

May 15, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

Six "Child Safe Facilities" Recognized

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department will recognize six local child care providers who have been certified through its new "Child Safe Facility" program during the Child Care Provider Appreciation Banquet at 6 p.m. tonight at Wesley United Methodist Church, 922 W. Republic Road.

According to national surveys, about half of children ages 3-6 who were not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in center-based care in 2007. 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 2009, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies rankings of state child care center oversight and regulation placed Missouri 46th out of 50 states. 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. 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 six providers to be recognized by the department are:

Gold Star: Messiah Lighthouse Child and Family Development Center, Springfield; Evergreen Place, Springfield

Silver Star: Carr's Kids, Springfield; Little Angels Learning Academy, Battlefield

Bronze Star: Hope Lutheran Church Child Care Center, Republic; Rise 'N Shine Daycare and Learning Center, Springfield

For more information, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205; or Pam Bryant, Maternal & Child Health Program Administrator, (417) 864-1431.