2007 was a banner year for Adventist early childhood education and care! (1) The North American Division (NAD) Early Childhood Task Force completed its work and made a report to the NAD; (2) the Review and Herald Publishing Association teamed up with the NAD and Griggs University to begin the process of developing a distinctly Adventist early childhood curriculum, a process that will take several years; (3) the Mid-America Union Conference Office added a part-time early childhood coordinator, Dr. Aleene Schaeffer Mills; (4) Andrews University is currently conducting research on Adventist early childhood programs; and (5) the Adventist Child Care Network again hosted meetings during the annual NAEYC conference.

Stay tuned to your ACCN newsletter. Our newsletter is a forum for the NAD to communicate and share information. Also, make plans now to attend the 2008 NAEYC annual conference to be held in Dallas, Texas, November 5-8. Your personal input during these annual meetings has been very beneficial. We intend to continue drawing on your expertise and experiences.

In the meantime, keep Adventist early childhood in your prayers and join ACCN. ACCN has been a professional organization for Adventist early childhood educators for the past thirteen years. Each year, membership increases. Now, more than ever, your membership is most important.

We at ACCN believe the future of Adventist early childhood education and care would be enhanced through willing involvement from those of us who have made it our life’s mission. Join the Adventist Child Care Network today!

NAD Early Childhood Task Force had representatives from every NAD Union. Left to right (front row): Eunice Alexander, Tamara Libonati, Christine Gillan Byrne, Pamela Consuegra, (back row) Debra Fryson, Astrid Thomassian, Caren Erickson, Tina Miller, Wendy Witas and Duane Roush
Phthalates Found in Baby Care Products

by Karen Miles
Retrieved February 17, 2008 from babycare.com

The safety of phthalates — one of the most commonly used families of chemicals in the world — is being called into question again. Researchers at the University of Washington's Seattle Children's Hospital and the University of Rochester have found that babies whose moms had recently applied infant care products like baby lotion, shampoo, and powder were more likely to have phthalates in their urine than babies whose moms didn't use these products.


"We found that infant exposure to phthalates is widespread, and that exposure to personal care products applied onto the skin may be an important source," says Sheela Sathyanarayana, an acting assistant professor in the University of Washington's Department of Pediatrics. This is disturbing because the safety of phthalates has been in question, with studies over the years raising more and more red flags. And, as Sathyanarayana points out, "Babies may be more at risk than children or adults because their reproductive, endocrine, and immune systems are still developing."

Phthalates (pronounced "thah-lates") are chemical compounds used to soften plastics (especially polyvinyl chloride, or PVC). You'll find them in some toys, household products, cars, and plastic bottles and containers. They're used in personal care products, too — to help lubricate and soften other substances, to help lotions penetrate and soften the skin, and to help fragrances last longer, for example.

The products with the strongest phthalate association were baby powder, lotion, and shampoo. Baby wipes and diaper cream did not have a strong association. What makes this new study unique is its focus on absorbing these chemicals through the skin via personal care products. Most of the previous concerns raised about phthalates — and another plasticizer, bisphenol A (BPA) — revolved around kids ingesting the chemicals. Ingestion can happen when children are mouthing or teething on plastic toys and nipples, when the chemicals leach from a bottle or storage container into something kids eat or drink, and when they breathe in chemicals "off-gassed" by vinyl products like shower curtains and flooring.

While the news is alarming, there are concrete steps parents can take to reduce their baby's exposure to phthalates:

- Limit the amount of baby care products you use on your baby, especially if he's 8 months or younger. Sathyanarayana recommends using these products only if "medically indicated" — in the case of diaper rash or eczema, for example. (Researchers found that diaper creams did not cause an increase in phthalates. Sathyanarayana suggests this may be because they're designed to sit on top of the skin and act as a barrier rather than be absorbed, like lotions.)

- When you do use baby care products, choose products that are phthalate-free. Unfortunately it's not always easy to tell from the list of ingredients. Manufacturers aren't required to list phthalates separately, so they may be included under the term "fragrance." To find out whether a product contains phthalates or other potentially harmful chemicals, call the manufacturer or visit the company's website, or use the Environmental Working Group's Safety Guide to Cosmetics and Personal Care Products and search by product, ingredient, or company.

- Because phthalates are also added to containers to make them more flexible and more durable, and because the chemical can leach from the container into a product, you'll also want to determine whether a product's container is phthalate-free. Many — but not all — "natural" body care manufacturers are conscientious about this, but you'll need to find out specifically from the company.

- Sathyanarayana cautions that some products labeled phthalate-free were tested and shown to have phthalates in them, though at much lower concentrations than products not labeled phthalate-free. "I think it's really difficult to know what is in any of these products," she warns. Still, Sathyanarayana says, if you're concerned about phthalate exposure, products labeled "phthalate-free" would certainly be preferable.

Crib Recalls

On September 21, 2007, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced a recall of approximately one million cribs made by Simplicity, Inc. as a result of infant deaths. These cribs have a drop-down side that may be installed upside-down by accident and detach from the crib, creating a dangerous gap that could entrap and suffocate an infant.

Crib recalls subject to the recall are the Aspen 3- or 4-in-1, Nursery in a Box, Crib N Changer Combo, and Chelsea and Pooh 4 in 1. The recall also affects Simplicity cribs with the Graco logo, which includes Aspen 3-in-1, Ultra 3-, 4-, or 5-in-1, Whitney, and the Trio. Caregivers with these cribs should check the envelope attached to the mattress support and the label attached to the crib headboard for model numbers 4600, 4605, 4705, 5000, 8000, 8324, 8800, 8740, 8910, 8994, 8050, 8750, 8760, and 8996.

For more information, please visit the CPSC website at: http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsspub/prerel/prerelep07.html.
University Park, Pa. — At-risk 3- and 4-year-old children who attended the Harrisburg Preschool Program (HPP) and who now attend kindergarten are demonstrating significantly higher academic skills in early literacy and mathematics than children who did not attend HPP, according to a recent evaluation by the Prevention Research Center at Penn State.

HPP is a collaborative program involving the Harrisburg School District (HSD) and Capital Area Head Start (CAHS), commissioned by Harrisburg Mayor Stephen R. Reed in 2001 to provide comprehensive, high-quality preschool services to at-risk 3- and 4-year-old children in the District.

“The differences between the children who attended HPP and those who did not are both meaningful and comparable to those achieved in well-known national studies of early childhood educational programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project,” said Mark Greenberg, PRC Director, and professor of human development and family studies.

The Penn State research showed that children who participated in HPP for two years had even better outcomes than those with just one year of participation.

“High-quality preschool for our most at-risk, youngest citizens was one of the top priorities when taking responsibility for the school district in 2000,” said Mayor Stephen R. Reed. “With the support received from Governor Rendell, the Kellogg Foundation, PreK Counts, and the Harrisburg Public School Foundation, we have been able to serve more than 500 children per year in each of these several years. It remains our goal, however, to be able to offer preschool to every at-risk 3- and 4-year-old in the District, and that will require added resources.”

High-quality early childhood programs provide an excellent return on investment, noted Dr. Gerald W. Kohn, Superintendent of Schools in Harrisburg. “Experts estimate that every dollar spent on high-quality early childhood education programs saves approximately $17 down the road in intervention, special education, and criminal justice expenses. Most importantly, however, programs like HPP provide an even playing field for the most vulnerable children in our society.”

Funding for the Harrisburg Preschool Program originally came from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Capital Area Head Start, PreK Counts (a statewide public-private organization promoting high-quality early childhood education), and the Harrisburg Public School Foundation, as well as other sources, including private and corporate donations. In 2007–2008, HPP is also funded by a $3.3 million grant from PA PreK Counts, an initiative of the Rendell Administration.

For more information on the report, contact: Mark Greenberg, Ph.D., director, Penn State Prevention Research Center, (814) 863-0112, mxg47@psu.edu, and Celene Dimitrovich, Ph.D., assistant director, Prevention Research Center, (814) 865-2616, cxdl30@psu.edu.

Retrieved February 17, 2008 from: http://live.psu.edu/story/28384

Finding Clientele

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (R&Rs) are located in 38 states. They provide free help to parents and early childhood professionals. R&Rs work with centers to improve the quality of child care and to maintain and expand the supply of child care. R&Rs help parents find child care that will best meet their family needs and are especially concerned about meeting the need for infant-toddler, bilingual and special needs care. R&Rs also provide low-cost or free training in topics as diverse as health, safety, child development, and sound business practices. To learn more, visit the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies website at http://www.naccrra.org.

The purposes of ACCN:

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. (In process)
6. To encourage the incorporation of Early Childhood Education in the nurture and outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (In process)
7. To foster working relationships with the world church, unions, conferences, local churches, and schools. (In process)
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)
Three Angels’ Blessing

Three Angels Child Care is a preschool and infant center in Ventura, California with an enrollment of forty-seven children, eight fulltime teachers and one part time teacher. They service single parents, fulltime working families and grandparents who are helping to raise their grandchildren.

As the director, Mary Wiggins has the privilege of helping families turn to God in prayer for answers in situations concerning their children. “It is very rewarding to see hope return to their eyes as we lift to God their concerns,” she writes. “We have seen changes take place in the lives of the children as we ask God for His intervention into their lives.”

In the classrooms, the children are brought into Christ’s presence through daily Bible stories and prayer. Twice a month chapel services are held for the children as another way of making Christ real to them.

Testimonies from the children’s families demonstrate that the children are experiencing Jesus in very real ways. One mother reported that while on vacation her daughter insisted on telling everyone the Bible verse she had memorized. Another father said his son talks about Jesus, but admitted he himself did not believe. The staff at Three Angels are praying for that dad himself did not believe. The staff are very excited about what God is doing at Three Angels. God is truly exceeding all expectations.

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After each age group participated there was a little ceremony with medals for each child and a certificate of participation. The entire event cost the center about a hundred dollars along with some time and creative effort. As the Lord has promised, though, “the laborer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:18) and “they shall not labor in vain” (Isa. 65:23). The Lord blessed Three Angels with $8,000.00 in proceeds, far exceeding all expectations.

The staff are very excited about what God is doing at Three Angels. God is truly blessing their efforts in partnering with Him to make Three Angels Child Care His center for young children.

Other programs offered at Three Angels include a Spanish class taught twice weekly for the three- and four-year-old children. Music class is taught weekly for the two’s, three’s and four’s.

Finally, even though most of the families have limited income they made our first annual “Walk, Hop, Skip, Scoot Jump, Toss A–Thon” a great success. It was one of the most hassle free, simple fundraisers ever!

Donation packets were sent home with each family asking them to get donations from family, friends and co-workers. Two weeks before the event the children began to ‘sharpen their skills’ by ‘training’ on a small trampoline, learning to hop-scotch, using scooters and other activities that would be used the day of the fundraiser. Posters were made for each event and when the big day came balloons made a festive atmosphere. Parents were asked to take pictures and assist with the activities.

All children need a laptop. Not a computer, but a human laptop. Mom’s, dad’s, grannies, and grandpas, aunts, uncles – someone to hold them, read to them, teach them. Loved ones who will embrace them and pass on the experience, rituals and knowledge of a hundred previous generations. Loved ones who will pass to the next generation their expectations of them, their hopes, and their dreams.

- General Colin L. Powell

Certificates of participation for active fund raisers