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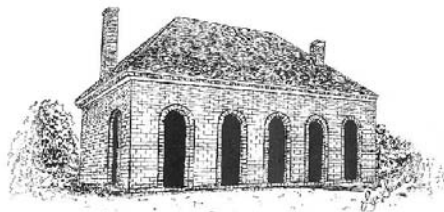
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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSIONER
MARTIN BROWN SPEAKS AT HANOVER TRAINING LUNCHEON**

Martin Brown, Commissioner for the Virginia Department of Social Services, was in Hanover County recently. He spoke to an audience of 40 child care center owners and directors at a Child Care Director's Training Luncheon held by the Hanover Department of Social Services.

Commissioner Brown addressed the group not only in his official capacity but as a parent who understands the importance and value of quality early childhood education. He reaffirmed the Commonwealth's commitment to early childhood education and challenged all attendees to be "first in class", "do no harm" and to "make decisions that work toward the goal of strengthening families."

Donna Douglas, Director of the Hanover County Department of Social Services, said that "Commissioner Brown's commitment to early childhood education is evident in both his speech and his actions."

"It was a comfort to hear, in his own words, his perspective on the importance of quality child care as it related to him personally and professionally," Douglas said. "I was extremely humbled by his willingness to come to Hanover County and support our community efforts to provide quality child care."

In addition to hearing from Commissioner Brown, attendees were provided information on prevention services available for parents from Hanover Community Services. They also heard a presentation from the Virginia Star Quality Initiative Director with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

The luncheon was hosted by Hanover's Department of Social Services and funded by the Quality Initiative Grant. This grant is awarded annually by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Development.

The purpose of the Quality Initiative program is to improve the quality, availability and affordability of child care for all of Virginia's citizens. Quality Initiative Grant funds are to be used by agencies to quality child care through Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) initiatives, improved school readiness, consumer education, small business training and development, infant and toddler development activities, improvements to services for children at risk and children with special needs or improvements.

In addition to the Director's Luncheon, the grant received by Hanover County funds a yearly Early Childhood Conference each fall as well as a series of trainings and workshops for child care providers in Hanover County.

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