

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006**

Thank you for your ongoing interest in strengthening early care and education. If you have any questions about the network or this Update, contact Tonja Rucker, Senior Program Associate, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004 or fax – 202/626-3043. The YEF Institute staff wants to thank all of the members of the Early Care and Education City Network for working so diligently on behalf of young children. Your dedication and commitment to strengthen early care and education provides numerous families with resources that improve their quality of life. We look forward to working with you and continuing to build upon the successes of initiatives launched in your community.

NLC NETWORK NEWS

- **Upcoming YEF Institute Audioconferences:** Municipal officials and city staff are invited to register for these free, hour-long audioconferences to learn new ideas, strategies, and innovations to help children, youth, and families succeed.
 - **October 19; 12:30 p.m. EST** – “Strengthen Working Families and Local Economies: How to Mount a Successful EITC Outreach Campaign”
 - **November 16; 2:30 p.m. EST** – “Keeping Young People Safe: Effective Mayor-Law Enforcement Partnerships”
 - **December 14; 4:00 p.m. EST** – “A Seat at the Table: Engaging Youth as City Leaders”

For more information, see http://www.nlc.org/iyef/events_audioconferences/1607.cfm

- **Network of California Cities Combats Gang Violence.** NLC has initiated a network of major cities in California to combat gang violence and victimization. This new California City Gang Prevention Network, the first of its kind in the nation, will focus on successful policies and practices that interweave prevention, intervention, enforcement, and a community’s “moral voice” as an alternative to prison-only solutions. NLC is partnering with the Oakland-based National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) to launch the three-year project with support from the California Wellness Foundation. Participating cities in California will include Fresno, Los Angeles (San Fernando Valley), Oakland, Richmond, Sacramento, Salinas, San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Rosa, and Stockton. To learn more about this project and other NLC initiatives to protect the safety of children and youth, visit www.nlc.org/iyef or contact Leon Andrews at (202) 626-3039 or andrews@nlc.org.
- **Competition to Honor Cities Efforts on Behalf of Young People.** The Alliance for Youth, a leading voice for young people, is seeking applications for its second “100 Best Communities for Young People” competition. City officials and their community partners are encouraged to apply no later than November 3, 2006. It is an initiative that honors the hard work of local elected officials, businesses, nonprofit organizations and others who collaborate to meet the needs of children and youth. To learn more about how to register for the regional forums or how to apply for the 100 Best Communities competition, visit www.americaspromise.org/100Best. Send an e-mail to 100Best@americaspromise.org to receive additional tips and information.

CITY SPOTLIGHT: Santa Fe, New Mexico (Pop. 66,500)

NOTE: This spotlight provides an opportunity to gather ideas from other network members. Each month, we will spotlight a new city or region. You are encouraged to share information about your local efforts, so that we can spotlight your activities and best practices in a future update.

Building an Infrastructure to Strengthen Children and Youth

The City of Santa Fe's Children and Youth Commission (SFCYC) and the Children and Youth Fund were established in 1989 as an expression of the City's commitment to the healthy development of its children and youth. For 17 years the city has been making a significant investment in children from birth through age 21.

This commitment has progressed into substantial investment of programming dollars. The Children and Youth Fund was established with an annual allocation from the city's general fund equal to a minimum of 3 percent of the city's share of state Gross Receipts Tax. The Fund provides approximately \$900,000 in annual grant awards to programs for children and youth. The current annual budget for grants, planning, and administration is approximately \$1 million.

Additionally, the Commission serves as an advisory body to Mayor Coss and city council in the initiation, sponsorship, and support of programs that enhance and further the learning of children and youth. The primary responsibilities of the Commission are to

- establish funding criteria and priorities for children and youth programs;
- assess current community needs;
- solicit proposals for funding consideration; and
- make funding recommendations which are forwarded to the city finance committee and city council for consideration and final approval.

The Commission is solely responsible for making these recommendations. The Commission also has an ongoing responsibility to monitor the utilization of funds by grantees.

Every year the Commission conducts a community needs assessment to determine emerging needs and funding priorities. The Commission recommends proposals for funding based on the underlying goals of the city's strategic plan, the funding criteria established by the Commission, and on emerging needs. The Commission, in making recommendations for the award of funds, considers the following funding categories:

- Early childhood development
- Mental Health
- Recreation
- Youth development
- Supplemental programs for students in public schools

Awards are made on a two-year cycle, an initial grant of one year and a potential renewal for one year. Requests may be renewed, denied, increased, or reduced. In general, awards are made for specific programs, not for general operating expenses.

Seven members appointed by the Mayor serve terms of three years with consent of city council. Commissioners must reside in Santa Fe County and not be a member of the staff or board of an organization receiving or requesting a grant. Members possess vast amount of programming experienced, are familiar with all geographical areas of the city, and have varied educational and professional backgrounds. Some members have experience with the legal, financial, and grant-reviewing process.

To ensure that children and youth programs succeed and grow over time, Santa Fe officials have put a lot of time and thought into how to institutionalize and manage a new way of program administration that sustains an effective children and youth agenda. The establishment of the Children and Youth Commission and the Children and Youth Fund is unique among American cities—both in its explicit recognition of governmental responsibility for the well-being of a community’s children and youth, and in its establishment of a framework and citizens’ advisory group for working toward achieving this goal. One of the primary reasons funding and the momentum of the Commission have been sustained is because of a dedicated funding stream and a strong public will to continue programming that support children and youth.

Linking Economic Development and the Importance of Supporting Families and Children

To ensure that early care and youth activities continue to succeed and grow over time, Mayor Coss and city officials have reorganizing city programs and departments to ensure maximum efficiency, provide better services and increase investment for children. The Children and Youth Commission was recently moved to a newly created Economic Development Department

City officials recognize that investing in children is a cost-effective strategy that shows a high rate of return. Investing in quality early care and education strengthens the city by increasing income tax revenues from parents; decreasing welfare dependence; reducing crime/delinquency; and improving school efficiency. High-quality early education increases both the soft and hard skills of young children as well as their ability to benefit from later education, which increases future employability and productivity in the labor market. The improved quantity and quality of Santa Fe’s labor supply stimulates business to create new jobs and expand output. The Commission will work closely with other city committees, such as the Economic Development Review Committee, on school readiness and quality education at the elementary, middle, high, and post-secondary school levels. . It is hoped that this new infrastructure will position the city to tackle a wide range of emerging human services and family support issues.

City Investments Expand Capacity

Renewed commitment and investment from elected officials and the general public has enabled the Commission to broaden their programmatic scope. Two new initiatives will influence the amount and type of investment in young children’s programs, while incorporating cultural diversity and addressing global issues for the 21st century.

- **Santa Fe as a Green City** - Much of Mayor Coss’s public service has been committed to issues affecting the environment. As global warming concerns continue to increase, elected officials across the country are focusing on the environmental vitality of their cities. Mayor Coss, along with members of the city council, believes that it is important to provide outreach initiatives for young children, encouraging them to care for and appreciate the natural world around them. Senior city staff persons who are already involved in environmental education will share information and design programs that

combine art, gardening, and environmental stewardship for young children. The Randall Davey Audubon Center and its outdoor science education programs will serve as a hub for young children to participate in activities that address the city's vision of all residents working together to ensure that Santa Fe is a "Green City."

- **Santa Fe as a Creative City** - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the city as a "City of Folk Art and Design" under the Global Alliance Creative Cities Network. The Children and Youth Commission has a long history of funding folk art, theater, dance, music, and poetry programs in early education programs and schools. Activities include field trips to cultural landmarks and culturally enriching activities. For Santa Fe Design Week, October 22-29, 2006, the Children and Youth Commission will host a neighborhood gathering at a preschool playground in one of the local parks. Parents and their young children will be invited to participate in activities that promote learning and strengthen families.

The City of Santa Fe is committed to supporting children and youth. The mayor, city council, and senior city staff continue to look for ways to better organize the infrastructure and design programs that will better serve and prepare children and youth for emerging issues of the 21st century.

For additional information, contact: Lynn Hathaway, Ph.D., Children and Youth Planner at 505-955-6678 or lhathaway@santafenm.gov

**STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT:
SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING FAMILY, FRIEND, AND NEIGHBOR (FFN) CARE**

NOTE: Strategy spotlights can help spark ideas that might be appropriate for your community. If you have additional approaches to contribute on this month's topic, please pass them along so we can add them to this list for future use.

Over 60 percent of U.S. households with children under the age of six have both parents in the workforce. Today, more married mothers are working to increase their family's income and more children now live with single mothers who must work to support them. Now more than ever, cities nationwide are recognizing the importance of accessible, quality child care.

Research is showing that the majority of infants, toddlers, and children in low-income families are in Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN care) — care provided by parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other relatives, friends, and neighbors. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2006 KIDS COUNT Data Book predicts that FFN care will be the most common type of child care for low-income children under the age of six with working parents.

Aware that FFN care is often the type of care that children are in while parents are working, some cities are reaching out to caregivers to offer support and guidance to those who may be isolated and not linked to community resources. Many city officials recognize that supporting FFN care providers is critical to ensuring a successful early care and education experience for a city's youngest residents. This translates into an important long-term economic development tool that plays a critical role in a community's ability to lay the foundation for children to enter

school ready to learn and acquire the skills they need to build a competent and highly skilled workforce.

THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS

With record numbers of parents working outside of the home, quality child care is vital to this nation's ability to compete in the 21st century. Children's ability to learn and develop skills is often shaped by their early experiences. What happens in the first three years of life has a great impact upon subsequent stages of development. Some would even contend that there are "critical" or "sensitive" periods of development in which certain skills are learned most rapidly, after which the ability to learn new skills quickly and easily is lost forever. Thus, it is important to create a safe and stimulating learning environment for children from birth throughout the early years.

There are numerous reasons as to why parents often choose FFN care over licensed child care options. Some of those reasons are lower cost, more convenient location, no formal application process, and no waiting lists. There is much left to learn about FFN care; however, FFN care may have any or all of the following characteristics.

- Caregiving arrangements often are initiated when a parent asks a family member, friend or neighbor for short or long-term help;
- Wages, if any, may be paid in cash or in barter, and are likely to be lower than for a licensed caregiver. In some instances FFN caregivers help out a relative or friend and do not charge for the care provided;
- The number of children per caregiver is generally smaller than in licensed care settings;
- FFN caregivers often have no formal training;
- Caregiving is arranged to meet the parent's need for or interest in shared values and culturally relevant language; and
- Care is provided during late-hour or variable work schedules in the safety and familiarity of the parents own home, or that of the caregiver.

FFN care is often safe and affordable but in some instances parents may find that care falls short of the quality-learning environment they would like for their young child. FFN caregivers' knowledge about children's healthy development, connections to other caregivers, and connections to the community can be strengthened via a variety of program and policy initiatives. As the nation turns its attention to FFN care, city leaders can take the lead in efforts to improve the quality of FFN care, which may lead to a comprehensive programmatic approach that addresses the complex dynamics between children, parents, providers, employers, and the broader economy.

What City Leaders Can Do:

- **Convene regular meetings that facilitate and enable center-based and home-based providers to work together and communicate effectively.** Many FFN providers do not have access to new cutting-edge educational activities, do not have the opportunity to interact with peers, and may not have any professional networks to rely on for support. Regularly scheduled meetings will give FFN providers the opportunity to discuss

challenges, share ideas, and get support, such as quality resources and basic information on healthy child development. It will also give city leaders the opportunity to convey how community partners (i.e., city agencies, schools, hospitals, churches) can play to strengthen the quality of care.

- **Encourage senior city staff persons to pilot and explore new childcare organizational models.** Established licensed child-care centers can be used as the neighborhood hubs that FFN providers use as a base from which to gather resources that will improve the quality of care being delivered in the home. These types of neighborhood networks will allow for better communication between center-based and home-based providers and can include coordinating a system to share lesson plans, toys, books, or equipment. Additionally, the relationship could evolve into setting up a system to provide back-up childcare.
- **Encourage libraries, museums, and agencies to support FFN providers by conducting trainings and sharing resources and materials.** Almost all FFN providers are interested in tangible developmental resources that they can use to promote healthy development in the children under their care. City departments can provide developmentally appropriate activity ideas, free culturally enriching programs at the local museum, and a lending library for books, toys, puzzles, games, and videos through the library system.
- **Engage the business community.** Carefully consider what to ask for from business leaders other than money. Businesses can provide both in-kind or pro-bono services as well as specific monetary donations to help support FFN providers. Examples of in-kind resources include meeting space or conference rooms, used computers, training seminars, or business-planning advice for child care providers. Requests can be as simple as asking local retailers to donate materials and distribute written information about resources and training sessions that are available for FFN providers.
- **Partner with local faith-based organizations and places of worship to reach FFN providers.** Faith-based organizations and places of worship have a long history of providing essential services to families, especially those that are sometimes hard to reach. Oftentimes, these groups have built trust with hard to reach groups and their credibility is well respected in local neighborhoods. Cities can sponsor “Getting to Know You” sessions in partnership with faith organizations to build trust in a safe and familiar environment.
- **Offer a city sponsored “FFN Training Series.”** Training, continuing education, and professional development opportunities should offer an extensive and diverse menu of courses, resource materials, and support options to reach and engage FFN providers. City leaders can build an infrastructure that will support the professional development goals of providers.

CITY EXAMPLES

The cities listed below are reaching out and supporting FFN care providers to ensure that their youngest residents receive quality early care and education from birth through their early years. These cities’ efforts, provided by city departments and supported by municipal leaders, lay the foundation for comprehensive educational services that promote an environment that leads to optimal cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.

- **Forth Worth, Texas.** City staff recognized that in most Fort Worth Hispanic neighborhoods, there were only a few families utilizing licensed child care, creating an

urgent need to reach informal providers. Through word of mouth and working with staff in elementary schools, training was offered to parents who also happened to be FFN providers. To date, the city has convened five different trainings at two locations. Training includes information about child development, safety, and school-readiness. Approximately 240 participants have participated in about 16 different modules. Sixty percent of the parents have come to at least four trainings and a core group has come to ten. For the city, a main ingredient of providing quality FFN care is building trust and strengthening relationships. Most of the FFN care providers are not registered with the licensing bureau. With so many children receiving this type of care, city staff felt that they could no longer ignore this type of service delivery.

- **Charleston, South Carolina.** The city has hired a new bilingual staff member for the early care and education team to address FFN care issues. One successful strategy has been to work closely with social services to share information and work with families who are using FFN care. Staff have recently partnered with a Spanish radio station to talk about the child care resource referral agency, lending library, and Born Learning materials. There are also efforts underway to convene neighborhood-wide events at local churches, where information can be shared with families. In the City of Charleston, FFN care is an ongoing project where new strategies and techniques are being employed every day.
- **San Antonio, Texas.** The Department of Community Initiatives has expanded the city's Early ON! School Readiness program to include establishing an infrastructure to support caregivers providing FFN care. To date, almost 500 FFN caregivers have attended at least one of the city's 150 FFN workshops covering topics such as social and emotional development, safety, discipline, health and nutrition, and language and literacy. On August 15, in partnership with Making Connections San Antonio — an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation — and various community partners, the city hosted an FFN Care Institute for competitively selected community-based organizations in each of the city's council districts. The Institute featured advice from national experts, such as Nina Sazer O'Donnell, director of national strategies for United Way of America Success by 6 initiative; Sid Gardner, president of Children and Families Futures; and Dr. Mon Cochran, professor at Cornell University. Close to 100 staff from delegate agencies attended the Institute to gain a broader understanding of needs and to formulate plans for the upcoming fiscal year.

RESOURCES

The Head Start Bureau — Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. For more information see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/>.

The National Alliance for Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care (NAFFNCC) — NAFFNCC is a work group of individuals and organizations that share a common interest in child and kin child care. It consists of a diverse group of practitioners, researchers, and policy makers who are at the forefront of work in this field. NAFFNCC aims to: Influence policies for family friend and

neighbor care; Enhance caregivers' access to services; and Increase awareness of the role that family, friend and neighbor child care plays in the child care system. For more information see: <http://www.bankstreet.edu/iccc/ffn.html>.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) — NAFCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting quality child care by strengthening the profession of family child care. One of the goals is to strengthen state and local associations as the primary support system for individual family child care providers. Another primary goal is to represent family child care providers by advocating for their needs and collaborating with other organizations. For more information see: <http://www.nafcc.org/include/mission.asp>.

Useful websites:

Sparking Connections — Sparking Connections is a demonstration and evaluation project of Families and Work Institute (FWI), a nonprofit center for research founded in 1989 that provides data to inform decision-making on the changing workforce, changing family and changing community (www.familiesandwork.org). The project is exploring non-traditional partnerships (with retailers, senior programs, libraries, museums and others) and other strategies for bringing child development information and resources to the family, friend and neighbor caregivers who care for the majority of our nation's children while their parents work. For more information visit: <http://www.familiesandwork.org/sparking/about.htm>

The Human Services Policy Center (HSPC) — The Center is dedicated to improving the lives of children, families, and communities, with a special emphasis on addressing the needs of those who are disadvantaged. In concert with the Evans School of Public Affairs, the organization pursues research and ideas that work to strengthen sound public policy and management. HSPC's interdisciplinary teams conduct applied policy analysis and research that informs policy at local, state, and national levels. For more information visit: http://hspc.org/about_hspc/mission.aspx.

Publications:

Who's Minding the Kids? Childcare Arrangements: Winter 2002, U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Washington, DC. Information on child care costs and arrangements are collected on an intermittent basis in the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Detailed information from recent surveys and historical trends in selected areas are included in this report, which is the latest in a series that dates back to 1985. The Survey of Income and Program Participation is currently the only source the Census Bureau uses to collect child care information from families. www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-101.pdf.

Enhancing Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregiving Quality: The Research Case for Public Engagement, by Brandon, R., May 2006. This paper specifies several criteria for determining whether the expanded policy attention about the focus on the quality of FFN care is warranted and what form it should take. www.hspc.org/publications/pdf/APHSApaper05.RRF.pdf

Sparking Connections: Community-Based Strategies for Helping Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers Meet the Needs of Employees, their Children and Employers by Marta Lopez, Peg Sprague, Nina Sazer O'Donnell, and Deborah Stahl, January 2003. This document presents an initiative to identify community-based strategies for helping family, friend, and neighbor

caregivers meet the needs of working parents, their children, and employers. Model initiatives are presented to illustrate some of the creative ways that community organizations and public and private partnerships are beginning to address the needs of family, friend, and neighbor caregivers. For a copy of this report, contact the Families and Work Institute at 212-465-2044 or on the Web at <http://www.familiesandwork.org/publications/sparking.html>.

The Use of Family, Friend and Neighbor Care: Findings from a Survey of State Policies, by Toni Porter and Shannon M. Kearns, January 2005. This paper presents data about state regulations, subsidy policies, and special initiatives for family, friend, and neighbor child care providers based on the results of a 48-State survey. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.bankstreet.edu/gems/ICCC/surveypaperfinal.pdf>.

Organizing and Supporting Home-Based Child Care: A Guide for Supporting Parents and Informal and Regulated Child Care Providers, by Kay Hutchinson, Kay Sohl, and Marnie Vlahos, 2004. This report describes models of support groups for informal care and a self-assessment tool for individuals who are considering becoming a family child care provider is appended. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/model%20documents/Final%20Organizing%20and%20Supporting.pdf>.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

Economic Success Clearinghouse — An online clearinghouse that connects leaders to resources about effective policies, programs and financing strategies that help low-income families. It provides links to policy-relevant research and tools by The Finance Project and others across a range of topics, including: Welfare; Workforce Development; Work Supports; Income Supplements; and Asset Development. To learn more, visit: www.financeproject.org/irc/win.

Promising Practices Catalog — The Promising Practices catalog is designed to help users learn about innovative initiatives across the country that can serve as ideas and examples for leaders nationwide. It includes over 900 promising practices profiled by The Finance Project in our main areas of work. There are more than 109 promising practices related to youth development issues. Users can search the catalog by a general keyword search or policy and program areas; state and locality; lead agency; and funding sources. Visit: www.financeproject.org/irc/promising.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

The Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: What Makes the Difference? by Ellen Galinsky, February 2006. This paper, written for the Committee for Economic Development, examines the factors associated with high-quality early education programs and explores what those programs actually did to have such lasting impact decades later. To read the full report, visit <http://familiesandwork.org/eproducts/ced.pdf>.

Getting Punched: The Job and Family Clock...It's Time for Flexible Work for Workers of All Wages by Jodie Levin-Epstein, CLASP, July, 2006. This report includes facts on the dramatic labor market changes that result in workers facing dueling responsibilities – those at work and those at home. Businesses that recognize this tension address it through responsive

scheduling and paid time off and these businesses benefit from cost savings when they do. The report suggests 10 ways that government should get more involved in promoting responsive workplaces for workers of all wage levels. To read the full report visit http://www.clasp.org/publications/getting_punched_fullnotes.pdf.

A Guide to Calculating the Cost of Quality Early Care and Education by Helene Stebbins and Barbara Hanson Langford, The Finance Project, May 2006. This brief outlines a strategy for estimating the cost of high-quality early care and education systems. To read the full brief visit <http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/costguide.pdf>.

2006 Kids Count Data Book. From The Annie E. Casey Foundation. The latest Kids Count data book reveals that the U.S. is no longer steadily improving in all indicators of child well-being. Three of the ten indicators used to create an index of child well-being have worsened since 2000, including the number of children living in poverty, the percentage of babies born at a low birthweight, and the number of children living in a household where no parent has steady employment. The full report as well as an interactive database is available online at www.acef.org/kidscount.

Get the Prescription: Child Care Workers Need Paid Sick Days. From the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). A fact sheet by Jodie Levin-Epstein of, lays out the importance of paid sick days to child care workers. Child care is one of the lowest paid professions, making unpaid time off for child care workers especially difficult financially. Moreover, child care workers are more likely to be exposed to illnesses because of the nature of their work. The report suggests legislation and other avenues to support paid sick days for child care workers. To read the fact sheet visit http://www.clasp.org/publications/get_prescription.pdf.