

Center News



Volume 6 Issue 4

A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers

Fall 2003

The GSA Nationwide Network of Child Care Coordinators

New England Region
Sherrri Edwards
617-565-7312

Northeast/Caribbean Region
Sidny Lincoln
Cora Zoccollo-Ungaro
212-264-0512 or 0514

Mid-Atlantic Region
Robyn Major
215-656-5897

Southeast Region
Janie Heisner
404-331-4729

Great Lakes Region
Connie Chinn
312-886-0611

The Heartland Region
Barbara Daniels
816-823-2215

Southwest Region
BJ Upton
817-978-8451

Rocky Mountain Region
Jacki Flinn
303-236-8000 x 2264

Pacific Rim Region
Lyvette Norris
415-522-3350

Northwest/Arctic Region
Jennifer Bashford
253-931-7700

National Capital Region
Leo Bonner
202-205-7255

Lessons Learned — Blackout 2003

Conducting emergency evacuation drills is the single most important thing child care centers can do to prepare for an emergency.

Coordinators should send quarterly reminders to centers to update and replenish emergency items and to keep emergency bags stocked and easily accessible.

Coordinators should ensure that centers have evacuation cribs, blankets, and all other items GSA has agreed to provide.

Coordinators should request emergency relocation information quarterly from centers as well as remind them to share that information with parents regularly.

Centers must be prepared to make the decision to evacuate based on the best information

they have available and must be prepared to evacuate on their own. **Emergency personnel will not always be available.**

Keypads and electronic locks do not work during a loss of power. Door keys should be marked and easily accessible.

Communication is key. Center directors do not always know which facility personnel to listen to regarding evacuation vs. remaining on site. Each director should be aware of who makes the decision in the facility in which the center is housed and have the necessary contact numbers. If these contacts cannot be reached, the center director has to make the decision based on the best information he/she has available to them.

“How Clean is Clean?” BuildingWide Hand Washing Challenge

Kinderplatz Child Care Center in Ft. Snelling, MN teamed up with the FDA, the Minnesota Department of Health, Ecolab and the Federal Child Care Board for a building-wide Hand Washing Event. Participants included building employees and visitors, cafeteria and center staff, parents and children.

Approximately 400 employees and 100 children attended the Hand Washing Challenge, during which health care professionals instructed the participants on effective hand washing methods.

Jeanne Tully, Kinderplatz Program Consultant, designed an amazing interactive hand washing display for the Center entrance. In Jeanne’s magical “Washing Town”, planes remind the residence of healthy habits by dragging “wash ‘em!” banners, parachutes jump down for assistance carrying bottles of soap, the town police exterminate germs with bubble shooters, and happy and healthy towns people enjoy lunch in the “Clean Hands” Café.

All the center children participated by making handprint “wash ‘em/ lavalas!” posters for the Whipple Building bathroom areas. Janet Zarich, Kinderplatz Music Instructor narrated a hand washing audio tape, in which the children sing 20 second songs emphasizing the amount of time it takes to properly scrub your hands clean.



Continued on Page 2, Column 2



Kevin's Corner

I recently did some research on environmentally responsible cleaning products. It's great to use "green" construction products when we build new. But even the perfect green building has to be cleaned! And the choice of cleaning products is critical, especially around children with their greater health vulnerabilities. But here again, the example of good child care practice is applicable to a variety of other GSA-controlled space. Indeed, air quality problems are on the rise for children *and* adults. So I spoke with Stan Halpern of Healthy Clean Buildings. He has been in the cleaning "biz" for over thirty years. Here are some of the insight he gave me:

Replacing "toxic" cleaning chemicals with safer "green" alternatives in our centers (and in fact, in all our GSA assets) may help greatly to address issues such as **"sick building syndrome"** ; **multiple chemical sensitivities (mcs)** ; **indoor air quality (iaq)** ; **allergic triggers**; **respiratory ailments**, especially **asthma**; and other indoor environmental concerns.

One of our biggest cleaning issues is disinfecting and stain removal. Traditionally, we use chlorine bleach to disinfect and to "bleach out" stains, but another option is to use **stabilized** hydrogen peroxide. Both are oxidizing agents which kill bacteria through "chemical burning". When both chlorine bleach and hydrogen peroxide oxidize: First, a bleaching action occurs and secondly, bacteria and viruses are killed. However, when chlorine bleach is used, poisonous chlorine gas is released into the air (which diminishes air quality) and water is left as a residue as by-products of this oxidizing process. Additionally, insufficiently diluted Chlorine Bleach is far too aggressive and can burn or bleach surfaces, irretrievably damaging them.

Continued in Column Two

Continued from Column One

This is not true of stabilized hydrogen peroxide, partly because of its chemical formulation: H₂O₂. Hydrogen peroxide releases the excess oxygen from its composition in the oxidizing process (thus minimizing its effects on air quality), and the residue left over is also H₂O (water). Hydrogen peroxide will safely bleach out surface stains without affecting the base surface like chlorine bleach.

Here is where it gets really interesting: According to a recent study at Purdue University, the Indiana Relative Chemical Hazard Score (IRCHS), some relative scores of various chemical ingredients include:

Chlorine	31.6 (by-product of chlorine bleach)
Asbestos (Friable).....	25.6
Ammonia.....	21.8
Sodium Hypochlorite	16.8 (chlorine bleach)
Hydrogen Peroxide (7 %) ..	1.9
Water	0.0

By this scale, chlorine gas rates higher than friable asbestos! These ratings are based on an average 55 yr. Old male weighing 180 lbs. The effect on others, especially children, will inevitably be more pronounced.

The subject of environmentally appropriate cleaning practices promises to grow in importance. Current licensing may be prescriptive in calling for chlorine bleach as a required method of disinfecting in your center— so check. And if Licensing does, as an advocate for children, bring this matter of air quality to their attention. For more information and to inquire about products, the email address is: cleaning@fnol.net.



"Washing Town" at the Kinderplatz Childcare Center

Continued from Page 1, "How Clean is Clean?"

Greg Abel and Amy Johnson of the FDA gave presentations to the Center children, parents, and staff. They also conducted a training session for the Sodexo Cafeteria staff.

Ecolab supplied portable sinks and testing glow station for the event. The FDA, the MN Department of Health, and MVNA shared informational pamphlets. GSA supplied Petri dishes for the Hand Washing Bacteria Growing Challenge. The bacteria growing Petri dishes were analyzed after forty-eight hours, and Ecolab rewarded those with the cleanest hands with many fun prizes! The children received prizes as well.

Playground News



*State Street Daycare Center Playground
pictured left*

The children at the State Street Day Care Center are busy enjoying nature in their recently transformed playground located in a courtyard on the lower level at the Kenneth B. Keating Federal Building in Rochester, NY.

In an effort to reduce clutter on the playground, The Office of Child Care asked Cindy El Gaaly, GSA Property Manager, to purchase a shed to house bikes and other playground toys. The shed she chose has windows with shutters and flower boxes and adds to

the charm of the newly enhanced playground. A new lattice fence separates the children's garden from the sand play area.

The garden is complete with flower boxes and bird feeders that draw all different types of birds. The garden area has wreaths and seasonal decorations many of which are handmade. The result is a haven of natural elements. These efforts to introduce nature and beauty to the playground are greatly appreciated and show that even with limited funds, a little imagination can go a long way towards improving the environments in which children learn and play.



*Treasure House Child Care Center
pictured right*

The Treasure House Child Care Center, located in Covington, KY at the IRS Service Center, recently received a much needed renovation to its Infant/Toddler Playground. Treasure House, which serves 126 children, is operated by Children, Inc. The playground, which was designed and installed by Grounds for Play, features a climbing structure, a Trex deck with sand and water play and bike track and a infant play area separated by activity panels.

Anti-Smoking Campaign Press Conference Held at the Edward Zorinsky Child Care Center

The Edward Zorinsky Child Care Center in Omaha, Nebraska hosted a press conference for the Family Service Agency for Smoke Free Child Care. Three local coalitions concerned about child health, including the Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition, the Sarpy County Tobacco Coalition, and the Cass County Tobacco is a Drug (TAD), published a first ever Smoke Free Child Care Guide. The guide provides a tri-county directory of smoke free child care programs. The guide was announced at a press conference at the child care center at the Edward Zorinsky Federal Office Building, 106 S. 15th Street, in Omaha, Nebraska. Speakers included Jona Beck, coordinator of the Family Service Healthy Alternatives for Little Ones (HALO) program, Sandy Thomas of Cass County TAD, Dr. John Sage, a child care and health advocate, and Susan Hamtel, a parent from the child care center. Two TV stations and the local newspaper attended the press conference.



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

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent reaccreditation:

- * Fedkids Child Care Center, New York, NY, managed by Imagine Early Learning Centers Inc.
- * The Advantage Learning Center, Lakewood, CO, managed by The Advantage Learning Center of Van Gordon Inc.
- * Little Aviators, Renton, WA, managed by Easter Seals



Congratulations to the following centers on their recent accreditation:

- * Just US Kids, St. Louis, MO, managed by Childcare Connection

U.S. Senator Grassley Tours New Child Care Center in Des Moines, Iowa



U.S. Senator Charles E. Grassley toured the New Uncle Sam's Child Care Center in Des Moines, Iowa on Thursday, August 21. The center opened its doors on April 7, 2003, following just 93 days of construction. The speed of construction was critical as its original location, the Des Moines Federal Building, is currently under renovation and the center's new location enables it to serve more of Des Moines. Randy Korn and Kathy Routson from the GSA Iowa Office, the child care center director, and the building owners accompanied Senator Grassley, who expressed interest in the federal child care program and its benefits for the federal employees and the community.

15th Annual GSA Child Care Conference

The 15th annual GSA Child Care Conference will be held at the Seaport Hotel at the World Trade Center, One Seaport Lane, Boston, MA, July 20-24, 2004. The conference will open with a luncheon at noon on Tuesday, July 20 and end with a luncheon on Thursday, July 22.

The room rate is \$159 plus tax, single/double occupancy (each additional adult is \$25 per night). Children 18 and under are free. This rate is available three days pre and post conference (based on availability). To make a reservation call 1-877-SEAPORT (1-877-732-7678) and ask for the "GSA Child Care Conference" room block. The deadline for reservations at the hotel is June 28, 2004.

The "save the date cards" will be mailed in early December and registration brochures will be mailed in Spring 2004.

Visit our website at www.gsa.gov/childcare for updates about the conference. For more information, please call Nancy Norris on (404) 331-1851.

GSA Office of Child Care

**WWW.GSA.GOV/
CHILDCARE**

national director
Eileen Stern
212-264-8321

Deputy Director
Frank Kirchoff
212-264-1268

Kevin Kelly
202-208-7656

Sue Dixon
202-501-0287

Nancy Norris
404-331-1851

Jill Rhea
215-656-5994

newsletter

Liz Themelis
216-522-4963



Special Thanks to Cecilia Tracz for her assistance with the graphics, formatting, printing and distribution of the newsletter.
(For additional copies call (415) 522-3472)

Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.

Club Fed Child Care Center, Albany, NY, Receives 5 Star Rating as a Child Care "Program of Excellence"

The Club Fed Child Care Center received a five star rating from Cornell University's pilot Child Care Program of Excellence. Through this pilot program centers are evaluated based on three criteria: program, staff and health and safety. The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale are used to evaluate program quality. The program is voluntary and is implemented by the local resource and referral agencies. Child care centers are then given a rating from two to five stars depending on the quality of their program. Club Fed was one of the first child care center in New York State to undergo this process.