

THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL

The Newsletter of the WKU Child Care Resource & Referral

Western Kentucky University

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What KIDS NOW Scholarships Can Do For You

Sheila Lundy, Scholar from Eagles Nest Child Care

Are you a child care center owner, administrator, employee? Would you like to have better educated staff, for accreditation or the STARS Program? Would you, as an employee, like to be better educated? But money is tight? You'd like to go back to school but are afraid you are too old, don't have enough basic education, or your boss won't work with you? Well, let me tell you a story!

I am 48 years old, have been in child care, both in home and in centers, for over 25 years. When I went to work in the first center in 1987, I was a high school graduate with some college. Now I have two Child Development Associate Credentials—one at the preschool level, the second at the infant and toddler level. And I am working towards my Associate's in Early Childhood Education. I started on this road in October 1999 and I've had a lot of support and encouragement from the staff of Western Kentucky University's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R). Financially, I've had help from the KIDS NOW Scholarship program.

This program works with employers who agree to pay up to \$50 for books per semester. Tuition is paid by the KIDS NOW Scholarship program. To qualify, an applicant must be a Kentucky resident, be enrolled in no more than nine credit hours per semester, and be employed at least 20 hours weekly in a participating early childhood facility. Scholars must not be eligible to receive state or federal training funds through Head Start or First Steps, or have unpaid financial obligations to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.

Each student can take up to three classes a semester, or spend up to \$1,400 in tuition per fiscal year. If at the end of the semester you have maintained a "C" average or better, you qualify for a related expense reimbursement of \$100. Now this may not sound like a lot of money, but believe me, it is. My one class this semester cost \$360 and my books were \$69.75. The final cost to me was only \$19.75. There are no income limits on this scholar-

ship, so even though I work and have a husband's income, I still qualified.

Now for the employer's perspective: you agree to spend \$50 a semester on books for each staff member - OUCH! But, a college class pertaining to an early childhood degree will give your employee more than the state required 12 clock hours of training. Registration for a normal six-hour training class is usually \$20 or more. If you are looking to go higher on the STARS Program - where education of staff is a requirement - it makes sense to invest the \$50 a semester.

This isn't just for employees! Administrators in the STARS Program need more education to reach higher levels. They can participate as long as they meet the requirements. There are Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees available in early childhood education.

Ah, but you are still nervous about going back to college. Okay, aim for the new Commonwealth Child Care Credential which is obtainable with 60 approved clock hours of training.

Or you can go for the Child Development Associate (CDA). The CDA is a nationally recognized credential that tells people you have taken extensive training (120 clock hours), and have shown proficiency in several areas of child care. This program can be completed over five years. You must attend enough recognized training sessions to total the 120 clock hours, but the rest of the program is self-paced. It does require writing and some research skills, an observation by a qualified advisor, and an assessment visit from the national program. The Child Care Resource and Referral offered a CDA Clinic, in which I earned my hours and got fantastic support and guidance through the whole process. The CDA Clinic is where I started work on my first CDA, and it cost neither my employer or myself, since the Clinic was funded by grant money.

I paid the \$325 application fee for my preschool CDA from my own pocket, because I did not qualify for the CDA scholarship. Today, the KIDS NOW program has a scholarship to pay the CDA Direct Assessment Fee, and it paid the \$225 fee for my infant and toddler CDA. If I had gotten both of them on my own, it would have cost me \$550 in an 18 month period.

I can not say enough good things about the KIDS NOW Scholarship program. The same goes for the people who administer it through WKU's CCR&R. These people believe in child care givers. They are there to support you and walk you through all the steps. I strongly urge anyone interested in pursuing higher education in the field of early childhood education to use these scholarships. This is a program that the state government is fully behind at this time. The government is requiring more from care givers, and will continue to demand more. If we do not use programs like the KIDS NOW Scholarships, and the CDA clinics, we may lose them. Let's put these dollars to good use for ourselves and the children we serve!

For more information about Scholarships, please contact Kim McIntyre.

For more information about the STARS Program, contact Taylor Tucker.

Child Care Resource & Referral

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Have You Hugged A Child Care Provider Today?

Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator

May 10, 2002 will mark the sixth year that *Child Care Provider Appreciation Day* has been celebrated. This is a day to celebrate important people in children's lives - child care providers, teachers, and educators. With at least 13 million children in the United States under the age of six in full or part time care, a great deal of recognition is deserving of the many care givers across the nation.

This is a great day for parents to show the staff and director just how much they appreciate the hard work and dedication that is given to their young children. For the director, think of how you can show your appreciation for your staff's hard work and dedication to the children and families. If you are a teacher, think of how you can show your appreciation to the director and parents for allowing you to touch so many children's lives.

Following is a list of some ways that appreciation can be shared with those who touch so many children's lives:

- Plan a surprise for the staff (cake, cookies, pizza, drinks, etc.)
- Send flowers
- Have your child write a thank you to their provider
- Give a training gift certificate from their local Child Care Resource & Referral
- Buy a new book for the classroom
- Provide a new toy for the classroom
- Write a personal thank you to the provider
- Plan a parent/provider picnic

There are many, many ideas that do not cost that will allow you to show your appreciation to your child care provider/teacher. A spoken "thank you" will mean so much for someone who gives so much of themselves to children.

Enjoy *Child Care Provider Appreciation Day!* And celebrate the wonderful people who care for young children! For more information and ideason celebrating *Provider Appreciation Day* visit the web site at www.providerappreciation.org.

The Cost of Child Abuse & Neglect

Bob Mason, Family Services Specialist, Training & Technical Assistance Services

The cost of child abuse and neglect each year is staggering. *Prevent Child Abuse America* estimates that the annual direct costs of child abuse and neglect is in excess of \$24 billion. That does not take into consideration the indirect costs associated with abuse and neglect which include the areas of special education; mental health care; juvenile delinquency; lost productivity; and adult criminality. This would add several more billions of dollars into the cost equation. It is obvious that this impacts each member of our society.

We probably all know someone who has been the victim of abuse. It is estimated that 15 out of every 1,000 children in America are victims of some form of abuse each year. In terms of the types of abuse/neglect, the percentages break down as follows:

Neglect - 46%
Physical Abuse - 18%
Sexual Abuse - 9%
Emotional Abuse - 4%
Other (including other forms of abuse & neglect, threat of harm, and abandonment) - 23%.

Nearly four children die every day in the U.S. because of abuse. In the year 2000, 18 children under the age of three were abuse fatalities in the state of Kentucky. In fact, it is the youngest of our children who suffer the most. Children under age five account for four out of five fatalities.

So what can we do? The best thing is to do our job. If our job is in child care then we are on the front line of child abuse and neglect prevention. As early child care professionals, our challenge is to assure that all staff have received the proper training in child abuse and neglect recognition and reporting. We must also ensure that we pay close attention each day to each child. We must be aware of the physical, behavioral, and environmental indicators of abuse and neglect.

Finally, we must have the courage to report when we have a "...reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected or abused, regardless of whether the person believed to have caused the dependency, neglect or abuse is a parent, guardian, person exercising custodial control or supervision, or another person who has attended such child as a part of his professional duties..."

If you do suspect abuse you should call your local office of Community Based Services and be prepared to supply the following essential information:

1. The Child's Identity
2. Any Person believed to be Responsible for the Abuse or Neglect
3. Nature and Extent of the Abuse or Neglect
4. Name and Address of the Reporter (if he or she chooses)
5. Where the Child can be Found

For more information and resources on child abuse and neglect, contact *Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky* by calling 1-800-CHILDREN or contact them on the web at www.pcakey.org. You may also contact their parent organization *Prevent Child Abuse America* at <http://www.preventchildabuse.org>.

"If we are ever to turn toward a kinder society and a safer world, a revulsion against the physical punishment of children would be a good place to start."

Dr. Benjamin Spock

April 30 is Spank Out Day USA

EPOCH-USA (End Physical Punishment of Children), an affiliate of EPOCH-Worldwide, is sponsoring *Spank Out Day USA* on April 30th, 2002 to bring widespread attention to the need to stop hitting children for purposes of discipline in schools, homes, and all places where children are cared for. For more information contact:

The Center for Effective Discipline
155 West Main Street, Suite #1603
Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. 43215
Telephone: (614) 221-8829 Fax: (614) 221-2110
<http://www.stophitting.com/>

Health Related Resources at WKU CCR&R Library

Lesley Montgomery, CCR&R Office Coordinator

We have many health-related resources at the CCR&R Library, available for you to check out! Here's a look at just a few of these resources:

The Official, Complete Home Reference Guide to Your Child's Symptoms, Birth Through Adolescence, Donald Schiff, M.D. and Steven Shelov, M.D. Drs. Schiff and Shelov have edited a state-of-the-art reference book. These pediatricians gleaned useful information from more than 30 contributors to create a readable, well-presented guide. The book is divided by age groups and also includes an illustrated first aid manual and safety guide. Topics include: crying/colic; fears; skin problems; vision problems; wheezing/noisy breathing; and eating disorders. Far from being a boring list, the book is interesting and includes charts, attractive line drawings, and highlights "helpful hints" throughout the book.

American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Sleep, Birth Through Adolescence, George Cohen, M.D., F.A.A.P., Editor-in-Chief. The CCR&R Library has a couple of copies of this paperback to help you get your baby to sleep through the night. It covers everyday problems and "bedtime battles," and explains common myths, theories and controversies regarding child sleep. The book gives advice about how to handle vacations, late night hours, daylight savings time and many more useful topics. This book is appropriate for parents, providers and anyone who is interested in helping their children get a good night's sleep.

American Academy of Pediatrics Official, Complete Home Reference Guide to Your Child's Nutrition, William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.A.P. and Loraine Stern, M.D., F.A.A.P., Editors. This book will help everyone who provides child care to build healthy eating habits for life. The book briefly covers the various age groups, but

generally combines useful information to present a cohesive picture of good nutrition. Parents and providers are informed about eating disorders, alternative diets, food safety, allergies, additives, and even dealing with outside influences such as television commercials! This Academy of Pediatrics hardback book is very attractive. It offers interesting hints, food charts with age-appropriate serving sizes clearly delineated, and even graphs demonstrating different birth weights in comparison to the parents' weights. This reference guide goes way beyond the traditional food pyramid - which is included as well!

Please call 1-800-621-5908 or (270) 745-2216 to reserve these materials. We will be happy to mail them to you. Or stop by and see us at Jones Jagggers, Room 151, on WKU's campus, and check out our other resources!

Ten Tips: Another Useful Resource

Ten Tips is designed to help early childhood leaders work effectively with business leaders to create and sustain successful early childhood partnerships. It speaks to current and future leaders who want to start, improve or expand partnerships and can be used to plan meetings and strategy sessions, to enhance staff training and leadership development, to help evaluate efforts or to spark new partnership ideas. Each tip includes advice, quotes and/or short examples, along with drawings that illustrate what works and what doesn't in working with business. The guide of 30 pages also includes a light-hearted quiz and a detailed list of other resources. Information about purchasing this guide can be accessed by visiting www.familiesandwork.org and going to Brand New Publications from FWI, then clicking on *Ten Tips for Getting and Keeping Business Involved: An Illustrated Guide for Early Childhood Leaders* (Pub. #C20-02. \$15.00).

Father Friendly Environments

Kim McIntyre, CCR&R Professional Development Coordinator

Since women have typically been considered the primary caregivers, do we sometimes neglect fathers who want to be involved in their children's lives? When writing notes home, to whom do you address the note? When speaking to parents, do you include fathers in the conversation and maintain eye contact, if appropriate, with both parents? When asking for volunteers for projects, whom do you ask for help? Think about greeting and departure time. Do you help fathers feel welcome? Are fathers involved at your center or family child care home?

Studies indicate that when fathers are actively involved in their children's education (attend school meetings, volunteer, etc.) children are more likely to earn As, more likely to enjoy school, and less likely to repeat a grade. When children grow up with warm, nurturing, and actively involved fathers, as opposed to uninvolved fathers, children reap benefits including:

- Better school performance,
- Increased self-esteem,
- Healthier relationships with peers; and
- Access to greater financial resources.

It is important to include all of a child's family and primary caregivers in the early childhood program, but child care centers may want to make a special effort to involve fathers, since some may need extra encouragement to actively participate. Fathers who have not typically been involved in their children's child care may not know how to get involved and may be afraid to become involved, but often fathers have flexible work schedules and are more than happy to help out.

By taking advantage of the changing and increasing roles of fathers in their children's lives and encouraging fathers' participation, child care centers can enhance their child care program and help fathers to enrich their children's lives. One of the first steps to increasing father involvement in your program is to ask yourself, "Is the child care environment in which I work father friendly?" Consider the following suggestions offered by Levine, Murphy, and Wilson (1993):

"Expect fathers to be involved - if fathers are aware from the start that their involvement is expected and valued, chances are they will participate in important ways. Include fathers' names when sending letters to parents, setting up parent-teacher conferences, and when making phone calls home. (When a child's father has a different address, yet the father has joint custody, ask the family if they prefer notes be sent to both homes.)

"Put out the welcome mat. Fathers need to feel welcome in your center. Are chairs available for them to even sit in? Take time to talk to fathers as they drop off or pick up their children. Share activities and observations of their child with fathers. Display pictures of fathers/men.

"Find out what fathers want and how much time they are willing to commit up front. Consider sending out a survey at the beginning of the year. Find out fathers' interests and hobbies, where they work, what type and level of involvement they would be interested in. Perhaps, they would be interested in making something for the center, organizing a father's group, helping organize a field trip or fund raiser, demonstrating/showing children a skill or hobby, talking to children about their jobs, reading to children, or serving on an advisory committee, etc.

"Encourage fathers to spend time with their children on the playground, playing ball, pulling wagons, pushing children on the swings, working on the woodworking center, playing with the parachute, etc. Fathers will often help prepare the playground in the mornings by carrying out the water/sand tables or getting out the tricycles, if caregivers will just ask!"

The following websites offer a variety of suggestions for involving fathers: The Families and Work Institute at <http://www.fatherhoodproject.org>; The National Center for Fathering at <http://fathers.com>; The National Fatherhood Initiative at <http://www.fatherhood.org>; and The American Coalition for Fathers and Children at <http://www.acfc.org>.

Spring into Safety!

Amy S. Hood, Infant and Toddler Consultant

While Spring is in the air, children will be spending more time on the playgrounds. Please make sure your playground is a safe environment for children! Studies have determined that every 2½ minutes a child is treated in an emergency room because of an injury received on a playground. In order to help people understand playground safety, the National Program for Playground Safety has established four key issues to ensure **SAFE** outdoor areas for children. These four key issues include:

Supervision - Time on the playground should not be break time for staff! The first key for safety is to supervise appropriately in order to prevent accidents from occurring. Teachers should always be actively involved in outdoor play time, moving from group to group, redirecting inappropriate use of equipment, and being accessible to all children.

Age appropriateness - The equipment and materials in the playground should be developmentally appropriate for the age group utilizing the playgrounds. The safety guidelines as established by the CPSC state that public playgrounds should have play areas divided by three age categories, Birth to Two Years Old, Two to Five Years Old, and Five to Twelve Years Old. Children should only be on equipment designed for their age group!

Fall surfacing - Eighty percent of playground injuries are caused by falls to inappropriate surfacing. Grass, dirt, concrete or asphalt are all inappropriate surfacing under those pieces of equipment. Any piece of equipment over 24 inches tall on which a child will climb or sit must have appropriate resilient surfacing.

Equipment Maintenance - Regular checks on all pieces of equipment are necessary to keep children safe. Splinters, protrusions, and broken parts can lead to injuries on the playground. Regular inspections of playground equipment are the final key to playground safety.

The Child Care Resource and Referral has certified playground safety trainers available to provide assistance to your program including the outdoor play areas. Feel free to contact us for more information on playground safety!

** Training focusing on playground safety will be held in Hart County on the evening of April 11 and in Butler County on the evening of June 6!*

Playground Safety Week is April 22-26, 2002

Congratulations CDA Sheila Lundy!

Kim McIntyre, Professional Development Coordinator

Congratulations to Sheila Lundy, of Eagles Nest Child Care, for recently obtaining a KIDS NOW CDA Mini-Grant and earning a Second Setting Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential! A Second Setting CDA Credential is awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC to candidates who successfully complete the CDA assessment process. The process includes 45 clock hours of approved training specific to the setting for which the candidate is applying, and candidates must demonstrate sound early childhood development knowledge and quality care for children and families. Mrs. Lundy is also a KIDS NOW Scholar attending classes in the IECE Program at WKU!

KIDS NOW CDA Mini-Grant Applications may be obtained by visiting the website at www.ttas.org and clicking on the CCR&R link. KIDS NOW Early Childhood Development Scholarships are also available to pay for college tuition. The deadline for the summer term is April 15, 2002.

For more information on the new Commonwealth Child Care Credential, the CDA credential, or KIDS NOW scholarships, please call Kim McIntyre, the WKU CCR&R Professional Development Coordinator at (270) 745-2216 or 1-800-621-5908. Kim will be glad to help you learn more about these exciting early childhood career opportunities.

Computers: Part II - Getting Started

Deane Oliva, CCR&R Family Child Care Coordinator

In this installment of our series on computers, we will explore what happens when the computer starts up. When you turn on your computer, it first checks itself to make sure that the necessary parts are connected to it. If there is no keyboard, it will beep and stop running because a computer needs a keyboard to work.

After making sure it has the necessary pieces, it loads the Windows operating system which checks the hardware to find out how the parts should interact. When a computer encounters hardware with which it does not know how to interact, it pauses its normal procedure to install the information needed to operate this equipment. To do this, it looks for files such as *drivers* associated with it.

For example, if your computer finds a new printer, it will tell you it found it, ask you to define its brand and model and then either tell you that it has found its drivers or ask you to put in a disk with the proper drivers. Once the drivers are put into the computer's working files, they will *load* every time the computer starts - or, in computer jargon, every time it *boots up*.

As the computer boots up, the Windows logo may briefly appear, then the screen may switch to words as it shows the instructions it is following. It will load the necessary drivers and then it will load your *desktop*. All is well when you hear a musical chord as your desktop begins to appear.

Your desktop will differ from other desktops in its particulars, but most Windows desktops look very similar. They all have a colorful background. This background is called *wallpaper* and may be plain or have lines, pictures or squiggles on it. The desktop also has a *toolbar*, which is a thin strip, usually at the bottom of the screen. At the extreme left of the toolbar is a rectangle that says *Start* and, to the far right, there is usually a clock with the current time. In fact, if you place the pointer of your mouse on top of the clock without clicking a button, the clock will also tell you the correct day and date.

Just to the right of the clock are several little pictures. These pictures are called *icons* and they are picture representations of tasks which your computer can do or files which the user has added. If you look above the toolbar on your desktop, generally lining up on the left, are both icons and pictures of file folders, which are appropriately

enough called *folders*. Desktop folders have the same job as regular file folders: they hold information. In this case, the information is a collection of icons related to the topic written under the folder. For example, a folder named "Games" might have several games in it.

Each task is actually a set of instructions telling the computer a list of things to do. The tasks are called *programs*. Thus, if you click on "Start," the *start menu* appears and if you then click on "Programs," you will see both folders and icons representing various software programs. Further, if you click on any folder, another menu will drop down with more folders and/or program icons. Your desktop has a few programs, but your start-program menu has icons and/or folders for every *application* on your computer. In this case, *application* means any program which you might want to run.

At this point you are ready to begin working. Do you want to write a note? Maybe follow stocks? Keep track of household or business expenses? Or play a game? In our next issue, we will explore some of your options.

April Celebrations

Autism Awareness Month
International Guitar Month
Keep America Beautiful Month
National Child Abuse Prevention Month
National Frog Month
National Garden Month
National Humor Month
National Mathematics Education Month
National Poetry Month
Stress Awareness Month
Playground Safety Week -April 22- 26
April 30 -Spank Out Day USA