

December 2009



## Handprints

Welcome to the second edition of our email newsletter. We are pleased to bring you many wonderful articles and necessary information about children and families in our community. Please enjoy the information and feel free to check out our NEW website at [www.partnershipforchildren.org](http://www.partnershipforchildren.org)!

Check out our new tip sheets!

- [Parenting Tips](#)
- [Teacher Tips](#)
- [Director Tips](#)
- [Family Child Care Home Tips](#)

Just a reminder: The Smart Start office will be closed December 21st-25th and New Years Day.

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## Director's Corner

Linda Leonard



Thank you to everyone who helped make our 5th Annual Snacks with Santa a success. Smart Start of Davidson County would also like to extend a special thank you to Thomasville Medical Center for partnering with us to make this event a success. We had over 20 different agencies and businesses participate by providing games and activities. Even a cold rainy day didn't stop over 2,500 people from attending. Thank you to the following businesses for their participation: All About Education, Lex

## Family Corner

### Toys that will grow with them...

During this holiday season the best gift that can be given to a child is your time. Playing on the floor with them will help you understand what they like to play with and how they like to play. Think back on childhood to what you enjoyed playing with. Why did you like those toys? Sometimes the best gifts are the ones that cost the least. Here are some simple ideas of toys that will grow with your child...

- Unbreakable Mirror
- Toys that stimulate senses-sound, sight, touch
- Small nesting/stacking toys
- Bath toys
- Push and Pull toys
- Wooden blocks, children will use until about 6 or 7
- Non-motorized riding toys (toys with pedals)
- Puzzles (knobbed for younger, more flat pieces for older children)
- Dress-up clothes

- Musical Instruments (children also love making these)
- Toys that represent everyday living (cell phones, cameras, cleaning tools, baby dolls, doctor kit). Things that they see used in their day-to-day activities.
- Cardboard boxes- from cereal boxes to refrigerator boxes. They can be used for building or climbing in and out.

Please Remember: No toy can replace you. Your child will enjoy whatever you play together. Don't stress about getting the perfect gift, your time and attention is the most perfect gift.

~ Kay Honeycutt  
School Readiness Specialist

## Toy Safety during the Holidays...

### Things to watch for...

- Make sure to check the label on the toy for the appropriate age range.
- When buying any kind of riding toys, make sure to include a helmet and proper pads.
- For younger children who tend to put things in their mouths, check to make sure toys do not have small pieces.
- Avoid toys made of brittle plastic that can break and leave dangerous points and edges.

## Kids Count down to Christmas...

### Here are some fun ideas!

- Ask children to draw pictures and/or write out holiday food menus (with your help).
- Let children design and make their own wrapping paper and christmas cards. Let the children also be involved in putting stamps on letters and placing in the mailbox.
- Making ornaments for the christmas tree or decorations for the house.
- Pick something around the house (like marbles) to represent the days until Christmas. Show children how to count the marbles and take away one from the jar each day leading up to Christmas. When the jar is empty, it will be Christmas Day!  
P.S. - This can also work with taking cotton balls off Santa's Beard.

Medical, Inc., Pizza Hut, SunTrust, Thomasville Pediatrics, Thomasville Medical Center, Walmart, and Western & Southern Life. With the impressive turn-out and generosity of those who came, we were able to collect a substantial donation of food for Family Services of Davidson County. We wish everyone and their families a happy and safe holiday season.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



## Upcoming Events

**March 20th 2010-**  
Early Childhood Professional Educator's Conference @ First Baptist in Lexington

**April 17th 2010-**  
Itty Bitty Kiddie Festival @ Davidson County

# Early Childhood Corner

## Ready Schools

The Ready Schools Initiative is a cooperative project between local elementary schools, Smart Start of Davidson County, families, and the community. The definition is simple:

"A ready elementary school provides an inviting atmosphere, values and respects all children and their families, and is a place where children succeed. It is committed to high quality in all domains of learning and teaching and has deep connections with parents and its community. It prepares children for success in work and life in the 21st century."

The work needed to make the definition come to life in our county is challenging. Davidson County is one of approximately 42 counties in the state engaged in cooperative work to meet the Ready Schools' Goals of:

- creating strong early childhood beginnings,
- ensuring smooth transitions from home or preschool to elementary school, and
- supporting elementary schools in creating continuous learning environments.

**Please join me in congratulating all three school districts for their continued support and work on this project.** Participating schools will be able to apply for a grant of up to \$3000.00 to meet their ready schools goals. If you would like more information or are interested in volunteering, please call Stephanie Nelson at (336) 249-6688.

## Early Educator Certification

Our work is more than a job, it's a profession - complete with a common mission, set of skills, a knowledge base and certified professionals. Become a part of growing body of Early Educators who are proud to be certified and recognized as professionals by getting certified today.

Free applications are going fast ... 150 spots were filled in just one week! Applicants will be served on a first come, first serve basis. Eligible positions include:

- director/administrator
- assistant director/administrator
- teacher
- assistant teacher
- school age group leader
- floater
- education coordinator

- family child care provider

Contact the EEC Office for more information on how to become certified and for more information on available EEC Rewards. Call 919-942-7442 or email [info@nceec.org](mailto:info@nceec.org).

### Education for the Stars Reminder

The Deadline for submitting Education for the Stars Grades and Verification forms for the fall semester is January 14, 2010. Contact [Don Stewart](#) for more information.

## Update: Smart Start Scholarship Program!

The Child Care Scholarship Program began serving families on October 12, 2009. The response from the community has been tremendous! In less than two months, the program has helped place around 70 children into 23 quality child care facilities within Davidson County.

Families haven't been the only beneficiary of our new program. The four and five star facilities serving our scholarship families have experienced considerable increases in their enrollment. This helps to provide new job opportunities for those working in the early childhood field. It has created a win-win situation for everyone involved.

**Child Care Scholarships are still available.** We encourage anyone who is working at least twenty hours a week, a full-time student (or a combination of the two), disabled, or homeless to please apply.

For more information on SSDC Child Care Scholarship Program, please call Mandy Campbell or Lauren Groce at 336-249-6688 or email us at

**[mandyc@partnershipforchildren.org](mailto:mandyc@partnershipforchildren.org)** or  
**[laureng@partnershipforchildren.org](mailto:laureng@partnershipforchildren.org)**.

## 15 Free Copies

## Drop by our office!

Visit our Resource Room located at:  
235 East Center Street in Lexington  
Call Melissa for more information @  
**(336) 249-6688**

**Offer Expires: Friday, January 15th, 2010**

**Please bring coupon!**

