

Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC Accreditation, 86% are now accredited.

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent reaccreditations:

- Zorinsky Child Care Center, Omaha, NE
- Just Us Kids, St. Louis, MO
- Future Stars, Austin, TX *** - 5th reaccreditation
- Castle Kids, New Orleans, LA
- US Kids, Washington, DC



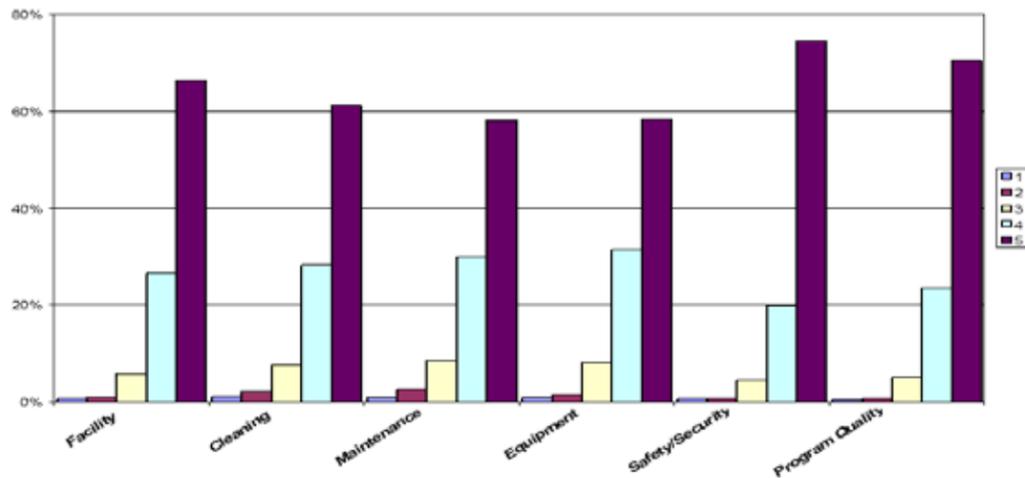
Emergency Relocation Drill

Corporate Kids Child Development Center, in the Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO, recently practiced their emergency evacuation procedures. The staff, evacuation team volunteers, and DHS officers and guards were focused, but made the walk fun, for all 90 children as they accomplished a smooth and secure practice. The center staff regularly hold drills to evacuate to their primary, closer location. However, at least once a year they practice evacuating to a designated location approximately a mile out of the downtown area.



2008 Parent Survey

The national results of the recent parent survey continue to indicate a high level of satisfaction from parents using GSA centers. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being very satisfied, 94% of parents rated the quality of their program either a 4 or 5. Center safety and security was rated the highest satisfaction level at 94.5%. In addition 91% of parents stated that having access to the center allowed them to be more productive and focus on their work.



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Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.

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Center News

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Jamaica Annual Harvest Parade Celebrates "The Many Faces of Fall"

The staff at Imagine@Jamaica Kids Early Learning Center, New York embarked on a project that united the entire center. As a group they decided that each classroom would take on a "Face of Fall", something that is at its best during this season, centering on harvest and healthy foods. The Pre-K room chose apples, the Twos- corn, the Toddlers- leaves, the Wobblers- pumpkins and last but not least, the Infants- squash. Once this decision was made, the staff incorporated in the lesson plans several activities that celebrate the season. The entire hallway of the center was transformed into a "Harvest Patch". The center took a trip to a pumpkin farm and to bring it all together ended the celebration on October 31st with their Annual Harvest Parade. The children made their own costumes based on their chosen "Face of Fall". Needless to say staff and children had a great time working, playing and learning together.



Fall Festival

Fairy princesses, lions, tigers, and bears took over the Columbia Federal Child Development Center (CFCDC), located in South Carolina's Strom Thurmond Federal Building, during the annual Fall Festival on October 29th. The event kicked off with a magic show followed by crafts, games, food and lots of family fun. The gathering encourages CFDC families to get to know each other, and offers parents and their kids the chance to enjoy each other's company without the hustle and bustle of a busy routine morning. The Center's Board of Directors Chair, Kellee Melton, said, "The kids love dressing up in their Halloween costumes and decorating mini-pumpkins, but this year it was a fairy princess who stole the show!" Sarah Dippity's comical magic show entertained kids and parents alike, and was a big hit.



Boards' Business

By Jill Rhea

As the New Year approaches many boards will be looking for new members. Here are some tips for successful Board recruitment:

- Have a real job description - not just a list of responsibilities.
- Maintain a current, strategic profile of what you have and what you need in board members and maintain the board recruitment process all year long.
- Share as much information as possible and honestly during the recruitment process.
- Conduct real interviews with each candidate; not just tours or social presentations.
- Don't go begging - make it a selective competitive process to be invited to your board so that service is seen as an honor and a privilege.
- Check references.
- Make it clear to the candidate why you want him or her -- what is it about this person that you value and want and need on your board.
- Do not hesitate to say no, thank you, if you determine this person isn't right for your board right now; you could have committees on which that person can serve instead.
- Let a candidate know up front the expected time commitment.
- Don't make your organization look better - or worse - than it is, give an accurate picture of the organization, any problems you are having, what is on the horizon. In other words, share the strategic plan with the candidates.

Preventing the Flu in Child Care Settings

The National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP), Families Fighting Flu and the Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (CIIC) have launched their nationwide flu awareness campaign, "Fighting Flu in Child Care Settings: Building Blocks to Increase Influenza Awareness."

Educational materials are available for download at www.PreventChildhoodInfluenza.org, www.familiesfightingflu.org and www.naccp.org.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 20th ANNUAL GSA CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

Hold July 21-23, 2009 for the 20th annual GSA Child Care Training Conference at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel, Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

The Buena Vista Palace Hotel is located in the *Walt Disney World Resort* directly across from the Downtown Disney Area. Rates at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel are \$109 plus \$7.50 (resort fee), plus tax, per night single/double occupancy, children under 18 free. For more information about the hotel check out their website at: buenavistapalace.com.

Baby Bottles

Concerns are on the rise about the chemical bisphenol A, or BPA. It's used to make a variety of food containers, including some plastic baby bottles. The federal government has issued a draft report on BPA's health risks for infants and children. And Canada recently moved to ban BPA in baby bottles. Consumer Reports has just run tests to find the best options for parents.

Consumer Reports' medical adviser, Dr. Orly Avitzur, says newer studies suggest health risks for children from BPA. Based on the latest laboratory research, the National Institutes of Health has discovered that BPA exposure during development may affect the brain and the reproductive system (through its ability to mimic activity of the hormone estrogen), and may cause other health problems.

Bisphenol A is found in many kinds of containers, including baby bottles made of polycarbonate. Polycarbonate is a hard, translucent plastic that can be clear or colored. Containers made of polycarbonate may have the recycling code #7 on the bottom, and sometimes the letters "PC."

Some stores and Web sites now sell plastic baby bottles labeled "without BPA," or "Bisphenol-A Free." Consumer Reports used an outside lab that specializes in plastic analysis to test several of these bottles, and found that BPA levels in them were negligible. Another option for parents concerned about BPA is to use glass baby bottles. But you have to handle these with care, of course, because they may break.

Eco-Healthy Child Care

Eco-Healthy Tip: Art Supplies

Some art and craft supplies contain toxic ingredients. Below are some tips for choosing and using art and craft supplies:

- Use only non-toxic art supplies approved by the Art & Creative Materials Institute, Inc. (AMCI).
- Read labels and identify precautions.
- Keep the workspace well ventilated by opening windows and using fans, or work outside.
- Do not allow children to eat or drink while using art and craft materials.
- Ensure children wash their hands thoroughly after using art and craft supplies.

Non-toxic Art Supplies Resources on the Internet

- Art & Creative Materials Institute: www.acminet.org
- Teacher's classroom checklist: www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/pdfs/kit/checklists/teacherchk1stbkgd.pdf
- Guidelines for the safe use of art and craft materials: www.oehha.ca.gov/education/art/artguide.html
- Games, Arts, and Crafts: www.checnet.org/healthhouse/education/articles-detail.asp?Main_ID=137

For more information on the Eco-Healthy Child Care program please contact your GSA Regional Child Care Coordinator or visit <http://www.oconline.org/our-work/kidshealth/ehcc>

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

Eco-Healthy Endorsed Centers	
Treasure House, IRS CCC	Covington, KY
Summit CCC	Atlanta, GA
IRS Child Development (Children's Choice)	Memphis, TN
CCC Learning Custom House	Chicago, IL
Bannister Complex	Kansas City, MO
Customs House CCC	Denver
NSFFB- Kids By The Bay	San Francisco, CA
Green Tree	Seattle, WA
Children's House (HUD)	Washington DC
Executive CDC (NIH)	Rockville, MD
NSF CDC	Arlington, VA
IRS CDC, New Carrollton	Lanham/Seabrook MD
Fed Children's Ctr of N. VA	Herndon, VA
Courtyard Kids	Islip, NY
Federal Kids	Newark, NJ
Clever Kids	Denver, CO
FTC Child Care Center	Washington, DC
USDA Child Development Center	Washington, DC
Mary Switzer NCR	Washington, DC
Sheila Watkins CDC (DOE)	Germantown, MD
Sunny Days	Riverdale, VA



Become an Eco-Healthy provider.



For healthier children and a happier earth.