



Midwest

Minnesota

Child Care

Resource & Referral Network

- Prairie 5 • Child Care Choices
- Heartland Community Action
- Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council

Quality Care and Education for Every Child

March-June 2011

Midwest Memo

Parent-Provider Partnerships: a Kids-Win Situation!

Children benefit most when parents and providers work together to plan and provide care. In a partnership, child care providers bring their knowledge of children's educational and developmental needs and parents bring the knowledge of their children's strengths, needs, and interests. Together, parents and providers develop goals that are best for each child within the child care setting.

Benefits of a Partnership

When the parent-provider relationship is working at its best, there are many ways to add to the overall development of children and to provide family-centered services. A successful parent-provider partnership is good for everyone.

- Children have support in their daily activities.
- Parents benefit when providers and staff understand and respond to their children's needs, and provide information and resources that help them.
- Providers benefit by having the much needed input,

support, and involvement of parents for their program.

What Providers Can Do

In both a center and a family child care home setting, child care providers play a big role in creating partnerships with parents. Parents need to be a key part of the child care program and providers can help make this happen.

To foster a partnership with parents providers can:

- Learn as much as possible about the children in their program and get to know their families as well. Learn about family rituals and routines and how they interact with one another.
- Encourage open communication with parents. Be a good listener and avoid making judgments.
- Be sensitive to cultural and family differences. Reflect cultural diversity in the program with a variety of materials, toys, books, and activities.
- Encourage and find ways to include parents in program activities and program

decisions. Invite them to participate in classroom activities. Ask their opinions about program improvements.

Host a family cookout in the warmer months or a "families cookin" in the more chilled ones! Have the children's families bring a dish to share with everyone.

Encourage other adults who are important in the children's lives to come as well, such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, and so on.

Make sure each child has a special area in your program and invite families to come and decorate that area with artwork, pictures, drawings, or other items that are reflective of that child's family and home life.

Create and give out a newsletter to families on a regular basis letting them know about upcoming events at the program, resources in the community, and news and trainings that involve program staff.

Article Content provided by Child Care Aware®, a program of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

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Taking Care of Business

Tom Copeland (writer, trainer, advocate on the business of family child care) has recently established a new blog called Tom Copeland's Taking Care of Business. In it, Tom writes regular articles about business issues (marketing, financial goals, record keeping), posts tax updates, and links to other resources. Go to www.tomcopelandblog.com to check it out! You can also subscribe to receive email updates when a new blog has been posted.

Army Respite Child Care Services

Providing Child Care for Minnesota's Army Families

We are recruiting child care providers for two programs to assist our state's Army Families.

Here's how you can help our service members

- Donate child care services on a short-term basis (two to four hours).
- Offer child care services to families, for compensation, one to two days a month as needed. These child care providers will be compensated by the U.S. Army Child, Youth & School Services through the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.
- Offer child care services at military family support events.
- Offer full-time care services to families for compensation.

For questions on these programs, or to sign up call 1-866-511-2244

Region 6E (Serving Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties)

Just Read!

Go to your local Library and ask the Children's Librarian for help in choosing good books to use in your program.

A family child care provider told me that she adds library books to expand the topic they are working on (for example, leaves in the fall). She is continually adding variety to their week.

Change it up!

Words are Everywhere!

Besides books, you can use print materials from everyday things in your house. Point out the first letter. Ask: How does it sound? What else starts with that letter?

Another child care provider told me about setting up writing stations (for example, she put scratch paper near the play phone, so the children could take messages).

Families Can Partner With You

If you have lots of books, maybe parents can borrow one to use at home. Let families know about your local Library Programs or ECFE classes they can take their children to.

For example, if you live in Willmar, tell them about the new program at the Willmar Public Library called "**1,000 Books Before Kindergarten.**"

Region 6W (Serving Big Stone, Chippewa, La Qui Parle, Swift, and Yellow Medicine Counties)

As a child care provider, you are very aware of the importance of maintaining a quality environment for the children in your care. Yet, what does a quality environment necessarily look like? The following will provide you with a few things to look at when considering the quality of your indoor care environment.

Is there enough space in your home for...

- the children's care needs and routines
- basic furniture
- the children's play and materials

Does the space allow for...

- adequate lighting – to allow for some direct natural lighting
- ventilation – can windows be opened, is there a ventilation fan in the bathroom
- room temperature control — where the room temp can be adjusted to keep it comfortable for you and the children
- sound absorbing materials such as ceiling tiles, carpets and soft furnishings -- a reasonable level of sound permits children and adults to hear and be heard without constantly raising their voices

Is the space (and its furnishings)...

- generally in good repair with no major problems that endanger children or compromise their care?
- reasonably clean and well-maintained — that is, are floors vacuumed and mopped on a daily basis, are big messes such as food on floor cleaned up promptly?

For more information on quality environments and what they look like, please contact Deb Spaeth at 320.269.8727 or 800.292.5437 or via email at debsp5@willmarnet.com.

Region 7W (Serving Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties)

Caring for a Lifetime

Annual Child Care Conference
Saturday March 26, 2011
Sauk Rapids/Rice Middle School
Keynote Speaker: Jason & Kim Kotecki
Also featuring: Nichole Polifka
MN Children's Museum
Early bird registration deadline:
March 17th for only \$55

Energize! A Child Care Center Director's Conference & Retreat

April 13-14, 2011
Grand Casino Mille Lacs
Keynote: "Motivate You" Felicia Ragland
Registration deadline: April 6, 2011
Registration fee: \$79

Log on to register for either conference at:
www.childcarechoices.net

Lending Library

Summer is right around the corner. check out our [lending library](#) of equipment at reasonable prices. Items include high chairs, portable cribs, toys, theme boxes, and tandem strollers or wagons that are great for walks!

To check out any items or for questions, call Corinne at:
320-251-5081 or 800-288-8549 ext. 20

Region 8 (Serving Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock Counties)

Thanks to the hard work of CCRR staff, our Resource Lending Library has recently been organized and updated! New catalogs are available that include our recently purchased DVD's. If there is a topic you would like more information about, chances are we have it!

We have also updated our lending library check out form and have begun to issue postcards to remind folks that their items are due to return. We want to ensure that the materials are available to everyone.

If you need an item or have something to return, give us a call !



SWCCRR Resource Lending Library

Proudly serving all communities in Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock counties.

Week of the Young Child & Provider Appreciation Day

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff in the Midwest District want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication you show to the young children and their families in your care.

Each spring brings organized times for us to say **THANK YOU** to those who work to make the lives of young children positive learning and growing years.

Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is an annual celebration to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. This year WOYC will be celebrated from **April 10-16**. The

theme of (WOYC) is "Early Years Are Learning Years". During this week many programs provide special activities such as inviting parents or grandparents to special events or meals. For more information and ideas on ways to celebrate go to www.naeyc.org/woyc.

May 9th, marks **Provider Appreciation Day**. As a child care professional, you are the world's unsung hero. Your profession is one of the most underpaid occupations in the country; yet research shows that early childhood is the most critical developmental period in a child's life. It takes a special person to work in this field and the contributions you make to the quality of children's and families' lives too frequently goes unnoticed.

Provider Appreciation Day offers an unique opportunity for us to recognize and commend the unselfish dedication, commitment, and compassion that child care providers like you demonstrate every day.

From all of us to all of you

THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO—YOU ARE APPRECIATED!!!!

FROM:

*Becky Beth Carol Corinne
Crystal Deb Diane Jessica
Karen Karen Lori Marcia
Marge Mary RaLonda Teresa
Tina*

Summer Is On Its Way - Are You Ready?

As you look out your window you are probably wondering if Spring will ever come - let alone Summer. But believe it or not, even with all the snow, it won't be long before you can go outside with the children without all the hassle of boots, snow pants, hats, etc.

Outdoor play is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment; it also provides many health benefits. Generally, infectious disease organisms are less concentrated in outdoor air than indoor air. Light exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of Vitamin D that growing children require. Open spaces encourage children to develop gross motor skills and fine motor play in ways that are difficult to duplicate indoors.

However, summer brings its own set of concerns for outdoor play - sun, heat, playground hazards - to name a few. Read on for some tips on how to take advantage of all the nice weather has to offer while still providing a safe place for children.

Sun - Exposure to sun is needed, but children must be protected from excessive exposure. It is estimated that 80% of a person's lifetime sun damage occurs before the age of 18 years. Individuals who suffered severe childhood sunburns

are at increased risk for skin cancer. It can take less than 10 minutes for a child's skin to burn. Practicing sun-safe behavior during childhood is the first step in reducing the chances of getting skin cancer later in life.

Children should be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protections of SPF-15 or higher. **With parental consent**, children should have sunscreen applied to exposed skin, expect eyelids, 30 minutes before exposure to the sun and every 2 hours while in the sun. Remember, when applying sunscreen you should wash your hands after application to each child.

Children should wear sun-protective clothing, such as hats, long-sleeved shirts and pants, when playing outdoors between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM.

Heat & Humidity - Caregivers must protect children from adverse weather and air quality. Heat and humidity that pose a significant risk of heat-related illness are defined by the National Weather Service and are announced routinely.

Children have greater surface area-to-body mass ratio than adults. Therefore, children do not adapt to extremes of temperature as effectively as adults when exposed to a high climatic heat stress.

Children produce more metabolic heat per mass unit than adults when walking or running. They also have a lower sweating capacity and cannot dissipate body heat by evaporation as effectively.

Before prolonged activity in warm weather, children must be well-hydrated and encouraged to drink water during the activity. In warm weather, children's clothing should be light-colored, lightweight, and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate the evaporation of sweat.

Check out this [chart](#) for information on when it is safe for children to be outside.

Playground Hazards - While it is always important to do a daily safety check of your playground before children use it, it is especially important to do so during the warmer months as you tend to spend more time outside. This check should include thinking about insect breeding hazards (standing water in toys, equipment, low lying areas of your playground) and use of wading pools or other water play.

[Click here](#) for information regarding MN Licensing Regulations regarding use of wading and other pools in child care.

For more information on general playground safety [click here](#).



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Region 6E



Region 6W



Region 7W

•Child Care Choices•

Region 8

Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council



Imagination Library

A wonderful resource may be available to your children and the children in your care. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a foundation established by Dolly Parton that makes books available to children. By registering (and having the children in your care register) your child will receive a quality book in the mail each month until their fifth birthday!

You know the importance of reading with your children. Through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, you will have the opportunity to increase your child's access to quality reading materials!

Imagination Library is sponsored in many communities by local Early Childhood Initiatives or other agencies. Find the sponsor in your area by visiting the website www.imaginationlibrary.com

Share the information with the parents in your care! What a fabulous way to get children excited about reading!

