

Center News



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A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers

Summer 2003

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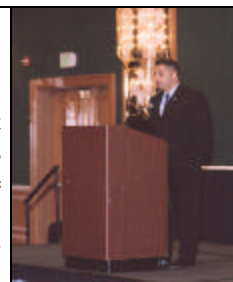
Highlights from GSA's 14th Annual Child Care Conference "Defining Quality in the Mile High City"

GSA's Office of Child Care, under the leadership of Eileen Stern, hosted our fourteenth annual national child care conference on July 22-24, 2003 in Denver, CO. Approximately 350 conferees gathered to hear well-known child development experts and government professionals speak on issues directly related to the work of child care center staff and administrators, Boards of Directors, Federal agency representatives and property managers.

Conference highlights include Chief of Staff David Safavian, representing Administrator Perry, delivering a letter from President Bush and opening remarks by Rocky Mountain Regional Administrator Larry Trujillo. PBS Commissioner F. Joseph Moravec, along with Assistant Regional Administrator for PBS Paul Prouty and Kevin Rothmier of the Office of Portfolio Management served on a panel titled "Child Care in the GSA Public Buildings Service – A Discussion." Featured keynote speakers included: Madelyn Swift, President, Childright,

who spoke on how discipline, integrity, and self-esteem mold our children; Ellen Galinsky, President and Co-Founder, Families and Work Institute, whose presentation on how children learn included excerpts from her upcoming series on public television; and John Irvin, President, Lifestyle Enhancement Services, whose session on Hilarity Therapy showed how the ability to see the positive side of things is essential to our daily lives. GSA and The National Association for the Education of Young Children honored 17 child care centers for achieving accreditation or re-accreditation at the Accreditation Luncheon. Representatives from each of these centers came forward and received a plaque.

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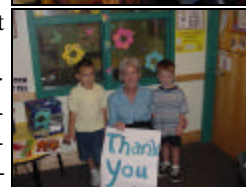
*pictured above:
David Safavian*

Governor of Kansas Visits Uncle Sam's Academy

On June 27, 2003, Uncle Sam's Academy, located at the Robert Dole U.S. Courthouse, Kansas City, Kansas had a very special visitor, the Governor of Kansas, Kathleen Sebelius.

Earlier in the month, an assistant of Governor Sebelius toured the child care center in the Dole courthouse as part of a site visit for the local Early Head Start program. Her assistant was so impressed by the child care program offered at the center that she asked the governor to make a personal visit to meet the staff and tour the center.

Valerie Piggie, Center Director, led the governor on a tour of the center accompanied by Bill Kelb, Property Manager, Larry Pierce, Property Management Director, and Barbara Daniels, Child Care Coordinator. The governor wanted to meet each teacher and interact with the children in every classroom. At the conclusion of her visit, the children presented the governor with a hand made card and a large vase of flowers from the staff. The governor returned the favor by donating the arrangement back to the center staff for their enjoyment. Meighan Peifer of N2Kids, was delighted to have the governor visit Uncle Sam's Academy Child Care Center.





Kevin's Corner

I recently read an article from the New York Times that was very thought provoking. The article was about a study that has just been published, finding that “those who spend long hours in child care may experience more stress and are at increased risk of becoming overly aggressive and developing other behavior problems”. Furthermore, it suggests that levels of cortisol, a hormone associated with stress, rose in the afternoon of full day child care for children under three: Very interesting, and possibly very disturbing.

My own perspective as an architect, however, is that the researchers may be looking for an explanation by looking only at effects without exploring the full range of possible causes of the reported stress. For instance, knowledgeable early childhood experts agree that the quality setting itself is a concomitant of quality care, As Winston Churchill said, (and I never tire of quoting because we all know instructively that it is true): “We shape our buildings, and thereafter our buildings shape our lives.”

GSA addresses the quality of care primarily by requiring accreditation from its centers, per the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). As a result, GSA centers enjoy an accreditation rate roughly 10 times the national average. But here is my main point about the environment: Most states allow 35 sq ft per child of activity space - that's 5 by 7 feet, folks - and *then experts are surprised by aggressive behavior!* In contrast, GSA's Child Care Design Guide, on the advice of early childhood expertise, strives to provide 45-50 square feet of activity area per child in the classroom to avoid crowding.

Young or old, we are human and react to inhospitable environments. One of the few things I remember from graduate school is the famous Calhoun rat study, about the effect of crowding on rats. In tight spaces, males at first turned very aggressive and then passive. Then the females got aggressive (can you blame them?) and I think everybody wound up dead. Since then psychologists have tailored these findings somewhat. Unlike rats, humans are adept at *learning to control feelings of aggression brought on by overcrowding*, but at the cost of greater anxiety particularly true in noisy environments. (Waal, Aureli and Judge).

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The parents at two centers being honored from the Denver area, Colonnade Children's Center and Custom House Children's Center, agreed to close their centers for the afternoon so that all staff members could attend the accreditation ceremony.

Commissioner Moravec presented Cornerstone Awards, recognizing associates, whose support is vital in maintaining the high quality in our child care centers. Individual award winners were: Lesly Wilson, Office of General Counsel; Stephen McLaughlin, New England Region; Kim Encinias and Gordon Pribyl, Rocky Mountain Region, Jennifer Villalobos, Pacific Rim Region, Iris Maguire, Northwest/Arctic Region; Edith Toms, National Capital Region. A GSA Team winner was the Major General Emmett J. Bean (Indianapolis, IN) Facility Team – Gloria Palmer, Robin Monroe, Paul Lawless, Myrine Callahan-Bigby, and Harold Lloyd, of the Great Lakes Region. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Protective Service winners included: Sheree Reed, Mid-Atlantic Region; Ann Deitch, Heartland Region; George Ware, Paula Perfetti and John Ulianko, Northeast and Caribbean Region; and Melissa Hester and Jewel Davenport, Southeast Sunbelt Region. The Greater Southwest Region honored Melanie Gra, a non-federal Board member.



Continued from Kevin's Corner, Column 1

Anyway the point is: Environment counts. Environment affects sociability, which is such an important by-product of quality care. But it seems that we keep investigating only the soft side of interactions and continue to overlook the hard side - how space, its quality and size affects interactions and stress.

It is interesting that this comes up now since the American Institute of Architects, National Institute of Health and the GSA Public Buildings Service are doing a study called *Better Working Environments*. The purpose? To determine “how well the spaces in which we work support our everyday tasks”. To do this, they will monitor volunteers for physical manifestations of stress such as heart rate during the workday. I wouldn't be surprised if the researchers found some pretty high cortisol and stress in adult workers who work in crowded, ill-designed and noisy spaces. The question is, will the New York Times then report a news flash: Those who work long hours *in offices* are at increased risk of stress?

NAEYC CLARIFIES ACCREDITATION CRITERION FOR SUPERVISION OF SLEEPING INFANTS

At its recent meeting, the NAEYC Governing Board voted unanimously to clarify the NAEYC Accreditation criterion regarding supervision of sleeping infants. This decision follows careful study by Academy staff and reflects the Board's desire to ensure that infants in NAEYC-accredited programs are well cared for and safe.

Effective immediately, NAEYC-accredited programs, and programs seeking NAEYC Accreditation, must comply with the following provisions for supervision of sleeping infants:

- Teachers must be capable of hearing and easily seeing all sleeping children. (If a full wall separates the infants, window openings must be large enough to allow a teacher to view all of the sleeping children.)
- Teachers must visually check on the infants every 5 minutes.
- Teachers must be able to respond to children quickly.
- Sound monitors may be used in

infant rooms to fulfill the auditory supervision requirement. However, teachers who are actively engaged with babies that are awake must be aware of and able to attend to the sounds coming through the monitor.

- Use of video monitors cannot replace visual checks by teachers.
- Young infants must be placed to sleep on their backs, unless parents sign a release.

The NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation is highlighting this new information through the Accreditation Update and the new Accreditation E-Update, and by contacting validators before they make program visits. Commissioners will include this information in their accreditation decisions. If you have questions about the criterion for supervision of sleeping infants, please contact an Accreditation Coordinator for your region, at 800-424-2460 or academy@naeyc.org.

Study Backs Laying Babies Face Up to Sleep - anti-SIDS Position has Added Benefits

Researchers have found still more reason for placing babies to sleep on their backs - the practice makes infants less likely to get fevers, stuffy noses or ear infections.

The study was published May 12, 2003 in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

The study was based on surveys of more than 3,700 mothers who reported they always placed their babies in the same sleeping position. The interviews were done in MA, and OH, when the babies were 1, 3, and 6 months old, between 1995 and 1998.

At 1 month, infants sleeping on their backs were less likely to have come down with a fever than those sleeping on their stomachs.

At 6 months, back sleepers were less likely to have a stuffy nose than stomach sleepers. And at 3 and 6 months, back sleepers needed to be taken to the doctor less often for ear infections than was the case with stomach sleepers.

Treating and caring for childhood ear infections cost the American public an estimated \$5 billion a year.

- taken from an article by Lee Bowman Scripps Howard

Albany Center Celebrates Renovation

On August 21, the Club Fed Child Care Center in Albany, NY celebrated the opening of their newly renovated, state-of-the-art center with a ribbon cutting ceremony presided over by Karl Reichelt, Regional Administrator for the Northeast and Caribbean Region. One of the highlights of the program included remarks delivered by Congressman Michael McNulty who has been a frequent visitor to the center since it opened its doors in 1989, the same year the Congressman was sworn into office.

Both the Congressman and the Regional Administrator attributed the longevity and success of the center to the tireless efforts of the staff led by Victory Riedy, the extraordinarily dedicated director/owner of Club Fed. Victory herself helped create the theme of the new center, which was designed to celebrate the natural surroundings of the Adirondacks. The celebration was enhanced by an awards ceremony in which the children presented awards to Sidney Lincoln and Cora Zoccolo Ungaro,

Regional Child Care Coordinators, and Frank Kirchoff, Deputy Director, Office of Child Care, as well as to Gary Palmer, GSA Project Manager, Alan Cerny, the architect, and Ed Virkler, the general contractor. A very special award was presented to Eileen Stern, Director, Office of Child Care by Brigid Riedy, the director's four-year-old daughter, who is also a member of Club Fed for her overall dedication to the Child Care program.

The Club Fed Child Care Center cares for 89 children and has been accredited by NAEYC since 1994.



*pictured from left to right:
Eileen Stern, Karl Reichelt,
Congressman McNulty,
Stephen Mann, (representative of
Senator Schumer) Victory Reidy*

Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC Accreditation, 81% are now accredited.

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent reaccreditation:

- * IRS Sound Start, Philadelphia, PA, managed by Hildebrandt Learning Centers
- * Atlanta Federal Center Child Enrichment Center, Atlanta, GA, managed by Easter Seals
- * Cottage Kids, Sacramento, CA managed by Bright Horizons

Congratulations to the following center on their recent accreditation:

- * Customs House Child Care Center, Denver, Colorado, managed by Direct Impact



Rochester Inaugural Picnic

On July 1, the first annual community picnic and child care center fundraiser was held at the Kenneth B. Keating Federal Building in Rochester, NY. The event was sponsored by The Federal Employees Parent's Association (The State Street Day Care Center Board of Director's) and GSA. Various local vendors donated food and beverages and the 98th Army Reserve Band provided the entertainment. A local Boy Scout troop presented the colors while a "Kiddie Color Guard" made up of children from the center carried flags and joined the Boy Scouts in the Pledge of Allegiance. The event was an overwhelming success and was attended by many members of the Federal community. Almost \$600 was raised for the State Street Day Care Center, which will be used for special events for the children.

The State Street Day Care Center recently experienced a provider change and is now managed by Volunteers of America. As a result, this event was a great way to reacquaint employees of the Federal Building and members of community with the children, staff, and management of the center and GSA. The State Street center is accredited by NAEYC and is home away from home to 46 children ages six weeks to six years.

NAEYC MERIT EXTENSION

Programs that have maintained accreditation for 6 years are eligible to apply for a **merit extension**. Merit extensions, a fourth year extension of accreditation status, may be granted if the following conditions are met: a program has achieved accreditation twice (earned 6 years of accreditation); the same director is present; staff turnover is low; compliance with criteria is high; and no serious complaints were verified. If these conditions are met, the program should submit a written request for a 7th year of accreditation, documenting compliance with these conditions during the 6th year of accreditation.

Study Shows Range of Injuries to Infants

CHICAGO, June 1 (Reuters) - The most common injuries among young children vary by age, with the most dangerous time coming at 15 to 17 months, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

The study by the University of California reviewed 23,000 childhood injuries, 636 of them fatal, from 1996 to 1998. It was intended to alert parents and doctors to hazards.

The study found that in the first year of life falls were the main source of injury before 3 months, battering at 3 to 5 months, falls from furniture at 6 to 8 months, swallowing foreign objects at 9 to 11 months and hot liquid or vapors at 12 to 17 months. The injury rate peaked at 15 to 17 months.

This coincides with developmental achievements such as independent mobility, exploratory behavior and hand-to-mouth activity, the report said.

GSA Office of Child Care

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Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.



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