



Working for Kids

Creating a better future for children by informing, driving action and advocating

Summer 2016

Upcoming Events

Get involved!

All interested parties are invited to attend these events.

Parent Café Training

Monday and Tuesday
June 27-28, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
William J. Harrison Education Ctr.
3140 Cass Ave.
Free
Information & registration:
Ruth Ehresman
rehresman@visionforchildren.org
or 314-534-6015

“When Child Care for All Wasn’t Just a Fairy Tale”

Segment viewing from *The Raising of America*
Discussion led by Katie Rahn,
SouthSide Early Childhood Center
Tuesday, Aug. 23
3–5 p.m.
Information & registration:
www.stlearlychildhood.org

Stepping Up for Kids Awards Luncheon

Friday, Oct. 7
11:15 a.m. Registration
11:45 a.m. Lunch
Norwood Hills Country Club
Guest Speaker: Jefferson County
Circuit Judge Darryl Missey

All meetings at Vision for Children at Risk unless otherwise noted.

For More Information:
(314) 534-6015

For the latest news:

www.visionforchildren.org

Facebook: [visionforchildren](https://www.facebook.com/visionforchildren)

Twitter: [vcrstl](https://twitter.com/vcrstl)

Families, Partners Join for Child Abuse Prevention Month

Hundreds of families and community agencies joined in this year’s observance of April Child Abuse Prevention Month led by the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership. Throughout April, community partners expressed their commitment by displaying “Every Child. Every Family. Safe & Secure.” yard signs. Their photos were posted on the Vision for Children at Risk Facebook page along with tips and information on keeping families strong.



Shaw Area Children’s Center

On Saturday, April 30, families enjoyed entertainment and food, and learned about supportive resources at the Healthy Kids’ Day and Family Resource Fair at the O’Fallon Park Recreation Center YMCA.



Healthy Kids’ Day and Family Resource Fair

Event sponsors included the St. Louis Family and Community Partnership, the YMCA, the St. Louis Area Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. More than 30 community partners participated. See more event photos on our Facebook page, [visionforchildren](https://www.facebook.com/visionforchildren).

“Child Abuse Prevention Month calls attention to how promoting strong families can help reduce the tragedy of child abuse and neglect. All of us can play a part,” said Ruth Ehresman, coordinator for the Partnership at Vision for Children at Risk. The Family & Community Partnership is a coalition of more than 200 leaders of child-serving agencies, schools, courts, police and others dedicated to preventing child abuse and providing supportive, permanent homes for children.



Parents as Teachers Normandy



CAC—Franklin County



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Vision for Children at Risk brings together people and organizations across the St. Louis region to create a better future for the area's children, especially the most disadvantaged socioeconomically. We inform the community with data and policy information, drive collaborative action among key stakeholders, and advocate for greater community investment in children.

Ways to Support Vision for Children at Risk

Vision for Children at Risk relies on our generous contributors in the community to sustain our work. Here are some ways you can help:

- ▶ Gift by cash or check, or made online to our website, www.visionforchildren.org
- ▶ Donate your used automobile. We take care of the towing and you receive a tax deduction. Call us to arrange.
- ▶ Consider including VCR in your estate plan.
- ▶ Escript program at Schnucks. Choose "St. Louis Children's Agenda" as your charity of choice.
- ▶ Amazon Smile. Choose Vision for Children at Risk as your preferred charity.

Results for Children Achieved in Legislature

How did children and families fare in the 2016 Missouri Legislature? A panel of child advocates reported on the session to a June 8 forum attended by some 100 interested individuals. Panelists included (pictured from left) Traci Gleason of the Missouri Budget Project, Judy Dungan of the Missouri Children's Leadership Council, Cherisse Thibault of Missouri KidsFirst, and Christine Woody of Empower Missouri. Among the session highlights:



- The budget includes a 10% increase in the child care provider reimbursement rate, and an increase in the reimbursement rate for providers serving a disproportionate share of low-income children (HB 2011).
- A quality assurance report pilot program was established for child care centers; this program will be voluntary (SB 638).
- Anti-bullying requirements for schools were strengthened (HB 1583).
- A prudent parent standard for foster parents was adopted, giving parents more leeway in making decisions about extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities, without court approval (HB 1877).

The forum was presented by the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership, the St. Louis Area Council on Child Abuse & Neglect, the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council, the Maternal, Child & Family Health Coalition and Vision for Children at Risk.

Kudos

- **Casey Family Programs** is highlighting the work of Vision for Children at Risk on its website. The site notes VCR's data on child abuse and neglect and how it is presented by ZIP code; it also notes this data is intended to stimulate community action to improve child well-being. Go to the Vision for Children at Risk website, www.visionforchildren.org, for a link to the posting.
- Thanks to the **Deaconess Foundation** for the **Community Capacity Building grants** awarded to Vision for Children at Risk and the Missouri Children's Leadership Council during their annual "Children at the Center" event on June 4.
- Vision for Children at Risk Executive Director **Rich Patton** received the Ray of Light Award from **United 4 Children** at their Lighting the Way Gala on April 7. Also honored was PNC St. Louis Regional President **Michael Scully**.
- The **St. Louis Family & Community Partnership** was honored with a "**What's Right With the Region!**" Award by FOCUS-St. Louis at their annual event May 12. The award, in the category of Fostering Regional Cooperation, recognizes the Partnership's work over the past decade to bring together over 200 individuals and organizations to prevent child abuse, promote strong families, and provide safe and supportive homes for all children.



Partnership co-chairs Brenda Maly and Mike Fitzgerald with Ruth Ehresman of VCR.

In Brief ...

▶ St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council Co-Chairs **Anne Kessen Lowell** and **Dawn Winkler** authored a commentary in the May 18 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on the importance of the child day care quality assurance pilot passed by the legislature, along with other ways to invest in early childhood development.

▶ Vision for Children at Risk welcomes to its board of directors **Ryan L. Pratt, MHA**, telehealth services manager at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital.



▶ Thanks to all who supported Vision for Children at Risk and other nonprofits throughout St. Louis on May 3 **Give STL Day**. Despite unexpected technology challenges, over \$2.1 million was raised for area charities.

▶ Some 50 families are participating in **Project LAUNCH** spring **Parent Café** sessions at Flance Early Learning Center and Temple Church of Christ. A 12-week **parent training program** is under way using the Chicago Parent Program model. Dozens of families enjoyed entertainment and learned about community resources at the annual **Children's Mental Health Day** on May 5 (below). See the Project LAUNCH Facebook page, moprojectlaunch, for additional updates.



How Childhood Trauma and Toxic Stress Influence Genes



Childhood trauma and toxic stress doesn't just affect behavior—they impact genetics, too. That's because our genes have the ability to switch on and off certain traits within a range. What happens in the genes of children exposed to poverty, trauma and toxic stress was explored at the May 3 forum, "The Deeper Impact," presented by the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council. It was the third in "The Raising of America" series that began in November. The May 3 forum began with viewing of the "DNA Is not Destiny" segment from "The Raising of America." This was followed by John Constantino, MD, from Washington University School of Medicine, describing the science and policy implications of these genetic responses, called epigenetics. He advised the audience that public policy interventions should focus on areas where the greatest impact can be achieved, in particular, reducing child abuse and neglect. A complete summary of the forum is available at www.stclearlychildhood.org.



The next forum in "The Raising of America" series will be Tuesday, Aug. 23., from 3 to 5 p.m. on the topic, "When Child Care for All Wasn't Just a Fairy Tale." Vision for Children at Risk staffs and facilitates the Regional Early Childhood Council.

Stepping Up for Kids Awards Oct. 7

Mark your calendar for the annual Stepping Up for Kids Awards Luncheon benefiting the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership, on Friday, Oct. 7, at Norwood Hills Country Club. Join us as we honor a select group of these individuals with Stepping Up for Kids awards. Our featured speaker will be Jefferson County Circuit Judge Darryl Missey, who has done exceptional work campaigning for more foster homes in the county, so children can remain near their homes of origin. We also are pleased that Debbie Monterrey of KMOX Radio will return as emcee. For information on sponsorship opportunities, visit www.stlfamilycommunity.org.



Pediatricians Target Child Poverty

Saint Louis University pediatrician Ken Haller, MD, and some 30 child-serving professionals on June 20 discussed how pediatricians and child advocates can work together, following viewing of a webinar on the American Academy of Pediatrics national initiative to involve pediatricians in addressing child poverty. Dr. Haller noted the problems of food insecurity, poverty and homelessness among children, and how physicians are challenged to treat children affected by these issues within the limits of a 15-minute appointment schedule. Discussion focused around policy advocacy.





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Working for Kids Newsletter

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Making Their Neighborhoods Better for Children and Families

How can residents help change their neighborhood for the better? Since February, Project LAUNCH has held a series of Community Cafés on how residents of the 63106 and 63107 ZIP codes feel they can make their community better for children and families. At the initial Café, they determined that transportation was the most pressing issue for these neighborhoods. Most low-income residents must rely on public transportation to get to work, school, medical appointments, etc. The area transportation agency



Metro has been participating since April. Concerns identified include physical safety at bus stops and on buses, timing and

frequency of stops, placement of routes and stops, logistical challenges for families with small children carrying bags and strollers, and professionalism of drivers. There also is a perception of a lack of equity including drivers sometimes passing stops perceived to be unsafe. During June, participants



Above, discussion; top right, Pastor Ron Stephens of Temple Church of Christ led the café; right, Metro and the City of St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency are participating.



are working in breakout groups, and they will convene for a general session on July 28. Vision for Children at Risk operates Project LAUNCH under contract to the Missouri Department of Mental Health and Department of Health and Senior Services.