lisa Ryan, President of Grategy.

"The workshop encompassed fear reduction, preparation tips, presentation design, skill development, and winning style. These topics were covered through examples and activities to enhance public speaking skills," said Wayne Gibson, ESC's Director of Gifted Education. The students will now be able to use these techniques in various projects in their high school settings."

In an evaluation, a Richmond Heights student commented, "I will be able to use some of these skills on interviews, presentations, even when I am having conversations with my peers and teachers."



Richmond Heights Art Students Create a Cultural Mural

Richmond Heights Secondary art students—Isabella Gorjanc, Patricia Molina, and Malik Hayes—were recognized on March 11th by the Richmond Heights Board of Education for their outstanding art achievements. They took the opportunity to present Board members and Superintendent Dr. Robert Moore with a cultural mural that was created by them and their fellow art students during the 2012-13 school year. The cultural mural's design reflects their personal and community diversity as students of the Richmond Heights Local Schools, members of their community, and citizens of the state of Ohio and of the United States. Their teacher, Mary Nichols-Bronfield, participated in a Summer Teacher Institute at the ESC of Cuyahoga County and funded by the Ohio Humanities Council, that explored cultural diversity and the ways that clothing and

personal adornment reflect our personalities and cultural development. The students were inspired to design, draw and paint this mural reflecting the cultural values of their generation.



Simon Youth North Coast Academy Grateful to Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury Charitable Trust for On-going Donations

Simon Youth North Coast Academy (NCA), located at the Richmond Town Square above Sears in Richmond Heights, is a school that provides an alternative high school setting where at-risk students may earn their high school diploma.



The Simon Youth Foundation and the ESC of Cuyahoga County established a consortium of 13 schools to serve the needs of these students in 2001 with the opening of this school.

For the past five years, the Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury Charitable Trust has donated more than \$100,000 towards scholarships to Simon Youth NCA graduates who may not have had the opportunity to attend post-secondary education opportunities due to life's situations.

This year, the Dusenbury Trust will continue providing scholarship monies for post-secondary education opportunities, public bus transportation for economically-challenged students, and field trips to area two- and four-year colleges and universities.

"We are deeply grateful for the Dusenbury's ongoing support of Simon Youth NCA," said Rena Wertheim, NCA Director. "Acting in accordance to the intentions of the late founders of the trust, Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury, the trustees continue to have made a significant difference in the lives of our students and we thank them for their on-going support."

Simon Youth NCA graduates who were recipients of scholarships have or continue to attend colleges and universities such as Cleveland State University, the University of Akron, Marymount School of Practical Nursing, Kent State University, Cuyahoga Community College, Ursuline College, Hocking College, Lakeland Community College, and the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music.

ESC Board Members Receive OSBA Award

ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. received his sixth OSBA Award of Achievement Honor. ESC Board Member Tony Hocevar received his fourth OSBA Award of Achievement Honor. Of the more than 3,300 board members in Ohio, only 77 received this honor in 2013. Pictured with them are OSBA Northeast Regional President Julie Schafer and OSBA State President Charlie Wilson.



Frank Mahnic, Jr.



Tony Hocevar

Fair Showcases Programs and Activities for Children with Disabilities for Summer and Beyond

The ESC of Cuyahoga County sponsored the 15th annual Summer and Beyond Fair on February 23rd at St. Michael's Woodside Party Center in Broadview Heights. Families were able to explore summer camps and activities for children and youth with disabilities. Free fingerprinting ID cards were available, as well as the popular "2013 Summer and Beyond Directory" that lists hundreds of opportunities for children. The directory also is available on-line at www.esc-cc.org.



Now is the Time to “March into Kindergarten” continued

other staff. A child’s transition to kindergarten is much more positive when they know what to expect and who is there to help as they venture into a brand new environment.

“Registration for kindergarten paves the way for a smooth and planful transition for children, parents, preschools and schools,” said Rebekah Dorman, Director, Invest in Children. “Preschools can then prepare children for their specific new school and schools are able to prepare to receive the children. Parents and children can familiarize themselves with the new school setting long before the first day of school, and be well-prepared for this next important step on the child’s educational journey. March into Kindergarten helps everyone work together to set the child on the path to educational success.”

“Early elementary educators play a vital role in shaping the experiences of our youngest students,” said ESC Superintendent Bob Mengerink. “In Cuyahoga County, our schools educate a very diverse population of students. Recognizing this diversity, it is even more important for teachers to have as much information as possible about each child at the outset so their classroom and teaching can effectively address the multiple strengths and challenges students will bring to the first day of school.”

“When we think of the first day of kindergarten, we imagine family photographs of adorable 5- and 6-year-olds, dressed smartly, holding their new lunch boxes and giving the camera their best big-kid smiles,” says Robin R. Martin of the Family & Children First Council of Cuyahoga County. “If families have not prepared and registered, a day that is supposed to be a smooth transition into a major new stage of a child’s life is instead chaotic and stressful. That’s a very different picture.”



Richmond Heights Students Partner with Windsor, Ontario School to Increase Global and Cultural Awareness

Mary Nichols-Bronfield, art teacher for the secondary schools at Richmond Heights Local Schools, has a passion for teaching her students to “think global.” She has been working with 20 of her art students this school year on a project they will remember for a lifetime called the “International Handmade Book Exchange.”

The students are working with teachers and students from Walkerville Collegiate School for the Arts in Windsor, Ontario to create their own journals reflecting their cultural experiences that will be exchanged between the two schools later this spring.

The Richmond Heights students took two field trips to the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory in downtown Cleveland. They made handmade paper and bound it into personalized journals. In the journals, the students are writing reflections about culture and using illustrations, cartoons, and other images to decorate the journals. The Walkerville students are currently making their own books with found objects and recycled materials. The students look forward to exchanging their books and learning more about the similarities and differences in their cultures. The conclusion of the project will be an exhibit of all the books for the Richmond Heights community.

This Ohio/Ontario project is made possible through a grant from Kent State University and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.



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