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PROMOTING QUALITY CHILD CARE: INNOVATIONS IN CONSUMER EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction -- Why Consumer Education Is Critical	2
Section One-- What Is Child Care Consumer Education?	4
Goals and Objectives of Consumer Education	4
Dual Approach to Consumer Education	5
Partners in Consumer Education	6
The Need for Effective Consumer Education	7
Section Two -- Consumer Education Innovations That Work	10
Eight Key Principles Illustrated in Successful Consumer Education Programs ..	11
Outreach to Targeted Audiences	11
Respect for Parent Values and Perspectives	13
Include Feedback from Consumer Testing	14
Build on and Reflect the Importance of Trust	15
Reflect an Understanding of Adult Learning	16
Link Consumer Education to Other Family Issues	18
Engage Other Partners in the Community	18
Build on Strengths of CCR&R Programs and Public Agencies to Serve Low-Income Parents	20
Section Three -- Replicating Multi-media Efforts	22
Essential First Steps	22
Step One: Developing Community Partnerships	22
Step Two: Setting Goals and Identifying the Audience(s)	24
Step Three: Resource Planning	25
Step Four: Developing and Testing the Message	27
Communication Strategies	30
References	33
Appendices	34
A. More About Child Care Aware	
B. Child Care Resource and Referral is at the Core of Child Care Consumer Education	
C. Consumer Education Resources	
Brochures, Posters, and Other Materials	
PSA Scripts	
American Academy of Pediatrics Newsletter Article	
D. Early Childhood Language and Parent Perceptions	
E. Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision	
F. Planning Tools	
Checklist for Planners	
Potential Sources of Funding and In-Kind Support	
Budget Tips	
G. Working with Design and Marketing Pros	

I NTRODUCTION

WHY CONSUMER EDUCATION IS CRITICAL

Parents of all incomes are using child care in increasing numbers, especially as more mothers of infants return to the work force, as moderate income families face economic pressures and as welfare reform propels more poor families into work settings. Every day, millions of parents face the most important consumer decision they will ever need to make: choosing child care for their children.

Parents are concerned about the safety and well-being of their children while they are at work. Parents have to juggle work schedules, transportation, children's school vacations, childhood illnesses, and individual family circumstances in their decision-making process about child care. They need access to information about child care choices available, about financial assistance, and how to match child care arrangements with their individual and family needs. Consumer education delivered individually through child care resource and referral (CCR&R) consultations can make the difference between stable arrangements with good outcomes for children and arrangements that are poor quality or unreliable.

It is through a combination of individual consumer education and public awareness that parents will seek, evaluate, and eventually demand good quality child care that will enable them to be stable employees. This booklet, a synthesis of innovations in consumer education, is designed to inform state, territorial and tribal communities, as well as other organizations interested in the promotion of quality child care through consumer education. It was developed by Child Care Aware for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through a subcontract with the National Child Care Information Center.

The booklet is organized into the following sections:

Section One

What is Consumer Education?

Goals and objectives; a dual approach; partners in consumer education; parent perspectives; effective consumer education.

Section Two

Consumer education innovations and strategies that work

Eight key principles of successful programs: targeted outreach; respect for the values and perspectives of parents; inclusion of feedback from consumers; building on and reflecting the importance of trust; understanding adult learning; linking consumer education and other family issues; involvement of community partners; and use of partnerships to build on the strengths of child care resource and referral programs and public agencies that serve low-income parents.

Section Three

How to replicate multi-media components of consumer education

Essential first steps: developing community partnerships, setting goals and identifying the audience(s), resource planning, and developing and testing the message; samples of campaign messages; the importance of marketing principles; communication strategies.

References and Appendices

These sections include additional information to help programs replicate the models highlighted throughout *Promoting Quality Child Care: Innovations in Consumer Education*. Included in the appendices are the artwork and public service announcements used in several consumer education projects, as well as a number of tools to help programs plan and implement successful child care consumer education campaigns.

Section One

WHAT IS CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION?

Consumer education is the process of communicating objective information about products or services to a prospective consumer.

*Child Care Choices, Consumer Education, and Low-income Families,
National Center for Children in Poverty, 1992*

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CONSUMER EDUCATION

The goal of child care consumer education is to help a parent become an informed and competent consumer of child care who will ultimately make a purchase of quality services that meets their personal and family needs. Any market system depends on informed, competent consumers in order to function efficiently and produce desired outcomes. In the case of child care, informed parents selecting high quality arrangements from an array of choices are essential to achieving desired outcomes: parents are able to meet both work and family obligations and raise their children to healthy and responsible adulthood.

The Primary Objectives of Child Care Consumer Education

- 1) Communicate with parents about child care in ways that will enhance their ability to know how to identify quality child care and how to ask for it.
- 2) Ensure that parents are aware of and have access to more than one child care program or provider, as well as the information and resources

Parents need to be as comfortable "reading the labels" of child care as they now are reading food labels.

Polly Talen, Dayton Hudson Foundation

that will help them make good child care choices.

3) Help parents to build and maintain a partnership with their program or provider.

DUAL APPROACH TO CONSUMER EDUCATION

In order for parents to be good consumers, they have to know both: 1) what good child care looks like; and 2) how to ask about it, evaluate it with confidence, and relate it to their child's well-being. States and communities are implementing a number of strategies designed to better enable parents to perform in the critical role of child care consumer.

Both individual consumer education through parent consultation and multi-media public awareness campaigns are essential. One-on-one consumer education through child care resource and referral programs is critical because consumer behavior is most likely to change among parents who receive individual attention. Families have very different needs and are at very different levels of comfort with the child care selection process. Through exploration of a range of resources and individual problem-solving, a parent can develop the confidence to seek and arrange good child care. This kind of one-on-one consultation is reinforced when a community comes together and works with CCR&Rs to conduct outreach and multi-media awareness campaigns that promote the importance of choosing quality child care and raise the visibility of community resources such as CCR&R.

In short, effective programs undertake a dual approach to child care consumer education through:

Direct consultations: one-on-one CCR&R consultations, classes and other efforts to support the child care decision-making of individuals or small groups of parents; and

Public awareness: communications and marketing to raise the visibility of the importance of good child care and to raise the visibility of local CCR&Rs to help parents.

PARTNERS IN CONSUMER EDUCATION

At the local, state and national level, there are resources to help parents make informed child care choices. Working in partnership to develop consumer education resources and materials, a variety of organizations are available to meet the needs of child care consumers.

At the local and state levels, *child care resource and referral* (CCR&R) programs have had a long history in consumer education. Created as community-based organizations to help improve child care and help families find child care, CCR&Rs respond both to the needs of parents who are seeking child care and education services and to the needs of communities for more quality child care. CCR&R programs interact with thousands of parents, collect data on consumer preferences and concerns, and assess the child care marketplace. CCR&R programs have developed a unique expertise in one-on-one discussions with parents about their child care choices.

In order to reach parents everywhere with the repeated messages required to change consumer attitudes and behavior, parents must be reached on their own ground. Such points of contact include shopping plazas and other consumer marketplaces, personal services, health care, recreation, transportation and worship. However, it is hard for parents to make a match between public messages and their ongoing need for child care, particularly as their needs change. CCR&R bridges the gap between the public awareness messages about quality child care and a parent's own situation and changing needs. When CCR&R programs are as familiar to parents as the yellow pages, parents will know where to turn for help whenever they need it. (See Appendix B for additional information.)

Every state has resources from the *Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant*. The Child Care and Development Block Grant Amendments of 1996 require states to certify that they will collect and disseminate information that will "promote informed child care choices." Additionally, the Amendments set aside not less than 4 percent of total funds for activities that are "designed to provide comprehensive consumer education to parents and the public, activities that increase parental choice, and activities designed to improve the quality and availability of child care (such as resource and referral services)."

Child Care Aware, a collaboration of organizations, has undertaken a nationwide consumer education campaign to promote quality child care. This national initiative is managed as a project of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). Members of the collaboration are:

What is Child Care Consumer Education?

- Child Care Action Campaign
- Dayton Hudson Corporation and Foundation
- Families and Work Institute
- National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE CONSUMER EDUCATION

Parents in Child Care Aware focus groups said they feel isolated because they don't know where to find help in recognizing quality care, evaluating centers and family child care providers, and making the right choices for their children. Ironically, many parents are not aware of valuable resources in their communities such as the local child care resource and referral program, or CCR&R. The results of the focus groups show that:

- ◆ Parents feel isolated when looking for child care and report that they usually don't know what they are looking for at the outset of their search.
- ◆ Parents usually go to other parents, relatives, co-workers, and friends for information and advice on choosing child care.
- ◆ Trust is a critical issue for parents. They are very concerned about leaving their child with a stranger.
- ◆ The words that parents use to describe good child care are very different from those used in the early childhood education field. Additionally, the value parents place on some factors linked to higher quality care (i.e., licensing, training, accreditation) is fairly low.
- ◆ Most parents are not aware of the availability of child care resource and referral services.
- ◆ Many parents are ambivalent about using child care. Due to cost, culture, and belief systems they would prefer to provide their own child care and early education.
- ◆ Most parents who use child care do so because they work, and most view child care as custodial rather than developmental. They are seeking someone to provide the nurturing care they would provide if they were home.
- ◆ Low-income families are even more likely to use a series of informal

What is Child Care Consumer Education?

arrangements than are middle-income families. This informal care is an integral part of the child care market, as relatives and good friends do provide low-cost alternatives to formal care. Research documents that quality is a serious issue in both informal care and formal arrangements and that an informed parent is critical to good outcomes in both formal and informal care.

*I didn't know what quality was
until I found it.*

Statement echoed by parents all
across the U.S.

More consumer education is needed to change consumer behavior. Child Care Aware research on child care consumers found that although parents were articulate about wanting nurturing care, attention, and learning activities, they had difficulty identifying and choosing an arrangement that would include these features. Parents often do not have all the information they need to assess a child care situation. Some parents may try several child care arrangements before finding one they feel is good quality.

Innovative consumer education incorporates experiential strategies to communicate with parents about components of quality. Open houses at high quality programs, videos, and encouragement to visit a number of programs give parents concrete experiences of good quality child care before they select an arrangement. Once parents select child care, ongoing consumer education helps parents work with caregivers to ensure ongoing quality that meets their changing needs.

Changing consumer behavior is complex and takes time. Professionals in marketing and advertising understand the complexity of changing consumer attitudes and behavior. CCR&R one-on-one consumer consultation and comprehensive information services have the potential to change consumer behavior so that parents expect, look for, and require quality child care. CCR&R is a core service valued by parents who use it; however, not all parents are aware of its availability in their community. It takes time for an organization to create visibility in a community. It also takes time for consumers to see and hear a message in a variety of ways before they are likely to respond. There is no easy answer or single method that will work for every market and in every community.

Effective consumer education makes the connection between quality child care and parent concerns. Researchers have agreed upon guidelines for quality child care, but those criteria have not been translated into parent demands. Parents and providers also agree on what constitutes quality care. Early childhood research demonstrates that training and accreditation lead to good quality care, but this path to quality has not yet been effectively communicated to parents.

Parents want positive outcomes for their children, although they do not describe them as professionals do. For example, parents say they want qualities that are associated with training, such as a warm and attentive relationships, but they do not correlate those

What is Child Care Consumer Education?

preferences with trained and accredited providers. "Early childhood speak" should be translated into parent-friendly language in media messages and in CCR&R counseling. (See Appendix D, "Early Childhood Language and Parent Perceptions: A Bridge to Cross") Effective consumer education also responds to parent concerns and provides information to those who select relatives and other informal care providers to help them evaluate and maintain good quality care.

Consumer Education Works Well When It:

Consumer education is not effective when it:

- ▼ uses only professional jargon.
- ▼ is not consumer tested.
- ▼ does not incorporate research on adult learning.
- ▼ uses a one-size-fits-all message, not targeted to specific audiences.
- ▼ is limited to formal child care settings.
- ▼ only reaches parents who call CCR&R.

✓ focuses on outreach to targeted audiences who may not be reached by other, more traditional forms of consumer education.

✓ respects parent values and perspectives on quality; makes a connection between parents' needs, parents concerns, and quality.

✓ includes feedback from consumers through focus groups, surveys, and consumer testing.

✓ builds on and reflects the importance of trust through one-on-one relationships and personal contacts with other parents, trusted individuals, child care providers, medical professionals, etc.

✓ reflects an understanding of adult learning styles; uses "teachable moments" when parents are most likely to use the information; makes child care quality concrete through strategies such as video, mentors, tours of child care facilities and homes, etc.

✓ links consumer education to other family issues.

✓ engages other partners in the community.

✓ builds on the strengths of CCR&R programs and public agencies to serve low-income parents.

Changes in how parents choose care and the type of care that they choose will only result from a change in consumer preferences. Some economists think the most efficient way to alter society's viewpoint on child care and early education may be an advertising campaign to inform consumer demand. At the CCR&R level, consumer education and leadership of public awareness efforts already are helping to change consumer behavior.

Section Two

CONSUMER EDUCATION INNOVATIONS THAT WORK

This chapter will provide examples of innovative child care consumer education strategies that have been successful. The chapter is formatted around eight key principles in designing successful consumer education efforts that build on the foundation of core CCR&R services. Successful project designs include eight key principles, as follows:

- ✓ Outreach to targeted audiences;
- ✓ Respect for parent values and perspectives;
- ✓ Include feedback from consumers;
- ✓ Build on and reflect the importance of trust;
- ✓ Reflect an understanding of adult learning;
- ✓ Link consumer education to other family issues;
- ✓ Engage other community partners; and
- ✓ Build on the strengths of child care resource and referral programs and public agencies that serve low-income parents.

In short, effective programs undertake a dual approach to child care consumer education through:

Direct consultations: one-on-one CCR&R consultations, classes and other efforts to support the child care decision-making of individuals or small groups of parents; and

Public awareness: communications and marketing to raise the visibility of the importance of good child care and to raise the visibility of local CCR&Rs to help parents.

EIGHT KEY PRINCIPLES ILLUSTRATED IN SUCCESSFUL CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

✓ Outreach to Targeted Audiences

Through Consumer Education, Parents Support Program Accreditation

Parents surveyed after their participation in Corporate H.A.N.D.S. increased their level of agreement with the following statement from 64 percent to 97 percent:

A nationally accredited child care program is more likely to provide good quality care than a non-accredited program.

This positive response to accreditation resulted from newsletters and meetings to increase parent involvement in their child care programs. Seventy-two percent of parents in the survey said they have become more involved in their child care program since the Corporate H.A.N.D.S. Project.

(Initiatives for Children, CCR&R, Houston, Texas)

Parents-in-waiting (Programs for Parents, CCR&R, Essex County, New Jersey)

Extensive interviews with parents found that convenience and cost play a more significant role in child care selection than does quality, and that once parents have made a child care choice, they are reluctant to change. Programs for Parents focused its messages on quality and on the role that training plays in quality. Interviews demonstrated that parents expecting their first child showed the highest level of interest in information on quality, so the project targeted new parents and parents-to-be.

Strategies included targeting OB/GYN offices, pediatricians, Lamaze programs, and maternity clothing stores for distribution of a continuous-play video presenting high quality child care. A quarterly newsletter and a radio public service announcement (PSA) were developed for the parents-in-waiting audience. All materials were produced in English and Spanish; print materials were also produced in Haitian.

Parents with established child care arrangements (Initiatives for Children, CCR&R, Houston, Texas)

One thousand six hundred employees using child care were targeted to increase parental demand for good quality in their own child care facilities. The project helped parents to understand the link between training, accreditation and good care. Parent concerns determined the content of newsletters that were developed on aspects of quality child care for both parents and providers. Parents were given opportunities to meet at centers and plan equipment purchases to improve their child's child care environment. Through the newsletter and ongoing discussions with other parents and providers, parents support accreditation.

Families of children with disabilities (Several initiatives and many CCR&Rs)

Many projects create brochures that are translated into the languages spoken in the community. These brochures are designed to be disseminated to parents of children with disabilities, participants at community health fairs, Head Start programs, case managers, child care centers and family child care providers, early interventionists, early childhood education students and program administrators.

Child care resource and referral agencies offer enhanced referral services for families with special needs. Parents are able to discuss their child care needs in detail and have follow-up discussions with counselors who are able to identify child care programs that match the family's needs.

Teen parents (Child Care Connection, CCR&R, Montgomery County, Maryland and Alaska Department of Community & Regional Affairs)

In Maryland, Child Care and Development Block Grant quality improvement funds were used by Child Care Connection to provide teen parents with training and technical assistance on choosing child care. Workbooks, a curriculum, and other materials were developed to help adolescent parents identify and choose quality child care. In Alaska, Block Grant funds supported a comprehensive statewide multi-media campaign which targeted teen parents as one audience. Design of the materials was tested for its appeal to teens who, like other parents, appear most receptive to clear, concise information (as few words as possible) combined with a "gift." Novelty items have been effective in spreading logo recognition such as an owl with the message, "Who's watching your Kids?" Many CCR&Rs have recognized the specialized counseling and support that teen parents need and have developed enhanced services for them.

Fathers from low-income communities (Maryland)

Maryland used Block Grant quality improvement funds to gather and disseminate information about the challenges of reaching and working successfully with fathers from low-income, high risk populations. The program reviewed the difficulties facing fathers in the 1990s; examined the existing research on effective ways to support men in their role as parents; collected information about projects focused on strengthening the relationships between fathers and children; and helped the child care community identify practical ways to support fathers' development of positive parenting skills.

African American and Latino communities (Crystal Stairs, CCR&R, South Central Los Angeles, California)

Crystal Stairs targeted a 50 percent African American and 45 percent Latino service area for consumer education activities to dovetail with agency participation in *Parent Voices*, a statewide pilot project to develop a core group of parent leaders who receive skills and training to organize other parents in their communities. The agency hired professional community organizers to connect with parents in a variety of agency and community programs and adapted Child Care Aware materials to be culturally sensitive to African

American and Latino communities. Materials emphasize visual messages rather than text because so many adults in the service area have limited English proficiency.

✓ **Respect for Parent Values and Perspectives**

Build on parent values and concerns (Initiatives for Children, CCR&R, Houston, Texas)
Parents were invited to meet and plan how equipment grants were to be spent in their child care facility. A total of 52 meetings were held with 343 parents in attendance. Although the meetings were planned to include a meal, parents weren't interested in eating and socializing after work. They wanted to hear about the project and go home as soon as possible. The brief meetings engendered fruitful discussions about appropriate activities and the meaning of accreditation.

A base survey of parents indicated that they were concerned that their young children were not being taught to read and write at their child care centers. Parents also expressed concern that their young children were being allowed to play too much and would not be prepared for kindergarten, particularly in math. Newsletter topics were developed to address those parent concerns and to educate parents about quality child care and early learning. They helped make the link between parent concerns about early learning with

Quality of Care From a Parent's Point of View

Traditionally, in designing child care and family policy, everyone speaks for the child and for the parents -- except perhaps the parents themselves. Oregon is setting a place at the table for the child care consumer by trying to help parents find their voice and articulate their vital interests in public policy through a coordinated effort at many levels. Efforts include:

- The collection, analysis, and use of data on family and child care demographics to drive policy and planning.
- An on-going research project measuring quality of care from a parent's point of view and studying its policy correlates.
- The 20-member Achieving Quality for Children Policy Council, a vigorous parent group, that is beginning to engage in the legislative process along with other groups and, drawing on results from the research, is helping to prepare a brochure on quality child care "in a parent's voice."
- A network of groups, task forces, research projects, and agencies cooperating in a loosely coordinated way to pursue common goals, in affiliation with the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership.

(Quality of Care From a Parent's Point of View: A Place at the Policy Table for Child Care Consumers, Arthur Emlen, 1996 unpublished paper, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Portland, Oregon)

One of the values of the focus groups is their objectivity. They come in with fresh unbiased viewpoints and more validly represent each first-time reader or viewer in our consumer marketplace.

Barbara Fedoroff, Executive Director,
Programs for Parents, Inc., A Child
Care Resource and Referral Service,
Verona, New Jersey

provider training and accreditation. Titles of newsletters included *Your Child Learns Through Play*, *How Early Childhood Educators Help Young Children Learn to Read*, and *Math and Your Young Child*.

Parent focus and involvement in planning (Crystal Stairs, Inc., CCR&R, Los Angeles, California)

This consumer education effort was designed to reach very low-income families in an African American and Latino community. Members of an advisory committee included representatives from the National Black Child Development Institute, the National Latino Children's Agenda, family child care associations and parent representatives from the Parent Voices Project, a grassroots parent organizing project.

✓ Include Feedback from Consumer Testing

Consumer testing (North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Network)

All materials used in the multi-media campaign were first evaluated by focus groups. A diverse group of rural and urban men and women commented on the brochure, billboard, poster, TV PSA, magnet, bookmark, tent card, 800 number, and slogan. Parents used score sheets to rank the top two choices for each component of the campaign and filled out a questionnaire regarding their child care choices and their suggestions to improve the circulation of child care information. Five parents agreed to share a personal story for the campaign video.

It's our constant process of evaluation -- working in partnership with others and having material reviewed by consultants, teachers, and parents -- that keeps us on the right track and keeps our messages effective.

Agenda for Children/Child Care
Resources, New Orleans, Louisiana

Suggestions from focus groups led to numerous revisions of the campaign materials, such as the choice of a cheerful color in print materials, the size of print, better racial balance in the video, the ease of using a particular 800 number, and the impact of slogans.

Testing the message (Programs for Parents, CCR&R, Essex County, New Jersey)

Parent focus groups gave feedback on a video which resulted in editing changes. Feedback from the focus group also led to better racial balance in the materials, the development of an audio-only tape, and selection of the newsletter title, "Child Care Matters."

Constant process of evaluation (Agenda for Children/Child Care Resources, New Orleans, Louisiana)

Messages about quality (caregiver training and credentials, positive discipline, appropriate activities) are constantly reviewed and evaluated by parent audiences. "A Parent's Guide to Education that Works in the Early Years," which educates parents about what they should see, hear, and feel on a visit to their child's classroom was reviewed by teachers and parents prior to publication.

✓Build on and Reflect the Importance of Trust

Child Care Aware research indicates that trust issues complicate consumer behavior. Parents often seek child care in an atmosphere of confusion and guilt. Most parents initially seek information from trusted sources such as relatives and co-workers, who may or may not have more consumer skills or access to information about choices than the parent. Few parents are aware of child care resource and referral programs as a source of information and problem-solving assistance.

How can I trust a stranger?

Frequent comment in
Child Care Aware focus groups

Trust also affects the choice of caregiver. Parents are very reluctant to place a child with a stranger. Often parents' primary criterion for selecting a caregiver is familiarity or a personal relationship with the provider. Innovative consumer education takes trust issues into account in delivering information about other criteria, such as training, to consider when choosing a child care provider.

Messages delivered and passed on within relationships of trust are powerful. For example, when parents pass on information to friends, relatives, and co-workers, messages are delivered within relationships of trust and are likely to increase the access to CCR&Rs and other community-based services. Innovative projects have used providers as consumer educators, encouraged parents to educate one another, and used health care and other trusted professionals as parent educators. These innovators:

- ◆ stimulated discussions about child care quality between parents and providers;
- ◆ developed partnerships with public schools, health professionals and family resource centers; and
- ◆ widened the circles of information about the importance of good quality child care.

Providers are trained to be consumer educators (Delaware Valley AEYC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Delaware Valley AEYC, believing that parents new to child care learn best about child care in the context of relationships, focused on developing accredited family child care providers as consumer educators. To help them in this role, Child Care Aware consumer

packets were sent to all accredited family child care providers, who distributed them to parents. The packets detailed the beneficial impact that accreditation has on program quality. Information given to parents in the context of the parent-provider relationship was well received.

The family child care providers met frequently through the Delaware Valley AEYC, and embraced the concept of becoming consumer educators. Many parents who received the Child Care Aware brochures from accredited providers passed the brochure on to other parents who sought their advice. The project confirmed that good family child care providers can be an excellent consumer education resource, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. Also, many providers in low-income neighborhoods are low-income parents themselves and understand the concerns of parents in their community. Accredited providers developed pride in being a support for both parents *and* a community support.

Other parents or trusted professionals are good sources for consumer education
(Several initiatives and many CCR&Rs)

Trust is a critical issue for parents. Educating parents and encouraging them to pass materials on to other parents is very effective, since parents especially trust the word of other parents experienced in using child care. Several projects nurtured parents as informed consumers and as informal mentors to other parents.

Since parents new to child care frequently ask their pediatricians or other health care providers for child care advice, several projects worked with health professionals to distribute information about child care and the availability of child care resource and referral services.

✓Reflect An Understanding Of Adult Learning

Parents learn about child care primarily through their everyday experiences (Several initiatives and many CCR&Rs)

Information which enters the neighborhood and workplace through "word-of-mouth" can be a resource for consumer education and have a positive effect. Parents who use child care learn something every day. They pass on what they learn to other parents through the informal word-of-mouth parent network. Disseminating information through child care settings and workplaces, and encouraging parents to share information with one another is an effective formula for consumer education.

Identifying and respecting learning styles of parents (Crystal Stairs, CCR&R, Los Angeles, California)

Parents may not recognize quality in child care until they first experience it. At Crystal

"All My Child Care" Targets Teen Parents

The Illinois Department of Public Aid (DPA) produced a video called, "All My Child Care," modeled on a soap opera but depicting young, single mothers who are receiving AFDC and are working or attending school. These mothers suddenly face crises with their inexpensive, informal child care arrangements. The video was produced in both English and Spanish, and has been shown at JOBS orientations.

Its messages include:

- *Several child care options exist, including family child care and center-based care.*
- *The parent should call the local CCR&R for an explanation of child care options, a list of providers to call, and information on how to choose good quality child care.*
- *The parent and child should visit the child care settings to meet the provider.*

*Improving Child Care Information
Services for Low-Income Parents, Ross,
p.42*

Consumer Education Innovations that Work

Stairs, the CCR&R staff have come to believe that parents need to learn to trust themselves so that they can learn how to select good child care. When CCR&Rs provide information to parents, some of them can "take it and run," but others don't really know how to use the information. "Tips" on child care aren't useful if parents don't understand their own learning styles or do not trust their own decisions.

The following questions ease the learning process:

- ***How have you learned in the past?***
- ***When was the last time you learned something that was of great value to you?***
- ***How did that come about? What happened?***

This process helps the parents feel better about learning new information, based on their past experience. Then they are ready to learn something important about selecting child care and are more likely to trust the validity of what they learn.

Hands-on, creative learning with teenage moms (Initiatives for Children, CCR&R, Houston, Texas)

Five jigsaw puzzles were designed, using information from Child Care Aware's "Five Steps" (Look, Listen, Count, Ask, and Be Informed). Teen mothers put the puzzles together, discovering the importance of each "step." Then they reported the contents back to the full group and decorated a poster with points that they thought were most important. They were excited about what they had learned and hung the posters in public places to share the information with other teen parents.

Moving Beyond the "Tri-fold Brochure" to a More Consumer-Friendly Format

A broad array of media formats and distribution channels are available to help get the message out to parents:

- ◆ Audio tapes
- ◆ Video tours of good quality child care settings
- ◆ Continuous run videos in medical settings
- ◆ Creative, long term use of multi-media
- ◆ Translation to languages other than English

- ◆ Meeting parents in churches and libraries
- ◆ Family child care and center open houses

✓Link Consumer Education to Other Family Issues

Involvement with family issues builds trust (North Coast Opportunities, CCR&R, Ukiah, California)

A CCR&R hired AmeriCorps Members to provide outreach to isolated, rural, Hispanic communities and tribal Rancherias. The agency learned that they had to look at the family as a whole, and the community as a whole, in order to be accepted and provide services. In order to build trust, the AmeriCorps Members attended many community events, maintained family resource information boxes that dealt with broad family concerns, provided help with tax forms, provided child care for parents at health fairs, taught dance and music, provided CPR/First Aid training, and worked with health clinics. Afterwards, more community members approached the CCR&R about child care information and services.

Dissemination at family-related sites (Several initiatives and many CCR&Rs)

Consumer education materials were disseminated at activities held at major retail outlets, community fairs, pow-wows, health fairs, shopping malls, laundromats, maternity clothing stores, toy stores, sports events, and community gathering places.

✓Engage Other Partners in the Community

Public schools (Child Care Resources/Agenda for Children, CCR&R, New Orleans, Louisiana)

One focus of the initiative by Agenda for Children was to develop an informed group of parents of children in New Orleans public schools to support and encourage implementation of developmentally appropriate practice throughout the system, including early childhood classrooms. In addition to gaining support from several existing parent organizations, they have stimulated a great deal of interest from the Orleans Parish Public School Early Childhood Department in reaching teachers with information on the importance of developmentally appropriate education. Strategies included seminars at parent and faculty meetings, participation in the Associate Superintendent's parent leadership team, and programming on the school system's cable channel.

Health professionals (Delaware Valley AEYC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

The Delaware Valley AEYC developed an article on the role pediatricians play in educating parents about child care for the Pennsylvania American Academy of Pediatrics newsletter. Through participation in a community 30 Day Mobilization for Peace, the project built a relationship with the director of the Women and Children's Health Medical Center. That new partner provided a link to the regional Maternal Infant Health

The Parent Voices Project

Despite many major victories for child care, overall progress toward meeting parents' needs has been limited. Notably missing from child care advocacy efforts at every level is a large number of parents consistently expressing their needs and expectations. Their busy schedules and often harried lives leave little room or energy for issues beyond day-to-day work and family life. Their absence in efforts to improve and expand child care resources leaves a notable void. No one speaks more convincingly for their children's needs than parents themselves.

The Parent Voices Project hopes to spawn powerful parent-led organizations that will involve and engage thousands of parents. Such a force is needed to address the specific child care needs of parents.

(Parent Voices, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, San Francisco, California)

Coalition and other regional alliances. Project staff made the case that good quality child care is a resource for communities and families not just because it enables parents to work, but also because it helps children learn to make good choices, resolve conflicts without violence, succeed in school, and grow to be responsible adults.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) "Early Years are Learning Years"

The NAEYC is a professional organization with local, state, and regional affiliates. The goal of its public awareness campaign is to help build parents' and the public's understanding of the importance of high quality early childhood programs to promote children's development and learning. The campaign is designed to increase awareness of the critical role that good programs play in keeping America's families working and helping all children thrive. News releases and replicable materials for the Early Years are Learning Years public awareness campaign are posted on the NAEYC Web site every two weeks, on or about the 15th and 30th of each month. (<http://www.naeyc.org/naeyc>)

"I Am Your Child," Early Childhood Public Engagement Campaign (Collaboration among the early childhood field, the entertainment industry and funders, under the leadership of Families and Work Institute)

The goals of the public engagement campaign, beginning in April 1997, are to increase public awareness of the importance of the first three years of life; to connect families with local resources that help them to promote their young children's healthy development and school readiness; and to build a public will to make such resources available throughout the country. The campaign represents new allies and new opportunities to work with other professional groups outside the early childhood field, such as the American Library Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, First Book, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the National Association of Police Chiefs.

Community Organizing Model (Crystal Stairs, CCR&R, Los Angeles, California)

The consumer education effort at Crystal Stairs was folded into Parent Voices, a pilot project coordinated by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network to develop a core group of parent leaders who receive training to inform other parents about

the importance of quality child care. The parents determined that the project would emphasize quality child care was determined by parents. The project encourages parents to talk about child care quality with other parents in their own organizing efforts.

✓Build On Strengths Of CCR&R Programs And Public Agencies To Serve Low-Income Parents

A recent study found the strongest parent information services for low-income families are typically provided by the local child care resource and referral agency (Ross, 1996)

As they work with parents, our counselors have a great many resources right in front of them on the computer screen -- everything from holiday care to support groups for parents of children with asthma.

Sandra Skolnik, Maryland Committee for Children, in Adams et al, 1996

Many state and local public agencies have funded CCR&R programs to provide counseling and referrals to low-income parents. CCR&Rs, especially those in large cities, have developed services designed to help low-income families understand their options and get up-to-date information on financial assistance and child care services. CCR&Rs have offered innovative services to meet the needs of working parents, such as co-location of services with public agencies, parenting advice lines, intensive counseling for parents entering training programs, and administration of child care subsidies. CCR&Rs have built up expertise in working with parents of all incomes. To fully address issues faced by very

low-income families, innovative programs have rewritten materials to be more accessible to a parent with low literacy skills, incorporated information about changing eligibility for subsidies, and discussed how to arrange child care during nonstandard hours.

Counselors explain how to choose child care, share information available about providers, and help parents solve their child care problems. One of the most important things CCR&R programs do is to explain the importance of visiting several child care programs before making a selection. Counselors urge parents to take the time to visit, talk to the provider, observe the caregiver at work, ask questions, and check references. (Ross, 1996)

Responsive CCR&R Services for Low-Income Parents

- ◆Counseling offered in CCR&R offices, welfare offices, community colleges, workplaces, family resource centers, libraries, and shopping malls.
- ◆Ability to transfer calls among different offices to meet linguistic, cultural and special needs of parents.
- ◆Extended hours to be more accessible to parents who have shift schedules or rigid work settings.

- ◆ Development of information to help families find and use community resources such as health clinics, support groups, financial assistance programs, services for children with special needs, immigration, subsidized housing, training programs, etc.
- ◆ Development of tip sheets on infant/toddler separation, single parenting, helping children with homework, adolescence, home safety, and other family issues.

Public agencies have experience with informal child care

Public agencies have had considerable experience with informal child care arrangements but may not provide consumer education about issues that should be considered in relative and other informal child care. Historically, many CCR&R programs have not included exempt or unregulated caregivers in their discussions. Many parents, however, prefer child care with relatives or neighbors. CCR&Rs are learning more about how to help parents who are considering informal child care arrangements. In some communities, partnerships between CCR&Rs and public agencies deliver consumer education that includes counseling on all issues related to the selection of child care in both formal and informal settings.

Parents can receive multiple services, including CCR&R at public agency sites

While most CCR&R counseling is done over the telephone, many CCR&Rs report more face-to-face counseling in their offices, welfare offices, community colleges, workplaces, resource centers and public agencies. Effective consumer education to low-income families should take advantage of opportunities for face-to-face counseling, such as co-locating CCR&R at public agency sites where families go.

CCR&Rs develop relationships with child care providers to enhance child care for low-income families (Several initiatives and many CCR&Rs)

CCR&R programs develop supportive relationships with child care providers and provide training for center staff and family child care providers. This provides a unique opportunity for CCR&R to support family-centered programs. For example CCR&Rs often encourage caregivers to serve teen parents and to explore special issues about teen development, school schedules, and the need to model nurturing care.

Section Three

REPLICATING MULTI-MEDIA EFFORTS

Child care consumer education is based on communications with parents. This section looks at the components of effective multi-media campaigns which utilize a variety of communication vehicles.

While many of the vehicles are fairly new territory for the early childhood field, they are very familiar to the marketing, advertising, and communications industries. Therefore, accessing the support and expertise of professionals in these industries is a wise step for any multi-media effort.

ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS

To help communities and organizations plan and implement an effective multi-media effort, a *Strategies Guidebook* has been developed and is available through Child Care Aware. In addition, to develop new information for this booklet, Child Care Aware reviewed and researched over 40 local or statewide consumer education efforts that have been funded by Child Care Aware and/or by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Care and Development Block Grant Quality Improvement Funds.

Effective campaigns are the direct result of planning and strategic activities. The critical first steps in planning a multi-media campaign are:

- ✓ Developing community partnerships.
- ✓ Setting goals and identifying the audience(s).
- ✓ Planning for resource needs.
- ✓ Developing and testing messages.

✓ Step One: Developing Community Partnerships

Partners can bring tremendous insight and valuable resources to a multi-media campaign. Establishing these relationships at the onset of campaign planning is highly important.

Through partnerships, public and private initiatives can be blended to leverage available resources. Without the involvement of partners, the impact of the campaign in a community or state is likely to be limited and short-lived.

Child Care 2000 Campaign Partners

One of the largest and most comprehensive collaborations in consumer education, with the greatest variety of partners, is the Washington State Child Care 2000 Campaign, under the leadership of the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

- * Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- * Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
- * Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- * Washington Association of Head Start & Early Education and Assistance Programs
- * Washington School-Age Care Alliance
- * Latino Child Care Task Force
- * Making The Most Of Out-Of-School Time Initiative
- * Washington State Family Child Care Association
- * Child Care Coordinating Committee
- * Child Care Directors of Greater Seattle
- * Child Care Works for Washington
- * Washington State Lutheran Public Policy Office
- * The Children's Alliance
- * Washington State Migrant Council
- * Black Child Development Institute, Seattle
- * Washington State Family Policy Council
- * Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Child Care Policy
- * Department of Health, Maternal & Child Health and Facilities Licensing
- * Family Resource Coalition of Washington

Partners can include:

- ◆ National and or local affiliates of child care organizations (early care and education associations, family child care associations, advocacy organizations and child care resource and referral agencies);
- ◆ Funders or potential funders;
- ◆ Medical practitioners (i.e. infant and maternal child health professionals, pediatricians, and childbirth educators);
- ◆ Media and communications experts (i.e. professionals in TV, radio, print,

Creating partnerships was the most important part of ensuring the successful distribution of materials.

The Florida Children's Forum

public relations, marketing, and advertising);

- ◆ Community leaders;
- ◆ Civic Groups (i.e. Junior League, Kiwanis, National Council of Jewish Women, Rotary); and
- ◆ Organized parent groups, PTA, and parents with children in child care.

✓ Step Two: Setting Goals and Identifying the Audience(s)

Challenging goals can motivate individuals and teams to stretch beyond what they might have otherwise thought possible. However, tempering the challenge with realism will avoid frustration because impossible goals were set. Goal setting around child care issues is particularly challenging, since there are many child care issues that affect the ability of parents to find and select good quality child care.

Sample Consumer Education Goals

Goals of the Child Care 2000 Campaign Washington State

- ▼ To transform public opinion about the perceived need for child care, moving from custodial to educational and nurturing so that children can truly enter school ready to learn.
- ▼ To initiate a massive readjustment of attitude to recognize caregivers as parenting partners.
- ▼ To heighten consumer awareness about the components of appropriate child care, including the link between training, accreditation and quality care.

To help parents, especially first-time parents, to recognize the components of good child care and enable them to access and demand it locally. (Child Care Aware)

To increase parents' demand for good quality child care in their own child care facility by helping parents identify and understand: the observable indicators of high quality care; how training leads to quality; and how their employer is supporting quality improvement efforts. (Initiatives for Children)

To build on parents' concern for children by exploring the notion that many new parents already value providers' training in safety and health and attempt to extend this to valuing training in child development; to stimulate discussion about quality between providers and parents; and to build momentum around accreditation. (Delaware Valley AEYC)

To educate parents, particularly parents with the greatest potential of responding (expectant or new parents), on the indicators of quality child care. (Programs for Parents)

To increase the awareness of services available to help parents learn how to locate quality child care facilities, particularly how their local CCR&R Agency could assist them in their search. (Florida Children's Forum)

The task of identifying the audience(s) is a logical extension of

the multi-media campaign goal(s). Two questions that can assist in identifying an audience are: "Who is most in need of the information?" and "Who must take action?" There are many potential audiences. Planners have found that implementing a multi-media campaign with a variety of messages targeted at different audiences is challenging but worthwhile. For example, the Washington State Child Care 2000 Campaign targeted four different audiences: consumers; public policy makers; business leaders; and child care providers.

✓ **Step Three: Resource Planning**

Once the campaign goals and objectives have been established, the next step is recognizing and securing the resources necessary to accomplish them. There are three resources that must be planned for and secured:

- ◆ Staff and other professional expertise;
- ◆ Time for planning; and
- ◆ Funds.

◆ *Staff and Other Professional Expertise*

Project staff and other professionals contributing to a multi-media effort should have the following qualifications and areas of expertise:

- * Strong organizational skills
- * Excellent communication skills and experience
- * Public relations and/or marketing experience
- * Familiarity with early childhood programs (but not necessary)

Individuals with expertise in communications, marketing, advertising, or public relations have contributed greatly to the innovative and successful approaches highlighted in this booklet. This expertise has generally been obtained by participation of volunteer(s) on planning committees or through a contract on a paid and/or pro bono basis. (See Appendix F for *Working with Design and Marketing Pros*, by Sally Bruner Johns, who consulted with the multi-media campaigns in Florida and North Carolina.)

*It always takes longer
than you think.*

A basic rule about planning time

◆ *Time for Planning*

Many of the multi-media campaigns studied were intended for planning and kick-off to take place within a one-year time frame. However, a substantial number were unable to fully implement their plans within this time frame and temporarily or indefinitely postponed some activities. It is not unusual, due to limited human or financial resources, for campaigns to be forced to decide that "something" will need to wait. The following questions can help planners decide what should wait and what shouldn't:

Replicating Multi-Media Efforts

*Less is sometimes more.
Be sure to do well at what
you choose to do.*

A campaign planner

- *Is the activity time-sensitive? (i.e., Is the effort tied to a particular time of year, like back-to-school, or summer care?)*
- *Is there a particular window of opportunity that will disappear later? (i.e., The Outdoor Advertisers Association has chosen to give the campaign billboard space free of advertising charge for three months. While the offer may not coincide with the launch of the campaign, the financial savings and potential reach is phenomenal. Clearly, schedules for other activities can be changed.)*
- *What is the potential exposure rate (measured by impressions) of each medium?*
- *What are the demographics of the audience for each medium?*

◆ *Funds*

Budgeting for a multi-media campaign is particularly challenging because planners may need to consider costs for advertising time and space in addition to production time, materials, and distribution. Again, the assistance and guidance of persons with advertising, media, and communications expertise will ensure more realistic budgeting. These experts will know or have access to information about the cost of paid advertising, the technical formats of TV PSA tapes required in the market, the varying costs of dubbing tapes, and the standard size and cost of printing billboard sheets, bus cards and other materials.

The funds and in-kind contributions committed to a campaign are critical to determining which strategies and communication mechanisms are realistic for a campaign. The most costly elements of multi-media efforts are design and development, printing, and paid advertising. One of the goals of this booklet is to facilitate the sharing of messages, designs, and materials that have already been successfully utilized, ultimately reducing the need for costly design and development for new initiatives. Appendix F includes tips for establishing a budget.

*Use or edit existing materials. There
is a wealth of information available.
Using it speeds up implementation
and cuts development costs.*

*Patty Rosnel, Alaska Department of
Community & Regional Affairs, Child
Care Programs*

While obtaining donated creative services can substantially reduce the need for funding, it also presents challenges. In-kind production work may take a back-seat to the donor's

kind production work may take a back-seat to the donor's business activities, causing delays in campaign timing. Several of the projects studied experienced delays of a month or two.

LESSONS LEARNED
CHILD CARE 2000 CAMPAIGN
Washington State

- Comprehensive, multi-media, statewide consumer education campaigns are expensive. It is important that the funds are available from the beginning to ensure the fullest exposure possible on all media fronts simultaneously.
- This type of campaign is labor intensive. It cannot be managed effectively without adequate staff and access to creative consultants with contacts in and knowledge about the advertising, media, and public relations fields.
- Support from the state administration is extremely helpful, both in leveraging additional public and private funding and in maximizing outreach to parents through their client contacts.
- To be effective, these types of consumer education campaigns are not short-term, as families will connect with the campaign only when it is relevant in their lives. This typically does not happen within the neat packaging of a nine month campaign.

✓ Step Four: Developing and Testing the Message

Getting to know what is most important to the audience is critical to developing an effective message. For instance, recognizing that parents are already very concerned about health, safety, and cleanliness in child care helped Agenda for Children/Child Care Resources in New Orleans develop TV and radio PSAs that built on this concern. (See Appendix C for text.)

Florida and North Carolina, for example, used basically one text for their messages, but applied very different design features after testing the materials on their own audiences. The North Carolina audience preferred primarily dark blue with a yellow highlight, while the Florida audiences preferred bright colors.

The Florida Children's Forum Consumer Education Campaign conducted focus groups to test poster concepts. Four focus groups were held, with Hispanic, rural, urban, and

African American groups. The results indicate the importance of testing concepts.

▼ *Find The Care That Fits The Child -- Call Child Care Resource & Referral* (Hispanic) This headline did not translate into Spanish in a way that would tie into the visual image of children dressed in oversized and undersized clothing. This group reaction was one of confusion and most greeted it with a puzzled expression or blank stare. One male participant finally said, "Their clothes look funny." This helped identify the problem and everyone had a good laugh.

▼ *See It Through Your Child's Eyes -- Choose Quality Child Care* (Hispanic) When this concept was introduced using a large pair of sunglasses with happy multicultural children's faces reflected in them, it was an overwhelming success. They "got it" and said they would remember this image and its message very easily. They would be most likely to walk over to this image to see what it was about. They would be more likely to call the 800 number. (The other three groups almost unanimously approved of this concept also.)

Recent focus groups with parents and other national research have contributed greatly to the body of knowledge about parents' interests, beliefs, and issues around child care. This research should guide message development.

Acknowledge that choosing child care is an emotional experience. Utilize materials and images that represent and trigger the emotional bond between parent and child. Parents will identify with information that focuses on the impact on the child.

Keep the message simple and concise, using language and words that will resonate with parents. Use of technical jargon will lose many parents in an instant. Please see "Early Childhood Language and Parent Perceptions" (Appendix D) for an analysis of parent perceptions and attitudes attached to many of the words early childhood professionals use regularly, as well as more "parent-friendly" language. Also, see examples of parent-friendly materials in Appendix C.

Present the information in a consumable format. Some parents need to read, some need to experience good care, and some may want conversations about child care. Access to all types of materials (book marks, posters, magnets, toys, etc.), in community languages and at appropriate reading levels is important. Testing the usefulness of materials is essential. Staff of the Florida Children's Forum weren't surprised to find that parents in an upscale market liked the idea of a rolodex card; however, they were very surprised to find that parents in lower-income communities liked it even better. These parents reported that they liked to take what's easiest to use -- essentially, a tear-off with a phone number. Overall, 85 percent of parents said they'd use the rolodex card. Other campaigns found that parents in their audience preferred magnets to rolodex cards. The key: **Know**

what your audience will use.

Go to the audience. Test the message and materials with audience members prior to mass production. Lessons learned from parents about the message and materials:

▼In North Carolina, parent feedback led to the choice of the slogan *Good Beginnings Never End*, the 800 number, and the design and photographic nature of posters and other materials. Many parents liked the phrase, *Choices for Parents...Chances for Children* and considered the term "quality" to be over-used.

▼In Washington State, The Early Childhood 2000 Campaign planners recognized that talk about "quality" in their area denoted "high end". Yet the campaign essentially wanted to make the point that every child deserves good solid child care. Their message "Child Care is More Than Graham Crackers and a Nap" attempted to walk this fine line.

▼The Florida Children's Forum, also concerned because parents perceive that "quality" equals "expensive," tested the language at both the beginning and end of each focus group session. Early on, they asked the question, "What is quality child care?" As in Child Care Aware focus groups, parents used adjectives such as "loving, caring, safe, reliable," and gave some mention of "educational experiences." At the end of the session, the question was then asked, "Does quality child care mean expensive?" Parents thought a little while, then responded, "Yeah, maybe."

Sample Campaign Messages

Child Care... It's More Than Just Graham Crackers and a Nap (Child Care 2000)

School Age Care...Growing Up with Someplace to Go (Child Care 2000)

Be Choosy About Your Child Care. (Agenda for Children)

Ask Questions. Get Answers. (Child Care Aware)

Five Steps to Quality Child Care: Look, Listen, Count, Ask, and Be Informed.
(Child Care Aware)

Learn what to look for. Your child's safety and learning depend on it. (Agenda for Children)

Good Beginnings Never End. Choose Quality Child Care. (North Carolina)

Who's Watching Your Kids? (Alaska)

Good Child Care Takes More Than Love. It Takes Training and Planning.
(Programs for Parents)

See It Through Your Child's Eyes (Florida Children's Forum)

Three critical marketing principles behind every multi-media campaign:

- Multi-media campaigns have limited impact until multiple (at least 3 to 6) contacts with a consistent message have been made.
- The message must be delivered by a credible source.
- Attitude and behavioral change is most likely to occur when the issue is pertinent to the consumer.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

A variety of communication vehicles and strategies can be utilized in multi-media efforts. Deciding which media to use should be dictated by who and where the audience members are, as well as timing and budget. In general, advertisers believe it is better to speak more often with a smaller, more targeted audience than to go out less often to a mass audience. The latter may be more expensive with a good portion of the exposure wasted on people who do not have an interest. Doing both would be ideal if funds and the creative and production support necessary, are available.

Effective campaigns selected different media in each geographic market depending on focus group findings, the type of media available, past successes with particular types of media in each market, and the willingness of the media outlets to become partners in the campaign. Comprehensive, multi-media efforts include activities in each of the following major categories:

- ◆ Retail Outlets
- ◆ Key Influencer Distribution
- ◆ Advertising
- ◆ Media Relations
- ◆ Events
- ◆ Child Care Providers and Programs

◆ *Retail Outlets*

Retail outlets are great potential mass distributors of written materials. However, delivery can be sporadic, particularly if materials are to be handed out at check-out counters. Some retail stores offer community bulletin boards and newsletters, or poster space in their windows. Strong relationships with upper level management are critical to a successful venture in retail outlets.

◆ *Key Influencer Distribution*

Written materials can be particularly effective when delivered to parents in the context of a trusted relationship. "Key influencers" -- relatives, friends, and co-workers -- often share information with parents seeking child care. This informal network of support is very strong and well-trusted. A brochure in a rack is valuable, but it is most valuable when received from a trusted individual.

◆ *Advertising*

A Complete Guide to Small Business Advertising (Vitale, The American Marketing Association, 1995) reports that people have to see an ad at least three to seven times before they feel comfortable enough to call. Thus ads in a newspaper need to run for at least three weeks. While it is important that the message be consistent, the format, artwork, and medium need to change so the message does not wear out. The American Association of Advertising Agencies recommends testing a message often by asking the target audiences how they feel about the message and by constantly monitoring response to find evidence of what works and what doesn't.

Advertising can sometimes be negotiated at a major discount or even free of charge. In the State of Washington, the Child Care 2000 Campaign received nearly \$500,000 worth of in-kind advertising, including production of three TV PSAs by a local PBS affiliate, radio PSAs by a National Public Radio affiliate, and over 200 outdoor billboards statewide at an 85 percent discount. Similarly, the Florida Children's Forum received over \$100,000 worth of in-kind support.

◆ *Media Relations*

The result of media relations work can be more consumer-friendly media coverage of child care, as reported by the Child Care 2000 Campaign in the State of Washington. In the past, the media often covered negative stories with alluring titles such as "Nanny Nightmares" and "Death in Day Care," which did not include information on the positive aspects of child care or offer readers, listeners and viewers information on where to call for help or assistance in finding and choosing good care. Following the campaign's launch, however, the media presented more balanced stories and called the State CCR&R Network for background material. In one case, the discussion with the CCR&R Network led directly to a discussion of the need for child care in a 30 minute TV program on the potential impact of welfare reform on families.

◆ *Events*

Events can be very effective mechanisms for gaining visibility, acceptance, and trust in a community. North Coast Opportunities, based in Ukiah, California, wanted to expand access to its CCR&R services for the 14 Indian Rancherias and the Hispanic communities in fairly rural and isolated regions of their service area. Participation in two Indian health fairs sponsored by Consolidated Indian Tribal Health, along with weekly visits to the communities by AmeriCorps Members, helped achieve this goal. They provided child care, arts and crafts, and game booths for children while parents browsed the fair. Participation in community events and distribution of family resource and parenting information were especially well-received.

Events, however, may not be particularly effective for passing out information on choosing child care, unless the event is targeted toward fairly new parents. Consumers use information when the issue is pertinent, so people offering brochures are often met with responses such as "I already have child care," or "The child care I have is fine." Information on child development, preventing illness in children who attend child care, building or strengthening relationships with caregivers, etc. as well as information on evaluating good care, would more likely catch the interest of parents.

◆ *Child Care Providers and Programs*

There is evidence that working with and through child care providers and programs to educate parent consumers can increase parent involvement and understanding of factors contributing to quality. CCR&R programs work with all types of child care providers in various capacities and are often in partnership with the larger early childhood community. Coordinated initiatives that involve the providers, parenting programs, the public schools, post-secondary early childhood programs, vocational programs, and parenting organizations are more effective.

The Delaware Valley AEYC in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania found that consumer education delivered through good quality child care providers is effective because it affirms that the provider is giving excellent child care, and that the parent has selected excellent child care. Thus it affirms the importance of quality for *both* parents and providers and builds upon the trusting relationships parents have with their child's teacher or caregiver.

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APPENDICES

- A. More About Child Care Aware
- B. Child Care Resource and Referral is at the Core of Child Care Consumer Education
- C. Consumer Education Resources
 - Brochures, Posters, and Other Materials
 - PSA Scripts
 - American Academy of Pediatrics Newsletter Article
- D. Early Childhood Language and Parent Perceptions
- E. Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision
- F. Planning Tools
 - Checklist for Planners
 - Potential Sources of Funding and In-Kind Support
 - Budget Tips
- G. Working with Design and Marketing Pros

Appendix A

More About Child Care Aware

Child Care Aware

Child Care Aware emphasizes consumer education

Child Care Aware is an ongoing national initiative dedicated to improving the quality of child care and early education in America. Its mission when it was founded in 1988 was to support professional development, training, and accreditation of providers, and to educate parents to recognize and choose good child care.

Since 1992, Child Care Aware has placed increasing emphasis on consumer education. All research suggests that for quality in child care to improve, consumers need to expect, seek, and ultimately demand it. Indeed, Child Care Aware's consumer research and extensive strategic planning revealed that much more work must be done to fill the information, awareness, and support gaps that exist for parents using and choosing child care and early education. This led the collaboration to identify consumer education as its single most important activity, and in August 1996, Child Care Aware committed to a revised mission that focuses *solely* on consumer education. (See Appendix D, "Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision.")

NEW MISSION OF CHILD CARE AWARE

To ensure that every parent has access to good information about finding quality child care and resources in their community, through national consumer marketing and by raising visibility for local child care resource and referral programs (CCR&Rs).

Campaign impact

Child Care Aware has

- invested over \$360,000 in local communities and states for consumer education initiatives;
- reached hundreds of thousands of parents through a national toll-free information line that links parents to their local CCR&R;
- developed *Five Steps to Finding Quality Child Care*;
- distributed over 7.25 million brochures; and
- generated over \$20 million in non-paid media.

Most importantly, the campaign has provided an impetus for CCR&Rs and other organizations to re-evaluate current consumer education efforts and to increase the quality and accessibility of information that will help parents to recognize and locate quality child care.

Child Care Aware's collaborating partners and their areas of expertise at the national level have been critical to the design and effective implementation of its campaign:

Child Care Action Campaign: message crafting, media relations,
message delivery in the media

Dayton Hudson Corporation: advertising, information distribution through
stores and store communication vehicles, public and media relations,
marketing, creative, design

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: message
crafting, community coordination, delivery through local CCR&Rs

National Association for Family Child Care: message crafting and delivery
through professionals

National Association for the Education of Young Children: message crafting
and delivery through professionals

Appendix B

Child Care Resource and Referral Is At the Core of Child Care Consumer Education

Child Care Resource and Referral Is At the Core of Child Care Consumer Education

CCR&R programs offer child care information to parents as part of their primary mission:

- helping families locate child care and balance work-family demands;
- supporting child caregivers;
- compiling information to help families, child care providers and communities; and
- building collaborations to improve child care policies.

(Making Child Care Work: A Study of Child Care Resource and Referral in the United States, NACCRRA, 1996)

CCR&Rs provide one-on-one counseling and consumer education to parents, primarily over the telephone, but increasingly at sites convenient to families, such as public agencies, work sites, libraries, and family resource centers. CCR&R programs have developed innovative services to provide specialized counseling and information for targeted populations such as teen mothers, JOBS participants, parents using vouchers, welfare clients, parents of children with special needs, etc. Their staff, typically well educated in child development and in best practices in child care and early education, conduct training for child care staff, recruit child care providers, provide technical assistance to providers, and develop resource banks of family supportive resources.

(Improving Child Care Information Services for Low-Income Parents, Christine Ross, 1996)

CCR&Rs help to build the supply of child care based on their work with consumers

CCR&Rs work to build the supply and quality of child care in the community, based on the consumer requests they receive, and incorporate parent data into community planning documents. The CCR&R is able to inform providers and other stakeholders about the special needs of parents so that community services can serve them better. CCR&R programs are accustomed to working with families who face the most complex challenges in trying to find and maintain reliable child care:

- first-time parents,
- families who cannot afford care and cannot get subsidies,
- rural families,
- families whose primary language is not English,
- families who depend on public transportation,
- families whose children have special needs, and
- families of school-age children.

CCR&Rs collaborate with others in the early childhood field

CCR&Rs use a wide variety of strategies to increase awareness about child care. Among respondents in the 1994 *NACCRRRA Counts Survey*, 96 percent of CCR&Rs reported collaboration with others in child care planning, and 61 percent reported that they take leadership roles in most child care planning efforts in their communities. The leadership and experience in collaboration of child care resource and referral agencies makes them a key player in public awareness efforts as well as in one-on-one consumer consultations. (*Making Child Care Work: A Study of Child Care Resource and Referral in the United States*, Adams et al, 1996)

Appendix C
Consumer Education Resources
Brochures, Posters and Other Materials

Alaska Department of Community & Regional Affairs, Child Care Programs

333 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 220
Anchorage, AK 99501-2341
Phone: 907-269-4500
Contact: Patricia Rosnel

- Brochure - Alaska Child Care Programs
- Brochure - Bridging the Gap (AFDC, Affordable Child Care, Employment)
- Brochure - Who's Watching Your Kids
- Brochure for Teen Parents
- Poster for Teen Parents (11" x 17")
- Poster - Quality Care for Your Child (17½" x 22")
- Above poster in versions for parents and programs
- Checklist
- Novelty Items: erasable marker board, finger print/ID kit, tote bags, plastic bags, mini-calendars, magnetized pen, band-aid dispenser, outlet covers, nightlights, insulated lunch bags, emergency number refrigerator magnet,

QUALITY care for YOUR child

Being a good child care provider means your child will be safe and happy with us. Come in any time and see:

- Warm and friendly caregivers.
- A facility that is clean and safe
- A plan for emergencies.
- Healthy food that children like to eat.
- Activities that respect cultural differences.
- Room to have fun, discover new things and use imagination
- Caring, gentle discipline.
- Individual time for your child each day.
- When you come to pick up your child, we will share her day with you. We know you will want to hear all about her experiences, because she is special to us, too!



HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS FOR THE IN-HOME AND RELATIVE CAREGIVER



Thank you for agreeing to be a caregiver. By doing so, you are giving parents and children the chance for a better future.

If you are an in-home caregiver, you will be providing care in the child's own home. If you are a relative caregiver, you will be caring for the child in your own home. The Government of the District of Columbia does not require that a child's own home or most relatives' homes be licensed, but we know that you want to provide the safest care possible.

If you are providing care in a home which is not yours, of course you can't make changes by yourself, but you can share these suggestions with the child's parent, and talk about the things you can do together to make the home safer for the child.

Department of Human Services, Commission on Social Services

Office of Early Childhood Development

717 - 14th Street NW, Suite 730

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-727-1839

Contact: Dr. Kellene Bruce

Brochure - What is Quality Child Care?

Brochure - Health and Safety Tips for the In-Home and Relative Caregiver
Flyers

Bus Boards

Bus and Train Posters

Novelty items: Buttons, tote bags, pencils, pens



Florida Children's Forum

259 East 7th Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32303
Phone: 904-681-7002
Contact: Warren Eldridge

Brochure with Rolodex card punch out
Poster (11"x17")
Billboard
Photo Frame Magnet (3"x4")
TV PSA's
Radio PSA's
Bookmarks
Videos



CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER



Illinois Department of Public Aid

**Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and
Illinois Department of Public Aid**

310 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1001

Chicago, IL 60604

Phone: 312-793-5623

Contact: J. Lee Kreader

Brochure - Choosing a Child Care Provider (IL Dept. of Public Aid)

Pamphlet - Child Care Choices from the Illinois Department of
Children and Family
Services (23 pages)

Video - All My Child Care

EXPANDING THE FAMILY CIRCLE



**NEED
CHILD CARE
ANSWERS?**



CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL

Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network

2116 Campus Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904
Phone: 507-287-2497
Contact: Patrick Gannon

Pamphlet (24 pages) - "Need Child Care Answers?"
Brochure - Child Care Resource & Referral Provides
"Community-Friendly" Services
Poster (11"x17")



...QUALITY CHILD CARE!

Is child care something you need?

Every mother needs a help. Especially when looking for the one thing that matters most in child care—quality. Quality child care can make a big difference in the future of your child. Your community, even the world. By choosing quality care now, you give your child a head start on a strong mind, body, and spirit. And it never stops to grow. For a more complete understanding of quality child care, contact your local child care agency. They can help you find the best quality care for your child. They can also help you understand the many benefits of quality child care. Quality child care is not just a place to leave your child. It's a place where your child can grow and learn. Quality child care is a place where your child can be happy and healthy. Quality child care is a place where your child can be the best they can be.



...CUIDADO INFANTIL DE CALIDAD

¿Es el cuidado infantil algo que le interesa?

Every mother needs a help. Especially when looking for the one thing that matters most in child care—quality. Quality child care can make a big difference in the future of your child. Your community, even the world. By choosing quality care now, you give your child a head start on a strong mind, body, and spirit. And it never stops to grow. For a more complete understanding of quality child care, contact your local child care agency. They can help you find the best quality care for your child. They can also help you understand the many benefits of quality child care. Quality child care is not just a place to leave your child. It's a place where your child can grow and learn. Quality child care is a place where your child can be happy and healthy. Quality child care is a place where your child can be the best they can be.



Child Care Aware

2116 Campus Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904
Phone : 507-287-2220
Contact: Denise Fogarty

Brochure (English and Spanish)
Posters: 11"x17" and 18" x 24" - set of three
Flyers
Print Ads
Billboards
TV PSA - Ask Questions, Get Answers
Banner
T-Shirts
Magnets
Buttons

**A
Phone
Call...**



...Can Bring Miles of Smiles.

It takes a quality child care now, you give your child a head start on a strong mind, body and spirit. Take your time in choosing child care. Ask questions. Ask for references. And ask plenty of questions.

Learn More About Finding Quality Child Care. Call:

1-800-424-2246



Child Care Aware

THE NATIONAL QUALITY CHILD CARE CENTER



MERYMA  TARGET  Kmart

**FIND A CHILD CARE
PROVIDER YOUR CHILD
CAN DRAW CLOSE TO.**



Child Care Aware

MERYMA  TARGET  Kmart

**QUALITY CHILD CARE
REDUCES MORNING
STATIC AND CLING.**



Child Care Aware

**NOW PLAYING
AT A QUALITY CHILD CARE
SETTING NEAR YOU.**



Child Care Aware

MERYMA  TARGET  Kmart

Child Care Aware

5 STEPS TO FINDING CHILD CARE



1. LOOK

Begin by visiting several child care homes or centers. On each visit, think about your first impression. But don't stop there. Does the place look safe for your child? Do the caregivers/teachers who will care for your child enjoy talking and playing with children? Do they talk with each child at the child's eye level? Are there plenty of toys and learning materials within a child's reach? You should always visit a home or center more than once. And stay as long as possible so you can get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. Even after you start using the child care, continue to come back and check it out.

2. LISTEN

What does the child care setting sound like? Do the children sound happy and involved? What about the teachers' voices? Do they seem cheerful and patient? A place that's too quiet may mean not enough activity. A place that's too noisy may mean there is a lack of control.

3. COUNT

Count the number of children in the group. Then count the number of staff members caring for them. Obviously, the fewer the number of children for each adult, the more attention your child will get. A small number of children per adult is most important for babies and younger children.

4. ASK

It's very important that the adults who care for your children have the knowledge and experience to give them the attention they need. Ask about the background and experience of all staff: the program director, caregivers, teachers, and any other adults who will have contact with your child in the home or center. Find out about the special training each one has and whether the program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). Quality care providers and teachers will be happy to have you ask these questions.

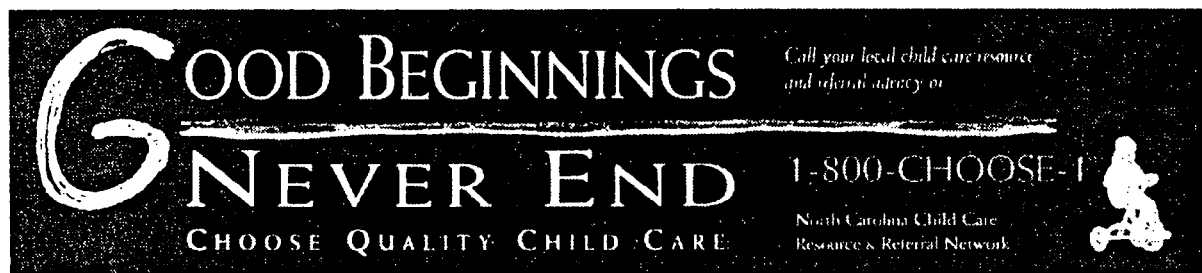
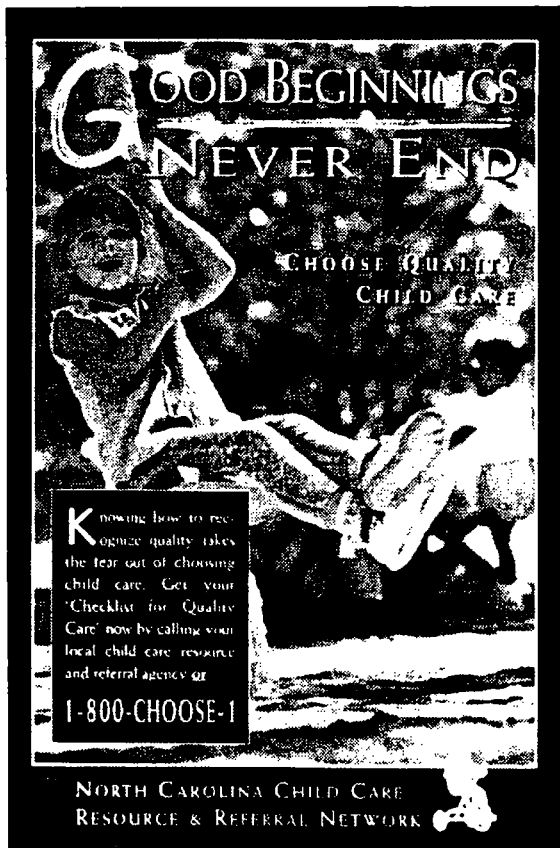


- Look
- Listen
- Count
- Ask
- Be Informed

**Check
It Out!**

5. BE INFORMED

Find out more about efforts in your community to improve the quality of child care. Is your caregiver involved in these activities? How can you get involved? For more information, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. Or call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246.



North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Sally Johns Design
 1040 Washington Street
 Raleigh, NC 27605
 Phone: 919-828-3997
 Contact: Sally Johns

Brochure with Rolodex card punch out
 Poster (11"x15")
 Table Tent
 Photo Frame Magnets (4 1/4" x 3 1/4")
 Bookmarks with checklist on back (9" x 2")
 TV and Radio PSA
 Billboard



care Matters

Bright Dreams: Planning Your Baby's Child Care



Excerpts from an interview plus an important piece of the day. Ruth Martin and Right to Choose have a guide on picky eaters with Janine. A reminder of this is delirious and one of our. Ruth Martin's, a non-Italian, is a diverse Italian, picky eaters' and Italian.

The first step in choosing child care is to determine what you want for your child. This is a decision that you will make for your child, and it is one that you will make for your child. The second step is to research the different types of child care available. This is a decision that you will make for your child, and it is one that you will make for your child. The third step is to visit the different types of child care available. This is a decision that you will make for your child, and it is one that you will make for your child. The fourth step is to choose the type of child care that you want for your child. This is a decision that you will make for your child, and it is one that you will make for your child.

Three Types of Child Care You Are Likely to Consider

Day Care Centers

Day care centers are a common choice for parents. They offer a structured environment with trained staff and other children. They are often a good choice for parents who want their child to be around other children and to learn from them.

One-on-One Care

One-on-one care is a choice where a single caregiver is responsible for the child. This can be a good choice for parents who want a more personalized care for their child. It can also be a good choice for parents who have a child with special needs.

Family Day Care

Family day care is a choice where the child is cared for in the caregiver's home. This can be a good choice for parents who want their child to be in a home-like environment. It can also be a good choice for parents who have a child with special needs.

Infants & Toddlers

Daily care of an infant or toddler is a challenge. It requires knowledge and effort. While personal styles and values differ in families, these basic principles of good care for babies apply to all types of care - in home and out.

A good caregiver is:

Loving and Responsive

Hugs, kisses, cuddles, steady eye contact and responses in the baby's smiles, emerging skills and interests, and finds ways to expand upon each experience.

Sociable and Interested

Talks with the baby about what they do and see, and is a playful partner who introduces baby to new ideas, objects, games, and encourages social contacts.

Respectful of Individuality

Understands and welcomes the baby's development, and recognizes and tunes into the baby's personal rhythms, style, strengths, and limitations, and is comfortable with a special need or disabling condition.

Good surroundings for babies are clean, safe, and filled with interesting and stimulating things so babies can explore, try out their natural curiosities and learn through free play. They should accommodate the needs of growing infants and toddlers and have well organized and separate eating and sleeping areas.

Used with permission of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Studies show children in day care do as well as children whose parents care for them at home.

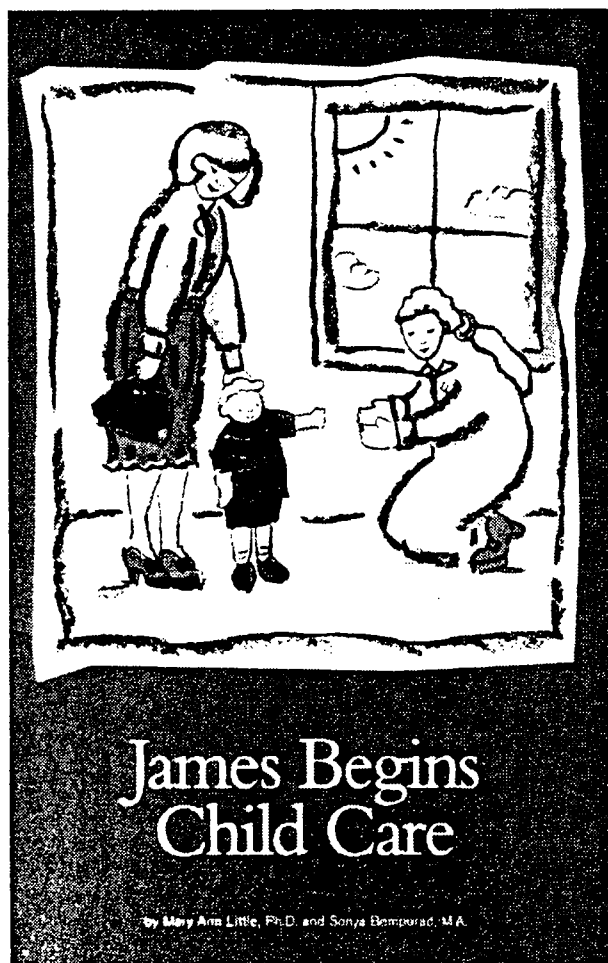
Programs for Parents

56 Grove Avenue
Verona, NJ 07044
Phone: 201-857-5171
Contact: Barbara Fedoroff

TV PSA
Radio PSA
Bus Card

Newsletter - Child Care Matters

Continuous Play Video: 11 minute video focusing on new parents selecting infant and toddler care.



The Child Care Group

1221 Riverbend, Suite 250
Dallas, TX 75247
Phone: 214-905-2401
Contact: Roberta Bergman

Books: "James Begins Child Care" Designed to be a gift which parents of newly-enrolling preschoolers can read with their children before they actually attend.

"You and Your Baby Start Child Care" Simply illustrated picture book for centers to give parents who are enrolling their infants or toddlers in the program.



What are the benefits of accreditation?

To my **CHILD** — provides early childhood programs that are best for the development of young children.

To myself as a **PARENT** — offers a way to judge the quality of child care programs.

To my **CHILD CARE PROVIDER** — gives professional recognition of achievement to center directors, teachers and family child care providers.

To my **EMPLOYER** — reduces employee stress and absences caused by unsatisfactory child care arrangements.

To our **SOCIETY** — provides settings where today's children can grow into tomorrow's productive citizens.

For information about accredited programs in your area, call

INITIATIVES FOR CHILDREN, INC.

713-840-1255,
or your parent counselor.

Initiatives for Children, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to assure that high quality child care is available and affordable to all families who need it.

Corporate H.A.N.D.S. Kids

Initiatives For Children, Inc.

March, 1996

Child Care Aware Issue No. 1

Corporate
H.A.N.D.S.



\$\$\$ Your employer, through Corporate H.A.N.D.S., has given your child care provider a grant to buy educational equipment and materials to meet your child's early learning needs

Why? Because children learn through play.

Teachers who get specialized training learn how to teach children through play.

Corporate H.A.N.D.S. has training scholarships available. Encourage a teacher to apply for one, TODAY!

Do you want your child to...

- be a good reader?
- understand and enjoy math and science?
- get along well with others?
- make good decisions independently?
- love school?

Is your child care provider helping your child accomplish these goals?

- Children learn as they play. A good early learning environment is set up to respond to your child's natural need to play.
- All of the skills that your child needs in order to be a good student and a well-adjusted, productive adult can be learned through play.

Aren't you pleased when you find that special toy your child loves to play with?

A trained teacher is as equally pleased when she finds something that catches a young child's interest.

- She uses dolls, blocks, books, dinosaurs, paint, musical instruments, puzzles, and other educational toys to introduce new concepts.
- She watches the children. When she sees an area a child is interested in, she encourages the child by asking questions, showing interest, and making suggestions, to expand the child's learning.
- She does not encourage a child to sit still and attend to an undesirable task, but she allows her to move around the room to find areas of interest and make choices.
- She understands that children's interests vary. She doesn't expect all children to enjoy the same things, so she doesn't make all children do the same projects.

What will a child learn by playing with blocks?

Children will develop an understanding of length, height, weight, and area as they use blocks in construction.

They will predict outcomes by seeing how high they can build before the blocks fall.

The children will use addition, subtraction, and fractions to figure out how many blocks they need to fill a space.

They will solve problems related to construction as they figure out how to build a bridge or steps, etc.

Children will classify, sort, and organize in a sequence as they play with blocks. These skills are necessary in order to be able to read.

Blocks will help children develop small and large muscle control.

They will get a better understanding of spatial relationships, below, beside, above...

Children will learn to share and cooperate with others while playing in the block area. They will develop a positive self-concept in the block area because there is no failure or no right way to accomplish a task.

- She knows that young children don't learn as well in large-group, teacher-directed activities. She encourages children to play in small groups.
- She knows that all children develop at different rates, so she individualizes the learning environment and educational materials for the children in her class.

• She always remembers that young children learn best through play.

If your child care provider is allowing your child to learn through play in a safe and nurturing environment, then your provider is helping your child become a good reader, understand new concepts, get along well with others, and make good decisions.

Initiatives for Children

5433 Westheimer, Suite 620
Houston, TX 77056-5305
Phone: 713-840-0948
Contact: Jeanette Zey

Brochure - Accreditation: Added Security when Choosing Child Care
Newsletters - Corporate H.A.N.D.S. Kids

Child CARE...

it's MORE THAN JUST
graham
CRACKERS
AND
A nap



1-800-446-1114

Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Supporting your local child care resource and referral agency

Child care choices for your infant, toddler, and pre-schooler

School Age CARE...

GROWING Up
WITH
someplace
to go



1-800-446-1114

Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Supporting your local child care resource and referral agency

Out-of-school time activities for your 5 to 14 year-old child

Child Care 2000 Campaign Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network

917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 301

Tacoma, WA 98402-4421

Phone: 206-383-1735

Contact: Elizabeth Thompson

Posters (11" x 14")

TV PSA

Radio PSA

Billboards

Child Care Aware Radio PSA

MEANING OF LIFE

:60

WE FADE UP ON AND HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A BUSY OFFICE. OVER THESE SOUNDS WE HEAR TWO MEN TALKING.

DAD

You know, my wife's been so happy about David's new child care place. She wants me to call and find out what he's learned.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE PHONE BEING DIALED.

DAD

Hi David, it's Dad. So what have you been up to?

THROUGH THE RECEIVER WE HEAR A SMALL BOY'S VOICE.

DAVID

Well, we learned that sharing makes everybody happy...and if you want plants to grow they need lots of attention...and Mrs. Johnson said the Choo-choo made it to the top of the hill because he said, "I think I can, I think I can." Gotta go dad. See ya later.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE PHONE HANGING UP FOLLOWED BY DIAL-TONE. THERE IS A SHORT PAUSE AND THEN WE HEAR THE CO-WORKER.

CO-WORKER

Dave? Dave? Is everything all right with your son?

DAD

That new child care place? They just taught my son the meaning of life.

ANNOUNCER

When you're looking for quality child care, call 000-0000. We can help you make a big decision for your little one. This Child Care Aware message brought to you by the Dayton Hudson Foundation.

Child Care Aware Radio PSA

MEANING OF LIFE

:30

WE FADE UP ON AND HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A BUSY OFFICE. OVER THESE SOUNDS WE HEAR TWO MEN TALKING.

DAD

You know, my wife's so happy about David's new child care place. She wants me to call and find out what he's learned.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE PHONE BEING DIALED.

DAD

Hi David, it's Dad. So, what have you been up to?

THROUGH THE RECEIVER WE HEAR A SMALL BOY'S VOICE.

DAVID

We learned sharing makes everybody happy. Gotta go dad.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE PHONE HANGING UP FOLLOWED BY DIAL-TONE.
THERE IS A SHORT PAUSE.

DAD

That new child care place? They just taught my son the meaning of life.

ANNOUNCER

For quality child care, call 000-0000. We can help you make a big decision for your little one. This Child Care Aware message brought to you by the Dayton Hudson Foundation.

Agenda for Children/Child Care Aware
Radio PSA #1: Choosing Quality Child Care

Is child care something you need? Then look for the one thing that matters...QUALITY!

Visit the child care centers or family child care homes you are considering.

Is the environment clean and safe?

Do you hear the sounds of happy children?

Is the atmosphere bright and inviting?

Are children comforted when needed?

Is there a safe outdoor play area?

Do the caregivers seem to really like children?

Do they interact with them - talking to them, listening to them, and getting involved in their play?

Is there enough qualified staff for the number of children present? (Ask the Department of Licensing or Child Care Resources about legal ratios.)

Ask about discipline practices, the program's license, and the caregivers' training.

And trust your instincts. Will your child be happy here?

This is an important decision in your child's life. Take your time. By choosing quality now, you give your child a head start on a productive future.

For more information, call your local resource and referral service. In the Greater New Orleans area, that's 1-800-486-1712.

This message brought to you by Child Care Aware, a project of Agenda for Children, 1-800-486-1712.

Agenda for Children/Child Care Resources
PO Box 51837
New Orleans, LA 70151
Phone: 504-586-8509
Contact: Jenni Watts Evans

Agenda for Children/Child Care Aware - TV PSA Script

PSA #1: Importance of Play

AUDIO

Parent to caregiver: "Why do they just play all day? I want my child to learn!"

Caregiver: "He [or She] is learning!"

Narrator: Young children learn by doing things.

Before they can learn through paper and pencil,

children need hands-on learning experiences - that look like play - to prepare them for school, work, and life.

Quality child care is carefully planned with the needs of young children in mind.

Unlike instruction or "seatwork" that may be appropriate for older children,

teaching young children works best when they can move around, touch and feel, discover and explore. That's how young children learn the skills they need - through play.

From basic math skills

to healthy living habits,

children learn these skills

any many more in quality child care.

Trailer/Tag: Be choosy about your child care. Learn what to look for. Call Child Care Aware at Agenda for Children, 1-800-486-1712.

VIDEO

Preschool child playing in the block area.
Parent and caregiver are watching and talking. (Children are not listening.)

Show a group of children at a table working with art materials...

Show one of those children in a big school desk (chair with attached desk piece - as in a high school classroom) squirming or climbing uncomfortably in the desk - frown on face.

Show a younger child in the housekeeping area

Show a teacher directed activity during circle time

Show the same child at a table with a big pencil (maybe oversized) and a big piece of paper (11x17).

Show children in the reading/listening area

Show children in the block area

Show a child washing hands

Show children outside

Show two children hugging with a smiling teacher in the background.

Trailer/Tag: The Child Care Aware logo with 1-800-486-1712 underneath and Agenda For Children's logo & the CCR logo small in the bottom right corner.

Agenda for Children/Child Care Aware - TV PSA Script

PSA #2 - The Caregiver

AUDIO

I want a child care provider for my child who is warm and loving;

...Someone who talks with the children and listens to them;

I want my child's teacher to be involved in her [or his] play;

They should offer guidance to help children *learn* appropriate behavior;

I want my child's teacher to have plenty of fun ideas that will challenge my child;

...And the caregiver should encourage my child's learning by getting down on her level, supporting her as she tries new things - celebrating even small successes;

I think people who work with children should be very careful about health and safety practices that help prevent accidents and avoid spreading germs;

Child care providers should be committed to their field and get involved in professional organizations and education or training;

I want a caregiver for my child who enjoys being with children.

Narrator: Whether your child spends five or forty-five hours a week in someone else's care, that caregiver is a very important person in your child's life.

Child care providers need skills and energy and plenty of patience. It is a very important job.

Trailer/Tag: Be choosy about your child care. Learn what to look for. Call Child Care Aware at Agenda for Children, 1-800-486-1712.

VIDEO

Fade from one parent to another making statements about caregivers. At least four different parents will be used. Parents will be filmed against a studio background. Parents will be asked to put statements in words they are comfortable with.

During the narration, show caregivers interacting with children - a caregiver with preschool children outside...fade to a caregiver reading with toddlers...fade to a caregiver playing on the floor with two infants.

Trailer/Tag: The Child Care Aware logo with 1-800-486-1712 underneath and Agenda for Children's logo small in the bottom right corner.

Child Care 2000 Campaign
State of Washington
Radio PSA Scripts - :20 Each

I. Infant/Toddler/Preschool Message

Raising a family is one of the most exciting things we can do. But, finding appropriate child care can sometimes be a real struggle. The Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network knows that *child care is more than just graham crackers and a nap*. We are available at 1-800-446-1114 to connect you with your local child care resource and referral program which will provide child care referrals, tips and training to parents and providers who would like to help ease the process for everyone. For your customized information packet, please call 1-800-446-1114.

II. School Age Message

Knowing where your school-age children are every minute of the day can be a real juggling act. At the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network, we know that good school-age care means *growing up with someplace to go*. We are available at 1-800-446-1114 to connect you with your local child care resource & referral program which will provide after school care referrals, tips, and training to parents and providers who want to make the most of their out-of-school time. For your customized information packet, please call 1-800-446-1114.

PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS, INC.
:30 Television PSA - Small Hands/Big Dreams
10/96

Small Hands/Big Dreams

Helping your baby grow and thrive,
It's the most important job you can do -
So plan your child care as soon as possible.
call: (201) 857-5171.
We can help you find the care your baby needs.
So you can help build your baby's dreams.

Appendix C
Consumer Education Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics Newsletter

SAMPLE AAP NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Child Care Aware: A Resource for Talking With Parents About Child Care

When parents search for child care they turn first to other parents and to their health care providers, the two sources they expect to understand their needs and have access to helpful information. In an American Academy of Pediatrics survey, half of pediatricians reported discussing child care regularly with parents. While most report discussing the issue only when parents raise it, many pediatricians are making child care discussions a part of routine child health supervision.

Parents want to choose good child care programs, but many do not know how to evaluate program quality. A recent national study revealed that 90% of parents surveyed rate their programs as very good, while the ratings of trained observers indicate that most of these same programs are providing care that ranges from harmful to mediocre. It is through this gap that some children fall prey to child care that is negligent or abusive. Current public policy fails to view high quality child care as critical to the healthy development of children and their families. In most communities there are only a handful (10 to 20%) of high quality child care programs available.

Pediatricians can play a very important role in helping parents make good child care choices. In the March 96 issue of *Pediatrics*, the AAP committee on Early Childhood, Adoption and Dependent Care suggests that pediatricians view early childhood educators as partners; promote the expectation of high quality child care in their contacts with families, child care providers, licensing organizations, and legislators; educate themselves about state and local regulations and national performance standards; give parents good information; and share information with and support child care providers. For example, parents need to know that state regulated centers and homes meet a "floor" of minimum acceptable standards meant to avoid harm while national accredited centers and homes are reaching toward a "ceiling" of high quality standards that foster healthy child and family development.

The Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC), the Pennsylvania Family Child Care Provider Association (PFCCPA) and CHOICE (which offers both health and child care information and referral services) have received a national grant from Child Care Aware, which makes national awards to community organizations for communication programs that help parents to understand the importance of high-quality child care and to recognize and choose the best care for their children. This grant was one of seven awards selected from ninety-two national applicants.

In Pennsylvania, this group of community partners is working to put information about quality child care into the hands of the primary resources that parents trust most and turn to first when choosing a child care program: pediatricians, maternal and infant health professionals, other parents who are using child care, and child care providers themselves. Using materials provided by Child Care Aware, these organizations are working to get good information to the people who can most effectively help parents choose good quality child care.

Child Care Aware, Rochester, Minnesota, is a partnership of the Dayton Hudson family of stores (Dayton's, Hudson's, Marshall Field's, Mervyn's and Target), the Child Care Action Campaign, the National Association for Family Child Care, and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Child Care Aware produces brochures, posters and booklets to help parents know what to look for and ask when visiting programs. These could be displayed in pediatric and obstetric offices, sent home with new parents in a hospital's new baby packets, and distributed during parenting workshops. Short articles and sidebars with key points and checklists for parents are available to include in parent and community publications. A national toll-free Child Care Aware information line, 1-800-424-2246, helps parents get in touch with their local child care resource and referral agencies.

For a sample packet of Child Care Aware brochures, information about Pennsylvania's Child Care Aware project, or to discuss ideas for ongoing development of this project, contact Alison Lutton at DVAEYC, 117 S. 17th Street, Suite 707, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Phone 215-963-0094. FAX 215-864-1085.

Developed by Alison Lutton August 1996

Appendix D

Early Childhood Language and Parent Perceptions

**EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS:
A Bridge to Cross**

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPEAK	PARENT PERCEPTION	PARENT - FRIENDLY LANGUAGE
Quality Child Care	• Love, attention, smiling faces • Caring for my child as I would • Meeting all my child's needs • Not a lot of TV or time alone • Home away from home • Good parenting	• Quality child care • Warm, nurturing, attentive care • Good child care
Developmentally Appropriate Practice	• Membership in an exclusive club • Something prescribed by a doctor • Program for developmentally delayed children	• Activities that stimulate and interest children at different ages • Caregivers that know how to help children grow and develop • Focus on learning through play
Staff-to-Child Ratio	• A mathematical equation of no interest to me • A licensing term	• The number of children for each adult. The more adults for each child, the more attention your child will receive.
Early Childhood Professional	• Cold, non-caring adult • Goal-oriented, overly structured • Not enough hugs, loving, caring	• Nurturing Professional • Committed, Caring Professional
Licensing	• A piece of paper anyone can get • Some government monitoring • OK, but not a bottom-line factor	• The program has met a minimum level of health, safety, and training requirements.
Training	• "What can they be trained in?" • No degree or license needed to hug, love, nurture a child • Threat to my capabilities: "Nobody made me go to school to be a parent" • OK, but not a bottom-line criteria • Over-emphasizes business practices	• Training helps caregivers to understand: • Need for individual attention • Nutrition • Good discipline • Caring for more than 1 child • Spotting learning disabilities • Childhood diseases

Appendix E

Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision

Prepared by Child Care Aware

Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision

Every day, 10 million to 12 million children below the age of 5 require full-time or part-time child care, for which parents are spending \$27 billion a year. That's just for care of children under age 5! The numbers swell when combined with quality care for the 24 million school-age children too young to stay home alone before and after school while parents work, look for work, or get job training.

According to the New York-based Families and Work Institute, only about one percent of employers in the U.S. offer child care options such as flex-time, on-site child care and subsidized care. That leaves the majority of parents on their own to find quality, affordable child care that will give them peace of mind.

Even when parents do have sufficient information to recognize and choose good child care, they sometimes cannot find it. The solemn fact is that only 9 to 12 percent of child care in America is truly growth-enhancing for children, and that 60 percent is merely custodial—that is, not harmful to children but not particularly nurturing either. The remaining 28 to 31 percent of child care is inadequate care. However, with well-informed consumers comes demand for more and better services—for quality child care as for well-maintained aircraft or low-fat foods.

*"I remember...
calling up the list of
licensed day cares, all
these names that you
know nothing about.
There was a [child
care provider] in the
neighborhood, and I
remember going and
pinning a note on her
door. It was a horrible
feeling of...not know-
ing where to turn."*

Parents Speak About Child Care.
Kathy Modigliani, Wheelock College

Why do we believe that a consumer marketing approach can help solve America's child care dilemma?

- ☒ Because in order to reach parents everywhere with the messages and frequency required to change attitudes and behavior, we need to meet them on their own ground: the consumer marketplace. The Child Care Aware toll-free information number must be accessible through popular media and wherever parents go for shopping, personal services, health care, recreation, transportation and worship.
- ☒ Because in focus groups, parents say they feel isolated when looking for child care. When local child care resource and referral agencies become as familiar as the yellow pages, parents will know where to turn for help and will no longer feel alone in their search.
- ☒ Because the quality of child care needs to improve, and economic studies have shown that quality improvement happens only when consumers demand it. We can increase demand by educating parents so that they know what good child care looks like and how to ask for it.
- ☒ Because child care is perceived as a family affair, even though child care issues affect the workplace and community, too. National studies provide overwhelming evidence that good child care contributes to the high self-esteem that helps keep kids away from drugs, early pregnancy and crime. And good child care means a better outlook for our future workforce.
- ☒ Because TV reports about bad or abusive child care do not offer practical advice for avoiding bad care and recognizing quality care. Parents need this information and they need to know about the local resources available to help them.

Child Care Aware is a privately funded initiative uniting national nonprofit child care concerns, local child care resource and referral agencies, and corporate sponsors in the effort to create a marketplace of informed parents making better child care choices and driving demand for quality child care. The results, we believe, will benefit not only parents, but also employers and even community.

Appendix F

Planning Tools

Checklist for Planners

Potential Sources of Funding and In-Kind Support

Budget Tips

IV. RESOURCE PLANNING

- ___ Enlist the services (paid and/or pro bono) of a Campaign Coordinator.
- ___ Enlist the services (paid and/or pro bono) of communications, marketing, and/or public relations experts.
- ___ Raise funds, obtain in-kind contributions of services or products (printing, postage, production of PSAs or videos, free or discounted advertising space, etc.).

V. DEVELOPING AND TESTING MESSAGES

- ___ Review messages of recent consumer education efforts across the country. Do any apply to your goals and audiences?
- ___ Review what you've learned from reading *Parents Speak About Child Care* and in focus groups.
- ___ If you choose to develop your own messages rather than replicate currently tested materials, put communications and marketing experts to work on creative and message development.
- ___ Remember the three C's: clear, concise, and consumable.
- ___ Test the literacy level to match the audiences you've targeted.
- ___ Make sure messages are culturally appropriate.
- ___ Test the materials, language, creative, etc. with parents prior to mass production. Ask your test audiences where they like to get information about caring for their family. What multi-media vehicles in the community do they notice? Would they trust a message presented there? Would they call?

VI. PLANNING USE OF COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

- ___ Review your resource availability, including level of staff or consultant support, funds, and in-kind donations.
- ___ Review the results of your testing/focus groups. Identify the communication vehicles that parents thought they'd be most responsive to.
- ___ Conduct assessment of resources and contacts within the Planning Team. Who has connections with billboard companies, TV, radio, social service agencies, pediatrician networks, etc. What has the community's experience been with each potential medium in terms of ease of working together, past successes with the audience, etc.?

- Identify specific media and outreach outlets in the community. Assign tasks to staff, consultants, and planning team members. Develop a timing and action plan to keep everyone on track.

POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR FUNDING AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

Banks

Billboard companies

Bus companies

Child Care and Development Block Grant Quality Improvement Funds

Community Service Block Grant

Family or corporate foundations

Health Management Organizations (HMO)

Insurance companies

Outdoor Advertiser's Associations

Newspapers

Parent Press

Printers

Radio Stations

Rotary Clubs

Television Stations

BUDGET TIPS

A review of marketing and advertising resources suggests the following principles which may be helpful in determining how much to spend for a multi-media campaign.

1. Use the budget by objective method - set specific advertising objectives, plan activities to meet them, and estimate the cost of performing these tasks. According to Jeffrey Davidson, author of *The Marketing Sourcebook for Small Business*, this approach works because it is most likely to put advertising dollars to work where they will do the most good.

2. The *Marketing Sourcebook for Small Business* suggests a few rules of thumb from the *Business Report*, published in Monterey, California:

- For every dollar spent to buy space or time, plan one dollar to produce the ad.
- The advertising budget is not a luxury. Once set, it should not be used to make up for budget shortfalls.
- Organizations should worry as much about underspending as about overspending. Nonprofit overspending may be less of a concern as it may produce a greater visibility which yields increased access to additional partners and potential funders.

3. *101 ways to Build Enrollment in Your Early Childhood Program* includes many hints on ways to stretch advertising dollars, such as:

- Always use the standard advertising rates as the basis for negotiation.
- Track all your advertising dollars and reuse the most successful efforts.

4. Nonprofit organizations are similar to small businesses, and have limited resources for multi-media campaigns. *Guerrilla Marketing* by Jay Conrad Levinson includes many strategies for maximizing marketing and advertising efforts, and tips such as:

- Reserve about 10 percent of your budget for the production of marketing materials.
- Think of different ways materials can be used over time so that you get as much mileage as possible from the original investment.
- Develop a solid marketing calendar so you don't have to pay for "rush" jobs.

Child Care Aware Examples

A review of Child Care Aware projects found that consumer education programs based on staff outreach or community organizing, such as in Ukiah, California, Houston, Texas, and Los Angeles, California, required high investments in staff, ranging from 82-95% of the budget. In contrast, programs which relied on public media required a lower investment in staff, but a higher investment in consultants, design, printing, and advertising.

Examples of statewide campaign costs:

Florida: \$180,000 Cash / \$100,000 In-Kind

Alaska: \$210,000 over three years

Washington: \$80,000 Cash / \$500,000 In-Kind

A look at one campaign's expenses by percentages:

Salaries & Benefits	20.0%
Office Expenses	1.6%
PR Firm Retainer	13.0%
Postage/Shipping	14.0%
Collateral Items	7.0%
Bus Ads	8.0%
Billboards	10.0%
Print Ads	13.0%
Printing	7.0%
Travel	1.0%
Administration	7.0%

Examples of outreach or community organizing campaigns:

Ukiah: \$10,000 leveraged with an additional \$27,000 AmeriCorps match
Houston: \$20,000
Los Angeles: \$19,000

Examples of Community Multi-Media Campaigns:

Essex County, NJ: \$24,104 Cash / \$5,000 In-Kind
Chicago Family-to-Family project: \$36,000 per year for three years
New Orleans: \$19,000

Resources

Davidson, Jeffrey P. (1989) *The Marketing Sourcebook for Small Business*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Dean, Sandra Linville. (1988) *Small Business Guide to Successful Advertising: A Handbook for Small Business*. Wilmington, DE: Enterprise Publishing.

Levinson, Jay Conrad. (1984) *Guerrilla marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits from Your Small Business*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Levinson, J. C. and Seth Godin. (1994) *The Guerrilla Marketing Handbook*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Appendix G

Working with Design and Marketing Pros

WORKING WITH DESIGN AND MARKETING PROS

There are four basic types of firms that develop advertising:

1) Advertising Agencies

- Full-service centers for all advertising needs
- Employ 10 to 150 or more
- Offer expertise in all advertising media -- print, radio, television
- Specialize in fast turn-around times
- Many have in-house research staff that can provide up-to-date information on market trends. These extra services may mean extra costs for clients.

2) Marketing Communications Firms

- Best-suited to produce high-profile corporate identity campaigns
- Create print advertising and may also coordinate print ad placement
- Develop print collateral (brochures, logos, signage, billboards, direct mail, newsletters, and stationery)
- Quality of each piece is emphasized as part of an overall advertising strategy, with corporate image at its heart

3) Graphic Design Studios

- Generally smaller than ad agencies
- Employ 5 to 12 people (creative director, art director, associate art directors, and designers)
- Finished product *generally* returned to client for placement and distribution (however, some provide media-buying and other marketing services)

4) Independent Designers

- Capable of producing work similar to a full-scale graphic design studio
- Usually limited to lower volumes and slower turn-around times
- Comparatively low overhead and fees

Five Tips to Reduce Time, Cost, and Frustration

1) Define the message and target the audience.

Before meeting with the marketing communications firm, have a clear idea of the message your company wants to convey and the target audience you want to reach.

2) Select one decision-maker for the company.

One person with the authority to give the "go-ahead" as questions arise will cut down considerably on the time it takes to get the project finished. This can greatly reduce deadline overruns that occur because of last-minute copy or photo changes, saving a considerable amount of money.

3) Bring good ideas, an adequate budget, and an open mind.

Bring these things the first time you meet with the firm. Remember that you've hired them for their professional expertise. It's good to have your own ideas, but don't cast them in concrete. (i.e. Would you go to a doctor having already made a self-diagnosis and having already written your own prescription?) The marketing professional may see problems you haven't even perceived and may propose solutions you may not have considered.

4) Ask for an estimate and a schedule.

If your first meeting has produced a clear understanding of the needs of the client and marketing communications firm, you should ask for an estimate of how long the job will take and how much it will cost. These protect you both from potential misunderstandings.

5) "Pick two -- price, quality, or speed."

The old advertising adage often holds true. The lowest price and fastest turn-around time will often produce poor quality results. If you want a high-quality advertising piece in a hurry, be prepared to pay for it.

Contributed by Sally Bruner Johns, owner and creative director of Sally Johns Design, Raleigh, NC and communications consultant to the Florida Children's Forum and the North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Network.