

Resources Especially for Child Care Providers and Preschools

Alert! Alert!

Because NICHCY's website will only remain online until September 30, 2014, most of its rich content has moved to a new home, the **Center for Parent Information and Resources** (CPIR), where it can be kept up to date.

The new address of *Resources Especially for Child Care Providers and Preschools* at the CPIR is:

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/childcare/>

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Resources updated, April 2013

It's a wonderful thing, to care for children, help them grow and change and learn, and keep them safe on their way. For those of you who help families and children every day by providing child care to the young ones or working in preschools, the rest of us say **a profound "thank you." What a job you do!** And with our finest treasures, too—our children.

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Wherever you work, children come to you with gifts, curiosity, challenges, and needs. They are small wonders, to be sure, and as full of diversity as society itself. And because disability is a natural part of life, it's also likely that some of your little ones may have a disability or a [developmental delay](#) that can impact their learning and growth.

As a child care provider or preschool teacher, you may even be among the *first* to notice a child's difficulties or special needs. That's why, quite often, **child care providers and preschool teachers play a key role in recognizing that a child may need special help** and in connecting families with the systems of that help that address children's developmental and disability-related needs.

This page is dedicated to helping child care providers and preschool staff do just that. Here, at NICHCY, you can learn more about disabilities, how to address the needs of wee ones with challenges, and create an inclusive and empowering environment where all children can flourish.

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About Developmental Delays and Disabilities

Recognizing that a child may have a developmental delay or disability is not necessarily an easy matter. Often, it's downright hard to say, because children develop at their own pace and the range of "normal" development is broad. Cultural and linguistic diversity can also add an extra dimension to the question. Does a child have trouble understanding or speaking because of a disability, for example, or because his or her native language is not English? Two resources that shed light on the nature of disability and delay are:

[Developmental milestones](#) | Explore the typical developmental stages and milestones that pediatricians and others use to monitor children's growth and progress over time. Learn about the sequence and timing of a typical child's earliest development and access resources to learn yet more.

[Developmental delay](#) | Find out how "developmental delay" is defined and the role that evaluation plays in identifying children with developmental delays.

Of course, sometimes the disability or delay is known, and as a child care provider you'd like to learn more about the nature of the disability and how you can support the child in your care. NICHCY can be very helpful in this regard, because we have a lot of information on specific disabilities. If you're looking for information about a disability, we encourage you to investigate the [Specific Disabilities](#) pages on our website. Enter these at: <http://nichcy.org/disability/specific/>

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Legal Issues and Questions

A frequent area of concern for child care providers and preschool programs is what they must do legally, when it comes to including children with disabilities in their programs. Here are several salient resources on the subject.

Commonly Asked Questions About Child Care Centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This 13-page publication explains how the requirements of the ADA apply to child care centers. The document also describes some of the Department of Justice's ongoing enforcement efforts in the child care area and provides a resource list on sources of information on the ADA.

www.ada.gov/childqa.htm

Child Care Law Center.

The Child Care Law Center uses legal tools toward making high-quality, affordable child care available to every child, family, and community, while focusing particular attention to low-income families, families and children with disabilities and other special needs, and other families who face barriers in securing and maintaining quality care. Want a quick reference to the ADA for child care providers? Want to know when a child care program is required under the ADA to admit a child with a disability? Visit the Child Care Law Center and find handy information.

<http://www.childcarelaw.org/>

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Approaching Families

When you're a child care provider or preschool teacher, and you suspect that a child in your care may have a disability or delay, you might hesitate over how to bring your concerns to the attention of the child's parents. It's naturally difficult and scary for parents to hear that there may be cause for action or concern with respect to their little one. We have a few suggestions that may help you approach the matter.

For child care providers and private preschools

Know that there are systems of help.

Each state must have a system by which it identifies and helps children who may have a disability or developmental delay, even the youngest baby, toddler, or preschooler. This system is called “Child Find” and it is responsible for doing precisely that. So parents have a place to turn to, to have their child screened and/or evaluated free of charge to see if there is, indeed, a disability or delay. If you talk to parents about your concerns, you’ll want to share this information with them (see the next paragraph), so they know where to go and especially that that screening and evaluation of children are provided free of charge to families.

Find the contact info for the local Child Find office. Wondering how to find where Child Find is? Visit NICHCY’s [State Organizations Search](#). Select your state from the drop-down menu. Your state’s list of organizations will automatically appear. (This is also a very handy resource for families to have, so you may want to print it out and include it in whatever information you share with families.) Look under “State Agencies.”

Depending on the age of the child in question, find the contact information for either: (a) “Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Ages Birth through 2”, or (b) “Programs for Children with Disabilities: Ages 3 through 5.” (If we’re talking about an older child, then you’d find the contact info for “State Department of Education: Special Education.”) Get in touch with that organization, and ask for the contact info for the Child Find office in the community in which the child lives. That’s the information you share with parents.

There are also disability-specific resources.

Early awareness and intervention for young children are two essentials in addressing the child’s individual learning and developmental needs. Are you concerned about....autism? hearing loss? an intellectual disability? a visual impairment? something else? There are specific systems and resources to access for a range of common disabilities in children. We highly recommend accessing these resources, for they are founts of info, support, and guidance.

While taking the time to check these out might be beyond your duties as a child care provider, there may be an appropriate time to tell parents more about the scope of help that’s out there. These resources fall in that category! One webpage in particular will take you (or the parents) into the heart of things, and that’s:

Early Identification of Specific Disabilities and Children At-Risk, at NECTAC (the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center).

<http://www.nectac.org/topics/earlyid/idspecpops.asp>

For preschool teachers in public schools

If you’re teaching preschool in a public school, and you suspect that a child in your classroom has a disability or delay, you’ll want to take a bit different action. Talk to the person at your school (or school district) who is in charge of special education services for children with disabilities. Find out your school’s policies regarding referring children for evaluation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Being well-acquainted with local policies will be extremely helpful in determining the next steps you should take with respect to the child, his or her parents, and the school system itself.

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Working with Diverse Families

Without a doubt, we are a diverse people! Your work as a child care provider most likely brings you into close contact with a spectrum of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. It’s important to realize that cultures do not necessarily view disabilities in children in the same manner we might, and it’s very helpful to have some handy materials on disabilities in other languages. To that end, might these resources help?

NICHCY...en español.

For Spanish-speaking families.

<http://nichcy.org/espanol/>

Birth to six prescreen chart for vision, hearing and development...in Ampheric Ethiopian, Cambodian, Chinese,

Farsi, Hmong, Hungarian, Korean, Laotian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Available from CLAS, Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. Listed under the category "Child Find Materials."

<http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/special/childfind/index.html>

About disability help...in Hmong.

<http://www.pacer.org/publications/hmongseasian.asp>

About disability help...in Somalian.

<http://www.pacer.org/publications/somali.asp>

Early intervention is critical.

Available in languages: Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Yiddish

This brochure from the state of New York is dedicated to raising public awareness of early intervention. It describes available services and how parents could ask for help.

Individual links to the brochure in the different languages are available at CLAS, under "Child Find Materials," at:

<http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/special/childfind/index.html>

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Helping Children Transition to Next Settings

As children leave your care and head off to new settings, you may wish to work with families to make the transition a smooth one. A lot is known about how to do just that, especially if the transition is from early intervention care to preschool or school-based services. Here are two resources that will help you prepare children with disabilities to move on.

Transition from early intervention to preschool.

NICHCY's page on the subject.

<http://nichcy.org/babies/transition>

Video on early childhood transition.

This 8-minute video provides an overview of the desirable outcomes of transition, research identifying effective transition practices, as well as the legal requirements of early childhood transition.

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources>

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Resources of Information on Early Childhood Care

There's a lot of expertise out there with respect to early childhood settings and care, some specializing in disability issues and others not. Here is a mini-list of centers and groups to consult to learn more about all manner of things child-care.

ChildCare.gov.

Your official source for all U.S. government child care information.

<http://www.childcare.gov/>

Child Care Aware.

<http://www.childcareaware.org/>

Healthy Kids, Healthy Care.

This website was developed by the National Resource Center for Health in Child Care and Early Education.

<http://healthykids.us/>

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

This organization addresses the issues of safety and health in child care and early education settings. They also provide licensure regulations from 50 states and DC. Lots of info in Spanish, too!

<http://nrckids.org/>

National Network for Child Care.

<http://www.nncc.org/homepage.html>

Office of Child Care.

The Office of Child Care, a program of the Administration for Families and Children, supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and promotes children's learning by improving the quality of early care and education and afterschool programs.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/>

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