Parents have the right to expect a childcare center will provide proper care for their children. They expect their children will receive ample quality supervision throughout each day, whether in the center’s classrooms, during playground activities or on field trips. And parents expect their children to be free of abuse and not suffer from some form of neglect. Meeting those expectations, however, requires constant vigilance on everyone’s part. One slipup can be devastating to a child and to the childcare center.

A glance at just a few of the recent headlines around the country in 2012 and 2013 shows what happens when rules are violated or we drop our guard for just a moment. A Southern California, Christian preschool was recently closed after students allegedly engaged in sex acts with each other. In Tucson, a child walked out of a childcare center and according to the mother was gone for more than an hour, and in Texas, heat caused the death of a child left in a daycare van. According to another report, one daycare even accidentally served bleach-water cleaner to the children.

While those headlines are from other organizations, you can be sure that over the years childcare facilities in the Adventist Church have also had more than their share of incidents and many of those were caused by failure to provide the supervision necessary to prevent such occurrences.

Laws often establish minimum supervision requirements based on the numbers and ages of children at a facility, but emphasis must be placed on the word minimum. Those requirements are a starting point, and various factors may influence a need for additional staff or volunteers. Classes and playground areas can never be left unsupervised, so staffing must allow for constant coverage of all areas in adequate numbers. All of the information is not out regarding the incidents at the Christian childcare center that was shut down, but properly supervised children will not find the opportunity to partake in such activities. And properly supervised children and good security measures do not allow a child to walk out a door or climb over a fence.

In 2009, a child at a daycare center in Florida was found hanging from a playground tetherball rope in an area that was not fully visible to playground supervision. We must question how well supervised the whole playground was, as well as the failure to adhere to playground guidelines that address strangulation and hanging hazards? (Download the free Handbook for Public Playground Safety at www.CPSC.gov.)

Not long ago, I was in a childcare center where the large side gate to the playground was unlocked and left ajar for the landscaping crew who had yet to arrive. In addition, erosion had left an enormous amount of space for a child to crawl under the fence, which is certainly much easier than having to climb over it. Supervision is more than watching. It is also observing conditions that might be hazardous and ensuring they are addressed. It is labeling bottles so everyone knows what is in them. I think we can safely say the accidental serving of bleach and water cleaning solution to children does not fall into parental expectations. Nor would contact with a poisonous insect spray or cleaning agent, yet we still occasionally find these items under sinks and within the reach of children.

How are your supervision standards? Do they meet applicable regulations? Would they meet parental expectations, or even your own. Review your program. Observe classrooms and playgrounds, as well as your guidelines for field trips. Look at your facilities. Are there glaring hazards that need correcting?

Obviously the primary concern is for the safety of the children in the childcare center. When picked up at the end of the day, they must be in the same condition they were when they were dropped off (although perhaps a little smarter). Such are the expectations. Let’s do everything we can to meet those expectations and more.

John Dougan, ARM, ALCM
Sr. Risk Control Consultant
Adventist Risk Management, Inc.
Teaching the Bible

Adventist child care centers have the awesome responsibility and privilege to teach children about the Bible—not only the stories, but real life principles they can start using at a very young age.

At the request of some teachers in the Adventist Child Care Network, ACCN uploaded several Bible lesson resources for you to use. You can access them here and you can click on the sample below to start making the Bible come alive for the children in your care.

Sample lesson plan: (click on the image for a full-sized PDF)

ECEC Graduates

Congratulations to our Pacific Union College Early Childhood Majors who will be graduating in June of this summer! The Adventist Child Care Network would like to introduce these fine ladies to those of you who may one day be their co-worker or employer.

Deanna Brown (djbrown@puc.edu) graduated in 2012 with a B.S. degree in early childhood education and is currently teaching 2-3 year olds at Foothills Adventist Preschool. She is presently finishing ECE certification requirements as outlined by the Pacific Union Conference Office of Education.

Priscilla Palinka (plpalinka@puc.edu) will be graduating in June of 2013 with her B.S. degree in early childhood education. She is planning to continue her education through the PUC Masters in Teaching and Credentials program. She is bilingual in Spanish and currently finishing ECE certification requirements as outlined by the Pacific Union Conference Office of Education, as well as the California Child Development Teacher and Site Supervisor Permit requirements.

Ashley Smith (smith.ashley24@hotmail.com) graduated in December 2012 with her B.S. degree in early childhood education. She is currently finishing ECE certification requirements as outlined by the Pacific Union Conference Office of Education, as well as the California Child Development Teacher and Site Supervisor Permit requirements.

Amy Webster (acwebster@puc.edu) will be graduating in 2013 with her B.S. degree in early childhood education. She is currently finishing ECE certification requirements as outlined by the Pacific Union Conference Office of Education, as well as the California Child Development Teacher and Site Supervisor Permit requirements.

These ladies are highly qualified and very – I mean, very – creative individuals; each with their own set of skills. What a pleasure it is to welcome them to the Adventist Early Childhood world!

Character Links

Join or renew your membership and receive a Character Links packet!

Annual dues are $25 total. Package consists of: six animal character masks, nine animal finger puppets, one cd of songs, one book of 35 character building lessons. Example of lesson: “I Have Choices; Choices Have Consequences”. Story of Chadwick the cat. Chadwick loves to sharpen his claws. It feels good to get rid of the old part of his nails. However, he uses the chair in the living room, even though he knows he is not supposed to do that. His mom presents him with two choices and their consequences: (1) continue to scratch the chair and end up outside alone, (2) find another suitable scratching post and remain inside with the family. Chadwick loves the feel of the chair. The wooden scratching post is too hard and so are the trees outside. So his mother suggests they go to the pet store to find a scratching post as a replacement for the chair. “When you are young, it’s sometimes difficult to think of all the possible choices. That’s why it’s important to discuss your problem with someone who can help you think of a choice that may solve your problem.” Suggested activities: form a circle and have the children take turns naming a choice and the consequence (good or bad).
Play Yard Safety

There has been a lot of talk among the NSN community over the years about the safety of cribs. Well today, we want to talk about play yards. At the end of February, all play yards sold in the United States must meet the new and improved federal safety standard designed to prevent injuries and deaths to children. If you work with child care providers or new parents, please make them aware that newer is better when it comes to the safety of play yards.

The new federal standard addresses hazards associated with play yard side rails, corner brackets, and mattress attachments. These changes are meant to prevent strangulation, entrapment, lacerations, and other injuries. New tests add to existing requirements that include a stability test to prevent the play yard from tipping over, latch and lock mechanisms to keep the play yard from folding on a child when it is being used, and minimum side height requirements to prevent children from getting out of the play yard on their own.

This month’s poster summarizes the new standard and is available in English (PDF) and Spanish (PDF). The poster also has Safe Sleep tips to help keep baby safe in his or her sleep environment. Be sure to post this free resource wherever parents and care givers might see it. The posters are also available as photos on Flickr in English and Spanish.

More information about the new play yard standard is at CPSC’s OnSafety blog. More information about keeping babies safe in their sleeping environments is at the Crib Information Center on CPSC’s website.

Once again, thanks for spreading the word and helping to make your community safer.

From www.cpsc.gov/onsafety

Job Opportunities

Visit our website to find (or list) job openings in your area. This is another way to stay connected within the Adventist system.

Lake Union. Certified preschool/daycare in Troy, Michigan is looking for a director. Applicant must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and have a BA in ECE /CD or a degree in a child related field with 18 semester hours of classes in ECE and/or CD and at least 480 hours of experience. Full or part-time - salary and hours TBD. For more information, please call Terri Morgan at 248-225-2565 and/or email your resume.

Mid-America Union. Little Angels Learning Center is a new preschool that is being established by the Kansas City Central SDA Church. We are looking to hire an SDA director to spiritually lead children. Submit resume/transcript to Kansas City Central SDA Church ATTN: Pastor Edye Campos 14651 Peterson Road Kansas City MO 64149. Information may be submitted via email to kccsda@hotmail.com. Questions? Call Pastor Campos at 816-331-9933.

North Pacific Union. Cedarbrook Early Learning Center is looking for a part-time Program Supervisor. Program Supervisor candidate must: (1) have a 2-year degree in Early Childhood Education, (2) be familiar with the Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) for Licensed Childcare Centers, and (3) have a minimum of 1-year experience. Call 360-379-2271 for an application or mail your resume to: Cedarbrook Early Learning Center PO Box 460 Port Hadlock WA 98339.

Southern California Conference. If you are SDA, have a degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or the core classes (Child/Human Growth & Dev.& Child, Family & Community) & other EC Program/ Curriculum (6SU/8QU) and are interested please fax your resume ASAP to 818-547-4824. A+ Adventist Children’s Center, 234 N. Isabel Street, Glendale, CA 91208. 818-241-9353.

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.
Adventist child care is unique. We minister to the whole child—mind, body and spirit. And we should celebrate all the centers that are fulfilling this commission. Therefore, each edition of this newsletter will highlight a different center throughout the North American Division (and possibly beyond), which is following the model set by Jesus—“Let the little children come and do not deny them, for such is the kingdom of God.”

If you have a story, miracle, policy or anything that can encourage, enlighten, and protect our children and the centers which serve them, please email us the copy so we can share it with all the members. Let’s do all we can to strengthen Adventist child care!

Our first two centers under the spotlight are Azure Hills Children’s Center and Iruka Yochien, located in Southern California.

**Azure Hills Children’s Center**

Azure Hills Children’s Center moved into a new building with four classrooms, a large hall, and a playground on March 18, 2010.

The big move took place before the annual trike-a-thon in April. The little tikes on trikes have successfully raised money for different needs every year. (What an example for the rest of us!)

Not only did the children pitch in to help, but all the pastors and some of the members assisted with the move as well.

Then, with an empty building on their hands, the church decided to convert the previous facility into a community food bank. This was done after completion of some much needed renovations.

You may think this all came together rather smoothly, without a hitch. Not quite. Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) signed off with no problems, but the fire department inspection was a very different story. Because of the age of the building, the fire inspector came back three times before he gave his approval.

Do they miss the old facility? Yes. The trees and hills made a wonderful setting for teaching young children about God’s creation. However, the new space is being put to good use. Enrollment at the time of the move was 35, with a capacity for 60. Now, the capacity is 100! And enrollment keeps going up.

But success does not end with one center doing well and filling enrollment. That is just the beginning. A preschool’s purpose is to prepare children to go on learning throughout their lives. And Azure Hills fulfills that roll.

Kindergarten teachers have called to praise the center for preparing the children well. The children learn to finish activities, listen, clean up after themselves, be thorough and follow-through to completion. And this goes far in preparing them for life.

This training is not only the teachers’ doing. Parent participation is at 95 percent! They help with activities, field trips and programs. Parents also help advertise the center. In fact, the parents are the best and main advertisement for the school. Parental involvement equals success.

Exit interviews give evidence that the parents are indeed happy with the school. “It has a special atmosphere. It is clean and tidy, and the schedule is flexible.”

Edith Nwosu has been the director for twelve years. She is from Nigeria where her husband, Roland, pastors and teaches at Babcock University. Over the years, Edith has worked to complete her education in Ed Leadership at La Sierra University. She now holds a doctorate.

And her predecessors paved the way before her. Well done!

**Iruka Yochien**

On Sabbath afternoon, December 15, 2012, Iruka Yochien in Hacienda Heights celebrated the opening of four new classrooms with a dedication service. Officials from the Southern California Conference and Pacific Union Conference were in attendance to congratulate, inspire and pray for the new classrooms, the children and their families and the teachers. We want to add our congratulations and share in their joy over the new addition and expansion.

Pray for God to fill each classroom with children who will learn of Him. Success for one center is success for all.

**Board Positions Available**

ACCN is looking for two individuals who would like to fill positions on the Executive Board. Send us a private message if you might be interested in helping the Adventist Child Care Network! In December of 2012, the Executive Board voted to change the ACCN By-laws to allow for an Executive Board of Directors rather than a board consisting of various positions and responsibilities. Board duties and action plans will be carried out by board members as they are able and willing rather than by virtue of the position.