



## Healthy Minds, Happy Kids Community Resource Fair October 23, 2010

Smart Start-Centre County was pleased to receive a grant for \$17,500 from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning which funded the following projects. The overall purpose of the grant was to work with Title I schools towards developing a county-wide transition to Kindergarten plan.



**Transition Teams:** Smart Start's Early Care and Education Committee recruited team members for 14 local elementary schools. Each team includes at least a parent, a school rep, and an early childhood rep. Smart Start provided a listserv to promote good communication for all the team members; this list now includes over 125 people.

**Transition Booklets:** Working together with team members and school staff, Smart Start created full-color story booklets for incoming Kindergarteners at 10 schools and a booklet for parents of incoming Kindergarteners for 3 schools. Over 875 copies of the booklets were distributed to families through the schools. In addition, over 120 booklets were given to early childhood programs for teachers to read to children heading for Kindergarten. Volunteers from Global Connections at Penn State translated 5 of the booklets into foreign languages (Chinese, Japanese, and Russian) as requested by the school principals. The booklets, including translations, were provided on CD to each school for future use.

**Training dinner:** About 40 people attended our training dinner. Participants came from all 4 school districts and included principals, directors, counselors, elementary teachers, parents, preschool teachers, daycare home owners, and daycare teachers.



*I personally used the transition booklet for Park Forest Kindergarten and found it to be a great tool. My son and I read it before bed the week before school started. --parent*

Each participating school received a copy of the OCDEL transition toolkit handouts and handouts from our guest presenters, Melissa Russell, pal, and Laura Lake, Pre-K teacher, from Tyrone Elementary School. Transition teams were given copies of the book "What a Treasure" to present to all Kindergarten teachers. Each team received a copy of Pianta's book on school transitions and guidelines for planning roundtable discussions.

**Roundtable discussions:** Over 120 people attended at least one of four district-wide roundtable discussions to review and plan transition activities. Dinner, childcare, training credits, and resources were provided. Participants shared what they currently do in their programs to help children and families prepare and adjust well to Kindergarten and thought about additional activities that would be helpful. All teams are planning to continue working together on these plans in the future.

*I really enjoyed the round table for transitioning to Kindergarten. I feel more confident in the role I play as a lead teacher in a four year old classroom. I now have the tools I need to hold a meeting for my parents in the spring, so that they can get every piece of info I think they'll need to help their child with such a transition. Thanks for organizing the event. Can't wait for the next one!!*