

# Quality Counts QUARTERLY

special feature

## WHAT'S NEW?

Look for a new SEEK Scholarship Application on the Institute of Excellence website. The Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry Update Form is now included as an attachment to SEEK Scholarship Application. Submitting the Update Form along with your SEEK Application allows us to process your Application faster, while keeping your Registry information up to date. <http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/seekscholarship.xml>

**It's Not too Early to think about Spring Registration.** If you are continuing at Palm Beach State College, registration for Spring classes begins the week of November 3, 2010. SEEK deadline for Spring registration is November 23, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. SEEK applications are available at [www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece.xml](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece.xml). For more information, contact a Career Advisor at (561) 868-3662.

**Need to meet with a QC Career Advisor after work hours?** A Career Advisor will be available from 12:00 - 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. To make an appointment, contact Karen Burrell at (561) 868-3717. *Location:* Palm Beach State College – Lake Worth Campus, Social Science Building – SS103.

**Raise your hand!** Have you recently completed a professional career goal? Did you earn a Staff Credential or graduate? We want to acknowledge you! Tell us about your achievement; contact your Career Advisor at (561) 868-3662.

## Coaching for Quality

Since the inception of Palm Beach County's quality rating and improvement system, the coaching component has been a valued support of the providers. The Early Learning Coaches for centers and school sites are Certified Teachers, employed by the School District of Palm Beach County, with specialized training to provide technical assistance in early childhood settings. The role of the coach has evolved over the years, based on research in the field and the needs of the system. Primarily, the role of the coach is to support Quality Counts (QC) providers in making improvements in key areas that correlate with positive outcomes for children, including the environment, learning opportunities, family engagement, program administration, and group size and ratios. Evaluation of our local coaching component (Shen, Tackett & Ma, 2008) demonstrates the positive results of the technical assistance provided in our Quality Counts community.

Over the last year, the coaches participated in training by Pat Wesley, a research scientist from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, on an evidenced based model of consultation. The model utilizes eight stages that have been found through research to enhance global program quality (Bryant, Wesley, & the QUINCE Study Team, 2009; Palsha & Wesley, 1998; Wesley, 1994) and increase the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided (Bryant, Wesley, & the QUINCE Study Team, 2009).

### "No significant change occurs without a significant relationship"

Using a relationship-based approach, coaches gather information and identify factors relevant to the provider's initial desire for change. It takes time to learn and understand the history or process that leads up to a current situation, and the strategies already attempted in order to initiate meaningful progress. This contrasts previous notions of a coach going in and telling providers what needs to be done without taking into account the culture embedded in the program. The latter promotes superficial change that fades after each assessment, and a dependence on the coach.

Next, the coach and provider identify goals and develop plans for improvement collaboratively. Goals should be meaningful and attainable, not imposed or unrealistic. The provider's participation in the process makes follow-up and implementation more likely. It also promotes shared responsibility and ownership of the change process. The coach's training and experience contributes to the process of selecting feasible strategies, identifying resources, and considering new perspectives. Target dates are determined to ensure progress towards goals.

Implementation of the improvement plan is an active process, which involves a variety of supports and follow-through on the part of the coach and provider. It is important to continuously clarify roles, observe, reflect, problem solve, and celebrate successes. There are several opportunities to evaluate the implementation of the plan during the process: informal feedback, monthly meetings between the coach and director, the 9-month review, the provider's evaluation, and the annual assessment.

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The School District of Palm Beach County  
Early Learning Coaches



# training & development

As of October 1, 2010, QC Program Assessors will be using and referencing the revised Public Playground Safety Handbook (April 2008) when scoring Space for Gross Motor Play, Gross Motor Equipment and Safety. Prior to this date, Program Assessors have used and referenced the Handbook for Public Playground Safety (1997). Significant revisions include equipment and surfacing guidelines. For example, the requirement of 6" of protective playground surfacing under and around gross motor equipment has been raised to 9". More detailed information can be found at the website for the Public Playground Safety <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf> and the ERS home page where the Supplemental Playground Information to be used with the Environmental Rating Scales is located <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/>

**Quality Counts Reminders From Assessors:** The Professional Development Pathway is scored based on information on the Registry Report(s). Quality Counts binders will be picked up on the day of assessment for Family Child Care Providers and at the Data Collection visit for Centers and School District sites. No Pathway documentation will be accepted after binders have been collected.

**Training for Early Childhood Professionals:** The Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education at Palm Beach State College provides professional development that meets the



*Connie Willis at a Family Child Care assessment.*

needs and wants of early childhood educators throughout our county. All courses are Registry-approved and meet QC requirements for 45-hour, Informal ECE Training benchmark, as well as School Readiness requirements. Below is a preview of courses; for complete course listings and to register, visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece.xml](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece.xml) or contact Deborah Watson at (561) 868-3669.

## Coaching for Quality

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### **“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”**

It is important to remember that quality improvement is not a sprint, but a marathon. After the formal assessment is conducted, the stages of the process are repeated. New goals and strategies are identified as programs strive for higher levels of quality. The skills gained through the collaborative coaching process remain with the program along with the experiences related to the change process. The baton is passed to the provider and less support from the coach is needed. In our system, this is the transition from the intensive to the maintenance phase.

The implementation of Pat Wesley's model of consultation enables our system to maximize the resources available. As more and more programs join Quality Counts, movement of existing programs into the maintenance phase will allow coaching hours to be transferred to new, intensive sites. Currently, there are 35 coaches serving 100 child care centers and 27 school sites. From baseline to the first formal assessment, child care centers evaluated with the Environment Rating Scales significantly improved the quality of care across all indicators of the tool (Shen, Tackett & Ma, 2008). Overall provider satisfaction is extremely high, with 93% of providers reporting satisfaction with services received by their assigned Early Learning Coach. Together, we are creating better environments for children! (References available upon request: [scottst@palmbeach.k12.fl.us](mailto:scottst@palmbeach.k12.fl.us))



*Active involvement of our students in our courses.*

Preview of course offerings:

**HE00138: The Power of Play and Reflective Listening** This course provides an understanding of how children develop social and emotional wellness and what teachers can do to foster positive adult-child relationships and reduce behavioral problems in the classroom.

Ref# 146480; 9/25, 10/9, 10/23, 9am-1pm; Palm Beach Gardens Campus

**HE00159: Successful Communication for the Early Childhood Educator** This course provides practitioners with knowledge and skills to strengthen written and oral communication abilities through activities with authentic application in the early childhood classroom. Students must have a working knowledge of the English Language.

Ref # 146415; 10/2, 10/16, 10/30, 11/13, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Lake Worth Campus

**HE00115: Personal and Professional Development Revised** This course provides students a chance to learn how to take charge of their personal and professional development based on Florida's Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Education Professionals.

Ref# 146474; 10/13, 10/20, 11/10, 11/24, 6:00 - 9:00 pm, Palm Beach State College, Historical Building, WPB

Ref# 146413; 10/16, 10/30, 11/13, 12/11, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, Palm Beach State College, Belle Glade Campus

**Coming Spring 2011! Caring for Children Birth to Three** will be offered in Spanish. This program prepares students who already work with children, birth to three years old, in a licensed child care facility or family child care home, for the Florida Child Care Professional Certificate (FCCPC) awarded by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Three modules will cover the eight content areas. For more information, contact Luisa Hernandez at 561-862-4719 or Darcy Russo at 561-868-3663.