

THE SCHOOL AGE UPDATE

Winter 2019



Professional Development

The North Carolina School Age Program has some great professional development opportunities for school age professionals this quarter. For new teachers and those wishing to sharpen their teaching skills, we are offering our BSAC and SACERS courses through our online GoToMeeting format. These trainings are \$25 each and offer in-person interaction with our program's Professional Development Consultant.

For teachers wanting more content specific information, this quarter will feature three FREE trainings covering topics ranging from inclusion and diversity awareness to STEM curriculum development. As with all of our training courses, participants are required to enroll for each online workshop at least one week prior to the start date. This will ensure that all training materials are processed and all participants are given ample time to complete any pre-course training activities.

We are also happy to announce that we are introducing a new .5 CEU course this new year. "Outdoor Adventures in Afterschool" will provide participants with an indepth overview of outdoor learning curriculum development and play area enhancement. Attendees will be challenged to think about how they view outdoor play areas and the role of gross motor development for school age students. This course will be \$25 and dates will be announced shortly.

To register for an online training contact Erin Marley at marley.erin@swcdcinc.org or visit our website at swcdcinc.org

Upcoming Trainings

BSAC

January 22 & 29, 2019
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: \$25

Celebrating Diversity
January 24 & 31, 2019
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: Free

SACERS U

February 5 & 12, 2019
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: \$25

How To Be A STEM Superhero
February 4 & 11, 2019
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: Free

BSAC

February 28 & March 7, 2019
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: \$25

Engaging All Learners
March 21 & 28
(7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)
Cost: Free

LET IT SNOW

North Carolina is a hodgepodge of different climates. The eastern and Piedmont sections of the state are home to hot, humid summers and often temperate winters. The western section of the state, with its mountain elevation, often has cooler summer temperatures, large amounts of rain, and a handful of large snow storms. No matter the region, winter time in North Carolina usually promises some amount of inclement weather. Be it a snow storm, freezing rain, or sleet it is important for all school age programs to be ready when winter weather hits.

Having A Plan:

One of the most important things a school age program can do is plan for the proper care of its students. Having a set winter weather emergency plan is essential to keeping students safe and your center within the boundaries of your EPR (Emergency Preparedness and Readiness) plan. Some things to consider include ways to communicate closings, methods to contact parents, and how to accommodate staff who can't come to work because of hazardous conditions.

Apart from having emergency contact information readily available to reach parents, it is wise to think about other mediums of communication to get inclement weather updates out. Social media, television announcements, and radio communication are all safe and effective ways to inform parents about school age program closings. There are also private service provider companies that programs can use to text or message parents concerning school closings. It is always advisable to have at least two forms of communication between center administration and parents to ensure that inclement weather messages get through.

Concerning program ratios and staffing, always make sure that your center has a core team of teachers that can stay during a closing until all students have been picked-up by a caregiver. Even during bad weather, ratios and group sizes matter. Take some time to talk with your staff to see who can afford to stay and who needs to leave. This will keep your center within state regulations and ensure the safety of all students.



Inclement Weather Care:

Many school age programs offer inclement weather care to parents when traditional centers and schools are closed. These school age programs are often extensions of an existing school age program, part of the local school system, or a separate program all together. If your school does not offer inclement weather care, you have the option to team up with one of these programs to help families when your center is closed. Forming a relationship with one of these programs can help extend your community reach and provide support to families who cannot afford to take time off of work. When forming these connections make sure to think about the extent of this partnership. Issues like extra paperwork, registration, food preparation, and student health concerns are all factors that must be considered by families who need this option.

WINTER FUN

Dramatic Play Snow Village

Materials:

- Collage Materials
- Styrofoam balls
- Cotton balls or sheets of cotton
- Small Dramatic Play buildings

Dramatic play doesn't always have to include dress-up materials or larger toys. Smaller houses, play figures, and craft materials can also be used to create a strong dramatic play area in a school age program. To encourage discussion about winter weather, take some time to add some materials like cotton balls/sheets, white Styrofoam balls, and some white clay to give students the ability to incorporate snowy weather into their dramatic play experience. These materials can help students mold a simple doll house into a winter wonderland village.

Keep Learning a Priority:

When the weather is bad outside it is often tempting to turn to the television. The excitement and energy that surrounds snow and program closings has the ability to overstimulate students and cause behavioral issues.

Information from the Healthy Social Behaviors Initiative with the NC CCRR Council highlights the importance of keeping routines with young students during times of potential chaos (www.childcarerrnc.org). Instead of turning on the television, adapt your program's schedule to include extra gross motor activities and problem solving games. If your center has an alternate gross motor area like a gym or multi-purpose room have teachers initiate large groups games. These games can even take on "weather themes" to help make the weather a learning tool.

The DCDEE allows programs to go outside in inclement weather as long as temperatures stay within the safety limits set in their weather watch spreadsheet. Access to this form can be obtained in the Provider Documents section of the DCDEE website (ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov) under the tab "Weather Watch". It is important to take precaution when venturing out in less than favorable weather. Apart from slick surfaces, students need to have the right attire to venture out in bad weather. Also make sure to monitor students with allergies or health issues to ensure their health.

Snowy weather not only provides children with a great gross motor resource, but can help students connect with potential science, math, and fine motor skills. For program directors, take some time to look at your program schedule and emergency plan before the bad weather hits. This foresight will help keep your students safe and your staff ready to teach. For more information about inclement weather preparation reach out to the North Carolina School Age Program by email at williams.jon@swcdcinc.org.



Thinking About School Age Grants...Be Prepared

For many school age programs, money is a tight commodity. Between paying staff, purchasing materials, and caring for the needs of families, school age facilities are often left with little resources to meet the growing needs of families needing afterschool care. Statistics from the Afterschool Alliance highlight that current school age programs in North Carolina do not have the necessary funds to extend school age care to the state's growing population. At the end of 2018, over half a million North Carolina students are actively waiting for enrollment in school age programs across the state (America After 3PM).

With a majority of school age programs attempting to simply break even, the prospect of expanding care and starting special program initiatives seem like a far off dream. However, there is good news for programs willing to do little digging. GRANTS. Grant funding is a great way for aspiring school age programs to find the capital to fund special projects, support staff development, and extend services to low income families. While the prospect of writing a grant might seem intimidating, the process is often simple, non-threatening, and user friendly for those who are prepared.

A Little Prep Work

When looking at applying for a school age grant, preparation is the key to success. More front end work often contributes to a better constructed grant and a more thorough understanding of where grant funding can best be used. Grant specialist Beverly Browning, states that one of the key reasons why grant proposals are denied rests with poor grant proposal preparation. Grant committees are experts at dissecting applications, and can easily tell which proposals are thought out and which ones are slapped together with a hope and a prayer (Grant Writing Boot Camp, 2010).

When looking to apply for a school age related grant it is essential to keep these four concepts in the forefront.



Desired Project

Before looking for a school age grant, it is important to take some time to think about the project that needs funding. Having a solid understanding of what idea needs extra program income helps grant providers fully comprehend the probability that the project will be successful. Moreover, this process will also ensure that the right grant is researched and chosen by the grant seeker.



Current Finances and Budget

A key factor to look at when applying for a grant is the program's current finances and a ball park figure of how much grant money is needed for the desired project to succeed. Program directors should look at the costs associated with program function and see if they in fact have any extra income tied up in nonessential program needs. Some grant providers will look at the finances of the school age program, so having a grasp on where money is going is paramount. More importantly, grant providers want to know that the money they are providing is a worthwhile investment. Having a detailed outline of how much grant money is needed for a potential grant project, and how that money will be used, will improve grant proposal success.



Community Being Served

Another key factor to contemplate before searching for a potential grant is understanding the community being served by the school age program. Having a firm grasp of the surrounding community and the families being served ensures maximum positive impact for everyone involved with the program. Moreover, this process helps narrow down the perspective grant search to a handful of opportunities that will provide a true impact.

For example, it would be problematic for a school age program located in downtown Charlotte to go searching for an agricultural grant for forest play enhancement when the center serves inner city families 50 miles from the closest wooded area. Having a grasp of the community being served would show the program that another type of grant would be more beneficial to the students and families.



Resources for Extra Funding

Apart from grants, what other resources are available to help fund a potential project. Some grants only offer small funding gifts and must be coupled with other funding sources to reach success. Sometimes, larger grant providers will ask programs to team up with other funding providers for a full community endeavor. Thinking about other funding sources can help a grant proposal stand out among the crowd.



Families in Turmoil

Three Warning Signs for Students Suffering From Homelessness

Homelessness affects roughly 26,000 school age students each year in North Carolina (NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, 2017). According to the National Center for Homeless Education families will suffer from the impact of homelessness during the school year, with peaks occurring during natural disasters and economic recessions (National Center for Homelessness Education, 2018). While North Carolina is currently in a time of economic growth, many students and their families have been pushed from their homes by hurricanes, wildfires, and other environmental catastrophes. Below are three warning signs for students suffering from the effects of homelessness. It is important to remember that while these signs can appear in all students, all three together are common with students dealing with homelessness.

Physical

Sudden negative changes in physical appearance is one way to spot potential student homelessness. Many homeless families do not have access to running water, hygiene products, or an ample supply of clothing. In light of this, students experiencing homelessness might come to school consecutively wearing the same clothes and needing some hygiene attention. These students might also show an increase in school day appetite because of nutrition reduction and little access to healthy foods. They might also show increased fatigue during the school day and have trouble staying awake due to the stress associated with homelessness.



● Academic

Decreased academic performance is also another indicator of potential student homelessness. Often times for children homelessness equates to constant moving and rapid changes in environment. For these students survival becomes an essential motivator, and school work often drops in importance. In response to this, homework completion, parental reading, and academic improvement become secondary issues. Couple this with increased cortisol levels and a lack of sleep, and homelessness quickly leads to a dramatic drop in school performance.



● Behavior

School age students are human...and humans innately desire some form of order. For many students suffering from homelessness, when order is taken from them personal behavior becomes the only thing that is actively controllable. Modern neuroscience research shows that transient living increases cortisol levels in students, and heightens the fight or flight reflexes. A result of this is increased negative behaviors, hyper vigilance, and issues like bed wetting.

Sudden dramatic mood swings, overly aggressive or passive behavior, and apathy are all common emotions for students suffering from the effects of homelessness.



The Power to Help

While homelessness is a complex problem, school age programs have the power to help students suffering from its effects. Providing a warm and safe environment is essential for students seeking stability and comfort. Listening to students and helping them with academic and social issues can give them that extra support they need in a trying time. More importantly, providing students with a healthy snack and families with viable support networks has the ability to secure hope and trust. Remember, afterschool care can be the one ray of light to a student with the weight of the world on their shoulders.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

January is a new year, and for many school age programs that means new staffing changes. With the current teacher shortage in the state, finding qualified staff can be quite a challenge. However, while this struggle is real...rules must be followed. The DCDEE has specific qualifications for school age group leaders in the state. Save yourself the stress and be sure to adhere to these regulations when hiring new group leaders.

1. Group leaders must be 18 years of age and have their high school diploma or its equivalent (DCDEE Chapter 9 .2510).
2. Once hired, the group leader must take the BSAC course within the first three months of employment (DCDEE Chapter 9 .2510). Group leaders in a summer camp must complete the BSAC training within the first 6 weeks of employment.
3. Assistant group leaders must be 16 years old and must take the BSAC course within the required amount of time after being hired. These individuals may not be left alone with students (DCDEE Chapter 9 .2510)
4. School age providers in non-DPI centers must have a DCDEE background check prior to starting employment. For more information of DCDEE background checks refer to the DCDEE website at ncchildcare.nc.gov.

The North Carolina School Age Program provides BSAC training through our online GoToMeeting format. To sign up for this training contact Jonathan Williams at williams.jon@swcdcinc.org or visit our website at swcdcinc.org. For providers looking for local BSAC training options, please contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

For more information on hiring regulations refer to the DCDEE Child Care Laws Chapter 9.





Jonathan Williams

NC Statewide School Age Coordinator

Phone: 828-450-9218

Email: williams.jon@swcdcinc.org

Erin Marley

NC Statewide School Age Professional Development Consultant

Phone: 828-354-0116

Email: marley.erin@swcdcinc.org