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Local Organizations Successful in Reducing Shigellosis Cases

More than two months after placing restrictions on child care providers in hopes of containing a Shigellosis epidemic in Gaston, the Gaston County Health Department has lifted those restrictions, citing no new cases.

In a letter distributed Sept. 30, child care providers were advised that restrictions on water activities, field trips and transfers have been rescinded.

"Thanks to the continuous efforts of daycare center staffs to help prevent the spread of Shigellosis, new cases are no longer being reported," said Colleen Bridger, Gaston County Health Director. "On average, we see four cases per year in Gaston County, but between the months of May and September, there have been 118 cases, making this one of the worst epidemics

we've ever seen. The decline in new cases is directly related to control measures and community-wide cooperation."

As part of the effort to combat the spread of Shigellosis, health department staff provided training to child care workers throughout Gaston County on how to prevent the development of the bacterial disease.

Even though the outbreak has passed, Bridger said Shigellosis remains active.

"As always, precautions should be taken to prevent another outbreak in the future," she said.

To prevent the spread of Shigellosis, the following measures should be taken:

■ Handwashing is the key to prevention. Make sure to wash your hands and help children to wash their hands

for at least 15 seconds. A good rule of thumb is to sing "Happy Birthday" in your head.

■ Supervise children around bathrooms to ensure that they are washing their hands thoroughly.

■ Review policies for sick children in child care facilities.

■ Children with diarrhea should be sent home and not return to child care or school until there is no diarrhea for 24 hours.

■ Continue to thoroughly clean and disinfect bathrooms, diaper tables, toilets and door handles.

For further information on Shigellosis and how to prevent it, contact the Gaston County Health Department Communicable Disease Program at (704) 853-5002 or the Child Care Health Program at (704) 862-6116.

Partnership Hires Early Childhood Education Director

Diane Hines joined the Partnership in July as Early Childhood Education Director.

Hines brings more than 20 years of experience in early childhood to the job. For most of that time, she served as director at child care centers, with a focus on

children with special needs, and she last worked as director of a non-profit center in Forest City,

where she pioneered the program that served children both with and

without special needs.

Newly relocated to Stanley, Diane grew up in and around Portland, Maine. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts and a master's degree from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.



PROVIDER CONNECTION

Child Care Health Consultant Training Opportunities

The following educational opportunities will be available for child care providers in the near future at the Gaston County Health Department. The programs are free of charge and those attending will receive an in-service training credit.

■ **Understanding Asthma in the Day-care Setting**, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; presented by Rita Heath, pulmonary educator.

This program offers an explanation of asthma, what to do in an emergency and how to use an Epi-pen.

■ **Caution Curriculum**, Thursday, Nov. 6, 6:30-

8:30 p.m.; presented by Caroline Taddei, Carolina Poison Control.

An education program for anyone taking care of young children on how to poison-proof your environment and what to do in an emergency.

■ **Ages and Stages Questionnaire**, Thursday, Nov. 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; presented by Kathy Hudson, early intervention specialist.

An easy, inexpensive program to assess the developmental needs of children in your program.

■ **SIDS**, Thursday, Dec. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; presented by Marilyn Gore, Cooperative Extension

Service. This training is designed to familiarize child care providers with the issues surrounding SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and the new law.

All programs will be held in the Community Room of the Gaston County Health Department, 991 W. Hudson Blvd., Gastonia. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. Call Catherine Becker, Child Care Health Consultant, at (704) 862-6116 or e-mail her at cbecker@co.gaston.nc.us.

Child Care Health Consultants in Lincoln and Gaston counties are available as a resource for con-

sultation and education to child care providers, children and parents on health, safety and nutrition concerns in child care facilities.

Services can be provided by phone consultation, site visits and technical assistance.

The following workshops are planned for early 2004:

■ **Beyond Band-Aids: Accidents, Illness and Medication Safety**

■ **Get Ready, Get Set, Go!: Field Trip and Transportation Safety**

■ **Infant-Toddler Zone: Infant and Toddler Safety**

Those interested in hosting the above workshops should contact Catherine Becker at (704) 862-6116.

Child Care Information Launches Parent-Provider Assistance Hotline

Child Care Information agency has launched a hotline designed to help connect local parents and child care providers with information they need.

The Parent-Provider Assistance Hotline is a free service that encourages parents or child care providers to call for answers to questions on any one of a variety of topics.

Child Care Information's Joyce Brison said the agency was prepared to either answer questions if they had the relevant information on hand or direct callers to another local agency that could serve as a better resource. The hotline is equipped to answer questions in the areas of child development, local agencies, child abuse and neglect, parenting skills, family issues, health and nutrition and adolescent and teen issues. As a follow-up, callers will be mailed a packet with information pertinent to their question after their agency was prepared to call, in addition to being given whatever information, contact numbers and names are available over the phone.



Volunteers will be staffing the hotline 24 hours a day. A significant number of people have already volunteered, Brison said.

"That's an asset that we have 28 people who volunteered to answer the phone at night," she said.

The toll-free number for the Parent-Provider Assistance Hotline is 1-866-866-2459. The hotline is available to all local parents, providers, guardians or interested parties.

For more information on the Parent-Provider Hotline or for information on volunteering, call Child Care Information at (704) 864-2459.

Apply to be linked to Partnership's Web site

The Partnership's Web site, www.pfclg.com, serves as a source for parents, providers and individuals seeking to learn more about the Partnership.

The site includes a page of links to the Web pages of local, state and national organizations that visitors to the site may find helpful.

Child care providers whose center or home has a Web page and who wish to be linked to the Partnership's web site may apply to be linked by e-mailing the Web address to publicinfo@pfclg.com. All sites will be reviewed.

JUST FOR PARENTS

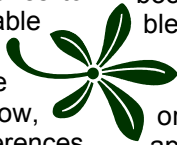
Autumn Project: Leafy Table Mats

Here's what you'll need:

- Sturdy colored paper or posterboard
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Clear self-adhesive plastic
- An assortment of autumn leaves

Directions:

Help your child gather a variety of autumn leaves to use in making the table mat. Gather fern fronds and maple leaves, red and yellow, and discuss the differences between the leaves as you and your child find them.



place them between two pieces of newspaper and press them inside a heavy book for a week, if possible.

Cut the sturdy paper or posterboard to appropriate table mat size.

Allow your child to arrange the leaves on the paper in

their own design, securing each with a small amount of glue or tape.



Cut the clear plastic slightly larger than the paper itself and place it adhesive side down on the tablemat so that it seals and protects the leaves. Fold the sides of the adhesive plastic under the

mat. Trim off any excess plastic and your child's one-of-a-kind table mats are ready to use! They can be wiped clean after use with a damp cloth.

Adapted from the book, "365 Days of Creative Play" by Sheila Ellison and Judith Gray. Published by Sourcebooks, Inc.

Very Important Parents Offers 'Parenting Matters' Course

The Very Important Parents program, or VIP, will offer an extended course for parents.

The course, called "Parenting Matters," was designed for parents or guardians who may need help with the sometimes-difficult task of raising children. The program has an educational focus, but sessions are designed to put parents at ease with an informal approach to learning. There is no cost for the program, but class size is limited to 15 participants in each session.

Sessions are planned for Nov. 18, 20, 25 and Dec. 2, 4, 9, 11 and 16. Each session lasts from 10-11:30 am and is held at the Gaston County Citizens Resource Center, 1303 Dallas-

Cherryville Highway, Dallas. Sessions cover a variety of topics fundamental to good parenting, such as personal stress management, understanding children and helping children learn. These sessions are appropriate for parents of children of any age, but the focus will be on parents of children ages 0-5.

The VIP program provides families with young children with a centralized source of information on positive child development and offers parents the opportunity to improve their parenting skills through education and support.

Parents interested in taking the course should contact Belinda Anderson, parent educator, at (704) 922-2122.

Children... a wise investment.

The Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties is working every day to make a difference in the lives of local children. Your support makes that difference possible. If you want to invest in the future of children in Lincoln and Gaston counties, please volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation.

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone _(____) _____

Amount enclosed: \$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Please make checks payable to Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties. Return check with this form in person or via U.S. mail to Partnership for Children, 1012 Philadelphia Church Road, Dallas, NC 28034.

Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties

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fax: (704) 922-0996
On the Web: www.pfclg.com
E-mail: pfclg@pfclg.com

Our vision: A community where young children will reach their full health and educational potential.

Our mission: To serve as a leading advocate and financial resource, in collaboration with other community agencies, to provide affordable access to high quality services for young children.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- October 24 — Partnership Board of Directors meeting, noon, Partnership office
- November 21 — Partnership Board of Directors meeting, noon, Partnership office
- November 27-28 — Holiday; office closed

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER?

If you would like to receive the Partnership's newsletter by mail, call Shannon Clubb at (704) 922-0900 or (704) 736-9008 or e-mail her at publicinfo@pfclg.com.

Please include the following information:
Name

Organization, if applicable

Complete preferred mailing address (*Note whether address is home or work.*)

Daytime phone number (*if we have any questions*)

STAFF

- Sherry L. Browning, Executive Director
 - Tory L. Borne, Program Manager
- Shannon Clubb, Public Information Coordinator
- Diane Hines, Early Childhood Education Director
 - Jan Morgan, Administrative Assistant
- Rebecca Powell, Parent Information Assistant
 - Dawn Rippey, Contracts Manager
 - Elizabeth Sisk, Office Assistant
- Vicki Timmons, Finance Coordinator
- Bobbie Weatherly, Purchasing Assistant

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