The Director's Toolbox

Division of Child
Care and Development

Commonwealth
of Virginia

2007

The Director's Toolbox
Revised Edition

Orientation of the New Staff Member in the Child Day Center

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You may wonder why the
"Alice in Wonderland" theme is used in the manual.

It is to remind you that
all children live in a world of wonder,
a land full of surprises,
sometimes funny, sometimes frightening.

Children live, like Alice, in a world
that is always changing.
It is a reminder that you were once a child
and thought like a child.

We hope you can regain that continuous wonder
that was once a most important thing in your life.

It is now most important in the lives of the children
for whom you care.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the fifth edition of **The Director's Toolbox**. It incorporates changes that have resulted from legislation and amendments to the **Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers** and the **Regulation for Criminal Record Checks for Child Welfare Agencies**.

The Director's Toolbox was originally developed in 1986 and later revised in 1991 by Mary Steinhardt and Ann Francis, experts in the field of early childhood development. Their work was done under contract to the Division of Licensing Programs, Virginia Department of Social Services and under the supervision of Catherine Loveland, manager of the Office of Training, Education, and Consultation in the Division of Licensing Programs. Since its development, the Director's Toolbox has been widely distributed to child day center directors and continues to be in much demand.

The current edition of The Director's Toolbox is a joint effort of the staff of the Virginia Department of Social Services Division of Child Care and Development and Division of Licensing.

This edition of The Director's Toolbox incorporates the Alice in Wonderland theme, as did the previous editions. The illustrations and the quotations are derived from Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass, originally published in 1865 and 1871 respectively.

The Division of Child Care and Development wishes to thank all of the people who have contributed to The Director's Toolbox. We hope that the fifth edition is as valuable to child day center staff as were the previous four editions.

LICENSING CONTACT INFORMATION

Home Office
Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Licensing Programs
7 N. Eighth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Main Phone: (804) 726-7165
Child Welfare Unit Phone: (804) 726-7139
Child Welfare Unit Serves: Childrens Residential
Facilities & Child-Placing Agencies

Peninsula Licensing Office
2600 Washington Avenue, Suite 202
Newport News, VA 23607
Phone: (757) 247-8020
Counties: Gloucester, Greensville, Isle of Wight, James
City, Mathews, Middlesex, South Hampton, Surry, Sussex,
York
Cities: Emporia, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News,
Poquoson, Williamsburg

Central Licensing Office
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130
Richmond, VA 23229-5008
Phone: (804) 662-9743
Counties: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Caroline, Charles
City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex,
Fluvanna, Goochland, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, King and
Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Louisa,
Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Northumberland,
Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George,
Richmond, Westmoreland.
Cities: Blackstone, Colonial Heights, Farmville, Hopewell,
Lawerenceville, Petersburg, Richmond, South Boston,
WestPoint

Piedmont Licensing Office
Commonwealth of Virginia Bldg.
210 Church Avenue, SW, Suite 100
Roanoke, VA 24011
Phone: (540) 857-7920
Counties: Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bath,
Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Henry,
Nelson, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Roanoke, Rockbridge
Cities: Bedford, Buena Vista, Covington, Danville,
Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Roanoke, Salem

Eastern Licensing Office
Pembroke Office Park
Pembroke IV Office Building, Suite 300
Virginia Beach, VA 23462-5496
Phone: (757) 491-3990
Counties: Accomack, Greensville, Northampton, South
Hampton
Cities: Chesapeake, Emporia, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth,
Suffolk, Virginia Beach

Valley Licensing Office
Augusta Professional Park
57 Beam Lane, Suite 303
Fishersville, VA 22939
Phone: (540) 332-2330
Counties: Albemarle, Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Greene,
Highland, Madison, Orange, Page, Rockingham,
Shenandoah, Warren
Cities: Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Staunton,
Waynesboro, Winchester

Fairfax Licensing Office
11320 Random Hills Road, Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: (703) 934-1505
Counties: Arlington, Loudoun, Fairfax
Cities: Alexandria, Annandale, Centreville, Fairfax, Falls
Church, Herndon

Western Licensing Office
190 Patton Street
Abingdon, VA 24210
Phone: (276) 676-5490
Counties: Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd,
Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott,
Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe
Cities: Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Bristol, Galax, Norton,
Radford

Northern Licensing Office
170 West Shirley Avenue, Suite 200
Warrenton, Virginia 20186
Phone: (540) 347-6345
Counties: Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Rappahannock,
Spotsylvania, Stafford
Cities: Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park,
Woodbridge, Dale City

FOREWORD

"Congratulations! You got the job!"

"Great! When do you want me to start?"

As the director of a child day center, you may be saying to yourself, "Now, what do I do? I've just hired a person who has no training in working with children, and I need her to begin right away. Where do I start?"

Your new staff member may be a recent high school graduate, a person who wants to work part-time, or an older individual just entering the field of early childhood education. There are policies, procedures, activities, and skills that she needs to learn right away to be able to respond to the demands that will be made on her. The task of properly orienting an eager, yet unskilled person to the complexities involved in day care can seem overwhelming, particularly when coupled with the blocked plumbing, the broken-down bus, and the two staff members who just called in sick! Yet, a good orientation for your new staff is critical, both to meet licensing requirements and to provide the quality child care on which your center prides itself. Orientation is also critical in retaining your new staff. If you give her the help she needs when she needs it, the child care experience will be exciting and challenging, rather than frustrating and overwhelming.

Clearly, we cannot write your orientation manual for you, any more than we can write your policy and procedures manual or your parents' handbook. Centers come in too many sizes, shapes, and styles to make such an approach practical or even desirable. You and your center have your own ways of doing things. Such variety helps meet the diverse needs of Virginia's parents and children. This manual is meant to assist you in meeting the **Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers**, hereafter referred to as the **Licensing Standards**.

This manual will provide you with guides and outlines, sample policies and procedures, and forms and checklists to help you through the process of developing or updating your own orientation program. We have attempted to label those items necessary to meet **Licensing Standards** requirements. The manner in which you meet those requirements may be suggested in this manual; however, you have the freedom and the responsibility to choose ways of meeting the **Licensing Standards**, which suit you and your center's needs.

This manual is divided into four chapters: Getting Started; Policies and Procedures; Health and Safety; and Orientation, Training, and Staff Development. The **Licensing Standards** are discussed and outlined throughout the manual in relation to the specific content areas. As you adapt this material to your own center, it can become a basis for discussion with prospective and new staff as well as with your seasoned staff members. Opening the lines of communication will give the staff a renewed understanding of licensing, administrative issues, and responsibilities as they relate to quality care for young children. As director, you will provide additional insights to staff

about caring for children. If staff members are inexperienced, you will have made clear the difference between baby-sitting and early childhood education. If they are parents, they will recognize goals that are common to parenthood and the center. They will also appreciate the support to families that quality care provides. If a new staff person has the notion that all one must do is "love" children, she may begin to see that "love" has knowledge and skills attached to it.

The manual and its references to the **Licensing Standards** are, to the best of our knowledge, accurate as of December 1, 2006. Should discrepancies exist between this manual and the **Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers**, the **Licensing Standards** must take precedence.

Please be aware that **Licensing Standards** are under constant revision due to changes in research findings, generally acceptable practices in child care, and laws enacted by the General Assembly. Please contact your regional licensing inspector to review your plans carefully before applying for licensure (new applicants are required to attend an orientation training before they are eligible to become licensed) or if you have specific questions about requirements related to the Licensing Standards. We hope you find this manual helpful in developing and updating your orientation program. If you have suggestions or comments, please send them to:

Division of Child Care and Development
Virginia Department of Social Services
7 North Eighth Street
Richmond, VA 23219-3301

Telephone (804) 726-7652

JOYS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING AND NURTURING

♦ Ours is a challenging, fulfilling profession.

♦ The contributions of early childhood, educators are many, from fostering children's development of self-esteem and healthy self-concept to enhancing language and literacy skills.

♦ The joys of early childhood teaching and nurturing are just as numerous. Ours is the sole profession where every talent and every personal interest can be explored, employed and emphasized. There are countless opportunities to celebrate diverse events, to participate in learning experiences for both children and staff members. Clearly, our profession entails a great deal of creativity, flexibility, and independence.

♦ There are also often unnoted fringe benefits: free lunch, free parking, and often free or reduced tuition for one's own children.

♦ The work of early childhood teachers does not go unnoticed. Administrators recognize high quality teaching and nurturing. Parents also show great appreciation for the support to families provided through quality child care.

♦ There is an increasing awareness of the importance of the early childhood years. Consequently, there is recognition of the critical nature of the experiences that children gain in a quality program.

Children may not always
remember what you say!!

But, they will always
remember how you made
them feel!!!

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INTRODUCTION ♦ ♣ ♥ ♠

GETTING ACQUAINTED

The orientation to your program begins with the recruitment, interviewing, and hiring process. During this process the attitude, skills, and knowledge you exhibit to potential staff members, communicate your expectation, as well as highlights the diverse components entailed in this profession. Without question, how and what you communicate during the hiring interview represents a significant part of program orientation.

Prior to the interview, you have defined the organization into which the new staff member will join. Your definition is based on many elements, such as:

♣ the type of program you offer

♣ the size of your center

♣ the needs and characteristics of the children and parents you serve

♣ the standards to which the new employee must meet or exceed

♣ your center's guiding philosophy, which defines the basis for curriculum, activities and the priorities that determine budget and expenditures

♣ your center's history (Even if you are brand new, you want your staff members to share the development and progress, which you make.)

♣ your goals for the children in the center which influence the program, schedule, communication, evaluation, the interaction between children and adults; and

♣ your policies and procedures concerning all aspects of your program, such as absences, biting, clean clothes… xenophobia, yelling, and zippers (You may not call them "policies and procedures" you may call them "rules" or "guidelines"…but you do have them)

In order to orient a new staff person, you will want to have this information clearly identified in your mind as it applies to your center.

The next section will provide you with some sample goal and philosophy statements and other tools, which will help you, explain your center and how it operates to a new staff member.

Note: A child day program is defined in the **Code of Virginia** as "a regularly operating service arrangement for children where, during the absence of a parent or guardian, a person or organization has agreed to assume responsibility for the supervision, protection and well-being of a child under the age of 13 for less than a 24-hour period."

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

What does your center do?
What kind of program do you have?

There are many different kinds of child day programs. To describe your program you must define the type of center, its purpose, its sponsorship, and the scope of services to be provided. The **Licensing Standards** require that the program be "age and stage appropriate." This means the curriculum, environment, equipment, and adult-child interactions are suitable for the ages of the children within a group and the individual needs of any child. It also requires that the program recognize the age span of the children within the group, as well as the needs of the individual child. While the standards reflect specific areas and implications for what is age and stage appropriate, there remains a great variety of program types, purposes, and sponsorships of child day centers. Your program might be:

- ♥ non-profit or proprietary (for-profit)

- ♥ open to the community or restricted to a particular group or company

- ♥ operated under the sponsorship of an agency or institution

- ♥ open for any number of hours per day or any number of days per week

- ♥ restricted in the ages of children accepted

- ♥ church, company, hospital, or school affiliated/sponsored

- ♥ parent or employee cooperative

- ♥ independently owned or franchised by a regional or national corporation

Example of Program Description

The Midtown Learning Center is a proprietary center operated by the Children's Center Corporation of Richmond. The center operates a half-day preschool, a full-day program for children ages 16 months to 6 years, and a family day care system for infants 6 weeks to 16 months old. The center is interracial, interfaith, and has children from many ethnic backgrounds. It provides education and health services to families and children.

The descriptive statement of your own center will be a part of your staff orientation manual, your parents' handbook, and any public relations brochures you may develop.

LICENSING

The director's attitude toward the licensing process will influence the way in which the policies and procedures are followed by each staff member. The licensing process recognizes the special nature of out-of-home care for young children. It also recognizes the responsibilities, which providers acquire when they establish a center to guide the social, physical, cognitive, and emotional development of the child. A positive attitude makes compliance with licensing standards an everyday occurrence. Parent visits and licensing inspections become welcome and easy.

There is increasing awareness of the importance of quality child care. The demand for care is expanding at a very rapid rate. The media attention to abuses in a small number of centers has made the licensing and monitoring by regulating agencies an ever more demanding job. Parents, too, have become much more conscious of their responsibilities and are visiting more often, asking more questions, and comparing centers more systematically.

Insurance companies are asking questions in many areas of training: safety drills, safety equipment, procedures for the administration of medication, and pre-employment screening practices. Also, training in child development/early childhood education, orientation, and the condition of play equipment are issues. These areas are all addressed by the **Licensing Standards**.

PURPOSE

The **Code of Virginia** requires the Child Day-Care Council to adopt standards for certain child day centers. The purpose of the **Licensing Standards** is to protect children who are separated from their parents or guardians during a part of the day by:

> Ensuring that the activities, services, and facilities of centers are conducive to the well-being of children, and

> Reducing risks in the child care environment.

The **Licensing Standards** apply to all programs offered to two or more children under the age of thirteen in a facility that is not the residence of the provider or of any of the children in care **or** thirteen or more children at any location.

Exemptions to licensing are listed in Part I - Definitions, of the **Licensing Standards** under the "child day center" definition. The license issued to the center is to be posted in the center in a place conspicuous to the public. All staff members should have an understanding of the value of licensing.

New staff members are required to know the standards that apply to their responsibilities. This knowledge, of course, helps the center to be in substantial compliance with the **Licensing Standards** and assures the director that all staff members are working together to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Staff members should also know that they might be asked about procedures in their classrooms when license renewal and monitoring inspections are being made.

DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Application fees, as well as other funds, are used to provide training to the staff of licensed child day centers throughout the state. In addition, Child Care and Development funds are used to expand training to regulated and non-regulated providers. Training is coordinated and scheduled through the Division of Child Care and Development. Twelve to thirty sessions are held in each licensing region annually. To date these sessions have covered various topics such as personnel procedures, creative activities for children, behavior management, and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Topics are selected on the basis of surveys, needs as cited by licensing inspectors in the field, and the availability of qualified trainers. Licensed child day centers are notified of upcoming training events through the mail. Information is also available on the State website.

The Division of Child Care Development develops and distributes technical assistance materials such as this **Toolbox**. The Division of Licensing Programs operates a Licensing Information Line, a toll-free line that provides information on the licensing process and a system to express concerns. A flier about the Information Line, which may be reproduced and distributed through your center, is located at the end of this section.

Information about licensing standards and regulatory requirements; information on programs and services for providers including copies of forms and applications, training sessions sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services, and the Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program; and a searchable statewide database of licensed child care facilities can be found at the Division of Licensing Programs web site at **www.dss.virginia.gov.**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF LICENSING PROGRAMS

INFORMATION LINE

1-800-543-7545
Richmond Area Only: 692-2394

For information on:

♠ Reporting concerns regarding a child or adult care facility

♠ Obtaining information regarding the process for becoming a licensed child or adult care facility

♠ Training programs offered by the Department for child or adult care providers

♠ Information on how to obtain/access materials on Selecting and Monitoring Child Care Facilities

♠ Obtaining statewide and regional lists of regulated programs

♠ The Voluntary Registration Program for Family Day Homes

♠ The Virginia Child Care Providers Scholarship Program

Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Licensing Programs
Website: www.dss.virginia.gov