



CHILDCAREGROUP

Trustworthy child care equates to peace of mind for working parents. No agency understands this better than ChildCareGroup, one of Dallas' largest non-profit organizations. A true leader in the field of early care and education for children, the organization has enabled many low-income families to receive the very best child care possible. Today, over 14,000 children in the Dallas Metroplex benefit from the services of ChildCareGroup.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Formal child care began in 1901 as a way to support children whose mothers worked in the Dallas cotton mills. The conditions for poor children at this time were not clean and safe, so sympathetic and civic-minded women came together to establish nurseries and kindergartens for the children of working women. ChildCareGroup origins are in three helpful organizations: the Clara Chaison Free Kindergarten and Training School, the Dallas Free Kindergarten and Industrial Association, and the Free Kindergarten Association. Only two years later, some 350 youngsters were reaping the benefits of Dallas' first child care system.

Over the next century, the organization endured many transitions, mergers, and name changes, ultimately transforming itself into ChildCareGroup, as it is known today. Even generations later, the mission of the organization remains the same: "to promote, deliver, and expand the best possible child care services available outside the home."



CHILDREN FIRST

The design of ChildCareGroup's logo is a rocking horse which portrays a *smile* as its base. This is a fitting comparison to the happy, well-cared for children you see in their programs everyday. Childhood is a special time in one's life, and the staff at ChildCareGroup is committed to ensuring it stays that way. In 1975, ChildCareGroup, then known as the Child Care Association of Metropolitan Dallas, initiated what is now known as Relationship-Centered Child Care® or RC³. This is a formalized approach to what the organization already knew best: nurturing and educating young children in a caring environment while their parents are at work.



One of ChildCareGroup's first child development centers supported by The Community Chest (currently known as United Way of Metropolitan Dallas).



ChildCareGroup has practiced RC³ in its own child care centers for 30 years, with excellent results.

The innovative approach of RC³[®] arranges children into mixed-age groups rather than same age groups in order to establish a family dynamic; the children respond to each other as would siblings. This approach also enables children to remain with the same caregiver for several years, which strengthens the bond between the caregiver and child. This model recognizes and supports the relationship between the parent and child as well as between the parent and the caregiver. It has been observed that the children look forward to seeing each other and their caregivers, and that they miss each other when one is absent.

In 1983, ChildCareGroup researched the effects of RC³ on the children involved and achieved outstanding results. Children who were enrolled in the program for ten months or longer exhibited remarkable advances in the development of their cognitive, physical, and social skills. Results like these propelled ChildCareGroup to the forefront of the Dallas community as a valuable asset in child development.

The RC³ method of child development is currently a nationally-renowned approach and is practiced in six ChildCareGroup Head Start and Early Head Start Centers. Individual centers have won national acclaim, and RC³ was highlighted on ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings as a compelling model in the country's child care system.

PEACE OF MIND FOR WORKING PARENTS

Dallas families can participate in any of ChildCareGroup's centers for little or no cost, depending on financial need. Parents of any income can also receive referrals to other child care centers in the Dallas area that are in the ChildCareGroup child care database. Every child deserves quality child care, so this opportunity is a welcomed resource to many families. As one of Dallas' largest non-profit organizations, ChildCareGroup receives grants from both private and public institutions, such as United Way, enabling it to capitalize on its strengths and continue to reach out to children and families.

Low and moderate-income families are able to access affordable child care through the Child Care Assistance voucher program. This service financially supplements approximately two-thirds of the daily cost of child care for about 30,000 families per year. Families who participate in ChildCareGroup directly or through its voucher or referral programs have various needs. Some are transitioning from welfare programs to gainful employment.

Others are low-income teen parents who are still attending school and need child care for their children. Some parents are attending training or are working and need financial assistance to pay for their child care. Still others have children with special needs. ChildCareGroup responds to all of these needs by helping parents find the best child care environment for their families' needs. Susan Hoff, the President and CEO of ChildCareGroup, believes "There's no greater cause than helping children most at-risk because of their family income. Beyond providing peace of mind for parents, good child care prepares the next generation's workforce, so it's good for business."



Susan Hoff, ChildCareGroup President/CEO