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Child Care AwareSM

A PARTNERSHIP FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE

Child Care Aware is a national initiative designed to improve the quality of child care and increase the availability of quality child care in local communities. The nationwide campaign continues to train child care providers and teach parents how to identify a quality child care environment and where to find quality child care in their community. Child Care Aware was created by founding sponsor Dayton Hudson Corporation and its stores in partnership with national and local quality advocates, resource and referral agencies and educational organizations.

For more information about Child Care Aware or help in locating your local child care resource and referral agency, call:

1-800-424-2246

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Your purchase of **Baby Fresh** benefits **Child Care Aware** and helps to improve the quality of child care in America.



Baby Fresh is proud to be a national sponsor of **Child Care Aware.**

DAYTON'S HUDSON'S
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Child Care Action Campaign
 National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
 National Association for the Education of Young Children
 National Association for Family Child Care

GIVE YOUR CHILD SOMETHING THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME...



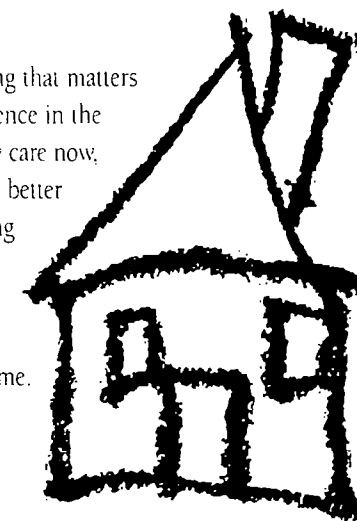
Child Care Aware.
YOUR PARTNER FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE



...QUALITY CHILD CARE!

Is child care something you need?

Then this brochure can help. Especially if you're 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 a better chance to become a more productive adult. So take your time in choosing child care. Compare your choices. And ask plenty of questions. Here are some general points about choosing quality child care. A good place to begin a serious search is with your local child care resource and referral agency. They know a lot about local choices, and can save you a lot of time.



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.



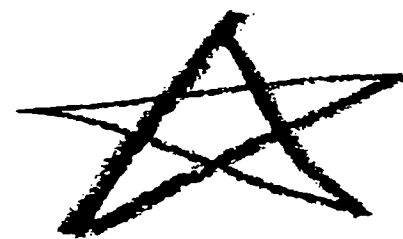
4. ASK

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.

ACCREDITATION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU
AND YOUR CHILD?

- ▶ Accredited homes and centers voluntarily measure up to national standards of quality that have been established by national child care organizations. Programs that are accredited have gone beyond minimum licensing standards and have made a commitment to provide the kind of care, attention, and stimulating activities that you and your children require.
- ▶ Caregivers in NAEYC- or NAFCC-accredited programs take part in on-going child development training. Trained caregivers are more likely to understand children's needs at different ages, plan appropriate activities, and interact with children in warm and stimulating ways. They are also more likely to provide positive guidance for children, rather than harsh discipline.
- ▶ Parents who use accredited programs are very happy with them! These programs undergo in-depth self-assessments, independent observation and approval by professional experts, and final endorsement by a national committee.



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.

CHECK IT OUT!

The following points are good ways to measure the quality of a child care home or center.

CAREGIVERS/TEACHERS

- ☐ Do the caregivers/teachers seem to really like children?
- ☐ Do the caregivers/teachers get down on each child's level to speak to the child?
- ☐ Are children greeted when they arrive?
- ☐ Are children's needs quickly met even when things get busy?
- ☐ Are the caregivers/teachers trained in CPR, first aid and early childhood education?
- ☐ Are the caregivers/teachers involved in continuing education programs?
- ☐ Does the program keep up with children's changing interests?
- ☐ Will the caregivers/teachers always be ready to answer your questions?
- ☐ Will the caregivers/teachers tell you what your child is doing every day?
- ☐ Are parents' ideas welcomed? Are there ways for you to get involved?
- ☐ Do the caregivers/teachers and children enjoy being together?
- ☐ Is there enough staff to serve the children? (Ask local experts about the best staff/child ratios for different age groups.)
- ☐ Are caregivers/teachers trained and experienced?
- ☐ Have they participated in early childhood development classes?

SETTING

- ☐ Is the atmosphere bright and pleasant?
- ☐ Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area with a variety of safe equipment? Can the caregivers/teachers see the entire playground at all times?
- ☐ Are there different areas for resting, quiet play and active play? Is there enough space for the children in all of these areas?

ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Is there a daily balance of play time, story time, activity time and nap time?
- ☐ Are the activities right for each age group?
- ☐ Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?
- ☐ Are toys clean, safe and within reach of the children?

IN GENERAL

- ☐ Do you agree with the discipline practices?
- ☐ Do you hear the sounds of happy children?
- ☐ Are children comforted when needed?
- ☐ Is the program licensed or regulated?
- ☐ Are surprise visits by parents encouraged?
- ☐ Will your child be happy there?

Child Care AwareSM

Informed parents making better child care choices.

Our Mission

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 agencies.

Our Strategies

Child Care Aware will accomplish its mission by:

1. Building consumer awareness and access to information on the national level, in partnership with retailers and other corporate sponsors, and by
2. Building consumer awareness of the information and services available from local community child care resource and referral agencies.

Our Successes

Founded in 1988 with a grant from the Dayton Hudson Foundation and the Dayton Hudson Corporation, including its three operating divisions (Target, Mervyn's and The Department Store Division), Child Care Aware has successfully accomplished many of the objectives of its original mission, which included pioneering and supporting the professional development and training of family child care providers as well as educating parents to recognize and choose good child care:

-  Initiated development of training courses of 15 hours or more for 17,000 family child care providers in 40 local communities, improving the quality of care for over 85,000 children
-  Prompted the *1995 Family Child Care Training Study* conducted by the Families and Work Institute, which found that following training, children were more secure with their providers and more engaged in activities, and overall quality in family child care improved.
-  Supported more than 700 family child care providers in achieving accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the highest standard for family child care quality in the country. The providers supported by Child Care Aware account for half of all accredited family child care providers in the United States.
-  Conducted parent focus groups in nine cities to better understand parents' values, attitudes and concerns about child care. Results were used to craft messages and identify communication strategies during Child Care Aware's national consumer awareness campaign launched in 1992.
-  Established a national, toll-free parent information hotline linking parents nationwide with their local child care resource and referral agencies, and disseminating information about how to recognize and choose quality child care.
-  Distributed 7.25 million information-packed brochures directly to parents through the toll-free hotline; through Dayton Hudson Corporation retail stores, child care resource and referral agencies, community organizations, hospitals, churches and schools; and at public events
-  Awarded Consumer Education Grants totaling over \$360,000 for 36 pilot programs in 21 states, designed for replication by community-based and statewide child care advocacy organizations.
-  Contributed to articles on choosing good child care in *USA Today*, *Parents* magazine, *Family Circle*, *Working Mother*, *Business Week*, *Fortune* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and to segments on ABC, CBS and NBC network news programs.

Our Leadership

The Child Care Aware Board of Directors is made up of distinguished leaders in the field of child care and in the corporate community. Current Board membership includes:

Gail Dorn, vice president of communications and community relations, Target Stores and Dayton Hudson Corporation, Minneapolis, MN

Deborah Eaton, president, National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), San Diego, CA

Ellen Galinsky, co-president, Families and Work Institute, New York, NY

Barbara Reisman, executive director, Child Care Action Campaign (CCAC), New York, NY

Tutti Sherlock, executive director, Child Care Resource & Referral Inc., Rochester, MN, and chair of the Board

Polly Talen, senior program officer, Dayton Hudson Foundation, Minneapolis, MN

Yasmina Vinci, executive director, National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), Washington, DC

Barbara Willer, director of public affairs, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Washington, DC

Our Plan

In August 1996, the Board of Directors redefined the mission of Child Care Aware to focus solely on integrating child care and the child care provider selection process into the consumer marketplace.

To help accomplish our mission, we are seeking additional corporate and foundation sponsors as well as Board members from the corporate, media, marketing and financial communities who have a demonstrated interest in quality child care, and who will contribute the expertise and financial resources that will help achieve our objectives.

We anticipate that Child Care Aware will grow in service to the nation's working families, employers, and communities, while remaining focused on our mission to integrate quality child care into the marketplace and to end the isolation of parents making child care decisions.

*"Child Care Aware
demonstrates the
positive change that
can be realized
when resources and
leadership are dedi-
cated to a carefully
coordinated and well-
managed effort."*

Families and Work Institute

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 every community.



SAMPLING OF MEDIA MENTIONS

CHILD CARE AWARE

SPECIAL EDITION

YOUR CHILD Newweek®

Spring/Summer 1991 \$3.50



From Birth to Three

What You Need
To Know

How Speech
Begins

A Baby's Brain

Genes &
Emotions

What's Normal,
What's Not

Where You Can Turn

BY CARLA KOEHL

AVID "TELE-PARENTS" WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE'S nothing like a phone jack and 16 megabytes of RAM for navigating the mysteries, hurdles and hassles of life with an infant or toddler. If only you had Net-scape and a 28.8 modem—or at least speed-dial—they'll say, you'd be surfing and dialing your way to parental bliss with all the child-rearing info that's available by PC and phone. Are they batty? No. Just a little excited.

There are now more places than ever to phone for help when mothers and fathers feel parentally challenged. And the explosion of parenting Web sites and newsgroups that's taken place on the Internet over the last five years is connecting families from household to household the way the telephone did for the first time in 1876. Only this time the advance in communications isn't just overcoming distance and isolation. It's conquering stigmas.

Kate Ripley was nursing her newborn in her cabin half an hour outside Fairbanks,



Online support: Rory and Kate

Alaska, when she found an online breast-feeding newsgroup. "I was really lonely," she says. "It was a huge relief." Now that Rory's 9 months, the baby books are hinting that he's eating too often. Ripley's group (misc.kids.breastfeeding) says otherwise. "You don't just want to have someone validate everything you think," she says. "But it's such a variety of voices, you can cull." Even in Los Angeles, where there's no such thing as a remote location, actor Brian Markinson logs on whenever he and his wife are stumped about their 9-month-old. "It's another resource," he says, "rather than call a doctor and feel like you're being a pain."

Technological alarmists, of course, take delight in warning that millions of modem-happy moms and dads will do nothing but produce millions of antisocial, monitor-gazing kids. A reliance on dial-tone parenting, they insist, keeps families, friends and neighbors from trading advice the old-fashioned way: in person. But a glance at all the live, wired interaction out there suggests that, so far, the alarmists are wrong.

On the Net

Usenet

alt.parenting and misc.kids
Great places to start on the Usenet—the Internet's collection of newsgroups—for discussions on hundreds of topics from teething and breast-feeding to pets and snoring. Also, rec.arts.books.children is a 24-hour-a-day book group on children's literature.

Childbirth.Org

<http://www.childbirth.org>
Top discussion forums here, and a home page that gets right to the point on tough issues, including "Pregnancy & HIV," "Having Your First Baby Over 35" and "Complications."

Family.com

<http://www.family.com>
Disney's new site has been criticized for being more upscale than helpful. But their bulletin boards and chat rooms are filled with the voices of intelligent, caring parents. They must be doing something right.

ParentTalk Newsletter

<http://www.tnpc.com/parentalk/index.html>
Clearly written articles by physicians and psychologists. What this site lacks in graphic creativity, it makes up for in sheer mass of information.

ParenthoodWeb

<http://parenthoodweb.com>
Pediatricians and psychiatrists respond (in due time) to your e-mail. Meanwhile, they've posted their stock answers to anything-but-stock questions, including "Did we make a mistake by having a child?"

Parenting Q&A

<http://www.parenting-qa.com/>
This site calls itself the only one on the Web "solely devoted to providing parents with answers to their most pressing questions." It does answer questions faster than most other sites we tried. But it also offers essays on touchy subjects like spirituality, and suggests reading lists for kids, games for rainy days.

ParentSoup

<http://www.parentsoup.com/>
Excellent discussion forums address everything from step-parenting and disciplining closely spaced siblings to premature babies and children with attention deficit disorder.

Zero to Three

<http://www.zerotothree.org>
The Washington, D.C.-based child-advocacy group has just launched its Web site. On it: a wealth of research and information on physical, cognitive and social development of infants and toddlers.

On the Phone

Child Care Aware

800-424-2246

Operators refer parents anywhere in the country to licensed and accredited child-care centers in their area. They'll also send, at no charge, an information packet on how to choose quality child care. Coordinated by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

ChildHelp National Hotline

800-4-A-CHILD

Twenty-four-hour advice and referrals for children and adults with questions or in crisis. Staffers with graduate degrees in counseling field calls on issues ranging from child-abuse prevention to whether it's normal for a 3-year-old girl to try urinating while standing up. (Yes, says a hotline counselor, it is.)

Gerber Information Line

800-443-7237

Tipper Gore's recorded welcome message jolts you from thoughts of strained peas on this 24-hour consumer-info line (she reminds callers that doctors recommend having babies sleep on their backs). Moms, dads, grandparents—not nurses—work the phones, advising

callers on nonmedical essentials like diapering, sleeping and "lots and lots of questions about food," says one operator.

National Parent Information Network

800-583-4135

NPIN boasts the largest parenting database in the country. Researchers hunt down referrals, abstracts and answers—and send them free of charge—to hundreds of callers every month. Trouble with toilet training, the merits of co-op playgroups vs. private preschools, baby bowel movements: absolutely nothing is out of bounds here. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

Parents Anonymous

909-621-6184 (not toll-free)

The national office in Claremont, Calif., refers parents to 45 state and regional affiliates, which offer support groups, counseling, referrals. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. PST.

Single Parents Association

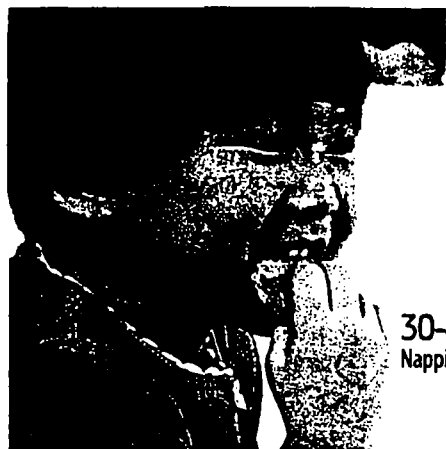
800-704-2102

This line, which has just gone national, helps parents find support groups and resources in their communities, fields questions on parenting skills and reminds single parents that they're not alone. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. CST.

With T. TRENT GEGAX

Working Life

child care



When Child Care Aware, a public-service campaign based in Rochester, Minnesota, surveyed nearly 800 4- to 10-year-old children in day-care centers and family child-care settings in 16 states, these were the activities kids said they enjoyed most.

30-40%
Napping

40-50%
Singing

60-70%
Getting hugs from teachers

Storytelling
Playing make-believe
Playing musical instruments
Playing in the sandbox
Reading and writing

70-80%
Watching television and videotapes

Taking care of animals
Playing with games, toys, and blocks
Painting and drawing

80-90%
Having a snack

Playing with others
Going to the playground
Going for walks and outings
Making friends

What kids like about child care

If you can't manage an occasional romantic rendezvous with your husband because of the cost of sitters, joining a **baby-sitting cooperative**—a group of parents who take turns minding each other's children—may be the solu-

Free sitters

tion. There are more than just financial benefits: Your kids (and you) may form some lasting friendships, and you'll have the comfort of knowing that mature adults are watching your children when you're not there.

To find a baby-sitting co-op, ask your PTA if they know of any groups in your area and check bul-

letin boards at your grocery store, health club, house of worship, and pediatrician's office. Or follow these guidelines to set up your own.

● **Advertise for members** by tacking flyers to bulletin boards in places parents frequent.

● **Start with one or two other families** and build from there. A **membership of no more than 24 families** works best, so that administration doesn't get out of hand.

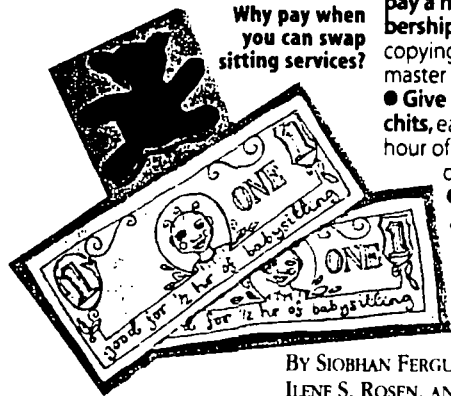
● **Make a master list.** Include children's names and ages, the typical times that the family is available (for example, weekend evenings only), and any necessary emergency and medical information.

● **Ask each family to pay a nominal membership fee** to cover the copying costs for the master list and for chits.

● **Give every family 20 chits**, each worth a half hour of baby-sitting for one child.

● **Official rules and monthly meetings** help things run more smoothly.

Why pay when you can swap sitting services?



BY SIOBHAN FERGUS TOSCANO,
ILENE S. ROSEN, AND LYNN GONNELL

Paying caregivers their due

May 1 is Worthy Wage Day, an annual event held to call attention to the low wages paid to child-care providers. According to the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, which sponsors the campaign, the average wage for child-care workers in centers is \$6.70 per hour, and family child-care providers make even less.

In fact, salaries fall below the poverty level for 70 percent of the child-care workforce.

Caregivers are not the only ones who suffer in this situation: More than **35 percent of child-care workers leave the field every year**, and when teachers come and go, children can't form the stable, secure relationships they need.

The long-term goal of Worthy Wage Day is to allow workers to be paid what they deserve without increasing the burden on parents. The additional funds would come from government allocations and from corporate subsidies for employees.

You can champion the cause by attending pro-child-care rallies, wearing a button, or participating in teacher-appreciation activities. To find out what's happening in your area, call 800-UR-WORTHY.



Working 5 to 9

Finding affordable, high-quality child care is hard enough for parents who work 9 to 5, but for those on weekend, overnight, or rotating shifts, the challenge is even greater. Currently, 7.2 million mothers with more than 11 million children need "off-hours" care. Many of these women work in the medical, hotel, and manu-

facturing fields.

Though most day-care centers are geared to the rhythm of daytimers, businesses and communities around the country are coming up with innovative solutions.

After learning that workers at a local food-processing plant were leaving their children in their cars to sleep during overnight shifts, the non-profit group Western Idaho Community Action Program persuaded several day-care providers to stay

open longer hours.

In Phoenix, a consortium of employers formed Close To Home, which recruits and trains family child-care workers to watch children at all hours.

Four hotels united to form Atlanta's Inn for Children, a 24-hour-a-day center that serves many shift workers in the city's booming tourism industry.

For help finding care, call Child Care Aware at 800-424-2246 for the number of local resource and referral agencies.



INSIDE

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It's All Relative *Granny as nanny*

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Licensing *What does it really mean?*

The Interview *Quizzing a potential caregiver*

Is Daycare Bad for Babies? *The latest research*

Backup Care *If your infant or sitter gets sick*

Touching Base *Daily debriefings*

In an Emergency *Information to leave*

So Long, Baby *Saying good-bye*

The Daycare Decision

Days with your newborn pass in a blur, and before you know it—probably before you're ready—your maternity leave will be over. Even if you're looking forward to returning to work, it's heart-wrenching to think that someone else will be caring for your little one in your stead, feeding her, playing with her, perhaps even witnessing her first steps or first words.

That's exactly why the search for childcare can't be taken lightly. It's essential not only for your peace of mind but also for your baby's health and development to find just the right person to care for and nurture her, make her feel safe and valued, and, of course, to play with her. Though the task seems daunting, with some homework and some legwork, you *can* find the best care for the newest member of your family. ➤

re or center care, you may need to sign up even before your child
 looking six weeks before you return to work. Where to start? Ask
 boards, parents' resource groups, newspapers, and nanny agencies.

DAYCARE INFO: WHO TO CALL

U.S. Information Agency, 202/401-9810

ChildCare

Aware Hotline, 800/424-2245

Option #2: Family Daycare

Cost: \$300 to \$800 a month

For many parents, the next best thing to home is the cozy environment and loose structure of family daycare.

The Basics Call and ask: Is there an opening? How many children in the home (there shouldn't be more than six)? How many infants (no more than two)? What are the hours? Fees? Is she licensed? How long has she been in business?

How does she balance babies' needs with older kids' needs? How does she feel about nursing visits or handling pumped milk? Can you drop in anytime? Who covers for her? What's her sick-child and late-pickup policy?

Next Steps If you like her answers, arrange a visit. Look for a caregiver who's responsive and affectionate; an environment that is appealing, clean, and safe; stimulating, fun activities; happy children; toys and books in good condition; a napping place; healthy lunches and snacks; an outdoor play space or regular outings to a park or playground. If you're satisfied with what you see, schedule an interview during the children's naptime or after hours.

Advantages

- Warm, homey atmosphere
- Relatively small group
- Mixed ages
- Some scheduling flexibility
- Stimulating play and learning opportunities

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Caregiver may have no formal training
- No backup if caregiver gets sick or takes a vacation
- Home may close during summer
- Caregiver may pursue other jobs



Kids of different ages can get acquainted in family daycare.

What Does "Licensed" Really Mean?

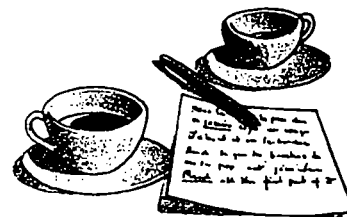
Family daycare licensing covers only health and safety issues, not quality, and no license is required in many states. That's why you'll need to make sure a program meets your own stringent standards.

Daycare centers in every state must meet health and safety requirements. But a better benchmark of quality is accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In-home caregivers do not generally need to be licensed, but some states require licensing for those tending more than two unrelated children.

The Interview

A face-to-face meeting with a caregiver is like a blind date: You're trying to learn enough about each other to decide if you want to pursue a relationship. Since actions speak louder than words, observe how a candidate responds to your



baby as well as how she answers your questions.

Then go with your gut feelings. It's vital that you like her and can communicate with her. Standard questions include:

- Why do you work with children? What do you like most, and least, about it?
- What training do you have?
- How long were you at your last job? Why did you leave?
- How long do you plan to stay in the childcare field?
- Are you CPR-certified or willing to learn?
- How do you feel about parents dropping in?
- How do you discipline?
- What do you think babies need most?

Is Daycare Bad for Babies?

There's no easy answer to that question. While experts agree that it's best for an infant to stay with a caring parent, that isn't always an option. How will daycare affect a baby's development? A recent study found that ten hours of quality daycare a week doesn't necessarily threaten the mother-baby bond. But most working families need daycare for far longer than that, and other research isn't too cheerful, either: One study shows that babies who have a succession of caregivers may later have difficulty with friendships and social situations. Another found that up to 40 percent of programs were potentially harmful to a baby's health and development. What's a parent to do? Quality and consistency of care are paramount, so seek out someone trained in early childhood education or use a center with NAEYC accreditation. But above all, make sure the person you hire is responsive, loving, playful—and committed to staying with your baby. A child can and should bond with her caregiver, so foster a warm, affectionate relationship between them.



Option #3: Daycare Centers

Cost: \$400 to \$2,200 a month

There's no getting around it: Institutional daycare isn't always ideal—or particularly easy to find—for babies. But if you must consider it, look for a program geared toward infant development that's staffed by dynamic, warm, and committed caregivers. After all, any daycare setting is only as good as the people who work there.



The Basics Call the center and find out: Is there an opening? What are the hours and fees? Are there late-pickup charges? Does the center have NAEYC accreditation? How is the staff trained? What's the turnover rate? How many babies per caregiver and per group? (There should not be more than four and eight, respectively.) Does a baby have the same caregiver at all times? Where do infants nap? What's the attitude toward breastfeeding visits and handling pumped milk? Can parents drop in?

Next Steps If you're satisfied with the answers, arrange a visit. Look for a loving, responsive staff who cuddle and play with their charges and who wash their hands frequently; happy children; a baby area that's clean, safe, and quiet; a nurturing environment with room to roll, crawl, play, and explore; and infants who are fed and diapered according to their needs, not a schedule. Finally, ask yourself, would I want to spend all week here? If the answer is yes, schedule an interview with the director.

Advantages

- Must meet state licensing regulations
- May have NAEYC accreditation
- Staff is typically well-trained
- Chance to interact with other babies
- Offers stimulating play and learning opportunities
- May offer extended hours
- No need for backup if caregiver is sick

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Environment can be noisy and chaotic
- High turnover means inconsistent care and lack of continuity
- Exposure to germs can cause illness
- Strict schedules



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ELIZABETH CREW/THE IMAGE WORKS, YAN NASCIBENE, JOHN KUCZALA

BY ANNE FIELD

Finding child-care programs to call was easy: You asked other parents, checked bulletin boards and local newspapers, asked your pediatrician for a recommendation, and even called the Child Care Aware Information Line (1-800-424-2246) for a resource and referral agency in your area. After phoning them all, you've narrowed down your options to just a few.

Now comes the hard part. To truly evaluate the quality of a program—be it family day care or a day-care center—experts say that an in-



Good caregivers sit down on the floor with the kids.

respectful and nurturing they are," says Janet Kahn Scolaro, a child and family therapist with South Nassau Communities Hospital, in Baldwin, New York. Providers should sit on the floor with the children rather than talking to the tops of their heads, or at least bend

er than insisting that a stove is used only for cooking.

Experts say you should leave your child at home for the first observational visit, so that you won't be distracted by taking care of her needs.

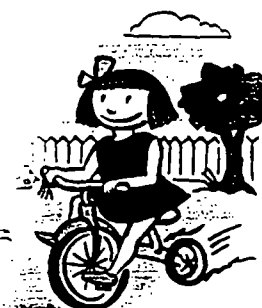
While you're watching the prospective provider in action, here are some other factors to note.

Environment. When a room is organized with distinct sections for different activities, it helps provide a sense

located away from the general play area.

For hot days, some kind of water relief is essential. "It doesn't have to be high-tech," says Scolaro. "Even a hose will do."

Staff changes. Ideally, you should observe every caregiver your child will be interacting with, so you may need to go back several times if there are staff



Separate play areas keep children safe.

shifts during the course of a typical day. (Some centers have a chang-

How to be a day-care

Experts give pointers for spotting signs of trouble.

interview with an administrator or even a caregiver isn't enough. "You've got to spend a half hour in the room," says Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D., president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Washington, D.C. "If a caregiver isn't warm and attentive to the children, she can't fake it for that long." Hearing a lot of "No, don't do that," rather than more skillful attempts at distraction, is a tip-off that you should find another arrangement.

"In well-run centers, caregivers take a child's-eye view. It tells you a lot about how

down when they give directions. "Caregivers should also look like they're having fun and be willing to go with the flow of a child's imagination," says Scolaro. If a child wants to pretend that the toy stove is a space shuttle, the caregiver ought to encourage the game, rather

of structure for children and a framework in which they can take advantage of stimulating activities. They will be more likely to play cooperatively if there is one area for blocks, one with a play kitchen, another for dolls, a table for art projects, and a quiet area where older children can read, rest, or just be alone. Age-appropriate toys and games should be accessible to kids, not stored where they can neither see nor reach them.

Similarly, wall decorations and children's artwork ought to be positioned at a kid's eye level.

Children also need an outdoor space where they can run, jump, and let off steam. There should be a separate area for riding tricycles and other vehicles, and swings should be

ing of the guard as many as five times in one day.) In order for an infant to receive optimal care, there should be no more than one primary caregiver assigned to him. "A baby needs to know there is someone he can count on," says Barbara Reisman, executive director of the Child Care Action Campaign, in New York City. If a shift change is unavoidable, make sure the same person relieves the primary caregiver each day. If your child is a toddler or preschooler, you should select a center with no more than two or three shifts per day. Regardless of the number of caregivers, if they seem exhausted or burned out, continue your search: If you sense their dissatisfaction, so will your child.

Safety essentials. Make sure the caregiver or center has taken the same types of precautions that you would



Kids need a place where they can escape the commotion.

Child Care

(Continued)

at home, such as covering outlets and tucking away cords on blinds. (For more on safety, see "Hazard Patrol.") Other points are significant as well. Do teachers and children wash their hands to help prevent germs from spreading in such close quarters? Are exits clear of any obstructions, in case of a fire or other emergency? **Nutritious food.** Not all day-care centers provide meals, but if they do, look

at what's served. Dishes should be appealing and appropriate for young children, and include plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Emergency plans. Especially with a family day-care home that has only one provider, there must be a backup plan in case the caregiver gets sick. Similarly, a qualified helper should

In order to be sure the day-care center or family day-care home you choose offers the best protection possible for your child, here's what Barbara Willis, Ph.D., spokesperson for the National Association for the Education of Young Children, recommends you look for. There are tripping hazards and paper scraps. Adults and children wash their hands before preparing food, before and after meals, and after diapering

patrol

or using the toilet. Baby toys, as well as the room itself, are cleaned daily with a child-safe disinfectant. Diapering is done in a changing room away from the food-preparation and eating areas.

Diapering is done in a changing room away from the food-preparation and eating areas. Diapering is done in a changing room away from the food-preparation and eating areas.

Electrical outlets are covered with protective caps.

Potentially poisonous or dangerous items, such as cleaning supplies and breakables, are stored in original, labeled containers and kept up high or locked away.

Play equipment is in good shape.

Children are not allowed to play in the yard if the ground is not approved for play.

Smoke detectors work, and fire extinguishers are accessible.

Recommended:

For each adult, there should be only:
3 to 4 infants or toddlers
4 to 6 two-year-olds
7 to 8 three-year-olds
8 to 10 five-year-olds

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

be available to pinch-hit if a child gets hurt and needs to be taken to the doctor or hospital. At least one staff member who is certified in infant and pediatric CPR, first aid, and the Heimlich maneuver must always be present. A quality center should be able to tell you which hospital

it uses and will request your pediatrician's name and number, a list of your child's allergies, and other important medical information.

Be continually vigilant. Your hands-on involvement in your child's care shouldn't end once you've selected a provider. It's a good idea to

go back from time to time and make sure that the standards of quality on which you based your decision are continuing to be upheld, and that your child is safe and happy in her home away from home. □

Anne Field is a freelance writer in Pelham, New York.

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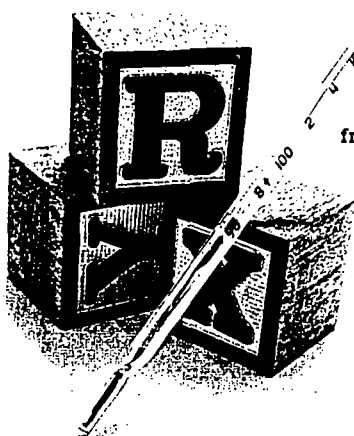
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Once You've Made a Decision You've finally found the right person to care for your baby, but your work isn't done. To ensure that they have everything they need, you'll need to consider a few more things:

Backup Care

Sometimes, even the best-laid childcare plans fall apart—your caregiver gets sick or quits, or your baby runs a fever and can't go to daycare. Since you may not be able to take time off work when this happens, make

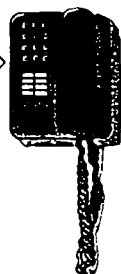


an emergency backup plan long before you need it. Can you call a nearby relative or stay-at-home friend? Does your employer offer emergency childcare? Is there a local sick-child center or agency that provides short-term, in-home sitters? Such care isn't cheap, but it may be the only option.

In an Emergency

Leave behind clear, written instructions along with a signed, dated letter giving the caregiver permission to obtain medical care for your child. Daycare centers and homes keep this information on file. For in-home care, post the following near the phone:

- Your home address and phone number
- Your full name, work address, and phone number, as well as your spouse's
- Your pediatrician's name and phone number
- Your baby's full name, birth date, and medical conditions or allergies
- The names and phone numbers of alternative contacts if neither parent can be reached



Touching Base

At the end of the day, employed moms need to know: Was baby happy? How much did she eat? When did she nap? And most important, is this setup working out? That's why daily debriefing sessions are so important.

Having a meaningful conversation, however, is easier said than done with a group-care provider, whose attention is understandably diverted during hectic pickup times. If you want more than a thumbnail sketch of baby's day, you'll probably have to schedule a dis-



A few words at day's end can make a big difference.

cussion or ask her to keep a daily log of baby's meals, diaper changes, naps, and overall mood. For in-home care, use the last 15 minutes of the nanny's shift to check in with her about your infant's day. Other keys to keeping the lines of communication open: Give your caregiver a chance to ask you questions; tell her what you expect; and let her know she's appreciated.

So Long, Baby

Leaving your new baby may be harder for you than it is for him. It can be terribly disorienting to return to work: Everything is essentially the same, but you've changed dramatically. And even as you settle back into the office, your mind will be on your baby. This is perfectly normal, and a good caregiver will expect your frequent calls during those first few weeks.

But even before then, ease yourself and your infant into the arrangement. If you're bringing him to a group setting, spend a few days together there. He'll gain confidence in his new surroundings and you'll feel more comfortable with the program. If you hire a nanny, have her start a week early so she has a chance to acquaint herself with your baby, your home, and your routines.

As you and your baby become accustomed to the new setup, both of you will thrive. And when you see him blossom, you'll know you've chosen his care wisely and well. ☺

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHN KUCZALA, ELIZABETH CREWS/THE IMAGE WORKS, YAN NASCIMBENE

WORK & FAMILY

By SUE SHELLBARGER

Costly Camps Put Many Parents in Bind For Summer Day Care

MANY WORKING parents in Patty Miller's area of the Midwest this summer are arranging a rich mix of activities for their kids: art, science and computer camps and theater and environmental-studies programs.

But for Ms. Miller's 12-year-old daughter, summer offers little more than a demand that she grow up too soon. She'll be staying home, caring for her 10- and 11-year-old siblings, because Ms. Miller, an administrative staffer at a nonprofit concern, can't afford the summer programs in her town. "I feel like I'm letting my kids down," says Ms. Miller, a single mother who makes \$12,000 a year.

She hates leaving them alone and knows it's risky and hard on them, "but I don't know what else to do. There's nothing out there I can afford." The \$150-a-week tab for sending her children to camp would eat up most of her pay.

Amid the summer rush by working parents to plan activities for school-age kids, a nagging problem is getting quietly but inexorably worse: The gap between haves and have-nots, worrisome enough during the school year, widens into a chasm when schools close in June.

High-end summer camps in special-interest areas ranging from space travel to Shakespeare are booming, says a 16-state survey by Child Care Aware, a nonprofit Rochester, Minn., child-care improvement and referral concern. But lower-cost programs that suit less-affluent parents' budgets and work hours are scarce.

One result: Staffers interviewed at six nonprofit child-care resource-and-referral agencies across the country see signs that the number of children left home alone is rising. The agencies are getting more calls from parents asking when they can legally leave kids alone. (State laws vary; while some specify an age, usually 10 to 12, others set no limit.)

CHILD-CARE affordability problems "are particularly acute in the summer," says Barbara Reisman of the nonprofit Child Care Action Campaign, New York. Day-care-weary children ages nine and up often resist going to day-care centers or having a sitter; the recreational programs they like average \$100 a week and range from \$50 to \$700, Child Care Aware says.

"I went to an Ivy League college, and I'm paying for four weeks of camp what my parents paid for a year of college" in the early '70s, says a New Jersey mother, whose son is spending a month on a Vermont lake for \$2,200.

Some inexpensive programs are being cut. Palm Beach County, Fla., officials eliminated summer school this year for 14,000 children through eighth grade. And government child-care subsidies, for parents like Ms. Miller, often don't apply to summer programs not licensed by the state.

Good, affordable, full-day programs are packed. In Charlotte, N.C., parents bearing sleeping bags

start lining up at 3 p.m. the day before signups begin to get a slot in Mecklenburg County's \$74-a-month camp. "We could easily double the enrollment" but lack funds and facilities, a spokeswoman says.

There isn't any data over time on kids in self-care during the summer; the latest national sampling, in 1990 by the Urban Institute, found 19% of children ages six through 12 are left alone at least part of the time in summer, usually for short periods; self-care was the primary arrange-



Carol Lay

ment for 2%. But the population of kids six through 13 has increased 8.4% since then, and a growing percentage come from single-parent or dual-earner families.

Self-care can be risky: in Detroit, officials report a 25% summer rise in residential fires caused by children left alone. Beyond that, it seldom yields the idyllic, Tom Sawyer-like experience of fishing and hanging out enjoyed by kids in the past; today, many parents forbid kids left home alone to even leave the house.

THE CHILD CARE Resource Center in Tulsa, Okla., has been getting urgent calls from parents each June for help finding child care. "They say, 'We were going to do self-care and it's just not working,'" says the center's Sharon Bentley. She says parents spend a lot of time on the telephone with kids who are frightened or bored and want to leave the house.

It's a wasted opportunity, too. Summer learning directly affects school performance, says Joan Bergstrom, a professor at Wheelock College, Boston, and author on educational issues. The 11- to 13-year-old age range is crucial for developing qualities, such as self-reliance and resourcefulness, that foster success in adulthood, she says.

"It's really important to feel good about yourself and get competent in something around 11, 12 or 13."

Once again, a few employers are proving a source of creative solutions. The American Business Collaboration, a 156-employer group, is helping finance more than 100 community summer camps, including 81 programs on an Olympics theme.

In New York City, a partnership of 10 employers organized by Child Care Inc., a resource-and-referral group, is planning to expand community programs for kids.

In Livingston County, Mich., where 10,000 more summer child-care slots are needed, Citizens Insurance Co. of America helps fund community recreation programs.

"We know we're not going to get more funding from the government for these programs," says Linda Herbert of the county's Community Coordinated Child Care Council. "We're really looking to employers," collaborating with community agencies, for help.

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Enterprise: Exporters set the pace among fast-growing small firms

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Advertising: D'Arcy Masius rescues N.W. Ayer with acquisition

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MARKETPLACE

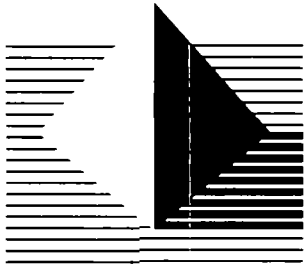
Technology: IBM studies unbundling Notes for possible Internet use

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Technology: SystemSoft to unveil self-help software for PC users

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NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

June 17, 1997

Ms. Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Jennifer:

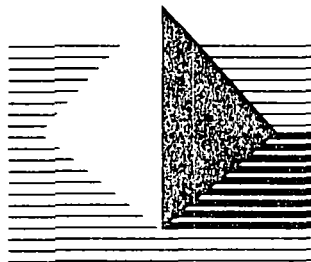
As I mentioned in our telephone conversation two weeks ago, enclosed is a proposal for an event sponsored by our Child Care Aware program to enhance the upcoming White House conference on child care. We are asking the President and Mrs. Clinton to take the lead in launching a Child Care Professional's Day to recognize exceptional child care professionals. That national holiday would take place in April, but would be established by executive order at the White House conference in November.

At your suggestion, the proposal has been forwarded to Bruce Reed and Melanne Verveer, with official copies to Donna Shalala and Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau. We will need to hear from Mr. Reed and Ms. Verveer fairly quickly in order to finalize plans for the event, including sponsorship of the event by General Mills (Cheerios) and possibly by other corporate partners.

I would greatly appreciate your help in keeping our proposal on the front burner. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at 202-393-5501. Thank you, Jennifer!

Sincerely,

Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies



NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

June 17, 1997

Mr. Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Enclosed is a proposal for an event to enhance the upcoming White House conference on child care and to underscore the President and Mrs. Clinton's commitment to American children and families.

We are proposing that the President and Mrs. Clinton take the lead in launching a national day of recognition for child care professionals, which would take place in the spring but which could be announced on the day of the White House child care conference this November. We suggest that Child Care Professional's Day be established by an executive order, and that Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors provide a "launch event" that enhances the conference.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations related to child care, are working hard to build a stable, high-quality child care system throughout both urban and rural America and to make sure that parents know how to find good child care. As you know, the need for quality child care extends to millions of American families, and their numbers are increasing as more parents exit the welfare rolls and enter the workforce. As the need for child care in our country grows, the key to success will be adequate numbers of well-trained, highly motivated providers.

Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, has been quite enthusiastic about our idea of a conference-day event to showcase the work that the President and Mrs. Clinton have done to make life better for American families, and to launch this important day. We hope you will agree that such an event provides a valuable opportunity for the Clinton Administration, and that an annual day of recognition for child care providers will add a permanent insignia to the President and Mrs. Clinton's legacy of commitment to children and families.

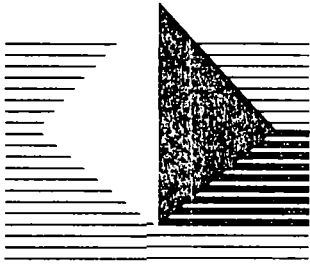
We would appreciate your reviewing our proposal at your earliest convenience, as plans for the White House conference are already underway. Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors, including General Mills (Cheerios), stand ready to support the President and Mrs. Clinton in their objectives for the conference on child care, and to provide a positively memorable event. Please reply by July 1 to Yasmina at 202-393-5501.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware



NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

June 17, 1997

The President and Mrs. Clinton
The White House
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton:

On behalf of NACCRRA and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations, we applaud your efforts to bring national attention to child care through a White House conference. Child care and early education are a part of daily life for millions of American families with children. Obtaining stable, high-quality child care will be critical to the success of parents leaving the welfare rolls to enter the workforce, and it will be a key factor in the health and well-being of their children. Clearly, child care issues also affect companies and even government agencies whose employees cannot be productive without the help of child care they can rely on.

We would like to suggest a cooperative effort between your administration and Child Care Aware to initiate a national Child Care Professional's Day, to be announced in conjunction with your upcoming White House conference on child care. When we presented the idea to Joan Lombardi, associate commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, she encouraged us to write to you immediately. We urge you and your administration to take the lead in launching this special day. Working with Child Care Aware to launch a day in honor of professional child care providers will be an opportunity for you to continue building your legacy of commitment to America's children.

Why create an annual Child Care Professional's Day?

- The role of child care professionals in our children's early development cannot be underestimated. As Americans learned from the April 17 White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, early care has decisive and long-lasting effects on how children develop socially and academically, and how they cope with stress.
- A solid partnership between parents and child care professionals is essential to the quality of child care. Child Care Professional's Day will help parents understand and appreciate the role of child care professionals, thereby strengthening this important partnership.
- Professionalism—that is, training in early child development and education—is linked to the quality of care that our children receive. Studies in the field show conclusively that children do better in programs run by trained, licensed and accredited child care professionals.
- Without loving, trained child care professionals, millions of parents would not be able to work and be productive, or complete their education. The availability of trained professionals to care for our children cannot be separated from the state of our nation's economy or from the success of welfare reform.

- Child Care Professional's Day provides opportunities to showcase skilled, nurturing providers and quality child care settings so that parents will know what to look for when choosing child care.
- Recognizing caregivers motivates them to stay in a field where demand vastly exceeds the supply and where pay can be less than rewarding. Child Care Professional's Day, therefore, will help ensure continuity of care, which is important to proper development in a child's early years.
- Child Care Professional's Day will energize more nurturing, capable people to become child care professionals as welfare reform increases the need throughout the country.

Mr. President, we sincerely believe that you, Mrs. Clinton and your entire administration can build on a legacy of commitment to families by leading the launch of a Child Care Professional's Day. The partners of Child Care Aware in this venture include the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Child Care Action Campaign, Families and Work Institute, the National Association for Family Child Care, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Most importantly, Child Care Aware has identified a number of corporate and media partners who share our vision of quality child care for all American families. To date, we have partnership commitments from General Mills, maker of Cheerios and other nutritious food brands, the General Mills Foundation, and Scholastic, the world's largest educational publisher. We anticipate that other partners will join this effort, as well.

While Child Care Professional's Day is still in the conceptual stage, we envision a launch that might include the following activities, and we would welcome your input:

- The day would be established by Executive Order during the White House conference on child care.
- The day would occur annually on the last Friday in April, when most children are settled into their child care programs and when no other holiday occurs.
- To help generate publicity for the Executive Order, General Mills will sponsor a Cheerios breakfast on the South Lawn for local area child care providers, children and parents on the morning of the White House conference.
- Child Care Aware will present you and Mrs. Clinton with an award in recognition of your ongoing commitment to the future of America's children.
- We would invite you to make an address focusing on the value of child care professionals who are trained in early childhood development. (Please note: Child Care Aware is a nonprofit initiative funded by corporate contributions and foundation grants. We do not sell or administer child care training programs and have no financial interest in any program.)

Following the White House conference, we will promote Child Care Professional's Day through the media, as well as on Cheerios boxes and in child care programs and schools. We also are planning a series of local community events throughout the country to prepare for the day.

Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, we believe that you and your administration will see value in developing a national Child Care Professional's Day to recognize exceptional child care providers. Along with programs to support children and their parents, Child Care Professional's Day completes your well-conceived effort to make sure that every child in America starts out right, with the quality care they need to grow into happy, healthy and productive citizens.

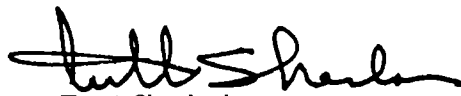
As you read this letter, the Child Care Bureau is gathering support for your plans for the White House conference on child care. Child Care Aware is offering to bring our corporate and media partners together to launch Child Care Professional's Day in conjunction with the conference. Can we count on you and Mrs. Clinton to lead the launch of this important day?

--We appreciate your considering this suggestion. Again, we applaud your efforts to ensure the best possible care for each and every one of America's children.

Sincerely,



Yasmina Vinci
Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies



Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware

cc: Ms. Donna Shalala, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Ms. Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner, Child Care Bureau

Background Note:

As the consumer education arm of America's network of over 550 child care resource and referral programs, Child Care Aware worked with the Child Care Bureau to design a consumer education leadership forum earlier this year. We also recently completed a manuscript for publication by the Department of Health and Human Services detailing the successes of grass roots consumer education programs initiated and funded by Child Care Aware.