



Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.

THE KIDS COURIER

We Believe All Children And Their Families Deserve To Thrive.

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Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.
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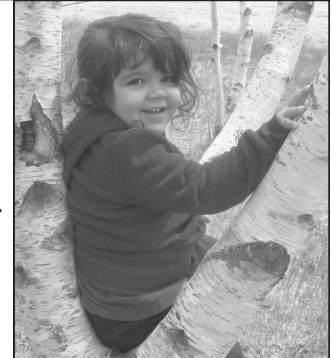
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The brain of a child undergoes amazing growth and development in the early years, starting even before birth. Numerous studies have documented the vital importance of safe, caring, and quality educational environments for our youngest citizens, which helps prepare them for success in school, success in work, and success in life. Ensuring these experiences for our nation's children is a challenge that is pertinent to our times.

Government agencies, educators, and private citizens across the nation are discussing early education, and are deciding where to invest resources to make positive differences in the lives of children and their families. The decisions they make have a profound effect on agencies and schools providing early care and education, and support for families.

For this reason, we want to share a window into our world with you. With over 40 years of experience in providing quality services in Downeast, Maine, we recognize that answers to many questions being asked about early education are found in the work we do every day. In our Kids Courier you will read about statistics and outcomes that help shape our projects, goals, and curriculum. You will also meet people who are part of the CFO community. Our goal is to provide information that allows our community members to confidently join in important conversations. We also want to share with our supporters the great value and impact of the gifts they make to our agency. To learn more about our programs, get involved at CFO, or give us feedback, please use enclosed the response card. Thank you!



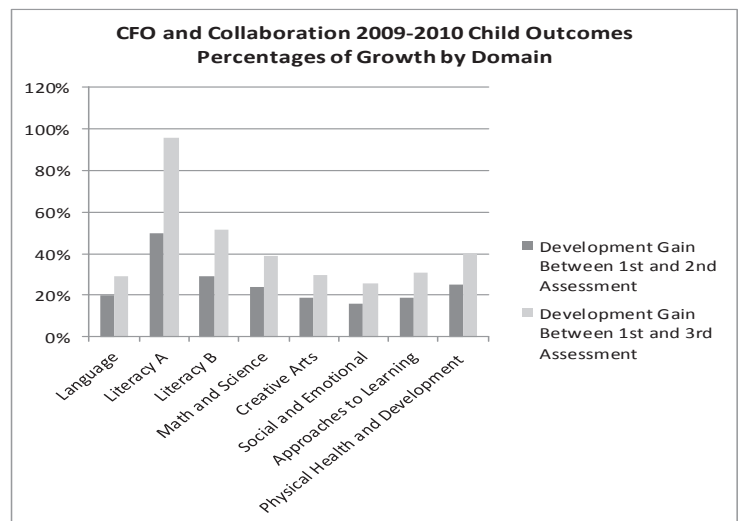
Learning and growing at Machias Valley ECEC - 2010.

OUTCOMES OF EARLY EDUCATION AT CFO

CFO teachers utilize the Maine Early Learning Guidelines, which are aligned with the Maine Learning Results and Head Start Child Outcome Framework. These tools assure that CFO's curriculum supports children's school readiness. Parent input, ongoing observations and assessments by teachers throughout the year provide information on the growth and progress of each child.

This chart indicates the growth 3 and 4 year olds gain in one year at CFO in eight learning domains.

Outcomes of Early Education at CFO continued on next page.



OUTCOMES OF EARLY EDUCATION AT CFO

CONTINUED...

In addition to early education, CFO families receive educational opportunities to increase parenting skills, support in crisis situations, and opportunities for leadership within the organization. CFO staff facilitate access to dental exams, physicals, and immunizations for students. Enhanced physical health enhances learning and improves child outcomes.

The chart below shows enrollment and medical and dental information for the Head Start and Early Head Start students served at CFO in 2009-2010. *Due to current funding, CFO only has the capacity to serve 28% of the Head Start eligible children in Washington and Hancock Counties, and 4.5% of the Early Head Start eligible children. Knowing statistics like these, increasing funding to better meet identified community needs is an goal in the current CFO Strategic Plan.*

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Enrollment, Medical, & Dental Information June 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010*

	Total Funded Slots	Average Monthly Enrollment	Total Families Served	Total Children Served	Percentage of Eligible Children Served	Dental Exams	Immunizations	Physical Exams
Head Start	224	100%	324	289	28%**	87%	99%	86%
Early Head Start	24	100%	58	46	4.5%**	84%	93%	82%

*As reported on Federal Program Information Report

** Figures calculated from Maine Kids Count Data Center 2009/2010, 2010 Maine State Profile of Selected Public Health Indicators (CDC, DHHS)

QUALITY PROGRAMS MATTER, TO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Studies show that high-quality early education and development experiences have the following positive results for families and communities*:

- students graduate high school at higher rates
- reduced use of welfare or other income assistance programs
- participants less likely to be violent and negatively interact with law enforcement later in life
- increased tax revenue in communities as a result of higher wages
- benefit to cost ratios for communities averaging between \$7-\$13 of benefit to every \$1 invested

To ensure our programs meet quality standards, CFO participates Maine's quality rating system, Quality for ME. Quality for ME increases awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, recognizes and supports providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and educates the community of the benefits of quality care. All CFO center-based programs participating in the Quality for ME system are rated at Step 4, the highest rating. In addition, CFO provides education and support for *all* Washington and Hancock County providers through Child Care Opportunities Resource Development Center.



Above: Listening and learning at Ellsworth ECEC 2011.



CFO infant exploring dental health at Ellsworth ECEC—2010.

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

We are committed to communicating with our supporters in the most efficient and effective ways. We aim to increase opportunities for you to receive information from us, and to provide you with the kind of information you want to receive.

We are also looking to reduce costs so we can invest more resources into direct programming. These days, every dollar is an invaluable asset. Every \$1.00 we invest in early education at our centers has a potential return to our communities of over \$7.00! For this reason, we are exploring providing more information electronically via email newsletters and online.

We would like to hear from you. Please return the included communication survey to us, or go online to our website to fill it out <http://www.childandfamilyopp.org>.

Also, check us out on Twitter @ChildFamilyOpp

and Facebook at Child & Family Opportunities, Inc.



SUPPORT FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS THROUGH THE CCO - RDC

Since 2009 CFO's Child Care Opportunities Resource Development Center (CCO-RDC) has participated in an initiative to provide training and professional peer support to child care providers in the Bucksport Bay area. The project is a collaboration of the Bucksport Bay Early Childhood Network and Child Care Opportunities RDC, and is funded by United Way of Eastern Maine.



Participants in the monthly meetings are licensed family child care providers, center based providers, and Care for ME (legal, unlicensed) providers. In addition to trainings that support child care providers in meeting licensing or other quality standards, the gatherings offer attendees opportunities to share experiences with peers, and to learn from and support each other. This year, Judy Nevells, Resource and Referral Specialist from Child Care Opportunities, and Dr. Bonnie Kline, Wellness Consultant through Bucksport Bay Healthy Community, collaborated with the group to explore how to enhance personal wellness and offer innovative and creative wellness activities in the child care setting.

At this time, nearly all eligible child care providers in the Bucksport Bay area are enrolled in Quality for ME, and there has been a dramatic increase in training hours received by providers. The interest in training and education has resulted in a growing commitment among providers to participate in the monthly group. Currently the initiative is funded until March, 2012. Foreseeing continued and growing interest in improving the quality of Maine's early care and education, CFO and the CCO- RDC are actively exploring how to assure that this program, and others like it, remain available to the communities that benefit from their investment.

A LETTER FROM JESSICA ROLLERSON, PARTICIPATING MEMBER OF THE BUCKSPORT BAY AREA PROVIDER SUPPORT GROUP

Over the past year, I have attended a monthly meeting for family childcare workers sponsored by Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. It took many invitations before I actually attended. I was busy! I was tired! And it was difficult to get out the door.

I'm still busy and tired. But I found that, although I struggled to get there, after a few meetings, I began to value these meetings. One reason was because I got all of my annual, required training hours through this group, including First Aid and CPR. Secondly, I was able to influence the content of the trainings. We have had a series of good trainings about topics chosen by the group. However, the primary reason I kept coming back, month after month, was unexpected.

I came to depend upon these meetings to help me keep from losing my mind! Don't get me wrong, I love the children and families, but having a childcare in our home has not been easy. And, I have to admit, after weeks of working with children, I need some grown-up conversation! Coming to the group introduced me to other people in our area, who do the same thing. I didn't feel so lonely. It allowed me to hear ideas from others. I felt inspired. It helped me make friends. I felt supported.

The most unexpected and valuable result of attending is that I feel like a professional. It's easy to lose yourself in diapers, dishes and blocks. But once each month, I am reminded of how important high quality childcare is. I am reminded of how lucky we are to do this work. And, I am reminded that childcare is difficult, even for the best of us. Once each month, I am reminded of all of these things.

I am a professional. And I take great pride in that. This group helps me do my best work for kids, even when I don't feel great. Attending this once-monthly meeting is a form of self-care that helps all of us care well for children and families.

Jessica Rollerson
Family Child Care Professional, Orland's Chicadee Childcare



Jessica Rollerson, Family Child Care Professional
Orland's Chicadee Childcare



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MEET JEFF DAWSON - CFO POLICY COUNCIL MEMBER AND BOARD LIAISON

Jeff Dawson has been an active member of the CFO Policy Council since September 2011. In October, he also took on the position of Policy Council Liaison to the CFO Board of Directors. Jeff is a parent of 2 children, Ainsley, who attends the Ellsworth Early Care and Education Center preschool program, and Josiah, age 1, who stays home with him. Jeff credits his involvement with the governing councils at CFO with an interest in being involved, and the realization that it is always the right time to participate in what is going on around him.

A graduate of the College of the Atlantic, Jeff received his Bachelors of Arts in Human Ecology. His interests are in building strong communities, and assuring that his children, and all children, have opportunities to approach learning as a tool that they can use and enjoy all of their lives. Jeff shares that he and his partner Vanessa were happy to find CFO as it was an early education center where their daughter could receive socialization and peer interaction, in an educational setting where her bright mind and inquisitive nature could be nurtured. “She is only three and a half, but she is really interested in starting to learn how to read and write” Jeff shared. “She has a year and a half remaining of pre-school, before going on to Kindergarten. I like the fact that her teachers recognize her need to be further engaged and challenged. They go beyond what is simply required or mandated to meet her needs.”

Jeff also shares that he is drawn to the community of Child and Family Opportunities as it reminds him of the preschool that he attended when he was a child. “Like CFO, my preschool was a Head Start and a child care center. I really appreciated that the school was representative of the whole community, and not just targeted to a specific demographic.” Many of the friends that Jeff made in preschool are still his friends today, and this is a gift that he hopes that his children will receive as well in their early education setting.



Ainsley, Vanessa, Josiah, and Jeff Dawson.