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Who are Children First CCR&R? Children First is the Child Care Resource & Referral Agency for eleven counties in southeastern Colorado, which include Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Crowley, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Las Animas, Prowers, Pueblo and Otero.

Children First is a Qualistar Early Learning partner that provides comprehensive services to, families, family child care homes, centers, preschools and school age programs. We also provide quality trainings, workshops, conferences and presentations to families, early care and education professionals and the community.

Children First is located on the campus of Pueblo Community College (PCC) in Pueblo, with a satellite office on the Fremont Campus of PCC in Canon City. We partner with PCC to assist students in accessing college courses to increase the level of quality care provided to children and families in the communities we serve.

Services provided by Children First are:

- * Assist students, staff & community members in accessing high quality care and education for young children.
- * Provide parents/guardians with free child care referrals to licensed child care providers, tailored to meet the needs of the individual family.
- * Work with business leaders and employers to raise the importance of quality child care.
- * Provide mentoring for child care sites interested in improving the level of quality child care.
- * Help military families' access high quality child care and fee assistance.
- * Speak out locally, statewide and nationally for children and their families.



~Leaders vs. Followers~

When leaders make mistakes, they say,
"I was wrong."

When followers make mistakes, they say,
"It wasn't my fault."

A leader goes through a problem;
A follower goes around it and never gets past it.

A leader makes and keeps commitments;
A follower makes and forgets promises.

Leaders listen;
followers just wait until it's their turn to talk.

Leaders feel responsible for more than their
job;

Leaders feel responsible for more than their
job;
Followers say, "I only work here."

~Author unknown

Cindy's Corner

Children First... Is your leader in Early Childhood Information. With the new Family Childcare Rules and Regulations that have been released, we will be collaborating closely with our local Licensing Specialists to assure family child care providers in all eleven counties have access to a training on the new rules and regulations. Watch for email alerts announcing the date, time, and place of the trainings. This rewrite of the Family Childcare Rules & Regulations is the first major rewrite of the rules and regulations in a very long time. The new rules and regulations incorporate health, safety, and quality care for young children being cared for in family child care homes. Quality Child Care is a strong focus in the country, Colorado being one of the leaders.

Children First Complaint Policy: If you have concerns with the services provided to you by the Children First office or would like a copy of the Children First complaint policy, call **Cindy Bernal, program director, at 719-549-3272**. If you have any complaints against a child care provider you can call the Division of Child Care at **1-800-799-5876**.



Keeping Children Healthy

Winter is here and with it comes colds, flu, runny noses, and a host of germs waiting to spread among children and staff. Illnesses may be spread by coughing, sneezing, direct skin-to-skin contact, or touching a contaminated object or surface.

How can you help children stay healthy? First and foremost – children and adults should wash their hands frequently throughout the day. Routine cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces will also significantly reduce the transmission of germs.

But how do you know if you are doing everything you should to maintain a healthy environment? What guidelines should you follow?

First, look for state and local guidelines related to health issues in childcare. State licensing requirements provide basic guidance related to health and safety; these requirements vary among states. State licensing and regulation information as well as links to other resources can be found at the National Resource Center (NRC) website. <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>

The most comprehensive health guidelines are found in Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs: 2nd Edition. This document lists more than 700 health and safety practices in the areas of staffing, program activities, health promotion and protection, nutrition, facilities and equipment, transportation, and infectious diseases. The National Resource Center <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/> has a searchable online version of this document. This resource describes best practice related to issues ranging from exclusion of ill children, to cleaning and sanitizing toys.

A companion document, Stepping Stones, includes a group of 234 Standards from Caring for Our Children that have been determined to have the greatest impact in reducing disease, disability, and death in child care. This document is also available online. Making sure all staff members are familiar with and meeting these requirements can enhance the quality of care for children.

To provide the best quality care for every child, caregivers should have access to reliable consultation on available resources in a variety of fields. This is the role of the childcare health consultant. Child care health consultants should be knowledgeable not only about child health, but also about out-of-home childcare in general, state childcare licensing requirements, and availability of health resources in the community. A national network of child care health consultants began as part of the Healthy Child Care America (HCCA) in 1995. Although federal support for state HCCA initiatives ended in January 2005, many states have leveraged other funding to support ongoing child care health and safety efforts and have identified HCCA representatives to serve as a point person at the state level. Through the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the HCCA Campaign website <http://www.healthychildcare.org/> you can locate child care health consultants or other child health representatives in each state.

Children First Child Care Resource & Referral Agency Highlights Chaffee County!

In December, the Chaffee County Early Childhood Council celebrated its second anniversary. Its thirty-five active members, including school superintendents, parents, child care providers, service agency directors, and health and mental health professionals are building a sustainable early childhood system in the county.

The Council has established county-wide multi-agency health, developmental, and oral health screenings for children birth to five and created *Exploring Best Practices through Assessment and Coaching* a 10-month program providing individual on-site support to licensed home child care providers. At the request of parents, the Council recently completed a brochure addressing dental care, developmental milestones, health, nutrition and social and emotional health covering children birth through age four.

In addition, The Council is conducting an early childhood professional development assessment to be followed by a comprehensive multi-agency professional development plan. A Colorado Trust Health Integration grant is allowing the Council to create and sustain multi-agency approaches that ensure timely developmental screenings, while raising access to and parental awareness of the importance of comprehensive well child exams. Council members tend to

describe it as both a “productive and enjoyable” experience.

The Salida School District has just received a grant to serve 56 families and children in Early Head Start. We will be partnering with many community agencies, and serve families throughout Chaffee County.

The Salida Early Childhood Center is growing and thriving, as we have numerous programs housed in the center: Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Early Childhood Special Needs, Private Pay, Two’s Early Learning, First Impressions infant and toddler care, Youth in Action mentoring program, Nurturing Parenting Program, Mother Reads Literacy Program, and the Early Childhood Council. We are looking at expanding our new building to accommodate the Early Head Start Program. The Buena Vista Avery Parson’s Preschool is also very busy with Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Private Pay, and Special Needs, Nurturing Parenting Program, Turning Two’s and Youth in Action Mentoring.

Colorado Preschool Program has expanded to another site at the Salida Montessori School. The program is fully enrolled and running well at three sites: Montessori, Strawberry Door, and the Salida Early Childhood Center. *Way to go Chaffee County.*

PROVIDER CHRONICLES

Summer
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2010


Children First
Your leader in early childhood information

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Cindy's Corner



One new change that is happening in the state of Colorado, is the Colorado Division of Child Care is rolling out a new system for those providers who contract with local Department of Human Services for reimbursement through CCCAP. The state is moving from a paper reimbursement to an automated process. Beginning in November 2010, all providers that contract with their local Department of Human Services will be required to use the new Point of Service (POS) Device, which allows parents/guardians to swipe a card for billing purposes to the program. The Colorado Department of Human Services has asked Qualistar Early Learning, in partnership with its CCR&R (Children First is your CCR&R agency) network, to coordinate trainings for child care providers on the new CHATS system. Providers who care for CCCAP children will need to use a POS ("Point of Service") terminal for attendance tracking to support provider payment. The training that we've been asked to provide will be around the use of this new system. This training is mandatory for all CCCAP-contracted providers. Children First staff have attended a Training of Trainers, are responsible for providing the trainings throughout our 11 county service area. The trainings will be implemented in phases throughout the state. The CO Division of Child Care will be sending out a flyer soon with the dates, times and places for each training. Any provider that wants to continue contracting with their local department for CCCAP Reimbursement is required to attend a training before they will be given a contract for CCCAP clients. Please watch for details about the trainings. Currently Children First plans on doing 4 trainings in different areas of our 11 county service delivery area. If a provider is not available on the dates scheduled, they can attend any training in the state. But again, the training is mandatory and must be taken before they will contract with their local department.

Important dates! CHATS trainings / Phase III

Registration: Kim Baird, Qualistar Early Learning kbaird@qualistar.org 1-303-339-6801

- Thursday - Sept. 2nd 6:00pm Walsenburg Housing Authority, 220 Russell Avenue, Walsenburg, CO 81089
- Wednesday- Sept. 15th 6:00pm Buena Vista DHS Annex, 114 Lindermann Ave., Buena Vista 81211
- Saturday- Sept. 25th 9:00am Mezzanine room, DHS Center, 1001 S. Main Street, Lamar 81025
- Friday, Sept 17 1:30pm Alamosa Public Health, Public Health Conference Room, 8900 Independence Way, Building B, Alamosa, CO 81101
- Saturday, Sept 18 9:00am Carnegie Library, Conference Room, 120 Jefferson Street, Monte Vista, CO 81144

If you need more training dates, please contact Kim for more available throughout the state.



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Providers "TIP" on "How to Choose a Social-Emotional Curriculum"

The "How Do I Decide?" Series of Guidelines was developed to help you make informed decisions that will positively impact young children's challenging behavior and social-emotional development.

Today, there are many curricula that focus on young children's social emotional development. Our purpose here is not to recommend certain curricula but rather to offer guidance on how to choose the one that will best meet your needs. It is important to note, however, that CSEFEL believes that every early childhood program should have a social emotional curriculum in place in order to provide a structure and focus that will promote this fundamentally important domain of development.

Step #1: Choose a Diverse Team to Provide Input

When choosing a curriculum, a broadly representative team of administrators, direct service providers and family members should be assembled to provide input. This type of decision-making structure makes it more likely that all interested parties will be committed to the ultimate decision.

Step #2: Have the Team Consider Key Questions

Key questions for teams to consider guiding and informing the ultimate curriculum adoption decision are listed below. The questions are organized into two broad categories:

- a. Pivotal questions which are designed to address the fundamental issue "Is this curriculum worthy of more careful review?"
- b. Relationship with program characteristics/resources questions which are designed to help match potentially "acceptable" curriculum to individual program assets and needs.

Step #3: Promote Buy-In and Implementation Fidelity

Once a curriculum has been selected, the team should take the following steps to promote buy-in and fidelity of implementation.

1. Have a formal "launch" of the curriculum in which all staff and families are informed about the decision-making process, why the particular curriculum was chosen, how providers will be trained, and what outcomes are expected.
2. Schedule training and continue training until staff can implement the curriculum with fidelity. Along the way provide acknowledgement for excellent implementation by individual staff.
3. Determine what steps supervisors will take to support fidelity of implementation. Set-up communication channels such that staff can make their support needs heard.
4. Set-up a system to evaluate child outcomes, making sure to link this assessment with other ongoing efforts.

Please visit the website: The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel for additional information and questions.

County Highlights

Pueblo County is the county highlighted this month. A lot is happening in Pueblo these days. Children First, Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, is the managing entity for Pueblo Early Childhood Council (PECC). They have been busy, with numerous projects: such as the Child Health Liaison Project; Foundations for Change, which awarded the first Children's Champion Award to Senator Abel Tapia, for his efforts on behalf of children and families; Pyramid Plus project, focusing on social, emotional development of young children, Pueblo being designated the Colorado Pyramid Plus Community Demonstration Site by the Colorado Pyramid Plus Center; Family Support Survey to identify gaps in services in our community; Expanding Quality in Infant/Toddler Care class in its' 10th year with a full class each semester; School Readiness Project, with Eastside Child Care Center receiving a 4 Star Rating; Professional Development opportunities for Early Childhood Professionals. Children First also have the Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood Grant, that serves Army families in Pueblo & Fremont County in collaboration with Ft. Carson. Congratulations Pueblo for all you do!