Outdoor Learning Environment Mini-Grant Application

2013-2014

Dear Early Childhood Program,

Have you ever wished you could do something different with your outdoor classroom (aka- your playground)? If so, Children’s Services Network has come to the rescue with a new initiative, The Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) Mini-Grant!

This grant offers licensed facilities in McDowell County the opportunity to apply for up to $1500.00, pending availability of funding, for the purpose of making improvements to your outdoor classroom environment.

This initiative was inspired to help address the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and the role that more movement and targeted activity can play to help in the fight against this concern for our children/community as well as the need to bring natural elements into the outdoor space.

How Do You Apply?

Complete the attached application and submit it to the CSN office by September 6th, no later than 4:30 p.m. You will be notified of your acceptance or denial by September 10th. Up to three OLE Mini-Grants will be awarded, pending funding availability and approved applications.

Mail your completed application to:
Children’s Services Network/MTCC
Outdoor Learning Application
54 College Drive, Marion, NC 28752

Or bring your completed application to:
the CSN Office:
Azalea Building 4, MTCC

Questions: Michelle Boyles: 652-0648, michelleboy@mcdowelltech.edu
Outdoor Learning Environment Grant Guidelines:

Your facility must be licensed and serve children ages 0-5 years of age.
Remain licensed the entire contract term.
Complete and submit the attached application.

Once approved you must:

- Complete and sign the Outdoor Learning Environment Grant Agreement.
- Participate in a minimum of five technical assistance sessions with CSN’s Early Childhood Specialist including:
  - Phase 1- Contract signing, Initial Consultation, Pre-Assessment, Plan Development (Create an Outdoor Learning Environment Improvement Plan with the help of CSN’s Early Childhood Specialist.
  - Phase 2- Purchase of materials, Improvements/Revisions, Technical Assistance to track progress.
  - Phase 3- Follow Up, Post-Assessment, Final Consultation w/project summary and maintenance checklist.
- Work closely with CSN, your licensing consultant and any owners and board members of your facility that affect your ability to make changes. Provide documentation from applicable owners/board members stating that they acknowledge and accept the plans that are being put in place at your facility.
- Attend targeted training on outdoor learning environments.
- Submit and review with the Early Childhood Specialist a pre and post schedule of activities/lesson plan indicating the amount of time children spend outdoors.
- Base the purchase of items and materials on the Outdoor Learning Environment Improvement Plan, technical assistance from CSN’s Early Childhood Specialist, Smart Start Cost Principles and acceptance from your DCDEE Licensing Consultant.
- Be responsible for all labor costs. (The grant does not pay for labor.)
- Share your progress with CSN and Smart Start by allowing pictures to be shared in newsletters, at meetings and/or with other media.
- You are urged to seek out additional streams of funding and resources that will offer more support to make the changes you may need/desire. Any additional changes must fall within the same guidelines listed above.

All invoices, receipts and packing slips for items purchased with grant funds will be collected and reported, by the Early Childhood Specialist, to the CSN office for processing, as purchases are made and received.

NOTE: Approved facilities that fail to complete the grant requirements will forfeit further purchases and may be asked to repay any grant funds spent to the grantor.

Are you ready to get started? If so, follow the “How Do You Apply” instructions and submit your application to CSN by September 6th, 2013.

CSN is funded by Smart Start and DCDEE