



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2005/6

As we start 2006 I would like to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year.

Chinese (Cantonese) Gung hay fat choy (a New Year greeting meaning, "May you become prosperous.") Sun nien fai lok (meaning, "Happy new year")	Italian Buon Capo d'Anno
Chinese (Mandarin) Xin nian yu kuai	Japanese Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu
Danish Godt Nyttår	Norwegian Godt Nyttår
Dutch Gelukkig nieuwjaar	Pilipino (Tagalog) Maligayang Bagong Taon
Farsi Aide shoma mobarak	Polish Szczesliwego Nowego roku
French Bonne année	Portuguese Feliz ano novo
Gaelic Aith-bhlaiin Fe Nhaise Dhuit	Romanian La Multi Ani
German Gutes Neues Jahr	Russian S Novym Godom
Hawaiian	Spanish Feliz Año Nuevo
	Sudanese Wiluieng

Hauoli Makahiki Hou	Tahun Baru
Hebrew	Swedish
Shanah tovah	Gott Nytt År
Hmong	Turkish
Nyob zoo xyoo tshiab	Yeni Yiliniz
Indonesian	Kutlu Olsun
alamat Tahun Baru	Welsh
	Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

At this time of year, we often look back at the changes, dreams and achievements over the past year, where did 2005 go?

Time appears to be passing so quickly, but one of the reasons for this is that this year has seen such growth and changes in childcare legislation and practice in many countries.

We are being told that things are changing so quickly that you have to run to keep up. Is this a good thing? Lets hear from our members about what have been the main changes for you and are they for the better?

2006 will be an opportunity for us to meet together at the international conference to exchange ideas and good practice.

I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend and meet up to plan the next phase of IFDCO, to take the organisation forward, from strength to strength.

Peace and happiness to you and your family, and enjoy this latest newsletter which has a focus on Australia.

Kay Jackson
Chair of IFDCO

A Message from Jo Cox, a provider in Australia commenting on Family Day Care Developments there.

Its great to read the information from around the globe. - In particular issues that have not been sanitised by internal influences nor sensationalized by the media, or suppressed by others.

There are issues within FDC that need to be put on the table and addressed. Australia is no different but we need to take control and collectively work out strategies to fix it and make FDC a model of childcare that is actively sought after.

There will always be corporate centres and they are continuing to buy up existing licences and applying for new licences wherever they can. Recently 2 corporate bodies merged to collectively own in excess of 650centres.

There is an underlying feeling that **some departments** are working toward dismantling FDC.

On the surface all seems to be working fine, but at the coal face there are issues that need addressing. In particular Caring for the Carer, Carer conditions, Carer Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding – as I have outlined below:

Issues that need addressing.

Uniformity

Uniform/national guidelines with a very clear distinction between policing bodies and support services, is required - to conduct both is being both judge & jury.

Long term carers are leaving the profession in droves - There are constant updates from providers that its become all too difficult and they resign. Others remain but are suffering from administrative stress and pressures, with a continuing shower of being over-regulated.

Celebrating Success:

Recognition of the Providers contribution to society, eg 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, etc years of service.

The psycho-social development of our next generation, is paramount to the carer maintaining a good enthusiasm and being enthusiastic about the future direction of her own micro-business. The provider should be given recognition of service.

Caring for the Carer:

Carer working condition and support mechanisms. Although it differs in all parts of the world, we can all learn from each other - networking and understanding how carers continue to work in a high burn-out field.

Micro-business

Maintaining a micro-business, where outside support is difficult, due to the unique nature of the service

Regulations

Uniformity with a very clear division between policing and support services is required. There has been extensive saturation of legal and policy issues, more is required in support services.

Advocacy

When difficulties occur and it becomes a deadlock. The continuous delay and repercussions are causing the service to have stress fractures, where issues are unresolved or the situation perpetuates, without solutions being put in place.
SWOT analysis

Marketing your own Business

Sharing strategies, and identifying client groups that would benefit from this unique service.

To offer and excel in the provision of service delivery.

Provide components of a service that is not offered by competitors

Expand

A Family Day care service cannot be on-sold, and it cannot grow due to regulatory restriction on numbers. We need to think how the business revenue improve ?
Costs are ever increasing and the

margin is shrinking.

And, is family day care in itself a profession or a vocation ?

Networking

Using all available technology & resources by sharing world-wide experiences. Encourage peer support.

Keeping the 'high' long after the conference is over.

To provide powerful, practical and interactive support to keep the enthusiasm alive, in this unique model of the childcare industry which can be an isolating experience.

Too many Chiefs

Too many organizations are top heavy with administration, we need more 'Indians' at the coal face, and for the information to be dispersed, discussed, respond, and getting it right so that it works well for all, especially the children.

When the carer works within a holistic, caring and harmonious environment, the flow-on to clients has greater benefits.

In some places the sponsor or corporate body hold the licence to operate a FDC service, in others the licence is held by the individual provider.

As our friend Charles Rice states:

In UK there is ever increasing competition from centre based provision and other policy developments that are squeezing FDC out of the market place.

The need then for us to drive up quality and promote flexibility and

accessibility will be essential to the well-being of FDC for the long term future.

We have already seen what is happening in Sweden and I think this could happen in many other nations unless we take stock of where we are and then develop strategies to ensure that FDC stays alive and kicking - namely by promoting our USP.

It is interesting that in Japan the fight to have FDC regulated has only just begun and this is in a Nation where childcare is an important social issue - they regulate centre based provision but still marginalise FDC - this I see as unacceptable when FDC has so much to offer to support Children families and the economy.

Conference News from Germany

"Family Day Care in Germany - in dialogue with European neighbours"
will be held on the 16./17.3.2006 at the University of Hamburg

15.3.2006 will be a pre-conference day with sightseeing and visits arranged in the city Hamburg. Informations and registration:
e-mail: TagesmuetterBV@t-online.de

Please note the Conference will be taking place in the German language with translations into English.

IFDCO Conference 2006

The International Family Day Care Organization's conference is being presented in conjunction with NAFCC's conference!

Theme "Family Childcare Shines Around the World – Strengthening children families and communities".

The National Association for Family Child Care

16th Annual National Conference

Orlando, Florida

July 26th – 29th, 2006

YOU ARE INVITED!

Designed exclusively for the family child care field and featuring research, innovative programmes, public policy, and dialogue.

Join us at the Caribe Royale All-Suites Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida!

Conference Facts

* Experts in family child care will present information and strategies to improve the quality of the field, including NAFCC accreditation and ALI/PDI sessions.

* Workshops focusing on literacy, cognitive development, diverse learning styles, hands-on activities for preschoolers and schoolagers.

* National and International keynote speakers addressing state-of-the-art early childhood education practices.

* Networking opportunities with family child care professionals from around the globe.

For more conference information or to register on-line (available mid-February 2006) visit www.nafcc.org.

Conference Host
Florida Family Child Care Home Association

Conference Hotel
Caribe Royale All-Suites Resort and Convention Center
8101 World Center Dr., Orlando, Florida 32821
1-800-823-8300 (Must mention NAFCC for group rate.)
or visit www.cariberoyale.com

Rates: Double Queen Suites
\$119.00

King Suites \$119.00

Deluxe King Suites \$139.00

Villas \$244.00

This is a four day conference which is split. The first two days, 26 and 27 July are called pre-conference days and have less delegates there than the following two days.

These pre-conference days provide either two full days or four half day sessions.

The following two days 28 and 29 July, provide up to 5 shorter workshop sessions each day, the proposed charges for this has not been confirmed yet. But the following information was received from the NAFCC to give IFDCO members a figure on which to base their budgets!

I cannot give you an exact price for the four days, since the price is dependent on which session is registered for.

For example, if a person registers for two full-day pre-conference sessions and full conference, the total is $2@175 + 149 = \$499$ USD.

However, if a person registers for four half-day pre-conference sessions, opts to purchase the networking lunch both days, and full conference, the total is $4@75 + 230 + 149 = \$509$ USD.

I believe \$509 is the most expensive it will be, as long as they are paying the early-bird member rate for full conference. I hope this helps!

This appears to mean that for a fully day pre conference session the cost will be \$175 per day
Half day sessions will be \$75
The two days conference (28&29 July) will be \$149

A full booking service will be available on websites from mid February 2006.

Family Day Care Quality Assurance in Australia

Currently, many Family Day Care Schemes in Australia are undergoing Step Three, Validation, as part of the Accreditation process of Quality Assurance.

This occurs every two and a half years and is one of the five steps that the National Childcare Accreditation Council has in place to promote and monitor Family Day Care practices in Australia.

The five steps are Registration, Self Study, Validation, Moderation and Accreditation Decision. Validators visit Schemes and validate it's quality practices.

The Validator completes a Validation Report based on observations of the Scheme including the Co-ordination Unit and a specified number of Care Providers randomly selected by the National Childcare Accreditation Council.

The Validator will observe practices, view documentation and ask questions to gather information which will enable them to validate the Indicators in the Validation Report. Each Indicator is validated as either 'occurring' or 'not occurring'.

In reaching a decision on the validation of each Indicator, the Validator determines whether the information they have gathered represents typical practice in each Care Providers home and the Scheme's Co-ordination Unit. Surveys are distributed to Care Providers, families, school aged

children and staff prior to the Visit taking place and these are collected and forwarded on to the National Childcare Accreditation Council along with the Validation Report.

Each visit to a nominated Care Provider can take up to two hours to complete and the Office Validation will take up to one day to complete.

An average sized Scheme will take four days for the Validator to gather all the information required to enable the Scheme to progress to the next stage of the process.

Step Four is Moderation and this is an evaluation of a Services practices by professionals in the Early Childhood field known as Moderators. It follows the Validation Visit.

The Moderation process; Analyses the Reports about a Services practices as submitted to NCAC after Self Study (Step Two) and the Validation Visit (Step Three) contributes a rating for the Services practices for each Principle Provides a written Report called the Continuing Improvement Guide to assist the Service in planning for future improvements.

The Accreditation Decision is made by NCAC and is the final step in the Family Day Care Quality Assurance process.

To be accredited, a Scheme must achieve a rating of Satisfactory or higher in all six Quality Areas on the Composite Quality Profile.

Since the introduction of the Quality Assurance system into Family Day Care by the Commonwealth Government in 2001, there has been a much higher profile and positive benefits of this form of child care and families have been keen to access and book child care places in their local Schemes. Applications from prospective Care Providers have also increased.

Grace McDonald, Senior Co-ordinator

[Bramble Bay Family Day Care, Brisbane.](#)

Extract from the Final Draft of the Orientation Package

**Contact Sally Cooper
vfdca@vicnet.net.au**

Funded by the Australian Government

Supported by the Victorian Office of FACS

**First draft Anne Stonehouse
Final Draft Susie Rush
Introduction**

This resource is intended to be a framework or guide to every aspect of the operation of a Family Day Care scheme.

While it is not an encyclopaedia or instruction manual, it should alert people to the many complex and challenging issues that arise, the many decisions that have to be made, in order to operate a successful scheme.

The material has been written with the coordination unit in mind as the main users, however, the material will give service operators a good overview of the complexity of operating a Family Day Care scheme.

Unlike the original Orientation Package, none of the material has been written directly for carers, however, much of it is relevant to carers, will be of interest to them, and could be adapted for their use.

The resource draws on the original Orientation Package written for the sector in Victoria in 1996-97.

Family Day Care has changed a great deal in the time since that resource was written. National Standards exist, a national Quality Assurance System is in place, resource materials have been published specifically for Family Day Care, and new forms of care, In-home and In-venue care, operate from some Family Day Care schemes.

This resource has been written to be used alongside five essential resources which all schemes will be very familiar with and use regularly:

- The original Orientation Package,
- The latest version of the Commonwealth Family and Community Services Child Care Services Handbook,
- The National Standards for Family Day Care,
- The National Childcare Accreditation Council's Quality Practices Guide, and
- Dimensions, published by the National Family Day Care Council of Australia.

Additional resource materials and organisations are recommended in the appendices.

Where the most essential information about a topic comes from one of the above documents, the section in this Orientation Package may be very brief.

The resource is divided into two main parts:

Part 1

focuses on the operation of the service, with particular emphasis on the coordination unit.

Part 2

focuses on the experiences offered to children in the home.

Within most of the sections in both parts, there are categories of information.

Key Concepts

are the most important facts or understandings that must be understood and shared in the scheme.

Things to Do and Think About

is the heading for suggestions of ways to bring about the shared understanding around the topic of the section. They are suggestions of ways that coordinators and field workers can increase their own understandings about these topics and ways that they can support carers in these areas. These suggestions can be used in an interactive way with your coordination unit team.

Essential or Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

these references will enable the reader to follow up on crucial documents with which they need to be familiar and actions to be implemented.

The Appendices

will indicate further selected contacts and materials. These resources of course will not provide complete information, recipes or formulae. They are a beginning, and there's no getting around the fact that supporting carers is a complex job that requires a lot of reading, thinking, and decision making – the use of considerable professional judgement by coordination unit staff.

Gathering information for this resource confirmed the incredible amount of wisdom that exists within schemes and demonstrated that each scheme is unique.

However, an efficient and effective way to develop and improve your own scheme is to use and adapt the wisdom and experience of staff from other schemes (ideas, policies, forms, brochures, handbooks, training materials, procedures etc.)

The intention in the information provided is not to be prescriptive but to raise issues and concerns that schemes will have and to highlight areas where decisions will have to be made.

The focus of the package is primarily traditional Family Day Care. Much of what is said, particularly about practice in the Family Day Care home, either applies directly to, or can be adapted to, In-venue and In-home care. This means that the coverage of the topics in the package is uneven. The length of the discussion does not reflect its

importance but rather the existence of other essential resources on that topic.

It is recognised that terminology used in schemes varies. The language of the National Childcare Accreditation Council's Quality Practices Guide has been adopted for this resource. Therefore the following terminology has been used throughout the documents;

The service operator refers to the management body of a Family Day Care scheme. For example this could be a Local Government, a Non-Government organisation or a Committee of Management.

To make the distinct between the service operator and the Family Day Care scheme it will be referred to as 'the Scheme'.

Coordination units and carers are self explanatory.

**Project Co-ordinated by
Sally Cooper
Family Day Care Victoria Inc.
Resource Unit
Supported by the Steering
Committee**

Anti-Family Child Care Bias?

The *ExchangeEveryDay* message on November 17, "[Type of Care May Impact Achievement](#)," caused a bit of a stir in the family child care community. In part it stated...

"A study released in August, 2005 by Professors Raquel Bernal of Northwestern University and Michael Keane of Yale University shows that this informal care may negatively influence a child's mental development. Center-based or formal care, however, may offset negative effects of a mother's reduced contact time with her child."

While the editors of *ExchangeEveryDay* believe that the researchers were comparing center-based care to informal babysitting by family and friends, other implications could be easily drawn. In fact, Maria West wrote to *ExchangeEveryDay*:

"While I very much appreciate hearing the current research, this one worries me. I am a family child care provider and am beginning to do some training for other providers. Last night I worked with providers who are serving low income children. Some of these providers felt very strongly that someone in power wants them out of business. One or two believed there is a strong movement to get children out of family child care homes and into centers..."

"I also question the researcher's premise that we can measure a difference in a child's development and correlate that difference with the type of care they receive. I

imagine that kith and kin and less formal care may meet the needs of certain families at certain times.

"I believe that the measures used to compare different types of care should be made very explicit when we are drawing conclusions for policy making. It is critical that the measures are broad-based, including social/emotional, physical, as well as cognitive, and that they look at how a child's, family's, and community's needs are being met. If this is not the case, we need to be careful about the implications we draw. "

Editors Response: While we do not believe there is an organized movement afoot to undercut family child care providers, we do concur that researchers and editors are often not fully cognizant of the differences between center care, family child care, and informal babysitting.

"Sometimes all of these forms of care are lumped together as "child care," and often family child care is confused with care by untrained, unsupervised babysitters. Such sloppiness in research and publishing can demean the hard work and valuable contributions of family child care professionals.

While **Exchange** magazine was founded as a resource for center directors, in recent years we have been reaching out to address the concerns and contributions of family child care professionals. We are proud to include the National Association for Family Child Care as an *Exchange Strategic Partner*.

And, we will celebrate our commitment to family child care by featuring family child care professionals on the cover of the January issue of **Exchange**.

We plan to respond to Maria West's justifiable concerns by ensuring that *ExchangeEveryDay* presents a balanced range of research about all forms of care and early education, and to note, where appropriate, the significant role family based care plays in the role of young children and their families."

We invite you to participate in this dialogue by providing your recommendations on research we should investigate that addresses family child care or your general views on family child care in today's **Sound Off** feature at <http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/878>

Contributed by Michael Kalinowski and Roger Neugebauer.

How Child Care Benefits the Economy

A growing number of studies support the value of quality child care in promoting economic growth. The Economic Opportunity Institute in Seattle Washington, has published a number of excellent reports that add to the case for quality early care and education. For example, their policy brief, "How does high quality child care benefit business and the local economy?," the Institute reports...

- Employees with inadequate child care are more likely to be late for work, absent, or distracted on the job than parents who are confident about their child's child care arrangements. Employees may be forced to spend time at work or take time off to handle child care concerns.
- A 1992 survey found that nearly 30 percent of workers knew employees who quit their jobs because of inadequate child care. Productive and valued employees who leave their jobs because of child care problems increase hiring and training costs.
- High rates of turnover, absenteeism, and low productivity cost employers money. It is estimated that absenteeism caused by poor quality child care costs American business more than \$3 billion a year.
- Working parents lose the equivalent of six days of work annually due to child care

issues or problems, costing Seattle businesses approximately \$112 million a year.

To read this full report (including extensive references on studies), as well as a more in depth policy paper, "The Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder: A Model for Improving Quality in Early Learning and Care Programs," go to www.eoionline.org and click on the link.

"A child's hand in yours — what tenderness it arouses, what power it conjures. You are instantly the very touchstone of power and wisdom."

Marjorie Holmes

New Research on Brain Development Is Important for Parents

Have you heard? It seems as if everybody is talking about "brain development" - the term being used to describe new research into the importance of a child's earliest experiences.

You may have read about it in a magazine, or seen it on "the web." Maybe you're hearing it for the first time right here. What parents have known for years - that good early experiences are good for our children - is now being proven by doctors and scientists at research centers and universities all over the country.

Attention to every stage of a child's development is urgent. Research now shows that the care babies get has dramatic and long-term effects on how children develop and learn, on how they cope with stress, and on how they react to the world around them. In fact, science tells us that the right kind of experiences in their early years can actually help our children's brains to grow! And, that it can affect how they continue to learn later on in life.

Just as good food and exercise can help our bodies grow, good early experiences can help our brains grow. Now there is even stronger evidence that there is a link between brain activity and brain growth.

Even before babies can walk and talk, their brains are developing. Neural pathways are the connections that allow information to travel through the brain. The

more pathways, the larger the brain. Interestingly, the neural pathways that are developed in your child's first three years can act like the roadmaps to later learning. A child with a larger brain or more neural pathways may be able to learn more easily once she gets into school.

One study, completed at the Baylor College of Medicine, showed that babies who had the chance to play often and who were held and touched often as infants, have larger brains with more neural pathways than children who received less attention and care when they were babies.

Nature or Nurture

You've heard about nature vs. nurture. It's the classic debate about how children grow and develop personalities. "Nature" refers to the idea that children are born the way they are, and that what we do has little influence on who they become. "Nurture" refers to the idea that a child's environment and the manner in which he is raised is the key factor in his development.

Helpful or Harmful

Helpful

- . The attention and support of a kind and interested adult.
- . Child care that is continuous and predictable.
- . A caregiver whom the child likes and trusts.
- . A safe and clean place to play.

- . Physical activity
- . interesting learning materials and fresh air.
- . Nutritious meals and snacks.

Harmful

- . Hearing harsh voices or "no" all day.
- . Not being picked up when crying, or listened to when upset.
- . Frequent turnover, what different adults caring for the child in a non-predictable schedule.
- . A caregiver who is too tired or overwhelmed by caregiving responsibilities, or who does not want to care for children.
- . Drugs, guns or lots of strangers in the environment (or brought into the environment by television).
- . Lack of toys, over-use of television.
- . No attention paid to healthful eating. "Junk food" or candy provided instead of meals.

The helpful and harmful practices on this list are important to consider for your child's experiences at home as well.

If you feel that your child's home life contains harmful aspects, your caregiver, pediatrician, a family resource center or a counselor, a trusted friend or relative can be important resources for making a change.

If you don't know where to start call your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency/program.

How does the new information about brain development fit into the child care picture? Think about how your care arrangement meets your child's need to grow and develop. Is your infant cuddled, held and talked to?

Are older children talked and listened to and given access to blocks, puzzles, games, and age-appropriate learning materials?

Are children of all ages read to every day, and given access to books and music throughout the day? In the very simplest sense, "rich" experiences equal "rich" brains!

You have an important partner in your child's caregiver! This new information is a great reminder to check-in with your child's caregiver. Share this article, and have a chat about how your child is doing. Offer to get more information about brain development if your caregiver is interested.

Resources

I Am Your Child is a campaign to focus on the importance of the first three years of life and to promote family involvement in young children's healthy development and school readiness. Parent materials are available.

Call 1-888-447-3400 to hear more, and to get information about brain development or check on the campaign at <http://www.iamyourchild.org>.

Child Care Aware is an initiative to improve the quality of child care. Parent information is available. Call 1-800-424-2246.

Your local child care resource and referral agency is a good resource for information about quality child care. They may also have information on events in your community related to the I Am Your Child campaign.

Also, check your local library.

For More Information...

About choosing and using child care and before and after school care, call the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency which serves your community. To find the number of the CCR&R in your area, call: Child Care Aware 1.800.424.2246

The Daily Parent is prepared by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Washington, DC and funded by the Citigroup Foundation.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies_ 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 500_ Washington, DC 20004_ NACCRRRA.org

Something to make all you busy ladies think...

FAMILY

I ran into a stranger as he passed by,
"Oh excuse me please" was my reply.
He said, "Please excuse me too;
I wasn't watching out for you."
We were very polite, this stranger and I.
We went on our way and we said goodbye.
But at home a different story is told,
How we treat our loved ones,
young and old.

Later that day, cooking the evening meal,
My son stood beside me very still.
When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.
"Move out of the way," I said with a frown.
He walked away, his little heart broken.
I didn't realize how harshly I'd spoken.

While I lay awake in bed,
God's still small voice came to me and said,
"While dealing with a stranger,
common courtesy you use,
but the family you love, you seem to abuse.
Go and look on the kitchen floor,
You'll find some flowers there by the door.
Those are the flowers he brought for you.
He picked them himself: pink,
yellow and blue.

He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise,
you never saw the tears that filled his little eyes."
By this time, I felt very small,
And now my tears began to fall.
I quietly went and knelt by his bed;
"Wake up, little one, wake up," I said.
"Are these the flowers you picked for me?"
He smiled, "I found 'em, out by the tree.
I picked 'em because they're pretty like you.
I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."

I said, "Son, I'm very sorry for the way I acted today;
I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
He said, "Oh, Mom, that's okay. I love you anyway."
I said, "Son, I love you too,
and I do like the flowers,
especially the blue."

Are you aware that if we died tomorrow, the company that we are working for could easily replace us in a matter of days. But the family we left behind will feel the loss for the rest of their lives. And come to think of it, we pour ourselves more into work than into our own family, an unwise investment indeed, don't you think?

So what is behind the story?

Do you know what the word FAMILY means?

FAMILY = (F)ATHER (A)ND (M)OTHER (I) (L)OVE (Y)