

COLLEGE RELATIONS AND MARKETING

4200 CONGRESS AVENUE, LAKE WORTH, FL 33461-4796

561-868-3122 tel

561-868-3123 fax



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE LAUNCHES CHILD CARE MENTOR & TRAINING PROGRAM

**PBCC Hires 13 Child Care Mentors Under New Program
Sponsored by Palm Beach County School Readiness Coalition**

**Mentor Program is Now Being Implemented at
Child Care Centers in Belle Glade and Lake Worth**

(Lake Worth, FL -- October 14, 2002) **Palm Beach Community College** has launched an early childhood education mentoring program, the first step toward transforming the county's training system for child care workers.

The **Palm Beach County School Readiness Coalition**, with funding from the county's **Children's Services Council**, has granted PBCC over a million dollars to develop the mentor and training coordination portion of a new school readiness initiative to improve the quality of child care countywide.

Over the last few months, PBCC has hired 13 professional child care veterans who began implementing the mentoring program in child care centers in Belle Glade and Lake Worth on Oct. 1. The mentors are sharing best child care practices with caregivers and center directors for the next year and possibly longer.

"The 1999 School Readiness Act mandated the development of an articulated career path for child care professionals. Now, in cooperation with the area School Readiness Coalition, PBCC is fulfilling this mandate," said **Dennis P. Gallon**, Ph.D., president of Palm Beach Community College.

"Under this new program, PBCC is leading the effort to develop a clear career ladder for child care professionals, as well as establishing a training clearing house, a training approval system, a professional development registry and use of a curriculum that incorporates the latest research and best practices. We'll also administer scholarships for caregivers to improve their skills and professional standing," he added.

"PBCC's new mentoring program is win-win for everyone. Child care providers win by having mentors available at their locations to articulate an achievable career path for professional

development and job advancement. Most importantly, the children and their families win by having better trained child care workers," Dr. Gallon said.

In addition to Palm Beach Community College, participants in the school readiness initiative sponsored by the PBC School Readiness Coalition are the Palm Beach County School District, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, Family Central Inc., ACS and Maximus.

A pilot mentoring project funded through United Way, Children's Services Council and the Barbara and Jeffrey Picower Foundation has operated in Palm Beach County since 1999. Six centers have participated (four in Belle Glade and two in Lake Worth). Extensive evaluation conducted by Florida State University has been positive. The "Picower Project" will transfer to PBCC in January.

About Palm Beach Community College:

Palm Beach Community College, a richly diverse comprehensive two-year institution with a history of achievement since 1933, offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Belle Glade and Palm Beach Gardens. PBCC is dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County by providing associate degrees in arts and science, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.

Contact:

Dr. Roanne Moreno

PBCC's Director of Early Learning Services

(561) 868-3661

Toni Wolf

PBCC College Relations and Marketing Specialist

(561) 868-3129

The full time on-site mentors are working in **two centers in Pahokee:**

- Bright Ideas Educational Foundation, Inc. (2 sites/Linda Joseph 924-3100)
- O'Say Child Development Center Inc. (Cornisha Dukes-Chisholm 924-2620)

and **four centers in Lake Worth:**

- Kiddie Haven Preschool Inc. (Nancy Tirado 967-8121)
- Little Red Schoolhouse Early Learning Center (Cindy Craig 433-8550)
- Huggins Child Care Inc. (Sallie Huggins 969-2007)
- ProChild Early Learning Center, Inc. (Angela Seder 533-1200)

Two more centers will be selected to have on-site mentors and other sites will have "roving mentors." The roving mentors will serve five to eight sites.