



BC Family Child Care Association Caregiver Connection

Fall 2013



Join Us In Going Green!



BCFCCA is excited to announce that we are **going green!** In an effort to save on both environmental and financial resources, BCFCCA will distribute all newsletters electronically (by email), beginning with our next issue, Winter 2013.

The online newsletter will still include all the information you have enjoyed in the past quarterly issues. This format allows us to provide you with more photos and hyperlinks to more resources; while allowing us to share information with you faster and more efficiently than we have in the past.

Whether you are joining or renewing your membership for the 2013/2014 year; please make sure we have your current email address and that you accept us as a sender so that the newsletter doesn't end up in spam or junk mail.



In support of our members who are unable to receive email, we will continue to mail out the current issue.

We are confident you will appreciate this change and encourage you to stay informed on news and events by checking our website at www.bcfcca.ca

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Download a membership form at www.bcfcca.ca under the membership

If you haven't had a moment to spare, with all the beautiful weather we have been having; now is the time to renew your **BC Family Child Care Association** membership for the **2013/2014 year**.

**Being a member of BCFCCA is all about discovering opportunities.
Renew your membership today and continue your discovery!**

Get the most from your membership.
Join forces with us to strengthen quality child care in British Columbia!

Watch for an email inviting you to a **Members Only** Facebook page.
A place for caring and sharing!



BCFCCA News

Hello everyone,

As was announced at our AGM in June at our fabulous conference in Nanaimo, Diane Bellesen has stepped down as Chair of BCFCCA. As well as Christine MacLeod was stepping away from her role on the board but as always both women will be hard at work in the background for Family Child Care in BC.

The board felt that we had some big shoes to fill and with this it was decided by the board that we would move forward with Co-Chairs. As previously announced Vicki Lepper and Rena Laberge are your new Co-Chairs for BCFCCA.

In our last newsletter we introduced the board (Carmen Barclay, Reddy Chan, Joanne Cruickshank, Rena Laberge, Vicki Lepper and Deb Smith).

For those of you who don't know us-here is a little bit about your Co-Chairs:

Rena Laberge has been with the BCFCCA board in different capacities since 2002 and is presently the President of SVIFCCA in Victoria. Rena runs her own Licensed Family Child Care in her home in Victoria and has been doing so since 1995. Rena facilitates workshops for child care providers and is always on the lookout for ways to help providers in their chosen profession.

Vicki Lepper has a Licensed Family Child Care in Coquitlam and has been providing child care for over 20 years. In 2011, Vicki became a board member for BCFCCA. Vicki is a facilitator of "Good Beginnings" and also facilitates workshops for child care providers. Vicki is actively involved in her community, networks with child care providers and also is on the "Tri-Cities Early Childhood Development Committee". Vicki has been nominated for many awards and in 2012, she was the "Individual" recipient of "The Tri-Cities Award of Excellence Working with Young Children" for her exceptional work for making the Tri-Cities a better place for families and children.

Rena and Vicki hope to bring a strong voice for FCC to the position of Co-Chair and are looking forward to working for all the members of BCFCCA and Family Child Care providers in BC.

"In a country in which you cannot legally cut hair without a licence, fix homes without a licence [Child care] is no different, and we should expect no less for young children."

Don Giesbrecht
Canadian Child Care Federation



Co—Chairs:

Rena Laberge

2012—2014

Vicki Lepper

2012—2014 BCFCCA member council rep.

email: chair@bcfcca.ca

Directors:

Joanne Cruickshank

2012– 2014

Reddy Chan

2012—2014

Carmen Barclay

2013—2014 appointed CCCF member council rep.

Debra Smith

2013—2014 appointed

A Community Approach to Resilient Children

Collectively as parents and caregivers, relatives, friends, mentors:

We are all raising the current generation together, so how can we, as a community, assist young people to thrive and become resilient?

The current generation's adulthood will be completely unlike our own. Not only are things moving, changing, and growing faster than ever in the realms of technology, but environmental resources, available energy, and multiple facets of the economy are slowing down. These forces oppose each other in a way that is both difficult to follow and difficult to navigate.

Let's first revisit our own values and priorities, making sure they reflect a resilient and sustainable approach so that we can be sure that we're offering sound guidance to the next generation.

There is no doubt that the future we are headed into will be very unlike the one we've been primed to expect. Unfortunately for this up-and-coming generation of children and youth, most of them have spent their lives awash in the cultural promise of *bigger, better, faster, more*. Their expectations have been shaped accordingly. One of the most wonderful traits of humans is that we are adaptable, though easily stressed. We generally prefer to adapt slowly and gently, rather than in abrupt response to crisis conditions. We can choose this slower pace if we want to, which will allow us to retain control and relax in the knowledge that we are steering our own course to the best of our ability. It would help if we lead by example and know our own values as we help the children to develop new perspectives on preparing for what will likely be a different kind of future.

We could work collectively towards:

- A smaller/moderate/slower kind of future.
- A future in which community cooperation and connection carry a higher value than consumer acquisition.
- A future in which resources – including food, water, energy, and belongings – are stewarded and maintained, rather than being disposed of and replaced.
- A future in which reduce/reuse/recycle goes without saying and goods are valued for their longevity and reparability.
- A future in which people who can make or fix useful and necessary things are valued more highly in the workforce than people whose businesses and/or skills relate only to luxury living.



Communities and families in which children experience a higher level of self-sufficiency as the norm will have an easier time adjusting to changes that limit their consumer power. If the children have grown up thinking that vegetables come from the backyard and the best presents are handmade, they've been given a gift of perspective. If they grow up in a vitally supportive community, they will be likely to cultivate community wherever they land. If they've spent their lives eagerly awaiting hand-me-downs from others and taking care of their clothing so it can be handed down, they will innately understand the chain of giving and receiving that operates outside of the "entitlement" way of thinking. If they grow up taking energy and resource conservation for granted, those habits will carry them through an adulthood of potential scarcity.

Emotional resilience is a very important part of preparing for a future of potential scarcity. Our children – and we – need to have connections with emotionally healthy people who have relevant wisdom, skills, and tools to share and it's not too late to start building community and learning from others. If we help our children experience the benefit of such connections, they will grow into adults who turn around and do the same for others, and the cycle will go on and on.

Personal resilience will be an extremely powerful tool in the future that we face. Honestly assess what you are modeling for the children in your life, and make sure that everything you teach – through both your words and actions – is fully aligned with your beliefs about the future. The example of adults is an extremely powerful force in the lives of children and youth, and so we need to start with ourselves in raising kids for a resilient future.

BCFCCA Member Spotlight on Tanya Brown

Its 2009, I'm a new Mom to two boys 11.5 months apart and my maternity leave is ending, I had been searching for childcare for over a year without much success or support and then we moved neighbourhoods, which made matters worse. Like everyone else, I contacted another agency who as it turned out didn't actually serve the community I was living in (or the community I ended up moving to.) Just a few months before returning to work I had a family friend lined up who, at the last minute rescinded on our agreement; now what? I'll do it myself! Coming from a professional, corporate background I knew I had the business sense to open my own business, but what did that look like in practise? I knew what I wanted in a child care provider for my boys, I knew I wanted to deal with a professional who took their industry seriously and had the credentials and personality to back it up, I knew I had by default become the "go to" lady for family and friends when they found themselves in a bind for their children's care during my almost 2 year maternity leave, and I knew this essential service was lacking in the area I now called home.

Tanya's Tots



Tanya & family



I set out to get information about what it took to become a child care provider and open my own business and not just to be a "stay at home Mom looking to make extra money." I was turned on to BCFCCA who provided my education in the Good Beginnings course; this in depth study really prepared me for becoming a child care provider, opening a business as well as giving me true readiness for the licensing process. I had tremendous support and feedback from my instructor, flexibility to do the course at my own pace via online (as I'm a quick study), as well as access to numerous materials; which I cannot, to this day, run my business without (record keeping calendar, contracts, etc.) I faithfully renew my membership each year with BCFCCA and proudly hang my certificate on my wall with all of my other credentials.

Being part of a professional organization takes my business to the next level of professionalism, imparting onto my clients (past, present, and potential) that I take what I do seriously, gives them faith that I will be reliable and trustworthy, and instils the extra vote of confidence that they are making the right decision in choosing me. Having access to workshops and conferences, staying abreast of changes in my profession as well as having a collective voice through the BCFCCA as my speaker when decisions are being made on behalf of the child care industry makes me feel heard and the child care industry is being fairly represented. Receiving the newsletters keeps me motivated, inspired and engaged in the career I've chosen and having these fresh perspectives from those articles also gives new ideas for recipes, arts and crafts and the like, keep things exciting.

I'm entering my Fifth year in business and truly believe without the foundation built by the BCFCCA, as well as supporting blocks and tools from them along the way, I would not have been out of the gate successful or continue to be as successful as I am today. So much so, as my waitlist continued to grow, I decided to expand a few years ago and operate at full licensing capacity "hiring" my husband (hockey coach and true life big kid) making it a real family business, still going strong with no end in sight; even though our boys are now in school themselves.



10 Tips for Beginning Child Care Providers

By Carolyn Ross Tomlin



1. **Learn from others.** Listen to more experienced mentors. Observe how they handle disruptive situations. Watch how they diffuse a tense situation.
2. **Expect great things to happen.** Be excited about your work each day. A child's first teacher is often the one he or she remembers the most. You could be that person in the life of the children you teach.
3. **Learn to be flexible.** Although young children need a consistent schedule, allow for the unexpected. What if snow starts falling? Or, a bulldozer is working nearby? Or, a helicopter hovers overhead? Make use of these teachable moments.
4. **Leave personal problems at home.** Begin each day with a warm, friendly greeting for each child who enters your program. Tuck personal problems away until later. A smile reassures parents that you will care for their child until they return.
5. **Maintain a clean, safe environment.** Is your program one in which you would want your own child to spend the day? Look around. Make a list of potential hazards. Prevention could keep an accident from happening.
6. **Respect individual differences in each child.** Realize that each child has a different learning style. Some children learn the best in a visual mode, such as watching a demonstration. Others learn in an auditory mode, such as listening to instruction. Still others learn best in a kinesthetic style which includes using the hands to feel, touch, and explore. Research shows that teachers usually teach in the mode in which they learn best. Evaluate each child and find his or her best learning style.
7. **Develop a primary bonding process.** David P. Weikart, President and Founder of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation recommends bonding with the children in your care. Some of your children may be from homeless shelters or dysfunctional families. They may exhibit aggressive behaviour, signs of withdrawal, or disruptive conduct. Realize that a structured environment, consistent daily routine, and shared control between adult and child are critical to the distressed child to take ownership of their learning.
8. **Never stop learning.** Keep an open mind. Read recent reports on child care. Visit other programs to discover techniques you could incorporate. Check for personal development classes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in your area. Consider finishing a degree or take refresher courses at a local college.
9. **Attend professional meetings.** Being an active member of a professional organization provides you with a network of like-minded individuals. Working alone, you cannot make many changes. But collectively, your voice can make a difference. You'll become familiar with laws that affect your program, standards, developmentally appropriate curriculum, suggestions for hiring and dismissal of employees, pay scales, benefits, keeping records, plus numerous other items vital to the success of a child care program.
10. **Establish a trusting relationship with partners.** Choosing the right child care program is of vital importance to parents. What are people saying about your program throughout your community? Is your staff one that welcomes parents? Are children excited about coming each morning? Do parents feel their child is in a safe environment? Think about these questions and list ways you can improve.



Check the BCFCCA website for member group information, workshops, events and resources

www.bcfcca.ca

Working with Families

Many child care providers say that working with families is the most challenging part of being a child care provider. It is important to let families know your rules and what you expect before you accept a child into care. An easy way to do this is to have the rules and expectations written. As a caregiver, you need to think through what is right for you and to set realistic expectations.

Consider having your written policies in a “loose leaf” manner, so you can make additions or changes more easily when they are needed. Whenever you make a change or update your policies, give every family a copy of those changes. Give a copy of your written policies when a family enrolls a child in your care. After parents/guardians have had time to read over the policies, have them sign a copy verifying they have read the policies. Remind parents/guardians to review your policies every few months.

You can also communicate these expectations through a new family letter, interviews, contracts, newsletters, daily logs, notes, bulletin boards, and quick conversations when families drop off or pick up their children.



Steps Before Taking a Child in Your Home

1. Plan for first telephone call.
 2. Visit with family and child.
 3. Trial visit and time of adjustment.
 4. Agreement/contract.
-

1. PLAN FOR FIRST TELEPHONE CALL

Most families looking for child care will call first to get information about you and your program. Plan ahead what you will tell them.

- Where you are located.
- What hours you provide care.
- What ages of children you care for.
- If you provide meals and snacks.
- How much you charge.
- If you charge more for infants.
- If you charge less for several children from the same family.
- If you care for sick children.
- If you plan activities for the children.
- If the children play outside.
- How you discipline children.
- If families have to pay when a child does not come.

Information you want to get from the family includes:

- Age of the child (birthday).
- Hours and days when care is needed.
- Any special requirements: allergies, disabilities, etc.

If the family's need matches what you offer then set up a time for a visit.

Never accept a child for care over the telephone.



Working with Families

2. VISIT WITH FAMILY AND CHILD

Plan a first visit with the family and child during a time when you are not providing care for other children.

You will want to:

- Show them around your home. Make sure they see where the children eat, where they play (indoors and out), and where they take naps.
- Give them a written copy of your rules, payment schedule, program, etc. Go over this information with the family. This will help prevent misunderstandings in the future.
- Go over the daily routine with the family.
- Provide activities for the child while you are talking with them. This will help the child feel comfortable in your home. If the child is old enough to talk, spend some time talking with him.
- Tell the family what you want the child to call you. Most providers prefer using their first names, but you may want children to call you Mrs., Mr., or Miss _____.
- Get information about the family – address and telephone number, where the parents/guardians work with the address and phone number, and emergency contact information for others when they cannot be reached.
- Get information about the child – special interests, if there are siblings, fears, a nickname, eating and sleeping habits, and allergies or other health problems.
- Let the family know they can come and visit any time.
- Remind them that you are running a business. You will be firm about things such as picking up a child promptly, payment of fees on time, and following other rules.

3. TRIAL VISIT AND TIME OF ADJUSTMENT

It is important for the family and child to make a trial visit to your home for an hour or so when the other children are there. You should schedule the visit when they have a chance to see what you do and how you work with the children in your care.

If a family is interested in child care at your home, begin with a two-week adjustment period. This gives you and them time to see if the child will “fit in” with you and the other children in your care.

If after the two-week adjustment period you do not feel the arrangement will work, that is the time to suggest that they find other care for their child. This is also the time for them to decide whether or not to keep their child in your care.

4. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT

If you and the family agree to child care in your home, an agreement or contract between you and the family should be signed.

Available Now!

**BC Family Child Care Association's
newly revised:**

**Parent/Child Care Provider Contract Package
(includes a registration package, contract and
emergency permission card)**

**Order forms are available on our website:
www.bcfcca.ca , under the 'Store' tab.**

Reprinted with permission from: 101 ways to Care for Kids, A Handbook for Child Care Providers, Better Kid Care-Penn State.

Transitions and Anxiety, are they related?

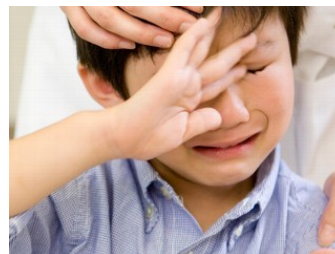


September is the start of a new school year and also a change in seasons, with changes such as these, we need to recognize that each and every child reacts differently to transitions. A child entering childcare or the school system, undergoes some obvious transitions, such as the differences from their home to childcare or school. Alongside this, children usually negotiate more subtle transitions, such as changes to their daily routine and a shift in their relationships and attachments. Some children may also experience a strong sense of cultural dislocation. The initial transition to childcare is hugely significant for children and they often experience feelings of confusion, anxiety, sadness and fear.

Transitions become more difficult for the child if a number of placements in different childcares occur, the cumulative effects of loss and disruption to relationships, attachments, identity and security may be highly detrimental to the child.

Some children do not deal with transitions and show signs of anxiety, which may show as the following:

- negative thinking patterns such as imagining the worst, over-exaggerating the negatives, rigidity and inflexibility, self-criticism, guilty thoughts
- anger, aggression, restlessness, irritability, tantrums, opposition and defiance
- constantly worrying about things that might happen or have happened
- crying
- physical complaints such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue
- avoidance behaviors, such as avoiding things or places or refusing to do things or go places
- sleeping difficulties, such as difficulty falling or staying asleep, nightmares, or night terror
- perfectionism
- excessive clinginess and separation anxiety
- procrastination
- poor memory and concentration
- withdrawal from activities and family interactions
- eating disturbances



You can support the anxious child in the following ways:

- Establish consistent daily routines and structure to reduce anxiety and regular daily patterns which will emphasize predictability and give a sense of control to the child. Anxious children do not cope well with a disorganized, spontaneous life style.
- Take care of the basic needs of the child to prevent fatigue and hunger.
- Make sure the child gets enough outdoor time to play and get some exercise. Exercise is helpful in relieving stress and helps the child's body relax.
- Set boundaries. It is important for children to have limits set and consequences for breaking the limits. Children feel secure when there are limits setting restrictions on inappropriate behaviors.
- Help the child to recognize and name various feelings they or others may experience. Discuss how people's facial expressions show their feelings and that showing your feelings is an important way for others to understand how you are feeling.
- Comfort and sooth the child through verbal reassurances of safety and by rocking, cuddling, holding, singing, and telling stories. Children may sometimes need comforting and soothing that seems to be too "babyish" for the child's age, however, anxious children do need extra soothing experiences that relax and relieve the tension in their bodies.
- Teach them how to problem-solve by defining the problem, brainstorming all possible solutions and their consequences, and choosing the best solution.

Research suggests that attention to how transitions are managed for children can mitigate trauma and ease their anxiety.

Tips on Coping with Transitions



Finally, here are 10 tips to help children cope with transitions:

1. Take time to listen. Children may have concerns during transition. Listen to and answer questions as simply and honestly as you can.
2. Give children reassurance. Assure the child that everything will be okay and that what they may be feeling is normal.
3. Be alert for significant changes. Note changes in sleeping patterns, eating habits, or physical and emotional wellbeing. If prolonged and significant, your observations with the child's parent and discuss the need to seek professional support.
4. Allow children some control over their environment. Let children to take an active part in the planning of things such as meals, snacks and activities. Allow children time and space to play. Remember to give the children a time frame before they need to move on to another activity or event.
5. Set up normal routines. Structure and routine help children feel safe and secure. Maintain rules and expectations.
6. Be sensitive to emotions. Give children time to adapt. Be patient and supportive by allowing them to express feelings.
7. Give children extra time and attention. Find time for special activities. They need close personal attention in order to feel safe and secure.
8. Be a model for the children. Children learn how to cope by watching and modeling how you respond to stress.
9. Help children to get involved in different activities. Children benefit from active socialization.
10. Say goodbye and hello. Make sure the parent's take the time to say goodbye to the child and not "sneak" out the door.



CANADIAN
CHILD CARE
FEDERATION

FÉDÉRATION
CANADIENNE DES
SERVICES DE GARDE
À L'ENFANCE

Have you taken advantage of your membership with the Canadian Child Care Federation, which is included in your yearly membership fee with BCFCCA.?

Go to www.cccf-fcsge.ca/affiliates to enter as a member and start benefiting from all that CCCF has to offer.

We have had some media coverage of the letter to the Premiers. The Toronto Star published an article and it can be found at:

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/07/24/premiers_urged_to_make_daycare_a_priority_at_annual_conference.html

To read ' An Open Letter to the Premiers 'go to www.bcfcca.ca under What's New

This & That

TOUCH-A-TRUCK EVENT August 10, 2013

SVIFCCA just spent a fabulous day volunteering at the Touch-A-Truck Event held at Western Speedway in Langford, BC. This event allows children of all ages (adultstoo) to climb in and over all the trucks. There were police cars, fire engines, buses (single, double and tour), helicopters, building equipment (diggers, caterpillars, backhoes), motor cycles, race cars and more. All the people entering paid a nominal fee and everything was free inside. All the children received goody bags with cool items, a plastic fire hat and many more things.

The weather began a little gloomy but as we had a tent overhead, we proceeded to set up the tables and arrange the art supplies ready for the first children. SVIFCCA had been asked to run the children's Arts & Craft tent. We had spent a fun day previously cutting all the necessary items so no-one would have to wait for supplies. There was a stamping table with 12 stamps of various trucks, cars, etc., stencils that could be traced to make their own vehicles which then they could decorate to their heart's desire, Traffic lights, numerous colouring sheets with markers, crayons or bingo daubers to use. All the children attending were given a checker flag to wave at the race cars. The weather turned sunny and the children came and everyone had fun and the parents remarked on the various stations set up as everything was adaptable to all ages.

We began at 8:30am and were all packed up by 2:30pm and all the volunteers had a great time. We are looking forward to doing it again, if asked, next year. All the equipment was purchased by them and at the end, they donated it to our Association, some can be saved and used next year or at our Theme Day in Summer 2014.



Looking for a change...

A new online course is being offered by the Justice Institute of British Columbia to become a Licensing Officer. It's brand new and the announcement just went out a few weeks ago

<http://www.jibc.ca/programs-courses/schools-departments/school-health-sciences/centre->



Keep the 'Boos' From Becoming 'Boo-Hoos'

From Robin McClure, former About.com Guide

Child care providers often find themselves in the throes of Halloween excitement and fall fun. What are some tips for child care providers in regard to trick or treat or the tradition of Halloween?

Halloween tips for child care providers:

If possible, know the parents' wishes or expectations for their kids for Halloween when in your care. Obviously, this is easier for a provider in a home setting with fewer children than in a daycare with many. For some families, Halloween is not observed; others may insist on "non-scary" only. Still others look forward to costumes and Halloween-type activities and encourage provider activities.

Some providers work Halloween festivities into a storybook day, in which kids are invited to come in costume of their favorite storybook. Others may have children make simple masks out of paper plates or fun foam, and have a fall party. One provider asks some of her closest neighbors to allow her childcare kids to trick or treat in the morning in costume; kids then return to the home for some special fun. Another has parents bring a special treat for all kids (which can be as simple as a plastic spider ring). Providers are so creative, and can make the time around Halloween special and memorable, whether or not Halloween is officially celebrated.

Providers can utilize some of the Halloween themes into a fun and enjoyable learning experience.

Learning about bats and their habits, and then making a bat out of construction paper, perhaps with red glitter for eyes, can be lots of fun. So can watching a pumpkin be carved, and then the seeds be baked. One provider plants pumpkin seeds and then children enjoy watching the pumpkin "patch" grow and flourish in time for fall harvest. Some adventurous providers take children to pumpkin patches for free fun; others make arrangements for a short hay ride or visit to the apple orchard.

If costumes are to be worn, providers should insist that parents bring a change of clothing and also understand that accidents can and will happen on occasion. One provider lamented that parents of a 3-year-old brought her to child care in an exquisite princess costume, then became outraged when she tripped and ripped the hem. If parents don't want any possible harm to come of a costume planned for evening trick or treat, then perhaps an alternative should be brought instead. Costumes are often itchy, uncomfortable, or warm, and after the initial excitement of seeing friends in costumes diminishes, providers often change kids back into play clothes and perhaps celebrate with a fun fall frolic at a neighborhood park.

One provider makes the day's lunch a special "unscary" and exciting treat, such as "finger" sandwiches, goblin juice (colored juice, witches noses (carrot sticks), and bats (jello molds). She says it is her favorite day of the year. Another has a special treat with the caramel apples, in which she carves out noses and face to look like a mini-jack-o-lantern and offers caramel dip with some sprinkles for kids. Other providers may opt to not do anything different and save the sugar-highs and costumes for parents entirely.



Ghost Pops, Gluten Free White Chocolate Covered Chocolate Cake Pops: Ready to eat.

http://www.glutenfreecanteen.com/2012/10/25/halloween-ghost-pops-gluten-free/ghostpops_32eat_sq1k/



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In order to best represent you, BC Family Child Care Association ("BCFCCA") needs members to promote and talk about the need for a strong voice in the field, to promote the unique and valuable contributions family child care providers made everyday. The more members we represent the more influence we'll have to ensure that family child care remains a viable option for parents and providers.

Visit us at: www.bcfcca.ca for up-to-date information

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributor, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the BC Family Child Care Association (BCFCCA).

The Caregiver Connection reserves the right to review and edit submitted material as necessary for inclusion in any issue.

Please direct all comments, submissions,

and inquiries to:

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Green settings for
healthier children



Across the country, early childhood professionals are interested in protecting the health of the young children in their care and in protecting the environment through green, or environmentally friendly, practices. Children are especially vulnerable in their early years, and developmentally, they are susceptible to environmental hazards that may affect their potential for long, healthy lives.

Even though early childhood professionals nurture children in the safest and most protective setting possible, it can be challenging to fully understand the steps to take to prevent inadvertent exposure to hazardous chemicals and conditions. Are children being exposed to asthma triggers? Is there lead in the water? Are there toxins in the plastic items being used? It is alarming how many common environmental conditions such as the presence of dust mites or other asthma triggers and poor ventilation can threaten emerging immune, neurological, and endocrine systems. Some of these challenges are beyond our control, but fortunately, many are easily managed.

Redleaf Press's **Go Green Rating Scale for Early Childhood Settings** and **Go Green Rating Scale for Early Childhood Settings Handbook** address these issues and are a way for early childhood programs to evaluate their practices to create a healthier environment and to inform families about the benefits of doing so.

For more information see www.gogreenratingscale.org