Make Way for Educare!
The Future of Child Care in North America
By Marilyn G. Beach

What will Adventist child care centers be like 10 to 15 years from now? It’s safe to say that we’re in for some significant changes. Because more and more Christian parents want good, Christian care for their young children, more and more Adventist institutions are looking into the possibility of providing that care. And judging from where we are now, change is necessary.

Where We Are Now

Following is a contrast of two existing Adventist child care centers. The first center is housed in the Sabbath school rooms of a church and is used for Sabbath school on weekends and child care on weekdays. The rooms, located in the church basement, have minimal light and no water. The bathrooms, with adult-size fixtures, are located down the hall. Toys, crayons, paper, and sleeping mats are stored in bins on the shelves and in closets in the hallway.

There is a small, grassy area where a slide, swing, and teeter-totter have been placed, but most of the playground is the parking lot of a church.

There is friction between the Sabbath school leaders and the child care providers over storage, bulletin boards, the use of materials, and breakage. There is pressure on the center to make a profit because the church established it to raise money for the mortgage. This means the director must pay lower wages. For the most part, the church board ignores the center until there is a problem which causes a financial strain.

The center provides care for between 12 and 30 children in each room with one or two adults. The child-to-teacher ratio is from 12:1 to 15:1. Most of the teachers and helpers (young women who took the job because they love children, homemakers who attend the church, or teenagers) have no specialized training. Most don’t plan to make this their career because it can’t provide a good living. There is a high turnover rate and the director finds it hard to get Adventist teachers.

Everyone puts in long hours to keep the kids safe and give them plenty of affection. By the end of the day they go home exhausted and feeling unappreciated. They come back because they care about the kids and jobs are scarce.

Now take a look at the second center. It was built as a day care, is light and airy, and contains bathrooms with child-size fixtures in the rooms. Each room was designed so that an adult can visually supervise the entire area from one location. Materials and equipment have been chosen to provide for a wide variety of learning experiences. There is adequate storage for extra equipment and sleeping mats in each room.

The center opens directly onto a playground where children can choose between activities like swinging, climbing, balancing, running, crawling, digging, group play, and solitary play. There is a track for wheeled vehicles as well as a variety of surfaces—grass, sand, dirt, and asphalt. The area is fenced and designed for clear visual supervision.

The church has a healthy relationship with the center. They established it as an outreach ministry, to provide an Adventist environment for the young children of its families, and to act as a feeder for its church.

Continued on page 3

The Scoop

A Network For You!

If you’re an Adventist child care provider, you won’t want to miss the organizational meeting of the Adventist Child Care Providers’ Network.

The Network is being started so that child care providers across North America can share information, ideas, experiences, and resources.

Adventist child care centers provide first rate care and education for young children in their communities. Through our small ministry, we bring light to our communities. And if we get together and work together, we’ll all get stronger.

Why not attend the kickoff meeting of the Adventist Child Care Providers’ Network from June 30 through July 1, 1994 at the General Conference Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland? We look forward to meeting you!
Come One, Come All!

Join the Child Care Network

By Noelene Johnson

What do Sandy Dickenson, Marilyn Beach, Eunice Alexander, and Dan Knapp have in common? Not geography. Sandy lives in Washington state, Marilyn in southern California, Eunice in Washington D.C., and Dan, halfway in between. As far as I know, they have never heard of each other.

Sandy, Marilyn, Eunice, and Dan believe in Adventist child care as a responsible way to serve the community and further the mission of Jesus Christ. Sandy and Eunice head up child care centers at established Adventist schools. Marilyn and Dan encourage Adventist child care providers. And all believe that an association for child care providers can help achieve their goals.

Our First Chapter

The Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists led the way when they established their Adventist Day Care Providers' Network. They foresaw the possibility of a national association and began brainstorming an idea for a national meeting with properly accredited seminars.

But first we need to build the association's membership. A conference won't work until a network is in place and there are people to attend.

To get the network moving, the North American Division has published this newsletter and scheduled a meeting. If you are involved in a child care—whether it operates at a church, a school, or out of your home—this newsletter alerts you that a professional support group could be just around the corner.

Your Turn

To join the network, send your name, address, and phone number to:

Child Care Network
NAD Children's Ministries
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
Or fax to: 301/680-6464.

Also, please send names and addresses of other child care providers who need to get this newsletter. We'll be happy to send them a copy. And circle June 30 and July 1, 1994 on your calendar. That's when we'll have our first division-wide child care providers' meeting. At that time, we expect to launch the association and elect officers. See the back page for more information about how you can attend.

Until then, may God bless your ministry to children.

Noelene Johnson is the director of Children’s Ministries for the North American Division.
What’s Ahead for Child Care?

The United Nations has named 1994 the International Year of the Family. The Adventist Church has embraced that premise. The needs of families are becoming a priority. Over the next few years, as this kind of consciousness increases in both the secular world and the Adventist Church, people will realize the importance of quality child care and the necessity for highly trained professionals to deliver that care.

More resources and government money will be made available for parents to use in obtaining the child care of their choice, in turn increasing the number of families requesting Adventist child care.

As child care moves from custodial care to what is known as educare (care and developmentally appropriate education of the young child), many of our centers will move from church buildings to spaces or newly developed centers on church school campuses. Parents will be able to drop all their children off at the same location. Educational systems will expand existing structures to become P-12 systems.

With the move toward professionalism, the quality of centers will improve and more will become accredited. The needs of the child will be paramount in the planning and operation of centers. Men and women who feel called to work with young children will be able to make a decent living and enjoy the same benefits that are presently provided for K-12 teachers only.

With increased funding, training will be available so that each center can be properly staffed with Adventist personnel. There will be conference-, union-, and division-level personnel hired to supervise and facilitate the work of our centers. Child care teachers will become part of the family of denominational educators.

Does this seem like an impossible dream? Keep in mind that the quality of child care in and by the Adventist Church is limited only by the scope of our vision and commitment. The church can make the future better for its young children. Make way for educare!

— Marilyn G. Beach

Network News

The Adventist Day Care Provider Network is being organized to provide a connection for Adventist day care providers across North America.

Lynne Alexander, one of the founders of the organization, says that through the network, child care providers can help each other give input and share information.

Alexander, director of the Shiloh Child Development Center in Takoma Park, Maryland, got the idea for a network after she conducted a 1991 study to determine if there was a need for child care in her conference—the Potomac Conference Education Department.

When Mary Ewing, Executive Secretary of the conference, looked at the results, she felt it would be a good outreach program. At that time, they set up a meeting and invited Nodela Robinson, Executive Director of the Children’s Ministries Department. They also invited Dr. Jane S. Bless of the principal of Shiloh Elementary School in Takoma Park.

At that first meeting last summer, the board had the idea and decided to move forward. They scheduled a second meeting in October and invited conference representatives and several of the area child care directors to attend.

At this meeting, the group elected Alexander as president, Edna Nied, owner and operator of a suburban Maryland center, was elected secretary, and Debra Oothien, director of a Virginia-based center, was elected treasurer.

The network’s mission is to provide support and nurture for Adventist day care providers and to reach out with information and encouragement to churches and individuals who are starting an Adventist day care center.

The group also decided to have a division-wide meeting where an organization could officially be established and Adventist day care providers could come together and network. That meeting will take place in January.

Why have an Adventist Day Care Provider Network? Because Adventist child care is "just about education and a safe environment," says Alexander. "It's leading children to Jesus.

— Celeste Ryan
Join the Adventist Child Care Network!

When: June 30 - July 1, 1994
How: Attend the first division-wide meeting for organization and electing officers.
Where: General Conference Headquarters, Silver Spring, Maryland
Purpose: To talk about and possibly organize an association of Adventist child care providers. To support each other in a professional capacity and to explore ways to increase the effectiveness and spread of this unique ministry.
Sponsors: North American Division, Potomac Conference, Southeastern California Conference, Columbia Union College, Home Study International
Accommodations: Plan to stay at the Ramada Inn, 4050 Powder Mill Road, Beltsville, Maryland 20705. For reservations, call 301/572-7100. To get special room rates (listed below) you must inform the clerk that you'll be attending meetings at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. At least 24 hours before your arrival and departure, you must request a shuttle pick up from the Baltimore/Washington Airport (BWI). Special room rates: $51.00 per night (1-4 people in a room) week nights. $58.00 per night (1-2 people in a room w/kitchenette and 1 double bed).

☐ Yes! I plan to attend the meeting to launch the Adventist Child Care Providers' Network meeting June 30 through July 1.

Name ____________________________
Name of Day Care ____________________________
Mailing Address ____________________________
City ____________________________ State ____________________________
Zip ____________________________ Country ____________________________
Phone ____________________________ Fax ____________________________

Resources

Thank You God For My Body
Thank You God For My Body is a delightful book designed to teach preschool children the names and functions of their body parts by combining related Bible verses, short rhyming prayers of thanks, and four color illustrations. The author, Edwin Nealy, is the owner of a day care in Silver Spring, Maryland. Cost: $6.95 Available from: Review & Herald Publishing Association and your local Adventist Book Center.

Great Ideas

Marketing Your Day Care
Looking for a way to market your day care? According to American Demographics, children love to get mail. We suggest you try colorful postcards or short letters. It'll highlight your creativity and it's a great way to keep in touch with your customers.

Small Talk

"Mommy, I'm Going!"
Adventist child care centers really do serve as outreach programs. Many of the children who attend are not of our faith but what they learn, they take home with them.
Recently at the Shiloh SDA School in Little Rock, Arkansas, little Jaime was overheard telling his mother, "Mommy, I'm going!"
"Going where?" his mother asked curiously.
"I'm going to heaven," the little boy exclaimed.
"We're always singing songs and talking about going to heaven with Jesus," says assistant director Margaret Hall. "I guess that's where he picked it up."