

April 21, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Little Angels Academy Achieves "Child Safe Facility" Distinction

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provides rankings of state child care center regulations and oversight. In 2011, Missouri was ranked 46 out of 50 states for combined regulation/oversight scores. These rankings are lower than the 2009 scores. This reveals a potential need for improvement in health and safety practices within Missouri child care settings that meet requirements for licensure. In response to this need, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department has developed a voluntary program that builds on minimum childcare provider licensing standards to promote health and safety for children enrolled in these settings.

Nearly half of all preschool-age children with a working mother spend 35 or more hours per week in child care. Child care settings provide vital education and care for children during critical developmental stages. Along with those developmental years comes risk for unintentional injuries and communicable diseases, including vaccine-preventable diseases. "It is clear that improvements in child care settings that create a safer, healthier environment for children will promote a place where children can thrive," says Nancy Hoeman, MSN, RN, Nursing Coordinator, Springfield-Greene County Health Department.

In an effort to assist child care providers, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department has created a "Child Safe Facility" program. Child care providers can use the standards and guidelines described in this program to implement changes in their own setting to earn certificates of achievement. The "Child Safe Facility" distinctions are based on completing performance measures in five different areas. These include:

- emergency preparedness
- immunizations
- indoor safety
- outdoor safety
- safe sleep practices for infants

After meeting criteria in each of these performance areas, child care providers may be awarded a certificate of recognition at one of three levels of achievement. A resource manual is provided to assist settings in making preparations for each performance measure. Additionally, The Springfield-Greene County Health Department Public Health Nurses are available to assist child care facilities in this endeavor.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is pleased to announce that the first child care facility in the area has earned the Star Three level, the highest level of achievement in the "Child Safe Facility" program standards. This is a significant accomplishment toward achieving

a safe, healthy facility for children. In order to celebrate this great success, the **Springfield-Greene County Health Department will be hosting a ceremonial presentation at Little Angels Learning Academy located at 4222 West Sandy Street in Battlefield, on Monday, April 25, 2011 at 10:30 a.m.** We invite the community to join with us in celebrating this achievement and to learn more about the "Child Safe Facility" program. For more information on the "Child Safe Facility" program, please contact the health department at 417-864-1658.

For more information contact: Katie Towns-Jeter MPH, Public Information Administrator, 417-874-1205



Harold K. Bengsch Building

227 E. Chestnut Expwy. • Springfield, MO 65802
417-864-1658