U.S. General Services Administration
PBS Child Care Operations

# Center News

Volume 10 Issue 4 A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers Fall 2007

**The GSA Nationwide Network of Child Care Coordinators**

New England Region
Sherri Edwards
617-565-7312

Northeast/Caribbean Region
Magda Marcano
212-264-1268

Mid-Atlantic Region
Robyn Major
215-446-2893

Southeast Sunbelt Region
Janie Heisner
404-331-4729

Great Lakes Region
Connie Chidester
312-886-0611

The Heartland Region
Barbara Daniels
816-823-2215

Greater Southwest Region
BJ Upton
817-978-8451

Rocky Mountain Region
Jacki Fling
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
202-401-7403

## Clever Kids Learning Center - Denver Celebrates 15 years of Providing Quality Child Care

On November 23, 1992, Clever Promotions became the operator of the center located in Building 64 on the Denver Federal Center. In the beginning, the center cared for children ages 1 to 12 years. In August1998, the center expanded with a new infant/toddler wing and infants began attending. In the summer the centers offer a fun packed camp. Many alumni come back year after year, joining siblings that attend on a year round basis. They have great fun renewing past friendships over the summer months.

Many of the teaching staff have been at Clever Kids for almost as long as the center has been in operation, and that is really something to celebrate!

To commemorate this milestone, the center held a birthday celebration with games, gifts and food. The main hall displayed posters of pictures of teachers and children - past and present - engaged in activities they enjoy on a daily basis. It was fun to watch “older” children stare and giggle at themselves as babies and young toddlers. After playing games of Fishing, Donut Hang, and Pin the Tail on the Horse the children tried their skills on the obstacle course and at ice skating. Each child and parent left with a gift bag from the center. The age appropriate gift bags contained baseball caps, books, rubber duckies for the tub, writing tablets, pencils, mini puzzles and carnival prizes.

A great time was had by all. Congratulations Clever Kids Learning Center!!!

# Boards' Business

By Jill Rhea

## Morale Boosters

Stretched resources and growing workloads can be a recipe for stress, burn-out and departures. As a board of directors or a center director, you have a lot of power to make your staff feel more appreciated and confident and less stressed. What is your best tactic? Remember that the people drawn to child care are motivated by more than a paycheck. Find new ways to trip these strong motivational triggers to help get them through trying times and heavy workloads. You might even be able to turn a tough time into a powerful bonding experience. Here are some basics to keep in mind to avoid departures and low morale.

- **Recognize tough times.** Be honest about your challenges and what it will take to overcome them. Let employees know you recognize that it might not be an easy road but that there are options and solutions you can work towards together.
- **Solicit staff input and ideas.** Often the best innovations come from those who do a task every day. Ask for employee recommendations and solution ideas. Personal participation in finding the solution can help boost morale. When a team has ownership for their assignments and responsibilities, they are more invested in seeing their ideas produce results.
- **Make tough choices.** It is discouraging when everything is critical and every task is a priority. Ease your employees' stress level by making tough calls and letting workers know which jobs can wait while high-priority projects are completed.
- **Acknowledge contributions.** Resources might be scarce, but praise does not cost a thing. Spotlight specific examples of hard work and "above the call of duty" behavior. Give direct praise to those who deserve it. Use a formal recognition program as well, or start one if your organization does not already have a program in place.
- **Provide extras where you can.** Maybe you can't hire more hands, but what can you supply to help? Can you bring in more volunteers? Would specialized software, equipment or other tools help streamline tasks and automate processes? See if you can get some financed, donated or borrowed. Do you have access to other free resources or community consultants? Again, ask the team what tools they think would most help them succeed.
- **Pitch in.** Be a visible example of rising to the occasion and going the distance for your team.

## Emergency Planning

Mark your calendars and make sure you are updating your emergency contact information quarterly as well as checking in with your relocation sites to ensure that they are still available to you. There are many good resources available to help you write and practice a good emergency plan. Don't get too wrapped up in trying to figure out every possible "disaster" that might come your way. In the end you will either **evacuate** or **stay** and those are the two events you need to train and practice with your staff, parents and children. In training with your staff take the time to remember the human side of disaster preparedness. *Acknowledge the range of feelings that may be experienced by staff. *Plan with the staff on "who leaves when", supporting their needs to deal with their own children and families. *Talk about how individual staff members can "keep it together" during times of stress. *Use staff in developing procedures.

## Ania's Angle

Long billed as a "green" product for environmentally conscious consumers, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are quickly becoming the norm in household lighting—and may soon replace traditional incandescent bulbs altogether. We also use CFLs in some of our child care centers.

But CFLs' cool-burning illumination is made possible by about five milligrams of mercury sealed inside every glass tube. One CFL contains a hundred times less mercury than is found in a single dental amalgam filling or old-style glass thermometer, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

While their mercury doesn't make CFLs unsafe, experts say, it does place them alongside many other household products—from paint to batteries—that need to be used and disposed of in a responsible manner. Please review the following fact sheet provided by the EPA on the use, disposal and clean up of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

*Frequently Asked Questions*

# Information on Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs) and Mercury

August 2007

**Why should people use CFLs?**

Switching from traditional light bulbs to CFLs is an effective, accessible change every American can make right now to reduce energy use at home and prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change. Lighting accounts for close to 20 percent of the average home's electric bill. ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescent light bulbs, last up to 10 times longer, cost little up front, and provide a quick return on investment.

If every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified CFL, in one year it would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of more than 800,000 cars.

**Do CFLs contain mercury?**

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 5 milligrams – about the amount that would cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams of mercury. It would take 100 CFLs to equal that amount.

Mercury currently is an essential component of CFLs and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use. Many manufacturers have taken significant steps to reduce mercury used in their fluorescent lighting products. In fact, the average amount of mercury in a CFL is anticipated to drop by the end of 2007 thanks to technology advances and a commitment from members of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

**What precautions should I take when using CFLs in my home?**

CFLs are made of glass and can break if dropped or roughly handled. Be careful when removing the bulb from its packaging, installing it, or replacing it. Always screw and unscrew the lamp by its base (not the glass), and never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket. If a CFL breaks in your home, follow the clean-up recommendations below. Used CFLs should be disposed of properly (see below).

**What should I do with a CFL when it burns out?**

EPA recommends that consumers take advantage of available local recycling options for compact fluorescent light bulbs. EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and major U.S. retailers to expand recycling and disposal options. Consumers can contact their local municipal solid waste agency directly, or go to www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling or www.earth911.org to identify local recycling options.

If your state permits you to put used or broken CFLs in the garbage, seal the bulb in two plastic bags and put it into the outside trash, or other protected outside location, for the next normal trash collection. CFLs should not be disposed of in an incinerator.

ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs have a warranty. If the bulb has failed within the warranty period, return it to your retailer.

**How should I clean up a broken fluorescent bulb?**

The following steps can be performed by the general public:

1. Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.

2. Carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a sealed plastic bag.
   - Use disposable rubber gloves, if available (i.e., do not use bare hands). Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the plastic bag.
   - Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces

Continued on page 4

## Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC Accreditation, 84% are now accredited.

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

- Academy for Early Learning (AEL) Philadelphia, PA
- East Mountain Child Care Center, Wilkes Barre, PA managed by Hildebrandt Learning Centers
- Eagles Loft, Ames IA managed by Bright Horizons
- Building Blocks, Auburn, WA managed by Easter Seals
- U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters Center, Washington, DC
- Energy Child Development Center, Germantown, MD managed by Bright Horizons
- Sheila Watkins Child Development Center, Washington, DC managed by Bright Horizons

Continued from page 3

3. Place all cleanup materials in a second sealed plastic bag.
   - Place the first bag in a second sealed plastic bag and put it in the outdoor trash container or in another outdoor protected area for the next normal trash disposal.
   - *Note:* some states prohibit such trash disposal and require that broken and unbroken lamps be taken to a local recycling center.
   - Wash your hands after disposing of the bag.

4. If a fluorescent bulb breaks on a rug or carpet:
   - First, remove all materials you can without using a vacuum cleaner, following the steps above. Sticky tape (such as duct tape) can be used to pick up small pieces and powder.
   - If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken, remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag or vacuum debris in two sealed plastic bags in the outdoor trash or protected outdoor location for normal disposal.

**What is mercury?**

Mercury is an element (Hg on the periodic table) found naturally in the environment. Mercury emissions in the air can come from both natural and man-made sources. Coal-fired power plants are the largest man-made source because mercury that naturally exists in coal is released into the air when coal is burned to make electricity. Coal-fired power generation accounts for roughly 40 percent of the mercury emissions in the U.S.

EPA is implementing policies to reduce airborne mercury emissions. Under regulations EPA issued in 2005, mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants will drop by nearly 70 percent by 2018.

The use of CFLs reduces power demand, which helps reduce mercury emissions from power plants.

For more information on all sources of mercury, visit http://www.epa.gov/mercury.

For more information about compact fluorescent bulbs, visit http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls

*EPA is continually reviewing its clean-up and disposal recommendations for CFLs to ensure that the Agency presents the most up-to-date information for consumers and businesses.*

**GSA Office of Child Care**

WWW.GSA.GOV/CHILDCARE

National Director
Eileen Stern
212-264-8321

Jacki Fling
303-236-8000 x2264

Magda Marcano
212-264-1268

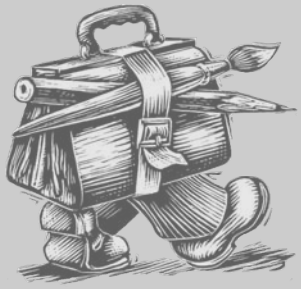
Nancy Norris
404-331-1851

Jill Rhea
215-446-4639

Ania Shapiro
202-208-7656

Liz Themelis
216-522-4963

newsletter
Liz Themelis
elizabeth.themelis@gsa.gov
216-522-4963



Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.

Want to receive this Newsletter electronically? Sign up at www.gsa.gov/childcare