

February 2011

MARYLAND'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM AT RISK:

STATE, LOCAL BUDGET WOES REQUIRE OUR ACTION

We all have felt the impact of the recession. Our Federal, State and local governments have felt it even more. Tax payments have declined at all levels, and recession-related public expenditures have increased, so the long knives of the budget-cutters are aimed at everything, including the vital public supports for Maryland's child care sector and the families that we serve.

At the FEDERAL level, we have lost the stimulus funding that kept Maryland from having child care subsidy waiting lists and kept our training infrastructure intact. President Obama would like to restore some of that Federal funding to child care, but the new Congress has a distinct bias against increases in Federal domestic spending, and is looking for big cuts. We need your communications to your Senators and your Representative to ask them to support the President's FY 2011 and 2012 Budget proposals. An easy way to do that is through <http://www.naeyc.org/policy/action> .

At the MARYLAND State level the Governor has proposed a Budget that would replace the missing Federal stimulus funding for child care subsidies, but would bring very serious cuts to Resource & Referral and family support funds. Other MSDE funding would continue at the same level for the most part, unlike other Government Departments that are facing layoffs and worse. But your State Senators and Delegates will be looking to make additional cuts in the Budget to protect their favorite parts of the State and county governments. So please get in touch with your Senators and Delegates to let them know how you feel about maintaining the integrity of Maryland's early childhood and family support system. In particular, please ask your legislators to support the Governor's allocations for MSDE for young children, except for increases for child care resource & referral and family support. You can do this through <http://mdelect.net/electedofficials> , although you'll have to fill in your address and click through several screens.

Maryland's LOCAL JURISDICTIONS also are under severe budget pressures, especially if the State Government passes on to them some of the expenses the State previously absorbed. Next month the County and Baltimore City proposed budgets will be issued, with public hearings to follow. If you can, please keep track of what's proposed for early childhood in your jurisdiction,

and do what you can to support at least existing levels of local funding for early childhood and family supports. You might get information on these questions from your local child care resource and referral agency.

Please act soon on these issues, and enlist your colleagues, your family and friends in this effort. It really matters for the future of the children and families we care for.

DRAFT QUALITY RATING IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS (QRIS) AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Office of Child Care recently announced its proposed matrix of standards for a new QRIS system for Maryland's centers and family child care homes, at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/019E3F93-C6FB-4CFA-A340-6089D80EBECA/27197/QRISstanddraft_010611.pdf. The Office intends to schedule focus groups about the proposed standards in different parts of Maryland, and it will establish a pilot program in one of its regions. Once the results of these have been incorporated into the standards, the Office plans to introduce them throughout Maryland. This is a big step forward, after years of planning.

PLEASE VOTE IN NAEYC ELECTIONS!

NAEYC is conducting its annual Governing Board and President-Elect elections now, through 5 p.m. on March 1. You can vote online at www.naeyc.org, if you have your member number and the PIN for voting that came with your election package in the mail.

NAEYC'S EARLY LEARNING NEWS PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL PRESS

NAEYC's website now has a relatively new feature, where news of interest to us as early childhood professionals is gathered, with links to the sources. See <http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/naeycel/issues/2011-01-28.html#0>.

NAEYC OFFERS WORKSHOP ON

IMPROVING PROGRAM QUALITY THROUGH SELF-STUDY

NAEYC's central Accreditation Program Support staff will be conducting an all-day workshop with the above title at NAEYC Headquarters on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Continental breakfast, lunch and refreshments are included. The workshop is designed for early learning practitioners with some or no prior knowledge of the NAEYC Accreditation process. NAEYC's Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria publication and an exclusive participant manual will be provided. All this is at a cost of \$199 for NAEYC members, including you. Registration closes on Friday, February 18. You may register with an e-mail to AccreditationTraining@naeyc.org.

CHILD CARE DAY IN ANNAPOLIS A SUCCESS

MDAEYC co-sponsored an afternoon and evening program on Monday, January 31, at the State Capitol in Annapolis, including visits to legislators' offices, a box dinner, a briefing on the legislative process, a pep talk by Senator Nancy King, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families, and a tour of the State House. Well over 100 Maryland providers attended, and we conveyed the message in the lead article above.