

# Caregiver Chronicle

## Early Learning Scholarships – Pathways I Serving Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP)

The Anoka County Community Action Program is now the Area Administrator for Pathways I – Early Learning Scholarships in Anoka and Washington counties. Think Small has been the administrator, so as children renew their scholarships, they will be transferred to ACCAP.

High quality early learning ensures that our children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. Thanks to Governor Mark Dayton and the Legislature’s investment, the Minnesota Department of Education is offering scholarships to help families afford high quality child care and early education programs for three–to five-year-old children and their siblings with highest need.

Priority for scholarships will be given based on family income, child poverty and geographic region. Families must have a Minnesota address and live in Anoka or Washington County. A family will automatically qualify and have priority status if they are served by foster care or protective services, or are homeless, or are a teen parent (under 21 years of age and attending high school or a GED program). Children who are homeless or have a teen parent will have priority status, but their household must be income eligible.

The focus of the program is to prepare 3 and 4 year old children for kindergarten by enrolling them in Parent Aware Star-Rated child care/early learning programs. MDE states that “Early Learning Scholarships are designed to increase access to high quality early

childhood programs and are available for three- to five-year-old children with the highest needs.”

The funding goes to the program (center or home provider) and helps families pay for care. Children age birth through 2 years can also qualify if their parent is under age 21 and attending high school or a GED program.

Families qualify if their child currently participates in one of the following programs:

- MN Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Free & Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Food Support (SNAP)
- Head Start
- Foster Care
- Protective Services

OR families qualify if household income is equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty level in the current calendar year. (See chart below for guidelines.)

There is an application for the family to complete, sign, and return with documentation of their assistance program(s) or household income. An original ink signature is required, so the application must be mailed or delivered to ACCAP.

Family Size	Gross Income
2	\$30,044
3	\$37,777
4	\$45,510
5	\$53,243
Each Add'l	\$7,733

### Contact Us:

**Katy Chase**  
763-783-4881  
kchase@accap.org

**Doreen Jackson**  
763-783-4891  
djackson@accap.org

**Allison Panning**  
763-783-4823  
apanning@accap.org

**Stacy French**  
763-792-8759  
sfrench@accap.org

**Tara Johnson**  
763-792-8713  
tjohnson@accap.org

**Ashley Skogen**  
763-783-4789  
askogen@accap.org

**Annette Borman**  
763-783-4711  
aborman@accap.org

**Lori Schmidt**  
*Early Learning Scholarships*  
763-783-4973  
lschmidt@accap.org

**Terri Hoffman**  
763-717-7718  
thoffman@accap.org

### Inside this issue:

Third Hand Smoke	2
Save the Dates	3
Child Skills for 3 Year olds	3
Emergency Preparedness	4
Storytime	5
Help Me Grow	6



A newsletter from  
ACCAP Child Care Support Services  
Serving Anoka and Washington Counties  
Volume 4, Issue 9  
September 2017

## Third-Hand Smoke?

Third-Hand Smoke? Everyone knows about second-hand smoke, but not many are as familiar with third-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke is the sticky, residual contamination that lingers on surfaces after cigarettes have been extinguished. Exposure to this invisible but toxic mixture of gases and particles can be especially hazardous to children. According to studies, the harmful particles remain on countertops, floors, upholstery, carpets, clothing and other surfaces for months after a cigarette was smoked.

Infants and toddlers are particularly susceptible to third-hand smoke exposure because of their tendency to crawl and play on these contaminated surfaces. The developing brains of children are most vulnerable to even the lowest levels of toxins.

Second-hand smoke is, of course, still a large factor for children who are in homes where someone smokes. Per the U.S. Surgeon General's 2006 report, there is no risk-free exposure to second-hand smoke.

Further hazards of smoking indoors include toxic litter, nicotine poisoning and fire hazards. Cigarette butts can be fatal when ingested by children. The average cigarette butt contains 0.1 to 1.5 milligrams of nicotine. Ten milligrams of nicotine can be lethal, but just two milligrams are toxic to children. Fires started by lighted cigarette products constitute the leading cause of fatal home fires in the U.S., while nicotine is an acute toxin.

Exposure to nicotine through cigarette butts, electronic cigarette liquids or other tobacco waste can cause nausea and vomiting, respiratory arrest, seizures and even death. In 2013, nicotine poisonings from e-cigarettes accounted for 23 percent of the 218 teen and child tobacco-related poisonings in Minnesota.

The one space where adults and children are most exposed to second-hand smoke is in the home. Almost 60 percent of U.S. children aged 3 to 11, or about 22 million children, are exposed to second-hand smoke in their homes.

In Minnesota, smoking is not allowed anywhere within the indoor areas of a licensed child care center, child care or group family child care home during the hours of operation. Some counties prohibit indoor smoking 24/7. These types of regulations go the furthest in protecting vulnerable children.

If indoor smoking is allowed in a child care home outside of the hours of operation, the child care provider must disclose this by posting a conspicuous written notice and verbally informing parents or guardians that smoking is allowed in the home outside of the hours of operation. You can do something, too. Protect all children by making your property, home and vehicle smoke free.

*Source: Kaitlyn Suhr, Health Educator with Dodge County Public Health.*



Community Eye Screening For Children

Check out KidsSight USA at <http://lionskidsightusa.org/>

## Develop Training Registration

Remember that not all trainings go onto the Learning Record in Develop, so plan time to send in and renew your account.

If the trainings are listed on Develop, they are Achieve MNCPD approved and count for Parent Aware. You may have to renew your membership so that certificates are added to the Learning Record. It will depend on the agency if they add attendance to Develop, so it's always a good idea to ask before registering for training. Unfortunately, there is no warning built into Develop to let everyone know this.

When registering for training on Develop, please note that agencies outside of Child Care Aware of MN and Think Small may not enter attendance into Develop to be added to your Learning Record. Since this is the case, you need to send your certificates to Achieve MNCPD and renew your Develop Membership. The average timeline for membership renewal is 4-6 weeks.

**Kristen Peters**

*Professional Development*

*Supervisor and Advisor*

651.641.6613 | [www.thinksmall.org](http://www.thinksmall.org)



## Save the Dates for Professional Learning Communities

Child Care Aware of Minnesota Metro East is sponsoring a Professional Learning Community (PLC) - an extended learning opportunity for you to connect with other child care providers in your community. It is a free opportunity for you and is facilitated by Child Care Aware Staff.

These are times dedicated to you, the provider, and are structured around topics and ideas of interest to you. This is a place for you to meet with other providers, share your knowledge and what works for you, ask questions, and learn from each other. Your experience providing child care and/or teaching preschool is important for children.

Your thoughts, ideas, and wisdom will lead the discussions and some of our Learning Communities will have special guests to help facilitate conversation and provide resources to you. These events are open to all licensed family child care providers and center staff in Anoka and Washington Counties.

We are always looking for new topics to add to our list, so please let us know what topics would be of interest to you! Some of our past topics include: curriculum and lesson planning, kindergarten readiness, family engagement and more. Please RSVP to Annette Borman at [aborman@accap.org](mailto:aborman@accap.org).

### Anoka County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 pm to 8 pm at

#### Blaine Human Service Center

September 12, 2017  
October 10, 2017  
November 14, 2017

### Washington County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30 pm to 8 pm at

#### Peace of Mind Human Service Center

September 21, 2017  
October 19, 2017  
November 16, 2017

**All Providers  
Welcome!**

## At 3 years old, a child's skills expand and build on each other

From birth, children rapidly add to their language, speech and cognitive skills, building the foundation that will help them the rest of their lives.

When a child reaches 3 years old, these skills begin to intersect and expand in wonderful ways. He isn't just playing with a block – he's building tall towers and telling you what he's doing. She isn't just playing – she's making up a conversation while playing make believe.

Every child grows at his or her own rate, and Help Me Grow offers the following developmental milestones for 3-year-olds to help monitor their progress as they grow:

- Climbs and runs well
- Builds with blocks; may build a tower of six blocks
- Uses three-word sentences
- Shows concern and affection for others
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people
- Does puzzles with three to four pieces
- Says first name, age and gender
- Asks "why," "where," "what," "when" and "how" questions
- Separates easily from parents

- Shows a wide range of feelings
- Enjoys routines and may get upset with a major change
- Enjoys helping with simple household tasks
- Verbalizes toilet needs and may be toilet trained during the day
- Knows common colors

Parents and caregivers can take the following actions to encourage a 3-year-old's development:

- Let the child help with simple household chores
- Help the child include others in playing, sharing and taking turns
- Support the child to develop trust in other consistent adults
- Listen to and encourage the child to use many words and longer sentences
- Share new stories, songs, games and play materials
- Support appropriate expression of feelings

Developmental milestones help you understand what's typical in a child's development. To learn more about these milestones and how to encourage a child's

progress at different ages, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).

Portions of this content, developed by Help Me Grow Minnesota, may have previously appeared elsewhere.



# September is Emergency Preparedness Month: Are You Ready?

ACCAP received a grant to assist with setting up an Emergency Preparedness Plan. There will be six hours of training available to start your plan and then you will complete it at home. All programs are encouraged to attend to start a plan or at least start thinking about a plan for the safety of your family and child care business. Family child care providers can operate in an unlicensed space for three months following a disaster.

All programs (centers and family child care homes) need a plan in place. There is a fillable form online on the Department of Human Services website at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7414A-ENG>

ACCAP is working out details for a commitment from Head Start sites in Anoka and Washington counties to be safe sites. When they are confirmed, programs can sign an agreement to use them as a safe site.

There's a new **Emergency Preparedness section** on the Child Care Aware website. It includes several important resources for child care providers, including emergency plans and guides, tips and FAQs, and links to upcoming emergency preparedness trainings. Visit <http://childcareawaremn.org/professionals-caregivers/emergency-preparedness>

There is also an app for smartphones called "Code Red" to set up and use your plan.

## Do 1 Thing: Can you do one thing a month to be prepared?

Don't wait—communicate! Have a family communications plan in place.

Do1Thing is an exciting web-based preparedness program that focuses on different areas of preparedness each month in a way that is inexpensive, easy, and fun for the whole family. The program won in the Awareness to Action category of the 2014 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards.

The Do 1 Thing mission is to move individuals, families, businesses and communities to prepare for all hazards and become disaster resilient. To get started, click the topic for the current month, select an activity from the list of "Things to do," and do that one thing! After following along for an entire year, you'll be better prepared for disasters and emergencies. Participating in these activities can also count

as participation in America's PrepareAthon! so be sure to register.

Do 1 Thing has resources available in seven languages, braille, large print and audio.

### Here are some steps:

1. Try text messaging. In many cases text messages go through when your call may not.
2. Designate someone local and out of the area who can act as a central point of contact to help your household reconnect. Make certain all family members know who to contact if they become separated. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town.
3. Maintain a current list of emergency phone numbers. Be sure to update it often.
4. Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to use it only to convey vital information to emergency personnel and/or family.
5. Limit non-emergency phone calls. This will minimize network congestion, free up "space" on the network for emergency communications and conserve battery power if you are using a wireless phone.

### **Does everyone know what to do in an emergency? Add emergency preparedness to your back-to-school to-do list:**

1. **Have a Password:** A family password is a great way to keep children safe if they get separated from you. Tell them no one is allowed to pick them up if they don't know the password.
2. **Know who to Contact:** Make your child a booklet or laminated card with important family numbers; not just "Mom" and "Dad."
3. **Make a Map:** What would happen if your children needed to get home on their own? Would they know the way? Make a fun family activity out of creating a clear, easy to read map for them to keep.
4. **Refresh your Kits:** Pick up a few items when you're back-to-school shopping to freshen up your emergency kits. Check expiration dates on food and make sure batteries are still working.
5. **Ask about School or Childcare Emergency Plans:** Ask about school or childcare emergency plans. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family during an emergency if you plan ahead, and communicate with others in advance.

For more information visit: <http://do1thing.com/> & <http://ready.gov>

# PREPARE!



Storytime is back in session at your local public library!

As older children return to school in September, public libraries in Anoka and Washington counties kick off their fall story time sessions for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

These story times are not simply a librarian reading books to preschoolers, but an intentional school readiness experience. This intentionally makes story times both a fun and educational early literacy opportunity for children. Early literacy is what children know about reading before they learn to read and write. At Storytime, librarians demonstrate research-based early literacy practices to help preschoolers prepare for Kindergarten.

Using the research-based *Every Child Ready to Read* model, story times demonstrate the five successful practices of early literacy: play, sing, talk, write, and read. *Every Child Ready to Read* is an initiative of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children. For each story time, the librarian carefully plans songs, rhymes, finger plays, books, or other activities that children do together with the librarian and with their parents or caregivers.

The results of intentional story times are dramatic according to a story by Linda Jacobson in the July issue of *School Library Journal*. Jacobson wrote, “multiple reports and studies emphasize the need for young children to be surrounded with books, to hear and learn big and interesting words, and to interact with language through play.” Jacobson continued that “story times in libraries and other learning opportunities in the community are now viewed as a critical component of young children’s preparation to enter school. They are also vehicles for giving parents guidance on how to encourage early literacy skills at home.” Researchers at the University of Washington Information School further found that when storytellers intentionally focus on early literacy skills, children demonstrate increases in those skills.

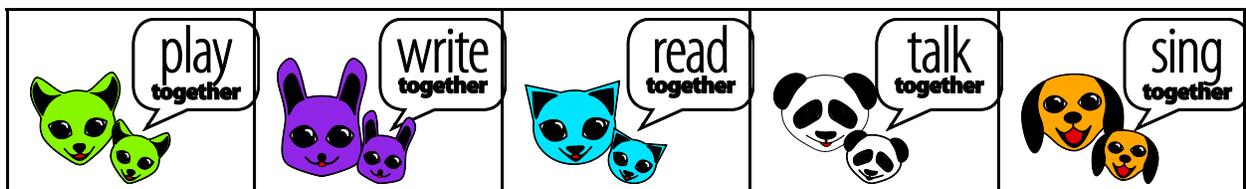
To find information on registration for story times, visit each library system’s calendar of events:

Anoka County Library: <http://anokacountylibrary.org/>

Columbia Heights Public Library: <http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/index.aspx?nid=127>

Stillwater Public Library: <http://stillwaterlibrary.org/>

Washington County Library: <https://www.washcolib.org/>



## Parent Aware Celebration 2017





## What Happens after You Refer a Child through Help Me Grow

Child care providers play an important role in children's development, as you help them learn, grow and gain new skills every day. If you have concerns about a child's development, it's important to discuss these with the child's parents or guardians in a private in-person meeting. Encourage parents to talk with the child's health care provider and use Help Me Grow to refer a child for help. A referral is a powerful tool to connect a child to services as early as possible, to help a child learn and grow.

Child care providers have a responsibility to monitor a child's development. As soon as a developmental delay or special need is suspected, it is important to report this to a parent in an in-person meeting. This will help ensure that the child will have access to early and appropriate interventions, if needed.

### How to refer a child

Any adult can refer a child by filling out a referral form online at [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org) or by calling 1-866-693-4769 (GROW). If you are considering referring a child, Help Me Grow recommends talking with the child's parents before making a referral. An online or phone referral is sent directly to the child's local school district, which will contact the child's parents to set up a developmental screening or evaluation.

All referrals are confidential. This information is required when making a referral:

- Child's name and age
- Parent/guardian name, address and contact information
- Your name, address and contact information, if you are not the child's parent or guardian, as well as whether you have discussed the concerns with the child's parents

### What happens after referral

Once a child is referred, only the parents will be contacted about scheduling a screening or evaluation.

Parents can expect these next steps after their child is referred:

- An early childhood specialist from their local school district will contact them to talk about their child's development. This call will generally happen within seven to ten days of a referral.
- The call will help the early childhood specialist learn if the child needs a developmental screening or special education evaluation. A screening may be required before an evaluation. If the child hasn't had a screening, one will be scheduled before an evaluation.
- Follow-up phone calls for children ages 3 to 5 years take place during the school year. This may delay the district's initial contact with a parent if a referral is made during the summer months.

A team of qualified individuals will lead the child's evaluation if it's needed. This evaluation will determine if a child is eligible and needs services. If a child is eligible for services, early childhood specialists will work with the parents to create a personalized service plan which may take place at home, a child care setting or school. For more information or to refer a child, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).

### Helpful links from the Help Me Grow website:

[A guide to discussing developmental concerns with parents](#)

[What to expect after referral](#)

[Referral myths vs. facts](#)

Here is one family's experience with Early Intervention: *"Being a part of the Early Intervention Program has been the helping hand we needed to get our preemie triplets on track developmentally and helped to identify the additional needs of our son with more long-term developmental delays. It's terrifying when your babies are born before they are ready to eat or breathe on their own --- and to have an extra set of hands and eyes once they come home to make sure that their learning keeps moving forward and that any problems that linger are addressed is so reassuring. It is also of immeasurable value to have the first three years of service come to us. With infants and toddlers who are immunocompromised from their early beginnings, using services in a public setting would have been difficult or dangerous for us, so having those services offered in our home while our boys got stronger saved us from potential additional hospital stays from illnesses their bodies wouldn't have been able to handle. The transition to preschool for two of our boys and Preschool Special Education for our third has been flawless and we feel surrounded by a team that is ready to keep our kids moving forward from where they are each day."* - Metro Parent

[This article originally appeared on the Help Me Grow website.](#)