



# Los Angeles County Employee Child Development Centers



Office of Child Care

*Working together to provide quality child development services to employees of Los Angeles*

July 2008

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## Time Really Does Fly

It was a Saturday morning in September 1988, when a collective sigh of relief was released by a small group of people at 1944 Marengo Street in Los Angeles. The classrooms and playground were measured, the toilets and sinks were counted, the fire alarm was tested and as a result - the first Los Angeles County employee child care center was licensed! In the journey to this milestone, LAC+USC Medical Center and the Child Development Consortium of Los Angeles (CDCLA) forged a partnership that has endured for 20 years. The LAC+USC Medical Center craftsmen had worked their magic and transformed former Medi-Cal eligibility trailers into a child care facility. Barbara Schutte, Executive Director of CDCLA, exuding her seemingly boundless energy, had equipped the classrooms, hired staff, and designed the playground.

In the 20 years since the program opened its doors, the child care center has re-located to 1401 North Mission Road, earned and sustained accreditation from the National Association for the Education of

Young for the past 11 years, and partnered with hundreds of parents to ensure that their children entered kindergarten with the skills and confidence to succeed. CDCLA now operates the employee child development center at Olive View Medical Center and five other programs. Lisa Wilkin has served as CDCLA's Executive Director since 2001 and honors her mother's memory by continuing to champion high quality child development services. The number of employee child care centers has increased from one in 1988 to eleven in 2008.

It is hard to believe, but many of those young children who were enrolled in the first employee child care program are now establishing their own careers and families! CDCLA will be celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Thanksgiving weekend and is inviting alumni families to contact them at [reunion@cdcla.org](mailto:reunion@cdcla.org) We offer a hearty congratulations to CDCLA for twenty years of caring!

For a listing of the County Employee Child Development Centers, see page 4.



## Keep in Touch with the Office of Child Care

There is so much going on – how can you manage all this information and still get your job done? Use the Office of Child Care Web site at [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov) to track hot topics and useful resources. Do you have a question on the child care supply in your community? Use

our interactive site at <http://gismap.co.la.ca.us/childcare/> Are you stymied by a child or parent? Ask Renatta for some help! Want to know about child care legislation or training resources? We have it covered! Can't find what you need? Let us know – we will try to help!



*Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.*

*The Science of Early Childhood Development*

[www.developingchild.net](http://www.developingchild.net)

## Tender Topics

Working with young children can bring a smile to your face and sometimes even cause you to burst out laughing. On other occasions, a child's language or actions can stop you in your tracks. Wrestling with your own discomfort, you try to determine an appropriate response to the child in that moment. Where is the line between normal curiosity about how bodies work and re-enacting an abusive experience? How much information should you expect four-year olds to have about sexual behavior?

Children's sexual behavior is one of those "tender topics" that early childhood educators need to be prepared to address. Robert Wiltse,

a Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor with the Department of Children and Family Services, will lead a discussion on this issue for representatives of the County employee child development centers on August 13, 2008, from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m., in Conference Room 739 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street in Los Angeles. Please confirm your participation with Kathy Malaske-Samu at [kmalaske@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:kmalaske@ceo.lacounty.gov) or (213) 974-2440 by August 11, 2008 and we will reserve parking for you at the Music Center. Enter the Music Center Parking structure from Grand Avenue, between Temple and First Streets.

## Steps to Excellence Project Update

Finding high-quality child care is a challenge many parents face when entering or returning to the workforce. To help give parents objective and reliable information about the quality of care their children receive, the County of Los Angeles is implementing a new child care quality rating and improvement system called the **Steps To Excellence Project (STEP)**.

Officially launched in July 2007, STEP has received over 180 applications from child care centers and licensed family child care homes interested in volunteering to be part of the project. In addition to offering participating programs a free observation and quality assessment, STEP also offers child care programs an opportunity to apply for a one-time \$5,000 quality improvement grant and priority enrollment in child development trainings.

To be eligible to join STEP, child care programs must care for children ages 0-5, have held a child care license for at least one year, and be located in one of STEP's ten pilot communities: Inglewood, Long Beach, Wilmington, San Pedro, Pacoima/Arleta,

Palmdale, Pasadena, Pomona, Santa Monica, and an unincorporated region of Los Angeles County known as Florence/Firestone.

STEP quality assessments are scheduled to begin in January 2009 and will be conducted by trained and reliable quality evaluators from UCLA's Center for Improving Child Care Quality. STEP's assessment process uses a numerical rating system (a scale from 1 – 5) to assess the quality of five critical components of a child care program: 1) Teacher-Child Relationships; 2) Learning Environment; 3) Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs; 4) Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions; and 5) Family and Community Connections.

The Office of Child Care will continue to accept applications from child care programs until the end of the pilot project in 2010. Interested providers can download a STEP application packet from our website at [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov) or you can request an application via mail by calling the Office of Child Care at (213) 974-4103.

## Connecting Families to Needed Services

How can you help a low-income family participate in your program? Connect the family with the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL).

LACEL is a countywide database of income eligible families who are seeking child care subsidies. Child development programs that receive funding from the California Department of Education, including the Alternative Payment Programs, draw families from the LACEL to fill vacancies. Parents need to apply only once to the LACEL for all their children. Families enrolled in the Alternative Payment Program or CalWORKs Child Care, are able to select from a wide array of child development programs in their community.

How can parents register with LACEL? Parents can contact their local child care resource and referral agency to apply to LACEL. For a list of child care resource and referral agencies located throughout Los Angeles County, visit [www.rnetwork.org](http://www.rnetwork.org).

The Office of Child Care administers the LACEL. In this capacity, the Office of Child Care is responsible for training agencies on how to use the database, updating family information on a regular basis and happily answering any questions that you may have. Please contact Mariela Balam at (213) 974-4519.



## Policy Matters: 2008-09 Legislative Session

“Tis the song, the sigh of the weary. Hard times, hard times, come again no more. Many days you have lingered all around my cabin door. Oh, hard times come again no more.” So goes the refrain in **Hard Times** by Bob Dylan that comes to mind in this era of looming budget deficits and subsequent proposals that may result in actual reductions and loss of services to many of the children and families that we serve. The fiscal crisis is not limited to child care and development services; proposed budget reductions and constraints are pervasive and will likely impact all County services, including health and social service programs such as the CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and Food Stamp programs, and hospitals, among others.

Overall, Governor Schwarzenegger’s proposed 2008-09 State Budget and May Revise, if passed, would implement 10% across-the-board cuts to most General Fund departments as a

way to address the budget deficit, now projected at \$24.3 billion if not addressed. For child care and development, funding would be reduced by \$198.8 million resulting in a loss of services for approximately 18,000 children of low-income families across the State. In Los Angeles County, the potential financial loss to subsidized child care and development programs is estimated conservatively at \$51 million. Moreover, the loss of spaces to serve children from low-income families is estimated at over 3000.

Adding salt to the wound, the Governor has proposed to reduce random unannounced inspections of child development programs by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) from an already deplorable once every five years to once every seven years. This recommendation, which is included in the proposed Budget for 2008-09, also extends to CCLD regulated foster

Continued on page 4

*As of June 2008, there were over 48,000 income eligible children in need of subsidized child care registered on the LACEL*

*The Office of Child Care*



## Los Angeles County Employee Child Development Centers

- **Annex Montessori Child Care**  
K-Step Montessori, Inc.  
3400 Aerojet Avenue  
El Monte, CA 91371  
(626) 569-2640  
(DPSS & DHS employees)
- **County Kid's Place**  
Knowledge Learning Corp.  
2916 South Hope Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
(213) 744-6241  
[www.knowledgelearning.com](http://www.knowledgelearning.com)
- **Crossroads Child Care Center**  
K-Step Montessori, Inc.  
12900 Crossroads Parkway,  
East Annex  
City of Industry, CA 91746  
(562) 908-4412
- **Discovery Time**  
Knowledge Learning Corp.  
406 South Second Street  
Alhambra, CA 91801  
(626) 458-1373  
[www.knowledgelearning.com](http://www.knowledgelearning.com)
- **Expo Kids**  
Center for Community & Family Services  
(as of 8/1/08)  
1024 38th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90037  
(323) 766-6100  
[www.goldenwingsacademy.com](http://www.goldenwingsacademy.com)
- **Harbor-UCLA Children's Center**  
Knowledge Learning Corp.  
975 West Carson Street  
Torrance, CA 90509  
(310) 222-4274  
[www.knowledgelearning.com](http://www.knowledgelearning.com)
- **LAC+USC Children's Center**  
Child Development Consortium  
of Los Angeles  
1401 North Mission Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90033  
(323) 226-2201  
[www.cdcla.org](http://www.cdcla.org)
- **Olive View-UCLA Infant/Child  
Children's Center**  
Child Development Consortium  
of Los Angeles  
14445 Olive View Drive  
Sylmar, CA 91342  
(818) 364-3444  
[www.cdcla.org](http://www.cdcla.org)
- **Rancho Los Amigos Children's  
Center**  
Knowledge Learning Corp.  
7755 Golondrinas Avenue  
Downey, CA 90242  
(562) 401-7981  
[www.knowledgelearning.com](http://www.knowledgelearning.com)
- **Telstar Montessori Child Care**  
K-Step Montessori, Inc.  
9320 Telstar Avenue  
El Monte, CA 91731  
(DPSS & DHS (CMS)  
employees)  
(626) 312-6382
- **Van Nuys Civic Child  
Development Center**  
Child Care Resource Center  
14350 Sylvan Street  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
(818) 780-1922

## Policy Matters continued from page 3

homes for children, and facilities for the elderly and disabled.

Pending legislation provide rays of hope in these hard times. Seventeen bills are currently being considered by the legislature, with work to be completed by the end of August. One of these rays of hope is SB 1629 (Steinberg), which would establish a Commission to develop a statewide Early Learning Quality Improvement System that includes a quality rating scale and a graduated funding model that supports quality. The composition of the Commission would include broad representation from the early care and education community, with appointees representing programs serving children from birth to five. Among its charges, the Commission is to develop a quality improvement and rating system that will impact comprehensively early learning programs serving children from birth to five years of age inclusively as well as conducting an analysis of the existing infrastructure that also addresses the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and issues related to workforce qualifications. The features of the high quality components outlined in the bill are consistent with the six domains of the Steps to

Excellence Project (STEP): regulatory compliance, teacher/child relationships, learning environment, identification and



inclusion of children with special needs, staff qualifications and working conditions, and family and community

The County of Los Angeles and Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) have taken a position of support for SB 1629. Conversely, the County of Los Angeles and the Roundtable have taken opposite positions on all budget cuts to child care and development services. Our advocate in Sacramento is working diligently with other child care and development advocates to influence legislators and their staff with respect to the critical needs of children and families and the long-term benefits of children and families participation in high quality child care and development programs.

Hard times indeed.

Copies of the policy briefs on the Governor's proposed 2008-09 budget cuts and its impact on child care and development services are available for download from [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov); click on Policy and Legislation, then Budget Issues or call Michele Sartell at (213) 974-5187. Contact Michele if you would like to receive a current copy of the Legislation Tracking Roster for the 2008-09 Legislative Session.

### Los Angeles County

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