



# Kids Korner Connection

A newsletter from the Children's Division of ARC

## Reaching Our Program's Performance Goals

by Shawn Preston, Director of Children's Services

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In our ongoing efforts to be the very best, we continuously measure and evaluate our performance in many ways and many areas including effectiveness, access, efficiency, and satisfaction. We are so pleased to report that we have achieved or exceeded almost all of our goals in these areas and have established strategies in the areas needing improvement .

**Effectiveness measures** relate to how well each service or support area meets its own mission. Following are the results of our effectiveness goals:

- ☺ 100% of ABLÉ children improved their language development skills
- ☺ 95% of ABLÉ children showed behavioral improvement
- ☺ 88% of children receiving in home behavior services increased adaptive behaviors and decreased maladaptive behaviors
- ☺ 78% of preschoolers made progress on their developmental goals
- ☺ 80% of PAT families report reduction in stress as a result of the program
- ☺ 91% of PAT parents showed improved parenting skills and attitudes
- ☺ 96% of Respite families report a reduction in stress as a result of the services
- ☺ 89% of Youth Links students and parents increased their advocacy skills
- ☺ 100% of Youth Links parents increased their knowledge of their children's educational rights
- ☺ 85% of individuals receiving Mental Health counseling reported improved psychological well-being as a result of services
- ☺ 84% of children receiving outpatient rehab (OT, PT, Speech Therapy) made progress on goals

**Access** measures relate to how readily the services can be accessed by those who need and desire them. Following are our results:

- ☺ 78% of children referred to ABLÉ were enrolled within six months
- ☺ 18% of children referred to Community Based Behavior were enrolled within six months
- ☺ 89% of all preschoolers referred to the program enrolled
- ☺ 13% of families referred to PAT enrolled within 10 days
- ☺ 100% of families referred to Respite enrolled within 10 days
- ☺ 65% of students referred to Youth Links enrolled within 10 days
- ☺ 92% of children referred for OT, PT, Speech Therapy enrolled within 10 days

**Efficiency Measures** relate to the financial efficiency of each service or support area. ARC Broward, Inc. strives to use resources in a manner that is cost effective while maintaining the highest quality of service. By minimizing cost of service, ARC Broward, Inc. can potentially expand the same high quality care to increasing numbers of individuals over time. We are pleased to share that this was accomplished in the preschool, Community Based Behavior, Kamp Krayola, Respite Care and Youth Links programs. The other programs were on target with cost of care and provision of services to the projected numbers of children.

**Satisfaction Measures:** ARC Broward, Inc. is committed to tailoring services and supports to meet the needs and desires of persons served. In an effort to do so, we gather information from individuals receiving services regarding satisfaction and recommendations for improvements. One hundred percent (100%) of families responding to surveys from ABLÉ, Community Based Behavior, Kamp Krayola, PAT, and Youth Links Programs reports overall high satisfaction with services and supports. Preschool, Respite Care Mental Health and Rehabilitation Services all had satisfaction rates of 90% or higher.

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## Upcoming Special Events

- ◀ Preschool Parent Leadership Committee (PLC) Meeting: January 22 @ 9:15 am
- ◀ Toy Drive: Help make the holidays magical by donating a new unwrapped toy for the children in our programs; Donation boxes are located in Building One Lobby (last day 12/15)
- ◀ Santa & friends are visiting the Preschool on December 21 at 10 a.m.

## Reminder:

- 12/21: Early release
- 12/22- 1/8: Winter break (Preschool closed)

## Reaching Our Program's Performance Goals

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Based upon all of these findings, we have established an improvement plan that includes:

☺ **ABLE Access:** Over the past several years, the ABLE program has expanded capacity to reduce wait time from serving 22 children to currently serving 40 children. We will continue to explore increased capacity in program as well as movement of children served to less restrictive services (in community). In addition, we will explore provision of a less intensive model at ARC for children to transition to since the structure and environment are crucial to the children's stability.

☺ **ABLE Satisfaction:** Recommendations for increased computers and educational materials/media were made and are being addressed through increased Assistive Technology and computer purchases and curricula made possible through CSC and Health Foundation funding.

☺ **Community Based Behavior Access:** ARC has and will continue to seek expansion dollars to increase numbers of children served and reduce wait time. Additionally, transition and discharge planning will be prioritized to ensure that services are fading and concluded when families demonstrate progress and no longer are in need of such.

☺ **Preschool Effectiveness:** In order to increase the children's progress toward their developmental goals, the preschool has begun utilizing a new curriculum, Play and Learn, has embedded the new Assistive Technology program into the curriculum for each student on an individualized basis, and has implemented a more systematic and structured team approach to the oversight of children's performance with changes to teaching plans in a timely manner if progress isn't shown.

☺ **PAT Access:** To address the significant delay in access to services and lengthy wait time, ARC submitted an expansion proposal to CSC which was approved, increasing funding to eliminate the wait list and provide immediate access to services for families upon referral/application.

☺ **Youth Links Access:** Delay in the enrollment of the three students who exceeded the ten day target was a result of the families' requests to delay intake/enrollment. Thus, no further action is needed.

☺ **Mental Health Access:** In order to prevent delays in intake/enrollment, the Coordinator will delegate intakes to prospective therapists on occasions in which she is unable to conduct within ten days of referral or request for services.

We sincerely appreciate all of the formal and informal feedback from all of you and value it tremendously in our commitment to continue to improve in all aspects of our service provision.

Congratulations to all of our team members and children for their hard work and phenomenal performance!!!

## Holiday Time at the Preschool

By Marisa Chazarreta, Educational Supervisor

It is a joy for us to see the excitement of the holidays through the eyes of the children. Their fascination with the season is evident on each of their faces. We have a lot of preschool fun planned for your child this month, from our annual visit from Santa to the party in each classroom before the end of the year. Following are a few ideas taken from the network for young children on how to make the holidays magical:

- ❖ Encourage your preschoolers to choose or make a couple of presents, have them help with decorating the tree and making holiday cookies. With your help, they can even help with some of the wrapping of the gifts. Remember that special occasions are more meaningful when your child can participate and have fun!
- ❖ Get a fun holiday gift that encourage pretend play. The dolls and dollhouses, action figures and play sets that they are asking for are not only playthings, but teaching tools too. Studies show that kids who play dress up and use their imaginations to bring action figures, dolls and stuffed animals to life, learn social and language skills, creativity and discipline too.

ARC Broward, the Children's Division and the preschool team wish you and your family the happiest of holidays. Remember that you already have the most precious gift that you will ever receive, your child!

## Our Shining Stars Students of the Month

Congratulations to our **Students of the Month** who are among our many students who are making notable gains this month:

### Preschool:

Room 134 - **Christopher B.**

Room 135 - **Stephanie S.**

Room 136 - **Khavon S.**

Room 137 - **Aaron M.**

Room 138 - **Ryan St. J.**

### ABLE:

Room 132: **Jalen R.**

Room 133: **Marcel M.**

Room 325: **Desmond G.**

Room 306: **Austin K.**

Room 307: **Jonathan O.**

Room 308: **Stephanie G.**

Our hats off to All our students!!!



## Florida Disability Mentoring Day

By Blanca Onetto, Youth Links Team Leader

The Florida Disability Mentoring Day is commemorated the third Wednesday of October, in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The DMD is part of a national broad-based effort to promote career development through hands-on career exploration, job shadowing and internship or employment opportunities for young people with disabilities. ARC Broward was represented by seven of our students who participated as Meentés and by our staff who participated as their Mentors. We joined the Center for Independent Living activities/workshops held at its facility on October 18, 2006. All participants received a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Jeb Bush, Governor of Florida. It was a great experience for our students and a good networking opportunity for us. We all look forward to repeating the experience next year!

### Upcoming events for December:

Dec. 12 - ESE Specialists annual meeting time/place TBA  
Please call Blanca Onetto for more information.

The Youth Links program is made possible by the generous funding from Broward County.

For more information about the Youth Links Program, please contact Blanca Onetto at 954-746-9400



## ABLE Forms a Girl Scout Troop

ABLE is proud to announce that we are in the process of forming a Girl Scout Troop. The Girl Scouts organization has been around for 95 years and is still going strong in the community. It's four primary goals are to help girls to develop to their full potential, relate to others, develop a meaningful set of values to guide their actions and decision-making, and to contribute to the improvement of society.

The troop leader will be ABLE's own Lead Instructor, Joan Mullings, who has recently completed the required training through the Girl Scouts organization. The girls in ABLE are in the process of enrolling in the troop. They will have troop meetings approximately every week where they will participate in fun learning and contributing opportunities for which they can earn patches for their girl scout vests!

We hope this proves to be a wonderful positive experience for the girls and certainly look forward to all of their activities, events, and yes, those famous COOKIES!

## Parent Corner

### ARC Holds a Special Place in MY Heart

By Nardine Wetzel

Hello, My name is Nardine Wetzel and I bring my daughter, Kiersten, to ARC Broward. Kiersten was diagnosed with Autism on March 3<sup>rd</sup> of 2005. Since finding out, ARC has been a major benefit to her progress! Kiersten has attended ARC for Kamp Krayola, Respite, The Parent as Teachers Program and Speech Therapy. The following explains a little about each program and how each program has helped both Kiersten and I.

Kamp Krayola was actually how I came across ARC Broward. The camp is full of routine activities, arts, crafts, and field trips. The hours that are run for the summer program are very flexible and convenient for parents to work. The staff is absolutely wonderful and I have never felt safer with leaving my daughter in good hands. The routine schedule helps Kiersten stay on track with her regular school and it keeps her from regressing. She truly enjoys attending camp and both her and I look forward to it every year.

Respite has also been a tremendous help for me as a parent because Respite is available on teacher workdays and weeks off from school for long holiday breaks. Kiersten enjoys the on-site activities and snacks that that are provided. Respite is a beneficial workday because Kiersten gains insight from teachers she learns to play with others.

The Parent as Teachers program has been a wonderful benefit for me because I am able to learn with Kiersten. I learn about handling her behaviors and what activities I can do with her to progress her learning. My Parent coordinator also informs me of new teachings and gatherings that either the city or ARC are having. Every visit is a new learning experience!

Kiersten attends ARC's speech therapy during Kamp Krayola and she did very well!!! After a couple of sessions, Kiersten would get involved and not tantrum. Kiersten has learned to express words with pictures and prompts and is doing well!

ARC holds a special place in my heart because it has done so much for both Kiersten and I. Parents and their children will understand the importance of ARC when they attend because the support you receive from the staff shows the enthusiasm and care they have for the kids!



Kiersten Wetzel

## Arranging the Environment for Communication

By Kim Fox, Coordinator of Rehab Therapy Services

In order for our children to learn to communicate we have to set up the environment for communication. We need to ask ourselves "What do we want the child to do?". We want them to **use simple gestures, sounds or words to initiate communication and we want them to communicate to request and protest.**

What can I do to help make this happen?:

- 1) During care-giving routines, create opportunities for him to communicate when he is motivated (e.g. when washing hands, turn water on briefly then off and wait for him to indicate that he wants the water on)
- 2) Choose fun materials that require your help to activate so that she has an opportunity to request help (blow bubbles then put the wand back into the bottle and wait for her to indicate that she wants more; push the swing a couple of times then hold the swing waiting for her to indicate that she is ready for more)
- 3) If he is starting to communicate, give him the opportunity to make a choice ("Do you want juice or milk?", "Do you want the dinosaur book or the truck book?")
- 4) Respond immediately with praise to any communication (looking, smiling, gesturing, signing, pointing to pictures, making sounds/words)
- 5) Do one thing at a time. Too much change can be frustrating and confusing

**Remember to keep it simple and to always be enthusiastic and Have Fun!!**

## Congratulations!!!

Welcome Aboard to Our Newest Members:

Sean Narcisse-Spence - PAT Parent Educator

Sharon Hallback- PAT Parent Educator

Marie Sannon- Preschool Teacher

### And The Award Goes To...

Congratulations to the following team players who had their PRIDE cards filled, signifying demonstration of every core value. Thanks for all of your hard work and dedication toward the children and for being on our team:

Preschool Teacher's Assistant: [Pamela Mc Grath](#)

### Team players of the month:

November: [Catherine Chesla \(Preschool Teacher\)](#)

December: [Michele Barbot \(PAT Parent Educator\)](#)

### Children's Services

Preschool  
ABLE After-School Program  
Respite Care  
Youth Links Transition Support  
Behavioral Analysis  
Summer 'Kamp Krayola'  
'PAT' Parent Training  
Rehab Therapy (OT, PT, SLP)  
Mental Health Counseling

### Adult Habilitation

Supported and Community Living  
Community and Center Day programs  
Individualized Supports  
Transportation Services

### Workforce Development

Community and Self Employment  
Skills Development  
Culinary Arts  
Calypso Grill  
Electronics Recycling  
Landscaping Services  
Vehicle Washing

### Advocacy & Social Services

### Nursing Services

### Information and Referral

### Human Services Training Solutions



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*"We have a **Passion** for what we do, **Respect** for all of our stakeholders, **Integrity** for how we do our jobs, a **Drive** for excellence and an **Entrepreneurial spirit**."*

