Hello Empower Friends!

Gosh, it’s been busy! I just returned from the First Things First Summit! What a huge event this has turned out to be, with almost 1,300 people attending. I feel like I talked to all of you at the Empower exhibit table! We presented a breakout session called Empower Evaluation Results. Guess what? Over the past several years of implementing Empower, collecting and recording self-assessment data results and then analyzing the results, YOU are all making a difference! We are showing improvement each year in implementing the standards and having written policies in place. GREAT JOB to all of you! As always, we’d love to hear from you. Enjoy this issue of the newsletter and consider forwarding to a friend.

Are you reading someone else’s newsletter? SUBSCRIBE to the Empower Newsletter and have this great resource sent to your Inbox.

Last Chance for Newsletter Survey

We’ve had over 150 responses to our survey and we’re learning a lot! For example, some of you want more school-age information, others want more training and professional development information, still others want nutrition and physical activity ideas. We are listening and trying to meet the needs of our readers. Please share your thoughts this month using the survey link.

This is your last chance to complete our survey!

We really want to hear from you! Don’t miss your opportunity to let us know what you think.

We would appreciate your time in taking this quick survey to help us improve the monthly Empower Newsletter. We’d love to hear your ideas of how the Empower Newsletter can better meet your needs. Also, you can always contact Bonnie Williams with Empower questions.

Healthy Kids AZ: A Free App for School Nurses and Child Care Staff

Healthy Kids AZ is a mobile app that was built specifically for Arizona’s school nurses and child care staff who take care of kids on a daily basis. The app is an up-to-date resource in the palm of their hands. Healthy Kids AZ includes access to electronic versions of the beloved infectious disease and injury prevention flipcharts, Arizona-specific vaccine information, infection control guidance, and much more.

Healthy Kids AZ is now available for FREE download in the App Store and Google Play.
Check out this fantastic infographic specific to ECE and obesity. Print and post this in your facility if you can. Also, remember this great Empower infographic too!

Why are ECE programs so important in obesity prevention?

Most young children spend time in care outside of their home, making the ECE setting one of the best places to reach young children with obesity prevention efforts.

Improving the environment of child care and early education facilities may directly impact what children consume and how active they are, as well as help them develop a foundation of healthy habits for life.

What is Arizona doing about this?

Promoting Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Screen Time Reduction and Breastfeeding Support in the Early Care and Education Setting - page 5 excerpt below. Hooray for us!!

In January 2010, the Arizona Department of Health Services adopted the Empower program, a voluntary program in which licensed ECE facilities in the state could enroll and receive a 50% reduction in licensure fees by adopting 10 Empower policies and standards that support healthy eating, active living, and tobacco prevention. Based on the success of Empower, in October 2010, the Arizona Department of Health Services implemented mandatory rules and regulations for licensed ECE centers, including structured physical activity, screen time limitations, exclusion of sugar-sweetened beverages, family-style meals, and breastfeeding accommodations.

Empower PLUS+ Project - Nemours Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives (ECELC)

Since FY12, we have reached ECE systems and programs in 10 states – Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New Jersey, and Virginia. This cooperative agreement with Nemours Children’s Health System (Nemours) supports partnerships with state public health and ECE leaders to: 1) make statewide improvements in their early care and education system by incorporating obesity prevention strategies; and 2) to support a targeted group of ECE providers to make facility-wide improvements using a learning collaboratives intervention.

Arizona WIC - WIC is a nutrition and breastfeeding program that helps the whole family learn about eating well and staying healthy.

Arizona CACFP - The goal of CACFP is to improve and maintain the health and nutrition status of children and adults in care while promoting good eating habits.

Arizona Farm to Preschool/Farm to ECE - Arizona Farm to School Programs work to ensure children of all ages have access to fresh, healthy and locally grown food. Intensive nutrition and agriculture education link farm to school and/or farm to early care education through a variety of activities that engage students in learning and increase consumption of healthy foods, reducing food waste.

Quality First - Partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning across Arizona.

and MORE!
We have three NEW LMS courses to offer this month! Many of you have been clicking away and learning more about the Empower Standards by using our LMS courses. This is a quick and easy way to meet your Empower training needs.

**LMS Courses**

- *NEW* Sun Safety in Child Care Settings
- *NEW* Tobacco Prevention in Child Care Settings
- *NEW* Tooth Brushing in Child Care Settings
- Family-Style Meals in Child Care Settings
- Fruit Juice in Child Care Settings
- Sedentary Activity and Screen Time in Child Care Settings
- Physical Activity in Child Care Settings for Children Birth Through Age 12

**Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry**

Many of you are using the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry to record your education, training, and professional development as you work your way up the Career Lattice. Empower has joined the ranks of the Registry with our online LMS courses too! All seven of our online LMS courses are listed in the Registry and they can be taken at any time that is convenient for you.

**If you want Registry credit, you have to enroll in the LMS course through the Registry.**

The link in the Registry will take you to the LMS course of your choice. You can also take the LMS courses directly through our Empower website but you won’t get Registry credit. Either way, you will receive a Certificate of Completion by email from ADHS within two weeks. Be sure to enter your email correctly or we can’t send it to you!

**Empower Trainings**

We recently trained about 80 Empower instructors using a train-the-trainer model. Now there is a group of trainers statewide who may be able to provide Empower training to you and your staff! We have both Basic Empower Training and Advanced Empower Training. The Advanced Empower Training is designed for a deeper look into individual Empower Standards. They are primarily designed for 30 or 60 or 90 minute sessions, depending on your availability. These trainings can also be offered through the Registry but it’s up to each individual trainer to offer it that way. It’s new, so please be patient as we roll this out across the state. If you need training, please let me know and I’ll forward the request to a trainer in your area. We’ll do our best to accommodate your needs.
In the newsletter survey, some of you mentioned wanting to know more about school-age children and programming. One of our key partners is the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence. Check out their assessment tools for creating a healthy environment!

Start off your school year by setting quality improvement goals for your program! Now is the best time to self-assess your program and set a baseline to measure your future success! See how your program aligns with the Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time and use your results and our resource library to plan ahead. Join over 1,000 sites who have signed the pledge and over 100 Arizona programs in the AzQSAT in their commitment to quality by registering your organization on the Arizona Quality Standards Assessment Tool and submitting your first self-assessment. FREE copies of the Quality Standards can be sent to you for your staff and community (just ask them!) and the tool is easy to use.

Refer to our Step-by-Step Guide to registering or watch the recorded webinar for the free and confidential self-assessment tool.

Professional Development

September 6-7, 2017 - Strong Families AZ Home Visiting Conference

September 23, 2017 - SAzAEYC Conference (contact Debby at SAzAEYC)

October 11, 2017 - 3rd Annual Kindergarten Transition for All Children Summit (contact ADE)

October 28, 2017 - Arizona Out-of-School Time Conference

November 4, 2017 - ECE Symposium (contact Sarah at ASCC)

Are you looking for more training opportunities? Are you a part of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry? Be sure to visit the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network website for conferences, workshops, and trainings.

Always check the most recent ECE Quarterly Bulletin for training, professional development, projects, and programs. Click here for July, August, September 2017 Edition.

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