



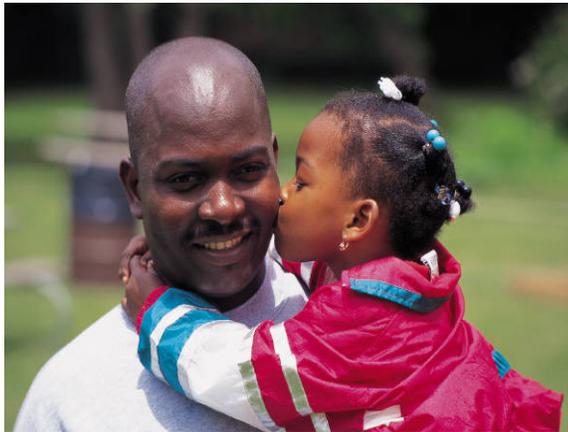
# DHS-ARC News Flash



## The Achieving Reunification Center Celebrates 36 Reunifications

Since its opening in late March of last year, the Achieving Reunification Center (ARC) has successfully helped reunify 36 families with 64 children. The ARC is a one-stop-center specifically designed to assist families in overcoming the barriers to reunification. It is the first center of its kind in the nation, and is on the cutting edge of family reunification support.

“Many of the parents involved in the child welfare system are frustrated in their efforts to comply with what are often conflicting mandates,” says ARC Director Nikita Jackson. “The services at the ARC help parents address the issues guided by child welfare, public benefits and workforce policies



so they can not only get their children back but provide a more stable and nurturing home for them.” Located at 714 Market Street, the ARC provides a host of on-site services in-

cluding workforce development, counseling support and parent education, housing and financial counseling, fatherhood support, coaches and mentors and technology-based learning. The Center also offers childcare and has a beautiful play space for parent-child or sibling visits.

DHS social workers are encouraged to visit the ARC to learn more about the wide array of services available to help their clients achieve their reunification goals. To arrange a tour of the facility, contact Nikita Jackson at 267-514-3500 (ext. 195) or e-mail her at [njackson@arcenter.org](mailto:njackson@arcenter.org).

## ARC Designated a CareerLink Access Site

To better assist parents in their efforts to obtain gainful employment, the ARC has recently been designated a CareerLink Access site. CareerLink provides a host of services that help link individuals to employment, education and training resources.

“We are so excited to have CareerLink on site,” said ARC Director Nikita Jackson. Unemployment is a major barrier to reunification for many of our parents. CareerLink will not only help them get the training they need, but also link them to the most



appropriate jobs for their skill level.

CareerLink offers information on the labor market, job vacancies, financial aid for education, job fairs and conducting a job search. Other services include:

- Assistance with developing an individual plan to obtain employment;
- Testing to determine skill level abilities and career interests;
- Education and training referrals
- Career Planning;
- Resume development;
- Techniques for job searches;
- Assessments for those seeking training and/or job placement.

## A Bright Play Space for Kids

One of the highlights of any visit to the ARC is the beautiful play space. Featuring cheerful murals created by the Mural Arts Program, the room is filled with toys and books. There are inviting cozy corners where a childcare can curl up with a book and plenty of art supplies that allow children to indulge their creativity.

The Learning Center is made possible by the Bright Space Foundation/McNeil Children's Pharmaceutical Program and is the 12<sup>th</sup> Philadelphia Bright Space.



According to ARC Director Nikita Jackson, the play space serves a variety of functions. The ARC provides free childcare for parents who are involved in ARC ser-

vices. The room can also be used for parent and sibling visitation. "It provides a bright, child-friendly space that allows parents and children to explore and learn safely through play and socialization," says Jackson.

The play space is also used for a Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange program designed to ensure the safety of domestic violence victims who are sharing custody of their children. The program, a collaborative effort of the Department of Human Services, the Children's Crisis Treatment Center (CcTC), Women Against Abuse, Inc. (WAA), and the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Family Court Division, Domestic Relations Branch, is staffed by experts in domestic violence, and children's mental health.



### ARC Partners with Community College

Community College of Philadelphia has begun offering computer courses for parents and caregivers at the ARC. The six-session courses, which take place in the ARC's computer lab, teach participants computer basics as well as how to navigate the Internet.



"These courses are an ideal way for parents and caregivers to acquire the basic computer skills that are required for so many of today's jobs," says ARC Director Nikita Jackson.

In August, Community College will sponsor a celebration ceremony at the College and each participant will receive a Certificate of completion.

## Don't Miss the ARC's Housing Fair!

On Friday July 21, the ARC will host a Housing Fair. The event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will feature:

- ◆ Workshops on first-time home buying, credit counseling and weatherization repairs.
- ◆ A panel discussion, facilitated by representatives from Dignity Housing, Citizen's Bank, OESS and others, which will address a variety of housing related issues
- ◆ A resource fair where participants can speak to representatives from various organizations that help low-income individuals address their housing needs.

For more information contact the ARC at: 267-514-3500.

