

# CHILD CARE

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## THE NEED

The way we care for our children is changing. One clear indication is the increasing number of families using supplemental child care arrangements.

The traditional family of two parents with one in the work force and the other at home raising the children now accounts for approximately only 10 percent of families in the United States. A decade or two ago, if parents needed care for their children during the day, a relative would step in. Today more than half of all preschool children are cared for outside their home while parents work. Of these children, more than one quarter come from single-parent families.

The number of infants in child care also has increased, as mothers employed outside the home return to work sooner—no matter whether they are single parents or part of a two-income family. Typically, a brief maternity leave is not a matter of choice, but a result of limited family-leave policies.

The first five years of life are the most important time for learning and developing skills. With the number of children of these ages in child care growing steadily, it is tremendously important that high quality care be available. Experts say that better child care now will reduce the need for juvenile detention centers,

alcohol and drug treatment, and other remediation a generation into the future.

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## EVALUATING CHILD-CARE NEEDS

### Finding Partners

An effective survey of local child care needs cannot be developed by club members alone. To determine whether the community needs additional child care, better quality child care, or both, the club should rely on expert advice and assistance.

First and foremost, identify expertise among early childhood educators, social service agencies, and other organizations that serve families with young children. Local chapters or affiliates of many organizations on the Kiwanis International Priority One Advisory Council can provide this expertise. Seek out local members of:

- ☐ National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- ☐ National Association for the Education of Young Children
- ☐ National Association for Family Child Care
- ☐ National Council of Jewish Women

- ☐ YMCA of the USA

Other organizations have limited local networks but offer excellent printed resources, including the Families and Work Institute, Committee for Economic Development, and the Child Care Action Campaign. Addresses for all of these organizations are at the back of the bulletin.

Create a coalition or partnership with those individuals or groups that can:

- ☐ develop the actual survey questions;
- ☐ administer the survey to people who will have useful information to share;
- ☐ analyze the results;
- ☐ utilize the information to generate public and private support for what is determined as community needs.

An ideal collaboration at the outset will produce information that is useful to all partners.

As this process moves forward, the coalition will consult with the supporters and beneficiaries of child care. Allow this process to draw interested representatives into the coalition so it connects with business, the chamber of commerce, churches and synagogues, government agencies, parent groups, community organizations and other service clubs.

## Developing the Survey

The survey of needs process may be as simple as assembling information of partnership members in a usable format.

If a survey must be developed, the partners can work together to provide or support the expertise needed to design the form, collect the data, analyze information collected and determine appropriate ways to disseminate the results.

Information requested in the survey should help to define both the quantity and quality of child care available.

## Topics the survey might include:

### *Information about available child care:*

- ☐ Number of children enrolled in various types of child care.
- ☐ Number of regulated programs and family providers and number of children they can serve.
- ☐ Number of families identified as unsuccessful in finding child care. Pay special attention to locations, ages of children, and types of care needed.
- ☐ Number of programs providing care for children with special needs; number of programs providing care for mildly ill children.

### *Information about programs:*

- ☐ Number of children enrolled
- ☐ Group sized and adult-child ratios
- ☐ Staff qualifications
- ☐ Costs

- ☐ Hours of operation
- ☐ Services provided

### *Information about child care providers:*

- ☐ Level of training
- ☐ Tenure in child care
- ☐ Salary and benefits received
- ☐ Involvement in continuing education

### *Information about parent needs:*

- ☐ Type and quality of care needed
- ☐ Special family needs/supports
- ☐ Hours when care is needed
- ☐ Location desired

### *Information related to business in the community:*

- ☐ Effect of child care concerns on employee productivity and absenteeism
- ☐ Child care benefits available to employees
- ☐ Ways in which business supports the expansion of quality child care in the community

It is often helpful to determine what related information might help partners to increase quality services to meet needs of children and families in the community. Once the data has been collected, the group can determine the format for disseminating and best utilizing the results (a joint report; press release; copies of results should be with all partners). Most importantly, the partnership will have a common information base of unmet community child care needs that can be used to inform

the public, parents, community, businesses, and organizations that might work with the partnership in supporting and implementing ways to meet their needs.

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## RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

If there isn't already a child-care resource and referral agency (R & R) in the community, the partnership could consider working to establish one. An R & R is a social service agency (or a department in a multi-service agency) that supports the child care system in a community. At a minimum, it will:

1. Maintain a resource file of all child care services in the community.
2. Educate the public about the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services.
3. Refer parents to available resources, respecting confidentiality of families and providers.
4. Provide information and support to current and prospective providers.
5. Encourage development of a sufficient quantity of high-quality child care programs of various styles and philosophies to meet community needs.

Thus, a child-care resource and referral agency might well conduct the kind of needs survey described above and could use it as the basis for developing more child care services in the community. By establishing an R & R, the partnership would create a

permanent entity that would work specifically on child care needs.

A partnership interested in developing an R & R should seek information from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (address on back page).

The challenges are great. Setting up an R & R—or placing it within an existing agency—would require establishing a board, creating the system to oversee and operate the agency, finding start-up funding, and hiring staff. The reward would be an ongoing system to improve child care in the community and provide services to families and providers.

If there is an R & R established in the community, it will be a member of the partnership as it develops strategies to increase the supply and quality of child care in the community. The partnership might well decide that the best way to address long-term challenges would be through increased support of the R & R. However, the partnership would continue its efforts—working with the R & R—to address immediate need.

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## **INCREASING QUANTITY**

If the demand for child care exceeds the resources in the community, the partnership could support efforts to recruit and train family child care providers, expand the capacity and quality of existing centers, and/or create new centers.

### **Family Care Providers**

To address the need for additional child-care providers, some communities have created recruitment and training programs for people interested in providing child care in their homes.

Typically, family-care providers are women who have young children of their own and want to stay home with them. Some have had difficulty finding quality care for their young children.

The training programs may be a few weeks to a full semester in length and may be provided through a university, vocational school, community college, or local child-care resource and referral agency. The training might include the elements of running a small business, planning developmentally appropriate activities, safety, health, and nutrition considerations in the home environment—quite a lot to learn. This is why continuing education and support should be offered to family-care providers. For information on training and preparation of family child care providers, contact the National Association for Family Child Care and/or the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition (see back page).

Each family-care provider will need to prepare her home to accommodate the children safely, develop operating policies, acquire supplies and equipment, apply for a license, and create a billing and bookkeeping system. As with any other small business, these start-up costs may require a loan. The size of the loan can range from a few hundred dollars to perhaps \$2,000.

The partnership could encourage development of family child-care providers by providing support or incentives to providers through the set-up process. This could take a variety of forms:

- ☐ Underwriting costs of training (scholarships).
- ☐ Tuition reimbursement on completion of the training program.

- ☐ A grant for set-up costs on completion of training.
- ☐ A low-interest loan program available only after training.
- ☐ A business adviser program that connects providers with experienced business people for advice or in-kind services.

For information on community programs that resulted in additional family-care providers, contact the Child Care Action Campaign (see back page).

Depending on the ages and special needs of the children, state or local laws, and the space available in the home, a family-care provider may be licensed to care for two to six children. A large number of new family caregivers may be needed to fully address local needs, as not all of them will continue to provide child care after their own children reach school age. However, studies indicate family providers are twice as likely to continue working in the field as employees at child care centers.

There are several advantages to promoting family child care. Family providers are generally convenient to the families they serve, may share a similar background and outlook about child care, and offer the warmth and constancy of a neighbor's home. With many family caregivers in the community, a parent looking for particular hours or other special needs is more likely to find an appropriate caregiver. Family child care also provides employment to women who otherwise might not be able to work.

### **New Child Care Centers**

Setting up a new child care center provides care for many

more children in one step. However, it's a very big step that requires a facility, equipment, and a trained, professional staff. Finding a sponsor that can offer space and administrative support for the new center can reduce the challenge. For a sponsor to make this kind of commitment, it must see the child care center as a logical part of its mission. In most communities, the list of possible sponsors is short: religious organizations, social service agencies, and businesses.

A sponsor is not expected to absorb all the costs of a child-care program. The sponsor is asked to provide space and to integrate the program's employees into the salary and benefit system of the sponsor. The objective should always be to create a program that pays for itself (salaries, equipment, insurance) beyond the established subsidy of free—or low cost—space.

Both the National Association for the Education of Young Children and High/Scope have materials on design and set-up of a child care center (addresses on back page).

### **Religious Institutions**

One of the largest sponsors of child care programs in the United States is the religious community. Churches and synagogues often have space available during the work week, and some congregations see child care as a mission of the church—providing assistance to families in the community, drawing families to the church, and possibly starting the religious education of the children. In other cases, the congregation simply feels it is appropriate to allow another organization to establish a child care program in its building.

The partnership could approach several churches in appropriate locations and explore which might have the interest in supporting a child care program. In addition to using materials from the organizations mentioned above, the partnership should contact the Ecumenical Child Care Network (ECCN) if it is working with a church. The ECCN self-study guide, "Congregations and Child Care," would help the congregation understand its role in supporting the program.

### **Social Service Agencies**

A variety of organizations — from the YMCA to community multi-service centers—sponsor or house child care programs. If, through its research, the partnership has discovered a need for child care and the agency has space available, it probably will be easy to reach an agreement. However, there may be less flexibility in terms of integrating child-care staff into the personnel and operating systems of the agency. Accounting procedures may be more involved since agency funding often comes from grants and contracts.

### **Businesses**

Businesses may support on-site child care if the partnership can show that it will help the company. Materials from the Child Care Action Campaign will show that workers are more productive and loyal to the company, absenteeism is lower, and productivity is higher. The research challenge for the partnership is to show how many employees use child care and would prefer an on-site program.

An alternative approach is to ask companies to provide start-up grants or a financial subsidy for a child care center that is nearby.

The company's workers might pay lower fees and have a number of enrollments reserved for their children.

Smaller companies can band together to support a child-care center in a similar way.

Other possible forms of support from businesses include payment of child care subsidies to parents (as long as the child is in an approved program), a dependent-care assistance plan (which pays for child care out of pre-tax earnings), and flexible benefit plans.

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## **INCREASING QUALITY**

Kiwanians are often surprised to discover that many of the families using child care are not happy with the quality of care provided. Families may not have alternative sources for care, or they may not be able to afford them. The partnership will probably learn that many families have concerns about the quality of care. It may need to work to improve quality system-wide, addressing the knowledge and skills of care providers throughout the community. It also may choose to support individual programs making a commitment to quality through accreditation, such as that offered through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### **Training**

Many workers in childcare centers have little or no training. The director for the center or lead teacher usually has an academic background in early childhood and helps other caregivers learn on the job.

These caregivers may view

their jobs as a worker at a fast-food restaurant does—simply another low-paying, nonskilled position. However, a good child-care worker understands that children learn by doing, through interaction with appropriate challenges at each new level of development. She provides a rich, rewarding, and safe environment. And, she displays patience, warmth, and understanding. Whether or not a child-care worker does her job well, she affects the children--and they are far more important than the hamburgers at McDonald's.

The partnership can sponsor training programs offered by universities, community colleges, or vocational schools by providing in-kind services and/or underwriting the costs of materials. The challenge will be to get care providers into the classroom. The partnership could offer scholarships, car-pooling or ride programs; support costs of substitute staff or child care to allow participation in training; or provide recognition to staff who completes several courses.

An alternate system would be to conduct classes at the childcare centers so that attending the training is convenient and the environment more familiar. These training sessions could be less academic, and the presenter on a given subject could make a series of presentations at centers across the community.

A third approach would be to sponsor one or two presentations a year and promote attendance to child care workers and parents.

### **Licensing**

Less than 10 percent of family-care providers are licensed or registered by a state agency, even though most states have a system of regulation. The partnership could promote licensing in the

community and offer assistance in working with the state agency, or family providers so their homes meet state licensing requirements. While licensure sets rather basic requirements, licensing all the providers in the community would raise the general level of quality.

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation of a child-care program involves a self-assessment and a review by a trained observer. It challenges the provider to improve care and meet more optimal standards of quality. Accreditation is available for childcare centers through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The National Association for Family Child Care provides an accreditation program for family providers.

The accreditation process requires both considerable work by the staff or provider and payment of a fee. The partnership could encourage accreditation by paying the fees and providing recognition. Recognition could take the form of a press release, a brochure that lists all accredited programs and providers, or presentation of a congratulatory certificate at a Kiwanis meeting.

The Ecumenical Child Care Network (ECCN) offers a self-study program for churches and synagogues. It is designed to be completed in conjunction with the NAEYC accreditation program for child care centers. While the NAEYC accreditation program focuses on the quality of child care offered to children, the ECCN program focuses on the relationship between the congregation and the child care center.

### **Higher Wages**

In most areas, workers at a

child-care center earn little more than minimum wage. Most home-care providers generally earn even less. As a result, better paying jobs draw many capable workers out of the child-care field. Three out of five home providers and one out of three center-based workers find new jobs each year.

Better pay would keep more capable workers in child care, thus improving the quality of care. However, passing these costs directly to families, in many cases, would make it impossible for them to continue in the program. Higher wages for child care workers must be linked to subsidies for qualifying families and implemented throughout the community in a coordinated manner.

### **Volunteers**

Kiwanis clubs, Circle K clubs, and other volunteer organizations in the partnership can provide support to child care programs in a variety of ways:

***Working with Kids***—Volunteers can provide additional adult interaction, either once a week or on a daily basis. The volunteers can be trained to handle specific tasks or assist another worker to interact with a smaller group of children or address other needs of the center.

***RIF***—Reading is Fundamental program involves purchasing books at a discount, reading them to children, and letting the children keep their favorite books. The program requires three book give-aways a year and can be done in any child care center in which the club feels it would benefit the children. To learn more about RIF, request service bulletin PO #1.

***Events***—Volunteers can organize special events for the children.

They can sponsor special presentations, such as an astronomer or a person with pet snakes. They can facilitate a picnic, a field day, a holiday party, a puppet show, or present-making session. Or, they could sponsor and participate in a field trip, such as going to the fire station, a fast food restaurant, or a television station.

**Expertise**—Volunteers can offer a provider or center their professional expertise. Child care, after all, is a business, with business plans, bookkeeping, advertising, billing, correspondence, meetings with clients, and an overburdened director. The help provided in these business areas frees up time for the Director to focus on the needs of children.

**Improvements**—Volunteers can save the child care center money by offering to repair toys, equipment, or the building. They can put on a semi-annual Clean-up Saturday, in which all the major cleaning is done. They might even offer to put in improvements, such as new bookshelves, a loft, or a deck for outdoor play.

### **Equipment and Materials**

The partnership can improve centers by purchasing or arranging donations of equipment and materials. The partnership could focus on perennial concerns, such as playgrounds (see service bulletin PO #18), plumbing, or carpeting. Or, it could ask each center or home provider to identify its one greatest need.

The partnership also could purchase materials that would improve the staff's skills or give the children new learning opportunities. This, too, could involve creation of a wish list of

materials. To make the best use of the materials, they could be circulated or loaned to centers.

### **Resource mobile**

In Dade County, Florida, Kiwanis, Junior League, National Council of Jewish Women, and the county have created a partnership that send two "Resource mobiles" to visit family-care providers in their homes. Each Resource mobile is staffed by an early childhood specialist who helps providers improve child care by modeling appropriate techniques, giving advice, and providing activities and materials. Each year, the Resource mobiles work with 70 providers, developing the competencies defined in the "Family Day Care Rating Scales" by Thelma Harms and Richard Clifford.

The Resource mobile program also delivers a Reading Is Fundamental program, provides family support in southern Dade County, sponsors two workshops a year, provides a newsletter, and has supported providers in developing their own professional organization. For more information, contact the Resource mobile program (address on back page).

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## **AFFORDABILITY**

The dilemma of quality, affordability, and reasonable wages in child care cannot be easily resolved. It is a balancing of competing demands.

A most common solution is to provide some form of "scholarship" or subsidy for families that cannot afford the care they need. The partnership can encourage businesses to support a scholarship fund or allow a program to charge fees on a sliding

scale.

Establishing these programs requires clear standards, appropriate application forms and recordkeeping. Contributing businesses can offer assistance in each phase of support, as well as helping programs make information about financial assistance available to families who need it.

In some cases, it may be possible that business people could suggest ways to reduce operating costs of a child care center. If the director of a center is willing, this approach can be tried. The effect of cost savings program quality will need to be carefully examined.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has developed a book titled *Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs*, which helps to compute the full cost of providing a quality program and includes suggested strategies for informing others about the costs of quality and the importance of a shared commitment to reaching those costs.

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## **EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY**

Any problem is easier to solve when people agree that there really is a problem. The partnership may conclude that the first challenge it faces is educating the community about the need for more or better child care.

The partnership could arrange a press conference to release its findings, seek time on a cable television public access station, or provide materials and contacts to television and newspaper reporters for an entire series of reports. This could be followed by distribution of

fliers, public service announcements, or town meetings. Throughout this process, the message should be that the partnership plans to address these issues, and is seeking support from additional members from the community.

The partnership could connect this public education effort to "The Week of the Young Child," which is celebrated each April sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The partnership also could educate the public by supporting the availability of resources, such as brochures that help families know how to choose quality child care. Excellent short brochures are available from NAEYC, titled "How to Choose a Good Early Childhood Program" (also available in Spanish) and "Finding the Best Care for Your Infant or Toddler."

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## ORGANIZATIONS

Most of the organizations listed below have materials on child care, ranging from research findings and recommendations to training and evaluation materials and public education pieces. Request a catalog from each organization and decide what materials your partnership needs. ResourceMobile and Reading is Fundamental have information related specifically to their programs.

Alliance for Early Childhood Finance  
[www.earlychildhoodfinance.org](http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org)

Association for Childhood Education International  
17904 Georgia Avenue, Suite 215  
Olney, MD 20832  
Phone 800/423-3563  
301/570-2111  
Fax: 301/570-2212  
[www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org)

Canadian Child Care Federation  
201-383 Parkdale Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4R4  
CANADA  
Phone: 613/729-5289  
800/858-1412  
Fax: 613/729-3159  
[www.cccf-fcsge.ca/home-en.html](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/home-en.html)

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs  
331 Cooper St., Ste 707  
Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5  
CANADA  
Phone: 613/237-7667  
Fax: 613/237-8515  
[www.inform.hamilton.ca](http://www.inform.hamilton.ca)

Center for the Child Care Workforce  
555 new Jersey Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone 202/662-8055  
Fax: 202/662-8006  
[www.ccw.org](http://www.ccw.org)

Child Care Action Campaign  
330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212/239-0138  
<http://childcareaction.org>

Child Care Bureau  
US Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration of Children, Youth, and Families  
Switzer Building, Room 2046  
330 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20447  
Phone 202-690-6782  
Fax: 202/690-5600  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/)

Child Care Experts National Network  
9722 Groffs Mill Drive, Suite 102  
Owings Mills, MD 21117  
[www.childcare-experts.org](http://www.childcare-experts.org)

Child Care Partnership Project  
<http://nccic.org/ccpartnerships/>

Child Care Resource and Research Unit:  
Early childhood care and education in Canada  
University of Toronto  
455 Spadina Ave, Ste 305  
Toronto, ON M5S 2G9  
CANADA  
Phone: 416/978-6895  
Fax: 416/971-2139  
[www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org)

Childcare Information Resource And Collection  
University of Toronto  
[www.childcarecanada.org/circ](http://www.childcarecanada.org/circ)

The Children's Defense Fund  
25 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202/628-8787  
[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

Child & Family Canada  
[www.cfc-efc.ca/  
menu/childcare\\_en.htm](http://www.cfc-efc.ca/menu/childcare_en.htm)

The Children's Foundation  
725 Fifteenth St NW  
Suite 505  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202/347-3300  
Fax: 202/347-3382  
[www.childrensfoundation.net](http://www.childrensfoundation.net)

Committee for Economic Development  
2000 L St., SW, Ste 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202/296-5860  
Fax: 202/223-0776  
[www.ced.org](http://www.ced.org)

Council for Early Childhood  
Professional Recognition  
2460 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009-3575  
Phone: 202/265-9090  
800/424-4310  
www.cdacouncil.org

Early Childhood Development  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433  
Phone: 202/473-1000  
Fax: 202/477-6391  
www.worldbank.org/children

Ecumenical Child Care Network  
8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 405  
Chicago, IL 60631  
Phone: 800/694-5443  
773/693-4040  
Fax: 773/693-4042  
www.eccn.org

Families and Work Institute  
267 Fifth Avenue, Floor 2  
New York, NY 10016  
Phone: 212/465-2044  
Fax: 212/465-8637  
www.familiesandwork.org

High/Scope Educational Research  
Foundation  
600 N. River Street  
Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898  
Phone: 734/485-2000  
Fax: 734/485-0704  
www.highscope.org

National Association of Child Care  
Resource and Referral Agencies  
1319 F St. NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004-1106  
Phone: 202/393-5501  
Fax: 202/393-1109  
www.naccrra.net

National Association for the  
Education of Young Children  
1509 16th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202/232-8777  
www.naeyc.org

National Association for Family  
Child Care (NAFCC)  
5202 Pinemont Drive  
Salt Lake City, UT 84123  
Phone 801/269-9338  
Fax: 801/268-9507  
www.nafcc.org

National Black Child Development  
Institute  
1101 15th Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone 202/833-2220  
Fax: 202/833-8222  
www.nbcdi.org

National Center for Early  
Development & Learning  
FPG Child Development Institute  
CB 1885  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599  
www.fpg.unc.edu

National Child Care Information  
Center  
243 Church Street NW, 2nd Floor  
Vienna, VA 22180  
Phone 800/616-2242  
Fax: 800/716-2242  
TTT: 800/516-2242  
www.nccic.org

National Children's Agenda  
www.socialunion.gc.ca/nca\_e.html

National Institute on Early  
Childhood Development and  
Education  
Office of Educational Research  
and Improvement  
US Department of Education  
555 New Jersey Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20208  
Phone 202/219-1935  
Fax: 202/273-4768  
www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI

National Network for Child Care  
Iowa State University  
www.nncc.org

National Resource Center for  
Health and Safety in Child Care  
Campus Mail Stop F541  
P. O. Box 6508  
Aurora, CO 80045-0508  
Phone 800/598-5437  
Fax: 303/724-0960  
http://nrc.uchsc.edu

Reading is Fundamental  
1825 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: 877/743-7323  
Fax: 202/673-1649  
www.rif.org

Resourcemobile  
395 NW First St  
Miami, FL 33128  
Phone: 305/347 671

Southern Early Childhood  
Association  
P. O. Box 55930  
Little Rock, AR 72215-5930  
Phone 800/305-7322  
Fax: 501/227-5297  
www.southernearlychildhood.org

YMCA of the USA  
Public Policy  
1701 K Street NW, Suite 903  
Washington, DC 20006  
Phone 800/932-9622  
www.ymca.net

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Service Programs Department  
Kiwanis International  
3636 Woodview Trace  
Indianapolis, IN 46268-3196 USA  
www.kiwanis.org  
service@kiwanis.org  
(317) 875-8755 Worldwide  
(800) 549-2647 North America  
(317) 879-0204 FAX