

Learn and Get Involved

- The [St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council](#) will hold a general meeting on Tuesday, April 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being, 1000 N. Vandeventer Ave. The main topic will be next steps under way in the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Plan that was announced at the October 2017 St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Summit. [Learn more.](#)
- Reach out to families in the north city area by participating in the fourth annual [Healthy Family Festival](#) on Saturday, May 12, at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being. Community organizations will have exhibits on their services that promote strong families. There will be plenty of entertainment for the kids including the mascot Louie from the St. Louis Blues. [Find out how your organization can get involved.](#)
- The St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network will hold its next quarterly professional training program on Friday, June 15, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being. The topic will be opioids.
- Watch for announcement of the date and program for the annual [Legislative Wrap-Up](#) in June summarizing the results of the 2018 Missouri Legislature affecting children and families.



[Give STL Day](#) is Wednesday, May 2. [Please support Vision for Children at Risk](#) and help us sustain our mission to inform the community with data, build strategic collaboration, engage marginalized citizens and advocate for children.

Sanaria Sulaiman Assumes Duties as Vision for Children at Risk Executive Director

Vision for Children at Risk welcomes Sanaria Sulaiman as executive director effective January 1, 2018. She succeeds Richard Patton, who retired after 20 years as VCR's first and only executive director. Sanaria is a familiar face to many, having served as director of VCR's Project LAUNCH promoting young child wellness and engaging families and community members in a high-need area since 2013.

Sanaria said, "I am very honored to become executive director of VCR. I very much admire the work that Mr. Patton, the staff and all our collaborative partners have done to establish VCR's unique and important role in providing data, building collaboration, engaging families and community members and being a champion for children. I look forward very much to continuing and enhancing our contribution to the St. Louis community."



From left, Rich Patton, Sanaria Sulaiman and Board President Dennis O'Connor, MD, at Rich's retirement reception.

Vision for Children at Risk Moves to Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being

New leadership wasn't the only change that came with the new year. As of January 4, Vision for Children at Risk relocated its office and meeting space to the [Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being](#), 1000 N. Vandeventer Ave. Besides modern offices for VCR staff, the Deaconess Center offers greatly improved meeting space, with three rooms accommodating groups of up to 150. The Deaconess Foundation constructed the building to be a center for collaboration and action around child advocacy. VCR greatly appreciates the opportunity to be located in the center along with Unleashing Potential, formerly Neighborhood Houses.

Community Cafés Pursue Solutions to Parent Concerns

Parents and other community members in the 63106 and 63107 ZIP codes are joining in Community Cafés to develop and pursue solutions to major concerns in their high-need neighborhoods. The Community Café is a structured process related to the Parent Cafés which have been held in the LAUNCH area for several years. While the Parent Café focuses on parent peer support, the Community Café is directed to making the community a better place for children



A recent Community Café on safety.

and families. During 2016-2017, the Community Café addressed the issue of transportation. Representatives of Metro, the City of St. Louis and other agencies joined in the cafés. As a result, a set of improvements to public transportation have been implemented, including a Metro on-demand texting app providing citizens with information on expected bus arrival times, an "adopt-a-stop" clean-up program, training for Metro drivers, and a funding request for improved lighting through the aldermen representing the area. For 2018, Community Cafés are being held on the topics of education and safety. The Community Cafés empower residents of these marginalized areas to advocate for improvements benefiting children and families.

RECC Focuses on Regional Early Childhood Plan

The [St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council \(RECC\)](#), a coalition representing over 200 stakeholder organizations in the area of early childhood development, is focusing its efforts on the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Plan introduced at the October 2017 St. Louis Metropolitan Early Childhood Summit. The plan will be explored further at the RECC's general meeting on Tuesday, April 24, from 1 to 4 p.m.



The [Early Childhood Plan](#) has the following overarching goals:

- Improve racial equity and reduce disparities across health and early education domains.
- Create a system of early care and education as evidenced by shared goals, deliberate and clear communication, coordinated efforts and adequate resources.
- Increase the participation of all key stakeholders including parents, service providers, policy makers and the business community.

[Read the Early Childhood Plan](#)

The RECC has several major initiatives under way. The Turn the Page STL early literacy campaign now involves over 30 libraries, literacy organizations and partners. In a second initiative, a group of 11 partners is meeting to create a pilot coordinated young child social-emotional screening program using the Ages and Stages (ASQ) online platform. Thirdly, the RECC is carrying out legislative advocacy in alignment with the state organization Kids Win Missouri. The most recent RECC [legislative alert](#) calls attention to the negative impact on children and families of proposed Missouri tax reductions.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

During April, the [St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network](#) has been working to strengthen families and prevent abuse and neglect by promoting Child Abuse Prevention Month. "Every Child, Every Family, Secure and Safe" yard sign are being posted around the area. See photos of signs plus prevention information on the [Vision for Children at Risk Facebook page](#). Your organization can be part of the Healthy Family Festival on Saturday, May 12, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being, 1000 N. Vandeventer. [Learn more](#).

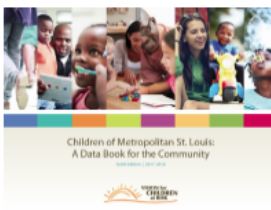


Children's Advocacy Center staff members display their sign at their Central West End location.

Each year, more than 15,000 incidents of child abuse and neglect are reported in the Missouri counties of the St. Louis region, with nearly 1,000 of these substantiated as abuse and neglect and another 8,000 receiving family assessments and preventive services. [See our 2018 Child Abuse Prevention fact sheet](#) with more data on child abuse and neglect, along with prevention tips.

In Brief

- Looking for data on low birth weight or child abuse incidents or percentage of children in poverty in a particular section of the St. Louis area? Looking to illustrate the disparities in child well-being across the region? The *Children of Metropolitan St. Louis* report offers ZIP code level data on over 40 child well-being indicators. You can purchase a printed copy of the report or download a PDF. [More ...](#)



- Vision for Children at Risk has been awarded a contract by the Saint Louis Mental Health Board to administer the [St. Louis System of Care](#), a network of community services and supports for children, youth and young adults with or at risk for mental health and related challenges. The work also includes facilitation of a family leadership cabinet composed of youth and primary caretakers of youth who have needed or have received mental health or substance abuse services.
- Over a dozen Project LAUNCH parents were among more than 500 individuals from around Missouri participating in **Child Advocacy Day** on April 3 at the Missouri Capitol. They attended workshops and a rally, and met with legislators and their staffs.
- Mark your calendar for the St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network's fifth annual [Stepping Up for Kids Awards](#) luncheon on Friday, October 12, at Norwood Hills Country Club. Awards will be presented to families and agency staff for outstanding service to children in foster and adoptive care. [More ...](#)

Help us create better futures for St. Louis-area children ... **Please Donate**

Vision for Children at Risk | 2433 N. Grand Blvd., 63106 | 314-534-6015
www.visionforchildren.org

STAY CONNECTED:



Vision for Children at Risk, 2433 N. Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63106

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by vcr@visionforchildren.org in collaboration with

Constant Contact 