

About Network Notes

Welcome to the premiere edition of AOK *Network Notes*! *Network Notes* is a quarterly, electronic publication that connects health and human service providers within McLean County's AOK Network to information relative to their clients. It is a venue where providers can share news about services, programs and events and

hopefully gain referrals from other programs and services. If you have information on a service, program or event, contact AOK Coordinator Maureen Sollars at maureen.sollars@mcleancountyil.gov or (309) 888-5539.

Autism Program "Sprouts" New Early Childhood Service

The Autism Program Illinois State University Affiliate Site is launching Sprouts, a program for children aged three to six with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Sprouts will provide individual and group services and focus on increasing communication, independent functioning (especially in group settings) and social skills. The goal is to supplement early childhood education (ECE) programs and more thoroughly prepare young children for a successful transition into elementary school. Sprouts will begin Jan. 20 and end May 10. It will be open Mon.-Fri from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Any child aged three to six diagnosed with an ASD and currently

enrolled in ECE is welcome to participate. The program is funded through the Autism Program of Illinois and provided at no cost to families.

Families interested in enrolling their children in Sprouts should call Kate Gioia at (309) 438-5629.



Parent Expo Set for March 14

The Parent Expo, a conference for parents and caregivers of children 12 and under, is set to take place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sat. March 14 at Prairieland Elementary School. Parents, teachers, childcare providers and others who care for children under 12 are encouraged to attend. The Parent Expo is an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn about community resources while taking advantage of the rich parent education assets available locally.

The conference will include a keynote address, break-out sessions, vendor area, and attendance certificates. Parents may attend one or all portions of the conference and some of the more popular sessions will be offered twice.

The keynote address, *When I Grow Up I Want to be Clark Kent: The Effects of Media and Violence on our Children*, will focus on how media impacts lives and not only changes a child's upbringing, but also the very fabric of our society. The escalating presence of internet,

T.V. and video games influences every child and it is important for caregivers to know how to navigate today's media appropriately.

Childcare for children three to 12 is available *with reservations*. Reservations are absolutely necessary in order to have enough staff and activities. Childcare is being provided by Parents Care and Share. Call Aly at 834-5224 for child care registration by 3/6/09.

The Parent Expo is a collaborative effort among local agencies that is coordinated by the AOK Network's Parent Enrichment Action Team. Participating agencies include: MCHD's AOK Network; CCRRN; Children's Home + Aid - Parents Care & Share; CH+A - Butterfly Project; Bloomington Public Library; District 87 - Sarah Raymond School; Easter Seals; Heartland Head Start; Housing Authority City of Bloomington; Katie's Kids Early Learning Center; McLean County Extension; Normal Public Library; Partners in Parenting; PATH; Unit 5 - Children First! and SPICE of Marcfirst.

It's not just for Parents. Teachers can benefit, too

- Participate in a Love & Logic discussion with parents
- Learn more about using Positive Discipline in your classroom
- Media Violence and your students, what you can do
- DCFS and CDA continuing education credits for child care providers