

July 15, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Health Department to recognize "Child Safe Facilities"

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department will recognize 10 local child care providers who have been certified through its "Child Safe Facility" program at 3 p.m., Tuesday, July 16 at Harold K. Bengsch Public Health Center, 227 E. Chestnut Expressway. Media are invited to attend the event. Health department staff and representatives from child care facilities will be available for interviews.

According to national surveys, about half of children ages 3-6 who are not yet in kindergarten are enrolled in center-based care. Because of their developmental stage, young children are vulnerable to unintentional injuries. Recent research indicates that health and safety practices in child care settings lack consistency and that improvement can promote safer and healthier environments for children. In 2011, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies rankings of state child care center oversight and regulation placed Missouri 33rd out of 50 states. That's up from 46th in 2009. (The rankings are released every two years, with 2011 being the latest available.) Benchmarks included credentialing and training of child care teachers on health and safety, as well as basic regulations of health and safety standards.

The health department's Child Safe Facility program is part of an ongoing, collaborative effort to promote the health and safety of children enrolled in child care settings. There about 250 child care facilities registered with the state of Missouri in Greene County.

"We wanted to create a way to note which child care facilities are going above and beyond in terms of health and safety," said Suzi Seely, RN, Community Health Nurse with the health department. "It's an additional resource parents can look for when selecting a facility."

The voluntary program began in 2011, and is designed to build on minimum licensing standards. Child care facilities that demonstrate achievement of specific performance measures may be awarded a Child Safe Facility Certificate. The performance measures include:

- Emergency preparedness
- Immunizations & health promotions
- Indoor safety
- Outdoor safety
- Safe sleep practices

The five performance measures are divided into Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. All criteria must be complete for a specific level under each performance measure to receive the Child Safe Facility designation. Resources to assist in preparation are provided by a registered nurse through consultation based upon an initial assessment of the facility.

The 10 providers to be recognized by the department are:

Gold Star facilities:

- Evergreen Place - 516 W. Evergreen St. in Springfield
- Little Angels Learning Academy - 4222 W. Sandy St. in Battlefield
- Carr Kids Daycare - 2784 W. Vincent St. in Springfield
- La Petite Academy - 1714 S. Enterprise Ave. in Springfield

Bronze Star Facilities:

- The Little School - 163 W. Saddle Club Road in Fair Grove
- Little Sunshine's Playhouse - 201 E. Cardinal St. in Springfield
- Safe N Sound Playground - 3216 S. Scenic Ave. in Springfield
- Little Sunshine's Playhouse - 2737 S. Claremont Ave. in Springfield
- Little Sunshine's Playhouse - 2826 W. Chestnut Expressway in Springfield
- Messiah Lutheran Lighthouse Child and Family Development Center - 925 E. Seminole St. in Springfield

There are currently no Silver Star facilities. Additionally, there are four more facilities working toward recognition. Current listings and links to additional resources can be found online at:

<http://health.springfieldmo.gov/childsafe>

For more information, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.