**Dates to Remember:**

February 9
PUC ECE Curriculum Committee (Angwin, CA)

February 26
PUC ECEC Advisory (Westlake Village, CA)

March 27-29
NAD ECE Task Force (Atlanta, GA)

April 6
Adventist ECE Teacher In-service (Milpitas, CA)

June 26
PUC ECEC Advisory (Westlake Village, CA)

July 10-12
NAD ECE Task Force (?)

October 2-4
NAD ECE Task Force (?)

October 28-29
PUC ECE and “K” Teacher Worship (Sacramento, CA)

November 14-17
NAEYC/ACCN Annual Conference (Chicago, IL)

December 4-6
NAD ECEC Task Force (?)

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**2006 ACCN Report**

Each new year, many of us spend time reflecting on the previous year. The year 2006 brings several firsts for Adventist early childhood professionals and a bit of reflection seems appropriate.

**The Role of ACCN**

One of the active participants in the development of the organizational structure within the Pacific Union Conference (PUC) has been the Adventist Child Care Network (ACCN). ACCN has been a valuable resource in helping the PUC Early Childhood Advisory know and understand the challenges facing Adventist early childhood professionals who are working in our various programs. Many of you have helped ACCN gather and share information, suggestions, desires, vision and provide feedback.

If you are reading this article as a courtesy recipient, ACCN encourages you to consider becoming a member so your voice may also be heard. PUC and ACCN value the input received helping to further an Adventist early childhood organizational structure which will be supported and fully recognized throughout North American Division.

As this newsletter goes to print, there are many exciting opportunities for Adventist early childhood providers; many new opportunities that have never been realized before in the history of this church. The purpose of this article is to give the reader an idea of the new and exciting opportunities that are developing and to outline the possibilities for a future in child evangelism.

**What’s New?**

Adventist early childhood programs located within church or school settings have a very special role to play in the evangelism of young children. In recognition of this last year, the North American Division (NAD) appointed an Early Childhood Task Force to study and explore possible options for the development of an organizational structure for all Adventist early childhood programs throughout the NAD. This is the first time in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church that the church organization as a whole has looked upon early childhood programs with an intentional eye for child evangelism.

One of the results of this Task Force was the deliberate inclusion of Adventist early childhood professionals in the August 2006 NAD Teacher’s Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. ACCN was part of the marketing tool used for disseminating information and drawing individuals to the convention. As one might guess, the entire event resembled a miniature General Conference session with the large majority of our teachers being present!

Many ACCN readers were in attendance and this interest has helped church and education administrators to comprehend the importance of the early childhood years and the programs that serve them. The Task Force has used the energy from the convention to work on their assignment of proposing possible options for the development of an organizational structure for Adventist centers.

**Why Now?**

You may be questioning the need for an organizational structure after all these years. Why would it be important for Adventist early childhood programs now?

Organizational structure is important for several reasons. Most importantly, our God is a God of order and planning; He is a God of forethought. Without organizational structure, the Adventist church would not be effective in its evangelistic efforts throughout the world. Without an organizational structure, Adventist education would not be as highly regarded or as successful as it has been since its inception. Confusion, strife, unnecessary duplication of efforts and competition would have decimated all evangelistic efforts.

Our Lord does nothing haphazardly. Mrs. White was given clear council on how to organize the Adventist church. She was also given directions for developing an effective educational system. Adventist early childhood programs are evangelistic efforts and as such, Adventist early childhood programs can greatly benefit with an organizational structure that follows a model consistent with the evangelistic and...
Handy Skills for 2-3 Year-Olds

Your child is gaining control over her arms, hands, wrists, and fingers. It’s time to encourage her fine motor development. By Ilisa Cohen

Two-and-a-half-year-old Zoë Del Vecchio, of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, surprised her mom after dinner one night when she carefully swept crumbs off the table with one hand and into the other, lining up her palms precisely so nothing fell on the floor.

This might not sound like a typical toddler activity, but it’s not really surprising. As 2-and-3-year-olds begin to acquire fine motor skills and improve their hand-eye coordination, they enjoy doing tasks that allow them to use these newfound abilities.

By now, your child is probably able to walk, run, tumble, jump, and use all of her major muscles. But at this age, she’s starting to gain control over her smaller muscles as well and is developing the ability to grasp, squeeze, rotate, and pinch. That’s why fine motor exercise—involving the fingers, hands, and wrists—is just as important as the whole-body workout your child is getting on the playground every day. “With strong fine motor skills, she’ll be able to write more easily and to snap her coat on her own when she goes to school,” says Laurie LeComer, author of A Parent’s Guide to Developmental Delays.

One reason children sometimes have weak hand and finger control when they get to school is because they haven’t been exposed to these tasks. “Parents tend to focus on their child’s gross motor milestones, and they may not recognize the importance of fine motor skill development until their child is school-age,” says Karen Rygalski, an occupational therapist at Columbus Children’s Hospital, in Ohio. But your toddler’s brain—specifically, the cerebellum—is continuing to develop now, improving his capacity to control and coordinate fine motor movements. So, not only is he gaining the physical ability to grasp, but his hand-eye coordination is improving too, making it easier for him to fit shapes into a sorter or stack blocks so they don’t fall. Kids this age also have longer attention spans and are better at following directions, both of which are often necessary for these intricate tasks.

“Practice makes perfect when it comes to fine motor development, so the key is to offer as many chances to experiment as possible,” says LeComer. Here’s how.

LET HER DO IT—Your child’s day is filled with opportunities to use her hand and fingers, and your job is to make sure she takes advantage of them. When you’re going outside, let her turn the doorknob instead of doing it for her. When you’re reading a book, give her a chance to turn the pages. Have her brush her own teeth (you’ll need to finish), wash her hands, and practice getting dressed by doing her own zippers, snaps, and buttons. “You should supervise, but only offer assistance when she’s really stuck,” says Rygalski.

GET CRAFTY—Painting, gluing, drawing, and cutting are all great fine motor activities, so don’t hide the art supplies from your toddler. Instead, set up a corner or table with a plastic tablecloth and let him explore his creativity. Another great game: Hide a small toy in a big ball of play dough and have your child try to find it. “Pinching and molding the dough is great exercise for her little fingers,” says LeComer.

COOK UP SOME FUN—Let your child scoop some mashed potatoes from the bowl onto her plate during dinner instead of doing it for her. When you’re making cookies, encourage her to mix the batter. “Cooking is an especially great activity for using your hands,” says LeComer. Some good kitchen tasks for your little helper: opening small water or soda bottles, pinching or kneading dough, unwrapping a stick of butter, or taking the paper off the bottom of a cupcake.

BE MUSICAL—Many children’s songs have hand gestures that go along with them, and kids this age enjoy learning these games. “The motions for ‘Itsy-Bitsy Spider’ get children to use their hands and wrists and also work on finger dexterity,” says Rygalski. “Where Is Thumbkin?” and “Here Is the Church, Here Is the Steeple” are other good hand games for toddlers. You and your child will both enjoy them—and developing his skills will feel more like play than (fine motor) practice.

IS MY LEFTY ALL RIGHT? Many children start to develop a preference for one hand by age 3, and about 10 to 15 percent will be lefties. (Left-handedness tends to run in families, but researchers haven’t figured out exactly what causes it.) Experts say it’s not a good idea to encourage your child to use his right hand if it’s not his natural preference. “When a child is 2 or 3, parents should put eating utensils and crayons in the middle of the table and let their child choose which hand to use,” says occupational therapist Karen Rygalski.

JUST BE AWARE—if your child showed very strong hand dominance or only used one hand before 18 months old, it could be a sign of muscle weakness on the other side so you should discuss the matter with your pediatrician.

PARENTS, February 2007, p.101-102
Employing Foreign Workers

For Adventist early childhood programs that employ foreign workers, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have just released very significant new policies concerning religious worker nonimmigrant as well as immigrant petitions:

1. **On November 28, 2006**, the USCIS announced a temporary suspension of the premium processing service for religious workers (R-1) nonimmigrant visas. This suspension was due to the fact that the USCIS fraud detection unit had completed a fraud assessment study of these types of petitions, and this study "revealed significant issues and potential vulnerabilities." This assessment of the religious worker program found indications of fraud in more than 32 percent of the petitions filed. The suspension of premium processing will remain in effect for the last six months if new policy changes are in place after November 28, 2006. After that time period the USCIS will determine whether to reinstate premium processing for R-1 petitions.

2. **On November 15, 2006**, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division (now part of Homeland Security) arrested 33 individuals in eight states. The ICE allege that these aliens paid substantial cash fees to a church or religious organization to file fraudulent paperwork on their behalf in order to obtain religious worker status for which they were not eligible.

3. **In December 2006**, the USCIS California Service Center informed attorneys that it had issued Requests for Evidence on all religious worker immigrant petitions.

4. **In November 2006**, the former Korean pastor of a church in the state of Washington was convicted of orchestrating a large-scale religious worker visa fraud involving South Korean nationals. This man filed applications for South Koreans he claimed were to serve as associate pastors of a church, but none of the visa applicants ever were employed in the church. As some of you may be aware, a similar practice has been uncovered in at least one SDA Conference, thus further increasing likely USCIS scrutiny of our applications.

Recently, an application for a religious worker visa filed BEFORE November 15, 2006 was subjected to a very high level of scrutiny, including an immigration agent who arrived, unannounced, at the school in question to interview the staff and investigate the institution. The USCIS also required an extensive list of additional documents in that case and still took over 5 months to process and eventually grant the application. We can assume that the USCIS, in all likelihood, will be looking at all of our R-1 petitions and immigrant petitions much more closely from now on. We also no longer have available to us expedited processing which in the past we were able to use to have an application processed quickly, sometimes in as little as a week. Therefore, it is extremely important that all religious worker applications be submitted at least 6 months prior to their intended employment and that we have sufficient documentation showing the individual's religious training as well as the nature and location of their religious employment.

If any of you have any questions concerning employing a foreign religious worker, please do not hesitate to ask your local conference human resource department.

Fund Raising with Review & Herald

Many centers engage in annual fund raisers ranging from Tupperware and pizza to candy and magazine sales. Here is a new approach, though!

Dan Wegh of the Review and Herald has developed a fund raiser opportunity for Adventist school that will benefit both the school and provide evangelical opportunities. It is called the Review Kids FunRaising program. It will earn your organization a 50% profit on all items sold plus as much as an additional 25% in the reward program that allows you to obtain new books or R&H best sellers.

The selling items are books and magazines in the categories of Christian living, health, cookbooks, and children's books – books and magazines you are familiar with, grew up with and have in your center! For instance: Bible Heroes, My Friend Jesus, Listen, Message, Women of Spirit, Life of Jesus, and many more!

It's easy to get started. Call Dan Wegh or Candy Harvey at 301-393-3240 or email dwegh@rhpa.org. Think of the possibilities of raising money for your center while sharing Adventist literature with your clientele and community.

### The purposes of ACCN includes:

1. To affirm, encourage and empower all engaged in the weekday ministry to children. (On-going)
2. To provide opportunities for professional and spiritual growth. (On-going)
3. To provide networking opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist Child Development Centers. (On-going)
4. To set certification standards for child care providers. (In process)
5. To foster unity between all areas of child development within the Adventist Church. (On-going)
6. To encourage the incorporation of Early Childhood Education in the nurture and outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (On-going)
7. To foster working relationships with the world church, unions, conferences, local churches, and schools. (On-going)
8. To encourage surveys and research in the area of Child Development and Early Childhood Education in cooperation with the North American Division. (In process)
9. To counsel with the North American Division and General Conference in the development and review of programs and strategies for Child Development. (In process)
10. To provide guidance and resources to training organizations, colleges, and universities. (In process)
11. To advocate the hiring of Early Childhood specialists at all organizational levels of the Adventist Church. (In process)
12. To develop working relationships with other Early Childhood Education organizations. (On-going)
13. To encourage child care centers to obtain national accreditation. (In process)
2006 ACCN Report, continued

Educational philosophies of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Providing an organizational structure means more than developing a hierarchical design chart, though. It means more than risk management and loss control. It incorporates the development of an early childhood curriculum that is distinctly Adventist; policies and procedures specifically designed to enhance the level of service provided while providing protection for center employees; a valid teacher and administrator certification process that respects various levels of formal education and years of experience. Providing an organizational structure requires conference and union administrators to move beyond these to include affordable and realistic education options for current employees, commensurate pay, insurance options, and nationally recognized center accreditation.

For example: Faith-based entities such as church organizations and private schools have specific protections under state and federal laws which allow for certain privileges not afforded to other organizations. Adventist early childhood programs share in these privileges, with one exception: early childhood programs are subservient to various state childcare regulations. Adventist early childhood programs must follow state regulations which govern their operation. (Currently, there are 15 states that allow for a faith-based exemption for early childhood programs. Each state allowing an exemption has different qualifications; different requirements. As a whole though, Adventist early childhood programs are not exempt from state regulation.) Developing an organizational structure for all Adventist early childhood programs would help to enhance the level of service being provided while providing protection for center employees, the hosting church or school, and the Adventist church organization as a whole.

Organizational Structure Example

As has been reported to you in the past, within PUC the concept of organizational structure has already been in place for several years with the Southeastern California Conference leading the way in the development of policies and procedures. The policies, procedures and guidelines initiated by the Southeastern California Conference have been edited and adapted for use throughout the entire PUC to provide stability and continuity within its Adventist programs. In addition, PUC has pioneered the development of an Adventist early childhood teacher certification process that is equivalent in merit to an elementary or secondary certificate. And most recently, the Pacific Union has formed an early childhood curriculum committee to formulate a proposal for a distinctly Adventist early childhood education curriculum.

The goal of PUC is to lead the way in the development of an organizational structure that will be relevant and meaningful to every Adventist early childhood program within the North American Division - and abroad! PUC actively recruits early childhood specialists including teachers, directors, college professors and students. These individuals use their expertise to guide the development of the overall organizational structure and make sure the details are fully applicable to the entire Adventist early childhood community.

In the near future, PUC will form ad-hoc committees to develop protocols for a nationally recognized center accreditation process, affordable teacher education alternatives and child-centered assessment practices.

Your Personal Role

As the editor of the newsletter, I encourage you to provide the ACCN with your thoughts, hopes and desires; your vision for the future of Adventist early childhood education and care. I encourage you also to become a member of ACCN to support the very important work that we have undertaken on your behalf. Finally, I strongly encourage each reader to become actively involved in the dialogue regarding the future of our beloved field of expertise.