Virginia Association of Counties

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince George County

Program Title: Prince George County Toddler Fair

Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Shel Bolyard-Douglas

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Department: Prince George Social Services

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Percy C. Ashcraft

Title: County Administrator

Signature:

Overview/ Summary of the Problem

Prince George County, Virginia has developed a unique way to focus attention on early childhood wellness by hosting the annual Prince George County Toddler Fair. This event, held each spring brings together multiple county and community agencies, including: Prince George County Social Services, Parks and Recreations, Police Department, the Prince George County Public Schools, the Prince George Library of the Appomattox Regional Library System, Hopewell- Prince George Smart Beginnings, and the Infant Intervention services of District 19 Community Services Board. The primary focus of the event is on the early identification of any developmental, hearing, vision, speech or language delays that could have a negative impact on a child's school readiness. After two years, the Prince George Toddler Fair has provided 472 screenings of children and made 68 referrals for additional care or treatment.

The fair combines a number of fun activities such as "Story Time", a Teddy Bear Parade, a Petting Zoo, children's crafts, and children's games with the screening activities. The Fair is free and open to the public for families with children ages five and under.

There is no way to know how the children who have been identified early on as needing additional assessments or referrals might have fared when they arrived in kindergarten if the Toddler Fair had not been available to them. Our hope is that, with the early assessments and referrals, their kindergarten experience and the many years after that will be a more positive experience for them and their families.

Problem or Need for the Program

Prince George County is a rural county with a population of just under 38,000 residents. There is no Head Start program in the school system and child care is typically provided in a home setting. Wellness activities in the region tended to focus on adults and thus overlooking a very vulnerable population in our community. Child welfare workers in Prince George County were encountering a high number of children under the age of 5 that appeared to be displaying signs of developmental delay. Since July 2012, the agency has assumed custody of 14 children under the age of five. Eight of those children

(57%) required additional services such as speech, OT and PT. The preschool indicators from the Special Education Performance Report from the same year indicated that only 42.9% of children ages 3-5 were functioning within the age expectations for acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy). According to the Smart Beginnings/Virginia Early Childhood Foundation 2014 Annual Report entitled A Portrait of Readiness, "a child's experiences during the earliest years have the potential to impact the trajectory of his or her entire life". We knew that if we could identify children early, provide initial screenings with referrals to appropriate services, we could have a positive impact. That impact could mean the likelihood of improved school readiness, a reduction in potential long-term needs for special care or comprehensive services, and potentially diminishing the risk of other negative health issues for young children in our community. The idea of a specific health fair for children ages 0-5 was born- The Prince George Toddler Fair.

Description of the Program

The Prince George County Toddler Fair was the result of a partnership of multiple county and community agencies, including: Prince George County Social Services, Parks and Recreations, Police Department, the Prince George County Public Schools, Prince George Library of the Appomattox Regional Library System, Hopewell- Prince George Smart Beginnings, and the Infant Intervention services of District 19 Community Services Board. Each agency brought in a commitment to provide the venue, supplies, promotional support, and/ or connections to resources needed for the identified screenings for the fair.

In 2015, the planning team identified five screening initially to be provided at the Toddler Fair, adding dental screenings in 2016 when the Hopewell- Prince George Community Health Center joined the partnership. The primary screenings offered to all children attending the fair are free and include: 1) Ages and Stages Developments Screenings (ASQ), 2) Speech and Articulation Screenings, 3) Vision Screenings, 4) Hearing Screenings, and 5) Car Seat Inspections & Education. Information is provided to

all parents and caregivers attending the fair. Referrals are provided for any child whose screenings warrant further assessment.

The target populations for the Toddler Fair are children in our community under the age of five. The Fair is free and open to the public. The primary location of the fair is the Prince George Library and the adjacent Scott Memorial Park Pavilion/ Playground. The Fair is held on a Saturday morning in the spring just prior to the annual kindergarten registration period. The fair combines a number of fun activities such as "Story Time", a Teddy Bear Parade, a Petting Zoo, children's crafts, and children's games with the screening activities. This year's fair was expanded to include Fire and EMS services provided emergency vehicles for fair participants to explore.

Families were not required to complete each screening but were encouraged to complete as many as they could. For each screening they completed, they received a raffle ticket they could enter to win one of two door prizes (an All-in -one car seat or a Pack & Play).

Financing and Staffing

The Toddler Fair is a health fair that is free and open to the public. It is operated by volunteers and agency staff. All costs related to any individual agency's personnel are absorbed by that agency.

The ASQ Screening tool was obtained as part of the Preserving Safe and Stable Grant through the Virginia Department of Social Services by Prince George Social Services. Child Welfare staff from Social Services and trained staff from Smart Beginnings provide the ASQ screenings at the fair. Approximate 12 staff assists with this function each year.

The speech and Articulation screenings as well as the hearing screenings are provided at no cost through the Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV) with students from Longwood University and James Madison University who require practicum hours for completion of their degrees. The screenings are completed under the supervision of faculty instructors who have donated their time and expertise to the project. There were approximately six student volunteers this year with one faculty volunteer.

The vision screenings are provided by the Prince George Lions Club. There was one primary screener and one student volunteer assigned to this screening function.

The car seat inspections are completed by Southeastern Virginia Safe Kids, a collaborative law enforcement partnership that combines the talents of several area Police Officers and Sheriff's Deputies. There were approximately eight volunteers in this activity during the fair.

The dental screenings were provided by the Hopewell –Prince George Community Health Center. There was one dentist and one assistant who volunteered for this activity during the fair.

The children's activities are staffed by volunteers from various organizations, student groups, Prince George Public Schools, and the library. The petting zoo has been a tremendous hit each year with children and adults alike. It is made possible through generous donations made to the Hopewell- Prince George Smart Beginnings Program. There are approximately 20- 30 volunteers who man various craft, play, music, and dance stations for the children.

Social Services utilized the Preserving Safe and Stable grant to purchase the signage for the Fair as well as the four incentive prizes mentioned above used as part of the screening raffle. The total expenditures for these items amounted to approximately $ 875 each year. There are other Social Service staff, about eight, who were utilized for registration, keeping track of the organization of the fair.

Results of the Program

In the two years that the Prince George Toddler Fair has been offered, 113 vision screenings have been completed with nineteen children being identified for further evaluations. All received referrals to local vision centers for follow up.

Eighty-seven children have been screened by SHAV for hearing and ninety-seven screened for speech and articulation skills. Of those screened, eight children failed the preliminary hearing screening and have been referred for further assessment through local pediatric services. Thirteen children were identified for additional assessment during the speech and articulation screenings. All have been referred

for additional evaluations with only one family declining further service. Smart Beginnings and Prince George Public Schools continue to follow the evaluations for these children residing in the county.

Ninety-nine children were assessed using the ASQ assessment during the two years the Fair has been provided. Eighteen children have been referred for further developmental evaluations and are being monitored by Infant Intervention services. Twenty-eight children's assessments fell into the monitoring range and the families have been referred back to their pediatricians for further support.

Since dental screenings were only provided in the second year of the fair, only forty-eight children received screenings. However, of those screened, 10 children were found to need further evaluations and referrals to local dentists were made.

Car Seat Safety Checks at the Fair have resulted in twenty-eight inspections with ten seats needed to be corrected and two seats needing to be replaced.

All families received wellness information, recreational information, and family resource information throughout the event. From a macro prospective, the planning team agencies have seen a strengthening of their working relationships with each other. There seems to be a stronger shared commitment to serving the youngest citizens of our community together.

Press Release/ Brochure Summary

PRINCE GEORGE, VA- Prince George County, Virginia has developed a unique way to focus attention on early childhood wellness by hosting the annual Prince George County Toddler Fair. This event held each spring brings together multiple county and community agencies with a primary focus on the early identification of developmental, hearing, vision, speech or language delays that could have a negative impact on a child's school readiness. The annual Prince George Toddler Fair combines a number of fun activities such as "Story Time", a Teddy Bear Parade, a Petting Zoo, children's crafts, and children's games with the various wellness screening activities. After two years, the Prince George Toddler Fair has provided 472 screenings of children and made 68 referrals for additional care or treatment.

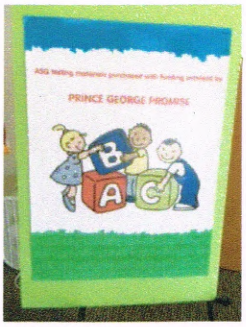
The Fair is free and open to the public for families with children five and under and is held at the Prince George Library and in the adjacent Scott Park playground area.

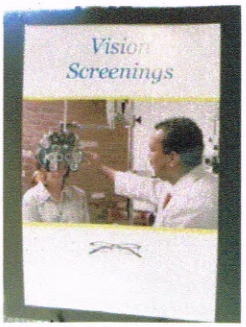
There is no way to know how the children who have been identified early on as needing additional assessments or referrals might have fared when they arrived in kindergarten if the Toddler Fair had not been available to them, said Zetta Ethington, Director of Student Services for Prince George Public Schools. Our hope is that with the early assessments and referrals, their kindergarten experience and the many years after that will be a more positive experience for them and their families. Planning is underway for the 2017 Prince George Toddler Fair.

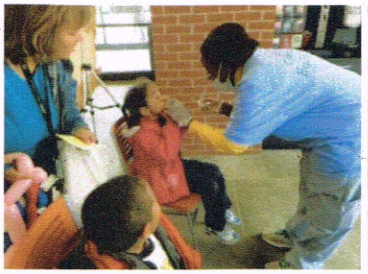
Award Criteria

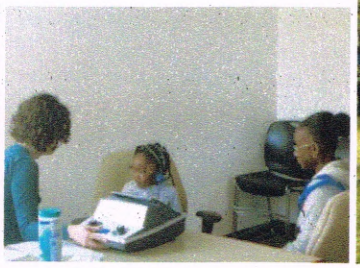
The Prince George Toddler Fair is an innovative plan for engaging families in early childhood wellness and addressing the importance of early identification and referrals for children who are presenting with developmental, vision, speech, language, hearing, or dental concerns. The Toddler Fair approach promotes the partnership amongst multiple government agencies as well as exhibits a strong public/ private partnership. The Fair's success is in the commitment from each of the partner agency and volunteer organizations that dedicate their time, energy, and expertise to the project. The fair is a resource for the families that shows the commitment that our county has for our youngest citizens. Prince George has developed a model that other localities can replicate easily within their own communities by pulling together and sharing the load.

Pictures from the 2016 Prince George Toddler Fair









Community Wide Partnership and Volunteer Organizations:

Prince George County Department of Social Services

Hopewell- Prince George Smart-Beginnings Program

Prince George County Public Schools, Office of Student Services

Prince George County Library, Appomattox Regional Library System

Infant Intervention Services, District 19 Community Services Board

Prince George County Department of Parks and Recreation

Prince George County Police Department, Community Policing Unit

The Prince George Lions Club

Prince George County Fire and Emergency Managements Services

Southeastern Virginia Safe Kids

Hopewell Prince George Community Health Center

John Tyler Community College with students from the Early Child Childhood Program

Hopewell- Prince George Healthy Families

Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia with students from Longwood University and James Madison University

Unity Baptist Church

Girl Scouts, Prince George Service Unit

Prince George High School Student Volunteers

Program Category: Health and Human Services

Submitted By: Shel Bolyard-Douglas, LCSW, Director, Prince George Social Services