Embracing and Engaging Diversity in Early Care and Education

By Gexenia Pardilla, Latino Outreach Specialist, Child Care Resources Inc.

Faces in our early childhood classrooms are changing. As the Latino population in North Carolina has increased dramatically over the past few years, early care and education classrooms have changed to include many more children whose native language is Spanish. As such, programs are faced with the challenges of meeting the linguistic and diverse educational needs of Latino children and their families.

Since the Latino population is expected to continue growing, it is important to prepare an action plan to create a more qualified workforce that can provide culturally responsive and quality care to Latino children and families. Here’s what you should consider when creating an action plan:

**Professional Development**
Provide opportunities for early childhood professionals to attend training about serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations, such as training that provide information about cultural beliefs and the values that are important to Latino families.

**Communication**
Plan to have written policies and procedures translated by a qualified translator. Have a list of words most often used in languages that represent the children you serve. Everything from curriculum night, parent meetings, newsletters, forms, etc. have to be translated to the family's home language. Provide training for families to learn about the philosophy, culture, and policies/procedures in their native language.

**Professional Staff**
Your staff should represent the children that you plan to serve or are serving. Whenever possible, hire bilingual/bicultural staff. This is a great asset to the program because it will increase communication between the program and the families, and it will also create an opportunity for all children and staff to be exposed to a new language and culture.

**Classroom & Program Environment**
Work with professionals, such as the child development specialists at Child Care Resources, to learn new ways to make your program's environment culturally relevant. Everything from books to developmentally appropriate toys should represent the children's cultures.

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“Lessons In Leadership” Conference

Child Care Resources Inc. and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools announce an exclusive professional development opportunity, “Lessons in Leadership,” for child care administrators across our area. On March 14th, administrators are invited to attend a day of professional development focused on leadership in Early Childhood Education. Don’t miss this opportunity to network with your colleagues, peers, and respected leaders from across the state and earn five hours of NCDCD inservice training credit.

The conference will feature a keynote address by Dr. Paula Jorde Bloom entitled “Paradoxes of Leadership.”

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For twenty years, Child Care Resources Inc. has honored an outstanding early care and education provider each year with the TEDDY Award. TEDDY Award winners demonstrate excellence in early care and education by providing loving interactions, developmentally appropriate experiences, and strong family partnerships.

Beginning this year, the TEDDY Awards will recognize not one, but three, providers who represent the ideals in quality early care and education: one administrator, one center-based teacher, and one family child care home provider.

“Dimensions of quality are as unique as the providers themselves. In order to truly recognize the efforts towards quality in our community, we felt it was critical to not only honor both center- and home-based programs, but also the administrators who drive improvements as well,” stated Grace Horsman and Michelle Williams, co-chairs of Child Care Resources’ TEDDY Award Committee.

As always, the TEDDY Award will be based on parent nominations and supporting evidence from the nominee. Parents will be invited to nominate their child’s provider and/or administrator for the TEDDY Award. Parent nomination forms will be provided to all early care and education providers in Mecklenburg County. They will also be available for download via Child Care Resources’ website. Upon receiving a nomination, providers will be asked to submit an application and professional portfolio for review by Child Care Resources’ TEDDY Award Committee. Finalists and award winners will be selected by an independent review board following a site visit and personal interview. A wonderful evening dinner and celebration will be held in honor of the TEDDY Award winners, who will each receive a $500 prize.

“Many providers strive to give children quality experiences each and every day, and the TEDDY Awards ceremony is our day to celebrate these providers,” Horsman and Williams explained.

More information about the TEDDY Awards will be available in the upcoming months, but start spreading the word now. You might consider launching campaigns during The Week of the Young Child or Provider Appreciation Week to encourage your parents to support their child’s early care and education provider with a nomination!

A New Look For An Old Favorite in 2008!

The annual NC-aeyc Southwestern Affiliate Early Childhood Education Conference will be held on Saturday, March 1st from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM at Pease Auditorium on the Main Campus of Central Piedmont Community College. Doors open at 7:30 AM.

Keynote speaker will be James Ransome, award-winning illustrator of more than 15 children’s books including How Many Stars In The Sky? and Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt. Mr. Ransome has won a Coretta Scott King Award, as well as a Coretta Scott King Honor Award given by the American Library Association to the top children’s books from black authors and artists.

Additional information:
• 3 hours of NC Division of Child Development-approved Child Care Training Credit will be provided.
• Two sessions are being held with a book signing during the break. (Participants attend both sessions.)
• Training slips will be distributed at the conclusion of the conference.

Information and registration for the conference was mailed in January. Register early as space is limited!

Questions?
Contact Sherri Nicewonger at Child Care Resources, 704-376-6697, ext. 304

Conference to Feature James Ransome, Children’s Book Illustrator
In 1979, the Mecklenburg County Commissioners asked the Social Planning Council of United Way to study the twofold issue of child care: 1) what to do about the 300 children currently in county operated centers; and 2) what to do about the growing need for quality child care for all of Mecklenburg County’s citizens who needed it to work and be productive citizens. After a 15-month study by an Ad Hoc Committee, a recommendation was made to the County Commission that an agency be formed as a public/private partnership that would coordinate child care needs with child care services.

The County Commissioners agreed that this new organization would administer child care funds for low-income families (formerly a Department of Social Services function), provide an information service for parents needing assistance in locating child care, provide training to child care providers to help them improve the quality of care offered to Mecklenburg’s children, and work with Mecklenburg businesses in addressing the work/family issues of their employees. This new entity would be funded by Mecklenburg County, United Way, and corporate and foundation grants.

Child Care Resources Inc. was incorporated in November of 1981 and opened to the public July 1, 1982. At that time there were 1,250 children receiving financial assistance; the information services department consisted of one program administrator and five Junior League volunteers; the training department was staffed with one person; and three social workers and a social work supervisor were responsible for administering child care subsidies. Two support staff rounded out the staff to ten.

Today, Child Care Resources is comprised of a budgeted staff of 114, a twenty-six member board of directors, and many individual supporters and volunteers. In addition to continuing to administer child care financial aid for Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services, Child Care Resources also administers child care financial aid for Mecklenburg Smart Start as well as Goodwill Industries, Charlotte Housing Authority and United Way (Tryon Hills).

In its current 2007-08 fiscal year, Child Care Resources has the responsibility of administering over $45 million in child care subsidy (financial aid) to an average of just under 8,000 children per month. Child Care Resources contracts with approximately 600 child care providers for the child care subsidy program. Of the Mecklenburg children receiving child care subsidy, 90% are served in 4- and 5-star care (parent choice). While many Mecklenburg County families with young children are able to access child care subsidies, 5,756 children were on the waiting list as of January 11, 2008.

In honor of its 25th anniversary, and in recognition of the achievements made by early care and school-age education programs, Child Care Resources wants to give back to YOU! Between January 2008 and June 2008, CCRI is gathering volunteer groups to perform 25 service projects for early care and school age education programs across our region. Volunteer groups will be comprised of five to ten people; the groups will be available for half-day or full-day projects such as:

- Outdoor playground work
- Classroom and building maintenance
- Landscaping
- Painting

If you are interested in having a volunteer team work at your center, visit www.childcareresourcesinc.org and download the application from the home page. The application will ask you to briefly describe a project idea that would benefit your program. If you have needs other than those listed above, please include as much detail as possible. You may also contact Dot Counts-Scoggins at 704-376-6697 ext. 117 or dccounts-scoggins@childcareresourcesinc.org for more information. Please reference the Volunteer Service Project in your email.
**Around The Region**

**Cabarrus County**

The Cabarrus County Staff are continuing to offer the PCAN (Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent – Provider Partnerships in Child Care) training series of three, 6.5 hour training sessions using the curriculum developed by Zero to Three:

- PCAN: Building Collaborative Partnerships With Families
- PCAN: Challenging Behaviors in Infants & Toddlers.

PCAN provides support for professionals by providing tips and techniques for using their natural relationships with parents to provide developmental guidance and information. This curriculum unit focuses on prevention of child abuse and neglect and recognizing the importance of relationships with very young children and their parents.

The staff is also partnering with the Cabarrus County Health Alliance in promoting Emergency Preparedness and Response training.

On March 31st – April 3rd, Carmen Lewis and Christina Castle will be presenting Part 2 of The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers training series.

The Cabarrus/Rowan/Stanly Association for the Education of Young Children is hosting the annual “Coming Together for Children Conference” on Saturday, March 19th. The conference will be from 7:30 AM until 3:00 PM at J.M. Robinson High School. The cost is $25 for AEYC members and $30 for non-members.

For more information on any of these Cabarrus County events, call Child Care Resources’ Cabarrus office at 704-786-1023.

**Mecklenburg County**

Child Care Resources Inc. is continuing to offer a series of in-depth training on The Creative Curriculum. These sessions started in January and will be held over four full-days. Administrators will join their classroom staff during this intensive training. Administrators will have also other opportunities to learn about implementing the curriculum throughout the year. Family child care providers will explore The Creative Curriculum through a series of four evening workshops.


For more information please contact Sherri Nicewonger, 704-376-6697, ext. 304, or Grace Horsman, 704-376-6697, ext. 186.

The Westside Family Child Care Network welcomes the Chamber of Commerce as it presents “Getting Your Business Involved” on February 12th, 6:30-8:30 PM at the Amay James Neighborhood Center. If you are interested in learning how being a member of the Chamber can benefit your FCCH, please attend.

The Triangle East Network is pleased to have the Institute for Entrepreneurship present “How to Compete with Big Operations” on February 25th, 6:30-8:30 PM at Albemarle Road Park and Recreation Center.

These seminars are offered at no cost to FCCH-network members; all others can register for $15. For more information about these seminars, or for more information about FCCH Networks, contact Arrealia Gavins at 704-376-6697 ext. 263.

Calvary Child Development Center is hosting a professional development event “Excellence in Early Childhood Education” for early childhood educators on March 8. The registration deadline is February 29 and registration can be completed online at www.calvarycdd.com. For more information, contact Debbie at 704-341-5357.

**Union County**

The annual Night of Stars, celebrating higher education accomplishments by Union County early childhood educators and quality improvements for facilities as measured by the NC Star Rating System, will be held at Rolling Hills Country Club on March 5th. Mark your calendars to be part of this event.

The Union County Arts Council will host The Tarradiddle Players for all Union County Child Care providers in March. The performances will be March 3rd and 4th at Wingate University and will begin at 9:30 am. Tickets are $5.00. Please contact Barbara Faulk at The Union County Arts Council at 704-283-2784.

The Week of the Young Child, April 14th-18th, will be celebrated in Union County with a variety of “lunch and learn” symposiums for parents on topics ranging from Infant/Toddler Development to Kindergarten Readiness. These sessions, held across the county, are sponsored by the Union County Child Care Association. Look for more information to share with parents regarding these wonderful opportunities.

Creating the Future, an early childhood conference hosted by Child Care Resources / Union County and the Union County Child Care Association, will be the capstone event for Week of The Young Child celebrations in Union County. The Conference will be held April 19th at South Piedmont Community College. Keep your eyes open for more information about this exciting opportunity for early childhood educators in Union County!
School-Age Staff Orientation
School-age staff orientation is now identical to all other staff orientation requirements. Please refer to your Child Care Rules handbook for specific details.

Aquatic Activities
Children under three years CANNOT participate in aquatic activities such as wading pools, swimming pools, etc. Children may continue to engage in sprinkler play and water table play.

The Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development
The North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development is an advisory group to the NCDCD in matters related to developing an educated work force to care for children who are in group care.

The Institute is dedicated to defining and advocating for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that provides supportive, accessible, and individually appropriate education, which is linked to compensation in order to ensure high quality care and education services for children and families.

The Institute’s link at the NCDCD’s website (www.ncchildcare.net) has an array of information on educational financial assistance, child care licensure, career exploration, education, compensation, leadership, and mentoring.

Interactive workbooks and lessons for teachers, administrators, and community members are also available for use as college credit coursework assignments, in computer lab clock hour training, as a self-study or staff exercise, and with policy makers in a presentation about the workforce.

Help Families Get The Credit They Deserve This Tax Filing Season!

You can make a difference by educating low- and moderate-income families about federal, and in some cases state, tax credits that can help put thousands of dollars in their pockets!

Families with children or other dependents may be eligible for one or more of the following federal tax credits when they file their taxes for 2007 in early 2008:

• Earned Income Tax Credit, which helps provide a wage supplement for low-income families (those earning less than $39,783 annually). This credit is worth up to $4,716, and is refundable.

• Child Tax Credit, designed to help families offset some of the costs of raising children. This credit is worth up to $1,000 per child. Families who owe little or no income tax can receive some or all of this credit as a refund if they earned at least $11,750 in 2007.  

• Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, designed to offset some of the child or dependent care costs that families incur in order to work. This credit is worth up to $2,100, though the amount that can be claimed is limited by a family’s actual federal income tax liability.

In addition, North Carolina has child and dependent care tax provisions. North Carolina also has state child tax credits for the 2007 tax year that are based on the federal Child Tax Credit.

To access helpful outreach materials that you can use with the families you serve, visit the NWLC Tax Credits Outreach Campaign webpage at www.nwlc.org/LowerYourTaxes. These materials, many of which are available in Spanish and other languages, include state-specific flyers, envelope inserts, sample Public Service Announcement scripts, and Q&As about the federal credits.

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Have you ever felt frustrated because the “routine” tasks take up so much time in the day that you don’t have enough time left for the “fun” things?

Routine care tasks such as diapering, feeding, washing hands, getting children to sleep, and greeting/departing transitions are a major part of meeting children’s needs but sometimes it’s easy to forget that they are actually so much more than just “routine.”

Young children establish their sense of trust and security when their needs are consistently responded to promptly by their caregivers. Through the interactions of the one-on-one moments of routine caregiving tasks, the child and adult build an intimate relationship in a way that can not happen during group activities or during play experiences. Brain researchers tell us that the most important factor in healthy development for young children is to be able to have a warm nurturing relationship with their caregivers.

**Relationship-Building**

The attitude of the caregiver during routine tasks gives the child a definite message – either good or bad – about how the caregiver feels about him/her. If the attitude is one of kindness, respect, and gentleness, the child will feel loved, secure, respected, and valued. The relationship between the two of them will become warm and secure.

If the routine tasks are done with an attitude of impatience, intolerance, frustration, or even indifference, the child will develop negative feelings instead. The relationship between the two will be one that is strained and out-of-touch in all other parts of the day as well. The important process of bonding will be much more difficult or delayed or not occur at all, often resulting in uncooperative behaviors and frustration on the part of the caregiver and the child.

**Learning Opportunities**

In addition to the bond that forms through the process, the interactions that occur during routines are also an important part of learning opportunities for children – the time to learn essential self-help skills, social skills, and even cultural norms and attitudes. Children learn what to expect from their world and the people in it, as well as how to identify their own needs and preferences and begin to learn to care for themselves.

**The Challenges**

Several factors can also make routines challenging and sometimes even conflict-filled. One instance is when there are differences between what the family does and prefers to have done for their child and how caregivers think things should be done. In these situations, we must work cooperatively with families to consider what is in the child’s best interest.

Caregiving routines are connected to cultural and family values which need to be respected. It requires open communication between family members and caregivers and also compromising as much as possible in order to provide continuity and consistency for the child’s sake. Otherwise, these differences can result in confusion, distrust, and even alienation of the child and can harm the child’s relationship with his/her family. These implications can last far beyond the time spent with the caregiver. Our role is to nurture the child’s needs in a way that also nurtures the whole family.

Another cause of conflict that can arise is when caregivers fail to recognize the normal developmental abilities and needs of children. Patience comes from understanding each child’s abilities, needs, and preferences based on his/her own development, growth, and life experiences. Trying to plan too much for children to do in a day, as well as trying to strictly stick to a planned schedule, can also make this conflict worse.

When we realize the importance of these routine tasks, and value them as much as the other activities we plan for children, we can plan and carry out these important times with a more relaxed and enjoyable attitude and make the most of them.

For tips on establishing “Winning Routines” refer to the next page.

By Loraine Barker-Witzkowski, Regional Infant-Toddler Specialist, Child Care Resources Inc.
Winning Routines ... Tips & Reminders

Diapering
- Diapering is an important learning activity when it engages the child and allows participation at the child’s own level of ability.
- Diapering is an opportunity to give each child attention in a one-on-one situation.
- Talking and encouraging participation by the child during diapering support positive feelings of competence in the child.
- Diapering allows for conversation and helps with language development.
- Treating the child with respect during the diapering procedure (for instance, warning the child before picking them up to change their diaper to avoid abrupt interruptions) fosters the development of self-esteem.
- Sanitation is critical! Proper hand-washing and proper disposal are essential!
- The important step of ‘potty training’ needs to be approached only when the child is showing signs of being ready and with careful coordination and communication with child’s family.

Handwashing
- Thorough hand-washing is the single most important thing caregivers and children can do to prevent the spread of illness in child care.
- Caregivers’ good attitude, as well as good habits, will result in children learning good habits that will likely last a lifetime.

Napping/Sleeping
- Like feeding and diapering, napping is an important opportunity for one-to-one interaction during which learning and the deepening of emotional bonds can take place.
- Napping is a vulnerable time for infants and toddlers, when the security and comfort of a familiar caregiver are particularly important.
- An individualized and responsive nap routine that respects family and cultural style, individual schedule, stage of development, and preferences gives the child a positive message about herself or himself.
- Caregivers must work to minimize health and safety risks: check cribs, follow SIDS guidelines, follow sanitation guidelines.

Feeding
- Through feeding, children receive both physical and social-emotional nurturing from their caregivers, as well as opportunities for learning.
- Providing care that is consistent with family and cultural practices is an important aspect of supporting development through routines. (For example, in some homes, independent behavior such as finger feeding is encouraged, while in other families it is preferable for adults to feed children until old enough to eat without making a mess.)
- Meal times need to be peaceful, happy times and to occur individually or in very small groups with an interacting and supervising caregiver.
- Responding promptly to a child’s message of hunger contributes to the development of basic trust and security and even self-esteem, as he/she learns to express his/her needs and preferences.
- The intimacy that occurs while feeding and/or sitting with children and interacting as they eat is an important part of developing warm relationships with them.
- While involved in feeding, children have the opportunity to listen, look, touch, and feel, discovering things about themselves and the world and people around them.

Greetings/Departures
- Greetings/departures are major transitions for both parents and children and need to be handled sensitively.
- During greeting and departing, caregivers should give personal attention to each child and family member, including daily exchange of information about the child’s care and activities.
- The morning greeting and transition from parent to center can set the tone for the child’s entire day.
- Departure from the care setting and reconnecting to the parent can be a sensitive time and should include communication between caregiver and parent/provider.

Mobile Lending Libraries Feature Resources for Professionals Too!

Child Care Resources’ mobile lending libraries aren’t just for parents and families! An array of resources for early care and education professionals is available from Child Care Resources’ two mobile lending libraries. Funded by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County and the Cabarrus County Partnership for Children, these lending libraries make monthly visits to centrally-located sites in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus Counties. All materials are available to visitors on a monthly loan basis, and a Child Care Resources’ specialist is always on-hand to help with selections, talk about child-related issues and make referrals to other community resources.

What are some of the selections you might find on a lending library?

The Infant And Toddler Handbook, by Kathryn Castle, is a practical guide for parents, teachers, child care professionals, caregivers, or anyone who cares for and works with children aged birth to twenty-four months. The book covers the first two years in a child’s life that are vitally important to his social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development, and successfully incorporates the latest in child development research into activities to use with your child anytime and in any setting. The activities are developmentally sequenced and arranged by age for easy use.

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Dear Trainer,

How do I get families involved and connected to what is going on with their child each day?

Let’s be honest. First and foremost, we have to look at and understand our roles as caregivers and be respectful of the role the parent/family plays in the child’s life. As caregivers, acknowledging these differences allows us to begin to place more emphasis on how we can focus on making the time spent with the child and the family as supportive, enriching and educative as possible. In order to offer and receive this support we must first understand how relationships form and how to encourage them.

There are several strategies one can use to encourage family involvement in an early care and education program: learn the family members’ names, greet them every time with warmth and make them feel comfortable, learn significant things about the child and his/her family, ask the family about the child’s interests, give positive information to the family daily, and arrange the environment so that the family can visit with ease and comfort. Incorporating these things will assist in building relationships that will lead to strong family involvement in your program.

To further the parent involvement process, caregivers should concentrate on:
• developing skills for working with adults;
• encouraging informal visits to the program.

Opening Doors for Dads

You’ve seen it – a dad comes through the front door in the morning, his child’s little backpack thrown awkwardly over his big shoulder. As quickly as he can, the dad escorts his child into class. Dad doesn’t say much – a quick nod to the teacher, a quick hug for his child – and he’s gone.

You’ve also heard it before - men often feel out of place in early childhood programs. Can you blame them? Most of the staff is women, most of the furniture is small, and often the walls are covered with cutesy decorations for kids. Child care is often perceived as being part of the woman’s world. It is easy to see how men might be overlooked. The traditional roles of men and women have changed over the years, and child care programs must change as well. An essential element in creating a father-friendly environment is to make men feel welcome, and there are many ways to do that.

Start by getting to know the fathers and significant male role models in the families you work with. Ask casual questions that show genuine interest in his work, his hobbies, and his favorite things. You might take a more formal approach by distributing a brief interest survey to discover common skills and interests, and convenient times to volunteer.

In addition, make an effort to communicate with dads. For men to feel welcome, they also need to feel acknowledged. At drop-off and pick-up times, greet men by name and take a minute to chat. Address all announcements and information to both parents, and, if parents live separately, send announcements to both.

Consider also making changes to the physical environment. Display photos and drawings of men and women with young children to convey the message that men are welcome. Invite families to submit photos of family outings and celebrations, or create special displays in hallways and classrooms that feature all of the men in the family – dads, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, etc.

The most important change you can make to welcome men is a change of perspective. Acknowledge and build upon the unique strengths that men bring to the culture of a child care program and be sensitive to the different ways men approach parenting and interacting with children. Parents of either gender feel most welcome when we recognize the key role they play in their child’s life. Being aware of the messages you send about male involvement is the first step towards lasting change.

Sources:
An Ounce of Prevention ...

Have you ever thought of a child care program as a living, breathing, well-balanced organism? Much like the human body, a child care program is comprised of many unique and complex parts. Each part plays a critical role and if one is not healthy the entire program could suffer.

Much like individuals, child care programs need regular check-ups to remain healthy and strong. In addition to the formal assessments completed by regulatory agencies, a great practice is to perform regular program “self-evaluations.” Use the following suggestions to give your child care programs regular check-ups and keep program quality, administration and facilities at peak performance.

Gather the experts.

Who are the program’s stakeholders? Think of all groups that have a stake in the success of the program – children, parents, staff, board members, etc. Solicit staff and parents to help develop an evaluation tool that provides the most relevant and helpful feedback. Remember that people who are involved in the process are more likely to be involved in the solution.

Ask meaningful questions.

There are many important considerations when planning an evaluation or survey, so make sure the team understands what types of information would be most helpful and meaningful. Use these questions to help guide the development of a program survey:

- What is the program’s mission?
- What are the program’s goals?
- Who will complete this particular survey?
- What results are expected?
- What resources are needed?

Use different methods to solicit feedback.

Performance evaluations, staff and parent surveys, child observations, suggestion boxes, and parent-teacher conferences are all excellent means of gathering information to evaluate a program. Other formal tools are also available (see resources on this page). Non-regulatory professionals, like child development specialists at Child Care Resources, are also available to help with program evaluation tools and training on how to use the tools.

Provide feedback and follow-up in a timely fashion.

Be sure to provide follow-up to those involved on the results of surveys and self-evaluations. Once you have conducted an evaluation/program self-assessment and analyzed the results, be sure to create a plan of action and share it with stakeholders. Remember that people who are involved in the process are more likely to be involved in the solution. Do not be afraid of program self-evaluation – if used properly it can guide continuous growth and improvement for individuals as well as child care programs.

Check out these resources for information and tools to use in early care and education program evaluation:

- The Visionary Director: A Handbook for Dreaming, Organizing, and Improvising in Your Center by Margie Carter & Deb Curtis
- Blueprint for Action: Achieving Center Based Change Through Staff Development by Paula J. Bloom, Marilyn Sheerer, & Joan Britz

This is a guidebook full of practical theory and examples of real-life situations center directors encounter with staff. Directors can use the information for implementing change – great or small!

The Visionary Director will make an immediate impact on the quality of early childhood programs by helping directors generate and implement enduring, meaningful visions for their centers. This book is filled with real world examples, inspiring quotes, and a wealth of creative and practical ideas.

Program Administration Scale
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale

Designed for early childhood program administrators, researchers, monitoring personnel, and quality enhancement facilitators, the PAS was constructed to complement the widely used environment rating scales designed by Harms, Clifford, and Cryer. Both the PAS and the ERS measure quality on a 7-point scale and both generate a profile to guide program improvement efforts. If used together, these instruments provide a focused look at best practices at the classroom level and the broad view of program quality from an organizational perspective.

By Jason Weeks, Project Manager for Directors Leadership Academy, Child Care Resources Inc.
Check Out The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project

As child care programs all over the state have transitioned to the new, two-component star-rated license, focus on higher education for teachers has increased. Research has demonstrated that young children perform better when their teachers have a good education and are well-compensated.

Yet, in North Carolina, less than half of teachers of young children have either a two- or four-year degree. Of those that do, few have degrees in child development or early childhood education. Additionally, child care professionals often make little more than minimum wage and receive few or no benefits. This leads to difficulty attracting and retaining well-educated professionals. High turnover rates, up to 50% in some centers, can significantly impact continuity of care and create attachment difficulties for children.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project gives scholarships to child care workers to complete course work in early childhood education and to increase their compensation. All T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships link continuing education with increased compensation and require that recipients and their sponsoring child care program share in the costs. Scholarships are available for teachers, directors, and family child care providers working in regulated child care programs in North Carolina and other states across the country.

To be eligible for any T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship, an applicant must work a minimum number of hours per week in a state regulated child care program. Some of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships require applicants to be working a minimum of twenty hours per week, while others require a minimum of thirty hours per week. Applicants must also have the sponsorship of their employing child care program. Teacher and family child care provider applicants must earn less than $14.60 per hour and directors or director/owners must earn less than $15.00 per hour; however partial scholarships may be available for providers earning just over the maximum. Each scholarship has additional eligibility criteria specific to the scholarship model.

For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship, contact:

Child Care Services Association
P.O. Box 901
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-967-3272
www.childcareservices.org

What About Me?

As child care professionals, the bulk of our jobs is to take care of others and to make sure that the needs of children and their families are met. For most of us the job doesn’t just stop there ... our own families need us to meet their needs too.

Sue Baldwin, the author of Lifesavers: Tips for Success and Sanity for Early Childhood Managers, writes about how child care professionals can maintain a good sense of self and well being through it all. These are just a few of her suggestions:

• Let go of the guilt associated with self-care. Guilt is an emotion that takes up a lot of attention and uses up loads of energy.

• Find time for yourself daily. As humans, we need relationships and people to survive, but we also need time to ourselves to reflect on our personal goals and values.

• Have fun. As Baldwin notes, “We don’t stop playing because we get old, we get old because we stop playing.” By taking time to enjoy what makes you happy, you are investing in yourself. Remember, it is okay to step out of the fast lane.

• Probably the easiest, yet the most underrated concept is to find humor. According to a 2007 study conducted by cardiologists at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, laughter may help protect you against heart attack.

• Tell someone what you need. By asking for help, we are at risk for rejection; but if we don’t ask for help, we are also at risk for isolation and detachment from others. We are not superheroes. We are human and vulnerable – and that is alright. Give yourself a hand by getting organized and involving others.

• Pay attention to your body’s health. Don’t forget to get regular exercise, stay hydrated, get your sleep, and eat well! Maintaining mental health can not be done without a healthy body, so take care of yourself!

By Kristi Godfrey-Hurrell, Educational Specialist, Child Care Resources Inc.
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Classroom Activities
In a culturally diverse classroom, it is important that the activities focus on language development in both English and Spanish. These activities need to respect the children’s cultures and provide opportunities to adapt and become comfortable in the new culture.

Community Resources
Create a list of organizations that provide services to Latino children and families. A list of several local organizations that can provide great information and assistance in serving Latino children and families can be found below.

Reaching out to serve Latino children and families provides opportunities that will enrich the early childhood program for the English speaking children and staff members as well as non-English speaking children and families.

Community Resources

Latin American Coalition
Promotes full Hispanic participation in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region, by informing, educating, and advocating for the Latin American community. 704-531-3848; www.latinnamericancoaltion.org

Casa Internacional
Promotes international understanding by serving as a center for diversity, advocating for people of diverse national backgrounds, and facilitating professional and cultural programs. 704-333-8099; www.ihclt.org

Mi Casa Su Casa Resource Center
Promotes self-sufficiency and community empowerment through advocacy, referral services, and programming in wellness, early childhood development, and family preservation. 704-536-9845; www.micasasucasarctr.org

Hispanic Learning Center
418 Kerr Street, Concord, NC
704-795-3535
www.thehlc.org

United Way of Central Carolinas in Union County
102 E. Franklin Street, Monroe, NC
704-226-5124

The “Lessons in Leadership” conference will be held at the Hilton Charlotte University Place from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. Registration includes all conference materials, snacks and refreshments, and a full Italian-style lunch buffet.

To register, contact Jason Weeks at Child Care Resources (704-376-6697, ext. 171).

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To find out more about the location, dates, and hours of free tax preparation sites in your area, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at (800) TAX-1040 or (800) 829-1040.

Locally, Community Link is coordinating assistance for parents in completing the EITC documents. Contact Community Outreach Coordinator Brenda Williams at 704-943-9635. Or, call United Way’s 2-1-1 hotline by simply dialing 2-1-1 from a home phone or by calling 1-866-744-7778 from a cell phone.

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Dr. Bloom received her Master’s degree and Ph.D. from Stanford University and serves as one of the country’s leading experts on early childhood leadership and program management. She has authored numerous scholarly articles and several widely read books in early childhood program management, including Blueprint for Action. She is also the lead author of the Program Administration Scale.

Other topics to be presented at “Lessons in Leadership” include:

- Generational Leadership, presented by Eric Rowles, Leading to Change
- Methods for Mentoring Teachers, presented by Dr. Richard Lambert, UNC-Charlotte
- Community Collaboration to Promote School Readiness, presented by Anne-Marie Dekort-Young, NC Office of School Readiness
- Sociocultural Perspective on Linguistic Styles, presented by Dr. Stephen Hancock, UNC-Charlotte

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Annabel Karmel’s book, In Small Helpings: A Complete Guide to Feeding Babies, Toddlers, and Young Children, features 120 recipes – many suitable for babies as young as four months. This cookbook will help parents and caregivers prepare delicious, healthy meals without spending days in the kitchen. All recipes were selected for ease of preparation; most can be made ahead of time and frozen!

Getting Your Child To Sleep…and Back to Sleep gives practical, age-appropriate tips for living with newborns, dealing with colic, having a family bed, early riser tactics, helping allay fears, creating toddler bedtime rituals that work, and more. Vicki Lansky’s book includes ideas that have worked for parents and providers, combined with the advice of today’s pediatric experts.

To find out how you can gain access to the materials in Mecklenburg County, contact Mary Katharyne Mascia at 704-376-6697 ext. 139. In Cabarrus County, contact Jennifer Perella at 704-786-1023 ext. 352.
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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Charlotte, NC 28209
Child Care Search ...........................................(704) 348-2181
Other calls .....................................................(704) 376-6697

Cabarrus County Office
2353 Concord Lake Road, Suite 160
Concord, NC 28025
Child Care Search ...........................................(704) 786-1024
Other calls .....................................................(704) 786-1023

Union County Office
105-A Cedar Street
Monroe, NC 28110
Child Care Search ...........................................(704) 238-8800
Other calls .....................................................(704) 238-8810

www.childcareresourcesinc.org

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