

### **BE ACTIVE KIDS® Staff Wellness Challenge is off to a great start!**

Be Active North Carolina had an overwhelming response to the ongoing Staff Wellness Challenge. This Challenge is intended to encourage child care providers and staff to increase and improve their physical activity habits and health while acting as healthy role models for the children in their care.

A total of 80 teams including 373 participants have registered for this healthy physical activity competition! Participants will keep a log of their individual daily physical activity minutes from February 20<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup> and compete as individuals, teams and centers.

One child care provider reported that the child care director has offered to provide additional paid time off to the individual who achieves the largest amount of physical activity! What an incentive to be active and move more!

### **The Value of Play Conference – Clemson University**



The U.S. Play Coalition's Value of Play Conference was held in Clemson, South Carolina, from February 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. Researchers and advocates for the value of play convened from around the world to present and discuss the deep rooted need for play, how modern lifestyles often prohibit play, and how educators and other supporters can encourage play among all ages of life.

To learn more about the U.S. Play Coalition or to see a complete conference event schedule, visit [www.usplaycoalition.clemson.edu](http://www.usplaycoalition.clemson.edu). The featured speaker presentations will soon be available for purchase as a DVD and can be ordered through the website.

A comprehensive literature review titled "A World Without Play" is now available online for free! This review was produced by Play England and the British Toy and Hobby Association and addresses the benefits of play to child development and how there are reduced opportunities for play in our modern lifestyle. The full review can be downloaded at <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/a-world-without-play-literature-review.aspx>.

### **My Plate vs. My Pyramid**



**Attention early childhood educators...**you may be wondering if you can still use your old MyPyramid materials to teach nutrition concepts now that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed the new MyPlate materials for preschoolers. The answer is YES! The USDA encourages educators to continue using any MyPyramid materials that you find useful to supplement the information from MyPlate. For more guidance on how you can integrate the new MyPlate messages with MyPyramid curriculum, take a look at the suggestions in the Using MyPlate with MyPyramid document at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

## Sharing your stories...

At The Growing Place in Randolph County, the preschool room is “training” for the Iditarod. The children are engaged in an in-depth project involving this famous dog sled race. For their training, they run laps around the gym, increasing their distance each day. They cool down by walking and then doing jumping jacks and other calisthenics. Finally, they perform stretches for their upper bodies and legs to prepare them for the race. Before and after their exercises, the children count their heartbeats and breaths and compare the numbers. The following week, the class plans to take a field trip to the YMCA. During the field trip, they will use the track for their training and an instructor will demonstrate field exercises. The preschoolers will then spend a morning camping outside in preparation for the race.

Additionally, the children are collecting 122 dog toys and 122 cans of dog food. This number represents the distance of the Iditarod. Once collected, they will donate the items to the local animal rescue shelter. Not only are these preschoolers getting in shape, but they are supporting the local community and having fun too!

*Submitted by Michelle Fisk, Randolph County Partnership for Children, Hub Specialist.*

Excel Learning Center, with seven locations in Carteret and Craven County, recently completed their first “Get Fit to Exel” Challenge to encourage staff to make healthier food choices, increase physical activity, and enhance center spirit through some healthy competition.

Excel #7 in Newbern took first place as their five team members reported a combined weight loss of 55 pounds! Excel #3 in Morehead City, a Shape NC Model Early Learning Center, took second place with a 41 pound combined weight loss, and Excel #1 came in third place with a combined weight loss of 36 pounds! **The 48 participants from the seven centers lost a grand total of 301 pounds!**

“That is simply an amazing number and it shows at each of our facilities. An even greater enthusiasm for exercise has spread through the Excel Corporate Family with teams taking their own initiative and forming exercise groups to continue the great feeling of success and well-being that started with a simple little competition.”

*Submitted by Sherry Peel, Carteret County Partnership for Children, Executive Director*

### **We want to hear from you!**

**Shape NC Connection will continue to issue newsletters to keep you posted on the happenings with Shape NC and current news and resources regarding physical activity, dietary practices, and outdoor learning environments in childcare.**

**Please share your successes and/or challenges with improving the health of young children by contacting:**

**[meredith@beactivenc.org](mailto:meredith@beactivenc.org) or (919)287-7012.**