

First 5 CARES program pays early care providers for increasing their education

Twenty-seven early care and education providers in Plumas County recently received a cash stipend of \$1,197 for their participation in the First 5 Plumas CARES program announced Ellen Vieira, First 5 Plumas Executive Director.

CARES (Comprehensive Approaches for Raising Educational Standards) aims to increase quality and retention in child care settings through both unit and non-unit bearing classes and workshops leading to attaining or upgrading a child development permit or multi-subject teaching credential.

Child care center staff and family child care providers serving children ages 0-5, and who work at least fifteen hours per week for at least nine months of the year are eligible to participate in the program. Providers qualify by completing professional development goals established with a CARES Advisor, following state standards, which can include college classes, workshops, mentoring, and networking with other professionals.

Surveys of early care providers indicates that participation in the CARES program increases a sense of satisfaction with providing child care, and providers feel that the program has encouraged them to remain in the field and continue their education in early childhood and child development. As a result of the CARES program, applications for child development permits in Plumas County have increased five-fold since the program began.

The First 5 Plumas CARES Program will begin the 2007-2008 program year with a series of orientations beginning August 13. Attendance at one of the orientations is required for participation in this year's program. For more information about the program, or to receive a program orientation schedule, please contact Susie Wilson, First 5 CARES Program Coordinator at 284-1406 or susiewilson@frontiernet.net.

The CARES program is funded by First 5 Plumas County Children and Families Commission and the Plumas County Office of Education.