



Thursday Notes from the Northeast Key
a program of CSC, Inc.



April 22, 2010

Today's Edition:

- ✓ **Northeast Key News**
 - Looking for Child Care Practitioners
 - Second Friday Conference Call
 - Rename Thursday Notes Announcement
 - NE Key TAP
- ✓ **State News**
 - Nominations Sought for Keystone STARS Advisory Committee
 - DPW Improves the Lives of Pennsylvania's Children
 - Harriet Dichter confirmed as Secretary of Public Welfare
 - PACCA's 2010 Award of Excellence and Educator of the Year Award
- ✓ **Keystone STARS**
 - Keystone STARS Family Standards Meetings
- ✓ **Learning Communities**
- ✓ **Professional Development Activities**
 - Professional Development At A Glance
 - Professional Development Opportunities
- ✓ **Early Childhood Mental Health**
 - Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires as a Screening Tool
- ✓ **For Your Information**
 - Week of the Young Child
 - Retired Air Force General Norman R. Seip: Expanding High-Quality Pre-K is a Matter of National Security
 - Casey: Pre-K Expansion Brings a Hefty Price Tag



Northeast Key News

Looking for Child Care Practitioners



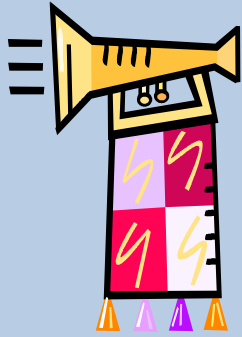
Do you have a good sense of the "pulse" of your community?

Would you be interested in meeting with
other practitioners in the Region?

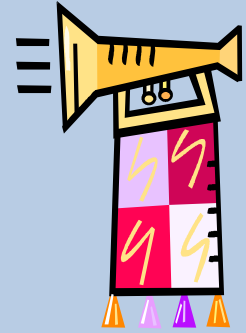
If so, the Northeast Key is looking for **YOU!!**

The Northeast Key is convening a group of practitioners from across the Northeast Region who would occasionally come together or conference call to get your input into new activities sponsored by the Regional Key.

If you are interested in being a part of this group, please email Beth Gambone at bgambone@cscinc.org with your name, the name of your program, your county and the best way to contact you. We will be taking names of those who are interested through the end of May.



Announcing The NEW Name for Thursday Notes!!!!



The votes are in
and the name that won the most votes is....



**Look for the NEW name
In July**

"The Key Connection"

Congratulations to Nancy Perri from YMCA of Carbondale whose name was selected by you as the new name for Thursday Notes!!

Second Friday Conference Call



Mark your calendar for the Second Friday Conference Call

May 14, 2010 – 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Future Dates: June 11, 2010 – 8:00 am to 9:00 am

If you have suggestions for a topic to discuss please feel free to email your suggestions to bgambone@cscinc.org.

To register for these conference go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Second_Friday_Conference_Call and complete the information in the survey. You can register for one or for all of the Second Friday Conference Calls.

You can also register for the Conference Calls by emailing Beth Gambone at bgambone@cscinc.org.

Dial-In Number: 218-862-1000

Participant Access Code: 157031#

Standard long distance charges apply when joining the Conference Call.

NE Key TAP

What is NE Key TAP?!

The Northeast Key TAPs are...

Technical Assistance Papers published by the Northeast Key to assist programs in the effort to develop and implement high quality services for children and families.

The first TAPs is on **"Instructions for Daily Health Checks"**

**** We have attached a copy of this TAPs. They will also be available on the CSC website under the Resources section. ****

State News

Nominations Sought for Keystone STARS Advisory Committee

OCDEL is seeking members for the Keystone STARS Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to advise OCDEL about the Keystone STARS program including performance standards, operations, and program design. The Advisory Committee makes recommendations by providing feedback and representing Keystone STARS provider concerns and assists in the development of program protocols, tools and resources to strengthen the quality of learning programs in the Commonwealth. The Advisory Committee membership brings unique knowledge and skills, which complement those key individuals and departmental staff engaged in this work. The Advisory Committee does not have formal authority and cannot issue directives that must be followed. Members appointed to the Advisory Committee serve at the pleasure of OCDEL.

Individuals appointed to the STARS Advisory Committee serve a three-year term of service. Terms of service coincide with the start of the state fiscal year in July. Individuals, whose names are put forth for consideration to serve on the Committee, shall possess practical program content knowledge and skills that will strengthen and advance the Keystone STARS Initiative.

For those interested in being considered for appointment to this committee, please return the [Keystone STARS Advisory Committee Application](#) (pdf) to OCDEL by **May 10, 2010**.

DPW Improves the Lives of Pennsylvania's Children

The DPW budget invests in proven programs for children with accountable results.

Reducing Child Abuse

By supporting families with programs that prevent abuse, **Pennsylvania has achieved a 10% reduction in substantiated child abuse cases** since 2003.

Providing At-Risk Children with Safe, Permanent Homes

Our focus on creating safe, permanent homes for all Pennsylvania's children has resulted in an **almost 60% decrease in the number of children entering foster care since 2003.**

Improving Children's Early Learning, School and Life Success

Our continuum of early learning programs, including Keystone STARS, Nurse Family Partnership, Child Care Works, and PA Pre-K Counts, is producing gains. In 2002-2003, fewer than one in five Pennsylvania children had access to a quality early education; **now, one in three children access quality early education.**

Assuring Children Receive Financial Support from Non-Custodial Parents

Our child support program leads the country in assuring that children receive financial support from their non-custodial parent. In 2009, **Pennsylvania was the nation's best in the collection of support orders at 81.3%**, which is higher than the national average of 61.9%.

Improving Children's Health

The **Pennsylvania Medical Assistance program covers over 1.1 million children**, with a focus on preventative health care. 94% of children in the first 15 months of life see a doctor as often as recommended. Children three to six years of age are 3 to 4% above the national average in terms of seeing their primary care provider when they should.

The mission of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is to protect and serve Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens, to promote, improve and sustain the quality of family life, and to break the cycle of dependency, while managing our resources effectively and promoting respect for employees.

The focus for the DPW FY10-11 Budget is **sustainability**—preserving services for those who need them, **quality and results**—ensuring services improve the lives of those who receive them, and **accountability**—ensuring efficient use of tax dollars.

For more information about the DPW budget visit www.dpw.state.pa.us. For information on how to support funding for this critical program visit the non-partisan Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center at www.pennbpc.org

Harriet Dichter confirmed as Secretary of Public Welfare

We are pleased to announce that Harriet Dichter was unanimously confirmed as Secretary for the Department of Public Welfare by the state Senate on Tuesday, April 20, 2010. She has served as Acting Secretary since the beginning of 2010.

Secretary Dichter's contributions to DPW mark a continuation of her career in the public, non-profit and philanthropic sectors. Prior to taking on the role of Secretary, she served as the founding Deputy Secretary for the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. In that role, she worked to build a quality early education continuum, and Pennsylvania has gained national attention for its accomplishments in early childhood education.

Secretary Dichter has 25 years of experience in health and human services, including serving on the management team at the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and running the City of Philadelphia's Office of Maternal and Child Health. She has an undergraduate degree from Yale and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Her role as Secretary continues her lifelong dedication to help design, build and implement systems and services that can make a genuine difference in the lives of low-income Pennsylvanians and other vulnerable people in our society.

Please join the entire OCDEL staff in congratulating Secretary Dichter on her confirmation.

PACCA's 2010 Award of Excellence and Educator of the Year Award - Nominate a Colleague!

Help recognize those child care professionals who inspire the rest! Award of Excellence honors directors for outstanding service and accomplishments in the field of administration. Educator of the Year Award acknowledges outstanding direct care and education of young children.

To submit your nominee, please complete the official nominee form recently mailed to all PACCA members or visit the [PACCA website](#) for information and eligibility requirements. Nomination deadline **has been extended until April 30, 2010.**

All nominees and winners will be announced at the Early Childhood Action Day, June 8, 2010 in Harrisburg, PA. All nominees will be notified of the Awards Committee's decision. For additional information, please call the Pennsylvania Child Care Association at 717-657-9000.

Keystone STARS Family Standards Meetings



Keystone STARS Family Standards Meetings are being held for Family Child Care Providers throughout the region in May 2010. The meetings will introduce the updated Keystone STARS Family Standards that become effective July 1st, 2010.

Berks County	May 18th, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm – Berks County Agricultural Center
Bucks County	May 11th, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm – Warminster WREC Center
Lehigh County	May 12th, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – Community Services for Children
Luzerne County	May 10th, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – Hoyt Library
Monroe County	June 5th, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm – The Growing Tree (Mini Conference – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm)
Northampton County	May 19th, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – Easton Hospital
Schuylkill County	May 19th, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm – Schuylkill Medical Center
Susquehanna County	May 22nd, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Susquehanna County Cares Literacy Office (Mini Conference – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm)

**** If your county is not listed, your STARS Manager will contact you to discuss the new Standards.****

Registration is limited, so please register promptly. Meetings may be cancelled due to low registration. Please review the registration form and choose a meeting date and location that will fit your schedule best. You will also notice offerings of mini-conferences for Family Providers in select counties, with the Family Standards Meeting occurring within that conference. Additional information will follow regarding the upcoming mini-conferences in Thursday's Notes.

Email, fax, or mail the registrations form to:

Attention: Sheila Rapchak
Fax: 610-432-5700
Email: srapchak@cscinc.org

Mail: Northeast Regional Key/Community Services for Children, Inc.
1520 Hanover Avenue
Allentown, PA 18109

**** The Keystone STARS Family Standards Meeting Flyer and the Family Standards Meeting Registration Form which includes dates and meeting locations are on the website under the Thursday Notes section. ****

Learning Communities



Looking Ahead

Learning Communities coming to your county in April, May and June!

Attend the following Learning Communities and you can climb the STARS!

Transitioning Children –

Lackawanna (4/29/2010) and Luzerne (5/28/2010)

Personal Care Routines

Berks (4/29/2010) and Lackawanna (5/27/2010)

Classroom Observation of Staff and Performance Appraisals

Luzerne (6/18/2010) and Bucks (6/10/2010)

**** Details including locations can be found on the attached Learning Communities for April – June 2010 flyer or on the website under the Learning Communities section. ****

Professional Development Activities

Professional Development At A Glance

**We have attempted to pull all of the Professional Development Events on the PA Keys website that are taking place April 19, 2010 to May 16, 2010. To view this list, please see the Professional Development Section on the CSC Website or visit www.pakeys.org to see a complete listing of all upcoming Professional Development Events and to Register ** We have also heard your suggestions and have included the Knowledge Area and Competency Level for each of the events. Hope you find this format helpful.



**Early Learning and School Age Programs:
Here is an On-line Opportunity for your Parents with Teens!**

The PA Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) invites youth, parents and staff in older youth programs to participate in two events! On April 27, 2010- there is a one-hour webinar on teens and social media tools (Facebook, Youtube, etc). Find out what teens are really doing on-line! And on May 4-6, 2010- there is an on-line career fair for middle and high school students to explore career opportunities in Pennsylvania. Space is limited- see registration information below.

To view the informational flyers for the two events listed below, please visit the PSAYDN website by clicking this link: www.psaydn.org

Social Media Webinar for Parents: Demystifying What Your Teens are Doing Online – April 27, 2010, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This one-hour webinar will demystify social media tools and talk about what your kid is REALLY doing online through the exploration of Facebook, YouTube, blogs, wikis and the newest fad, Chat Roulette. They will also talk about how you can work with teens to protect his/her privacy and use these tools productively and safely. Michele Martin, a parent and expert in social media, and Jessica Roy, a 2010 graduate of New York University (NYU) with a BA in new media, will be your guides. **Space is limited, so be sure to [register for the webinar by following this link!](#)** Once you complete the online registration, you will be sent a confirmation and information on how to log in to the webinar.

If you have any questions or want more information, contact parcepnetwork@gmail.com or visit <http://sepacareerfair2010.ning.com/>.

Online Career Fair – May 4 – 6, 2010

This event will allow middle and high school students, parents, as well as teachers, guidance counselors, and anyone else who wants to learn about careers in Pennsylvania to log on from their home, office or school and participate in webinars with employers and schools throughout the region. Live events will take place between 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM and from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM on each of the three days. All events will be recorded so you can access them later or listen to a session you weren't able to attend. To see a schedule of the live events, or to register [click here](#).

School-Age Professional Development Opportunities

Check out the attached School-Age PD Flyer for exciting professional development opportunities for your School-Age staff that are happening in April and May.

Don't forget about the SAC Mini-Conference happening **May 1, 2010** at Community Services for Children. **REGISTER TODAY!!!**

3rd Annual Higher Education Institute, The Future is Here: Developing Responsive Pre-K to Grade 4 Educators & Learners - May 24-25, State College – REMINDER!

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the Pennsylvania Key, and PennAEYC issue an invitation to the 3rd Annual Higher Education Institute on Diversity, The Future is Here: Developing Responsive PreK- Grade 4 Educators & Learners, to be held on May 24-25, 2010 at the Penn Stater, State College, PA.

The purpose of the institute is to provide faculty, administrators, and other professional development providers with methods, research, and instructional strategies associated with meeting the unique educational needs of all learners in Pre-K through Grade 4. A specific focus will be on racially, ethnically, linguistically, ability, and socio-economically diverse learners and their families.

Areas to be addressed through institute sessions include:

- Effective approaches for addressing Chapter 49-2 requirements
- Building effective collaboration with diverse partners
- Assessment of the performance and progress of all learners
- Building opportunities for high quality inclusionary practices and programs
- Emerging issues and research related to preparing current and future personnel to support all learners in Pre-K through Grade 4
- Resources and instructional strategies for developing responsive educators

For additional information, including registration instructions, please see the [3rd Annual Higher Education Institute, The Future is Here: Developing Responsive Pre-K to Grade 4 Educators & Learners brochure](#) (pdf).

44th PAEYC Conference

Creativity: Where the Future Begins

May 14 – 15, 2010

Pittsburg, PA

For more information on the Conference visit <http://www.pghaeyc.org/>



Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires as a Screening Tool

This session is intended for **directors/administrators** of early learning entities that have achieved a STAR 2 Level or above. Participants will learn how to use the ASQ and ASQ:SE as a screening tool for children ages 3 months – 5 years. As a result of their participation in the session, they will receive these screening tools (limited to one per site) and will be able to administer, score, share results with families, and refer children for further evaluation if indicated.

Upcoming Ages and Stages Questionnaire training in the Northeast:

Northampton County

April 29, 2010

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Five Points Elementary School

363 Five Points Richmond Road, Bangor, PA 18013

Fee: \$5.00 per Director/Administrator

Sign up TODAY!!

**Time is running out for you to take advantage of this
Professional Development Opportunity!!**

Register online at www.pakeys.org!!

A service provided by the Northeast Regional Key





Look what these programs did for the Week of the Young Child!!

Little People Day Care School – West a STAR 3 program had the following activities:

Guessing Game - Jar in foyer where children guess the contents all week long. Prizes are awarded Friday. This year, we used circus peanuts. In the past, we used jelly beans, mini marshmallows, gummy bears and pennies.

Special Readers - In the past, we had: local 5th. grade class, Mike Washo, Kevin Murphy. This year our school-agers are doing the reading. We expect a Bank president to read at the end of the month.

Face painting by our school-agers. In the past, we invited local college kids to paint.

Special treats like Ice Cream Sundaes and favorite lunches



Trike-a-thon to benefit St Judes Children's Hospital. This year, we included our annual Hop-a-thon to benefit MS and Bubbles for Autism. Baskets were donated by staff, outsiders and the school. All monies are being sent to the three benefits.

Wheel-barrel Races - School-agers and Pre-K children did wheel-barrel races in the playground this year.



It was fun for everyone!!!



Family YMCA of Easton STAR 3 and 4 programs, had the following activities:

Y Color Day! – Wear the Y colors Red, Blue, Yellow, or Green. Kick off Breakfast. Visit by Mayor Panto including a special presentation by the children.

All About Me Day! – The parents and children drew themselves or wrote their names on the sidewalks.

Pajama Day! – Wear favorite PJs to school. Jelly Jar pictures. Afternoon Story Time where parents can join in for Story Time and popcorn.

Give a Hand to ECDC Kids! – The parents painted their children's hands to make a "Give a Hand" Mural.

When I Grow Up Day! – Children discussed what they want to be when they grow up. The preschool children participated in 3 Kinds of Touch program. Then the children had a Rita's Water Icy Party.

Retired Air Force General Norman R. Seip: Expanding High-Quality Pre-K is a Matter of National Security

Over the years, the ranks of those advocating for expanding public pre-K have grown as economists and business leaders made the case that providing all kids with a high-quality early education is essential to America's future competitiveness. Now a growing list of the nation's top military leaders say doing so is also a matter of national security. Having served as a Lieutenant General in the Air Force, including a command of 46,000 airmen assigned to 12th Air Force, General Seip is intimately acquainted with what it takes to organize, train and equip our armed forces so they can defend against threats to our nation. He is also a leader of a relatively new organization, Mission: Readiness, which advocates for improving the quality of and access to preschool education.

General Seip reports, "While our military remains strong and prepared, there are concerned about the downward trajectory of readiness among our young people. There is a growing deficit of skills and fitness among our young people that threatens our military readiness, as well as our country's ability to compete on other levels in the private sector as well. In fact, as we've reported in a series of research reports, 75 percent of 17 to 24 year-olds are ineligible for service in the Armed Forces. Those of us who have had the privilege of leading our military feel we have identified a serious problem, and we want to affirmatively address it in a serious way."

He continues, stating, "We have the experience to understand the problem and analyze solutions, and we believe that we can help forge a policy solution. So we have formed Mission: Readiness to bring our experience to bear on this troubling set of issues. "Readiness" refers both to our military's capacity as well as the need for us to get the upcoming generations ready for our challenging world. In order to elevate this set of issues among policy-makers and the public, we need organizational capacity and staff to help us, and we are building our organization with the help from staff and important seed money from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Birth to Five Policy Alliance."

To view the entire article, please visit the [Preschool Matters website](#)



Casey: Pre-K expansion brings a hefty price tag

The Pennsylvania senator was told by a panel the \$9 billion cost would be money well spent.

The proposal has a \$9 billion price tag. But the benefits of expanding childhood education nationally would outweigh the costs, panelists told U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., at a Senate hearing at Morrisville High School April 6, 2010.

Making pre-K programs available to all children is a hefty proposition in a budget year that's already cutting programs, said Casey, who has proposed a bill to provide federal funding for early childhood education.

"That makes it harder to fund a new commitment. But I think the commitment is there, and it's a bipartisan issue. We don't want to scale back or shortchange our vision," he said. He spoke to a room packed with community members and more than 20 students. Casey said he chose Morrisville for the hearing because it's had success with its state-funded Pre-K Counts program.

The legislation he has proposed would help many district families, said Superintendent Elizabeth Yonson, who spoke at the hearing. Nearly half the Morrisville School District children younger than age 5 are from families who are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, she said. That's roughly \$40,000 for a family of four, and it's precisely the population the bill aims to help with free pre-K. Panelists, including district educators, researchers and leaders in child development, urged Casey to work toward guaranteeing federal funding to expand access to high quality pre-kindergarten education for all American children.

The evidence shows that early childhood education improves not only academic performance and social aptitude in kindergarten, but also sets the tone for long-term success into adulthood. Yet, only one in five Pennsylvania children younger than 5 receives high-quality, publicly funded education, said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children.

Three studies of about 1,800 students in various American pre-K programs demonstrate the advantages, said Debra Ackerman, associate director for research at the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University. Each program served disadvantaged children, used highly qualified teachers, and had staff-to-child ratios of 1 to 8.5 or better.

The key findings:

- Fewer students in the programs ended up needing special education. About 15 percent of students in a Michigan school's pre-K needed special education in higher grades, compared to 34 percent of students who weren't in the program.
- More students in such pre-K programs graduated from high school. About 66 percent of the Michigan students graduated from high school on time, versus 45 percent of children who weren't in the program.
- Children in pre-K programs experienced less grade repetition, greater enrollment in college and higher income and employment rates by age 40, compared to those who didn't attend pre-K.

The implications can't be ignored, said Ackerman. "The costs of a high-quality pre-k program are admittedly not cheap, but it can be more expensive in the long run to fund programs that have little chance of improving children's outcomes," she said. The basic elements that make a program successful are high teaching credentials, small class sizes, access to support professionals, high curriculum standards and ongoing support for teachers, she said.

Bucks County has been one of the testing grounds for government-funded early childhood education for the past three years. State-funded grants for Pre-K Counts support about 175 children in the Morrisville, Bristol Township and Neshaminy school districts and five United Way program sites. Students who are in the Morrisville district's pre-K have made great strides in reading, writing and math, Yonson said. Seventy-one percent of students in the program are above the standard level in reading. Many have already worked with the gifted teacher and are now being tested for the gifted program, said Yonson. Melissa Bowman, a Morrisville kindergarten teacher, said she can tell which of her students attended pre-k because they tend to be ahead academically and more comfortable in class.

Other panelists included Todd Klunk, acting deputy secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, under the state's departments of public welfare and education and Michelle Fina, branch director of the Morrisville YMCA, which applied for Pre-K Counts grants with the school district. Klunk talked about the need to develop talented educators. Fina, who has a master's degree in early childhood education, said independent evaluators have given Pre-K Counts at the YMCA excellent scores.

Casey first introduced legislation in 2007 to expand voluntary high quality pre-kindergarten, especially to low-income families. The Prepare all Kids Act would help states make voluntary high quality universal pre-k programs available to 3- to 5-year-olds for at least one year before kindergarten.

After being reintroduced, the bill has been read and referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. "I hope the bill spurs some conversations on early learning at the federal level. It's good to have Casey involved and communicating with school districts," said Terry Casey, president of the Pennsylvania Childcare Association. She's not related to the senator.

Benso said the federal government must take some action but without pulling money away from existing education programs or skimping on program requirements. "If we're going to use taxpayer money, we should do what works. Quality matters. It may take 10 to 20 years for all children to get high quality early education, but getting lesser quality early education for all children sooner is not going to work," said Benso.