As we move into summer and look toward fall, we may find ourselves thinking about improving our own skills and competencies. This issue concludes our two-part series on professional development and focuses on the more formal area of the professional development continuum. We hope this information will be helpful to you.

Information from the Connecticut Department of Health concerning the safety, health, and well-being of those in your care, is included, as well as our permanent Child Care “Mailbag” feature.

You are a “Child Care Professional”!

To continuously improve your proficiency, a systematic plan for professional development is essential. Its goal is to increase and expand your existing knowledge and skill base through informal or formal settings (see the spring 2003 issue of All Children Considered). The Connecticut Community College System, the Connecticut University System, and the University of Connecticut, as well as Connecticut’s private four-year institutions, provide the formal education and certificates/degrees to meet your professional development goals.

Your professional development plan also should involve an appropriate professional association and its activities. Such associations supply opportunities for members to network with others, share and receive support as you move through your challenging but rewarding work. In addition, these associations provide publications, public policy information and education, a vehicle for establishing and maintaining standards, an accreditation system, a career ladder, advocacy for improvement of compensation and benefits, and, lastly, a unified voice for children and youth in the larger society. Find an appropriate professional association by calling 211 Child Care Infoline or 1 (800) 505-1000.

Harry Mangle, Editor
Arlene Swatson, Editorial Team Member
A New Path to Professional Development and Early Childhood Degree Options

Patrice Farquharson, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education
Teikyo Post University; Executive Director, West Haven Child Development Center, Inc.

Exciting opportunities for professional development are available to practitioners in Early Childhood Education. Some of these are:

- **Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education**
- **Administrative Certificate Program in ECE**, and
- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential**

The *Associate degree* is generally 60 to 62 credits (typically accomplished full time in about two years and has a general core of coursework, in addition to the Early Childhood courses. This degree provides students with an integrated curriculum of general education and professional studies, with objectives based on the guidelines developed by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Although specific courses may vary, students will gain knowledge in child development, have the opportunity to develop and implement age-appropriate lesson plans, understand the value of observation and assessment, early language and literacy, children’s literature. They may also explore math and science for young children, learn about working with students with exceptionalities, health, safety, nutrition, the importance of working with families, and gain valuable experience through practicum work.

In addition to taking courses in a traditional manner, in person, at postsecondary academic institutions, they also can be taken online. What does this mean for you? Now you can begin or finish your ECE degree from the comfort of your own home or workplace, at your own pace any time and anywhere.

Two post-secondary institutions that provide online degree programs and courses are Teikyo Post University and Charter Oak State College. Project Learn and the West Haven Child Development Center offer Modules 1 and 2 of the Charts-A-Course CDA training online as well. Teikyo Post University courses are delivered in eight (8) week sessions. This accelerated format can also be taken on site, delivered right at your workplace with up to 30 students in a class. As a practitioner in the field for 25 years, I think that this program has been a continuation of my commitment to find ways to provide increased access to education for early childhood professionals.

An online course developer and instructor in this new format, I can only say that it has been a truly rewarding experience for me. The students are wonderful, self-motivated, and very serious about their education. I actually spend more individual time with my online students than I would in a typical classroom setting and I can log in from anywhere in the world. Here are a few quotes from students who have recently experienced the new online format:

Mary writes: “...After taking these courses, I received my Head Teacher License. I then continued to pursue my CDA to help me be a more qualified and professional teacher. I took part of the CDA content area online through CT-Charts-A-Course modules 1 and 2. I now have my head teacher license and CDA thanks to the convenience and quality of the online courses.”

Barbara writes: “I wanted to earn my degree in Early Childhood Education but between family and a full time job, I found it difficult to do. The accelerated degree program was the perfect way to do it...I decided to finish my courses on line. I enjoy the convenience of classes in the comfort of my own home.”

Jennifer writes: “As a student, I am able to attend classes, do required reading, and fulfill homework assignments in a seven-day period. I enjoy the assignments and electronically interacting with classmates and teachers. I feel I have gotten the same, if not more, out of attending classes on-line. At first, I was skeptical about not having one-on-one interaction with my teacher or classmates, but that was quickly erased by the information provided by my professors.”

For more information on the various online programs offered, please contact me at drpatrice@aol.com. For other local courses, check University web listings at http://www.teikyopost.edu/
Power Outages in Licensed ChildCare Facilities

Marilyn Parks-Jones, Supervisor
Child Care Licensing, DPH

“Should we close, or shouldn’t we?”

Throughout the year, licensed childcare programs are faced with this dilemma when the power goes off. When trying to make such an important decision as to whether or not to close, you need to be aware of regulatory issues that raise the following questions to help you decide:

• Can proper refrigeration be maintained? (This must be no more than 45˚F for perishable foods.)

• If you prepare and serve meals, is the kitchen clean, well lit, and ventilated? Is there hot and cold running water; adequate and safe storage for food supplies?

• Are you able to maintain good sanitary and safe practices in the areas of toileting, handwashing and diapering?

• Can required air temperature be maintained? Ambient air temperature shall be at least 68˚F.

Connecticut Preschool Model Lab Schools: Centers for Excellence

Beth Bye, Director
School for Young Children
at Saint Joseph College

In the 1998-99 school year, the Connecticut State Department of Education designed the Preschool Model Lab Schools to support the professional development of teachers with unique learning opportunities. There are presently two such schools: one at St. Joseph College in West Hartford and one at Gateway Community College in New Haven (Yale University/Early Learning Center).

The School for Young Children at Saint Joseph College, in its fifth year as a Model Lab School, has hosted over 5,000 preschool professionals and students in an array of learning experiences.

The Model Lab Schools are structured each year with input from visitors and participants. Learning takes many forms to meet the different learning styles and schedules of teachers and other program staff. The School for Young Children uses its Model Lab component to support individual professional development and broader program improvements by including the following:

• Site Visits to the school (open year-round) during which tours are provided that highlight features of the physical environment that support early learning, and highlight the teacher skills that promote language, literacy, and inquiry in young children.

• Spring Workshop Series, each spring, consisting of four evening events focusing on issues such as literacy, math, community building, science, and parent communication.

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• Site Visits to the school (open year-round) during which tours are provided that highlight features of the physical environment that support early learning, and highlight the teacher skills that promote language, literacy, and inquiry in young children.

• Open House Evenings, particularly for those who cannot make a site visit during the school day. The conference room at the school is open to other programs that may schedule their monthly staff meetings here, use the resource room, or tour the building.

• Spring Workshop Series, each spring, consisting of four evening events focusing on issues such as literacy, math, community building, science, and parent communication.

• Model Lab School Newsletter, that is published two or three times a year and is distributed statewide with information about the School for Young Children, and classroom ideas, or special programs and current research at the School. The newsletter emphasizes practical information and ideas for teachers.

• Website (www.sjc.edu/syc) that includes information about the School and professional development opportunities.

• Documentation Panels, which document curriculum and learning goals for visitors and parents at the School. Teachers use photographs and children’s words to design the panels that describe a classroom activity, conversation, field trip, or other event. The activity is then linked to a learning goal from the State of Connecticut Benchmarks. The Benchmark is placed in the bottom corner of each panel.

In addition to these efforts, The School for Young Children is a pilot site for several research projects and demonstration initiatives for the College and the State Department of Education. To schedule a tour or obtain information about our next workshop series, call Sue O’Donnell at (860) 231-5561 or email her at sodonnell@sjc.edu.

CONNECTICUT STATE AGENCY UPDATE

Department of Public Health (DPH)

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY-BASED REGULATION
http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Day_Care/day_care.htm
1 (800) 282-6063, 1 (800) 439-0437, (860) 509-8045

Power Outages in Licensed ChildCare Facilities

Marilyn Parks-Jones, Supervisor
Child Care Licensing, DPH

“We should close, or shouldn’t we?”

Throughout the year, licensed childcare programs are faced with this dilemma when the power goes off. When trying to make such an important decision as to whether or not to close, you need to be aware of regulatory issues that raise the following questions to help you decide:

• Can proper refrigeration be maintained? (This must be no more than 45˚F for perishable foods.)
• If air temperature exceeds 80°F, can more fluids and increased ventilation be made available?
• If you administer medication, is there medical equipment needed for day care children that is run by electricity?
• Are telephones operational?
• How long will the power be off? This is a factor to consider, after you contact your power company for that information.

Depending on the time of year, you need to take into account some of the regulations that you might not be able to comply with during a power outage. For instance, during the winter it might be too cold to remain open because you cannot maintain the required temperature. In the summer, you might not be able to remain open because you cannot provide adequate refrigeration for food.

Programs should consider including plans for power outages in their operational policy, emergency plan and/or weather plan. For further reference and information:
• Statutes and Regulations for day care centers and group day care homes (Section 19a-79-6a and 19a-79-7a).
• Statutes and Regulations for family day care homes (Section 19a-87b-9).
• Licensed child day care centers and group day care homes can contact their local health official for advice. Also, all licensed programs can always reach the Department of Public Health, Child Care Licensing Unit by calling the Help Desk at 1 (800) 282-6063, 1 (800) 439-0437, or 1 (860) 509-8045.◆

ALERT!!
Protecting Children in Family Day Care Homes and Other Home-Based Care from Child Abuse and Neglect by Household Members

Devon Conover, Acting Director
Child Day Care Licensing, DPH

As a relative, in-home caregiver, or family day care home provider, your primary responsibility is to protect the health and safety of the children in your care, especially from child abuse and neglect. In addition to protecting the day care children, it is important that you take steps to protect your household members from allegations of abuse or neglect that could be made against them. Careful supervision of the day care children at all times is an effective way to protect your family against child abuse allegations. This means always being physically present with the children, even when they are in the presence of your household members, unless the household member is an approved substitute.

Sections 19a-87b-7 and 19a-87b-6(j) of the Public Health Code list the requirements that household members must meet in a family day care home, including criminal and child abuse record checks. The provider is responsible for notifying the Department of Public Health in writing within five working days if there are any changes in a household member’s mental, emotional or physical health or immediately of any convictions that may adversely affect the day care children (Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-87e.) Allegations of child abuse or neglect in family day care homes must be reported immediately to the Department of Children and Families [(800) 842-2288] and to the Department of Public Health [(800) 282-6063 or (860) 509-8045].

Please Note: Last year, several family day care home providers lost their licenses due to the actions of a provider’s household member who was not an approved substitute. In each case, one or more children in the family day care home were sexually abused, physically abused or neglected by the provider’s household member.

Talk with your household members about the responsibility of providing child care. Be sure that everyone in the household knows you expect them to treat the day care children with kindness, dignity, and respect at all times. Make sure they understand what child abuse and neglect are and that your job is to protect the children and keep them safe at all times.

Create an environment that makes it easy for you to supervise the children at all times. Be aware of the places children may want to use as hiding places and supervise them closely. An effective way to protect children and household members is to never permit a day care child to be present or nap with an older child or adult household member in a room without your direct supervision, even for a few minutes.

Remember: Never make assumptions about the safety of the day care children with your household members. It is preferable to provide careful supervision at all times than to leave yourself and your household members vulnerable to allegations of child abuse and neglect.

Training Opportunities:
Managing Asthma in Connecticut Child Care Facilities

Joan Simpson, Health Educator
Asthma Program, DPH

The Connecticut Department of Public Health Asthma Program, in collaboration with Healthy Child Care Connecticut, produced a resource guide entitled, Managing Asthma in Connecticut Child Care Facilities. It was sent to all licensed day care facilities in the state during the month of February. If you did not receive one or know of someone who would find this resource useful, please contact Joan Simpson at (860) 509-7751 or joan.simpson@po.state.ct.us. The resource guide provides information on training opportunities for child care professionals. Two sessions offered are:

• Managing Asthma in the Child Care Setting, a 3-hour workshop provided by a registered nurse trained by the Asthma
Summer Safety Tips
Marian Storch, Health Program Associate Injury Prevention Program, DPH
(860) 509-7805 marian.storch@po.state.ct.us

TIP #1: PARKED CARS ARE DANGEROUS FOR KIDS! CARS ARE NOT TOYS!
L
ong days and warm weather make the summer months a wonderful time to enjoy outside activities in Connecticut, especially after a long New England winter. Families and caregivers also may make trips in the car more frequently. However, parked vehicles can pose special risks to young children, particularly during the summer.

Sun and warm temperatures can cause the temperature inside a car to rapidly heat up to deadly levels, even with the windows rolled down. With an outside temperature of 80°F, a car’s interior temperature can reach dangerous levels in just minutes. Young children are much more susceptible to heat than adults and are at greater risk of heat stroke and death.

Children playing in or around parked cars also face other dangers. They can be trapped while playing inside trunks. Children may also set the car in motion and injure themselves or others. Drivers can easily back into children who are playing behind vehicles in driveways or parking lots. The following steps can help prevent deaths and injuries to children in and around cars and other vehicles. Share the following safety tips with the families of children in your care and keep them in mind when taking trips in a motor vehicle:

- Make sure all infant and child passengers are out of the vehicle after the trip.
- Don’t overlook sleeping infants.
- Keep the car doors and trunk locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway.
- Store keys out of children’s sight and reach. Never leave keys in a parked car or leave the car running unattended.
- Teach children to never play in or around cars.
- If a child is missing, immediately check inside the car and trunk.
- If children are locked inside a car, get them out and dial 9-1-1 immediately.
- Since surfaces in a car parked in the sun can get very hot, check the surface temperature safety seats and the safety belt buckles before buckling children in. Always walk behind your vehicle to make sure there are no children there before backing up.
- Contact your auto dealership to inquire about an emergency trunk release system.
- Finally, remember to buckle up children in an appropriate restraint. For more information, contact the CT Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention Program at (860) 509-7805 or go to: http://www.dph.state.ct.us/Resources

TIP #2: PREVENT CHILDREN FROM FALLING OUT OF WINDOWS
Summer is a dangerous time for children and open windows! Prevent window falls by:

- Never relying on screens to keep children from falling out of windows. They are designed to keep bugs out—not children in.
- Moving chairs, cribs, beds, and other furniture away from windows.
- Opening windows from the top, when possible.

Install window guards, meeting the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s new safety standards, on windows above the ground floor. These guards protect small children from falling but allow adults and older children to open them in case of emergency.

For more information go to: http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/prhtml00/00126.html

Resources:
• KIDS’N CARS www.kidsncars.org (415) 789-1000
• Connecticut SAFE KIDS Coalition www.ctsafekids.org/Entrapment.htm (860) 545-9988
• National SAFE KIDS Campaign www.safekids.org (enter “cars” in search) (202) 662-0600

& Allergy Foundation of America. This workshop will help child care providers learn how to manage a child with asthma in their facility.

• Medication Administration course mandated by the State’s licensing regulations for programs that administer medications to children, including those with asthma.

You are strongly encouraged to take both these courses so that you will gain knowledge and confidence in caring for children with asthma. They, in turn, will be able to participate more fully in all activities. For more detailed information, call Healthy Child Care Connecticut toll free at 1(888) 608-7830.
Moving Toward Director Credentialing in Connecticut

Darlene Ragozzine, Director
CT Charts a Course (CCAC) Project
and
Deborah Flis, Director
Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP)

Professional development for those working in the field of Early Care and Education (ECE) is essential in improving the quality of education and child care in home, centers, and school-based settings. Quality of staff and faculty is an important criterion for parents in choosing the educational or child care setting for their children. The prime focus of professional development efforts, compensation improvements, higher education, and often advocacy efforts is on supporting and training credentialed teachers as well as other care and education providers.

Over the last decade, “Research confirms that the director’s leadership is the primary indicator for growing a quality program and that directors play an important part in the production of high-quality services.”¹ One result of this realization is the need to develop a director credential. For the past two years, leaders in Connecticut have been exploring the idea of a voluntary Connecticut Director Credential for administrators of child care programs. This work has been spearheaded by the Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative, in collaboration with many directors and organizations including Charter Oak State College (COSC), CT Charts-a-Course (CCAC), CT Department of Social Services, two- and four-year colleges, and advocates for a well-trained workforce.

The planning work has now resulted in the Connecticut Director’s Credential (CDC) which Charter Oak State College has offered since January 2003. The CDC provides a voluntary system of credentialing with four levels of proficiency (provisional, initial, standard, and master). It will be awarded to those who have successfully met all the requirements necessary to obtain the credential at each level. The CDC will acknowledge that professionals working in the field of early care and education and school-age care have obtained knowledge and competencies in the following Connecticut Core Areas of Knowledge for Directors:

1. Plan and implement developmentally appropriate care and education programs for children and families.
2. Develop and maintain effective organization.
3. Plan and implement administrative systems that effectively carry out the program goals, mission, and objectives.
4. Administer effectively a program of personnel management and staff development.
5. Foster good community relations and influence child care policy that affects the program.
6. Develop and maintain the physical facility.
7. Have the legal knowledge necessary for effective management.
8. Apply financial management tools.

How can I get the training for the CDC in the competency areas?

Through the NAC course and other college offerings, individuals seeking the Connecticut Director Credential have a variety of options for achieving the requirements of Connecticut’s new credential. The delivery of training for directors who voluntarily seek the credential includes credit-bearing coursework at the two- and four-year colleges, credit (such as the National Administrators Credential (NAC) Course), and non-credit-based training (workshops) approved by CCAC, distance learning, and online programs, and portfolio review by Charter Oak State College. The Connecticut Director Credential requires 9 to 15 credits in administration or leadership in order to achieve an initial, standard, or master level credential. These credits must include a 3-credit survey course in Administration. The NAC course, as sponsored annually by CCAC/AFP, is one option for meeting this requirement. Other options for securing the 3-credit survey course will be available soon through higher education institutions in Connecticut.

What do I get if I attend the training?

By accumulating credits and demonstrating competency in the Core Areas of Knowledge for Directors, an individual could choose to apply for the CDC. The credential would be issued by Charter Oak State College based on an assessment of the documentation of core area knowledge.

How do I apply for the credential?

Is there a fee?

Applications for the CDC must be made through Charter Oak State College. A $50 application fee is required each time you apply for the CDC. For additional application and fee information, please contact Maryanne LeGrow at (860) 832-3846 or by email: mlgrow@charteroak.edu

How can I get more information about the CDC?

To obtain a brochure with more information, visit: www.charteroak.edu or www.ctcharts-a-course.org or call (800) 832-7784炝◆

Quality enhancement services and activities reached over 3,500 children in more than 1,800 child care programs, and almost 1,500 staff from School Readiness funded centers and other centers, during the state fiscal year ending on June 30, 2002. Quality enhancement funding is provided by the Department of Social Services to the state's priority school communities. Each community’s school readiness council is responsible for administering these funds.

The purpose of the quality enhancement grant is to create and/or maintain local services that enhance the quality of early care and education programs which support children, families, and child care providers. Projects receiving this funding must support families and children receiving services from all types of early care settings, whether or not the child care programs participate in school readiness.

Based on end-of-the-year reports submitted by the 17 school readiness communities, a variety of activities and services were funded by the quality enhancement grant. They may be grouped into four main categories:

1. Technical assistance to child care providers (including mentoring, home or site visits, and accreditation support).
2. Family and provider support and information (via conferences, seminars, workshops, and publications).
3. Staff development (including in-service training, CDA, and early childhood education college courses and scholarships).
4. Direct services to children (field trips; screenings; health, dental, and developmental; and skill development workshops on self-esteem, personal safety, and decision-making).

Priority school communities were required to target 10% of each community’s quality enhancement allocation for services to kith and kin providers, since so many of Connecticut children are cared for in this setting. Close to 900 kith and kin care providers serving over 1,600 families, including more than 400 children, benefited from activities such as technical assistance, health screenings, First Aid/CPR and other staff development courses, playgroups, field trips, and transition to kindergarten support.

For a copy of the report or to learn more about the Quality Enhancement Initiative, please contact Amparo García, Department of Social Services–Child Care Team, at (860) 424-5346 or via email at amparo.garcia@po.state.ct.us.

Currently, there are 17 communities designated as priority school districts: Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Putnam, Stamford, Waterbury, West Haven, and Windham.

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**Project STARS**  
Connecticut State Department of Education Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Initiative

Gerri S. Rowell, Program Manager  
Project STARS  
Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services  
CT State Department of Education

During the last two years, the Connecticut State Department of Education has developed and implemented a professional development model for various types of early childhood educators based on early language and literacy research. The professional development is supported by a U.S. Department of Education grant, and, in Connecticut, it is called Project STARS (Striving to Achieve Reading Success). The project provides targeted training designed to improve children’s early reading and language skills with a goal of preventing reading difficulties when children enter and progress through school. Six Connecticut communities are served in the project: Bridgeport, New Haven, New Britain, Meriden, Hartford, and Waterbury.

The first component introduces preschool teachers and supervisors to the research-based program, Literacy Environment Enrichment Program, LEEP. LEEP is a four-credit college course offered to early childhood educators in the six targeted communities. The participants receive college course credits awarded through Southern Connecticut State University or the University of Connecticut, and the costs are paid for through the grant.

The second professional development component, led by personnel from Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC), provides early childhood teacher preparation trainings to new
and/or entry-level early childhood practitioners. Teachers from various public and private preschool programs, including child care centers, Head Start programs and the state funded School Readiness programs in the six cities have been participating.

Ten workshop topics in the literary strand are: Supporting Children’s Writing; Creating Environments to Support Language and Literacy; Helping Children Engage in Print in the Environment; Rhymes, Music and Poetry to Foster Sound Awareness; Fostering Dramatic Play to Support Language, Literacy and Writing; Book Selection and Building Vocabulary; Talking With Children; Reading to Children; Assessing Children’s Language and Literacy Development; and English Language Learners. CCAC conducts these training sessions for teachers in the target cities through the grant period ending September 30, 2003. The benefit for everyone is that these literacy strand workshops are now a permanent part of the CCAC modules to be offered across Connecticut in modules III and IV.

For more information on the Project STARS program, phone (860) 807-2031 or email gerri.rowell@po.state.ct.us.

CHILD CARE INFOLINE MAILBAG

As a childcare provider, I am concerned by the recent reports of the rise in obesity in children. How can I help fight this problem in my child care program?

One of the most important lessons a child can learn is healthy eating habits. A childcare provider has the unique opportunity to reinforce healthy eating attitudes with children and to work with the child’s parents to enforce good eating habits and an active lifestyle.

It is important for childcare providers to talk to parents about their child’s eating habits. What are some of their child’s favorite foods, those they refuse to eat, any food allergies? Within your program, you can include the children in the meal and snack preparation as much as possible. You can also try new foods with the children and reinforce healthy snacking such as fruit, vegetables, and yogurt. Avoid using foods as a reward or a bargaining tool. There are also some great books out there you can incorporate in your program as well to reinforce good eating habits. Exercise should be another important component in your child care program, with children having the opportunity to participate in outside play including gross motor activities and games.

Other resources for licensed child care centers and family day care homes include the Child and Adult Food Program, nutrition education and training and consultation services. For more information on these programs, contact 2-1-1 Child Care Infoline or 1 (800) 505-1000.