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FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum re Federal Child Care

2012-1035-S

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

*file federally-
sponsored
child care*

A Report To The President

Steps To Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care



**Prepared
by the
U.S. General Services
Administration
June 10, 1998**



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Administrator

July 8, 1998

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On March 10, 1998, you directed Federal agencies to take significant new steps to improve the quality of Federally sponsored child care and requested the General Services Administration and the Department of Defense to report back to you on the status of accreditation rates and background checks. Because of fundamental differences in the systems used by DOD and by the other Federal agencies, we are providing two separate reports.

We have made tremendous progress over the past 13 years to make the Federal child care system a model for the nation. In many ways, our system is already the best in terms of accreditation rates and in ensuring the safety of our children. Quality is not uniform across the system. There are some truly excellent centers run by competent and caring staff, using curricula that fosters child development in a safe and healthy environment. Other centers need work, and we are committed to making them the best they can be with the resources we have. And we're prepared to be tough where toughness is required.

Child care is not just about being "family-friendly." Having child care available makes parents more productive and our agencies perform better. We provide child care because it is good for the business of Government. The resources devoted to this program are an investment in Government's most valuable asset -- its people.

Here are the broad strokes. Since children spend the majority of their waking hours in our care, child development is necessary. Let us put the emphasis on early education and child development instead of "child care." Let us look for champions at each agency and the Congress. Let us develop a single licensing agreement to be used by all agencies to improve quality and safety. Let us use the Internet and the experience of DOD as well as the private sector to create a child development network to improve accreditation. Let us find out whether a direct contracting relationship with our vendors would be more cost-effective and improve the overall quality of our centers.



The steps outlined in this report, when implemented, will improve accreditation rates and the timeliness of criminal background checks for child care workers in Federal facilities. But the report does not address the fundamental issue of affordability.

Money is an issue for every Federal agency which sponsors child care centers; money is an issue for child care professionals who are among the most poorly paid professionals; and money is an issue for any Federal employee seeking child care. Too many of our employees, particularly those who need it the most, simply cannot afford to put their children in our care.

Thank you for your personal commitment to implementing fundamental changes to the way we invest in our working families who need child care. With your leadership, we will keep building on the sound platform we have constructed.

Respectfully,

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David J. Barram
Administrator

Enclosure



A Report to the President

Steps to Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care

Accreditation and Criminal Background Checks

Children enrolled in child care centers sponsored by Federal agencies are in good hands. Since 1985, when Government agencies formally began providing child care centers in Federal buildings, issues of quality and safety have been paramount. Accreditation rates, which measure quality, are nine times higher in Federally sponsored child care centers than in the private sector. Criminal background checks for workers at child care centers are required by most agencies; and, while they take too much time to complete, those checks help create safe environments for the children. We can improve accreditation rates and the timeliness of background checks, but the fact remains that many Federal employees cannot afford to enroll their children at Federally sponsored child care centers.

On March 10, 1998, the President directed his Administration to take significant new steps to improve the quality of Federally sponsored child care in the executive branch by: 1) ensuring proper criminal background checks for all child care staff who work in Federal buildings, 2) achieving 100 percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers, 3) exploring partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability, and 4) ensuring that Federal workers become better informed about child care tax credits and other available benefits.

The General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) were charged with reporting back on the status of accreditation rates and background checks. Under the auspices of the newly-chartered Interagency Federal Child Care Council (IFCCC) (see attached list of member agencies), we surveyed those agencies that sponsor child care and identified certain barriers--structural, legislative, financial, and operational--that must be removed or overcome in order to improve Federal child care.

This report focuses on those centers sponsored by civilian Federal agencies. It is worth noting, in brief, the fundamental differences between DOD centers and those sponsored by civilian agencies. DOD has a centralized structure dedicated to child development, operates its own centers, and allocates appropriated funds to the Military services, which in turn subsidize centers and offer a sliding fee scale based on total family income. Because of this commitment, DOD has an 86 percent accreditation rate for 437 centers that are part of a variety of its child development options, which include family care homes, and out-of-school care. Since it has an entirely different nature and scope for its child care system, DOD has provided a separate report.

What is the state of Federally-sponsored child care now?

The Federal Government sponsors the largest employer child care program in the Nation. Civilian agencies sponsor 240 child care centers at which 15,000 children are nurtured and educated. Unlike DOD, which operates its own centers, other Federal agencies do not run child care centers. Instead, they sponsor child care, and the centers are operated by either non-profit boards or by for-profit or not-for-profit vendors.

Under existing law (40 U.S.C. 490b), Federal agencies may provide space in existing buildings, lease additional space, or construct new space and playgrounds to accommodate child care centers. Agencies also may provide: (1) the office and classroom equipment used by the staff and children, and (2) operational support through provision of utilities, telecommunications, maintenance, and security. Some agencies elect to pay for the costs of processing the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and State criminal background checks that are required by the Crime Control Act of 1990, as amended, Public Law 101-647.

Current legislation does not allow the use of agency funds to subsidize staff salaries, training, or tuition assistance. Most civilian Federally sponsored child care is affordable primarily to higher-grade employees. Lower-grade employees cannot afford tuition unless they are qualified for and can access subsidy funding.

How can we improve the Federal civilian child care system?

The good news is that remarkable progress in the provision of quality on-site child care for Federal employees has been made over the past dozen years. We can take great pride in that accomplishment, yet much work remains. The President has directed the DOD to share its expertise with non-DOD centers, and that process has begun through the IFCCC. Certainly, we can use the best practices from DOD and learn from the private sector.

Affordability, however, remains the single-largest concern. If we are to make quality child care available on-site to the majority of Federal employees with young children, there must be significant changes in the way the Government-sponsored child care centers are organized structurally and how they are funded. While this report does not address the possible solutions to the affordability problem, it should be noted that we seek additional legislative authority on oversight and for exploring expansive collaborations with the private sector to increase the quality, quantity, and affordability of child care. Some of our specific recommendations for accreditation and background checks require legislative relief, and others have fiscal and/or personnel consequences.

ACCREDITATION

The national accreditation rate for all child care centers in the private sector is approximately five percent. To determine accreditation rates among Federally sponsored centers, GSA polled the members of the IFCCC. We received responses from civilian agencies responsible for 240 centers. Of the civilian agencies that have provided data, 216 of the centers are eligible for accreditation. Of the eligible centers, 95 are accredited, 54 have begun the process, and 67 have not started the process. The current accreditation rate for Federally sponsored child care is 44 percent. The following section identifies barriers to accreditation and offers steps for improvement.

Staff Turnover

The most frequently cited barrier was director and teacher turnover that disrupts the accreditation process. Continuous staff turnover usually indicates low wages, lack of benefits, and little or no staff development or training.

Lack of Quality Providers

The Federally sponsored child care system has a mix of different types of providers, including for-profit and non-profit entities, national chains, and community-based entities. The mix complicates not only the development of an effective system of performance measurement and a standardized-control system, but it significantly and adversely affects compliance with accreditation requirements. Quality providers that pay decent wages, provide benefits, implement stimulating and engaging curricula and are committed to attaining and maintaining accreditation are often in short supply, especially in non-urban areas.

Recommendations:

1. *The IFCCC should explore establishing a list of qualified providers.* In the interim, Federal agencies should use available information. For example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has prepared information on how to choose quality providers, and it maintains a database of accredited providers by location. The proposed mentoring network (see General Recommendations) should link to this advice, so that boards can have ready access to this information.
2. *Enforce the vendor/Federal agreement.* When a Federal agency agrees to provide space to a child care entity, the agency should require the entity to take all necessary steps to attain accreditation within two years as a condition of occupying the space. The sponsoring agency should monitor and enforce this requirement, working with or through, as appropriate, the non-profit board.

3. *Use Interagency teams to address accreditation issues.* The IFCCC should establish Specialist Teams, drawn from its membership, for onsite review and assessment of non-accredited centers. These teams will determine if the provider (a) will not achieve accreditation within two years and should be replaced; (b) could take advantage of the network to provide additional training; (c) should use the mentoring system for their self-study process; and (d) should undertake other assignments, such as working with the agency, to facilitate accreditation requirements.
4. *Aggressively explore direct contracting.* (See the General Recommendations.) One benefit of direct contracting would be to give agencies immediate oversight of the quality of centers and the ability to terminate contracts with vendors who do not achieve accreditation within the allotted time period.
5. *Build on small, quality local providers.* Small local providers that are committed to quality and that have successfully been accredited should be encouraged and supported to expand their businesses to other locations.

Lack of Federal Agency Support

Child care has been given a low priority at some agencies. Insufficient funding has been allocated for appropriate agency staffing, travel to child care centers and national conferences, and oversight responsibilities to monitor the accreditation process. Problems and issues appear to occur with the mid-level management that agency child care support staff turn to for program needs. In some cases, agencies do not encourage their employees to participate on boards or to attend meetings during working hours, which reduces the ability of the board to function effectively. Resources have not been made available to address board turnover.

Recommendation: The President should direct agencies to appoint accountable senior-level employees, who are trained or are knowledgeable about the delivery of child care, to monitor the sponsored centers in the agency and to assure that the child care entity takes all appropriate steps to achieve and maintain accreditation. Trained program-level employees should monitor operations of the centers. Further, agencies should consider establishing policies that would permit agency employees to spend a specifically defined amount of time on board-related issues.

Facility Issues

Some agencies lack expertise to identify necessary alterations and equipment, and do not budget adequate funding to procure alterations and equipment. In some centers, the appropriate level of cleaning and proper maintenance has not been provided, leading to health and safety deficiencies.

Recommendation: After an agency identifies centers that they believe require facility upgrades and/or expansions in order to become accredited, an IFCCC Specialist Team should inspect the site, develop a list of needed improvements, and work with agency architects to design changes. Those alterations, equipment, furnishings and other materials required for accreditation should be addressed, and the sponsoring agency should fund upgrades and equipment, as allowed under the law.

Board Turnover

Frequent board turnover disrupts and delays the accreditation process. Because of the frequency of board turnover, there is a continuing need to train boards on their roles and responsibilities, especially if they are operating the center.

Recommendation: Agencies should use the mentoring network to access information on non-profit boards and to share best practices with one another; explore community resources available to provide training for non-profit providers; and procure consultants to provide board training if community or agency resources are not available.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

GSA surveyed civilian Federal agencies to determine their practices and procedures for criminal background checks. Agencies generally require such checks, but they are not being completed in a timely manner. Civil child abuse background checks are not performed by any civilian Federal agency. Background checks for child abuse and neglect bring out many complex issues, primarily those concerned with privacy. While we make no recommendations on civil child abuse and neglect background checks, we note that in April 1998, the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention issued "Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working With Children, the Elderly, and Individuals With Disabilities in Need of Support." These guidelines identify many issues and make recommendations for State governments to consider.

The Crime Control Act

The specific language of the Crime Control Act applies only to child care workers who are employees of the Federal Government or work under contract. Child care employees in civilian Federally sponsored child care centers are not employees of the Federal Government, and in most cases, they do not work for vendors who are Federal contractors. Most vendors who operate the centers contract directly with a non-profit board.

Though most agencies require FBI and State criminal background checks on every child care employee as a condition for operating in Federal space, a few agencies do not. Some agencies do not believe that they have authority to use appropriated funds to process criminal background checks.

Recommendation: The President should propose legislation that would amend the Crime Control Act to state clearly that all child care workers in Federally sponsored or operated child care centers must have FBI and state criminal background checks. The legislation should be amended to clarify that appropriated funds may be used for the specific purpose of obtaining background checks. The licensing agreement between a Federal agency and a child care provider must define appropriate screening requirements. The sponsoring agency must be accountable for full compliance with the Crime Control Act and must have appropriate management controls in place to assure that compliance.

Timeliness of FBI Background Checks

Agencies reported considerable variation on the amount of time it takes to receive documentation of a completed FBI background check, with an average of five months from the time of the completion of the forms to receiving the documentation of completion of the check. Rejection of fingerprint cards was cited by agencies as the major reason for the delay.

Recommendation: The President should direct the FBI to give high priority to working with agencies to institute a clearly delineated, standardized, and timely method for background checks, including a routine schedule for child care workers to have their fingerprints taken at FBI offices in urban areas near their centers. Expansion of digital fingerprinting for Government employees should be a priority.

No "Quick Check"

At this time, there is no standardized Governmentwide method to conduct pre-employment screenings for child care staff who work in Federal buildings. Confusion about the process and what it covers leads to delays and the admittance of employees who have not been cleared into the centers located in Federal buildings.

Quick name checks prior to the child care employees beginning to work in a Federal building are not done routinely because of restrictions on using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for employment screening purposes. Some agencies have received a letter of waiver from DOJ allowing the use of NCIC for "quick checks." This waiver is not Governmentwide, and the waiver letter has not been widely distributed or fully incorporated into agency practices.

Recommendation: The President should direct the DOJ to ensure that Federal law enforcement organizations in all agencies have the authority to request “quick name checks” on every child care employee who works in a Federal building. The President should direct the Director of the FBI to issue a memorandum granting the exception for use of the NCIC system for employment screening purposes for child care employees located in Federal buildings or in leased space on a government-wide basis. Agencies should be directed to implement the “quick check” as a condition for allowing child care workers to begin work in a Federally-sponsored or operated child care center.

Criminal Background Check Database

Most agencies do not maintain a centralized database on completed criminal background checks, but rely instead on the child care provider/vendor to maintain such records. Although GSA's Federal Protective Service maintains a database, they do not perform all agency checks. In addition, no centralized database is kept by agencies or Governmentwide about terminations for cause of child care workers.

Recommendation: The IFCCC should explore the creation of a centralized Governmentwide database for completed background checks on child care workers. Also, the IFCCC should review the feasibility of including the names of workers who have been terminated for causes that reflect their unsuitability to work with children. This review should include the legal constraints, if any, associated with such a practice.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: CREATING CONTEXT AND CULTURE

As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government should take the lead and be a model for quality, affordable child development centers for its employees. In order to do so, we must first create a context and culture among Federal agencies that reinforces child care as a priority. Building on the strengths and experience of the Federal child care system, we recommend these next steps.

1. *New Language*

“Child care” is an outdated term that discounts the need to nurture and educate young children. Child care is not baby-sitting. Our best centers use curricula that stimulate and engage children, helping to develop their intellectual, social and emotional intelligences.

Recommendation: Re-name Government-sponsored child care centers as "child development centers" to reinforce our responsibility to provide good care *and* early education. DOD runs child development centers, and adoption of that terminology would provide for Governmentwide consistency.

2. Champions

The lack of consistency of standards and policies throughout Government-sponsored child care has created a loosely organized system which has no "parent" agency. In many agencies, child care is a "foster child," with responsibility and accountability fragmented across the agency.

Recommendations: A common element of all successful child care programs is strong, dedicated, and consistent leadership. A great opportunity exists for the President to create "champions" for child care, beginning with the Cabinet and the heads of every agency.

We recommend that the President:

- Direct the leaders of all agencies that sponsor child care centers to identify a single trained person who will be directly responsible for the accreditation of every eligible center and for 100 percent compliance with criminal background checks for all child care staff by the year 2000.
- Send a strong message to agency heads that these goals require a commitment to provide financial and human resources and full participation in the IFCCC.

3. Governmentwide Consistency

Federal civilian agencies and departments generally do not directly operate child care centers or directly contract with vendors for the operation of the centers. Agencies that do not contract directly have adopted a variety of methods to allow the vendors to occupy space. There is no standard licensing agreement between vendors and agencies for the use of Federally controlled space for operation of a child care center.

Recommendation: On June 29, 1993, GSA published in the Federal Register "Special Conditions to Licensing Agreement for Child Care Centers in GSA-Controlled Space," which represented the terms and conditions under which child care providers would be licensed to occupy space in GSA-controlled facilities. In consultation with the IFCCC, GSA's licensing agreement should be revised to ensure that it includes terms and conditions that promote quality and affordable child care for Federal employees.

Among other things, that agreement should state specifically what services and supports the Federal agencies **may** provide, and must clearly set forth the requirements that a vendor, or a board-operated center, **must** agree to in order to operate in Government-controlled space, including but not limited to specific accreditation and employee background screening requirements. The President should direct Federal agencies to use the revised licensing agreement and to have appropriate management controls in place to ensure that the agreements are enforced.

4. System Assessment

Government sponsored child care began as a facility-based program. Over the years, agencies have taken more responsibility for the selection of vendors, the quality of the program, and the safety and design of the space the center occupies. Civilian agencies have just over 10 years of experience in the child care business, and it is now time to evaluate the method by which we provide child care services for Government employees to determine whether there is a more effective and less costly delivery system.

Recommendation: The President should direct GSA, in consultation with the IFCCC, to analyze the feasibility of direct contracting with vendors to determine whether it would improve the quality of Federally sponsored child development centers. The study should include a cost/benefit assessment of the impact of direct contracting.

5. A Mentoring Network

Communication among Government-sponsored child care centers is negligible. Most child care centers that operate in Federally sponsored space do not use the Internet, and some do not have computers at all. This lack of access to technology can significantly affect the ability of centers to obtain information about best practices, subsidies, and other resource and referral tools, and contributes to a lack of efficient and ongoing staff training, particularly in remote areas.

Recommendation: The President should direct all agencies that sponsor child care to ensure that all of their centers have computers and access to the Internet by January 1999. The IFCCC should initiate a public/private partnership to create an electronic network for their child development centers. Internet access will also enable distance learning for child care personnel. The IFCCC will create technical assistance to supplement Web-based training and Internet mentoring among the centers. The network also will facilitate face-to-face mentoring with professionals from DOD centers and the private sector.

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Steps To Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care



**Prepared
by the
U.S. General Services
Administration
June 10, 1998**



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
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NOT FOR RELEASE

July 8, 1998

The President
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Recommendations:

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Lack of Federal Agency Support

Child care has been given a low priority at some agencies. Insufficient funding has been allocated for appropriate agency staffing, travel to child care centers and national conferences, and oversight responsibilities to monitor the accreditation process. Problems and issues appear to occur with the mid-level management that agency child care support staff turn to for program needs. In some cases, agencies do not encourage their employees to participate on boards or to attend meetings during working hours, which reduces the ability of the board to function effectively. Resources have not been made available to address board turnover.

Recommendation: The President should direct agencies to appoint accountable senior-level employees, who are trained or are knowledgeable about the delivery of child care, to monitor the sponsored centers in the agency and to assure that the child care entity takes all appropriate steps to achieve and maintain accreditation. Trained program-level employees should monitor operations of the centers. Further, agencies should consider establishing policies that would permit agency employees to spend a specifically defined amount of time on board-related issues.

Facility Issues

Some agencies lack expertise to identify necessary alterations and equipment, and do not budget adequate funding to procure alterations and equipment. In some centers, the appropriate level of cleaning and proper maintenance has not been provided, leading to health and safety deficiencies.

Recommendation: After an agency identifies centers that they believe require facility upgrades and/or expansions in order to become accredited, an IFCCC Specialist Team should inspect the site, develop a list of needed improvements, and work with agency architects to design changes. Those alterations, equipment, furnishings and other materials required for accreditation should be addressed, and the sponsoring agency should fund upgrades and equipment, as allowed under the law.

Board Turnover

Frequent board turnover disrupts and delays the accreditation process. Because of the frequency of board turnover, there is a continuing need to train boards on their roles and responsibilities, especially if they are operating the center.

Recommendation: Agencies should use the mentoring network to access information on non-profit boards and to share best practices with one another; explore community resources available to provide training for non-profit providers; and procure consultants to provide board training if community or agency resources are not available.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

GSA surveyed civilian Federal agencies to determine their practices and procedures for criminal background checks. Agencies generally require such checks, but they are not being completed in a timely manner. Civil child abuse background checks are not performed by any civilian Federal agency. Background checks for child abuse and neglect bring out many complex issues, primarily those concerned with privacy. While we make no recommendations on civil child abuse and neglect background checks, we note that in April 1998, the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention issued "Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working With Children, the Elderly, and Individuals With Disabilities in Need of Support." These guidelines identify many issues and make recommendations for State governments to consider.

The Crime Control Act

The specific language of the Crime Control Act applies only to child care workers who are employees of the Federal Government or work under contract. Child care employees in civilian Federally sponsored child care centers are not employees of the Federal Government, and in most cases, they do not work for vendors who are Federal contractors. Most vendors who operate the centers contract directly with a non-profit board.

Though most agencies require FBI and State criminal background checks on every child care employee as a condition for operating in Federal space, a few agencies do not. Some agencies do not believe that they have authority to use appropriated funds to process criminal background checks.

Recommendation: The President should propose legislation that would amend the Crime Control Act to state clearly that all child care workers in Federally sponsored or operated child care centers must have FBI and state criminal background checks. The legislation should be amended to clarify that appropriated funds may be used for the specific purpose of obtaining background checks. The licensing agreement between a Federal agency and a child care provider must define appropriate screening requirements. The sponsoring agency must be accountable for full compliance with the Crime Control Act and must have appropriate management controls in place to assure that compliance.

Timeliness of FBI Background Checks

Agencies reported considerable variation on the amount of time it takes to receive documentation of a completed FBI background check, with an average of five months from the time of the completion of the forms to receiving the documentation of completion of the check. Rejection of fingerprint cards was cited by agencies as the major reason for the delay.

Recommendation: The President should direct the FBI to give high priority to working with agencies to institute a clearly delineated, standardized, and timely method for background checks, including a routine schedule for child care workers to have their fingerprints taken at FBI offices in urban areas near their centers. Expansion of digital fingerprinting for Government employees should be a priority.

No "Quick Check"

At this time, there is no standardized Governmentwide method to conduct pre-employment screenings for child care staff who work in Federal buildings. Confusion about the process and what it covers leads to delays and the admittance of employees who have not been cleared into the centers located in Federal buildings.

Quick name checks prior to the child care employees beginning to work in a Federal building are not done routinely because of restrictions on using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for employment screening purposes. Some agencies have received a letter of waiver from DOJ allowing the use of NCIC for "quick checks." This waiver is not Governmentwide, and the waiver letter has not been widely distributed or fully incorporated into agency practices.

Recommendation: The President should direct the DOJ to ensure that Federal law enforcement organizations in all agencies have the authority to request "quick name checks" on every child care employee who works in a Federal building. The President should direct the Director of the FBI to issue a memorandum granting the exception for use of the NCIC system for employment screening purposes for child care employees located in Federal buildings or in leased space on a government-wide basis. Agencies should be directed to implement the "quick check" as a condition for allowing child care workers to begin work in a Federally-sponsored or operated child care center.

Criminal Background Check Database

Most agencies do not maintain a centralized database on completed criminal background checks, but rely instead on the child care provider/vendor to maintain such records. Although GSA's Federal Protective Service maintains a database, they do not perform all agency checks. In addition, no centralized database is kept by agencies or Governmentwide about terminations for cause of child care workers.

Recommendation: The IFCCC should explore the creation of a centralized Governmentwide database for completed background checks on child care workers. Also, the IFCCC should review the feasibility of including the names of workers who have been terminated for causes that reflect their unsuitability to work with children. This review should include the legal constraints, if any, associated with such a practice.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: CREATING CONTEXT AND CULTURE

As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government should take the lead and be a model for quality, affordable child development centers for its employees. In order to do so, we must first create a context and culture among Federal agencies that reinforces child care as a priority. Building on the strengths and experience of the Federal child care system, we recommend these next steps.

1. *New Language*

"Child care" is an outdated term that discounts the need to nurture and educate young children. Child care is not baby-sitting. Our best centers use curricula that stimulate and engage children, helping to develop their intellectual, social and emotional intelligences.

Recommendation: Re-name Government-sponsored child care centers as "child development centers" to reinforce our responsibility to provide good care *and* early education. DOD runs child development centers, and adoption of that terminology would provide for Governmentwide consistency.

2. *Champions*

The lack of consistency of standards and policies throughout Government-sponsored child care has created a loosely organized system which has no "parent" agency. In many agencies, child care is a "foster child," with responsibility and accountability fragmented across the agency.

Recommendations: A common element of all successful child care programs is strong, dedicated, and consistent leadership. A great opportunity exists for the President to create "champions" for child care, beginning with the Cabinet and the heads of every agency.

We recommend that the President:

- Direct the leaders of all agencies that sponsor child care centers to identify a single trained person who will be directly responsible for the accreditation of every eligible center and for 100 percent compliance with criminal background checks for all child care staff by the year 2000.
- Send a strong message to agency heads that these goals require a commitment to provide financial and human resources and full participation in the IFCCC.

3. *Governmentwide Consistency*

Federal civilian agencies and departments generally do not directly operate child care centers or directly contract with vendors for the operation of the centers. Agencies that do not contract directly have adopted a variety of methods to allow the vendors to occupy space. There is no standard licensing agreement between vendors and agencies for the use of Federally controlled space for operation of a child care center.

Recommendation: On June 29, 1993, GSA published in the Federal Register "Special Conditions to Licensing Agreement for Child Care Centers in GSA-Controlled Space," which represented the terms and conditions under which child care providers would be licensed to occupy space in GSA-controlled facilities. In consultation with the IFCCC, GSA's licensing agreement should be revised to ensure that it includes terms and conditions that promote quality and affordable child care for Federal employees.

Among other things, that agreement should state specifically what services and supports the Federal agencies **may** provide, and must clearly set forth the requirements that a vendor, or a board-operated center, **must** agree to in order to operate in Government-controlled space, including but not limited to specific accreditation and employee background screening requirements. The President should direct Federal agencies to use the revised licensing agreement and to have appropriate management controls in place to ensure that the agreements are enforced.

4. System Assessment

Government sponsored child care began as a facility-based program. Over the years, agencies have taken more responsibility for the selection of vendors, the quality of the program, and the safety and design of the space the center occupies. Civilian agencies have just over 10 years of experience in the child care business, and it is now time to evaluate the method by which we provide child care services for Government employees to determine whether there is a more effective and less costly delivery system.

Recommendation: The President should direct GSA, in consultation with the IFCCC, to analyze the feasibility of direct contracting with vendors to determine whether it would improve the quality of Federally sponsored child development centers. The study should include a cost/benefit assessment of the impact of direct contracting.

5. A Mentoring Network

Communication among Government-sponsored child care centers is negligible. Most child care centers that operate in Federally sponsored space do not use the Internet, and some do not have computers at all. This lack of access to technology can significantly affect the ability of centers to obtain information about best practices, subsidies, and other resource and referral tools, and contributes to a lack of efficient and ongoing staff training, particularly in remote areas.

Recommendation: The President should direct all agencies that sponsor child care to ensure that all of their centers have computers and access to the Internet by January 1999. The IFCCC should initiate a public/private partnership to create an electronic network for their child development centers. Internet access will also enable distance learning for child care personnel. The IFCCC will create technical assistance to supplement Web-based training and Internet mentoring among the centers. The network also will facilitate face-to-face mentoring with professionals from DOD centers and the private sector.



FAX

To: Nicole Rabner

From: Lucy Hackney

Re: Interagency Council Meeting Monday, April 6-9:30 to 12:00.

April 1, 1998

Thanks so much for agreeing to come on Monday. I think it will send just the right message to have someone from the WH talking to the group about the President's directives and his desire for government sponsored child care to be a model of quality and affordability for the nation. This is a group that has a lot of work to do between now and June 10, and even more once the reports are done, and it is time to implement the plan. They need a lot of cheerleading!

Here is the letter and attachments that went out to all of the invitees. The agencies that were invited are listed in the second page of the charter. By Friday, I can send you the list of who is actually attending if that would be useful. My guess is that if you came at ten, or a little before, that you would not have to wait around too long. Of course you are welcome to come as early as you would like, and stay as long as you would like.

The AIA building is at 1735 NY Ave NW-the entrance you want is on 18th and E.

I will be hard to reach the rest of the week and Susan is out of town. If you have any questions call Cheryl DeAtlely at 208-3260.

DC
info

6 PAGES

202-456-2878



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Office of Management and Workplace Programs

MAR 27 1998

Ms. Kathryn Wolf
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Ms. Wolf:

Since we last met to discuss the Quality Child Care for Federal Employees Act and other pending legislation on child care, there have been a number of developments. We are now an officially chartered Interagency Federal Child Care Council with a defined structure, membership, and functions. I am enclosing the charter. I invite you to the first meeting of the Council on Monday, April 6, 1998, from 9:30 am to Noon, at the American Institute Of Architects (AIA) building, AIA Boardroom. The first hour of the meeting will be for principals and staff, and we plan to spend the second hour forming work groups to tackle specific tasks.

On March 10, President Clinton issued four major directives to improve Federally sponsored child care as part of the Administration's plan to make Federal child care a model of affordability, accessibility, and quality for the Nation. These directives require us to have plans for:

- ◆ Ensuring proper background checks of child care workers
- ◆ Achieving 100 percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers
- ◆ Exploring partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability.
- ◆ Ensuring that all Federal workers become better informed on child care benefits and the options available to them.

These directives are a wonderful opportunity for all of us. We will have draft work plans on accreditation and background checks for your review at the April 6th meeting. Our goal is to establish task forces for each of the directives and for overall plan development.

18th and F Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20405

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Lucy Hackney, Senior Advisor on Child Care at GSA, will coordinate the work of the Council. Please respond to my office at 202-501-0945 by April 1, 1998, regarding your attendance. Lucy Hackney (lucy.hackney@gsa.gov) is available if you have any questions, suggestions for the development of the plan, or additions to the enclosed agenda.

This is a new day for Federally sponsored child care, and I look forward to seeing you and beginning this exciting opportunity to provide the best child care for our Federal families.

Sincerely,

SIGNED SUSAN CLAMPITT

Susan Clampitt
Associate Administrator

Enclosure

Agenda for Interagency Federal Child Care Council
April 6th 1998 - 9:30 - 12:30
AIA Boardroom

1. Welcome Susan Clampitt
2. Review of interagency Child Care Council Charter
Discussion
3. Update on Tribble/Jeffords Legislation
4. Update on President's Child Care Initiatives
5. Review of President's Executive Memorandum: Steps to Improve
Federally Sponsored Child Care
Discussion
6. OPM Report on Presidential Directive to inform Federal workers about
Child Care resources including tax credits that are available to them.
7. Formation of Work Groups to define tasks, allocate tasks, and set
timetables for completion of the work.
 - (1) Accreditation Work Group (Co-Chairs DOD and GSA)
 - (2) Criminal and Civil Background Checks (GSA)
8. Set next meeting date for Interagency Federal Child Care Council
9. Charge to group and closing

CHARTER

INTERAGENCY CHILD CARE COUNCIL

1. Official designation: The name of this council is the Interagency Federal Child Care Council (IFCCC).

2. Background: Federal agencies, through statutory authority contained in 490b, 40 USC, have established more than 230 (non-Department of Defense (DoD)) child care centers in Federal facilities. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has asked the General Services Administration (GSA) to provide leadership among Federal agencies to address Federally sponsored child care quality, affordability, accessibility, and other topics of interest, and to publish guidance, best practices, and relevant policy. The establishment of an Interagency Federal Child Care Council will provide a forum for executive, legislative, and judicial branch agencies to collaborate in discussing and recommending governmentwide child care policy and guidance.

3. Functions: The functions of the Council include, but are not limited to:

a. Facilitate the exchange of information, and develop practical, professional governmentwide standards that preserve and protect the health, safety and welfare of children in child care centers in Federal facilities.

b. Make recommendations for new or improved legislation governing child care in Federal facilities.

c. Evaluate and determine what aspects of child care in Federal facilities need to be addressed in governmentwide policy, guidance, and regulations.

d. Recommend revisions and updated measures of compliance for health, safety and facility standards in child care regulations.

e. Promote and improve the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care services provided by or through Federal agencies and organizations.

f. Establish strategies and goals for the work of the council, and provide working/task groups as needed.

4. Structure:

a. The Council consists of executive level senior leadership officials representing the child care program interests of their agency.

b. The Council has a working group consisting of a designated representative from each member agency. The representative should have substantial experience or knowledge of child care in the agency they represent.

5. Membership:

a.. The council is composed of a senior representative from the legislative and judicial branches, and each of the following departments and agencies:

Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Education
Department of Energy
Department of Labor
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Health and Human Services
General Services Administration
Department of Interior

Department of Justice
NARA
NASA
National Science Foundation
Office of Personnel Management
Social Security Administration
Department of State
Smithsonian
Department of Transportation
Department of Treasury
Department of Veterans Affairs

b. The Chairperson may invite additional representatives as deemed appropriate.

6. Support services: The Chairperson of the council is the GSA Associate Administrator for Management and Workplace Programs. The chairperson may appoint a vice chairperson. The GSA General Counsel will designate a legal advisor for the Council. The GSA Office of Real Property, Office of Governmentwide Policy will provide administrative support. The chairperson may establish subcommittees and interagency working groups as required to accomplish its functions.

7. Meetings:

a. Council meetings are to be held annually, or as appropriate, as determined by the chairperson.

b. Working group meetings are to be held as required, but at least semi-annually

8. Records and reports: The supporting administrative staff maintains the necessary records. The Chairperson prepares any reports necessary to accomplish the Council's objectives and to keep agency officials advised. The reports are exempt from the reports control program.

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FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum re Federal Child Care

2012-1035-S
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P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
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[001]

Susan Clappitt
w 501-0945

P6/(b)(6)

Larry Hackney

P6/(b)(6)

215-656-5527 w

204-7761 DC

for 208-5438

Joan
h

P6/(b)(6)

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Department of Defense	NASA
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Department of Energy	Office of Personnel Management
Department of Labor	Social Security Administration
Environmental Protection Agency	Department of State
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	Smithsonian
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Department of Transportation
Department of Health and Human Services	Department of Treasury
General Services Administration	Department of Veterans Affairs
Department of Interior	

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President Clinton Calls for Child Care That Strengthens America's Families

March 10, 1998

Today, President Clinton renewed his call to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for America's working families. In a speech in Connecticut, the President issued an executive directive to improve federally-sponsored child care, and announced the release of a new report by HHS which reveals a pressing need for greater child care investment.

Ensuring the Quality of the Federal Child Care System. The President believes that the federal government should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The executive directive President Clinton issued today instructs all executive agencies to: (1) reach 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care by the year 2000 (accreditation is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional organizations to validate safety and quality; criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards); (2) ensure proper background checks on child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (3) explore public-private partnerships to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensure that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them. The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers -- 788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal departments -- and the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, about 215,000 children are in federally-sponsored child care.

New Report Points to Innovation But Limited Resources In the States. *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: Report of State Plans* outlines strategies that the states have developed to administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. The report reveals:

States need more resources to help working families afford child care. The welfare law allows states to use the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide child care subsidies to lower-income working families -- defined as families with less than 85 percent of state median income. This new report shows that because of resource constraints, some states set eligibility levels far below what is allowed by federal law. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income is not eligible for any help with child care costs. In as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements.

States have innovative strategies to improve child care quality, such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

The President's Child Care Initiative Addresses the Need for More Resources And Builds on Innovation in the States. The President's balanced budget calls for an historic investment -- more than \$20 billion over five years -- to help working families pay for child care, build the supply of after-school programs, improve child care safety and quality, and promote early learning.

Connecticut is Improving Child Care Quality. Connecticut recently passed bipartisan School Readiness Legislation to improve child care quality and promote early learning.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Bridgeport, Connecticut)

For Immediate Release

March 10, 1998

March 10, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Steps to Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care

Now more than ever, America's working parents are struggling to balance their obligations to be good workers -- and their more important obligations to be good parents. By choice or by financial necessity, millions of Americans rely on child care to care for their children for part of each day. Parents deserve to know that their children are safe and nurtured in child care.

One of my highest priorities is to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. That is why my balanced budget includes the most significant investment in child care in our Nation's history and proposes specific measures to improve child care quality.

As a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce, the Federal Government should lead the way in improving child care. I am proud that our military has developed one of the finest child care delivery systems in the world, and that the Department of Defense, at my request, is sharing its expertise with the public and private sectors. Still, we need to do more. The executive branch of the Federal Government has responsibility for over 1,000 child care centers -- 788 through the military, 109 through the General Services Administration, and 127 through other Federal departments. In addition, the military oversees nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in our care.

Today I am directing my Administration to take significant new steps to improve the quality of Federally sponsored child care in the executive branch by (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers; (2) achieving 100 percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers; (3) exploring partner-ships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all Federal workers become better informed of child care benefits and the options available to them.

First, all child care workers in Federally sponsored centers should undergo thorough background checks to make sure that our children are safe. The vast majority of child care workers are caring people who have dedicated their lives to teaching and nurturing children. But one tragedy in child care is too many, and criminal and civil background checks are necessary to determine whether the people caring for our children are fit for this responsibility. The military already has a model system to conduct background checks of child care workers. I now want to guarantee that workers at all nonmilitary, Federal child care facilities undergo such background checks in a thorough and timely fashion.

I therefore direct the Administrator of General Services ("Administrator") to report to me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure complete and timely background checks, to the fullest extent possible, for all child care workers in nonmilitary, Federally sponsored child care settings. Agencies with oversight of nonmilitary child care settings will report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Second, all Federally sponsored child care centers should receive nationally recognized, independent accreditation as soon as they are eligible to do so. Currently, only 76 percent of military centers, and 35 percent of other Federally sponsored centers, are accredited. By the year 2000, 100 percent should be accredited. I therefore direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator to provide me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, independent, nationally recognized accreditation of all eligible, Federally sponsored child care by the year 2000. Agencies with oversight of non-military child care settings shall report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Third, partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector are an increasingly important way to maximize existing resources and improve child care. I therefore direct the Administrator to work with the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to explore opportunities for collaboration both within Government and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability in Federally sponsored settings.

Finally, employers have a responsibility to make sure that their workers are better informed on child care and the options available to them at the national, State, and local levels. I therefore direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("Director") to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, all Federal workers receive full information about child care benefits available to them on the Federal, State, and local levels, including information on resource and referral networks, available tax credits such as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, as well as public subsidies. The Director shall also host a nationwide summit designed to showcase model public and private sector solutions to child care needs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

###

CHILD CARE EVENT IN CONNECTICUT
March 10, 1998

INTERNAL Q&A

Directive to Improve Federally-Sponsored Child Care

Q: Why is the President issuing a directive to improve federally-sponsored child care? Is it in bad shape?

A: Federally-sponsored child care is not in bad shape, but it is not uniformly excellent in quality. The directive that the President issued today will help ensure that the federal Government is a model child care provider. The President believes that the federal government --both as a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce --should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The directive calls for several steps to be taken: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (2) achieving 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care; (3) exploring partnerships among federal agencies and with the private sectors to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

Q: Isn't the biggest problem with federally-sponsored child care that it's not affordable? Won't improving its quality just make it even more expensive?

A: It is true that today, many lower-income government workers cannot afford the care sponsored by the federal government. The President is committed to making child care more affordable for all Americans. His child care initiative has several components aimed at improving child care costs: (1) \$7.5 billion over five years to double, by the year 2003, the number of children currently served with child care subsidies; (2) \$4.8 billion over five years to provide greater tax relief to working parents paying for child care; and (3) a new tax credit to businesses that offer child care services to their workers. Government workers will benefit from these measures, as will all Americans. In addition, the President's directive instructs the Office of Personnel Management to ensure that federal workers know about the child care options and benefits, including subsidies available to them, and asks that his Cabinet explore public-private partnerships to improve child care affordability.

Q: How are background checks currently administered in federally-sponsored child care? Is there a big problem there?

A: The President believes that background checks are necessary to ensure that children

in child care are safe. The Administration wants to be assured that this is happening in a careful and systematic way in federally-sponsored child care --and that monitoring of this process is vigilant. The military has developed a model system to do background checks of child care workers in the centers and family day-care homes it sponsors. The President's directive is aimed at bring a similar level of excellence to the non-military federally-sponsored child care. The President's directive requires that the Administrator of the General Services Administration review this issue and submit a plan to the President to ensure complete and timely criminal and civil background checks in all federally-sponsored child care.

NOTE: The Department of Defense conducts background checks --using both the FBI and an internal clearance system --on all child care workers in the child care centers and family child care homes it sponsors. Non-military federal agencies that sponsor child care are required by law to conduct criminal background checks --through the FBI and through the state criminal history repositories --on child care providers, as well as to comply with state and local requirements.

Q: Aren't non-military federally-sponsored child care centers already required by law to do background checks? What is the point of the directive?

A: Non-military federal agencies that sponsor child care are required by law to do background checks on child care providers, but there is no oversight mechanism to ensure that these checks are being done thoroughly and in a timely fashion. Although some centers do thorough and timely checks, others appear to comply with their statutory obligations in only a perfunctory manner. The President's directive instructs the Administrator of the General Services Administration to report to him on the thoroughness and timeliness of background checks of child care providers in all non-military federally-sponsored child care. The result should be a uniformly high level of care and accuracy in conducting background checks.

Q: What about background checks for child care workers nationwide?

The President has taken action to help improve background checks on child care workers nationwide. Last year, the President transmitted the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact to Congress, which will facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for purposes other than ongoing criminal investigations. The President has urged enactment of this Compact so that child care agencies or parents wanting to do background checks can gain access to ratifying states' complete criminal records.

Q: What is accreditation? Why is President calling for all federally-sponsored child care center in the Executive Branch to be accredited?

A: Accreditation for child care is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional organizations to validate safety and quality. Criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards. Currently, 76 percent of military child care centers are accredited and 35 percent of other federally-sponsored child care centers in the executive branch are accredited --as compared to an estimated 7 percent nationally. The President believes all eligible, federally-sponsored child care should achieve nationally-recognized, independent accreditation to ensure and maintain quality.

Q: How is the President's Directive different from the legislation sponsored by Senator Jeffords and Congressman Gilman to improve federally-sponsored child care?

A: Both the President's directive and legislation proposed by Senators Dodd and Jeffords and Rep. Gilman aim to improve federally-sponsored child care. Both require federally-sponsored child care centers to be accredited by independent, nationally-recognized organizations. The congressional legislation would require that these child care centers achieve accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, within five years of enactment of the legislation. The President's executive memorandum sets a quicker time frame for accreditation and directs his Cabinet to ensure accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, by the year 2000.

The President's directive also addresses other issues not in the Jeffords/Gilman legislation, including: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; and (2) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

The pending legislation does one thing that cannot be done by executive action: it would require that all non-military federally-sponsored child care adopt health and safety standards developed by the General Services Administration.

Q: Does the Administration support the Jeffords/Gilman legislation?

A: While the Administration has not taken a formal position on the legislation, we have provided significant technical assistance to congressional staff as it has developed and support its essential elements. We look forward to continuing to work with Senators Dodd and Jeffords, Rep. Gilman and other Members of Congress to meet our mutual goals of improving child care in federally-sponsored facilities, and to making child care better, safer, and more affordable for all American parents who rely on it. Of course, some of this legislation will be rendered unnecessary by the President's executive directive.

Q: What does federally-sponsored child care look like?

A: The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers --788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal departments. In addition, the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in the care of federally-sponsored child care in the executive branch. In addition, the judicial and legislative branches sponsor 5 child care centers, caring for 338 children.

Q: How does the military operate its child care system? Isn't it a good program because it spends so much money?

A: The Department of Defense's Child Care System serves approximately 200,000 children (aged zero to 12) daily, making it the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the nation. Through this system, the military offers full-day, part-day, and hourly child care, part-day preschools, before-and after-school programs for school age children, and extended hour care. Because of the Department of Defense's commitment to excellence in child care, since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 353. Currently, over 75% of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7% of other child care facilities nationwide.

While the military does invest significant resources into their child care system, it also finds ways to increase quality without large investments --by setting and enforcing high quality standards (including unannounced inspections), supporting family day care networks, offering a strong resource and referral system, and providing a wide variety of care options, all of which increase quality without large investments.

Q: How does non-military, federally-sponsored child care operate?

A: Non-military federal agencies sponsor over 240 child care centers across the country in federally-owned and leased buildings. The centers are operated by profit and non-profit child care providers. Once a need is established, the General Services Administration or the agencies that occupy the building can supply space to establish a child care center. The sponsoring agency or agencies may continue to support the center by providing free rent, utilities, telephone services, and general maintenance, but may not provide subsidies for salaries, training for child care staff or tuition assistance.

All children of federal employees families are eligible to send their children to federally-sponsored child care centers. Under present law, fifty percent of the

children attending the child care centers must be children of federal employees. Families in the community may use any slots not filled by children of federal workers, who are given priority for admission.

The centers are overseen by boards that contract with vendors for services or operate the centers themselves. Because federal child care is not uniform in operation, quality, or the amount of support the center gets from its sponsoring agency, there are many variations among the centers operated by the non-military federal agencies.

Q: Are there federally-sponsored child care facilities in Connecticut? Are they accredited?

A: There are four child care centers sponsored by the federal government in Connecticut --one by the General Services Administration, one by the Department of Transportation and the Coast Guard, one by the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and one by the Navy. All four require background checks; two are accredited (the GSA and Navy centers).

Q: What are the child care options for parents who work at the White House?

Employees of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) can enroll their children in the nearby U.S. Kids Child Development Center, a center accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children. Additionally, White House parents may enroll their children in any of the 26 other federal child care centers in the greater Washington, D.C. area.

New HHS Report

Q: What does the new HHS report tell us?

A: This report --called *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: A Report of State Plans* --outlines the strategies that the states have developed to administer the block grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. There are two important findings to the report. First, the report indicates that states could use more resources to help working families afford child care. With the current block grant funding level, states are not able to serve everyone that could be eligible under federal law with a child care subsidy. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income does not have a chance for help with child care costs. And in as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements. Second, the report tells us that states have designed innovative strategies to improve child care quality, such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for

businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

The President's child care initiative addresses the need for greater resources to the states for child care subsidies and builds on the innovative activities that states are employing to improve child care quality and build the supply of good care for the families who rely on it.

Q: How will the President's child care initiative respond to the issues raised in the report?

A: President Clinton's child care initiative responds to the need to help more hardworking Americans with the costs of child care by investing \$7.5 billion over five years in the Child Care and Development Block Grant --an investment that would enable us to double the number of children currently served by the block grant.

In addition, the President's initiative builds on the promising efforts to improve child care quality underway in the states, such as those designed to improve consumer education, provide scholarships to child care providers, offer tax credits to employers that provide child care services to their workers, and to enforce state health and safety standards. The President's child care initiative builds on these state-level efforts by: (1) creating a Standards Enforcement Fund; (2) establishing a Child Care Provider Scholarship Fund; (3) offering a national tax credit to employers that offer child care services; (4) establishing an Early Learning Fund for activities to improve child care quality and promote early childhood development; and (5) providing after-school opportunities for 500,000 more children each year.

Q: The Children's Defense Fund today released a state-by-state report on child care? Why is some of CDF's information different from that in the HHS report?

A: The two reports collected data for different periods of time using different approaches. For example, the HHS data reflect information submitted in the CCDBG plans prepared last summer as dictated by law, while the CDF data were collected through interviews with administrators in January 1998. But in general CDF's report and HHS's report are consistent in that they point to the insufficient funds available to states through the block grant to provide child care subsidies for working parents.

Q: Do you agree with CDF's finding that we need to invest an additional \$20 billion over five years in the block grant? Why has the President proposed so much

less than that?

A: The Administration believes that states need significant additional resources to enable them to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for the hardworking Americans who rely on it. We know that today states are able to serve far less than those eligible for child care subsidies under federal law, and that, more than ever, parents struggle to meet the high costs of child care. That is why the President has proposed an additional \$7.5 billion over five years for the Child and Development Block Grant --an investment that would allow us to double by the year 2003 the number of children currently served with child care subsidies by the block grant. The President has also proposed other child care investments --including greater tax relief for working families and for employers that offer child care services for their workers, scholarships for child care providers, and funds for standards enforcement and early learning activities. The President's child care initiative --totaling over \$20 billion over five years --represents the largest single child care investment in our nation's history.

General

Q: What is the President's child care initiative?

A: President Clinton's historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families represents the largest single investment in child care in the nation's history --over \$20 billion over five years. President Clinton's initiative responds to the struggles our nation's working parents face in finding child care that they can afford, trust, and rely on. The President's proposal will help working families pay for child care, build the supply of good after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning.

- **Doubles the number of children receiving child care subsidies** to more than two million by the year 2003 by increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant by \$7.5 billion over 5 years.
- **Increases tax credits for three million working families to help them pay for child care** by investing \$4.8 billion over 5 years in the Child and Dependent Tax Credit. The President's proposal also provides a new tax credit for businesses that offer child care services for their employees.
- **Provides after-school care for 500,000 children per year** by expanding the 21st Century Community Learning Center program by \$800 million over 5 years to provide funds to school-community partnerships to establish or expand programs for school-age children.

- **Improves child care safety and quality and enhances early childhood development** by establishing a new Early Learning Fund as well as supporting enforcement of state child care health and safety standards, providing scholarships to up to 50,000 child care providers per year, and investing in research and consumer education.

Q: Are states spending the child care money in the new welfare reform law?

A: We are very encouraged by the state reports which show they have obligated over 99 percent of the child care funds available under the new welfare law for FY 1997. This demonstrates the tremendous need states have for child care, and President Clinton has continued to urge states to invest their dollars into helping working families. Several states, such as Illinois and Delaware, are committing substantial state dollars to ensure that low income families --both working families and those transitioning from welfare to work --have available child care. But let's be clear --the President's initiative is not aimed at mothers on welfare. It is aimed at working parents. We know that working parents with annual incomes under \$14,400 that paid for child care for children under five spent 25 percent of their income on child care --and even then it is difficult to find accessible, quality care.

Q: Child Care has not been made a clear priority by the Congressional leadership. Do you really think you have a chance of getting anything done?

A: Since the President announced his child care initiative in January, legislation has been introduced by Republicans and Democrats that include proposals similar to the President's proposed initiative. Senators Chafee and Dodd each have introduced promising legislation in the Senate, and Representatives Johnson and Kennelly have introduced legislation in the House. The Administration believes that making child care better, safer and more affordable for the hardworking American families that rely on it has strong Congressional and public support. We will be working hard with Congress on a bipartisan basis to enact child care legislation this year that is right for America's children and families.

Q: Since much of the funding of this proposal is based on the tobacco settlement, aren't you counting your chickens before they've hatched? What will you do if the tobacco settlement does not go through?

A: First, the initiative is paid for in a number of ways --only one part comes from tobacco revenues. Second, and more important, we believe that a national tobacco settlement will pass. The President supports strong tobacco legislation, and many Republicans and Democrats alike are working vigorously to craft comprehensive legislation. Of course, no offset proposed in a budget is guaranteed; the Congress can reject any proposed way of financing a program. If Congress does not pass

comprehensive tobacco legislation, we will work with Congress to find other offsets. This is a high Administration priority, and we will find an effective funding mechanism.

Q: What's the Administration's position on proposals to support stay-at-home parents?

A: There are a number of proposals on the Hill to help stay-at-home parents, and we are working hard to evaluate their costs and effects. The President believes that we should respect and support parents in whatever choices they make, whether they work or stay at home. He has supported that choice in the past through a variety of actions to increase family income, such as expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing the minimum wage, and passing the \$500 per-child tax credit. These actions targeted to help families will cost approximately \$250 billion over the next five years. The President believes that by continuing to work together on a bipartisan basis and by taking the best proposals from both sides of the aisle, we will achieve legislation that benefits all America's families and children.

Q: Some conservatives claim that this is a big government proposal, which promotes institutionalized day care. Is this true?

A: No. The Administration is committed to helping parents make the choices that are right for their families, whatever child care arrangements they choose for their children. Most of the funding in the President's proposal goes directly to parents --whether through tax cuts or through vouchers issued by states with child care block grant funding. The President's child care initiative is designed to provide maximum flexibility to parents so that all their child care choices are supported.

CHILDCARE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is accreditation?

Accreditation for early care and education centers is similar to accreditation of private schools, colleges and universities. A non-profit, non-governmental professional organization validates the safety and quality of early care and education programs.

How many Federally sponsored childcare centers are accredited?

DoD: 76% of eligible centers

GSA: 69% of eligible centers (54 of 109 are accredited)

Other Federal centers: 24% of centers (32 of 133 are accredited; eligibility data is not known)

How long is a center accredited for?

Accreditation lasts for 3 years. The childcare center then must be reviewed for re-accreditation.

What does it cost to become accredited?

Fees range from \$400 to \$1,000 dollars. This does not include the cost of repairs, renovation, or additional training and personnel costs that may be required for accreditation.

Do taxpayers pay costs of accreditation for Federal centers?

Government agencies that sponsor childcare **may** pay for accreditation fees and renewal fees.

Who accredits childcare centers?

Numerous organizations, including:

- NAEYC National Association for the Education of Young Children
- PACE Professional Association for Childhood Education
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- National Accreditation Council for Early Childhood Professionals Personnel and Programs
- National System for Improvement and Accreditation of School-Age Care Programs

What are the criteria for accreditation?

In general, the criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff -to -child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards.

Why are there so few non-GSA centers accredited?

Accreditation is required for childcare centers in GSA controlled space. It is not mandatory for non-GSA sponsored childcare centers. Other government agencies that sponsor childcare have encouraged their providers to become accredited. The legislation introduced by Senator Jeffords and Congressman Gilman will require that all federally sponsored childcare to become accredited five years from the enactment of the legislation.

Who will or should take the lead to ensure centers are accredited?

DoD and GSA have considerable experience with childcare, and they will lead the effort. In order to reach the goal, every agency sponsoring childcare must contribute personnel and financial resources to this effort.

How many children are enrolled in non-GSA/DoD centers?

This data has not been collected from all governmental agencies that sponsor childcare; the estimated capacity of these centers is:

Executive Branch	7,996
Judicial Branch	65
Legislative Branch	273
Total	8,334



General Services Administration, Region 3
The Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3396

FAX

TO: NICOLE RABNER

FROM: LUCY HACKNEY

MARCH 2, 1998

3 PAGES

TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS!

CALL 215-654-5527

Wanman -

→ lead inspection (GSA does not)

A.

→ less than 20% req. lead inspections

→ setting standards -

scientific
fact



fed. 1

To: Nicole Rabner

From: Lucy Hackney

Re: Criminal background checks and civil and criminal child abuse clearances for childcare employees in government sponsored childcare.

March 2, 1998

It just has not been possible to get center by center compliance rates, or overall compliance rates. We should have a conversation about why that is so. In addition, we do not have any information at all about how non-GSA government sponsored childcare providers comply with this requirement. The conclusion in GSA, which is right, is that one government agency should not be calling other government agencies to ask about compliance rates with a federal law.

I am waiting for information from HHS about state requirements for civil and criminal background checks. Apparently in some states, background checks are a component of state licensing of childcare centers, in some it is not. Except in DC, almost all of GSA sponsored centers are licensed by state and local authorities.

So this is our answer to criminal background check question:

GSA has established procedures to ensure that all newly hired employees at child care centers located in GSA controlled space undergo a criminal history background check. The completion of the background check can take up to six months to complete. This is because the Crime Control Act of 1990 requires that the background check be conducted through the Identification Division of the FBI and through the state criminal history repositories. In recognition of the difficulty in getting an immediate clearance through this process, Congress amended the original requirements, and authorized childcare providers to hire staff on a provisional basis prior to the completion of the background check. Provisional employees must be within sight and under the direct supervision of a cleared employee at all times.

GSA has advised all providers who operate within GSA controlled space of the requirements of the law, and GSA has established procedures to ensure that the requirements of the law are met.

GSA has no information regarding the procedures other agencies have taken to assure compliance with Public Law 101-647.

WH.MEM

Page 1

- IV. Director of the Office of Personnel Management **Janice Lachance** to ensure that **to the fullest extent possible** all federal workers receive full information about child care benefits available to them on the federal, state, and local levels, including information on resource and referral networks, available tax credits such as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits and Child Tax Credit, as well as public subsidies. **Director Lachance will also host a nationwide summit designed to showcase model public and private sector solutions to child care needs.**

OPM
You may have this. Janice
Sent her changes over to GSA
and I wanted to make
certain you had them.

Q and A's re 1) criminal background check requirement for childcare workers in Federally sponsored childcare centers. And 2) state requirements for criminal and civil child abuse clearances.

Complaints have been made that criminal background checks for Federal employees can take an excessive amount of time to complete. Are there child care workers without clearances taking care of children in Federally sponsored child care centers?

A FBI criminal background check can take up to two months. However, there are interim steps that ensure that children are safe. In GSA sponsored centers, every newly hired child care worker completes the state and federal forms to initiate the FBI criminal background check. An initial background check is done by the Federal Protective Services at the regional level. Once the check is complete, if there are negative results, they are sent to the GSA childcare coordinator and the director of the child care center. If there are any problems the offer of employment is withdrawn. If the initial investigation is satisfactory, the employee is hired provisionally, but works within sight and under supervision of an employee who has a completed the FBI criminal background check.

Do states have similar requirements for criminal and child abuse clearances for staff in child care centers that are not sponsored by Federal agencies?

The FBI criminal background check law (Public Law 101-647) only applies to employees in Federal facilities, or in facilities operated under contract with the Federal Government. Most, but not all, states require that employees in regulated child care undergo a state level criminal history check, and sometimes a record check with the civil child abuse registry. Unfortunately there are currently no uniform requirements from state to state regarding criminal and civil background checks for child care center employees.

To: Nicole et al, and Susan

From: Lucy

Re: Follow up to Saturday AM Conference call

February 21, 1998

Here are the answers to the questions (not always definitive) with background material attached, that I was able to clear up.

1. Criminal background checks:

Public Law 101-647 is the controlling statutory authority for criminal background checks. I do not have a copy of the law but the IG report on GSA compliance (attachment I), states that the law requires that criminal history background checks be conducted for all child care employees in Federally provided space. Despite the fact, that the law applies to all federally sponsored child care, the IG report only dealt with compliance in centers located in GSA controlled space. I am not aware there were IG reports related to compliance in other agencies, but I will try to find that out.

2. Accreditation:

On rereading the 1987 amendments to the original Tribe Amendments (passed in 1985), the requirement for accreditation is not there for all federally sponsored child care. What the amendments does allow is for a sponsoring agency, or GSA, to pay accreditation fees, including renewal fees for that center to be accredited by a nationally recognized early childhood professional organization. It does not specify NAEYC. (See attachment 2). However, GSA's licensing agreement does require that centers in GSA controlled space are accredited within two years of beginning operation (I do not have a copy of the licensing agreement handy so I am paraphrasing the language). The 1987 Tribe Amendments refer to the GSA licensing agreement as a vehicle for GSA to provide assistance and oversight to Federal agencies. I understand that some number of other Federal agencies use our licensing agreement that requires accreditation but I do not know how many have done so. The Jeffords/Gilman bill that has been proposed takes Tribe a bit further by including language requiring accreditation to the maximum extent possible five years after enactment. (See attachment 3).

Sorry this is ambiguous. I had understood from our legal office that all govt. sponsored child care required accreditation so I may be reading this wrong, or perhaps there has been some subsequent agreements, directives, etc. re accreditation that required accreditation for all child care centers. If that is not so, the Jeffords' bill does make the requirement more specific. I will check this with our legal office ASAP. (Susan have you been able to get Lesly's number at home?) The bottom line is that even if Tribe does not require accreditation, it certainly implies that it is desirable and gives agencies the authority to pay for costs of accreditation. That means there is no barrier to the President issuing a directive that all federally sponsored child care centers should be fully accredited by the year 2000 and those agencies should pick the costs of making that happen.

2. Suggested wording for directives we agreed upon.

Directive to OPM:

Instruct OPM to:

Give information to all federal employees (including military service) about all available federal and state tax credits that are available to them for child care and to reduce family tax liability (EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit, DCTC (Dependent Care Tax Credit) I mentioned state credits as well because in some states there is an additional state EITC or DCTC. (The reason I included military is that Linda Smith told me when we met with her that they did not give info-they are not unwilling, they just had never thought about doing it-to service families about public subsidies available to them when DOD centers are full up and they are

public subsidies | *per. child tax credit*

referred out to the community. (DOD subsidies do not go with the military family when they have to use community day care because DOD centers are full).

Provide information to all employees about local child care resource and referral agency to help with the identification and location of affordable and appropriate child care. (HHS can work with you on this one since they know all about Child care R and R.

Directive to all agencies:

Explore partnerships and collaboration with other federal and state agencies and with the private sector that would maximize existing resources and create new resources to improve the quality and increase affordability of child care for federal employees.

FYI

Attachment 4 Recommendations from NAPA study to increase affordability of federally sponsored child care.

Attachment 5 Updated list of non-GSA/DOD Federally sponsored child care centers.

ATTACHMENT (1)

IG REPORT

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

X In Central Office, the Office of Workplace Initiatives, an element of the Office Policy, Planning and Evaluation, provides advice and assistance on a number of programs designed to create a climate that provides GSA and other Federal employees with a family friendly workplace, including child care centers. In each region, a child care coordinator has been designated. The coordinators have overall responsibility for administration of the child care program in Federally provided space, and the specific responsibility to work with other Federal agencies at the regional level in promoting onsite child care. 1

Child care center providers are required to have each child care center employee submit fingerprint cards and a Statement of Personal History (GSA Form 176) for the criminal history background checks. In addition, many states have special requirements or forms for requesting information from their criminal history state repositories. The regional CSRS¹ input agent in FPS receives the documentation and transmits some of the information to Central Office via computer modem. The signature pages of the Statements of Personal History and the fingerprint cards are sent to the Office of Physical Security and Law Enforcement, Public Buildings Service (PBS), in Central Office, where information is to be requested from the FBI and the state criminal history repository for all states in which the applicant has resided. According to FBI officials, their background check includes a name search and a fingerprint check. The fingerprint checks include about 7 million records that are not a part of the name search in the National Crime Information Center, a nationwide computerized information system established as a service to all criminal justice agencies--local, state, and Federal. The results of the background check are then forwarded to the regional FPS personnel, who should advise appropriate regional officials and, eventually, the child care providers, of the results.

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

NB The objective of the audit was to answer the following question: *

Is GSA in compliance with Public Law 101-647 which requires that criminal history background checks be conducted for all child care employees in Federally provided space?

¹ The Contractor Suitability Reporting System (CSRS) is an electronic tracking system for the contract suitability process. It is also used to help manage criminal history background checks for child care center employees.

Nebraska
Iowa

every effort will be made by the Postal Service to recognize the rapid rate of population growth in Las Cruces and to automate the Las Cruces, New Mexico postal facility in order that mail processing can be expedited and handled in Las Cruces.

SEC. 522. None of the funds in this Act may be used to reduce the rank or rate of pay of a career appointee in the SES upon reassignment or transfer.

SEC. 523. No funds in this Act may be used to award a Federal agency lease in the Omaha, Nebraska—Council Bluffs, Iowa, geographical area, which does not meet the following criteria:

Any Federal agency which leases commercial space in the Omaha, Nebraska—Council Bluffs, Iowa, geographical area, when entering into new leases, shall give preference to space available meeting standard Government lease criteria, provided, the space also meets the occupying agency's mission requirement. The agency shall give priority consideration to space offered at the lowest cost per square foot within the geographical area, provided that the space under consideration also affords accessibility to the greatest number of members of the public served by the Federal agency, and to other factors set out in the applicable statutes and regulations.

SEC. 524. Such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 1993 pay raises for programs funded by this Act shall be absorbed within the levels appropriated by this Act.

SEC. 525. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall be available to pay the salary for any person filling a position, other than a temporary position, formerly held by an employee who has left to enter the Armed Forces of the United States and has satisfactorily completed his period of active military or naval service and has within ninety days after his release from such service or from hospitalization continuing after discharge for a period of not more than one year made application for restoration to his former position and has been certified by the Office of Personnel Management as still qualified to perform the duties of his former position and has not been restored thereto.

SEC. 526. None of the funds made available to the United States Customs Service may be used to collect or impose any land border processing fee at ports of entry along the United States-Mexico border.

SEC. 527. Where appropriations in this Act are expendable for travel expenses of employees and no specific limitation has been placed thereon, the expenditures for such travel expenses may not exceed the amount set forth therefor in the budget estimates submitted for the appropriations without the advance approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations: *Provided*, That this section shall not apply to travel performed by uncompensated officials of local boards and appeal boards of the Selective Service System; to travel performed directly in connection with care and treatment of medical beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to travel of the Office of Personnel Management in carrying out its observation responsibilities of the Voting Rights Act; or to payments to interagency motor pools where separately set forth in the budget schedules.

SEC. 528. Section 616 of the Act of December 22, 1987 (40 U.S.C. 490b) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a)(2) to read as follows:

"(2) such officer or agency determines that such space will be used to provide child care services to children of whom at least 60 percent have one parent or guardian who is employed by the Federal Government; and";

(2) by amending subsection (b)(3) to read as follows:

"(3) For the purpose of this subsection, the term 'services' includes the providing of lighting, heating, cooling, electricity, office furniture, office machines and equipment, classroom furnishings and equipment, kitchen appliances, playground equipment, telephone service (including installation of lines and equipment and other expenses associated with telephone services), and security systems (including installation and other expenses associated with security systems), including replacement equipment, as needed."

(3) by redesignating subsection (b)(3), as amended by paragraph (2), as subsection (b)(4), and inserting after subsection (b)(2) the following:

"(3) If an agency has a child care facility in its space, or is a sponsoring agency for a child care facility in other Federal or leased space, the agency or the General Services Administration may pay accreditation fees, including renewal fees, for that center to be accredited by a nationally recognized early-childhood professional organization, and travel and per diem expenses for attendance by representatives of the center at the annual General Services Administration child care conference"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(c) Through the General Services Administration's licensing agreements, the Administrator of General Services shall provide guidance, assistance, and oversight to Federal agencies for the development of child care centers to promote the provision of economical and effective child care for Federal workers."

"(d) If a Federal agency has a child care facility in its space, or is a sponsoring agency for a child care facility in other Federal or leased space, the agency or the General Services Administration may enter into a consortium with one or more private entities under which such private entities would assist in defraying the costs associated with the salaries and benefits provided for any personnel providing services at such facility."

SEC. 529. Section 532 of the Act of November 5, 1991 (104 Stat. 1470; Public Law 100-609), is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a)" immediately before the first sentence inside the quotation marks; and

(2) by adding before the close quotation marks at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) The Internal Revenue Service may use competitive procedures or procedures other than competitive procedures to procure the services of attorneys for use in litigating actions under the Internal Revenue Code to which a foreign-controlled corporation is a party. The Internal Revenue Service need not provide any written justification for the use of procedures other than competitive procedures when procuring attorney services for such cases and need not furnish for publication in the Commerce Business Daily or otherwise any notice of solicitation or synopsis with respect to such procurement."

SEC. 530. (a) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, enforce, or otherwise carry out any change in the terms or conditions governing benefits under

Day care.

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memoranda

GILBERT J. L. FOWLES

an Executive agency, the Administrator shall delegate to the head of the agency the evaluation and compliance responsibilities assigned to the Administrator under subsection (b) (4) (A).

(f) Technical Assistance, Studies, and Reviews.--The Administrator may provide technical assistance, and conduct and provide the results of studies and reviews, for Executive agencies, and entities sponsoring child care centers in executive facilities, on a reimbursable basis, in order to assist the entities in complying with this section. The Architect of the Capitol and the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts may provide technical assistance, and conduct and provide the results of studies and reviews, or request that the Administrator provide technical assistance, and conduct and provide the results of studies and reviews, for legislative offices and judicial offices, respectively, and entities operating child care centers in legislative facilities and judicial facilities, respectively, on a reimbursable basis, in order to assist the entities in complying with this section.

(g) Council.--The Administrator shall establish an interagency council, comprised of all Executive agencies described in subsection (e), a representative of the Office of Architect of the Capitol, and a representative of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, to facilitate cooperation and sharing of best practices, and to develop and coordinate policy, regarding the provision of child care in the Federal Government. *

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

(h) Authorization of Appropriations.--There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$900,000 for fiscal year 1998 and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year. PROU

S. 1490 - QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ACT

SECT. 3(b)3 - ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

PROVISION

- Governmentwide regulation will require, to the maximum extent possible, that Executive centers comply with accreditation standards
- Compliance, or substantial progress toward it, is required within 5 years after enactment
- Contracts/licensing agreements with Providers must contain this condition
- Centers are subject to monitoring for compliance

ANALYSIS

- Language does not require accreditation; centers must meet the standards for accreditation
- The Administrator has the flexibility to determine if "substantial progress" toward meeting accreditation standards has been made
- Many centers are already accredited, or in the process with NAEYC
- Language does not have a 100% standard - why not?

Define - develop
collaboratively

Example

regulation - check this -
by pioneer changes accreditation - walks out door -
Can this be changed - + - Data re turnover
Generally 526

DEVELOP NEW INITIATIVES AND LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO ENSURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Academy Study Team recommends that consideration be given to:

6. Collaboration among federal agencies and between federal agencies and states, local governments, the private sector, and community-based organizations to identify areas where federal employees' child care needs might be met via existing resources within the community.

In this regard, consideration should be given to allowing federal agencies to use their available funds and resources to invest in start-up costs in non-federal child care enterprises.

7. Enacting legislation to give department and agency heads the flexibility to decide the level and kind of support they will provide for child care programs consistent with the availability of appropriated funds.

8. Amending the Tribble Amendment to modify the minimum 50 percent federal employee enrollment requirement for individual government child care centers.

9. Authorizing demonstration projects that would grant selected federal departments and agencies expanded authority to pilot alternative forms of child care assistance.

10. Establishing demonstration sites so OPM can pilot test cafeteria-style benefits programs for federal employees, which would include child care as an option.

11. A study by OPM of the feasibility of removing the statutory barrier to federal employees having access to the Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP). The study team recommends the concept be evaluated for its potential to help low income federal parents, the impact of tax revenue loss, and administrative costs to the government. During the study, OPM should review the New York State DCAP to assess how it is benefiting low- to moderate-income employees.

In addition to describing the background, history and environment of child care in the federal civilian agencies, the study details support for each of the findings and recommendations.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 3, 1998

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER (K) *in*

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Report on Accreditation of
Military Child Development Centers

Purpose

Reply to Secretary Cohen's letter on accreditation status.

Background

On March 10, you directed Bill to submit a report on the accreditation status of Military Child Development Centers. His letter notes that as of August, eighty-six percent of the centers were accredited and that the Services have plans to gain accreditation of the remaining centers by the year 2000.

Your reply thanks Bill for the report and asks that he thank those who worked on the initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

Attachments

Tab A Letter for Signature
Tab B Incoming Correspondence

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

TAB A

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter reporting on the accreditation status of Military Child Development Centers. I am highly impressed with the extent of the progress that has been made thus far.

Please thank all those in the Military Child Development Program who have worked so hard on this important initiative. Their efforts are significantly improving the quality of child care for the children of our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

The Honorable William S. Cohen
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

TAB B



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000



AUG 24 1998

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The attached report responds to your March 10, 1998, Executive Memorandum, "Steps to Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care." That memorandum directed me to submit a report along with a plan that ensures all eligible, Federally sponsored centers in the Department of Defense are accredited by an independent, nationally recognized accrediting body.

I am proud to inform you that as of today, eighty-six percent of all eligible Military Child Development Centers are accredited. It is especially noteworthy that one hundred percent of the eligible centers operated by the United States Air Force are accredited. Further, each Military Service has a plan to ensure the remaining eligible centers meet your goal of accreditation by the year 2000.

We appreciate your interest and support of our program and are honored to be part of the plan to improve federally sponsored child care.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure:
As stated



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

National Accreditation of Federally Sponsored Child Development Programs

Background and Current DoD Policy:

DoD has been committed to national accreditation of child development centers dating back to 1990. The Military Child Care Act (MCCA) of 1989 required DoD to accredit 50 child development centers and then to study the results of achieving the higher standards required by accreditation on the development of children. DoD elected to apply the National Association for the Education of Young Children's National Academy of Early Childhood Programs accreditation process.

In response to the MCCA requirement, DoD asked the RAND Corporation to study the effects of accreditation on military child development center operations and outcomes. Its report, "Examining the Effects of Accreditation on Military Child Development Center Operations and Outcomes," found that universal accreditation of child development centers is a desirable and achievable goal. A copy of this study is at TAB 1. Based on the positive results of this experience, DoD subsequently published policy requiring all military child development centers to meet the standards for accreditation by December 1997. While our policy did not require actual accreditation, only that all centers meet the standards, each of the Military Services committed to achieving actual accreditation by the year 2000.

Meeting the Goal:

Currently, 86% of all eligible DoD Child Development Centers are accredited as shown in the chart below.

Service	Eligible Centers	Accredited Centers	Percent Accredited
Air Force	145	145	100%
Army	150	128	85%
Navy	112	87	78%
Marine Corps	30	17	57%
Total	437	377	86%

The remaining eligible centers are in the process of accreditation. Each of the Military Services has submitted a plan that ensures full compliance with accreditation requirements, has a monitoring system in place to track those centers not yet accredited, and has mentoring programs in place to assist them in accreditation. All eligible military centers will be nationally accredited by October 1999.

The DoD and Military Services whole-heartedly endorse national accreditation efforts. We believe that the outside evaluation of our military programs by the National Association for the Education of Young Children has been one of the key factors in developing a high quality child development program.

Sharing the Experience:

Finally, we have used the experience and success of the Military Services and particularly the United States Air Force to guide this effort. The Air Force, as Executive Agent for our accreditation initiative, has prepared a guide detailing its experiences. This document, "***Military Child Development Programs – Best Practices Toward Accreditation***," will assist military child development programs that are reaching out to mentor other Federal and non-federal child development programs seeking national accreditation. A copy of the guide is at TAB 2. As directed in your April 17, 1997, memorandum, we are encouraging all military programs to reach out and share the lessons learned from their experiences.

Future Initiatives:

Because we view the Military Child Development Program as a *system of care* and accreditation as a keystone of that program, DoD has set a broader benchmark toward program accreditation. The Air Force and the Army have assisted in designing a new system of accreditation for School-Age Care Programs. In addition, the Air Force is working with a national group to develop an accreditation system for Family Child Care Homes.

RAND

*Examining the Effects of
Accreditation on Military
Child Development Center
Operations and Outcomes*

*Gail L. Zellman, Anne S. Johansen,
Jeannette Van Winkle*

National Defense Research Institute

Preface

This document was prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (Personnel Support, Families and Education) and is the first of two reports that explore the implementation of the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) of 1989. This report fulfills an MCCA mandate to assess the effect of accreditation of military child development centers (CDCs) on child outcomes.

The objectives of this research were fourfold: to analyze the accreditation process; to examine the effect of accreditation on CDC staff morale, professionalism, and interactions; to explore the perceived impact of accreditation on child outcomes; and to assess the incremental value of accreditation over the benefits associated with DoD certification of CDCs.

The report uses information derived from documents on certification and accreditation published, respectively, by DoD and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), data collected during site visits to 17 military installations and four major commands, and data collected from a worldwide mail survey of Child Development Program directors.

These data and the recommendations that follow should help Congress and military policymakers, child care managers, and installation-level commands better understand the accreditation process and the unique benefits it provides to CDC children, staff, and parents.

The research was conducted by the Defense Manpower Research Center, part of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the defense agencies.

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Summary

Background

In November 1989, Congress passed the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for 1990 and 1991. The goals of the new law were to improve the availability and quality of child care services in the military. An additional aim of the act was to standardize the delivery and quality of care across installations and military services, which in 1989 varied considerably.

Much of the act focused on changes to be made in staffing, training, compensation, and funding. But the MCCA also contained a provision that required at least 50 military child development centers (CDCs) to be accredited in accordance with the standards of a national accrediting body for early childhood programs. Accreditation of these 50 centers was to be completed by June 1, 1991. The 50 accredited CDCs were to serve as a "demonstration program" from which other nonaccredited centers could learn about best practice. An independent organization was to evaluate the effect of CDC accreditation on child outcomes. This evaluation would compare child outcomes in accredited and nonaccredited centers. Study data would shed light on the effects of accreditation and address the desirability of mandating that all military CDCs be accredited.

Congress's intention to assess the benefits of accreditation was stymied by several realities inherent in the passage of the MCCA. In particular, the requirement that the accreditation of the first 50 CDCs be completed by June 1, 1991, led to a disproportionately high number of already high-quality and exemplary centers in the initial accreditation group.

Given the biased nature of the "demonstration program" centers, a study of the effects of accreditation on child outcomes could not authoritatively determine its value. Thus, DoD staff concluded that the cost of its implementation was not justified.

Study Design

Given these realities, RAND staff, in consultation with Personnel Support, Families and Education (PSF&E) staff, set out to develop a research plan of more limited scope.

The final accreditation study design employs a variety of different methods that together converge to assess the effect of accreditation on CDC operations and outcomes.

The specific study objectives were to (1) analyze the accreditation process, (2) examine the effect of accreditation on CDC staff, (3) explore the perceived effect of accreditation on child outcomes, and (4) assess the incremental value of accreditation over the benefits associated with DoD certification.

To achieve the study objectives, the study design relies on three different data sources:

1. Relevant military and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)¹ documents;
2. Data collected from a worldwide mail survey of child development (CD) directors;
3. One-on-one interviews with respondents on 17 local installations and four Major Commands, including military personnel, CDC employees, parent users of child care, and kindergarten teachers.

The installation sample was chosen to reflect a range of MCCA implementation and accreditation experiences. Installations were categorized according to the degree of difficulty they had experienced with the overall implementation of MCCA requirements. Installations were also categorized according to the presence (or absence) of at least one accredited center. Those installations with one or more accredited centers were further divided into early, middle, and late accreditors according to the date of accreditation of the first center.

Study Findings

DoD Inspection and Certification

The MCCA established a program of four yearly unannounced inspections of each CD program to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. If inspection reports confirm that a child development program is operating in compliance with military standards, DoD issues one-year certification.

¹The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, offers the only set of standards for early childhood programs that leads to national accreditation (Hayes et al., 1990). We use NAEYC throughout the text to refer to both NAEYC and NAECP because that term is more widely known.

Accreditation

NAEYC has established a set of professional quality standards that must be met for a child development center to become accredited. These standards were developed on the basis of a review of the available literature regarding child development and child care quality, as well as on the basis of the judgment of 175 early childhood specialists (Hayes et al., 1990).

NAEYC's standards incorporate two types of indicators: structural elements, such as group size, caregiver-to-child ratio, caregiver training, available space, and equipment (e.g., Berk, 1985; Fosburg, 1981; Ruopp et al., 1979), and indicators of children's daily experiences in care, such as how caregiver and child interact (e.g., Anderson et al., 1981; Carew, 1980; Rosenblith, 1992). Of the two indicator categories, the latter is more closely linked to developmental outcomes (Belsky, 1984; Bredekamp, 1986).

Achieving accreditation requires completion of a three-step process that includes (1) a self-study, (2) a site validation, and (3) a commission decision (NAEYC, 1991). The self-study is guided by four principal instruments. The first is an early childhood classroom observation scale that is used by CDC caregivers to rate their own classrooms and teaching activities. Other instruments used during the self-study include surveys of both CDC staff and parents.

When the self-study is completed, a decision is usually made to proceed to a validation visit. The purpose of the validation visit is to verify that the results of the self-study submitted by the CDC staff accurately reflect the daily operations of the center. A three-person accreditation commission, consisting of a diverse group of early childhood professionals, reviews all materials and decides to either grant a three-year accreditation or defer it.

The Accreditation Process

For the most part, the accredited centers in our sample embarked upon the accreditation process at the behest of Major Command representatives or others in the child development hierarchy. The accreditation process proved time-consuming and labor-intensive. Mail survey respondents reported on average that the initial accreditation process took one year from beginning to final completion. Work done for accreditation almost always took place during regular work hours.

Training curriculum specialists were universally considered to be critical to the accreditation process. As this position was created by the MCCA, there is little

doubt that widespread accreditation of CDCs would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve before the implementation of the act.

Accreditation Effects

The most significant effect of accreditation was evidenced in caregiving activities. Self-study resulted in more child-initiated and child-controlled activities. Accreditation also resulted in activities better suited to particular age groups. Other improvements resulting from accreditation included the acquisition of better equipment, both indoors and out, as well as improved learning centers. The prestige of accreditation and the recognition for having met a nationally recognized standard was the most frequently reported benefit among interviewees.

Improved caregiver interactions with children were facilitated in at least some CDCs by significant changes in policies and operations, e.g., fewer group changes during the day as group sizes declined.

Most parents thought that accreditation through NAEYC was a good thing, even though few were attuned to the details of the process. Most CDC personnel believed that the quality of care had substantially increased because of an accreditation process that stressed overarching goals and staff training and empowerment.

Although we asked directly, CDC staff had difficulty describing the effects of accreditation on child outcomes. For most, there was a sure sense that children had benefited and continued to benefit from accreditation. But most of these benefits were inferred—from better equipment, more group stability over the course of the day, higher staff morale, and a clearer sense of key delivery goals.

Commanders, command representatives, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) directors and service commanders at the installations visited by RAND expressed a wide range of opinions on the accreditation process. Most favored accreditation, despite a lack of knowledge about accreditation requirements.

Views among those individuals who did not support accreditation ranged from skeptical to openly hostile. They argued that the costs in personnel time outweighed any benefits that could be had through meeting accreditation standards. Since these individuals saw neither the need for nor additional benefits from accreditation, recognition by NAEYC seemed unnecessary and amounted to "overkill" in child care regulation.

Discussion

Study results show that the accreditation process is both time-consuming and labor-intensive. To a large extent, the most time-consuming and difficult problems that had to be overcome during the initial accreditation process were facility deficiencies. CDC coordinators who had successfully completed the accreditation process believed that accreditation was doable as long as there was sufficient command support to make changes identified in the self-study process.

The effect of accreditation was judged by nearly all to be overwhelmingly positive. The most frequently cited benefit among survey respondents was higher staff morale and pride. The second most frequently cited set of benefits related to program improvements such as better-defined goals, higher-quality care, and more innovative programs.

Comparison of DoD certification standards with those specified by NAEYC reveal considerable overlap. The NAEYC requirements, however, go beyond the minimum certification standards and provide very explicit instructions for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, environment, staff-parent interactions, developmentally appropriate activities, and evaluation. An advantage of accreditation over certification is that NAEYC standards expressly consider the goals of child care, rather than focusing on meeting specific requirements. In this way, the accreditation process becomes oriented toward providing good quality care rather than passing a checklist mandated by law. As such, accreditation complements and builds upon certification standards.

Conclusions

It was not possible to directly measure the effect of accreditation on child outcomes, but there can be little doubt that accreditation improves the quality of care provided, not only in those centers with lower pre-accreditation quality of care, but also in initially high-quality centers.

Studies of child development have found significant relationships between quality of care and child outcomes across a range of domains, including cognitive development, language skills, and social development. These studies have shown child-caregiver interactions to be of particular importance for child outcomes. Since accreditation is designed to particularly improve this aspect of care, it is reasonable to conclude that accreditation results in improved child outcomes, although empirical evaluation is still needed.

Respondents disagreed about whether the benefits of accreditation outweigh its costs; no one could cite data supporting his or her position. But it is clear that in many respects, the implementation of the MCCA has substantially reduced the costs of accreditation. In particular, the mandated training and curriculum specialist position in each CDC has provided each center with at least one person with a strong child development background who can devote a substantial portion of her workday to accreditation-related activities. Required caregiver training has increased the skill level and knowledge base of caregivers. The salary increase that caregivers won through the MCCA has increased both the quality and longevity of caregiving staff.²

Moreover, certification checklists that require many of the same physical attributes in CDCs that NAEYC specifies have resulted in physical plant improvements in many CDCs. Although plant improvements were cited by some respondents as a major and unfunded accreditation cost, the need for certification and increasing limitations on waivers have essentially moved this cost out of the accreditation category.

Given minimal incremental costs for accreditation and substantial apparent benefits, we conclude that universal accreditation of CDCs is a desirable and achievable goal. Indeed, as accreditations are achieved in initially less-able CDCs, we have every reason to expect that the benefits of accreditation for military children will become increasingly apparent.

²See Zellman and Johansen (forthcoming) for data on these points.

1998 Edition

Military Child Development Programs

Best Practices Toward Accreditation

Prepared for

THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Nancy J. Duno-Broadway
Early Childhood Connections, Inc

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PURPOSE

In an April 17, 1997 memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, President Clinton directed that all military child development programs "share the expertise and lessons learned with Federal, State, tribal and local agencies, as well as with private and non-profit entities that are responsible for providing child care for our Nation's children¹". In praise of military child development programs, the President added: "I believe that the military has important lessons to share with the rest of the Nation on how to improve the quality of child care for all of our Nation's children.¹"

One of the reasons military programs were chosen for this recognition is the unusually high percentage of military programs that have been nationally accredited. In contrast to the civilian sector, over 75% of military centers have been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Some centers have now been accredited for the third time. In the process of achieving this high level of accreditation, the military services have learned important lessons that can be shared with others.

The purpose of this handbook is to document some of the lessons learned by military programs in achieving accreditation by NAEYC. This handbook is also designed to help staff in military programs who provide community outreach to assist early childhood programs in the private sector in achieving accreditation. This guide is designed to supplement existing accreditation documents and guides provided by NAEYC or the services, not replace them.

¹ Letter from The WHITE HOUSE Office, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, to Secretary of Defense, 17 April 1997

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter reporting on the accreditation status of Military Child Development Centers. I am highly impressed with the extent of the progress that has been made thus far.

Please thank all those in the Military Child Development Program who have worked so hard on this important initiative. Their efforts are significantly improving the quality of child care for the children of our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Clinton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honorable William S. Cohen
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000