

EARLY

STAGES

STRONG BEGINNINGS • BRIGHT FUTURES



WWW.EARLYSTAGESDC.ORG

CONTACT EARLY STAGES

WWW.DCPS.DC.GOV

The Early Edition

March 2011, Volume 1, Issue 2

Introduction

Thank you for your support of the Early Stages Center, and welcome to the second issue of Early Edition!

As Executive Director, I have the honor of leading several talented teams. In this issue, we will be taking a closer look at our Child Find and referral processes. Led by Program Manager Sean Compagnucci, the Child Find team represents Early Stages in the community. This team works with the community to find children who can benefit from our center's resources, and educates the public on the importance of early intervention. There are Child Find Field Coordinators in all eight wards of the District of Columbia, and several who focus on child care, health care, and social services outreach.

I hope you enjoy learning more about Child Find, the referral process, and your dedicated Child Find team.

As always, we welcome your feedback as we work to make our second year even more successful than our first.

Nathaniel Beers, MD, MPA, FAAP

Early Stages Staff

Your friendly Ward 8 Child Find Field Coordinators are none other than Phyllis Lewis and Milton Bryant.

Phyllis is local to the area and has been working with underserved families for most of her career. In addition to Child Find, she has helped coordinate children's programs at the Lincoln Theatre. Before Early Stages, she authored *I Count for Something*, a book teaching children how to count using relatable concepts.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Special Education

Early Stages Center
1125 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
phone: 202-698-8037

Milton, also local to the area, currently volunteers with Greater DC Cares on the weekend to assist children with special needs and other at-risk populations. He has provided mentoring/tutoring services for students, and has held free college admissions/prep sessions to help answer questions about getting admissions done properly.

Phyllis and Milton, along with the rest of the Child Find team members, work in Washington, DC to help identify children between the ages of 3-5 years with potential developmental delays. The Child Find team works with the community through public, private, and charter schools; child care centers; health clinics; libraries; churches; community centers; and various non-profit/for-profit organizations.

A Child Find Field Coordinator has two main responsibilities: to help identify children who may qualify for services, and to educate the DC community about the importance of early intervention. Phyllis and Milton are proud to be out in the community serving our city's children!



Early Stages Experience: The Referral Process

A referral to Early Stages, simply put, is a request for a developmental screening. Here at Early Stages, we believe that a childhood developmental screening should be as routine as an annual physical, so we are happy to work with families whether they have a specific concern or not. Certainly if there is a concern, a referral is the place to start.

How Do I Make a Referral?

Anyone concerned about a child can make a referral to Early Stages by phone, fax or email (referrals@earlystagesdc.org) through a form on our website (earlystagesdc.org), or by dropping in at the Center. We can also provide organizations with a referral form to streamline the process.

Parent Involvement

Discussion of developmental progress in young children is very personal, so it is essential that parents always feel supported and in charge of the process. Consequently, we do ask that you speak with the parent before you make a referral on another family's behalf. Talking to a parent about their child's development can be difficult; if you are unsure about it, please call us and we will help you figure out how to proceed. Also, a referral does not commit a family to anything; we seek to empower parents at all times. If, at any time, a parent feels uncomfortable about the process, they can and should stop it until they are comfortable and have their questions answered.

What Happens After a Referral?

After a referral is made, a member of the Early Stages Child Find team calls the parent, explains the process, and arranges a time to conduct a screening. After our developmental pediatrician reviews the screening, any recommendations for further evaluation will be shared with the parent. All parent and child information is protected under strict privacy laws, but if the parent gives us consent, we can also share the outcome of the screening with the person who made the referral and the child's pediatrician.

Referring Organizations and Early Stages: Partners in Serving Families

Sometimes, when a third party makes a referral, we find that we have a difficult time reaching the family. In these cases, we get back in touch with the person who made the referral and work together to ensure that the family is reached successfully. We view this as a joint effort and welcome the assistance.

What If I'm Not Sure About Whether to Refer?

We encourage parents and community members to call us even if they are not sure they want to make a referral. We are happy to simply talk about the process and provide more information. No call is ever a waste of time; it is what we are here to do. A Child Find Field Coordinator is also available to go out and talk to groups of parents and professionals. The more everyone understands about early intervention, the better positioned all DC children will be for a strong start to school.

Early Childhood Development

Gross Motor Development in 3-5 year olds

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body that allow a child to sit, walk, run, skip, kick, catch, and throw. The first gross motor skill infants usually learn is to lift their heads and shoulders, which is typically followed by head control. Most infants can lift their heads to a 45-degree angle by the age of 4 to 6 weeks. As children develop, they acquire the muscle strength to sit up, stand up, walk, and balance. By age 3, they can typically stand on one foot for one second without holding onto anything. By age 4, they can usually jump forward a distance of 20 inches, starting with both of their feet together. And by age 5, they can usually skip using alternating feet.

Gross motor milestones encompass the following areas:

| Component | Definition |
|---------------------|--|
| Locomotion | Ability to transport oneself (walking, skipping, jumping, hopping) |
| Stationary | Ability to keep control of the body |
| Object Manipulation | Ability to catch and throw objects |

Gross motor skills can develop during a child's everyday play, but where a child plays and what he or she plays with is important in helping to develop these skills.

- **Hula-Hoop Challenge:** Stand a few feet away from your child and hold a hula-hoop at their eye level. Have them practice throwing a sock ball or other soft item through the hoop. As their coordination gets better, move the hoop from side-to-side to make it harder. (Any item around the house can be substituted for a hula hoop, such as a laundry basket, empty box, large pan, etc.)
- Take your child to the park so they can explore the playground. By 3 ½, children can usually climb a ladder and slide down a slide without help. This is something you can practice together.



- Play “Simon Says” and have your child balance on one foot without holding onto anything. By age 4, children will usually be able to stand on one foot for 5 seconds.
- Have skipping, hopping, and tip-toe races. These are all skills that children have typically developed between 4 ½ and 5 years of age.

Be sure to encourage your child as they make progress. These activities can be fun for your family and help your child develop at the same time.

Sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics

Berk, L. (2002). *Infants, children, and adolescents* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Early Stages Statistics

It has been nearly a year and a half since Early Stages opened in October 2009. During that time, the Child Find team has been engaged in extensive outreach efforts, and referrals have come in from all over the city. Below are some details of this work.

During our first year, the Child Find team initiated contact with nearly 1,000 different organizations across the city and personally met with more than 550 of them to establish contacts and initiate partnerships.

More than 1,300 children were referred to Early Stages in the first year:

- o 35 percent from families directly
- o 30 percent from schools
- o 20 percent from child cares
- o 8 percent from health care facilities
- o 8 percent from community-based organizations

More than 200 of these families spoke a language other than English; together, they represent a total of 19 different languages.

As a result of this work, nearly 900 children are currently eligible for some level of service. This is more than twice as many children identified during the previous year.

DCPS Parent and Family Resource Center Workshops

The DCPS Parent and Family Resource Centers (PFRCs) are located across the city and offer many free workshops for parents interested in learning more about the development of children, and how to support children with special needs. Below, some of the offerings are described along with the March schedule.

1st Saturdays Family Education Series: Raising Successful Students

These workshops will give you information and strategies you can use to correct problem behaviors and support positive ones. Child care and interpretation services are available. Space is limited! Call 202-673-2146 to reserve a space. For more information call 202-673-2014 or e-mail sarah.johnson@dc.gov.

- Tantrums, Tattle Tales, and Tears: Pre-K thru 2nd Grade (10-11:15 a.m.)
- Me, Myself and I: 3rd-5th Grade (10-11:15 a.m.)
- Hormones, Heartache, and Everything In-Between: 6th-8th Grade (10-11:15 a.m.)
- Raising Responsible Adults: Why Teens Still Need Boundaries & Support (10-11:15 a.m.)
- Wait, That's a Crime?: Avoiding & Navigating the Juvenile Justice System (11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.)
- ... And Words Can Really Hurt You: The Signs and Impact of Bullying (11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.)
- Just for Parents/Caregivers: Zumba Fitness (9-9:45 a.m.)

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

This interactive four week course covers: communicating effectively with your children; preventing the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; using discipline to teach responsibility; encouraging the development of self-esteem and character; redirecting misbehavior; sidestepping power struggles; and exploring and encouraging nonviolent conflict resolution inside the home and in the community.

Special Education Monthly Parent TeleChat

The telechats are forums led by experienced parents for other parents of special education or struggling students to discuss their challenges, share what they have learned, brainstorm solutions, and find information. For information on how to join the conversation, contact Karla Reid-Witt by phone at 202-724-7621 or by e-mail at Karla.Reid-Witt@dc.gov.

Sticks and Stones Can Break Your Bones And Words Can Really Hurt You – The Signs and Impact of Bullying

Over the past several months, national attention has been focused on the potentially tragic impact of bullying. Join us to learn about the signs of bullying, the “new ways” kids are bullied (on-line and on cell phones), and what you can do to help address the issue.



Understanding ADHD/ADD

Did you know Terry Bradshaw (the athlete), Woody Harrelson (the actor), and Paul Orfalea (the founder of Kinko's) were all diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)? During this workshop, participants will learn information about the characteristics of ADHD/ADD, how ADHD/ADD affects children at home and school, and what parents can do to help their children find success.

Understanding Special Education

Come hear about the special education process and the important role parents/guardians play in helping their children achieve success. Participants will learn what special education is (and is not) and how it works.

Understanding Special Education Testing

Learn what you need to know about assessment and testing for learning disabilities. During this workshop, we will discuss the various types of special education assessments, how to interpret test scores, and how tests and assessments are used in schools to identify learning disabilities and develop programs.

Calendar of Events & Workshops

March 1

9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 1

10–11 a.m.

Understanding Special Education

PFRC Ward 7 (inside Shadd ES, 5601 E. Capitol St., SE) 202-645-4374

March 3

9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 8 (inside M.C. Terrell ES, 3301 Wheeler Rd, SE) 202-645-6619

March 3

9–10:30 a.m.

Cook, Chat and Chew

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 5

9–1 p.m.

1st Saturdays Family Education Series: Raising Successful Students

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 8

9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 8

8–9 p.m.

Special Education Parent TeleChat: Special Education 101

Call 202-724-7621 for the conference call number

March 9

7–8 p.m.

Special Education Parent TeleChat: Autism

Call 202-724-7621 for the conference call number

March 10

9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 8 (inside M.C. Terrell ES, 3301 Wheeler Rd, SE) 202-645-6619

March 15

9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 15
10–11:30 a.m.

Understanding ADHD/ADD

PFRC Ward 7 (inside Shadd ES, 5601 E. Capitol St., SE) 202-645-4374

March 17
9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 8 (inside M.C. Terrell ES, 3301 Wheeler Rd, SE) 202-645-6619

March 17
9–10:30 a.m.

Sticks and Stones May Break Your Bones and Words Can Really Hurt You

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 22
9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 1 (inside Harriet Tubman ES, 3101 13th St., NW) 202-673-2014

March 22
10–11:30 a.m.

Understanding Special Education Testing

PFRC Ward 7 (inside Shadd ES, 5601 E. Capitol St., SE) 202-645-4374

March 22
7–8 p.m.

Special Ed. Parent Telechat: High Functioning Autism/Aspersers in Elementary School

Call 202-724-7621 for the conference call number.

March 24
9–10:30 a.m.

Raising and Nurturing Successful Families

PFRC Ward 8 (inside M.C. Terrell ES, 3301 Wheeler Rd, SE) 202-645-6619

Early Stages is a District of Columbia Public Schools early intervention program that offers free developmental screenings and evaluations for children ages 3 through 5 years old. We are here to serve DC families by helping them identify delays in their children's development and to address those delays with appropriate services. Children referred to the Early Stages Center will receive a full evaluation and treatment and /or services for a diagnosed delay regardless of whether they go to a public school, private school, are home-schooled or have not yet entered the school system. The experts at our family-friendly Center are here to help children begin school ready to learn and succeed.

Strong Beginnings. Bright Futures.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Special Education

Early Stages Center
1125 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
phone: 202-698-8037