

# Center News



Volume 6 Issue 2

A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers

Spring 2003

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

The time is NOW to register for this year's conference in **Denver, CO-July 22-24, 2003.**

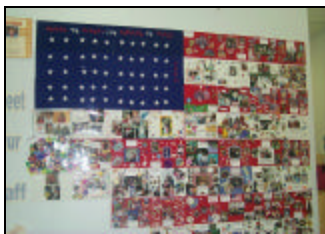
This year's conference will feature a number of nationally recognized keynote speakers. Featured on Wednesday will be **Ellen Galinsky**. Galinsky is the President and Co-Founder of the Families and Work Institute. She will speak on "Promoting Learning Relationships in Early Childhood Programs: New Learning Modules". All young children are born to learn—but as they grow, this desire fades for some children, according to a new study being developed by the Families and Work Institute on Children and Learning. This speech will explore what we can do to keep the joy of learning alive and flourishing in children.



Ellen Galinsky

Also on Wednesday we will hear from **Madelyn Swift, M.ED**, nationally acclaimed author, speaker, and authority on discipline, family dynamics and personal communication. She is the author of *Discipline For Life: Getting it Right with Children*, *Getting it Right with Teens* and her newest book is *Teach your Children Well: A Parent's Guide to Encouraging Character and Integrity*.

**See Conference, page two**



Kathy Herward  
CCC Family Quilt

The Windy City Kids Child Development Center in the Harold Washington Social Security Center in Chicago, IL celebrated the occasion by inviting Jennifer H. Lang, Director for Human Resources, SSA in the Chicago Region to read a story to the pre-school children. The children were so delighted that she had to read the story THREE TIMES!

The Kathy Herward Center at the IRS in Andover, MA celebrated with a full week of activities with visitors, parties and parades. The favorite event was their family quilt. Each family received a felt piece to decorate with pictures of their family, activities and celebrations they enjoy. The wall hanging shaped as the flag has become a favorite stopping spot for all.

## Children's Opportunities - Our Responsibilities Week of the Young Child Activities

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) proclaimed the week of April 7th 2003 as this year's "Week of the Young Child."

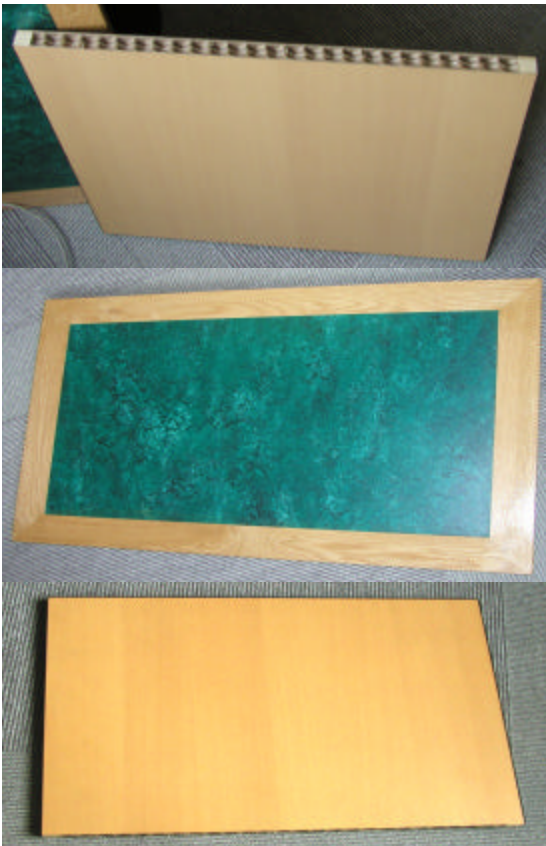


Jennifer Lang,, Director,  
Human Resources,  
SSA Chicago Region



## Kevin's Corner

A new product we are looking at called SONO-Board 3D is truly remarkable. It is absolutely non-toxic in terms of its incremental formaldehyde emissions, 100% recycled content and is entirely recyclable. Not many recycled products can claim that. "What is it?" you say. It is basically a substitute for many traditional wood non-structural applications. It is made of a slurry of recycled paper and other natural cellulose fibers which are molded under high pressure. It is incredibly hard - which seems impossible because it is so light - due to its multi-faceted, honeycomb profile. And unlike many traditional wood products, it can be molded in a wide range of thicknesses and rib configurations. It can even assume the shapes of curves and vaults. One of the uses that intrigues me is as an environmentally responsible countertop. Most affordable countertops are full of formaldehyde and other bad things. Not this one. Take a look at the images below and you will see what I mean. One of the examples is linoleum which Starbucks is using widely for its counters. We plan to pilot linoleum on SONOBoard (with non-toxic glue) in some upcoming projects!



## Conference - from page one

"Hilarity Therapy" will close our conference on Thursday with **John Irvin C.S.P.**, Lifestyle Enhancement Services, Inc. Irvin is an expert in the area of stress management and humor and attitude enrichment, author of *Chicken Poop in My Bowl and Chicken Poop In Your Bowl, II* and contributing Author of *Possibilities: Awakening Your Leadership Potential & Possibilities II: Stories of the Heart That Feed The Mind*

### Pre - Conference Sessions:

- **NAEYC Validator Training**

Must register and be accepted by NAEYC. Check out the NAEYC web site at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) or call NAEYC at 1.800.424.2460 for an application. Walk-ins will not be accepted and space is limited.

- **Council for Professional Recognition**

9:00 to 12:00 PM 7/22/03

- **Council Representative Refresher Training:**

This session will review the role and responsibilities of the Council Representative in the evaluation process and provide technical assistance in carrying out those responsibilities. **Refresher training is open only to pre-approved individuals - those who have completed full-day Rep training, have been endorsed as Council Representatives to conduct Verification Visits and are working for the Council. This session is FREE but a reservation is required. Contact Mary Beth Van Why, Early Childhood Specialist at 202.265.9090 ext. 300 for a reservation.**

- **CDA General Information Session**

1:30 to 3:00 PM 7/22/03

The Council for Professional Recognition will provide an overview of the two ways for earning the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential: The CDA Assessment System and the CDA Professional Preparation Program (CDA P3). They will provide detailed information on eligibility, formal education, documentation collection requirements, final evaluation, optional bilingual specialization and renewal procedures. This session is free and reservations are not required.

### CONFERENCE and HOTEL REGISTRATION ARE OPEN

Adams Mark Hotel

1550 Court Place, Denver, CO.

Hotel rate of \$112 plus tax (single/double occupancy). For hotel reservation call 1.800.444.2326, ask for "GSA Child Care Conference" room block before June 29.

You can find conference information on our web site at: [www.gsa.gov/childcare](http://www.gsa.gov/childcare)

You can register on line at [www.cmpinc.net/childcare](http://www.cmpinc.net/childcare)

Registration fees go up after June 29, 2003.

## A new Benefit for Federal Employees - Pre Tax Dependent Care Spending Accounts

An open season for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), a brand new employee benefit, will be held from **May 19 through June 20, 2003**. An FSA allows you to set aside money, on a pre-tax basis, for health care and dependent care expenses. With an FSA, you can reduce your taxes while paying for services you would have to pay for anyway. Up to \$3,000 may be set aside for health care expenses and up to \$5,000 may be set aside for dependent care expenses. The initial plan year for the FSA program begins July 1 and will end on December 31, 2003. For all future years, the plan will be effective from January 1 - December 31.

All federal employees who are **eligible** for participation in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program may enroll in the FSA program. **You do not have to be currently enrolled in the FEHB program.**

SHPS, one of the nation's largest FSA administrators, will assume full responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the FSA program. If you have questions and need to speak to a SHPS customer service representative, you should call SHPS toll-free at 1-877-FSAFEDS (1-877-372-3337). Customer service representatives will be available from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. **Associates must enroll directly with SHPS, either on-line or through the toll-free telephone number.** You may enroll on-line via the SHPS Web site at: [www.fsafeds.com](http://www.fsafeds.com) or by telephone at 1-877-FSAFEDS (1-877-372-3337).

Open seasons will be held each year at the same time as the Health Benefits Open Season. The next open season will be held from November 10 through December 8, 2003.

### ATTENTION -

**It is important to understand that Flexible Spending Accounts will have a "use-or-lose" provision - that is, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules will require associates to FORFEIT any funds they do not use by the end of the calendar year. This program, however, should still be a boon to those associates who have a good idea of what their average annual medical and day care expenses have been in the past and can therefore estimate how much they will probably spend in the future.**

### Northwest /Arctic Regional Child Care Coordinator Wins Service Awards



Jennifer Bashford will receive the Northwest/Arctic Region's PBS Service Excellence Award. She is recognized for the "tremendously positive impact she's had on the PBS organization". Nominees for this award are judged on the following criteria: Thrilling the Customer, Organizational Teamwork, Innovation, Measurable Improvements/Contributions to the Accomplishment of the Agency's Mission.

Jennifer also received the Seattle Federal Executive Board's (FEB) Annual Public Service Recognition Award.

Jennifer has proven herself to be a tireless worker, an expert advocate, and a helpful partner to everyone she meets. Because of her, Region 10's child care program has been taken to new heights of success and accomplishment.

### Kohl/McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Awards

Two staff members from the Lutheran General Children's - FAA Center in Des Plaines, IL, Cecilia Beltrano (below, left)- Toddler program and Michelle Russo (below, right)- Infant program, are among eighteen of metropolitan Chicago's finest teachers selected as finalists for the Kohl/McCormick annual teaching awards. The finalists exemplify the best practices of quality early childhood teaching: dedication, innovation, leadership, respect for children and their families and commitment to professional growth.



**Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC Accreditation, 80% are now accredited.**

*Congratulations to the following centers on their recent reaccreditation:*

- Treasure House Child Development Center, Covington, KY
- Stars and Stripes Learning Station, Battle Creek, MI
- Creative Child Development Center, HUD Washington DC
- Rainbow Castle Child Care Center, St. Louis, MO

*Congratulations to the following center on their recent accreditation:*

- Colonnade Children’s Center, Denver, CO



**Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Center Achieves 4 Star Quality**

The East Mountain , SSA Child Care center has received a 4 star rating in the Pennsylvania Keystone Stars program. Keystone Stars recognizes child care providers who consistently excel in meeting or exceeding health and safety licensing regulations. The program is built on a four star rating system, with the highest level reflecting standards similar to the accreditation standards developed by NAEYC. The Keystone Stars program is a voluntary program and awards providers who meet the star requirements with financial merit awards. The amount varies by the size of the center and the star designation. The average award for a 2 star rating is \$9,600, \$13,000 for 3 stars and \$16,000 for a 4 star rating. Kudos to the East Mountain Child Care Center staff for all of their hard work.

GSA Office of Child Care

**WWW.GSA.GOV/  
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Special Thanks to Cecilia Tracz for her assistance with the graphics, formatting and printing of the newsletter.

*Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.*

**Two New Centers Open**

Uncle Sam’s Federal Child Care Center in Des Moines, IA has a new home. Forced to move out of the federal building due to major construction a new leased location was sought. The new building was completed in 93 days which included design and construction time. The building is approximately 8,000 SF. It is a two story building with infants, toddlers, and two year olds on the first floor, along with the office, kitchen, and a story time area. The preschool rooms, commons area, and staff lounge are on the 2nd floor. It has a storm shelter, pantry, and storage area in the basement, an elevator, and two staircases. The playground is 3,000 SF. The center is designed for 72 children. The center is operated by Bright Horizons.

The Courtyard Kids Child Development Center, located on the site of the new U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building in Central Islip, New York, opened its doors on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003. The 7,000 square foot stand-alone center serves 66 children and is managed by Imagine Early Learning Centers. The building is arranged so that each classroom exits into a beautiful protected playground that is keeping with the contemporary design of the center. One of the challenges of the design was to ensure its compatibility with the much-honored and very contemporary Courthouse.



*Pictured above: Newly moved Uncle Sam’s Federal Child Care Center, Des Moines, IA*

*Pictured below: Newly opened Courthouse Kids, Islip Long Island, NY*

