ACCN at NAEYC Conference

If you missed the last NAEYC conference in Washington, D.C. (Nov. 2009), then you missed a really exciting conference. ACCN was there hosting our annual business and networking meeting as well as the Friday evening and Sabbath worship services for Adventist attendees.

By far, the most exciting event was hosting a round-table Learning Galleria discussion on the "Spiritual Development of the Young Child: The integration of beliefs, values, meaning, and self-worth". On Wednesday, before the conference, presenters Christine Gillan Byrne and Rose Gamblin were guests on LifeTalk Radio’s Homeschool Companion, discussing the upcoming presentation’s key points regarding how young children learn and how to focus that learning to help develop the spiritual domain.

The annual ACCN business and networking meeting was held on Wednesday evening. We were pleased to be introduced to three newly appointed early childhood liaisons representing three different unions: Evelyn Sullivan from the Columbia Union Conference; Barbara Livesay from the Lake Union Conference; and Sue Patzer from the North Pacific Union Conference. In addition, both Liezal Dozier and Gwen Dozier of National Child Care Systems joined us.

On Thursday evening, during the conference, ACCN president, Christine Gillan Byrne, was asked to join a small gathering of faith-based center directors to talk about how ACCN was started, what lessons were learned, and how other faith organizations can benefit from the formation of their own professional organizations.

When the long-awaited Friday morning presentation on the “Spiritual Development of the Young Child” came around, what an incredible response we received! Presenters Byrne and Gamblin were pleasantly surprised at the amount of interest demonstrated in this very important topic. This session provided a synopsis of the research describing the spiritual development of young children and how it differs from the inculcation of religious teachings. Attendees asked to continue the dialogue through email and online meetings. The number one action item created through this initial meeting was the need to develop standards and indicators relevant to the spiritual development, not religious understanding of teachings, of the young child. As a result, several attendees made a commitment to help prepare a presentation for the 2010 NAEYC conference to be held in Anaheim, California. Assuredly, this is a very exciting opportunity for the Adventist

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USDHHS Early Childhood Programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Early-Childhood Programs

No doubt you have been reading about the federal government’s stimulus money for early childhood programs. The $100 billion in funding dedicated to education targets programs for almost every age group, from early childhood programs to financial aid for college students. In an effort to keep Adventist early childhood professionals informed and competitive in an ever-changing arena, ACCN has collected several story excerpts to provide some highlights on this important issue.

According to Education Week, the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides $1 billion over two years for Head Start, an education and social-services program for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families that began in 1965. The 15-year-old Early Head Start program, which provides services to infants, toddlers, and pregnant women, will receive $1.1 billion over that period, a dramatic increase, as a result of the stimulus legislation. The money is expected to double the number of children and families served by the program. About 95,000 families and children are served by Early Head Start, compared with 976,000 in Head Start programs.

Federal child-care and child-development block grants, which are used in combination with state money to provide subsidies for families that need child care, will receive $2 billion in increased funding over two years.

Expansion and Quality Improvement Plans

Stimulus money for early childhood programs is also contained in other funding streams, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Programs serving children with disabilities from infancy to kindergarten age are receiving $900 million.

In addition, the $13 billion in Title I stimulus money, which can be used for schools that have large populations of children from low-income families, can be used to pay for early childhood programs.

Matthew Melmed, the executive director of Zero to Three, a nonprofit organization that supports professionals, policymakers and parents on issues related to infants and toddlers, anticipates that the aid will allow for the expansion of programs, as well as the creation of new ones. But some of the money also will be spent on improving programs.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the new law provides $5 billion for early childhood programs, including the federally funded Head Start. That includes $2 billion for states to use in child care and development. Of that amount, $255 million will be set aside for "quality improvement," addressing concerns such as teacher qualifications and class size requirements.

Of interest, was the comment by Joanne Hurt, executive director of Wonders Childcare, a chain of nonprofit day-care centers in the

ACCN is dedicated to Adventist early childhood providers. We will do our best to keep you informed and empowered.

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The Purposes of ACCN:

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

Join ACCN

ACCN website address: http://paucearlychildhood.adventistfaith.org
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Child Care Network!

Friday evening, the sundown worship talk was interrupted by plumes of smoke pouring into our meeting room from the hotel’s kitchen. After relocating us, the hotel brought us a platter of cookies and bottles of water. Soon after, NAEYC’s Executive Director, Dr. Mark Ginsberg, stopped by to welcome and speak briefly to our group.

Sabbath morning found ACCN attendees at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church. Eunice Alexander, a long-time member of ACCN, arranged for the church to provide lunch for ACCN attendees. Our Sabbath afternoon excursion was suppose to be a visit to the D.C. Zoo, but by the time lunch was over, a biting, cold wind convinced us to simply enjoy a few hours of monument-hopping. Nevertheless, we had an enjoyable Sabbath day.

The 2009 NAEYC conference was a very busy week for ACCN – but well worth it. Hopefully more Adventist early childhood professionals will be able to join us next year. If so, plan on spending Sabbath day with us: Church, lunch and an afternoon excursion in sunny, southern California.

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Washington, D.C., area, who said she will likely apply for assistance that covers annual teacher training and background checks, which would help alleviate budget pressures and stabilize tuition costs.

Linda Smith, executive director for the National Association of Child care Resource and Referral Agencies, said she would like to see the money prompt states to increase their requirements and regulations, especially in the area of licensure, inspections, teacher training and background checks.

So what does all this mean for Adventist early childhood programs? It’s a trickle-down effect. What the federal government requires of their federally funded programs, states will require of their state funded programs. As a result, all other early childhood providers, regardless of their venue, will find themselves seeking ways to meet the new standards and regulations. ACCN is dedicated to Adventist early childhood providers. We will do our best to keep you informed and empowered.

Sources:

NACCRRRA

Wall Street Journal

Education Week

A wise man is more powerful than a strong man, and a man of knowledge than a man of might; For it is by wise guidance that you wage your war, and the victory is due to a wealth of counselors.

-- Proverbs 24:5-6

He who gains intelligence is his own best friend; he who keeps understanding will be successful.

-- Proverbs 19:8