



EARLY YEARS ARE LEARNING YEARS

Shasta County Celebrates Week of the Young Child April 9-16, 2011

By Deborah Peel, First 5 Shasta

.A celebration is about to roll out recognizing the importance of the early years of life, a critical time of development and learning from 0-to-5. Our community joins communities nationwide in honoring young children during the Week of the Young Child, April 9-16, 2011. This year, Shasta County's annual Week of the Young Child (WOYC) offers over 30 fun and educational experiences for children, families, and professionals. With funding provided by First 5 Shasta, nearly all local events and activities are free, and those that charge a fee have seriously discounted rates. All community members are invited to join the celebration and explore the enormous possibilities that lay before young children when we invest in their health, education, and overall well-being.

First 5 Shasta and the California Cascade Association for the Education of Young Children (CCAIEYC) are hosting the WOYC kick-off conference *The Language of Young Children* on Saturday morning, April 9th (Holiday Inn, Redding). The WOYC conference will feature early language expert Anne Fernald from Stanford University. Anne will reveal how infants and young children learn language, how critical the parent/caregiver's role is to language development, and how "educational" media should or should not factor into building language skills. A low fee of \$5 makes the conference affordable and seats can be reserved by calling Tom Kaut of CCAIEYC at 530- 222-0355 x10.

The Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is full of fun, but it is more than a feel good phenomenon. Now in its ninth year, WOYC has become a Shasta County tradition connecting families with young children to valuable support resources during engaging educational activities. Free WOYC activities provide excellent family outing destinations including this year's Triple P Positive Parenting workshops that include parenting strategies, dinner, and child care for ages 0-to-5! Seminars will be offered in Burney on April 12th (call 530-335-4600) and in Redding on April 11th, 13th, and 15th (call 530-224-3246).

Early Years are Learning Years, this year's WOYC theme, indicates the fascinating and critical journey young children take as they develop, grow, and explore their world. Shasta County's WOYC has adopted the *40 Developmental Assets* as a foundation for

creating strength-based events and activities that support early learning and model simple ways to enrich children's lives during the learning years. Caring adults providing meaningful activities for children in safe places helps build a child's developmental assets, the *positive building blocks* that children need to succeed throughout life.

To announce the arrival of WOYC 2011, paperdolls crafted by local children are on display in store fronts and lobbies across the county. The free calendar of events for WOYC 2011 can be found at libraries, agencies, and businesses displaying the WOYC paperdolls. The calendar is online at first5shasta.org and WOYC event details are available at [Woyc Shasta on Facebook](#). Look for the WOYC paperdolls, grab a calendar, plan your week, and, above all else, take this time to honor and value the young children of Shasta County.