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ChildCareGroup

ChildCareGroup's Semi-Annual Newsletter  
for those who care for and about young children

Spring 2007

# Child at the Center

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Since 1901, ChildCareGroup has pioneered exemplary child care solutions for families, providers, employers, and the community.

Our mission is to promote, deliver, and expand the best child care services available outside the home.

Every day, ChildCareGroup is responsible for providing or managing the care of more than 14,000 children from low-income families.

## Why is Child Care and Early Education a Policy Issue?

(Excerpts from *A Texas Child Care & Early Education Fact Finder, Third Edition* prepared by Melanie Lurie Rubin)

Educators, scientists, parents, police chiefs, and policymakers all concur: young children's early education and experiences influence their lifelong development and set the stage for future development and success in school and life. Experts agree that the foundation for healthy development comes from a connected relationship to a significant caregiver in a stimulating environment. The majority of our youngest Texans spend the majority of their days in early education settings. Unfortunately, the supply of early education programs providing the necessary elements to promote optimal development is severely inadequate.



Texas ranks 49th in total state and federal child care spending per child (birth to age four), spending \$257.90—less than half the U.S. average. During the 80th Legislative Session, the State of Texas has an opportunity to use the knowledge we have gleaned from both science and education to support the development of our children for today and for our future. With the goal to serve a greater number of preschool children at a higher level of care in cost-effective ways, the Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 76 in 2003.

SB 76 mandated the coordination of early childhood services including Head Start agencies, pre-kindergarten programs, and private and not-for-profit early childhood education programs. Governor Perry designated the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE) as the State Center for Early Childhood Development (SCECD) and required the organization to monitor the implementation of the initiative.

Out of this legislation, the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) was developed to improve the readiness of children entering kindergarten. Child care programs serving poor and at-risk children throughout the state receive training and resources. TEEM fosters a partnership among all child care and early education programs, including child care, Head Start, and public school Pre-K. Teachers receive ongoing scientific-based teacher training and use personal digital assistants (PDAs) to enter test results on how well the children are doing. The teachers are then able to identify areas of needed improvement. The Center also created a parent guide to go along with the program.

The outcomes of the program have been significant. Project evaluations have shown that the children participating in the TEEM program demonstrate substantial gains in early literacy and language development.

Texas is celebrating the success of the program. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) objective for FY 07 is to position more districts to be ready to implement the TEEM model. TEA is continuing work in this arena by establishing a School Readiness Integration model, one that is "community based and individualized to each local area."

It is imperative that the State of Texas invest in early care and education to provide Texas with healthy, successful children, secure families, a productive work force, and a bright future.

## Healthy Weight for Young Children (continued from page 3)

### Long-term Effects:

Children who are overweight are more likely to suffer from long-term ailments, such as asthma or Type 2 diabetes, a disease in which an individual's body loses its ability to maintain normal blood sugar levels. Type 2 diabetes is becoming more prevalent in children and teenagers, with children as young as four years of age now having the disease. Children who are overweight as toddlers are more likely to be overweight as adolescents and adults. Overweight preschoolers have a five times higher risk of being fat at age 12 than do lean preschoolers.

According to the AAP policy statement, Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity, the risk of adult obesity increases from 20 percent in an overweight 4-year-old to 80 percent in an overweight or obese adolescent.

Individuals who remain overweight or obese throughout their lives are at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and bone, joint, and muscle problems. Risk for overweight increases dramatically when one, or particularly both, parent(s) is overweight showing that the family lifestyle—nutrition and fitness—is a factor in the weight of children.

### Setting a Good Example:

Being overweight is about more than self-image; it is about overall health and well-being. Caregivers can help children to develop healthy habits by modeling appropriate behaviors, such as eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, limiting portion sizes, and participating in physical activities.

Setting a good example cannot only impact both the present and future well-being of the children in your care, but also improve your own health.

### Selected Resources:

**My Healthy Child Growth Calendar**, *Healthy Child Publications*, 877.258.6178, www.healthychild.net

**American Academy of Pediatrics**, www.aap.org

**Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity**, www.surgeongeneral.gov



We put the child first. | Page 4

ChildCareGroup, a not-for-profit organization, offers its services, programs, and activities to eligible participants without regard to race, gender, national origin, color, age, religion, disability or political belief. \$52,413,966 or 95.1% of the cost of ChildCareGroup's programs are provided by the federal government; \$2,725,559 or 4.9% are provided by non-federal government sources. Persons who wish to receive information about participation in ChildCareGroup's programs may call 214.630.7911 or visit www.ChildCareGroup.org.



The printing of this publication has been made possible by the generosity of KAPLAN Early Learning Company.



ChildCareGroup's revolutionary model of care, Relationship-Centered Child Care® (RC<sup>3</sup>™), focuses on building relationships with families and children.



How well children do in school and in adult life is often determined by their interactions with caring adults at very young ages.



### Provider Tidbits!

Are any of the families in your care employed by Texas Instruments, ExxonMobile, or IBM?

If so, please send an e-mail to [Scochran@ccgroup.org](mailto:Scochran@ccgroup.org) with your contact information. We have free training opportunities available for you.

Have you updated your information with our Resource and Referral program lately?

If not, you could be missing out on referrals for your business and some great trainings mailed only to those programs in our database. Visit our website at [www.ChildCareGroup.org/rr](http://www.ChildCareGroup.org/rr) or call 214.631.2332 to update your information.

### Teacher Positions Available

ChildCareGroup is interviewing for lead teacher and teacher positions in its infant/toddler and preschool classrooms. Please call 214.630.7911 for an application.

### Save The Date

Saturday, August 18th

ChildCareGroup and WorkSource for Dallas County will host the 4th Annual Summer Sizzler: *Hot Topics in Early Care and Education* at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas.

Plan now to join us for this informative training conference packed with information on the latest topics in early care and education. Visit our web site at [www.ChildCareGroup.org](http://www.ChildCareGroup.org) for more information.

## Pre-K Day at the Texas Capitol a Big Success

ChildCareGroup and more than 300 early childhood advocates from 20 Texas communities joined the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) on February 12th in Austin for the "Pre-K Day at the Capitol." The day included a press conference on the Capitol steps, a model high quality classroom in the Capitol Rotunda to help educate elected officials about the importance of early childhood education, and legislative visits. The day was sponsored by Senator Judith Zaffirini. Representative Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Joe Straus assisted with the coordination of the press conference.



Hundreds of early childhood advocates gather for "Pre-K Day at the Texas Capitol."

A 2006 study conducted by the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M found the benefits of investing in high quality early childhood education in Texas greatly outweighed the cost, and that for every \$1.00 invested at least \$3.50 is returned to Texas communities!

Events such as "Pre-K Day at the Capitol" are critical to building a high quality early childhood education and development system in Texas. For the next two months the focus will remain on the 80th Legislative Session and tracking of the 40 filed early childhood education bills. In addition, TECEC will work with legislative leadership to ensure the successful passage of Senate Bill 50.



Cynthia Lewis, 2006 Elementary Teacher of the Year



Rep. Michael Villarreal takes time out of the legislative session to read to the children in the model classroom.

With special thanks to the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition for sharing pictures taken at the "Pre-K Day" in Austin.



Kaitlin Guthrow, Executive Director TECEC, awards a "Picture the Future" art contest scholarship to 1 of 5 students who were randomly selected to win a \$1000 scholarship toward their post-secondary education.

## Healthy Weight for Young Children

Excerpted from article by Diona Reeves, Consultant, American Academy of Pediatrics, Early Child Care & Education Initiatives—*Healthy Child Publications*, February-March 2007 issue, [www.healthychild.net](http://www.healthychild.net)

Baby books are filled with pictures of adorable babies--and often those babies have the large cheeks of a budding football linebacker. Chubby babies are undeniably cute but as children age, baby fat can go from cute to worrisome. And when excessive fat moves from adolescence to adulthood, serious and often life-threatening problems can result.

### The Problem

As a whole, America is overweight. What is even more alarming is the fact that being overweight is no longer an adult-sized problem. Toddlers and preschoolers are increasingly susceptible to the health effects of being overweight. The prevalence of being overweight for height has more than doubled in the past 30 years for children ages 2-5. Concerns about being overweight extend beyond just the immediate issues. Weight problems may inhibit both emotional and social well-being, as well as contribute to long-term health risks.



Typically, children are overweight due to a lack of physical activity and to unhealthy eating habits. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), weight issues are associated with significant health problems in children. Being overweight can affect infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in the following ways:

- Impaired immune system. According to studies at the National Cancer Institute, being overweight can affect a person's immune system and subsequent ability to fight off infection and disease. In children, this may lead to more frequent colds or other illnesses.
- Impaired cognitive development. The University of Florida recently discovered a link between toddlers who weighed more than 50 percent above their ideal body weight and low IQ scores, suggesting that delays in cognitive development could be a problem for overweight children younger than four years of age.
- Sleep apnea. According to experts at the University of Toledo, overweight children may suffer from sleep apnea, a disorder in which they awaken many times during the night. This can affect school performance and also may lead to children being misdiagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Dental problems. An increased risk of cavities and other tooth abnormalities has not yet been confirmed in overweight children. However, decreasing common dietary risk factors for obesity, such as sugary foods and drinks, may lead to a decrease in both tooth decay and weight.
- Inadequate social/emotional development. Overweight children may be bullied or excluded from social activities, which can lead to depression, anxiety, or even rage. Such problems may significantly affect a child's social skills and self-esteem.

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Are you a family child care provider and NOT currently under contract with a USDA Food Program Sponsor?

If so, ChildCareGroup offers an excellent Food and Nutrition program that can help you with menu planning, nutritious tips, and quick reimbursement for feeding the children in your care.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program, call Angela Young at 214.905.2464 or visit [www.ChildCareGroup.org/foodprogram](http://www.ChildCareGroup.org/foodprogram).

### Community Invited to Attend Free Events

Join marching bands and young children from area child care programs for ChildCareGroup's Parade Celebrating Week of the Young Child on April 26. The parade will begin at the MLK ChildCareGroup Center at 2922 MLK Blvd, Bldg. D, Dallas 75215 at 10:00 a.m.

ChildCareGroup's Annual Parent Fair will be held on Saturday, April 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Jeffries Street Learning Center, 3001 Grand Avenue, Dallas 75215. Health screenings will be available on-site and community service vendors will be there to share information with all participants.

For more information about any of these events or programs, please visit [www.ChildCareGroup.org](http://www.ChildCareGroup.org).