

Congratulations are in order for the following centers:

New Accreditations:

- Memphis Child Development Center, IRS, Memphis, TN
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Reaccreditations:

- A Child's Place, Fort Worth, TX - managed by the YMCA
- Advantage Learning Center, Lakewood, CO
- Joyful Noise East, Portland, OR
- Joyful Noise Downtown, Portland, OR

NAEYC
Accreditation

90%
of GSA Child Care Centers
are Accredited

2009-2010 Influenza Season and H1N1 (Swine) Flu Update

On September 4, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidance entitled, "CDC Guidance on Helping Child Care and Early Childhood Respond to Influenza during the 2009-2010 Influenza Season."



This document provides guidance to help decrease the spread of influenza (flu) among children in early childhood programs and among early childhood providers during the 2009-2010 flu season. It expands upon earlier guidance documents by providing a menu of tools that health officials, Head Start, and other early childhood and child care providers can choose from based on conditions in their area. It recommends actions to take now, during the 2009-2010 flu season; suggests strategies to consider if CDC determines that the flu is becoming more severe; and provides a checklist for decision-making at the local level.

Children less than 5 years of age are at increased risk of complications from influenza (flu); the risk is greater among children less than 2 years old. Importantly, infants less than 6 months of age represent a particularly vulnerable group because they are too young to receive the seasonal or 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. As a result, individuals responsible for caring for these children constitute a high-priority group for early vaccination. Influenza vaccination is the primary means of preventing flu. Additionally, infection control measures are recommended to reduce the spread of flu.

Early childhood settings present unique challenges for infection control due to the highly vulnerable population, close interpersonal contact, shared toys and other objects, and limited ability of young children to understand or practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene. Thus, parents, early childhood providers, and public health officials should be aware that, even under the best of circumstances, transmission of infectious diseases such as flu cannot be completely prevented in early childhood or other settings. No policy can keep everyone who is potentially infectious out of these settings.

The CDC has provided recommendations, assuming that the severity of illness is similar to what was seen during the spring and summer of 2009, as well as recommendations that could be added if the severity of illness worsens. Influenza is unpredictable, therefore, the CDC will provide periodic updates of these assessments and may recommend additional strategies if they are needed. Also, because conditions may vary from community to community, early childhood providers should also look to their state and local health officials for information and guidance specific to their location.

For a complete version of the new CDC publication and tool kit, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov and www.flu.gov.

More Information

Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged. Want to receive this Newsletter electronically? Sign up at www.gsa.gov/childcare



Center News

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20th Annual GSA Child Care Conference

An enthusiastic crowd of over 425 attendees celebrated a significant milestone with GSA as they participated in the 20th Child Care Training Conference held in Orlando, FL on July 21-23, 2009. "Imagineering Possibilities for 20 Years" was this year's theme, signifying GSA's long-term and on-going commitment with other federal agencies, child care providers, boards of directors and facility managers. This partnership has enabled us to provide quality child care services to more than 8,000 children each year for the past 20 years.



The Child Care Division conducts this training annually to keep both federal and child care center personnel up to date on the latest information in center standards, quality, and design. This year's program was divided into five tracks, one each for directors, teachers, boards, and facility specialists, and a fifth track concentrating on new director/NAEYC topics. Twenty-three varied and unique breakout sessions were offered. Without a doubt, a conference highlight was the inspiring professional development General Session, presented by the Disney Institute, on creating and sustaining a service culture.



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The kick-off event - the presentation of the Cornerstone Awards by Anthony Costa, Acting Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, GSA, - appropriately honored and recognized 19 GSA

employees throughout the country whose consistent commitment to excellence and unwavering support during the past year helped make the child care program even better than it was the year before!



That same evening, Jimmy Bridgeman, Acting Regional Administrator of the Southeast Sunbelt Region, and Jim Weller, Acting Regional Commissioner for PBS, welcomed the lively group of participants to the Region. Acting Assistant Commissioner Lawrence Melton, Facilities Management and Services Programs, spoke of our government's ongoing commitment to providing high quality care to federal families and the communities we serve. He also recognized those employees who have worked in our child care centers for 20 years or longer, as well as centers that have been operational for the past 20 years.



Twenty-five GSA managed child care centers were recognized at the accreditation luncheon for achieving accreditation or re-accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Alison Pepper, Senior Director, NAEYC Accreditation Support Program Department, spoke eloquently on the importance of achieving NAEYC accreditation and reaching that higher standard. Another milestone was announced eliciting thunderous applause: ninety percent of all eligible GSA child care centers are now accredited!



BOARD'S BUSINESS
by Jill Rhea

Annual GSA Child Care Conference!
It was wonderful to see so many of you in July at the 20th Annual GSA Child Care Conference! I know everyone who was able to attend had a marvelous experience.

One of the highlights of the board track was John Elbare, MBS, CFP of Florida Philanthropic Advisors, who shared a session on building a great Board of Directors. The session provided an overview of the characteristics and behaviors of a "great" board. For those not able to attend, here is a review of what a great board looks like:

- Strong, committed leadership
- Focused on Mission & Vision
- Delegates management responsibility to the CEO
- Accepts responsibility for securing resources
- Safeguards the assets
- Loyal to the organization and its mission
- Renews itself
- Connects the organization with the community
- Members give and help raise funds

Other sessions targeted to the boards during the conference included fundraising, developing a strategic plan, retaining and recruiting board members and stress management. More information about the conference and these sessions can be found on the GSA childcare website. Plan to attend next year's conference for training that will provide your board the tools it needs to become a "great" board! \$



BOTTLED WATER - BE AWARE
Over the past decade, per capita consumption of bottled water in the United States has more than doubled. With this increase have come several concerns in recent years about the safety, quality, and environmental impacts of bottled water. In June 2009, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) published the results of a study which was undertaken to evaluate the extent to which the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other federal and state authorities regulate the quality, safety, and purity of bottled water.

What the GAO found is that FDA safety and consumer protections for bottled water are often less stringent than comparable Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) protections for tap water. Specifically, in 1996, the FDA deferred taking any action on DEHP (an organic compound used in the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride plastics) and has yet to either adopt a standard or publish a reason for not doing so. As mentioned in the Spring 2009 newsletter, research has increasingly shown that this toxic ingredient mimics hormones and can disrupt normal development and growth. Additionally, FDA does not have the specific statutory authority to require bottlers to use certified laboratories for water quality tests or to report test results, even if violations of the standards are found. Despite these shortcomings, a GAO survey of cognizant officials in 50 states found that consumers often believe that bottled water is safer or healthier than tap water.

Congratulations to the following centers which have received Eco-Healthy endorsement this quarter:

- Lutheran General Children's Services, Des Plaines, IL
- CCC Learning Center, Metcalfe, Chicago, IL
- Gold Creek Child Care Center, Juneau, AK

Among the environmental impacts of bottled water are the effects on U.S. municipal landfill capacity and U.S. energy demands. GAO found that about three-quarters of the water bottles produced in 2006 were discarded not recycled. Regarding the impact and on U.S. energy demands, the production and consumption of bottled water is much more energy-intensive than the production of public drinking water.

Celebrating the End of Summer
Newark Federal Kids Care ended the summer with a delicious barbecue out in the playground. The children and staff enjoyed a beautiful day outdoors, and many family members stopped by to join in the festivities. Some of the favorite treats of the day included hamburgers, watermelon, and snow cones. Newark Federal Kids would like to send this message out to their Federal Protective Service Officers: "THANK YOU for sponsoring the wonderful barbecue and donating your time to cook for us!"



Did you know?

Presentations and handouts from the 20th Annual Child Care Training Conference are currently available for download on the Child Care Website. Go to: <http://www.gsa.gov/childcare>

More Information

Eco-Healthy Child Care is a national program created by the Oregon Environmental Council to ensure that child care settings are as healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxins. GSA is proud to partner with the Oregon Environmental Council in support of child care centers going green. If you want to know more on the EHCC Program, contact your Regional Child Care Coordinator or visit www.oeconline.org/our-work/kidshealth/ehc