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ABSTRACT

One of three training manuals developed for day care center staff, this administrative guide was written to assist day care center directors in developing policies and procedures aimed at improving all aspects of the day care program, and thus reducing the risk of child abuse. Four chapters focus on (1) selection of staff, including recruiting, screening, interviewing, and selection processes; (2) effective team management, including modeling behavior and attitudes, communicating effectively, and facilitating high morale; (3) management and supervision of staff, including staff performance evaluation, stress prevention and reduction, conflict resolution, and termination of employment; and (4) allegations of child abuse, including preventing child abuse through high quality programming, handling concerns expressed by parents and staff, and handling outside investigations of child abuse. Each chapter concludes with a test on key concepts. Eleven appendices provide related material, such as representative personnel policies, statements of conditions of employment, job descriptions, sample classified ads, an interview format for a day care teaching position, an interview rating scale, examples of test items concerning typical situations in centers, a sample notification of employment, a performance evaluation, an outline of steps in conflict resolution, and the regulation and compliance requirements on discipline from the West Virginia Day Care Center Licensing Requirements. (RH)

An Ounce Of Prevention:

An Administrative Guide For Day Care Center Directors

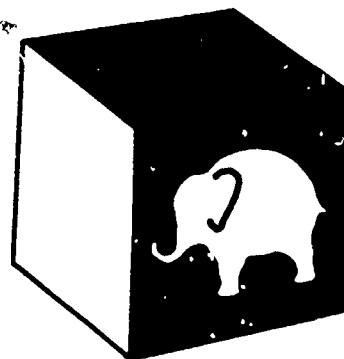
By Norma Gray, Ed.D. and Don Hall, Ed.D.

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**AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION:
AN ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDE FOR
DAY CARE CENTER DIRECTORS**

**By Norma Gray, Ed.D.
and
Don Hall, Ed.D.**

Developed by the Training in Abuse Prevention Project
through a grant funded by the West Virginia Department
of Human Services.

PREFACE

An Ounce of Prevention: An Administrative Guide for Day Care Center Directors is one of a series of three training manuals developed for day care center staff by the Training in Abuse Prevention project through a grant from the West Virginia Department of Human Services. Monies allocated by the United States Congress to train child care workers provided the necessary funds for this project.

The primary goal of the TAP project was to improve the quality of life for children in day care centers by helping center staff to gain expertise in behavior management techniques, by increasing directors' administrative capabilities in selecting and training staff, and by providing relevant informational materials to directors, staff and parents concerning child care and child abuse. In addition to the administrative guide and two training manuals on child management and prevention of abuse, four brochures were developed for parents and distributed through licensed day care centers in West Virginia. Eight regional seminars were held throughout the state. The primary purpose of the seminars was to train directors and lead teachers to conduct inservice sessions for their staff using the TAP training manuals.

This administrative guide was written to assist day care center directors in developing policies and procedures aimed at improving all aspects of the program, thus reducing the risk of abuse to children. It is based on the belief that child care can be improved and the risk of abuse reduced by selecting appropriate staff and providing the supervision and support they need to be effective in their work, and by implementing practices that will assure the safety of children in day care centers. This guide concludes with suggested procedures for dealing with allegations of child abuse.

The information included in this book is based on current statistics on child abuse and on what is presently known about preventive techniques. It is suggested that day care center directors continue to seek training in this area and keep abreast of new information as it becomes available in future years.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Norma Gray is Executive Director of Region III Child Development Services and Children's Place in Huntington, West Virginia. She has administered a variety of preschool programs, including child care centers, for the past fourteen years. Prior to that, Dr. Gray taught in both public school and private kindergarten settings. She holds an A.B. degree in Early Childhood Education and an M.A. in Educational Administration from Marshall University, and an Ed.D. in Educational Administration from West Virginia University. Dr. Gray is married and has one daughter and one grandson.

Donald L. Hall has been an Assistant Professor in the Counseling and Rehabilitation Department at Marshall University for the past three years. He also serves as a professional consultant to Parent Child Centers through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with a speciality in stress management. Dr. Hall previously was Program Director of the Consultation, Education, and Prevention unit of Pretera Center for Mental Health Services for six years. He holds an Ed.D. degree from the University of Virginia in Counseling Psychology, and is a licensed psychologist in West Virginia. A resident of Huntington, West Virginia, Dr. Hall is single and has two children.

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CHAPTER ONE

SELECTING STAFF

By Norma Gray, Ed.D.

The most important factor in a quality child care program is quality staff. You, as director of a day care center, are primarily (if not totally) responsible for selecting appropriate staff to ensure a quality program.

It is not an easy task, particularly when entry level salaries are low, fringe benefits are non-existent, and few people are trained or experienced in working with young children. Hiring staff is also time-consuming. Many times you have very little time to search for a new employee because you are substituting for the one who left.

Low salaries, minimal benefits, and lack of training perpetuate staff turnover in day care centers. As a result, some directors may think that a lengthy search for staff is not worth the effort and will resort to hiring staff on a no-choice basis. Because of time constraints and/or a lack of money to advertise, directors may employ the first person who applies for the job.

Ignoring a systematic and thorough staff selection process involves more time in the long run. Employing inappropriate staff ultimately means dealing with such consequences as staff who lack knowledge about age-appropriate activities for children, or have poor child management skills or inadequate interpersonal skills, or do not have the self-control necessary to work with young children.

This chapter will suggest some ways to help you become organized to efficiently employ quality staff. This step-by-step process of selecting staff will include: preparing to recruit, recruitment methods, screening out inappropriate staff, interviewing techniques, and finalizing the selection.

GETTING READY TO RECRUIT

Planning is crucial in selecting satisfactory staff. Before you have a job opening, you should already have established some basic employment policies and developed job descriptions for all positions. It would also be helpful to have a brochure or flyer describing the center, some samples of employment want-ads, a listing of recruitment sources, and a rating form for interviewing applicants. When these materials are prepared in advance, you will experience less panic when an employee gives short notice, and you will be able to move quickly through the process of selecting a new employee.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Policies are the principles which serve as guidelines for determining a course of action or procedure. No matter how small your program is or whether it is a profit or not-for-profit center, personnel policies (particularly policies concerning employment) are extremely important. They are for your protection, as well as to ensure the rights of employees and prospective employees. It is equally as important to have them in written form and accessible to all staff. Policies should be reasonable and should apply uniformly to all staff (or applicants). A sample of center personnel policies is included in Appendix A.

In a not-for-profit center, the Board of Directors generally makes the final decisions on policies, based on staff input and the director's recommendations. If you are the owner of a private child care center, you may want to involve a committee of staff and/or parents in helping develop policies.

Policies governing hiring practices should cover such issues as non-discrimination; recruitment methods and sources; reference requirements; who makes decisions on employment; the extent and stipulations of the probationary period; the salary range and method of determining salary for each job classification; and the advancement opportunities within the organization (Jensen, 1981).

1. Non-discrimination—According to the regulations in *Affirmative Action and Equal Employment* (1973), a non-discrimination policy should include a statement to the effect that all applicants will be considered for employment regardless of sex, age, race, religion, or handicapping condition.

2. Recruitment process—Employment policies should specify how and where employees are recruited. The following is an example of such a policy:

Staff shall be provided first opportunity when a job vacancy occurs and encouraged to apply before the vacancy is advertised outside the organization. If a position is not filled within the organization, the job opening is advertised for at least two days in the local newspaper.

3. References—A policy concerning reference requirements should include the number of references and the acceptable sources for references (i.e., former employers, supervising teachers, professors). This policy should state whether references must be written (and whether "To Whom It May Concern" letters are acceptable), and the time limitations for receiving references in order to be considered for a particular job vacancy.

It is suggested that this policy also include a requirement that all applicants sign a disclaimer form authorizing the organization to make inquiries and gather job-related information from former employers and other references. Disclaimers may be included on the application form or be a separate document. An example of a Terms and Conditions of Employment form, which includes this disclaimer, is found in Appendix B.

4. Authority to employ—Employment policies should specify who in the organization has input in hiring staff and who makes the final decision. In most not-for-profit centers, the director is employed by the Board of Directors and the staff are employed by the director, although it is not unusual for the Board to employ staff upon the recommendation of the director or a personnel committee. In a for-profit center, the owner generally makes all employment decisions. If the owner and director are two separate individuals, the owner either delegates the decision-making to the director or asks the director for recommendations.

5. Probationary period—If your center has a probationary period, it should be stated in the employment policies. Employing a person for a trial period is the best way to determine if the new employee is able to fulfill the job requirements. A probationary period is usually three to six months in length. The probationary employee should receive at least minimum wage and the same basic benefits (such as sick leave, vacation, health insurance) as regular staff. Probationary employees have the same rights as outlined in the personnel policies for all employees.

6. Salary and benefits—The policy on salary should include how salaries are determined and how and when salaries are increased. Generally, salaries are based on experience and/or education or training. Logical reasons for increasing salaries (when possible) are: length of service with the organization, additional education, merit, and increase in cost of living.

Fringe benefits should be outlined in the employment policies. Paid vacation and sick/personal leave can be uniform for all staff, or may be graduated according to length of service in the organization. Other fringe benefits might include health insurance, retirement plan, reduced or free child care, free meals/snacks during working hours, paid parking, subsidized college tuition, or a choice of one or more of these benefits.

7. Advancement opportunities—If you have a career ladder within the organization, the employment policies should specify how an employee may qualify for advancement. Such a policy should also require posting job vacancies at the center before publicly advertising the opening.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Trying to explain the job responsibilities to an applicant without a written job description can result in misunderstandings and untold personnel problems later. A written job description not only minimizes misunderstandings during the initial interview, but also helps the director evaluate each applicant according to the job requirements.

Job descriptions should be as specific as possible without being so detailed that there is no flexibility in carrying out the job responsibilities. The duties and responsibilities should be directly related to those on the evaluation form for each staff position.

Most job descriptions include the following:

- Title of the position
- Person(s) to whom the employee will be responsible
- Job responsibilities and duties
- Qualifications and/or skills needed

The working hours and salary/benefit package can be included, but this information outdates job descriptions very quickly. Examples of job descriptions for a center director, teacher, aide and cook are included in Appendix C. Other sample job descriptions can be found in *Day Care Personnel Management* (Travis and Perea, 1981) and *Developing and Administering A Child Care Center* (Sciarrà and Dorsey, 1979).

Job descriptions should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Changes in job responsibilities are often made because of an immediate need and such changes may make the job descriptions obsolete.

RECRUITING APPLICANTS

When written employment policies and job descriptions have been prepared, the director is ready to recruit applicants. Certainly, Board members, staff and substitutes should be notified about job vacancies first. This is necessary, not only for communication purposes, but to allow qualified persons within the organization to apply.

If the position is not filled within the organization, and you have a personnel policy which requires that persons whose applications are on file will be notified of job openings, this should be the second step in the recruiting process. Usually a phone call or letter notifying them of the vacancy is sufficient, although sending them job descriptions might screen out those who are not interested or are not qualified. If your employment policy does not require notifying those with applications on file, the job opening should be advertised in the community.

Some excellent recruitment sources are: universities, community colleges, and vocational schools which offer training in education, home economics, or child development. Notify both the job placement offices and the appropriate departments within the school(s), and post notices in the student centers. Current students may be interested in part-time or substitute jobs while going to school, or may be interested in filing an application at your center when they complete their training. Requesting permission to post job openings in churches, particularly in the children's department, may be beneficial in recruiting staff and substitutes.

Advertising in the classified section of the newspaper and posting notices on community bulletin boards can lead to a lengthy, time-consuming process of screening out inappropriate applicants unless you approach the task with a great deal of forethought. The notice should be specific enough to reduce the number of unqualified applicants without discouraging qualified persons from applying. For example, if you must have a kindergarten teacher with a four-year degree in early childhood education, specify that this qualification is required. If it is not required, then state that a teacher with an early childhood degree or a CDA credential is preferred but not required. Listing the salary range and fringe benefit information will eliminate those for whom the salary is too low.

An ad or notice should include the title of the position, general (but brief) responsibilities, qualifications and/or skills required or preferred, and how and when to apply. Always mention the latest date applications will be accepted. It is suggested that you state in your ad that you are an equal opportunity employer, although this is not required for organizations that employ less than fifteen persons.

Examples of classified ads are included in Appendix D.

SCREENING APPLICANTS

Careful consideration should be given to how applications for job openings are filed. If you don't want to be interrupted by phone calls and drop-in applicants, it would be best to secure a post office box or a box number with the newspaper, deleting the name of the center from the ad. By asking applicants to send a letter outlining their education (or skills) and work experience, you can screen out inappropriate persons very quickly.

During times when you need to replace a staff person immediately, you may choose to accept direct phone calls regarding the opening. You can limit the interruptions by requesting that applicants call during certain hours, and you can save time by preparing a screening form in advance.

The screening form should include priority concerns such as relevant work experience, education and/or skills, whether the applicant is at least eighteen years old, and whether the salary and fringe benefits are acceptable. Other questions concerning current working status, health and dependability could be asked during the screening by phone.

At any time during the questioning that it becomes evident the caller is not suitable, you can explain why they do not qualify for consideration and thank them for calling. A sensitive issue that sometimes confronts day care directors when searching for teaching staff is poor grammar on the part of the applicant. While it may be difficult for you, it is permissible to say: "Because we believe that our staff should be role models for children, we have a policy that all staff working directly with children must use correct grammar and articulation skills. I'm afraid you don't meet that qualification." There is no need to continue questioning or describing the job when a person is obviously unsuitable.

If you are interested in interviewing a caller in person, ask the name, phone and/or address and schedule an appointment. If you are not sure whether or not you want to schedule a personal interview with the caller, you can conclude the telephone conversation by saying: "We are taking information now and will schedule interviews at a later date with those who best match the job requirements." Take the name and phone number of each person in case you want to schedule an appointment after the pre-interview screening has been completed.

When scheduling appointments for interviews, mention the process used by your organization in selecting employees. The process for day care centers may consist of an interview with the director, an interview and/or observation by other staff or Board members, a group interview, a written test, and reference checking. You should also point out that a Criminal Investigation Bureau check must be completed on all persons who work in child care. If the caller has a conviction record, she will probably not pursue employment. If you have a thorough selection process, those who are bluffing or lying will be discouraged from asking for an interview.

After you have screened out applicants who do not have the basic qualifications necessary for the job, you can reduce the number of interviews further by selecting the three most qualified persons to interview. If you are not satisfied with any of the three after interviewing them, you can review your screening information and select additional persons to interview. You do not have to interview every person who applies for a job. Your task is to find the person who is the most suitable candidate for the position.

INTERVIEWING PROCESS

It is advisable for directors to involve at least one other person in interviewing potential staff. With a team approach to interviewing, greater insight can be gained in evaluating the qualifications of each applicant. Both interviewers have an opportunity to listen and observe more accurately when free of the total responsibility of conducting the interview. Involving others in the interviewing of applicants does not necessarily mean that all interviewers have equal decision-making power in employment matters, but it does mean that their input is taken into consideration.

While members of the Board or professionals in the community could assist in interviewing, most directors prefer to involve the person who will be the supervisor, or who has the same job responsibilities as the new employee. Not only are they more aware of the competencies needed for the job, but they are the ones who will have to help orient the new employee. They will probably be more cooperative in training that employee, if they have helped make the employment decision. If the final employment decision is contrary to the wishes of staff, it is best if the reasons can be shared openly, so that there is no resentment of the new employee.

Some administrators have used the group interview approach in order to save time. Any number of applicants are scheduled to be interviewed together. Information about the position can be given

to all the applicants at one time. Applicants respond to questions asked directly of them and are encouraged to enter into general discussions as well. Buese (1984) claims that the group interview allows the interviewer to assess the applicants' interaction skills while also determining the extent of their knowledge about child care. However, some applicants may be intimidated by a group interview and will not respond as accurately or thoroughly to questions as in an individual interview. Group interviews may be more effectively used when the purpose is only to dispense information about the job. Those interested in applying could schedule individual interviews later.

Regardless of which interview approach you decide to use, it is important to limit the number of persons on the interview team. The interview tends to lose its effectiveness when there are more than three persons interviewing at one time. A large interview team of four or more persons can intimidate the applicants.

It is assumed that all the applicants you interview meet the minimum qualifications for the job. These applicants, then, should each be given equal opportunity in the interviewing process. The best way to ensure this is to design a structured interview format so that everyone receives identical information and is asked the same basic questions. The following outline is suggested by Jensen (1985) as an interview format:

1. Establish rapport.
2. Outline interview process.
3. Gather information about applicant.
4. Relate information about the job.
5. Allow applicant to ask questions.
6. Close the interview.

The above format does not have to be used in that particular order. You could describe the job before asking the applicant any questions. A sample format for interviewing a day care teacher is included in Appendix E. While the same basic questions should be asked of each applicant being interviewed for the position, other questions can be asked in order to clarify or expand the information you are seeking.

1. Establish rapport—It is important to set the stage for an interview. Prior to the interview, the director should review the applicant's resume or application and have all the necessary forms and information available (job description, salary schedule, center brochure etc.). Find a place for the interview where you will have privacy and will not be interrupted by the phone, staff, or parents. Arrange the chairs in a conversational setting, if possible, with no desk or table between you and the person being interviewed. Begin the interview at the scheduled time. Keep the interview as informal and friendly as possible. Start the meeting with a few pleasant remarks about something you might have in common to help ease the tension.

2. Outline the interview process—Let the applicant know in the beginning of the interview that you will be asking questions pertaining to child care and teaching young children; then you will share some information about the center and the job; and at the end of the interview, there will be an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions. Outlining the format of the interview will help the applicant to feel less anxious about the interview.

3. Gather information about the applicant—The application or resume will contain most of the factual information you need. The primary purpose of the interview, according to Travis and Perreault, should be to find out if the candidate has the knowledge, skill and values needed to fulfill the job responsibilities. While knowledge can be determined through interview questions, skills are more difficult to evaluate unless you can see the person in action. However, asking questions such as: "Tell me what you would do if a four year old interrupted storytime by hitting another child on the nose with his boot," or "What would you do if you saw a two year old struggling to get the wheel of his trike free from the climber?" will give you insight into the applicant's ability to apply knowledge to practice.

Assessing an applicant's values and attitudes is more subjective than evaluating her knowledge and skills. It is important to employ child care staff who value children and families, so gear all your questions to determining if the applicant is nurturing, dependable, cooperative, willing to do a fair share of the work, and is excited about the prospect of working in the position for which she is applying. Decide which attitudes are important to you. Would you rather have a teacher who is innovative or one who is cautious about making changes? Do you want someone who is flexible or someone who is orderly? Are you more concerned about not employing staff who act without thinking than those who procrastinate? Look for the attitudes that are needed in this employee to make your staff an effective team.

Values and attitudes will be revealed verbally through what is said and how it is said, and non-verbally through gestures and posture. Be aware of what is missing, both verbally and non-verbally. A lack of warmth and openness in communicating may be due to nervousness or it may be a personality trait.

In gathering information about the applicant, use open-ended questions, rather than questions which need only "yes" or "no" answers. To help the applicant feel more at ease, start with low-key questions, such as: "Tell me about your experience in teaching the four year olds at church," or "What activities did you enjoy most when you worked in the Head Start program?" or "How do you think your experience cooking for church dinners will help you as a cook in a day care center?". As the interview progresses, your questions can be more specific and more probing. For example, you could ask the applicant to define his concept of discipline, or to tell you what a former employer might say about his dependability.

Posing hypothetical situations is another method of soliciting information. Asking such questions as: "What would you do if a child bit another child?" or "What would you do if you came to work and discovered that you had forgotten to thaw the roast for lunch?", will give you clues to the applicant's ability to cope with typical crises, as well as information on his knowledge and values.

According to Pollock (1971), there are four errors commonly made by many interviewers:

1. Talking too much;
2. Asking questions that do not provide you with additional information;
3. Asking inappropriate questions; and
4. Overselling the job.

These errors will be discussed in this section and the following section on relating information about the job.

Many interviewers spend most of the interview time talking to the applicant. While it is necessary to explain the job and your program, the main focus should be on gathering information from the applicant. Keep in mind that you will learn more about a prospective employee if you talk less and practice more active listening. Use prolonged silence to gain information when you think someone is being evasive.

Avoid questions that suggest obvious answers, such as: "You don't believe in withholding food as a method of discipline, do you?" or "You really enjoy working with three year olds, don't you?". You will get the answer they think you want, but you may not get the truth.

As an employer, you must be careful not to ask questions which could be interpreted as discriminatory. There are a number of federal laws governing pre-employment inquiries concerning age, race, national origin, sex, marital status, family, physical size, and physical conditions. There are acceptable ways of gaining the information you need. While you should not ask, "Do you have any physical disability or handicap?", you can explain that licensing regulations for day care centers require a physical exam prior to employment and every two years thereafter, and then ask: "Do you have any physical condition or handicap which might limit your ability to carry out the responsibilities of this job?". If you are concerned that the person applying for the job is not old enough to meet licensing standards, you can state the age requirement and ask: "Are you over age 18?". Asking a person's birthplace or national origin is unacceptable, but you can ask what languages the applicant speaks, reads and writes. Avoid asking questions about financial status, marital status, how the spouse feels about the applicant working, how many or what age the children are, or whether there is someone to care for their children during work hours. These questions are not directly related to job qualifications and are not only inappropriate, but illegal.

4. Relate information about the job—With a written job description and a brochure or flyer about the center program, this part of the interview will be fairly easy and should be brief. Be enthusiastic about your center, but be cautious about overselling it.

Be open and above board. Point out some of the less rewarding responsibilities such as cleaning up after a toileting accident or waiting after closing time for late parents to pick up their children. If employees are expected to come to staff meetings and in-service training on their own time, this policy should be shared during the interview. Do not make promises you may not be able to fulfill. You cannot agree to allow two months off every summer, if that is a Board decision or you may not be able to find a suitable substitute.

5. Allow applicant to ask questions—After discussing your program and the job qualifications, and gathering the information you need, give the applicant an opportunity to ask questions. If most of the questions asked during this time are the same as those covered earlier in the interview, you will know that either the applicant did not listen well or that you were not clear in your explanations (or both).

6. Close the interview—In closing the interview, ask the applicant to tell you briefly how well he meets the job qualifications and what areas he will need to strengthen if employed. This gives you an opportunity to see how well the applicant understands the job responsibilities and how aware he is of his own strengths and weaknesses.

If observing in the classroom or taking a test is part of the selection process for prospective employees, schedule an appropriate time with the applicant. Mention the need for references and explain the process your center requires. Ask applicants to read and sign a "Conditions of Employment" form, which will not only give the information on such requirements as a medical

exam and a criminal investigation check, but will also give you permission to check references. (A sample "Conditions of Employment" form is included in Appendix B.)

Inform all applicants about how and when the final selection will be made, and how they will be notified. Thank them for applying for the job and/or for being open and responsive in answering questions.

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process includes evaluating each applicant following his interview, observing him in the classroom, having him complete a test (if that is included), checking references, getting input from others who have interviewed or observed the candidates, and making the final decision. The director of the center is responsible for initiating each of the steps in this process.

RATING APPLICANTS

It is always easier to evaluate applicants you have interviewed, if you organize your information and perceptions in written form. Allow a few minutes following the interview to make notes about each applicant. This can be an informal notation of facts about education/training and relevant experience and a listing of perceived weaknesses and strengths, or you can use a rating form. A structured rating scale can be a time-saving device and will encourage all interviewers to focus on priority issues when evaluating applicants. The rating form should provide for an assessment of job-related knowledge, work skills, values and attitudes of the applicant, as well as more personal qualities such as appearance and demeanor. A sample interview rating scale for teaching staff may be found in Appendix F.

OBSERVING APPLICANTS

The best way to determine how well an applicant can perform on the job is to observe that person carrying out some of the job responsibilities. Some day care center directors ask applicants (or at least the top contenders) to volunteer to work in the classroom for a day or part of a day. This trial run helps the applicant gain a better understanding of the job responsibilities and allows staff to observe the abilities of the applicant.

TESTING APPLICANTS

Tests are also used to supplement information learned during the interview or to screen applicants before selecting those to be interviewed. An appropriate test for teaching staff consists of requesting written responses to three or four situations which are typical of child care responsibilities. An example of such a test is included in Appendix G.

Responding to hypothetical day care situations will enable applicants to consider alternatives and prepare thoughtful answers. In turn, the director obtains examples of the applicant's knowledge and values without having to remember what was said in an interview.

Another test which is helpful in learning more about the values and attitudes of applicants is a sentence completion test similar to the one in Appendix G. Applicants are given beginning words or phrases and asked to complete each sentence with the first response that comes to mind. Responses to phrases such as: "A problem child . . .", "I like work which . . .", "If I have a job . . .", "When a child takes my hand . . .", may reveal additional information about an applicant.

CHECKING REFERENCES

Checking references should never be overlooked, regardless of how urgently you need to employ staff. Licensing regulations state that you must have two written references on employees, but you may want to check on these references personally or contact additional references. When you contact references by phone, you are able to ask more specific questions (and usually get more revealing answers) than when written references are submitted. Make adequate notes when checking references by phone or in person and record only job-related information. You may need this documentation, if a disgruntled applicant protests not having been employed.

Former employers are generally the best sources of information about an applicant's job performance, ability to get along with others, and overall dependability. It is advisable to ask a former employer if they would employ the applicant again. Character references from the applicant's friends or former co-workers may be of little value since they do not address work-related abilities and weaknesses. In checking references for a position requiring a certified teacher, the college and public school supervisors of student teachers are excellent resources concerning applicants' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

It is important to be as objective as possible in evaluating the information you receive from references. Use this information to support or confirm your observations and not as the sole reason for employing or not employing a person.

Never disclose information shared by a reference with anyone other than those who are making the employment decision. This is confidential information. Do not tell an applicant that she was not selected because of poor references. You are not required to tell applicants why they were not employed. You have the right to employ the person you believe is the best match for the position. As long as you have adequate documentation on why you selected a certain employee, you are ready for any challenge from your Board of Directors or any fair employment investigation.

INVOLVING OTHERS IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

Involving others in making an employment decision benefits you and your staff. In soliciting the opinions of your staff, you gain an additional perspective about how the applicant might fit into your organization. Team effort is essential in child care programs, and it is advisable to receive your employees' evaluation of a prospective employee. Those who will be working directly with the new staff person are most appropriate to give input.

If parents or Board members have been involved in the interview and/or observation, they should be included in the decision-making process also. Parents will often have a different perspective from staff, and their viewpoints should be considered. Many times a Board member or someone from the community can be more objective than staff in assessing applicants.

MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

It is important to keep the number of people involved in making the final selection to a maximum of four. The director, a staff member, a parent, and a Board member would represent all groups concerned. This size group could work efficiently. Another effective system is to ask for comments from all those concerned, with the director and one other person evaluating the applicants and making the final decision.

To arrive at a final decision, directors may wish to use the consensus method. This process may be lengthy if the members of the group cannot agree, but the pros and cons should be discussed until every member in the group agrees on the applicant to be hired. If an agreement cannot be reached,

there are several alternatives: (1) a majority vote can be taken; (2) the director (or owner) can make the final decision; (3) all applicants' credentials can be reviewed to see if there is another candidate that all committee members can agree to employ; or (4) a new search for the staff person can be initiated.

However, there is merit in using a selection process in which the final decision rests with the director. The director is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the center program and must deal with any personnel problems. While other viewpoints should be considered, the director's evaluations regarding an applicant will usually have the greatest influence on the final decision.

Sometimes making the employment decision is fairly easy. When you organize all the information (the applications or resumes, the interview ratings, the observation comments and the references), one person may obviously be the best applicant for the position. There are times, however, when you may find yourself face-to-face with one of two predicaments: either you are not satisfied that any of the applicants fully meet the job requirements, or you have two or more applicants who appear to meet the qualifications equally. When none of the applicants appear fully qualified, you have at least three options:

1. Ask the top two or three candidates to come in for a second interview or visit in the classroom, so that you and your staff can observe them more closely.
2. Select the applicant who is not fully qualified, knowing that extensive training will be necessary. (In this situation it is advisable to choose someone with the right attitudes. It is easier to provide training than to change attitudes and values.)
3. Begin the process again, either through advertising the position or reviewing all applications again and selecting two or three others to interview.

In the situation where two or more applicants meet your requirements equally, ask these applicants to return for a second interview or observation. If possible, employ each applicant as a substitute and ask them to work alternate weeks. It will usually be evident within two weeks which of the candidates is the better choice. You can also check additional references. Document your selection thoroughly, since you may be accused of discriminatory or unfair employment practices.

When the final decision is made, all applicants who have been interviewed should be notified that a decision has been made and whether or not they have been selected. This is usually done by phone or letter, but the person who is employed should receive a letter verifying the employment offer. Information regarding the date the job begins, the salary and other benefits, and any other conditions that are relevant should be included. This letter serves basically the same purpose as a contract. A sample is included in Appendix H.

PERSEVERANCE PREVENTS PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

The time it takes to thoroughly search for the most suitable applicant is time well spent. Few functions are more important than hiring staff with potential to be nurturing, knowledgeable facilitators of the growth and development of young children.

Take the time needed to be prepared for your next vacancy. You may not have another vacancy for a year, but if you have developed the necessary recruitment and employment forms and have determined the screening and interviewing techniques you want to use, you can move more quickly through the selection process. It is possible, if you are organized, to complete this process within ten to twelve days. But if it takes longer to discover the "right" person for the job, then take as much time as you need. The children in your center deserve the very best you can offer them.

ASSESSMENT

STAFF SELECTION PROCESS

1. Assess your present status on being prepared to recruit and interview new employees. Check the following items already available for this purpose.

- Job descriptions for all positions
- Employment policies
- Brochure/flyer about program
- Want-ad samples
- Listing of recruitment sources
- Interview rating forms
- Conditions of employment form
- Form employment letter

2. List the items you intend to prepare before recruiting your next employee:

3. What process do you think would be best for you in recruiting new staff?

4. What would be the most efficient method of screening and interviewing applicants for your center?

5. Who do you think should be involved in deciding the person to employ in the following positions?

Director _____

Teacher _____

Aide or Assistant Teacher _____

Cook _____

6. What would you do if you were not completely satisfied that any of the applicants for a teaching position fully met the job requirements?

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CHAPTER TWO

EFFECTIVE TEAM MANAGEMENT

By Norma Gray, Ed.D.

What makes the difference between marginal staff and staff who do everything in their power to make learning an exciting experience for children? Why are some day care centers so quiet you can "hear" the rigidity of the program, while in other centers you can feel warmth and joy and sharing the moment you walk in the door? The answer to both questions is you, the director.

Being a director is not just a matter of hiring staff, ordering supplies, dealing with budgets and keeping records, important as these tasks may be. In order to be an effective manager, you must be able to relate to people, to motivate staff, to facilitate a spirit of cooperation among the staff, parents and community. This is not easily accomplished but it is a challenge worth pursuing.

This chapter will focus on the process of building cooperative team effort among your staff. It will suggest ways for you to be an effective team manager by modeling behavior and attitudes, improving your communication skills, and fostering high morale among staff. By following the suggestions in this chapter, you will learn how to:

1. Encourage the behaviors and attitudes you want from staff;
2. Gain staff cooperation;
3. Involve staff in planning and decision-making;
4. Give clear instructions;
5. Be an active listener; and
6. Facilitate a high level of morale.

Every situation in a day care center involves people. Parents bring children to your center, the teaching staff care for the children and provide stimulating learning experiences, the cook prepares the food, the custodian cleans, and Board members determine policy and oversee management. You have to relate to all these individuals. Your job is to encourage everyone to work together for the benefit of the children. This involves effective team management.

Building and managing a team requires a high level of interpersonal skills. Since it is not possible to discuss all the interpersonal skills needed, only the most basic skills in administering child care centers are included. It is essential that a director models or demonstrates the behavior and attitudes she wants staff to have, and that she communicates effectively with staff.

MODELING BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

It is a fact of life that you usually get what you give. If you smile at a person, usually that person will return your smile. If you respect others, they will respect you. If you are loyal to staff, they are more likely to support you. Therefore, the first step in building a staff team is to model the behavior and attitudes you want your staff to exhibit on the job.

You begin that process when you interview applicants. Your friendliness during the interview, your concern for their comfort, your respect of their knowledge and abilities set a precedent for them as new employees. You continue the process each day as you support and praise the results of their efforts, and listen and empathize with them about problems.

If you were to describe the characteristics of a team, you would undoubtedly say that team members

- help one another,
- support one another,
- have a strong sense of belonging,
- trust and respect one another,
- feel pride in their jobs, and
- cooperate freely with others.

These are characteristics you will want to demonstrate during your daily interactions with staff.

One way to encourage a helping attitude in a new employee is to assist her until she becomes oriented to the job. A director who is willing to clean up the overturned flower pot while the teacher deals with the children, will find the teacher volunteering to help when the director is in a bind. The director who pitches in to help wash dishes when the dishwasher breaks down is not likely to be refused when she asks the cook to bake cookies for the next Board meeting.

When the director includes staff in planning and in making decisions which directly concern them, a sense of belonging develops. If you want staff to perceive themselves as part of the group, ask them to share their talents.

One suggestion is to establish a management team (perhaps you and your lead teachers) to assist in planning and conducting inservice, to revise job descriptions or parent handbooks, to problem solve, and to brainstorm new ideas. Many employees in the 1980's are more assertive and want to be involved in the decision-making of their organizations. The director who draws on the expertise of others and is able to meld the strengths of each staff person into a cohesive team effort, will have few concerns about the quality of the center program.

If you, as the director, trust and value your staff, respect their opinions, and look for positive factors in their ideas, they in turn will respect you and be more receptive to your suggestions. Also, when the director is enthusiastic about the program and regularly commends employees, they will feel a pride in their jobs and strive to improve the quality and quantity of their work. Help employees understand the importance of their work. Let them know that you value their abilities, and you will have employees who exhibit greater effort.

Cooperate with a teacher who needs to change his work schedule to attend an afternoon class at the community college and you are more likely to get his agreement to work a split shift while enrollment is low. Cooperate with staff who want to turn a storage area into a staff lounge and you may have more assistance from them on your next fundraiser.

Do you want teachers to be more consistent and fair in disciplining children? Then be a model of fairness and consistency in dealing with personnel problems. Do you want staff to get to work on time? Then be prompt yourself.

Modeling doesn't give perfect results; but it goes a long way in helping staff understand your priorities and values. You teach more by your actions than by your words. Behave as you want staff to behave and you will see your conduct and attitudes mirrored in most of your staff a majority of the time. Set the example for your staff to follow and you will have a firm foundation for building a team.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Communication is the act of providing information. What you say and how you say it, your facial expression, your posture and gestures, and also your silence are important factors in communicating with others. Effective communication is being understood and understanding others. It requires listening, as well as talking.

There are numerous communication skills, but the focus of this section will be on the two skills that are considered the most necessary in promoting team effort. These skills are: (1) the ability to give clear instructions, and (2) the ability to listen.

GIVING CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

A big mistake most administrators make is assuming that what they say is understood. Ambiguity occurs because of the way information is given, the way it is received, or both. If you haven't given any forethought to your instructions, you may stumble in and around what you want to say but never clearly express it. If you give instructions which are too lengthy or too complicated, you may lose the listener's attention.

There are three basic rules to remember when providing information or giving instructions:

1. Plan what you want to say;
2. Be concise; and
3. Get feedback.

Think about what you want to say before you start talking. Jotting some notes on paper will help you organize what you want to say. Planning ahead will also help you anticipate how the other person will react. If you expect the custodian to reject the new floor stripper because it takes longer, determine what the new stripper will do for her. Will it require less effort? Will the fumes from the stripper be less hazardous? You can then point out that, although it may take ten minutes more to strip a room, it will be easier and safer. By mentioning the negative aspects before the custodian does, you are more likely to win her cooperation. Be concise. Say what, why, how, when and where as briefly and directly as possible. Be specific. Don't tell the cook that you want a few cookies for the parents' meeting. You may get a dozen cookies when you need three dozen.

If you are giving complicated instructions, Pollock suggests in *Managing Others Creatively* that you present the "big picture" first before you give specific details and that you start with the familiar before presenting the unknown. To the cook you might say: "We have a new form for recording the inventory but there is one minor change which I will explain first. Then we'll go through it step-by-step the first time . . ."

The only way to be sure that your message or instructions are understood is to get feedback. After you have finished your explanation, say: "What do you think of the idea?" or "Do you have any suggestions about how this can be accomplished in your classroom?" or "How do you think this information should be shared with the parents?" Give the employee the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. He will be more receptive to hearing what you say and more accurate in carrying out your instructions.

While the emphasis on communicating is generally placed on verbal communication, research reveals that seventy-eight percent of meaning is conveyed non-verbally. In fact, most people will read what you are saying by the expression on your face, the tone of your voice, your body posture or gestures. What you say will be interpreted by the listener according to whether you are grim-faced or smiling; whether you speak tersely or in a relaxed, friendly manner; whether your gestures are tight and closed or open and expansive. Don't let your non-verbal communication distract from what you are saying but rather use your voice and gestures to support and emphasize the intent of your message.

One more point needs to be made about giving instructions. People will respond more positively when you make suggestions or requests rather than give orders. Instead of demanding, "Get me . . ." or "Do this . . ." say: "Would you please . . ." or "I would appreciate . . ." Your staff knows who's boss. You don't have to use authoritarian tactics to remind them you're in charge.

LISTENING

Did you know that you usually have more influence on people by listening to them rather than by talking? Listening means that you care, that you're interested in their ideas and concerned about their problems. Listening shows your respect.

In *The Art of Managing People*, Hunsaker and Alessandra (1980) describe four types of listeners:

- the non-listener
- the marginal listener
- the evaluative listener
- the active listener

The **non-listener** is a faker. He acts as if he's listening but in reality he is thinking about another problem or planning what he is going to say. A non-listener may interrupt constantly with what he wants to say.

The **marginal listener** also looks as if she is listening but she tends to hear only the facts and does not want to listen to any detailed discussion. She stays on the edge of the message but never probes for the real meaning. She is easily distracted. The marginal listener also tends to put off dealing with problems.

The **evaluative listener** is more attentive. He hears the words but he is so busy forming opinions about what is being said that he isn't aware of the non-verbal clues and sometimes misses the intent of the message. This type of listener usually reacts emotionally and is quick to respond in anger or begin "preaching."

The **active listener** tries to understand the speaker's point of view. She hears not only the content of the message, but also the intent. She is aware of the speaker's feelings and emotions, and has the ability to "read between the lines." By being receptive to what is said and asking questions, she lets the speaker know that she understands.

A "good listener" is an active listener. In order to be an active listener, you have to:

1. Sincerely want to listen.
2. Strive to act like a good listener. Sit up straight or lean slightly forward. Maintain intermittent eye contact (don't stare). Nod occasionally or interject exclamations when appropriate ("Ah!" "Really?" "Amazing!").
3. Concentrate. Don't let the sounds of children or traffic or the phone distract you.
4. Listen for the main ideas.
5. Empathize. Try to understand the speaker's point of view.
6. Let the speaker talk without any interruptions from you.
7. Take brief notes. If it's a long, detailed conversation, jot down important points.
8. Ask open-ended questions to clarify your perceptions and understanding.
9. Try to determine what the problem is and what the employee wants done about it.
10. If it is a job-related problem, plan with him a solution or strategy for dealing with it.
11. Follow through. If it is a job problem, implement your plan of action. If it is a personal problem, let the employee know you are still concerned.

Developing active listening skills requires constant practice, but most of all, it requires the desire to be a better communicator. When an employee rambles on and on or interrupts you at a particularly busy time, it may be difficult to be patient and empathetic; however, the payoff is a more satisfied employee and a more effective team member. Your staff will also be more receptive to listening to you. That's what effective communication is all about— being understood and understanding others.

FACILITATING HIGH MORALE

Morale is a term that describes the attitude or feeling that an employee has about her job. High morale is present when employees have positive attitudes and feelings of excitement and enthusiasm.

While the term "high morale" is rather difficult to define, it is easy to observe. It's the warmth in an aide's eyes as she rocks an infant. It's the sense of excitement in the classroom as the teacher and aide plan a new art experience for the children. It's the feeling of enthusiasm which pervades the staff. It's the sound of whistling in the kitchen as the cook prepares lunch. It's the look of satisfaction on the custodian's face as he polishes the floor in the hallway. It's the sound of snickered laughter as a teacher tells the director about Joey's latest escapade.

Facilitating high morale is not a matter of wages and benefits or shorter working hours or less work to do. While most people are more satisfied when they make an adequate salary and would welcome additional benefits, these are not the most important sources of motivation to them. It's possible to have a high level of morale among staff even when they work for minimum wage.

In creating a climate for high morale, the director must take into consideration the needs, values, and perceptions of each staff member. Each person is a product of his own unique environment and brings his own set of beliefs and attitudes to the job. The director must sort all this out so that he can respond to each individual in a way that will promote high morale.

In influencing the development of a high level of morale, the director must recognize and respect differences of opinion. What may be a reward to one employee will cause another distress. What the director thinks will boost morale may instead create dissention.

Several ways to promote high morale (involvement in planning, problem solving, and decision-making, being valued and respected, and having a supervisor with good communication skills) have already been discussed. Other factors leading to high morale (appropriate feedback on job performance and stress reduction) will be discussed in the next chapter. This section will include some practical suggestions for increasing staff morale: challenging work, special privileges, special recognition, and opportunities for growth.

CHALLENGING WORK

Most people get tired of the routine of their jobs and will be stimulated by new challenges or by changes in their routines. For those on your staff who are ambitious, give them opportunities to learn new skills (Schoenberg, 1978). Allow the teacher with good interpersonal skills to work with the parents' advisory committee to plan the Halloween party while you substitute for her in the classroom. Let the aide with efficient recordkeeping skills prepare the monthly food reimbursement report while you take on her responsibilities for the morning. Ask the teacher who is talented in music to share his music with the other classes while other staff work in his place. Give the cook who is interested in nutrition the opportunity to develop a new set of menus while you clean the kitchen after lunch for several days. Ask the teacher who has an interest in science to provide an inservice session on science activities.

For those on your staff who are not interested in new challenges but would enjoy a change of routines, let them exchange responsibilities occasionally or change classrooms for a day. Assisting in circle time instead of supervising handwashing, or preparing snack instead of doing the laundry may be a welcome change for staff. Keep in mind that some people don't like changes, so don't require it of all staff.

You may want to try a "topsy-turvy" day when each of the staff works a different job. The lead teacher serves as the director, the aide becomes the teacher, the cook takes over for the aide and the director does the cooking for the day. The children will think it all great fun and the staff will have an appreciation for one another's responsibilities and capabilities.

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

One sure way to build morale is to give special privileges. However, if you select only a few people to reward in this manner you will destroy morale. What is given to one as a special privilege must be available to all who want it.

While the day care center can't afford to supply staff with company cars or country club memberships, you can offer to substitute for them so that they can go to lunch with their spouses on their birthdays or anniversaries. Or find several community volunteers or Board members who would be willing to oversee nap time while part of the staff has a leisurely lunch together. This could be rotated so that volunteers would be working only one afternoon a month and each staff member would get to eat out several times during the year.

A number of day care centers give staff members the day off on their birthdays. Some directors arrange for special refreshments during nap time on staff birthdays. If your staff is large, individual birthday celebrations may be too much but you can have a special meeting once a month to celebrate all the birthdays. Other ideas include providing the privilege of sleeping late or going home two hours early once a year, or allowing staff a half-day off to go shopping before Christmas.

Involve your Board in brainstorming some special privileges that are affordable for your center. Some of the Board members may be able to supply some special privileges such as free passes to the movies or free pizzas or discount cards from local merchants. Arranging special privileges will take a little ingenuity and planning, but the effect on staff will be well worth the effort.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Giving staff special recognition for excellent work or for a project that involved volunteer time is another way of increasing the level of morale for some employees. However, special recognition honors only a few and this may cause jealousy and low morale among some staff.

Public recognition can range from a certificate from the Board for perfect attendance, to an award from United Way for fundraising, to an employee of the month poster in the center. Sometimes the center may get special recognition from the parents or from community leaders for having an outstanding program or for being the first center to main-stream handicapped children in the program. As director, you know who should be honored and can facilitate these kinds of public recognition.

You can also give special recognition privately. A word of appreciation for the staff's abilities or hard work, a birthday card, or a note calling attention to something a staff member did that was above and beyond the job requirements are all ways of increasing self-esteem and job morale.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Arranging and encouraging additional learning experiences can be a great morale booster for some staff. The chance to attend a conference or observe in another center brings a new excitement to your center as staff share their experiences.

While few centers have the funds to pay for staff attendance at state or national conferences, for a minimum investment of time and/or money you can facilitate personal and professional growth in other ways. You can begin by looking for professionals and specialists in your community who could assist you in providing inservice for your staff. Perhaps an elementary supervisor would do a session on story-telling or a speech therapist might provide information on language development in the preschool years. Is there a nurse or physician who would share information on infectious diseases or a psychologist or counselor who would have a seminar for staff on interpersonal skills? Could someone from the county extension office provide training for the cook? Does the company where you buy cleaning supplies have someone who could teach the custodian how to properly operate the buffer?

You can give staff opportunities to visit other centers in the area. It's always stimulating to see what other centers are doing. If you can't afford to pay a substitute or find volunteers, perhaps you can arrange with another day care director to exchange teachers for a day. Or if other centers would allow staff to visit on short notice, you could release one of the staff when attendance in your center was low.

Encourage staff to take college courses by allowing them to study once or twice a week during nap time. Facilitate self-study by subscribing to professional journals for center staff use or by purchasing resource books for staff.

Be alert for workshops sponsored by other organizations. Churches, the local Red Cross, and professional teachers' associations sometimes offer workshops and seminars which are relevant for your staff. Training sessions on video tape and film may be available from the local Department of Human Services, Health Department, Community Mental Health Center, or school system. Check with them to see if they have anything on child abuse, working with special children or other suitable topics.

SUMMARY

Effective team management occurs when directors model the behavior and attitudes which are appropriate for child care staff; when they are able to use such communication skills as giving clear instructions and being an active listener; and when they facilitate high morale by offering challenging work, giving special privileges and recognition, and fostering the professional growth of the staff. No single element of team management is more important than another. It is the combination of all these factors that makes team management effective.

ASSESSMENT
EFFECTIVE TEAM MANAGEMENT

1. List the behaviors and attitudes that you strive to model for staff. _____

2. What are the three basic rules of giving clear instructions? _____

3. Name one verbal and one non-verbal communication skill that you need to improve. _____

4. List four ideas for improving staff morale which you would like to try. _____

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CHAPTER THREE

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF STAFF

By Donald L. Hall, Ed.D.

Few activities are as related to successful day care center operation as the effective supervision and management of staff. As center director, you are continually planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating people and material resources to achieve center goals. For the most part, success in day care centers doesn't result from chance factors. Centers are more likely to experience success when they are managed by knowledgeable directors, skilled in supervisory practices.

This chapter offers practical information and suggestions to help you be a more effective supervisor. The information presented here outlines ways for you to deal successfully with performance evaluation, stress prevention and reduction, conflict resolution and termination. The objectives of this chapter are to introduce you to:

1. Practices for conducting day care center employee evaluations;
2. Techniques to prevent or reduce stress within your center;
3. Effective conflict resolution practices; and,
4. Methods of terminating the employment of staff.

STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Performance evaluation is the process of measuring how well employees perform their jobs. Not only do performance evaluations enable you to systematically determine the abilities of employees, they also provide valuable information you may use to determine job promotions, salary increases, staff development or training needs, and corrective job actions. The information presented here examines the current issues and practices regarding job evaluations within day care centers.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PHILOSOPHY

Traditionally, employees view the performance evaluation process as a dreaded experience. Having one's performance rated in some way can be threatening to even the most competent day care employee. Too often, evaluations are used solely to screen out or terminate ineffective employees. While identifying unsatisfactory job performance is necessary during the evaluation process, the primary objective should be job performance improvement. When unsatisfactory evaluations occur, concrete methods for performance improvement should be provided. Examples of methods to improve performance include in-service training, job counseling, additional experience, supervisory guidance, and other staff development activities. When employees realize that evaluations are conducted primarily to enhance performance effectiveness, they will be less fearful and more cooperative about following through on suggestions for improvement.

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Employees often perform assigned jobs poorly because they have not been oriented to their responsibilities. Evaluation procedures should not judge job performance when employees have little or no idea of the do's and don'ts of their work. Each employee should receive an orientation to her job expectations and specific information regarding "good" and "bad" job performance. She should be provided a written job description, outlining the expectations and requirements of the job (see Appendix C). She should also be provided opportunities to learn about the day care center, its services, policies and procedures, or other relevant information.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Performance evaluations should not measure the general worth or personal value of employees. An employee's value or competency as an individual should remain separate from the assessment of work-related behaviors. An important early stage of the performance evaluation process, therefore, is the identification of the specific skills, behaviors, or characteristics essential to carrying out a job. This task results in a "job description", which includes written specifications and expectations required of a particular job.

SUPERVISORY FEEDBACK

Feedback involves your report to an employee regarding how well she is performing her job responsibilities. The feedback report may be quite formal, such as placing a note or memorandum in the employee's personnel record. This type of feedback tends to be relatively permanent and is often included during scheduled, more comprehensive job evaluations. Feedback may also be more informal, such as an occasional word of praise or constructive criticism when talking with the employee. Informal feedback usually concerns less serious matters and is offered as opportunities allow. When used as corrective mechanisms, both types of feedback should clearly identify ineffective employee actions and provide concrete suggestions for improvement. At times, feedback should be offered privately and confidentially, particularly when it concerns employee performance problems. It is usually unfair and unnecessary to reprimand an employee in the presence of her peers.

Supervisory feedback may also be used as a reward for good employee performance. Often, when financial or other more material incentives are unavailable, day care employees' motivation to perform at desirable levels is encouraged by your recognition of jobs well done. Feedback, when offered conscientiously, will keep employees aware of how well they are performing. Consequently, each employee should always have at least a general idea of her standing within the center.

DOCUMENTATION OF JOB PERFORMANCE

An essential quality of effective job evaluation is the practice of "documentation". Documentation refers to the recording, usually in written form, of accurate employee performance information. During scheduled job evaluations, your reliance upon memory to recall information regarding an employee's performance may contribute to inaccuracies. Documented records usually become a part of the employee's personnel file and can be withdrawn at any time you designate. Sometimes documentation is more informal and may consist of personal supervisory records. These usually involve less serious matters, but will serve as helpful reminders for you during job evaluation procedures. Consider these guidelines when documenting information concerning employee performance:

1. Only information relevant to job performance or day care employment should be documented;

2. Documentation should include information regarding an employee's desirable, as well as undesirable, performance;
3. The employee should be informed of the content and purpose of any documentation through supervisory conferences, feedback, or written correspondence; and,
4. Documented information should be specific rather than general, including the precise dates, times, and nature of employee behavior.

INVOLVING THE EMPLOYEE

Performance evaluation procedures tend to work best when employees are actively involved. When given an opportunity for input, they are able to clarify or explain performance habits so that directors or supervisors are better informed. Also, active employee participation will promote more positive views of the evaluation system as a fair, unbiased process. One method of employee involvement is the "face to face" conference where both the director and employee complete a single evaluation rating. The employee provides information or personal views of performance before the director makes a final decision. Several centers utilize a similar method which requires the director and employee to complete evaluation forms separately, then meet to compare ratings. This method allows the employee a "self-assessment" opportunity to be compared with the director's assessment. A third and more commonly used method involves the director's independent rating of an employee's performance, followed by a supervisory conference to communicate evaluation results to the employee. Regardless of which method you select, it is important to actively involve employees and receive their input before evaluation decisions become permanent.

THE EVALUATION FORM

Typically, formal job evaluation procedures occur within three to six months of the individual's employment, or at the conclusion of the employee's designated probationary period. After the initial evaluation, the employee should be evaluated at least once each year. There are numerous types of evaluations used to assess employee performance and you must be very careful to select a procedure and evaluation form which is valid and reliable. Perhaps the most common technique of evaluating employees' work behavior is the "performance rating method". This approach is a systematic technique, which lists those general duties or responsibilities appropriate to a certain job. Each job responsibility is divided into specific job tasks or behaviors which the employee should be performing. When utilizing this method, you must rate the appropriate level of accomplishment demonstrated by the employee being evaluated. Some job responsibilities may be more important than others, and you must decide which ratings suggest a weakness in performance. Forms may be completed by other management persons having reasonable supervisory responsibilities for an employee's performance. An example of a performance rating form is provided in Appendix I of this manual.

EMPLOYEE RIGHT TO APPEAL

Regardless of the information or decisions resulting from a job evaluation, each employee should have the opportunity to appeal or challenge the outcome. Such appeals are usually presented in the form of grievances and have become relatively common in most work settings. Grievances represent the right of each employee to disagree with your evaluation decisions. Grievances should be handled in a very specific manner according to the policy and structure of each day care center (see Appendix A). To minimize the likelihood for employee grievances, consider the following actions:

1. Take employee complaints seriously;

2. Attempt to resolve complaints early, so that they do not become more serious;
3. Deal honestly, calmly, and with respect when considering or discussing employee grievances;
4. Practice conscientious documentation and make certain each evaluation decision has a sound basis; and,
5. Become familiar with the legal implications of performance evaluation decisions and employee rights.

SUMMARY

Performance evaluation procedures are essential to the administration of an effective day care center. They occur routinely and systematically throughout the employment of each day care employee and will assist you in your efforts to employ quality staff. Generally, effective performance evaluations occur when:

1. A high level of interpersonal trust exists between the center director and employees;
2. The performance evaluation system fairly and accurately measures performance;
3. The evaluation process is specifically linked to job improvement and staff development opportunities;
4. Performance evaluation procedures involve employees; and,
5. Employees have the opportunity to appeal decisions or information resulting from evaluation processes.

ASSESSMENT

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| ___ 1. written specifications of the necessary skills, characteristics and other attributes required of a particular job | a. job performance evaluation |
| ___ 2. an introduction of day care employees to the specific demands and expectations of their job | b. feedback |
| ___ 3. an appraisal of how well an individual does his/her job | c. job orientation |
| ___ 4. contained on a job rating form, these can be broken down into more specific job tasks | d. job description |
| ___ 5. a supervisor's occasional report to the employee regarding incidents of good or bad job performance | e. job responsibilities |

2. Answer a through c with True or False.

- a. ___ Performance evaluations should primarily be used to screen out employees who should be dismissed.
- b. ___ The day care director should only consider "serious" performance problems for documented records.
- c. ___ It is considered good practice for more than one supervisor to contribute to the performance evaluation of an employee.
3. Effective and conscientious performance evaluations do not evaluate or assess the _____ of the employee.
4. The most commonly used evaluation system utilizes a _____ to assess worker performance.
5. _____ is the procedure of recording accurate employee performance information so that the director will not have to rely upon memory or recall to complete evaluation forms.
6. Employees usually have a right to appeal performance evaluation decisions. Such appeals are usually referred to as _____

(answers on page 49)

STRESS PREVENTION AND REDUCTION IN DAY CARE CENTERS

Stress on the job has become a predominant concern for agency and organizational administrators (Girdano and Everly, 1986). The direct and indirect consequences of stress can seriously affect work effectiveness. In day care centers where services involve young children's emotional and physical health, the consequences of employee stress are potentially alarming. The stressed employee, preoccupied with personal and occupational pressures, will find it difficult to perform his usual responsibilities in a conscientious manner. The "child-centered" attention of the stressed employee may become more "self-centered" and children's well-being will be threatened.

Presented here is an overview of stress, common definitions, a review of typical day care stressors, and methods to help you prevent or reduce stress in your center.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

Stress is generally defined as the reaction of one's body or mind to any perceived threat, pressure, or demand. A stressor is usually considered to be the source or cause of a "stress response" in the individual. Experiencing stress in moderate amounts can be motivating and stimulating for employees but becomes a problem when they become overstimulated or bombarded with excessive demands or pressures. High levels of stress are unhealthy and dangerous. Along with increased health risks, chronically stressed employees will exhibit signs of "occupational burn-out", a condition characterized by decreased job performance and increased job disinterest.

SOURCES OF STRESS IN DAY CARE CENTERS

Traditionally, there are two general sources of stress regarding the job environment: the personal or "self-oriented" characteristics of the individual, and the actual work environment which includes all those stressors unique to the particular job. Personally, you as well as all other individuals, must assume a degree of responsibility for the stress you experience. Consider the following individual qualities and how they will affect your proneness to stress:

1. **Personality**—Researchers have broadened their investigation of stressors to include personality factors. Most have concluded that the "Type-A" personality provides for increased stress vulnerability (Girdano and Everly, 1986). Type-A behavior individuals tend to be highly competitive, feel a sense of time urgency, require additional assignments prior to completing earlier ones, and express frustration when these behaviors are not possible. Day care directors with these traits are seemingly working under constant self-imposed demands and pressures, while often expecting similar behaviors from others.

2. **Life Events or Changes**—Change and adaptation are major contributors to any individual's stress response. You can only experience a limited amount of change, expected or unexpected, before stress symptoms develop. When you are forced to make adjustments in daily schedules, establish new or different priorities, and place other important concerns aside for the present time, you may eventually feel overwhelmed with change and adaptation. Marital or family concerns, legal or financial matters, and employment issues are among the many areas often requiring transition and adaptation.

3. Perception—Since each individual reacts to his environment in a unique way, situations which are stressful to one individual may not be stressful to another. Your proneness to stress will be influenced by the way in which you view work and its responsibilities. When you exaggerate or distort the importance of life's demands you will become more stressed. Believing that work responsibilities are the most important priorities in your life, and over-reacting to the events and problems associated with occupational roles will tend to create more stress.

In addition to these individual sources of stress, you will be exposed to a variety of stressors resulting from your role as director of the center:

1. Responsibility For Others—As a director, you assume a degree of responsibility for the job-related actions of your staff. While it is unrealistic to assume total control over the actions of others, you will often sense this responsibility. The behavior of day care employees will directly influence the lives of young children. When their actions are inappropriate or problematic, you are responsible for taking corrective actions.

2. Accountability—No other individual is more responsible for the center's success than you. The demands associated with your total responsibilities can become highly stressful. Budgetary or funding issues, development of policies and procedures, and personnel decisions are among the tasks for which you must be routinely accountable.

3. Responsibility With Little Control—Few stressors are more demanding than the experience of being responsible for something but having little control over it. Having the responsibility to conduct a quality child care program is usually affected by the constraints of limited funding, inadequate facilities, few materials and equipment, or limited training for employees. In most cases, you have no direct or immediate control over these conditions, even though they seriously influence successful and conscientious day care services.

You must also manage the stress associated with organizational or employment concerns. Within the day care center, there are working conditions which have a high likelihood of creating stress for employees. Centers having the following characteristics will be more likely to promote a stressful work environment:

1. Employee Feelings of Inequity—Stress is more likely to occur among day care employees when they have considerable responsibilities, excessive job demands, and long hours, with low returns for their conscientious performance.

2. Lack of Job Enrichment—When employees perform their responsibilities over long periods of time with little change in the routine, job disinterest may result. Centers offering little or no opportunities for job variety, increased work responsibilities, challenging tasks, or innovation and creativity in work assignments, encourage worker stress resulting from boredom and understimulation.

3. Limitations in Equipment and Materials—Budget problems usually create stress for you and your employees. Often, your program will have limited funds for materials and equipment. As supplies become obsolete, damaged or depleted, replacement costs are higher than budgets have allowed. When day care employees are motivated to perform their jobs in a quality manner, but cannot because of materials or equipment shortages, they become frustrated.

4. **Lack of Advancement or Promotion Opportunities**—Because of the relatively small size and funding limitations of many day care programs, it is improbable that employees will be advanced to positions of higher authority, responsibility, and salary. This condition, while perhaps unavoidable, may become stressful for the center employing achievement-oriented staff.

5. **Ambiguity**—When you or your supervisors express unclear expectations or directions, employees will likely experience confusion and anxiety. Such sources of ambiguity are stressful.

6. **Job-Employee Mismatch**—Day care center jobs aren't appropriate for everyone. Often, day care employees' personal interests or skills do not match those required by the work. It is stressful for the employee when he desires to perform well but is limited by inadequate or inappropriate skills.

RECOGNIZING THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Each day care employee will respond to stressful conditions differently. Some will react by exhibiting a variety of physiological symptoms: rapid pulse, tight muscles, headaches, backaches, nausea, fatigue or general anxiety. Others will respond by demonstrating such psychological characteristics as confusion, preoccupation, worrying, depression, anger or frustration. Behaviorally, stressed employees may begin to increase such negative personal habits as smoking, overeating or drinking. Additionally, the employee's customary work efficiency will begin to suffer and he may seem to lose interest in the job.

Just as stress affects employees on an individual basis, chronically stressful conditions will create problems for the day care center as a whole. Symptoms of "organizational stress" may include unusually high levels of sick leave, tardiness, unexplained absenteeism, staff turnover, motivation or morale problems, conflict, or general apathy among employees.

STRESS REDUCTION IN DAY CARE CENTERS

You must assume responsibility for identifying and addressing stress problems in your center. You should remain alert to stress symptoms in individual employees as well as those organizational signals which suggest that stress is affecting the day care center as a whole. The following practices can be helpful in reducing the personal stress associated with your supervisory role:

1. Learn to recognize physical and emotional responses to stress. Interpret these signals as evidence that stress is present in either low, moderate, or excessive levels. Be prepared to take action when warning signals are observed.
2. Set work and personal priorities by deciding what issues or responsibilities are most important at the present time. Avoid personal overloading by addressing relevant tasks one at a time. Be realistic regarding what can and cannot be accomplished.
3. Practice time management. Appropriate scheduling and sequencing of activities will help to alleviate your work overload. You should set aside time to arrange daily or weekly activities so that job requirements do not overlap.
4. Establish reasonable short and long-term plans. Be realistic about work plans and objectives without under-estimating your center's potential for growth and success.

5. Balance work and pleasure activities. The director who overindulges in work-related activities is more likely to develop stress symptoms. Schedule time for pleasurable and recreational activities. They serve as temporary escapes from the demands of your center.
6. Consider your personal fitness. Time should be scheduled for exercise and relaxation. Avoid overeating, smoking or drinking excessively.
7. Delegate responsibilities. When demands become overwhelming, select capable employees to assist with specific tasks or responsibilities.
8. Recognize that stress can represent an opportunity for you to do something creative. Accept stress and pressure as challenges to perform competently and more effectively than ever.
9. Do something nice for yourself. Reward your hard work and dedication by treating yourself to something pleasurable. You deserve it.

For organizational stress reduction:

1. Learn to recognize organizational symptoms of stress in your center. Assess the degree of stress and be prepared to make feasible adjustments to resolve stress problems.
2. Recognize stress problems in employees and provide support. Assist employees by recognizing their symptoms and taking responsible action.
3. Set clear, well-defined objectives for employees and be certain they are aware of specific job demands and responsibilities. Avoid ambiguous directions or job expectations by communicating clearly. Thoroughly orient all employees to their jobs.
4. When possible avoid excessive and unnecessary job demands of center employees. Overloading employees will add to their stress and may eventually contribute to performance problems.
5. Give feedback. Recognize that center employees want information regarding their performance and will more than likely improve performance in weak areas if given the opportunity. Recognize exceptional or outstanding employees.
6. When appropriate, encourage employees to participate in center decisions. Often, in lieu of financial or other material incentives, their participation in decision-making, policy development, or center problem-solving will increase their motivation.
7. Arrange job enrichment opportunities for staff by adding variety and unique responsibilities to employees' work assignments. Encourage opportunities for staff to participate in seminars, conferences, workshops, or in-service training to increase their occupational or personal competencies.
8. Keep employees aware. Changes should be introduced gradually when possible, and sudden, unexpected work transitions avoided.
9. Use authority firmly, but gracefully and fairly. Center employees should not feel oppressed or dominated. Allow employees to voice complaints or grievances in a constructive manner.

10. Resolve center conflicts or grievances quickly. Prevent the stress associated with personnel issues by developing procedures which act quickly and responsibly.

11. Avoid placing employees in day care positions for which they are untrained or disinterested. Use conscientious hiring practices to employ the most suitable candidate for the job.

SUMMARY

The ideas and suggestions presented here should serve to lessen the probability of stress problems in your day care center. While the stress of work and daily living is largely inescapable, conscientious stress prevention and reduction strategies can be successful in preventing the serious consequences of chronic stress. Emotionally and physically healthy day care directors and employees will tend to provide healthy environments and successful child care programs for young children.

ASSESSMENT STRESS PREVENTION AND REDUCTION

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ 1. a kind of stress prone personality | a. a series of reactions to any perceived threat |
| ___ 2. burn-out | b. Type-A |
| ___ 3. perception | c. the source or cause of stress |
| ___ 4. stress response | d. decreased work performance due to job disinterest and chronic stress |
| ___ 5. stressor | e. a unique quality in individuals which evaluates situations as stressful or not |

2. Answer a through d with True or False.

- a. ___ Stress is always negative and detrimental to maximum job performance.
- b. ___ Most employees will eventually become stressed if they receive little or no supervisory feedback.
- c. ___ It is probable that as a director, your actions or policies will have little to do with employee stress.
- d. ___ It is stressful for an individual when he/she has supervisory responsibilities for others.
3. _____ is the process of making jobs more exciting or interesting by adding variety and challenge.
4. _____ will usually result when day care employees perceive that what they receive from their jobs is too small relative to their efforts.
5. When your expectations or directions to staff are unclear, the stress due to _____ will often result.

(answers on page 49)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN DAY CARE CENTERS

Conflict usually occurs whenever incompatibility exists. Conflict between individuals and groups is inherent in all human relations, including those in work settings. The most traditional type of conflict results from an incompatibility between an organization's needs, goals, or directives, and the needs of employees. Conflicts are traditionally perceived negatively by supervisors or administrators since they often represent a "moment of truth", testing the organization's health and cohesiveness. Conflicts represent crises which may weaken the organization, create lasting resentment, hostility or antagonism. These potential consequences represent only the negative features of conflict, however, when realistically, there can be numerous positive features. Investigations have suggested that without conflict, many organizations become stagnant, inflexible and lacking innovative problem-solving (Johnson and Johnson, 1975). Conflict tends to promote quality decision-making from organizational leaders, fair supervisory policies and procedures, and constructive practices to identify and overcome weaknesses.

The ideas presented in this section offer you information regarding the potential sources of conflict in your center, a review of your role in resolving conflicts, a list of the skills or personal traits needed to deal with conflict, and a discussion of a problem-solving method to resolve conflicts in your center.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN DAY CARE CENTERS

The day care center, employing a combination of individuals, each with a unique personality, is no exception to the number of organizations often experiencing conflict. Involved, dedicated participation among day care employees and administrators will produce fairly regular conflicts, in spite of the relative cohesiveness within the center. Review the following descriptions of typical day care conflicts and consider the likelihood of their presence within your center:

1. Performance Problems Conflict—It is common that you and your employees will have different perceptions of how well they perform their jobs. Even the most reliable and valid performance appraisal system frequently results in at least moderate conflict when employees receive poor job evaluations.

2. Perceived Inequities—When day care employees feel that salaries, fringe benefits, job performance ratings, staff development opportunities, recognition or promotion, or the distribution of equipment and materials, have been offered unfairly, they will react in ways that promote conflict.

3. Interpersonal Conflicts—A frequent source of conflict in day care centers involves interpersonal relationships. Since each employee brings her unique attitudes, values, and behaviors to the job, conflict may eventually result when employees come together to perform their work activities.

4. Conflicts Over Center Policies and Procedures—As center director, you must often dictate and support various personnel policies and procedures. Because policies are often general, they often do not consider the special or unique situations employees may sometimes experience. In these cases, decisions based upon written policies or procedures may require your subjective interpretation. Employees will tend to disagree with your interpretations when your ultimate decision does not favor them. They will usually interpret identical policies in ways that benefit them most and conflict results.

5. **The Discontented Employee**—Certain employees will voice concern or opposition to center decisions, regardless of your intended fairness. These employees are usually less interested in their work and more interested in controversy. The discontented employee will usually complain or gripe about anything, as long as her reaction will create conflict.

THE ROLE OF THE DAY CARE CENTER DIRECTOR IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS

You should give as much attention as needed to resolve conflicts so that the provision of child care within your center will remain uninterrupted. Unresolved conflicts will lead to more widespread problems in the center and eventually the supervision and care of enrolled children will be affected. As director, no other center employee is more responsible for managing and resolving conflict than you. Consider the following conflict resolution practices or responsibilities when dealing with conflict in your center:

1. Recognize your responsibilities. Understand that as director, you must assume responsibility for identifying and resolving conflicts before they develop into widespread problems for the center.
2. Be prepared. Anticipate conflicts and be realistic about effective ways to resolve them. Design and implement procedures which accept and review employee grievances.
3. Understand that you will not always be able to resolve conflicts in ways that satisfy employees. While you should be concerned with changing unfair or discriminatory conditions, some sources of conflict cannot and should not be changed. When an employee's complaint is unrealistic, or it conflicts with the center's established policies, rules, or regulations, the conflict cannot simply be changed to the employee's satisfaction.
4. When conflict is limited to disputes between employees, become an unbiased mediator. Your primary interest is employee job performance and when conflict does not influence employee's work, you may wish to assume a more passive role. When child care services are affected by employee differences you should take action to guarantee a successful resolution.
5. Give adequate attention to imagined grievances or conflict. Even when an employee imagines unfair or discriminatory conditions, address the conflict conscientiously. Although the employee's concerns are not real or factual, performance may nevertheless suffer.
6. Conflicts should be over issues, not the persons involved. There should be nothing personal during conflict resolution practices. Parties involved in conflict should express their disagreements without expressing rejection of other parties.
7. Avoid conflicts of interest when resolving conflicts. Favoritism, loyalties, or social affiliations should not influence your decisions during conflict situations. When all parties perceive that they have been treated fairly, without bias, they will be more likely to accept the conditions of conflict settlement.
8. Communicate decisions carefully. Decisions regarding conflicts should be carefully communicated to employees, rather than suddenly forced upon them. Provide evidence that you carefully considered all sides prior to making a decision, and that you accepted input from all those involved.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Because your handling of conflicts will affect center morale, it is important to identify the traits or skills you will need to resolve conflicts. The following skill areas or conditions will be valuable to you when your center must deal with conflict situations (Robert, 1983):

1. Develop trust and credibility with all employees. When you are recognized as a fair, trustworthy leader, your decisions will have greater credibility with employees.
2. Manage conflicts calmly and confidently so that employees will be satisfied that you are competent and able to manage the situation in a productive, effective manner.
3. Develop effective conflict communication skills. The often biased views of employees involved in conflict situations may threaten honest attempts at effective communication. Active listening, assertion and confrontation tactics, empathic understanding, and persuasion strategies are among the most commonly required communication skills.
4. Use authority wisely to manage conflicts. Often, the underlying motivation of conflicts involves a challenge to authority. Employees will attempt to test your authority by opposing your decisions, views or policies. The director who responds to this challenge non-aggressively and tactfully will be more successful in resolving conflicts. Imposing inflexible and rigid decisions on employees, offering them little or no options, will likely create more conflict.
5. Practice effective problem-solving strategies. It seems that conflicts are usually perceived as contests to be either won or lost rather than as problems to be solved. As the most responsible party in a conflict situation, your greatest skill can be to assist employees to turn their conflicts into solvable problems. Resolving problems within your center should be rewarding to all employees, regardless of their original views concerning the conflict.
6. Be creative and innovative in resolving conflicts. The creative problem-solver will examine conflicts thoroughly and evaluate new or innovative ways of resolving them. Practicing creativity will encourage flexible solutions to conflicts while discouraging "one-way", rigid ideas. The use of "brainstorming", where many different ideas are presented in a short period of time, can be helpful in creatively resolving conflicts.
7. Manage anger and fear effectively. Directors should explore their personal vulnerability to these emotions and learn to deal positively with them. Allowing anger and fear to influence conflict resolution strategies will contribute to unfair, biased, decisions. Don't allow anger or fear in others to affect your emotional tone.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Employees and directors in conflict should develop a positive view regarding their differences. They should view conflicts as opportunities to resolve problems positively. You should encourage employees to believe that conflicts are natural and often lead to constructive center changes. Avoiding or denying that conflicts exist will usually serve to increase them.

As director, you should consider "problem-solving" methods of reducing conflicts rather than "win-lose" methods. In problem-solving methods, the objective of conflict resolution is to achieve an agreement most satisfying for all parties concerned. In win-lose strategies, the goal is to achieve a decision which is more favorable to one party than to another. An example of a problem-solving model of conflict resolution is included in Appendix J.

SUMMARY

This section of the manual has offered information regarding the successful resolution of conflicts within your center. The information has emphasized the importance of perceiving conflicts positively and managing them through problem-solving methods. Additionally, the information presented here has identified the typical conflicts you may expect to encounter in your center and the various responsibilities you will assume. A review of the general skills you will find useful during conflict situations is also included. Finally, the material emphasizes a problem-solving approach, rather than a win-lose approach to resolving conflicts.

ASSESSMENT

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Match the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. represent a "moment of truth" in organizations | a. brainstorming |
| _____ 2. perhaps the most common conflict | b. an employee's needs clash with the organization |
| _____ 3. when the director is biased toward friends or loyal to others during conflicts | c. "win-lose" methods of conflict resolution |
| _____ 4. the use of creative thinking to generate solutions to conflict | d. conflict situations |
| _____ 5. encourages competition and negative views of conflict | e. conflict of interest |

2. Answer a through d with True (T) or False (F).

- a. _____ Conflicts always represent negative conditions for the organization with little likelihood that positive consequences will follow.
 - b. _____ The day care director should ignore an employee's complaints when they are imagined or unreal.
 - c. _____ Some employees seem to create conflict just for the sake of having conflict.
 - d. _____ It is usually advisable for day care directors to play a passive, "wait and see" role during conflicts.
3. Conflict will usually occur when employees believe that resources or materials have been unfairly distributed. This perception leads to feelings of _____.
4. Conflicts should deal with _____, not _____.
5. Two of the most common emotions expressed during conflicts within organizations are _____ and _____.

(answers on page 49)

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYEES IN DAY CARE CENTERS

No other task will present you with a greater challenge than the termination, or dismissal, of an employee. Termination decisions have serious implications for your center, and obviously, for the employee. In most cases, dismissals represent a "last resort" strategy to relieve the center of a problem in which earlier remedial attempts have failed. While the implications of dismissal for the employee are obvious, there are significant considerations the center must face.

When an employee feels his rights have been violated, and unfair actions have contributed to the dismissal, the probability of legal action is increased. It seems that most groups of employees, minorities, women, and those in certain age categories, have been provided considerable legal protection from management's discriminatory practices. Since the Civil Rights Amendment of 1964, a number of congressional and Supreme Court decisions have acknowledged the rights of employees as individuals. Currently, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission effectively monitors employment practices to prevent inequities. Additionally, the National Labor Relations Board becomes an advocate for employees in certain situations when unfair practices have resulted in their termination. The implications of these "human rights" efforts are clear. You can no longer take lightly the decision to dismiss an employee.

IMPORTANCE OF POLICY

Prior to making the termination decision, it is important that your center develop written policies describing the various ways in which a center employee may lose his job. Dismissal policies should reflect the standards and guidelines devised by federal legislation and provide a clear set of rules governing termination actions. In day care centers, licensing regulations require that such policies are included in personnel policies. Not only should center policies be developed and followed, it is important that employees become familiar with them. During orientation or probationary periods, employees should receive and examine copies of termination policies along with other relevant information (see Appendix A). Make every attempt to avoid a dismissed employee truthfully saying, "No one ever told me about the ways I could lose my job."

COMMON REASONS FOR DISMISSAL

While the decision to dismiss an employee can be a difficult one, you should not neglect your responsibilities to take appropriate action when justified. There are several situations when termination is the most valid alternative:

1. **Gross Misconduct on the Job**—Employees who commit blatant violations of day care policies can be dismissed for their actions. In day care settings examples of misconduct include: abuse or neglect of children, improper care or supervision of children, refusal to work, misuse of day care funds and equipment, or illegal activities. Some misconduct problems are more serious than others and your center must, at its discretion, decide which will warrant termination action.

2. **Chronic Performance Problems**—Written in the job description for each day care center employee is a set of minimum performance expectations. When an employee continually exhibits a reluctance or inability to perform according to these expectations, dismissal may be considered. Poor work habits such as continual tardiness, absenteeism, difficulty following directions, abuse of center time schedules, and inability to complete child care tasks in a competent manner, are typical performance problems which may lead to dismissal.

3. Dismissal Due to Economic Difficulties—Decisions to terminate employees are frequently the consequences of poor financial conditions within the center. These dismissals are usually referred to as layoffs. The critical issue regarding layoffs is deciding who should be dismissed. Traditionally, the length of employment, importance of the position to the center, and the employee's job performance have influenced this decision. When layoffs are being considered, review the following guidelines:

- a. Be certain the layoffs are necessary and other cost reduction measures are less feasible.
- b. Determine the specific conditions you will use to decide which employees to dismiss.
- c. You should be able to provide evidence that your decisions are based upon relevant, job-related characteristics.
- d. Each employee should be aware of layoff policies and how decisions are made.

MAKING THE TERMINATION DECISION

Regardless of the nature of the termination, you should have a very good reason for dismissing an employee, and documented information to support your decision. Terminating employees because of "personality conflicts" or "bad attitudes" is difficult to verify. Before making the termination decision, you must prepare for it by clearly going over your reasons. Determine whether the center has adequately prepared the employee for her work. You should be careful not to allow emotions to interfere with sound judgement. Remain calm and follow established procedures. Remember, spending time getting adequately prepared to dismiss an employee may prevent time spent later on if legal action results.

A frequent issue regarding dismissal decisions is who is responsible for firing. Generally, in day care centers, you must play the most active role. As centers vary in size and structure, they will have different organizational qualities and you may have an executive director or owner who may assist you.

THE TERMINATION INTERVIEW

When the dismissal decision has been made and the documentation completed, you are ready for perhaps the most difficult step, the termination interview. The interview can be an extremely demanding procedure, even for the most experienced director. While the task will not be easy, there are some suggestions which may be of use to you (Jensen, 1981):

1. Consider the time of the interview. Schedule the appointment at a time when the employee may leave the center for the day.
2. Announce your decision in the beginning of the interview. Hesitation on your part may indicate indecision.
3. Be direct, but considerate and understanding.
4. Give precise, well documented reasons for the dismissal.
5. Listen to the employee's response, but do not become defensive or argumentative.
6. Make no reference to unrelated factors as reasons for termination. Use your documented evidence.

7. Anticipate questions the employee may ask. Remember, be well prepared.
8. Describe information related to termination pay, notice of leave arrangements, employee benefits, and other considerations.
9. Be confident. Understand you are performing a necessary function and all other alternatives have been explored.
10. Keep the interview relatively brief. Thirty minutes should be enough time.
11. Indicate that you will follow the interview with a written notice of termination.
12. Assure the employee that you will do what is necessary and appropriate to make his transition as easy as possible.
13. Arrange a second meeting if necessary.

SUMMARY

The termination decision is a complex, difficult one and there are important implications for the employee and center as well. Nevertheless, there are situations when you must take action. Presented here are the various situations which contribute to dismissal decisions and several guidelines you should consider for each situation. Developing sound policies, communicating them to employees, and applying them in appropriate situations are a few of the important tasks you must consider.

ASSESSMENT

TERMINATION

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. person most responsible for dismissal decision | a. licensing regulations |
| _____ 2. ensures that terminations are non-discriminatory | b. day care director |
| _____ 3. requires the center to have termination policies in place | c. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission |
| _____ 4. results from economic problems in the center | d. legal action |
| _____ 5. often results from poor dismissal decisions | e. layoff |

2. Answer a through d with True (T) or False (F).

- a. _____ When dismissing an employee, the final meeting should last as long as the employee wants.
- b. _____ Using personality conflicts as reasons to terminate an employee is good practice
- c. _____ An employee should never be dismissed because he does not have the skills to do the job.
- d. _____ Termination notice should rarely come as a surprise to the employee.

3. Gross misbehavior on the job is referred to as _____

4. Each day care center should have _____ to inform employees of termination practices and procedures.

5. The final meeting, in which the director informs the employee of a dismissal decision, is referred to as a _____

(answers on page 49)

ANSWERS TO ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

1. 1-d, 2-c, 3-a, 4-e, 5-b; 2. a-F, b-F, c-T; 3. personal worth; 4. performance rating method; 5. documentation; 6. grievances.

STRESS PREVENTION AND REDUCTION REVIEW

1. 1-b, 2-d, 3-e, 4-a, 5-c; 2. a F, b-T, c-F, d-T; 3. job enrichment; 4. feelings of inequity; 5. ambiguity.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION REVIEW

1. 1-d, 2-b, 3-e, 4-a, 5-c; 2. a-F, b-F, c-T, d-F; 3. inequity; 4. issues, people; 5. anger, fear.

TERMINATION REVIEW

1. 1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-e, 5-d; 2. a-F, b-F, c-F, d-T; 3. misconduct; 4. dismissal policies; 5. termination interview.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

By Norma Gray, Ed.D.

While less than one percent of the reported cases of child sexual abuse have involved child care providers, the focus on these cases by the media has caused the general public to view child care with suspicion. Parents are concerned about leaving their children in child care, and many caregivers are leaving the profession because of an increased sense of vulnerability. The best method of reducing the risk of child abuse in day care settings is the maintenance of high quality programs for children.

As a day care center director, you have an obligation to assure the safety of the children in your center, as well as the responsibility of helping staff understand how to protect themselves from allegations of child abuse. There is apparently a problem of abuse in the day care setting, but this chapter includes some suggestions on how to improve your center's program, thereby reducing the risk of abuse. It offers ideas on dealing with complaints from parents and staff. This chapter also describes what to expect if an allegation of child abuse is made against your center. Information on physical abuse, emotional abuse, and child sexual abuse will be discussed.

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE THROUGH QUALITY PROGRAMMING

There is no one solution to preventing child abuse, but there are a number of policies and practices which can be initiated to discourage potential child abusers from being present in your center and to help build a trusting relationship between parents and staff. Several of these policies and practices have already been discussed in the previous chapters. They include:

- Conducting a thorough search for qualified staff;
- Requiring a criminal record check on employees;
- Employing nurturing and knowledgeable staff;
- Providing adequate job orientation and training;
- Facilitating a cooperative team effort among your staff;
- Offering staff an ongoing evaluation/improvement process;
- Using stress reduction techniques; and
- Terminating inappropriate staff.

The remaining suggestions aimed at eliminating the potential for child abuse will be incorporated in the following two categories: (1) prevention through policies and practices, and (2) prevention through education.

PREVENTION THROUGH POLICIES AND PRACTICES

In most day care centers, program or operating policies are usually developed through tradition and tend to be relayed verbally. This practice often leads to misunderstandings. Program policies are implemented more effectively when they are developed by those who are directly involved in the daily operations of the center and when they are written so that misinterpretations are not passed on to new employees. These policies should be reviewed and updated periodically by staff.

Only those policies and practices which are considered most important in preventing child abuse will be discussed in this section. These include discipline, touching, staffing, staff breaks, security of the center facility, and an open door policy for parents.

1. **Discipline policy**—A written policy specifying the discipline techniques which are acceptable in your center should be developed by you and your staff. Involving all staff in this process will increase their awareness of appropriate discipline and help ensure that these policies will be followed.

The policy should clearly state that physical, emotional, or sexual abuse will not be tolerated. Bates and Koskie (1985) suggest that the discipline policy should include "... statements about:

- the purpose of discipline
- who will discipline
- how you will discipline (specific techniques)
- under what conditions discipline will be called for
- what is enough discipline
- who will make the decisions about discipline."

The *West Virginia Licensing Requirements for Day Care Centers* specifies that discipline should take into consideration the child's developmental level and should not be "... out of proportion to the particular inappropriate behavior." It notes that the primary purpose of discipline should be to help children gain self-control and learn to accept responsibility for their behavior. In developing your policy, refer to the discipline requirements as outlined in the licensing regulations included in Appendix K.

The discipline policy should be explained to parents before they enroll their children in the center and included in the parents' handbook or information packet. Parents should also be informed about the licensing regulations concerning discipline. If a particular child has difficulty in controlling aggressive/destructive behavior, the plan of disciplinary action should be shared with and approved by the parents. By being open with the parents on all discipline issues, there will be fewer misunderstandings and parents will be more comfortable in approaching you when they have a complaint.

It is also suggested by Bates and Koskie that a specific discipline plan be developed for any child who has a behavior problem and that a log be kept on how and when the child was disciplined, who did the disciplining and what the results were.

2. Touch policy—A great many day care center staff today are confused about whether there should be any physical contact with the children they teach. They know that most young children need occasional hugging and cuddling in order to feel secure and loved and that many preschoolers also need assistance in toileting and dressing, yet they are afraid that these touches might be misunderstood by others. In order to alleviate the fears of both parents and staff, you may want to develop a written policy on touching.

There is no question that appropriate touching is a vital ingredient in fostering the development of young children. Maur and Pekor (1985) note that "... nurturance helps to create and sustain the trusting relationships which enable children to feel secure and to become ..." independent. A written policy on touching helps staff clarify what kind of touches are appropriate and, as Bates and Koskie point out, sharing the policy with parents "... puts the burden of acceptance or nonacceptance on the parents' shoulders." It also shows parents that you are aware of their concerns and are acting in a responsible manner to reduce any anxiety on their part.

A touch policy should state how, when and where children will be touched by staff. For instance, if your staff helps some children rest at naptime by patting backs or stroking the head or arms, the policy should be specific. It should also note who will have the responsibility of changing diapers and assisting children in the bathroom and exactly what the process will be. If diapering and toileting takes place in an area that is not easily viewed by other adults, you may not want to give these tasks to volunteers. Unfortunately, males and teenagers are most susceptible to being accused of child sexual abuse, and it may be in their best interests to release them from diapering and toileting responsibilities. Another way to protect children and staff would be to require that no one person be alone in the bathroom with children when the door is closed.

3. Staffing—In order to further protect children and staff, it would be advisable to have a policy that no adult is alone with a child anywhere on the day center site unless in full view of others. If it is at all possible, it would be best to always have at least two adults with any group of children. Staff should never be allowed to take children off the premises without the signed permission of the parents.

4. Staff breaks—Staff who work full time should have a half-hour break each day and half-time employees should have a fifteen minute break. Many times staff will choose not to take a break because there is so much to be done in the classroom, but it is your responsibility to insist that they have some time away from the children. Child care is an extremely demanding job, and many times staff do not recognize the symptoms of stress within themselves until they lose control. By being alert to signs of frustration or burn-out among the staff and making certain that they have some time away from the children, you will help prevent possible emotional and/or physical abuse in your center.

5. Securing the center facility—The space inside and outside the day care center should be arranged so that all areas are open to view. (The ideal facility would have observation rooms for all classrooms.) Make it a practice to walk through the building and grounds at least once a week to check for secluded areas that need to be eliminated. Storage rooms are especially prone to having hidden nooks and crannies.

Keep the building and grounds secure at all times. If children must leave the classroom for the restroom or water fountain, the classroom and restroom doors should be kept open and the outside doors to the building should be locked. When day care centers are located within churches or other buildings open to the public, staff should be especially alert to the possibility of persons entering the building who might harm a child. If you have a storage building outside, keep it locked and limit the availability of the key.

A child should never be allowed to leave the center with anyone other than the parent or person authorized by the parent. Children should be brought to and from the classroom by the parents, rather than left at the front door or in the reception area or playground.

6. Open door policy—Parents should be welcome to visit the center at any time, with or without prior notice. Inviting parents to drop in during the day or to eat lunch or volunteer for a special project will help parents understand that you have nothing to hide. Sometimes staff think that parents dropping by whenever they want is disruptive to the program, but this interruption is a small price to pay for the assurance the parents receive from occasionally monitoring their children's care.

Keep parents informed of their children's progress and the daily events in the center. This communication can be a casual remark when the parents pick up their children, or a note or telephone call, a periodic newsletter or a notice on the parents' bulletin board. Conferences with parents should also be held twice each year.

PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION

A publication on child sexual abuse by the Department of Health and Human Services, Region X, points out that education is the cornerstone of prevention. Parents, staff and children should be educated about the potential for child abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) and ways to help prevent its occurrence. In this section, suggestions will be offered on the issues considered to be the most important in educating staff, parents and young children.

1. Educating staff—Staff should be made aware of the law on mandatory reporting. It is required that child abuse be reported to the Department of Human Services, regardless of who might be seen abusing a child.

2. Educating parents—Parents should be made aware of the policies and practices which have been initiated to protect the children in your center from physical, emotional and sexual abuse. They need to be apprised of the curriculum you will be using to teach the children about appropriate touching. It would also be helpful to have a child development specialist, psychologist or pediatrician discuss normal sexual development of young children at one of the parent meetings. Parents should be informed about signs of abuse and how to report suspected abuse.

3. Educating children—Teaching children how to help protect themselves from sexual abuse is a sensitive issue and one which should be approached with caution. It is important that they do not become fearful of all strangers, and it is crucial that the task of protection from abuse is not made the primary responsibility of the children.

The curriculum used with the children should help them understand about different kinds of touching and the importance of telling others if they are touched in inappropriate ways. Preschool children have difficulty generalizing, so they may not be able to process the assertive skills needed to resist abuse. They can learn to say "no," but if they should fail to escape abuse, they should not be made to feel at fault. The curriculum should be integrated with other units on safety and should be taught by the regular staff. Inviting specialists in child abuse prevention to discuss this safety issue calls special attention to the topic, which is not necessary. Children will also be more comfortable discussing touching with staff than with strangers.

HANDLING CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY PARENTS AND STAFF

By implementing sound policies and practices and communicating these to parents and staff, you will prevent many misunderstandings and complaints about the care children receive at your center. However, complaints can never be entirely eliminated. Therefore, it would be advisable to develop a plan for responding to concerns when they are expressed. This section will offer suggestions for dealing with complaints from both parents and staff.

CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY PARENTS

Parents will often come to you because of concern over an unexplained bruise or bump or something their child said. Most of the time these complaints are minor and are due to misunderstandings or lack of communication between staff and parents. It is essential that you take all concerns seriously and investigate them diligently. Any complaints alleging child abuse/neglect must be reported immediately to the Department of Human Services (both the area Child Protective Services and state Licensing units). Inform the president of your Board of Directors about any allegations involving child abuse/neglect.

Implementing the following procedure can help build a trusting relationship between you and the parents:

1. Listen objectively and document information.
2. Don't be defensive.
3. Agree to investigate immediately and make an appointment with the parent for another meeting (no later than the following day) to inform the parent of the progress you've made.
4. Talk with staff individually. Ask open-ended questions and document all information collected.
5. Observe in the classroom where the incident is alleged to have taken place.
6. If the complaint is substantiated, you must decide whether to give the employee another chance, suspend the person temporarily, or terminate employment immediately. Your decision should be based on the nature and severity of the incident.
7. Meet with the parent and share the information you have gathered.
8. Follow-up with occasional meetings with the parent until the complaint is resolved.
9. If the complaint is not substantiated and evidence is inconclusive, promise the parent to be alert to his concerns and ask for his cooperation.

CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY STAFF

If a staff person tells you that a co-worker is using harsh disciplinary methods or behaving inappropriately with the children, this report should be investigated immediately, even if you suspect that the report is a retaliatory action by the reporting staff person. Any complaints alleging child abuse/neglect must be reported immediately to the Department of Human Services (both the area Child Protective Services and state Licensing units). Inform the president of your Board of Directors about any allegations involving child abuse/neglect.

The following procedure is suggested for dealing with concerns expressed by staff:

1. **Document**—Write the details of the alleged incident as they are reported to you, noting who is reporting, the date, the person who is being accused, the child or children involved, the date(s) and time of day it occurred, and specific details of the incident. Determine if there were other adult witnesses.

2. **Interview others**—If there were other staff working at the time of the alleged incident, interview them individually, using open-ended questions. Be careful not to ask leading questions.

3. **Talk privately with the accused**—Schedule a private conference with the accused, reveal the report you have received (but not the reporter), and ask the person to respond to the accusation. If the staff person agrees that the incident occurred, try to determine if it was a one-time occurrence. Be aware that people often deny that they harmed a child or will lie about the circumstances and try to place the blame on someone else.

4. **Make a decision**—On the basis of the information you receive, you will have to decide whether to continue your investigation, give the person another chance, suspend the person temporarily or terminate employment immediately.

5. **Follow up**—If the accused denies any wrongdoing and there are no other witnesses, the director should observe the employee's classroom on a regular basis, documenting details of the observations.

HANDLING OUTSIDE INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Sometimes complaints of abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, will be made directly to the Department of Human Services or the police. In every instance of alleged abuse, whether physical, emotional or sexual abuse, the director should first and foremost be an advocate for the child. This section will describe what to expect in an investigation of child abuse by the Department of Human Services or the police and suggest ways to handle outside investigations. Advice about responding to the media concerning child abuse allegations will also be offered.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

If your center or a staff member is investigated following a complaint of child abuse or neglect, consider the following suggestions:

1. Don't be defensive. If a child has been abused, it is crucial to find out who the abuser is.
2. Cooperate fully in the investigation. Answer all questions factually. Allow the investigator to see any relevant records.
3. Ask to be allowed to inform staff about the allegation before they are interviewed separately.
4. Ask to be allowed to observe during the questioning process so that you can make decisions more expeditiously.

5. Inform your Board of the allegation. Ask for assistance in staffing to facilitate questioning of staff and to ensure that more than one adult will be with each group of children.
6. Document every phase of the investigation.
7. If you or your Board conduct a separate investigation, it is suggested that you talk with any adults who may have witnessed the alleged abuse. Interview them individually, using open-ended questions. Be careful not to ask leading questions. Record all information collected.

Then schedule a private conference with the alleged abuser; reveal the report you have received (but not the reporter), and ask the person to respond to the accusation. Be aware that abusers will usually deny that they harmed a child or will lie about the circumstances and try to place the blame on someone else. If the staff person agrees that the incident occurred, you should immediately suspend or terminate that employee.

Keep the law enforcement and/or Child Protective Services and Licensing authorities apprised of your findings.

8. The Licensing unit generally requests that the staff person who has been accused of abuse be suspended or removed from contact with children until the Child Protective Services and/or police investigation is complete. If the report of abuse is substantiated, the employee must be terminated.
9. The decision whether to notify specific parents or all parents will be made by the Licensing and Child Protective Services staff. If all parents are notified, it would be advisable to have a parent meeting with staff and Board members in attendance, so that the issues could be fully discussed. It would be helpful to have a specialist in abuse prevention and the investigators present to answer parents' questions.
10. Keep parents, staff and Board updated on the status and the final outcome of the investigation.
11. Be prompt in taking whatever action is necessary throughout the investigation.
12. If the outcome of the investigation results in an adverse licensing action by the Department of Human Services, your center has the right to appeal the decision and request a hearing. Refer to the administrative hearing procedure in the *West Virginia Licensing Requirements for Day Care Centers*.

RESPONDING TO MEDIA ABOUT ALLEGATIONS

If you are approached by reporters from any of the media, it will not help your situation to deny that an allegation has been made. Make a brief statement to the effect that a complaint of abuse has been filed, that the Board and staff are cooperating fully in the investigation, and that when the investigation is completed a statement will be made concerning the outcome. You may want to request an attorney's advice at this time. You cannot keep the reporters from interviewing parents, but if a trusting relationship has been established between the center staff and the parents, it is likely that the parents will support you during this crisis.

ASSESSMENT

ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

1. List at least ten ways you can help prevent child abuse from occurring in your center.

2. Check each of the actions listed below which would be appropriate in responding to an allegation of child abuse against your center.

- A. Defend all your staff and volunteers when an accusation is made. Your reputation is at stake.
- B. Cooperate fully with investigators.
- C. Insist that investigators give you proof of abuse before you answer any questions.
- D. Close the center down rather than have staff go through the ordeal of an investigation.
- E. Try to keep the investigation a secret from the parents and community. What they don't know won't hurt you.
- F. Stand by your staff, regardless of any evidence presented. They will think you are disloyal, if you don't.
- G. Inform your Board immediately of any allegation, although it may cost you your job.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Personnel Policies

CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC.

POLICY MANUAL

Employment Policy

It is the policy of Children's Place, Inc., not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, national origin, age, and marital status. Physical or mental handicaps will be considered only as they may relate to bona fide job requirements.

This policy not to discriminate includes, but is not limited to, recruitment-advertising, process of application for employment, promotion, termination, wages, job assignments, leaves of absence, including provisions for maternity leave, fringe benefits, training programs, employer sponsored programs, and any other terms, condition or privileges of employment.

All positions are advertised in the local newspaper in the area where the position is available. Applications of qualified persons who apply when no position is available or who are among the top candidates for a job but are not selected are kept in the active file for one year and may be contacted for an interview when an appropriate position is available.

All staff who meet position qualifications are notified about available positions before advertising outside the agency. If a position is filled within the agency, it will not be advertised outside the agency. Substitutes shall be treated as all other staff when positions become available. If internal applicants are not best qualified, they will be told why before an offer is made to an outside candidate.

No commitments of staff transfers or employment may be made without the approval of the executive director. (Exception: the executive director position will be filled by the Board of Directors.) The supervisor(s) (director, teacher) of prospective employees will be asked for input in employment decisions.

There are three classifications of employees: probationary, regular, and substitute.

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE

New employees of Children's Place, Inc., are employed for a probationary period of six months. During this time a decision is made on eligibility for regular employee status. The purpose of the probationary period is to determine through actual practice if the employee has the necessary qualifications for the position to which she/he has been assigned.

REGULAR EMPLOYEE

Regular employees are full or part-time employees who have served the probationary period and are given a contract for a specified length of time.

SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYEE

Substitute employees are paid by the hour and work only specified hours or days as replacement for staff or when extra workers are needed.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Licensing Regulations require that an employee have a physical exam every two years. A report from the physician must be submitted to the center director at the time of employment and every two years thereafter.

All employees must have a time test every two years. Results and date of test must be filed with the center director.

All employees who work directly with children must receive eight hours of training in first-aid.

SALARY POLICY

The Board of Directors determines the salary schedule for each fiscal year, based on recommendations of the executive director. Salary increases are automatically in effect at the beginning of the fiscal year, if staff moves from one level to another through additional experience and/or education. The salary schedule is based on the following employee qualifications:

Level A Aide—Less than 2 years paid experience working with young children in a supervised program.

Level B Aide—2 years or more paid experience working with children in a supervised program.

Associate Teacher—2 or more years paid experience working with young children and in position of sole responsibility for planning and implementing program in classroom.

Level A Cook—Less than 2 years experience working as paid cook.

Level B Cook—2 years or more experience working as paid cook.

Level A Custodian—Less than 2 years experience working as paid custodian.

Level B Custodian—2 years or more experience working as paid custodian.

Level A Teacher—Less than 2 years paid working experience with young children, with a 2-year degree in day care or child development or 4-year degree in early childhood, home economics, or elementary education.

Level B Teacher—2 year degree in day care or child development or 4-year degree in early childhood, home economics or elementary education and two or more years working experience with young children.

Level A Social Worker—4-year degree in social work, counseling or sociology with less than 2 years paid work experience in social work or counseling.

Level B Social Worker—4-year degree in social work, counseling or sociology with 2 or more years paid experience as social worker or counselor.

Level A Secretary—Less than 2 years paid experience as typist, clerk or secretary.

Level B Secretary—2 or more years paid experience as typist, clerk, or secretary with position which includes bookkeeping responsibilities.

PAY CHECKS

Employees are paid by check bi-weekly on Friday. Each pay period covers 10 working days from Thursday of one work week through Wednesday of the third work week. The number of hours or days paid each pay period is based on time card records.

DEDUCTIONS

The Center is required by law to withhold certain deductions from gross salary, including:

- a. Social Security Tax
- b. Federal Withholding Tax (at a rate determined by the number of dependents claimed by the employee)
- c. State Withholding Tax (at a rate determined by the number of dependents claimed by the employee).

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Worker's Compensation insurance compensates employees for medical expenses resulting from job-related accidents. Forms to apply for Worker's Compensation are available from the secretary and must be filed within 24 hours of an accident.

Unemployment insurance is paid for every employee.

HOLIDAYS

The Center is closed for ten holidays each year: July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following day, three days at Christmas, New Year's Day, Friday before Easter, and Memorial Day.

SICK/EMERGENCY DAYS

Sick/emergency days are to be used when personal and/or family illness prevents an employee from coming to work, or for emergencies. Emergency is defined as "beyond your control," such as going to testify in court, or when home is burglarized or damaged by fire or flood, or in case of the death of a family member.

A total of ten sick/emergency days is available for the year. Probationary and regular employees earn one-half sick/emergency day each bi-weekly pay period until ten days have been earned for the fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). No sick/emergency time is earned during the first bi-weekly pay period after employment, if employee works less than ten working days. Sick/emergency days cannot be used until earned.

Employees are expected to notify the center director or their immediate supervisor as soon as the need to be absent is known, so that substitutes can be secured. Failure to contact the director or supervisor will result in loss of pay for the absence as well as loss of sick leave.

In making use of the sick/emergency days, staff are expected to function professionally. These days should be used only for sickness or for approved emergency leave. Abuse of this policy will be reason for termination of employment.

Earned sick days unused at the end of the fiscal year (June 30) will be carried over to the next year up to a maximum of 30 days. If the employee accrues more than 30 unused sick leave days, she/he may use up to 50% of the days over the 30 accrued days for paid vacation days, upon request.

ABSENCES BEYOND EARNED TIME

Employees who have used all earned vacation and/or sick leave days may only be absent due to personal illness and this time will be without pay. In case of absence without pay due to illness which extends beyond three days, employee must request leave of absence.

Employees absent without permission are subject to immediate termination.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Employees may request a leave of absence without pay due to ill health, if all vacation (paid or unpaid), and sick leave days have been used. Request must be made to the director, and a letter from the employee's physician as to the employee's need for extended leave must be submitted. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Employees may request leave of absence without pay for educational or personal reasons, once all vacation has been used. Each request will be considered on its own merit with consideration as to whether or not the absence will jeopardize the program.

MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees of one year or longer employment who want to apply for a maternity/paternity leave without pay may submit a written request to the executive director. All sick/emergency leave and paid or unpaid vacation must be used before leave becomes effective. Leave may be granted up to a maximum of three months. Each case will be considered on its own merit.

ANNUAL LEAVE

The number of paid vacation days for employees shall be based on the number of years service with Children's Place. Employees with less than five years service with Children's Place shall earn vacation at the rate of one-half day every bi-weekly pay period to a total of ten days annually. The director and employees with five or more years service with Children's Place shall earn vacation at the rate of one-half day every bi-weekly pay period to a total of twelve days annually. Persons employed less than twenty hours per week do not earn paid vacation days.

Accrued vacation must be used within a year, and should be requested at least two weeks in advance. In granting vacation, seniority will prevail should there be a problem in staffing the Center. Seniority is defined as length of employment, not position. No more than ten vacation days can be accrued at any time.

WORKING HOURS

A full-time employee works forty hours a week. A half-time employee works twenty hours a week. A part-time employee may be employed for one to seven hours daily.

All full-time employees receive a 30 minute break each day.

All half-time employees receive a 15 minute break each day. A part-time employee who works 5 to 7 hours daily receives a 20 minute break and one who works less than 4 hours daily receives no planned break.

LUNCH COST

All employees who are required to eat lunch with the children will receive lunch at no cost. All employees who are not required to eat lunch with the children may eat lunch from the kitchen at the cost of \$1.00 per day.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Each beginning employee must successfully complete a six-month probationary period before being considered a regular employee. The purpose of the probationary period is to determine through actual practice if the employee has the qualifications necessary for the position to which she/he has been assigned.

Persons who have worked as substitutes for Children's Place before being employed as a probationary employee are eligible to serve a shorter probationary period if they have been employed in daily continuous employment. Daily continuous employment as a substitute at Children's Place will be credited by the hour up to 480 hours (12 weeks). For example, a person who has substituted every day for 4 weeks will receive 4 weeks (or 160 hours) credit toward the probationary period. If the substitute has missed work due to illness or personal reasons, at an average rate of no more than 2 days per month, those hours will be subtracted from the hours credited toward the probationary period.

Within two weeks in a new position the center director and/or teacher will arrange an orientation program. During the orientation, the short form and long form evaluations will be discussed.

The supervisor will complete the short form evaluation when the new employee has worked one month (or less than a month, if needed). The short form evaluation can be used as often as is necessary during the probationary period, but must always be followed by a conference with the employee concerning the evaluation. The employee should establish a plan, in writing, to improve job performance.

Before the end of the six-month probationary period, the supervisor and the employee must complete the long form evaluation on the employee's job performance. The evaluation will be discussed and goals set for the next six months. The short and long form evaluations may be used as often as needed.

During the probationary period, serious concerns may result in dismissal, as outlined in the Termination Policy.

While on probation, employees are paid for any holidays observed by the Center and accrue sick/emergency days (and vacation days, if paid vacation is due).

EVALUATION PROCESS FOR REGULAR EMPLOYEES

All employees will receive consistent and constructive information concerning their job performance. Every staff member will be required to complete a self-evaluation and be evaluated by the immediate supervisor on a regular basis.

After the six-month probationary period (during which an employee is evaluated at least twice), the employee is again evaluated after six months, and then once a year thereafter. More frequent evaluation can occur, if necessary.

The employee and supervisor will have an evaluation conference to discuss the written evaluation and to set goals for improving future job performance.

Evaluations of staff members will not be kept on file longer than one year, unless an employee requests that particular evaluations be kept on file. In the event that an employee leaves, the last evaluation will be kept in the inactive personnel file.

RESIGNATION

If an employee intends to resign, a letter of resignation should be submitted to the executive director no later than two weeks before the departure date.

TERMINATION

Gross violations of the following professional standards and policies can result in immediate termination:

1. Abuse and/or neglect of a child or children. According to our policy, abuse includes physical abuse (such as slapping, hitting, pinching or shaking child), and emotional abuse (such as screaming at child, threatening to physically punish or to withhold meals, or verbally demeaning child). Neglect includes leaving child/children without adequate supervision.
2. Inability to function normally on the job because of an alcohol and/or drug related problem.
3. Stealing money or property belonging to Center, staff, clients or visitors.
4. Lying to Center staff, clients or others which results in causing trouble to others.
5. Absence without permission.
6. Insubordination.
7. Failure to perform at or above level of competence according to job performance evaluation.

In the event of unsatisfactory job performance, the supervisor must meet at least twice with the employee in question to discuss the problem area prior to termination. The two (or more) conferences must take place within a two-week to one-month period. Each conference must be documented by a memorandum to the employee, with a copy sent to the center director and/or executive director.

This insures that an employee will not be dismissed without an opportunity to improve his/her job performance. If an employee is terminated or suspended, his/her recourse is to make a written appeal to the grievance committee.

In a situation of unsatisfactory job performance in which repeated conferences with the employee in question have been held (six or more conferences within a four-month period), and the employee alternately improves and regresses in satisfactory job performance, the employee may be dismissed if memorandums covering evaluation conference note specific instances of unsatisfactory job performance were discussed in a majority of the conferences during a four-month period.

In cases where termination is due to decrease in funds, every attempt will be made to give at least two weeks notice including unused vacation days. The order of termination shall take into consideration position, seniority, importance of position to the continuance of services, and job performance.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A grievance may be defined as an unresolved problem, as a result of which the employee feels a sense of injustice or unfairness for which she/he seeks redress.

Because of poor communication, misunderstandings may occur in many work situations. If, for any reason, you feel you are not being treated fairly, or if you have other problems or complaints, you should think through your problem(s) and talk frankly with your supervisor and/or others concerned.

If the above steps are taken and the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, it is then considered to be a grievance and you have the right to initiate a grievance procedure as outlined below.

If you initiate a grievance in good faith, such action on your part should cast no reflection on your loyalty or ability as an employee. It should have no effect on your standing with your supervisors. At the same time, your grievance should cast no reflection on your supervisor.

1. When a grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily in a meeting with your supervisor, you should write your concerns to the executive director, giving problem, date you met with your supervisor, outcome of the meeting, and your present dissatisfaction.
2. The executive director will immediately schedule a meeting alone with you to discuss the matter.
3. Following this meeting, the executive director will talk with the supervisor about the grievance.
4. After talking with the supervisor, the executive director will arrange a meeting with the supervisor and you.
5. If the meeting in step four was not resolved to your satisfaction, you should send a letter to the chairperson of the Children's Place, Inc., Board of Directors explaining the situation and stating your grievance. A hearing date will be scheduled with the grievance committee and you will be notified at least one week in advance of the hearing. If you do not appear, the request will be considered null and void. If extenuating circumstances prevent your attendance at the hearing, you may request another hearing, but the committee will have the right to decide whether the circumstances merit granting this request. You may bring an advocate with you to the grievance hearing. Also present will be your supervisor and the executive director and any employee the supervisor and director may request to attend. The grievance committee will make the ultimate decision in all appeals. You will be notified of that decision by certified mail.

RESTRICTIONS

1. Grievance procedure must be initiated within ten working days after your meeting with the supervisor. (This means that the letter to the director must be delivered or mailed no later than ten working days after the meeting.)
2. The director must schedule a meeting with you immediately. (There is no time restriction except as outlined above.)

DRESS CODE

Dress should be neat and informal, with an emphasis on good grooming, rather than style. Since it is necessary to be able to move quickly when working with young children, restrictive clothing such as high heels, tight skirts, or pants that drag the floor, should be avoided. Pants and jeans are acceptable, as long as they are clean and in good repair. Shorts may be worn in the activity room or on the playground in conjunction with an activity that specifically requires this type of dress (such as tumbling or water sprinkling or trips to the pool).

The staff's dress should always reflect the knowledge that they are serving as role models for the children. T-shirts with suggestive language or pictures on them—either related to sex, alcohol or drug use—are definitely prohibited. Undershirts should not be worn as outer garments.

In compliance with health and hygiene regulations we require that hair be clean and well-groomed. Staff who choose to wear their hair long should keep it pulled back away from the face when working with children in order to avoid contact with food, paints or other materials used in daily curriculum.

Fingernails must be kept trimmed short to mid-length in order to avoid scratching children and to lessen the possibility of build-up of bacteria which could be passed on to others. Particular attention should be paid to keeping the hands and nails clean at all times when working with children.

Staff are provided with smocks to wear for protection of clothing and to provide a soft surface for carrying babies. It is required that staff in the infant-toddler program wear smocks when working with the children. Smock wearing for the rest of the staff is encouraged. Smocks must be laundered after daily wearing.

Use of jewelry in the infant room must be restricted to that which will not interfere with caring for infants.

SMOKING AND CHEWING GUM

Smoking is prohibited in the building. If employees wish to smoke outside, it should be done away from the area in which children are playing and the cigarette butts should be placed in trash cans, rather than thrown on the grounds. No one in our employ is to smoke while working with the children. This includes while involved in field trip activities and transporting children.

Chewing gum is prohibited in the Center by both children and staff, as it has caused clean-up problems for the custodian.

USE OF PHONE

The phone in the Resource Center may be used by employees for brief calls during breaks from classroom duties. Friends and family should be told not to call and ask for staff who are in the classroom, except in case of emergency. If an occasional message needs to be called in, the secretary may take the message and deliver it to the appropriate person, or hold it until the person goes on break. This service should only be requested occasionally for messages of extreme importance. At no time should a long distance phone call be billed to Children's Place.

PARKING

Parking is available to staff in the parking alley on the 9th Avenue side of the building. However, there are not enough spaces there to accommodate the entire staff.

Additional space can usually be found along Richmond Street in front of the building. Care should be taken, however, not to park on both sides of Richmond Street, as delivery trucks often cannot get through the narrow street when this happens. Additional parking spaces are usually available on Oak Street.

CLOCKING IN AND OUT

Employees should clock in as near the time they are scheduled to work as possible. It is all right to clock in a few minutes early when coming into the building early. However, we cannot pay for the extra time recorded by the clock unless it has been approved in advance by the director, in which case the time card should be initialed by the director. The same applies for working longer than the regularly scheduled time at the end of the day. If an employee wants to stay late for some reason of her/his own, the employee should clock out at the normal time and then go back into the classroom. If the employee was asked by the director or a supervisor to work longer, the supervisor's initials should appear on the time card.

LOAN LIBRARY

The Resource Library has a number of good books that staff and parents can check out for periods of two weeks at a time. The Resource Library also has audio-visual equipment, media materials and toys which can be loaned out to the room staff through the director.

Appendix B

Terms And Conditions Of Employment

REGION III CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
1418 Tenth Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Region III Child Development Services is an equal opportunity employer. This agency strives to employ the best matched individual for any vacant position based upon job requirements and regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion or handicap.

As an applicant for a position with Region III Child Development Services, I understand and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Region III Child Development Services may seek any job-related information necessary in order to verify my qualifications for employment. I agree and consent to this investigation and release from liability any person giving or receiving any job-related information requested by Region III Child Development Services.
2. Falsification of information included in the application form, in other employment-related forms, or in interviews may exclude an applicant from being considered for employment, or if already employed, may result in immediate dismissal.
3. Every employee of Region III Child Development Services is required to be fingerprinted and to complete a form requesting a Criminal Investigation Bureau check for prior arrests and convictions. If such a check reveals a record of conviction on a charge of moral turpitude, I will not be considered for employment, and if already employed, I will be subject to immediate dismissal.
4. Employees of licensed day care centers in West Virginia are required to have a medical exam prior to employment and once every two years during employment. I authorize my physician or hospital to release any information needed to determine my ability to perform the responsibilities of my job.
5. This organization will make every effort to give two weeks notice of termination, whenever possible. I understand that employment may be terminated immediately, however, and that this organization is not liable for salary/wages beyond that which has been earned at the time of termination.
6. I understand that employment with Region III Child Development Services is for no definite period of time.

I have read, understand and agree to the above conditions and terms.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Job Descriptions

SAMPLE

TEN-BUCK-TWO DAY CARE CENTER JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Director

Relationships: Responsibility is to the Board of Directors of Ten-Buck-Two Day Care for the daily operation of the center.

**General
Responsibilities:**

Staff

1. Supervise all staff (teachers, aides, cook, custodian and substitutes).
2. Interview candidates for all new employees. Final decision made by lead teacher, Executive Director, and Coordinator.
3. Attend staff meeting once a month at the Center.
4. Evaluate lead teachers and CDA's using formal evaluation forms once a year for teachers employed one year or more by the Center and twice or more a year for new employees.
5. Assist in formal and informal evaluation of staff and children.
6. Be available for consultations concerning staff problems.
7. Assist in planning inservices (when named to committee).
8. Assist in planning parent meetings.

Record Keeping

1. Complete all forms dealing with West Virginia Day Care Licensing Regulations, the Enrichment Program, and the Child Care Food Program.
2. Keep on-going records of information required for Center's annual report.
3. Keep on-going information for line items in budget and review monthly budget print-out.
4. Approve all supply and equipment requests.
5. Arrange for necessary upkeep and repairs.
6. Oversee staff's keeping children's records up-to-date.

7. Collect fees from center, process, write receipts. Keep each child's ledger. Correspond with parents if fees are behind.
8. Update Staff Policy Manual, Day Care Procedures Manual, parent handbook, job descriptions, evaluation forms, and other forms.

Other Duties

1. Know and understand Licensing Regulations.
2. Know and understand Enrichment Program.
3. Know and understand food program requirements and food reimbursement process.
4. Know and understand all responsibilities to lead teacher.
5. Know and understand Department of Human Services per diem (Title XX) process.
6. Be present in Center when representative from licensing, enrichment or food program monitors the Center.
7. Take care of necessary correspondence.
8. Write and edit the quarterly newsletter.
9. Prepare day care annual report.
10. Other duties assigned by Board of Directors.

General Qualifications:

Teaching experience and a Masters degree in Education, with an Early Childhood endorsement preferred. Other relevant experience and academic qualifications considered.

General Skills:

Ability to compose written materials. Ability to organize and be self-directed. Ability to evaluate quality program and staff. Ability to communicate with staff, parents, and children. Ability to foster a cohesive, supportive, and productive work climate among the staff.

SAMPLE

TEN-BUCK-TWO DAY CARE CENTER JOB DESCRIPTION

- Title:** Teacher
- General Responsibilities:** Plan and carry out the daily classroom program for young children, assist in conducting in-service training sessions for staff, attend staff and in-service meetings, and work cooperatively with other staff members.
- Relationships:** Direct responsibility is to the Center Director. Directly responsible for supervision of classroom aides.
- Qualifications:** A four-year degree in education, preferably early childhood. Prior experience in working with young children is also preferred.
- Specific Duties:** The teacher plans and implements daily activities for the children and is also responsible for:
1. Making daily lesson plans
 2. Working with children on an individual basis, as well as in small and large groups.
 3. Evaluating children's programs.
 4. Having individual conferences with parents.
 5. Doing a health check when each child arrives.
 6. Keeping attendance and food records.
 7. Contacting director if there is a problem she/he cannot or should not handle alone, and when a child has been involved in an accident.
 8. Supervising one or more aides
 9. Evaluating any aides working under her/his supervision.
 10. Keeping a neat, clean, attractive room.
 11. Fulfilling any other responsibilities assigned by the director.
- Salary:** Salary will be set by the Board of Directors according to level of degree. Employment is for twelve months annually, with ten days paid vacation after one year's employment.

All applicants should request interview and send resume, transcripts of college credit, and have three letters of recommendation sent to:

Mrs. Mary Brown, Director
Ten-Buck-Two Day Care Center
Cash, West Virginia

SAMPLE

TEN-BUCK-TWO DAY CARE CENTER JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Cook

General Responsibilities: Prepare breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for approximately 60 children and 8 adults, maintain clean kitchen, and assist in planning menus and purchasing food.

Relationships: Direct responsibility is to the Center director.

Qualifications: High school graduate (or equivalent education) with paid experience as a cook preferred.

Specific Duties

1. Plan menus in cooperation with Center director and according to standards set by the Child Care Food Program and the State Health Department.
2. Prepare nutritious and tasty food for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack and serve at specific times.
3. Maintain a clean, neat kitchen (including cleaning stove, refrigerator, and freezer, as needed).
4. Wash all dishes and utensils used in preparing, serving and eating.
5. Organize and maintain inventory of foods, supplies and equipment.
6. Keep necessary records on the Child Care Food Program, as required by the U.S.D.A.
7. Order food and supplies after approval of director.
8. Pick up food and supply orders when requested by director.
9. Maintain neat, clean appearance.
10. Attend staff meetings, when requested.
11. Work cooperatively with staff and other personnel in the building.

SAMPLE

TEN-BUCK-TWO DAY CARE CENTER JOB DESCRIPTION

- Title:** Teacher's Aide (or Teacher's Assistant)
- General Responsibilities:** Assisting teacher in child care center, attending staff meetings and in-service training sessions, and working cooperatively with other staff members.
- Relationships:** Direct responsibility is to the classroom teacher and the Center director.
- Qualifications:** Must be a high school graduate or have GED, and have an interest in and a desire to work with young children. Previous experience with preschool children preferred. Must be at least 18 years of age, be able to read and write, and to use correct grammar in speaking and writing.
- Specific Duties:** The aide helps serve breakfast and lunch; eats with the children; helps children change clothes in case of toileting accident; helps children dress for outside play; helps children relax at naptime; talks and plays with children during indoor and outdoor activity; reads stories to children when asked; plays games and sings songs; assists teacher during large group sessions; works with children individually and in small group activities; prepares teaching materials when requested; helps with children's records when requested; assists in keeping Center neat and clean at all times; and any other duties as assigned by the teacher or director.

Appendix D

Sample Classified Ads

SAMPLE CLASSIFIED ADS

TEACHER

Child Care Center Teacher. Must have A.B. degree in education with early childhood certification. Experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching kindergarten and assisting in training staff. Send resume by Nov 1, 1985 to P.O. Box 849, Wayne, WV 25704. We are an equal opportunity employer.

AIDE

Child Care Center Aide. Experience in working with preschool children and high school diploma or GED required. Responsibilities include assisting teacher with class of two-year olds. Send letter stating education and experience working with young children to TEN-BUCK-TWO Day Care Center, 000 Blank Street, Cash, WV, by June 1. No calls. We are an equal opportunity employer.

COOK

Cook for day care center needed immediately. Must have experience in cooking for large groups. Responsible for cooking breakfast, lunch and snack for 60 children. Six hours daily M-F, \$3.50 hour and two weeks paid vacation after one year. Call Mrs. Smith at 568-9900 between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM. We are an equal opportunity employer.

Appendix E

Interview Format

INTERVIEW FORMAT FOR DAY CARE TEACHING POSITION

Region III Child Development Services

Materials Needed: Application, resume, job description, brochure, salary schedule, and sample newsletter.

BEGINNING INTERVIEW

1. Be hospitable—offer chair, coffee, etc.
2. Make casual comment or two.
3. Explain interview procedure.

QUESTIONING APPLICANT* Use open-ended questions. Examples are listed below:

1. Tell me about your student teaching experience with the kindergarten program.
2. What other experience have you had with preschool children?
3. What activities do you enjoy most when you are working with young children?
4. How do you think your experience with children will benefit you in the position for which you are applying?
5. What activities would you plan for a morning with three-year olds?

Ask at least four **situational questions**. Examples are listed below:

1. If you were reading a story to the children and one child bit another on the arm, what would you do?
2. If one of the four-year olds called another "fatty," what would you do?
3. What do you need to take into consideration when disciplining a two-year old?
4. If a parent complained because her three-year old was not learning to write the alphabet, what would you say to her?
5. How would you handle a situation in which an aide refuses to help clean up when one of the children has a toileting accident?
6. How do you think you can involve working parents in the center program?

Ask **questions on attitudes and values**. Examples listed below:

1. What do you think your former employer would tell me about your ability to work with others? About your work habits?

*Questions asked by you must relate to the applicant's education, job skills and relevant experience. No personal questions about age, marital status, children, how the husband feels about applicant working, etc.

2. What do you think are the most important skills and attitudes an aide should have?
3. What do you think are the most important skills and attitudes a supervisor should have?

EXPLAIN THE PROGRAM AND JOB

1. **Review job description** with applicant. Be sure applicant understands some of the responsibilities, such as changing diapers, cleaning, preparing snack, etc.
2. **Give monthly and annual salary** based on degree and experience on the Region III Salary Schedule. Remember there is a limit of 5 years experience credit by Region III on entry level professional employees and a limit of 3 years experience on service personnel.
3. **Fringe Benefits:**
 - a. **Retirement**—6% of employee's salary is deducted from each pay check. This amount is matched by our agency or the State. If employee leaves the agency before retirement age, the employee's contribution can be withdrawn.
 - b. **Health Insurance/Life Insurance**—First year the employee pays 30% of cost. After one year employment, our agency or the State pays the full cost. If employee transfers from another West Virginia State agency covered by State Employees Insurance Program with more than one year's employment in that agency, the full cost is paid by the agency.
 - c. **Sick/personal leave days** are earned at the rate of 1-½ days per month (18 days for 12-month employees). Three of those 18 days may be used for personal leave. There is one additional day for emergency due to illness of family.
 - d. **Vacation days**—Vacation days for 12-month employees are accrued at the rate of 1 day per month.
 - e. **Paid holidays**—10 days for 12-month employees.
 - f. **On-the-job travel** reimbursed.
4. **Conference allowance** for professional positions.
5. **No tenure** for any position with Region III. Job with agency is not to be promised beyond June 30th of any year. Point out how long agency has been in operation, however.

Appendix F

Interview Rating Scale

INTERVIEW RATING SCALE FOR TEACHING STAFF

Applicant's Name _____ Interviewer _____

Circle the number which most nearly responds to your perceptions of the applicant. 1 = low and 5 = high.

Knowledge

Knowledge of child development stages	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of age appropriate activities	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of appropriate discipline	1	2	3	4	5

Skills/Abilities

Nurturing skills	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5
Planning skills	1	2	3	4	5

Values/Attitudes

Attitude toward work	1	2	3	4	5
Value of self-discipline	1	2	3	4	5
Value of team effort	1	2	3	4	5
Importance of early childhood years	1	2	3	4	5
Commitment to helping children	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding of parents' concerns/problems	1	2	3	4	5

Personal Qualities

Positive self concept	1	2	3	4	5
Poised, maintains eye contact	1	2	3	4	5
Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
Clear, well-modulated voice	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriately dressed and well groomed	1	2	3	4	5

List perceived strengths and weaknesses on a separate sheet.

Appendix G

Test Examples

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Please complete the following sentences as rapidly as you can. Write down the first response that comes to your mind.

1. People _____

2. A problem child _____

3. People think I _____

4. Given a distasteful job, I _____

5. I like work which _____

6. Quiet children _____

7. If I have a job _____

8. When a child takes my hand _____

9. I am unhappy when _____

10. I get depressed _____

11. I like people to _____

12. Children _____

Appendix H

Employment Letter

December 23, 1983

Jane Doe
000 4th Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia 25702

Dear Jane:

You have been employed as a level A-Aide effective January 3, 1983, in Room 103. Continued employment is contingent on available funds and adequate enrollment in the center.

Your bi-weekly salary will be \$268.00 (\$3.35 x 8 x 10 days) during the six-months probationary period, which begins on January 3, 1983. After successfully completing the six-months probationary period, you will become a regular employee with an increase in salary.

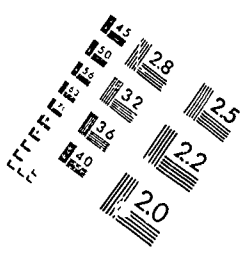
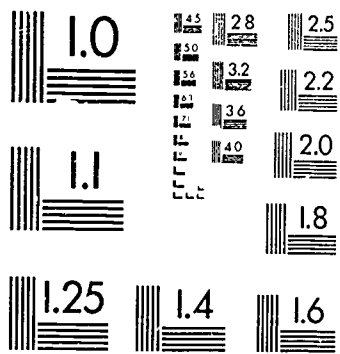
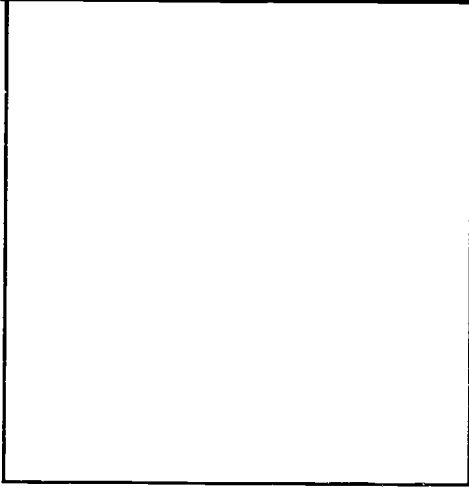
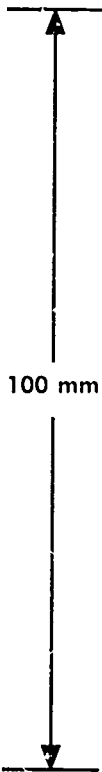
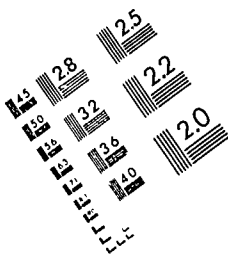
Please complete the enclosed W-4 form and bring it to the Center when you report for work next Monday.

Welcome to Children's Place!

Sincerely,

Norma Gray, Executive Director
(Mrs. Howard Gray)

NG/bw

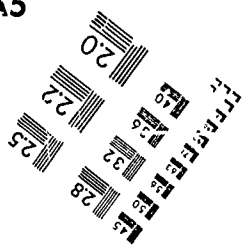


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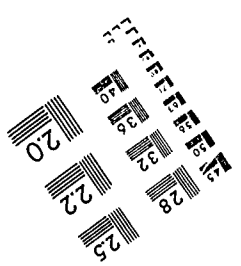
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A5



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Appendix I

Performance Evaluation

REGION III CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
1418 Tenth Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701
SHORT FORM EVALUATION
Teacher and Aide

Name _____ Center _____

Date _____ Completed By _____

	Unsatis- factory	Passable	Good	Excellent
Interaction With Children				
1. Respects the dignity of each child	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Speaks kindly and positively	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Comforts child by holding or touching	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Maintains patience and self-control under stress	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Shows enthusiasm in working with children by	_____	_____	_____	_____
- a pleasant voice				
- a smile				
6. Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Behavior Management Skills				
1. Manages behavior without being judgmental	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Consistently makes positive statements to guide behavior	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Stops unsafe activities and redirects child to safe activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Helps child express feelings (of anger, sadness, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Is able to manage a group of children	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Manages children without using a harsh voice or negative statements	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Unsatis- factory	Passable	Good	Excellent
Interaction With Parents and Staff				
1. Expresses positive attitude toward parents				
- speaks to parents	___	___	___	___
- listens to parents' requests and directions	___	___	___	___
- follows +' rough on same	___	___	___	___
2. Communicates messages to parents appropriately	___	___	___	___
3. Works cooperatively with other employees	___	___	___	___
4. Other _____	___	___	___	___

Classroom Responsibilities

1. Willingly performs the following tasks as necessary				
- changes children's clothing	___	___	___	___
- cleaning toys and/or classroom	___	___	___	___
- general clean-ups and set-ups	___	___	___	___
2. Arrives on time	___	___	___	___
3. Notifies center promptly when she/he will be absent	___	___	___	___
4. Dresses appropriately and has a clean appearance	___	___	___	___
5. Other _____	___	___	___	___

Teacher's Evaluation—All of the Above Plus:

1. Plans good, age appropriate experiences for children	___	___	___	___
2. Models behavior expected of aides	___	___	___	___
3. Keeps records up-to-date or supervises this task	___	___	___	___
4. Maintains a good relationship with co-workers	___	___	___	___
5. Demonstrates effective team leadership	___	___	___	___
6. Provides appropriate supervision of staff	___	___	___	___

My immediate supervisor and I have discussed this evaluation. My strengths are: _____

I have agreed to work toward improvement in the following areas: _____

Signature of Employee _____

Signature of Supervisor _____

Date of Conference _____

Appendix J

Conflict Resolution Model

CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL

STEP 1: CONFLICT EXPLANATION AND IDENTIFICATION TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. obtain perceptions of each of the parties involved
- b. eliminate erroneous or imagined factors
- c. deal with issues, not personalities
- d. concentrate upon common ground between the parties involved
- e. choose the right time to explore and resolve conflict
- f. use conflict communication skills

STEP 2: GENERATE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. brainstorming ideas from all parties
- b. be creative
- c. avoid judging or evaluating ideas at this stage
- d. receive equal input from each party

STEP 3: EXAMINE CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. avoid pre-determined bias
- b. assess consequences of each alternative
- c. look for the best solutions, not unrealistic, perfect ones

STEP 4: DECISION-MAKING TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. obtain proposals from each party
- b. discuss likely decisions
- c. avoid conflicts of interest
- d. obtain commitment from each party
- e. practice effective conflict communication skills

STEP 5: APPLICATION TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. determine strategies for implementation
- b. decide best way to implement decision into center operations
- c. decide best times, locations, costs, and persons responsible for implementation

STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP TASKS INCLUDE:

- a. assess appropriateness of implementation
- b. find out if everything was accomplished
- c. continued evaluation
- d. assess level of satisfaction in all parties

Appendix K

**Regulation and Compliance Requirements on Discipline
From The West Virginia Licensing
Requirements For Day Care Centers**

REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS ON DISCIPLINE FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA DAY CARE CENTER LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

REGULATION

The children's behavior shall be enhanced by positive guidance, redirection and the setting of clear-cut limits which foster the child's own ability to be self-disciplined. Staff shall not use spanking or other forms of corporal punishment.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- a. Children shall be disciplined with kindness and understanding.
- b. Staff shall use disciplinary measures designed and carried out in such a way as to help individual children develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own acts.
- c. Simple, understandable rules shall be established for both children and staff. These rules shall set the limits of behavior required for the protection of the group and individuals within it.
- d. Discipline shall be developmentally related and shall not be out of proportion to the particular inappropriate behavior.
- e. Discipline shall be related to the child's act, handled without bias and without prolonged delay on the part of the adult involved so the child is aware of the relationship between acts and consequences.
- f. Discipline shall be delegated to persons who have an ongoing relationship with a child.
- g. Removal from the group as a means of helping a child gain control shall be for reasonable periods of time. When possible, children should help set time limits.
- h. Behavior problems shall be treated individually and privately. If there is an assessment of a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior, the entire staff should be aware of it and cooperate in carrying out the specific plan developed for the child.
- i. Staff shall not use punishment which is humiliating, shaming, frightening or otherwise physically or emotionally damaging to children. Punishment shall not be associated with food, rest, toileting (training), isolation for illness, or excessive exercise.