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## **Sarasota County co-sponsors workshop on safeguarding kids in childcare**

Sarasota County wants to help local childcare providers save money, become more sustainable and educate the next generation on the value of being environmentally responsible.

The “Greening Childcare” workshop will be held 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 14, in the Sarasota County Commission Chambers, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota. Topics will include indoor air quality, cleaning up green, saving money on energy costs, green purchasing and more. The workshop is free and open to all interested parties.

Preschoolers spend a substantial part of their developmental lives in childcare where they may be exposed to common chemicals used to protect them from other risks like germs and pests. The World Health Organization estimated that as much as 24 percent of global disease is caused by avoidable environmental exposures, and that the environment significantly affects more than 80 percent of major diseases. More than one-third of disease in children under 5 years old is caused by environmental exposures.

“We’ve created a program with the National Green School Coalition that shows childcare providers how they can make their facilities more environmentally friendly, save money and teach children the value of thinking about our environment,” said Amy Meese, general manager, Sarasota County Natural Resources. The free workshop is co-sponsored by Sarasota County Natural Resources, the Sarasota County Health Department and the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota.

Each week in Sarasota County, daycare and family homecare facilities provide services to almost 10,000 children. Safeguarding and educating children in these settings through environmentally friendly sanitation and disinfection practices is an essential function of providers.

“As our community mobilizes around the goals of reducing chemical exposure and resource consumption in childcare settings, we foster their understanding of the importance of resource conservation and sustainable practices as they grow into adulthood,” said Meese. Sarasota County’s “Greening Childcare” workshop began as a Fellowship project through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Environmental Public Health Leadership Program.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the Sarasota County website at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).