Looking for new resources to help families prepare for kindergarten? How about three videos on DVD and a CD filled with electronic materials to supplement your own readiness program?

For the past year, Mecklenburg County early care and education professionals have used Ready, Set, Go! Making the Move to Kindergarten, a video designed to help children know what to expect in school. Now three new resources join Making the Move to Kindergarten, expanding Ready, Set, Go! into a four-part series.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Child Care Resources Inc., North Carolina Department of Public Instruction / Office of School Readiness, and Early Reading First are proud to announce the much-anticipated release of this new kindergarten transition video series and toolkit in July!

Videotaped in diverse homes, neighborhoods and early care and education settings from the mountains to the coast of North Carolina, Ready, Set, Go! is presented in English and Spanish to help you support children and families preparing for kindergarten.

The expanded Ready, Set, Go! series provides support at every stage of transition and offers something for everyone:

**Ideas to Grow On**—An up-close look at how children develop in the preschool years. Ideal for families and caregivers of children birth to age five. Based on Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success. (DVD—Running Time 22:05) Includes As You Grow—Bonus music video performed by CMS elementary teachers and students (Running Time 3:20)

**All Set for School**—A step-by-step guide to the year before kindergarten to help families prepare for school with a focus on the routines, requirements, and relationships that create a strong foundation for success. Ideal for rising kindergarten families. (DVD—Running Time 14:38)

**Making the Move to Kindergarten**—A fun and family-friendly virtual tour of kindergarten. Ideal for rising kindergartners and their families. (DVD—Running Time 12:35)

**Your Electronic Toolkit**—A wealth of time-saving, customizable, and printable resources for the early care and education professional including invitations, posters, take-away flyers, tip sheets, follow up activities, resource lists, and community awareness materials. (CD-ROM)

**Free video series for early care and education professionals in Mecklenburg County**—

With funding from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ Early Reading First grant, all licensed and license-exempt early care and education programs that serve children birth to five years in Mecklenburg County will receive a four-part boxed set of the new Ready, Set, Go! series free of charge. Look for your special delivery via UPS in July!

**Outside of Mecklenburg County?**

A limited supply of Ready, Set, Go! four-part boxed sets will be available for purchase at www.ReadySetK.org, where one can see a free preview of each movie in English and Spanish.

For more information contact Carolyn Hazeldine, Kindergarten Transition Specialist, at (704) 376-6697, ext. 107 or via email at CHazeldine@childcareresourcesinc.org.
Early care and education professionals were honored at the 21st Annual TEDDY (Teachers Educating and Developing Dynamic Youth) Awards ceremony on June 6 at the Wachovia Atrium. This award has been presented by Child Care Resources Inc. since 1987 to recognize exceptional achievement by an early care and education professional from the Charlotte region. This year, the TEDDY award was expanded to recognize not only an outstanding teacher, but also an outstanding family child care home (FCCH) provider and an outstanding child care center director. Thanks to the generosity of *The Charlotte Observer*, *Charlotte Parent* magazine, and Kaplan Early Learning Company, each TEDDY winner received a $500 cash award. Other TEDDY sponsors included Wachovia Corporation and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County.

Dr. Jo Ann Springs, Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling, Special Education and Child Development at UNC-Charlotte, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Springs gave an inspiring speech about the attributes of a professional.

The TEDDY Award process begins with parent nominations and is open to any early care and education professional who serves children 0-5 years of age, and who has worked at least three years in a program located within *The Charlotte Observer*’s circulation area. Each director nominee was judged on his/her leadership skills and ability to provide a quality early care and education environment for children and staff. Classroom teacher and FCCH provider nominees were judged on activity planning, classroom environment, professionalism, communication with families and classroom guidance.

The three director finalists were Shelby Fullerton (Garr Christian Preschool), Cynthia Kara (Dilworth Child Development Center), and Jennifer Warren (Childtime Learning Center, Union County). The director TEDDY Award winner was Jennifer Warren. Jennifer values the importance of recognizing and encouraging her staff. She is in school herself and encourages her staff to do the same. She ensures that new staff members begin to feel a part of the center as quickly as possible. She has established a “buddy” system that pairs a new staff person with a current staff person in order to ease the transition for the new staff person.

The three FCCH provider finalists were: Pauline Dias (Mrs. Pauline’s Home Day Care), Yolanda Harrington (Your Child’s Home Away from Home Day Care), and Shernelle Samuel (Safe Hands Learning Center). The FCCH TEDDY Award winner was Pauline Dias. Pauline Dias, who has been providing care to young children for over 11 years. She describes herself as a “builder”—helping young children to be successful in life.

The five teacher finalists were: Gloria Briscoe (Dilworth Child Development Center), Chris Cantu (Thompson Child Development Center), Diane Griffith (Plaza Presbyterian Weekday School), Anita McManus (Christ Church Preschool), and Ana Scoggins (Thompson Child Development Center). The teacher TEDDY Award winner was Chris Cantu. Chris teaches three-year-olds and is described as someone who truly believes in children, in their ability to do great things and has a genuine love for young children.

Congratulations to all of the finalists and winners for their contributions to the field of early care and education!
The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) can be a nerve-racking and anxious experience for anyone. With this in mind, the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP) has created a detailed summary of the lowest scoring items and indicators for each of the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, SACERS & FCCERS). Below are the top three lowest scoring items within each ERS.

**ECERS-R**

**Item #14.** Safety practices: 3.1. No major safety hazards indoors or outdoors

*Common issues:* Mulch not being deep enough, inadequate fall zones and uncovered electrical outlets. *Note:* The mulch not being deep enough and inadequate fall zones can also affect the score for space for gross motor (Item #7, Indicator 3.2).

**Item #10.** Meals/snacks: 3.3. Sanitary conditions usually maintained

*Common issues:* Recontamination and not allowing the sanitizer to dry appropriately.

**Item #12.** Toileting/diapering: 3.3. Sanitary conditions are maintained

*Common issues:* Not cleaning the sinks at the right times.

**ITERS-R**

**Item #11.** Safety practices: 3.1. No more than 3 safety hazards that could result in serious injury indoors and outdoors, combined.

*Common issues:* Lip of changing table not being 6” from the mat, mulch not being deep enough, fingers getting pinched in rocking chairs and putting babies on their stomachs to sleep.

**Item #7.** Meals/snacks: 3.1. Meal/snack schedule meets each child’s needs

*Common issues:* Not providing water to children between meals and not meeting the feeding needs of infants/toddlers (making babies wait until “lunchtime” to eat when they are being observed as being hungry).

**Item #9.** Diapering/toileting: 3.1. Sanitary conditions are maintained at least half of the time

*Common issues:* Not following diapering procedures properly.

**SACERS**

**Item #15.** Safety practice: 1.2. Hazards present in outdoor area

*Common issues:* Mulch not being deep enough, equipment being too close together, old equipment and “S” hooks being open.

**Item #18.** Meals/snacks: 3.5. Food eaten under sanitary conditions

**Common issues:** not sanitizing tables, not using disposable towels to clean and disinfect and recontamination of hands.

**Item #24.** Language/reading activities: 5.3. Children encouraged to use reading/writing in practical situations.

*Common issues:* Staff not visibly encouraging children to engage in these types of activities.

**FCCRS**

*(Based on previous rating scale, data from revised rating scale not available yet.)*

**Item #12.** Safety: 5.1. No obvious safety problems both in and outdoors

*Common issues:* Mulch not being deep enough and problems with fencing.

**Item #26.** Active physical play: 5.1 & 5.4. Safe outdoor physical play for all ages provided

*Common issues:* Misunderstanding of the term “weather permitting,” inadequate cushioning and fall zones.

**Item #10.** Diapering/toileting: 3.1 & 3.3. Area meets basic sanitary conditions and hand washing after toileting and diapering

*Common issues:* Using the same sink for diapering and meals and diapering/sanitation procedure not followed correctly.

For further explanation and information of the lowest scoring ERS items and indicators contact your licensing consultant.
All Counties

Effective July 1, 2008, the North Carolina Division of Child Development (DCD) will be coordinating and registering those interested in attending the two-day Child Care Center Pre-Licensing Workshops. At this time, you may view upcoming Child Care Center Pre-Licensing Workshop dates and locations on the DCD website, www.ncchildcare.net.

Save the Date! Plan now to attend the NC-aeyc, SouthWest Affiliate Annual Conference, September 27, 8:00am–12:30pm, at St. John’s Episcopal Church (1623 Carmel Road, Charlotte, 28226). The conference will focus on “Literacy Connections: Integrating Literacy through Music, Puppetry, Art, Storytelling, and Theatre.” Cost to attend is $20/person and attendees will receive 3 credit hours of training. Watch for details later this summer!

Cabarrus County

Child Care Resources Inc. will be partnering with the Cabarrus County Red Cross chapter to train parents and teachers on being Red Cross Ready. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to become educated on emergency preparedness and response. Participants will be challenged to take three actions (get a kit, make a plan, be informed) to help make their families, classrooms, workplaces, and neighborhoods safer. Each attendee will receive a free “Be Red Cross Ready” kit containing emergency preparedness items. Teachers will receive extra curriculum materials to share with their students. This training along with the “Be Red Cross Ready” kits will be offered at no charge. Individuals or programs interested in securing a slot should contact Devonya Govan–Hunt at (704) 786-1023 or DGovan@childcareresourcesinc.org. Directors may call to set up sessions to be conducted at their child care programs for the families served as well.

SIDS, Family Child Care Pre-Licensing, and First Aid and CPR are now being offered in Spanish in Cabarrus County. Anyone interested should reference the Region 7 CCR&R’s Training Calendar for dates and registration information.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the third leading cause of infant mortality in North Carolina and is the leading cause of death for babies between one month and one year of age. During 2001–2005, 491 babies died from SIDS in North Carolina. In an effort to educate as much of the community as possible on some strategies to help reduce the risks of SIDS, Child Care Resources Inc. has partnered with the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation to offer the Baby Easy Safe Sleep Training (BESST) to members of the community (Cabarrus County) free of charge. This workshop offers safe sleep practices based on the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations. Proper safe sleep positioning (back to sleep), crib safety, and the link between secondhand smoke and SIDS are just some of the topics to be discussed. This session will be presented to various community organizations (pregnancy centers, teen parent groups, senior centers, Northeast Medical Center) during the months of June and July. Any program that is interested in setting up a workshop for teachers or parents should contact Devonya Govan–Hunt at (704) 786-1023 or DGovan@childcareresourcesinc.org.

The 19th Annual North Carolina Afterschool Coalition (NCASC) Conference will be held at Embassy Suites Hotel Resort and Conference Center in Concord, NC on November 7-8, 2008. A pre-conference training day is included on November 6, 2008. Early bird registration discount deadline is August 1, 2008. Please visit their website at www.charityadvantage.com/ncascouncil/ to see details and preliminary conference information. You can also call Michelle Inofer at (704) 376-6697, ext. 115.

Mecklenburg County

Family Child Care Networks will be hosting the college success series “Get Ready, Set, Go Back to College!” in July 2008. This series is designed to aide child care providers to gain the skills and strategies necessary for reading comprehension and overall general college study skills. The series will be offered on Tuesdays at CCRI (4601 Park Road) and again on Thursdays at Hickory Grove Recreation Center (6709 Pence Road). All courses run from 6:30-8:00 pm. Providers may attend the entire series or take individual training that will strengthen specific areas of challenge.

Thursday, July 10: “Manage the Volume of Assigned Readings”
Thursday, July 17: “Format of Text to Reading Comprehension & the Writing Process”
Thursday, July 24: “Retention of Information: Rephrasing to Retaining”
Thursday, July 31: “Vocabulary Development for Comprehension

Union County

Union County child care facilities anticipating 3-year licensing renewal with assessment and those that are interested in increasing their current star ratings are encouraged to contact the Union County office of Child Care Resources Inc. at (704) 238-8810, ext. 169 or ext. 371 to request technical assistance services.

Save the Date! The Fourth Annual Part-Day Preschool Professionals conference is scheduled for Friday, October 10. Weddington Christian Preschool will again be hosting this popular event. Mark this date on your calendar and plan now for a Professional Development Day for your staff. More information available late summer.
Dear Trainer: I have been hearing a lot lately about the rise in childhood obesity rates and the many health risks for children related to being overweight. I know that the summer weather will allow my children to play outside more; what are some healthy snacks that I can plan for them that are easy and tasty?

The key to healthy snacking is to plan in advance. Snacks supply an important part of a child’s daily nutrition needs, usually about 25%.

Start with a list of healthy foods and plan the shopping trip. When making your list consider that all snacks served in child care facilities must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Following the CACFP meal pattern will help you create healthy food combinations.

There are four groups you may choose from; milk, which only includes fluid milk; fruits, vegetables or juice; grain products, and meat or meat alternates. Each snack must include at least one food from two different groups.

The key to high quality nutritional content is to provide a wide variety of foods. In order to increase variety, create a menu that does not repeat the same foods each week.

To increase vitamin content and lower fat and calories include fruits and vegetables frequently. You may use them fresh, frozen or canned; however, summer is a great time to take advantage of the fresh fruits and vegetables available at your local farmers market.

Also remember to ask the children what their favorite foods are and solicit their input into menu planning. Before planning the menu offer them choices from a list of healthy foods that you have provided. This will help in avoiding the prepackaged foods that are highly processed and high in sugar.

Finally, remember to serve plenty of water in addition to the required foods during snacks and throughout the day, especially when you are outside.

12 Easy Snack Ideas

Below are 12 creditable snack combinations that are easy, tasty and do not require cooking:

- Strawberries and milk
- Graham crackers and bananas
- Soft taco shell rolled with grated cheese inside
- Yogurt and peaches
- Ham on whole wheat bread
- Cheerios and milk (or other low sugar cereal)
- Papaya and whole wheat crackers
- Vegetable/fruit tray of broccoli, carrots, apples and cheese chunks
- Mini bagels and mixed fruit (avoid whole grapes)
- Watermelon and pretzels *
- Tuna salad on crackers
- Tomato sandwiches with cheese

*Examine the ingredient list for pretzels; only the brands that list “enriched” flour first are creditable.
Imagine all of our preschoolers spending hours each week in a parent’s lap, reading their favorite storybooks. Then envision these same children arriving at kindergarten, already in love with the printed page. Imagine Raising A Reader®!

Research demonstrates that reading to children every day is the single most important activity to prepare children for school success. Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) is pleased to announce the launch of Raising A Reader®, a nationally acclaimed take-home book bag program that will be implemented in child care settings in Mecklenburg County.

Upon entering kindergarten, Head Start children using Raising A Reader® tested at least twice as high as the national Head Start norm for book knowledge and story comprehension. In various independent evaluations, parents reported a 471 percent increase in time spent sharing stories with their children, and Spanish-speaking families increased library visits with their children by 300 percent.

CCRI, with funding from United Way of Central Carolinas and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, and support from the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, will launch Raising A Reader® in July 2008. The program will initially serve 1,000 children in child care programs in Charlotte’s East Corridor (zip codes 28227, 28215, 28212, and 28205) in 2008-09.

Raising A Reader® is based on a unique system that trains early childhood professionals to work with and train parents in read-aloud strategies for the children, while simultaneously getting children excited about reading!

Programs chosen to participate in the Raising A Reader® program will receive literacy materials and training on the Raising A Reader® program, and on how to engage children and parents in read-aloud activities. The Raising A Reader® program is based upon five anchor behaviors that have been proven to increase read-aloud experiences between children and parents:

**The child drives the process.** Getting children excited about reading is central to the success of the Raising A Reader® program. Participating programs will receive enough red book bags for all the children in their Infant, Toddler, and Preschool classrooms filled with developmentally appropriate, high quality storybooks! Children will take a new red bag filled with new books home every week to read with their parents, and will return it at the end of each week and take out another! In addition, classroom teachers will be trained to get the children excited about using their new books!

**Teachers are well-trained.** Participating sites will have teachers trained by CCRI’s Raising A Reader® coordinator in order to prepare them to train parents. Teachers (known as Program Implementers) will learn to train parents on read-aloud strategies and early brain development. Additionally, teachers will be trained and supported in holding parent-friendly literacy events at their facility.

**The book bag system is easy to follow and manage.** Both parents and teachers are very busy, so the book bag take home system is designed to be easily managed.

**Parents engage in “read aloud” and “book cuddling.”** Each red bag comes equipped with an informative DVD that is designed help and encourage all parents to share books with their children. The DVD is produced in more than 10 different languages so that the child and parent may watch the DVD in their home language. Parents of all reading levels have had great success in reading aloud to their children through the Raising A Reader® program and the informative DVD.

**Parents and children get to know their local library.** After participating in the program for a few months, participating programs will be provided with blue Raising A Reader® book bags packed with information about their local library to distribute to children for them to keep! These bags can be used when children visit their local library with their parent!

The Raising A Reader® program has been proven powerful and effective by removing barriers and empowering parents to play an active role in their child’s development by reading with their children, while simultaneously strengthening relationships between parents and the teachers in their early childhood programs.

If you operate a child care program in Charlotte’s East Corridor and want to learn more about Raising A Reader®, please call Mary Katharyne Mascia at (704) 376-6697, ext. 139, or visit the website at www.raisingareader.org.
What experiences do you provide for children to prepare them for reading and writing? How do you explain pre-literacy skills to parents and encourage them with ideas for activities? How do children learn through songs and rhymes? Emergent Literacy Matters is a new opportunity being offered starting in July to child care centers and family child care homes in Mecklenburg County to help you answer those questions. This project offers support in developing literacy-rich classrooms, understanding emergent literacy practices, and preparing children for future school success.

Emergent literacy is the development of the association of print with meaning that begins in the very early stages of childhood and continues until the child reaches the stage of conventional reading and writing. From birth through preschool young children begin to acquire basic understandings about reading and writing and its functions.

The North Carolina Division of Child Development has approved The Creative Curriculum, published by Teaching Strategies, Inc. (TSI), as a curriculum that qualifies licensed child care programs for a quality point under the star rated licensing system.

Participants in Emergent Literacy Matters will receive training over a five-month period on The Creative Curriculum and Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach. They will also receive on-site technical assistance; a copy of Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach for each classroom; access to classroom literacy kits; and staff training/support to enhance families’ involvement in their children’s reading.

Emergent Literacy Matters will be open to participation by Mecklenburg County 3-, 4-, and 5- star child care programs (centers and FCCHs) who serve children birth to five and are willing to serve children receiving child care subsidies. Programs must have provided child care for a minimum of three years and must commit to ensuring the attendance of designated staff at all required training. Participating center-based classroom staff and FCCH providers must have a minimum of two years of child care experience. Seventy-five percent of lead teachers in participating programs must have completed three college-level credit bearing courses (excluding credential). Information and applications for participation in Emergent Literacy Matters will be made available to all eligible programs. For further information please contact Grace Horsman, (704) 376-6697, ext. 186, or Sherri Read, (704) 376-6697, ext. 304.

Five Ways to Encourage Children to Read

Summer is here! Children are out of school and parents will be looking for activities to keep their children busy. Unfortunately, many children will spend their summer watching too much television. Children ages three- to five-years-old spend an average of over 13 hours each week watching television (www.familyeducation.com). Studies indicate that children who watch television instead of reading books do not develop key literacy skills needed to prepare them for school and early learning.

It is never too early to start reading to children. Reading together builds language skills and stimulates imagination. When children are read to at an early age they have larger vocabularies and become more proficient readers. So, make reading part of your summertime activities. Here are some fun ways to encourage children to read:

1. **Library Day:** Designate at least one day a week during the summer to visit the library. Allow children time to browse and select books. Get your child a library card. Attend the many scheduled story time activities the library has to offer.

2. **Book Cuddling:** Story time is a warm and caring way to show your child he/she is important. Snuggling in a parent or caretaker’s lap, sharing stories and talking about ideas stimulates a child’s imagination and creates a lasting bond.

3. **Use Expression:** When reading a story to your child, use different facial expressions and voices. This can hold your child’s attention and make an old story new again.

4. **Share the Book:** Each of you can take turns reading the pages or allow your child to tell the story from the pictures.

5. **Provide a Selection:** There are many age appropriate books to choose from. Provide a variety of fiction and non fiction so your child can learn what interests them.
Every day, new information tells us that environmental hazards like chemicals in cleaning products and weed killers are too risky for children. Children are especially sensitive to chemicals, because their organ and immune systems are still developing, they eat and breathe more pound for pound than adults, and their natural habits (e.g. crawling on the floor and putting their hands in their mouths) increase exposure to toxics.

Now there’s help for child care providers who want to make environmentally healthy choices.

Child Care Resources Inc. and the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council are pleased to announce that both will launch North Carolina’s participation in the national Eco-Healthy Childcare (EHCC) Program later this summer. ECCH is a free, voluntary program offered by the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) that endorses child care programs committed to reducing toxins in and around the child care facility. The goal of the program is to educate and empower childcare providers to reduce the toxics in their childcare facilities, while advertising and seeking media stories to encourage parents to choose ‘eco-healthy.’

Childcare providers apply by filling out a 25-item checklist, available in both English and Spanish. The checklist addresses issues like pesticide use, indoor air quality, and lead and mercury exposure. Facilities that comply with 20 of the 25 items, including two mandatory items, receive a placard and poster announcing their Eco-Healthy qualification.

Qualified facilities receive regular tips on how to continue improving the environmental health of their facility. Look to receive more detailed information about this program later this summer, or visit the OEC website to preview detailed information about how to create an eco-healthy childcare facility on its website (www.oeconline.org/kidshealth), as well as helpful tips for parents.

Currently more than 200 facilities, serving over 7,500 children, have already qualified as Eco-Healthy. Previously a project created solely for Oregon childcare providers, the Eco-Healthy Childcare Program is now going national, and looks forward to supporting child care providers throughout North Carolina! CCRI President Janet Singerman has been appointed to ECCH’s National Advisory Board.

Go Healthy and Green with the Eco-Healthy Child Care Program
S
ince hurricanes Hugo and Katrina, individuals are much more aware of the effects that severe weather can have on child care programs, families, and the community. Developing a written emergency plan requires a facility to identify the roles and responsibilities of the staff, define the procedures and processes for sheltering in place (providing emergency protection of children and staff members at a facility), develop the planning and preparation needed for each type of weather event, and conduct an inventory of the necessary emergency supplies that may be needed. To make sure everything is addressed, think of the “who, what, when, where, and how” of the plan.

Who:
Waiting to assign tasks during an event may lead to confusion and could cost a facility valuable time should it become necessary to shelter in place. The administrator should be the one to institute the appropriate response actions. In the event that the administrator is not available, the next assigned person in authority should assume the responsibilities of the administrator. These actions would include identifying the emergency situation and determining the course of action. While the administrator determines the course of action, the person next in authority will work with the administrator in planning, implementing, documenting, and evaluating practice drills, and will co-facilitate the procedures during the actual weather events.

What:
The child care program should have an emergency kit and each classroom should have a “grab n’ go” kit with the necessary supplies for the appropriate age group of the children. The emergency kit may include, but not be limited to, items such as, staff contact lists, flashlights with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a whistle, and a notepad with pens or pencils. The “grab n’ go” kits may also include emergency contact information for each child, attendance sheets, diapers and formula, (if applicable), a first aid kit, and a flashlight and extra batteries. By conducting a needs inventory, the facility can determine what supplies will best equip the facility to handle an emergency event.

When and Where:
In the event of tornados and hurricanes, there may not be time to evacuate to an alternate site, and in those cases, staying at the facility may be ordered to provide immediate emergency protection for children and staff members. Once the shelter in place announcement has been made, all children and staff need to move to a pre-designated area within the facility that avoids window and glass doorways.

Doors to the outside need to be closed and the staff and children need to protect their heads by remaining on the floor with their heads down and covered. Everyone should remain sheltered in place until they hear the “all clear” signal given by the administrator or the next in charge.

How:
After each drill, the administrator should conduct an evaluation to determine any areas of improvement needed. By having regularly scheduled drills and a written plan for improvements, the facility can effectively determine additional needs or changes to the plan to ensure that all children and staff can successfully prepare for, and recover from, a severe weather event. Should an actual severe weather event occur, having a thorough written plan that everyone has reviewed and practiced will enable the staff and children to effectively evacuate in a timely manner.

For additional information and training on emergency preparedness, facilities can check the Region 7 Training Calendar, or contact their local resource and referral office to request technical assistance and/or training at your facility.

Take a tour of a quality early childhood program and you are likely to see a number of things: children playing in classroom settings arranged in learning centers such as blocks, art, and dramatic play; outdoor learning environments with climbing equipment, riding equipment, and wide open spaces; and teachers interacting with children individually and in small groups, modeling appropriate language and social behaviors.

What you will also see are lots of women: mothers of the children in care during drop-off and pick-up, as well as the female staff members. While parenting is more shared than in past generations, mothers are still the predominant caretakers in most situations and women far outnumber men working in early care and education settings. According to a 2002 study by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, as reported by Francis Wardle in his article “Men in Early Childhood: Fathers and Teachers,” only three percent of pre-kindergarten teachers are men and even fewer men work with children ages birth to three. This absence of men raises a number of important questions for our profession:

• Are we providing positive role models of girls and boys?

• Are we responding to the concerns of fathers and mothers in the families we serve?

• Are we the inclusive, diverse profession we claim to be?

When examining the lack of men in early childhood, it is critical to not only consider the impact on the children and families, the “clients,” but also on the profession itself.

Bryan G. Nelson, the founding director of MenTeach, a national non-profit with a mission to increase the number of men teaching in early and elementary education, writes about widely-accepted misconceptions about men in early childhood in his article, “Myths About Men Who Work With Young Children.” For instance, many people believe that “men won’t work with young children because of the money.” Nelson debunks this myth by pointing out that men are often found in similar-paying jobs such as food service, maintenance, and general labor; however, men are accepted in these settings and there are other men in these environments. The prevailing issue is not the salary, but the lack of acceptance of men in the field of early childhood.

Other assumptions about men that keep them from joining the ranks of early childhood professionals include the false notion that “men are not nurturing or patient enough to work with young children.” Ironically, most people do believe that it is important for children to have experiences with male teachers and caregivers, according to Nelson’s report. Unfortunately, this is not likely to happen until the myths and stereotypes about male teachers are challenged.

Others in early childhood education have also reported on what keeps men from entering the field. Roger Neugebauer, publisher of Child Care Information Exchange, writes about several concerns from his perspective in the field. Neugebauer tells of a survey of over 200 child care center directors, the results of which indicated that most directors believed that “women had a natural ability to nurture children and that men failed to have this instinct” and “most directors would not consider allowing a male teacher to change a diaper… were more likely to fear that male teachers would molest children than female teachers… and were more fearful that male teachers would play too roughly and injure children than female teachers.”

Neugebauer also writes of child care center policies that single men out, such as “men cannot change diapers” or “male teachers may not be left alone in charge of a classroom.” Policies such as these often intend to protect male teachers, but instead imply that men cannot be trusted. Additionally, men in early childhood environments are often expected to assume most of the physical labor such as changing light bulbs, checking tire pressure, or retrieving objects from outside the fence or on the roof. Gender-typing appropriate work for men is just as damaging as the assumption that women are most nurturing.

Look for Part Two of this article in the next issue of Taking Care.
Check out these Teacher Resources

On-line articles
Child Care & Early Education Research Connections  
www.childcareresearch.org

National Network for Child Care  
www.nncc.org (click on Learn for articles)

Books for the Early Childhood Provider

Behavior & Development

By The Ages: Behavior & Development of Children Pre-Birth Through Eight  
written by Allen & Marotz (2000)  
This is a user-friendly guide to a child's development including milestones, growth patterns, daily routines, and activities.

The Emotional Development of Young Children  

Special Needs
Active Learning for Children with Disabilities  
written by Bailey, Cryer, Harms, Osborne & Kniest (1996)  
Parsippany, NJ: Dale Seymour Publications  
This manual gives teachers ways to adapt the environment, activities and schedules to meet the needs of children with special needs.

Family-School Partnerships
From Parents to Partners: Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program  
This book elaborates on the importance and design of creating a partnership with families as part of a family-centered approach to quality early childhood practices.

Assessment
The Portfolio Book: A Step-by-Step Guide for Teachers  
This book provides portfolio assessment techniques in easy to manage steps.

Curriculum
Roots & Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs (Revised Edition)  
This book provides a clear and practical introduction to multicultural resources for early childhood teachers.

Children’s Magazines/Books
Magazines
Ladybug (ages 2-6)  
Each issue includes songs, finger plays, poems and rhymes that encourages a lifetime of reading and learning. (www.cricketmag.com)

Your Big Backyard (ages 3-5)  
Each issue presents a conservation message by focusing on animals and nature. (www.nwf.org/yourbigbackyard)

Picture Books
We’re Going on a Bear Hunt  
written by Michael Rosen & illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type  
written by Doreen Cronin & illustrated by Betsy Lewin

Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears  
written by Verna Aardema & illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon

Mouse Paint  
written by Ellen Stoll Walsh

The Rainbow Fish  
written by Martin Pfister

Big Al  
written by Andrew Clements & illustrated by Yoshi
About Child Care Resources Inc.

Founded in 1982, Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) works with families and communities to ensure that all children have access to high quality, affordable early learning and school-age opportunities and experiences which enable them to succeed in school and in life.

Contact Us

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Other calls ........................................................(704) 376-6697

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Child Care Search ..........................................(704) 786-1024
Other calls ........................................................(704) 786-1023

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Monroe, NC  28110
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www.childcareresourcesinc.org

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