

# Child Safety: A Comprehensive Look From the Perspective of a Quality Program

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February 4, 2010



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## Purpose

From the perspective of a quality Head Start program, to share various systems of change and innovative measures to ensure the ongoing safety of children.



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## A Quality Program

- Program of Excellence
- NAEYC accredited
- 1:6 child adult ratios, class sizes of 20
- Highly qualified and motivated site directors and staff, program directors
- Support staff at every center



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Quality alone does not guarantee the ongoing safety of children...

Agencies must continue to provide preventative measures and ensure they are followed and remain on heightened alert.

*According to DSS, approximately 295 day care licenses statewide were revoked between March and November 2008.*

Hines, L. (2009, February 13). Day care licensing appeals process faces criticism. *The BizPress*.



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## Accountability for Children Starts at the Top

- Administrative Systems:
  - Relationships
  - Accountability
  - Closing the loop on systems
- Site Level:
  - Low ratios alone not preventative
  - Communication
  - Teamwork
  - Leadership



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## Preventative Measures: Administrative systems

- Chronological Supervision and Staff Accountability system
- Performance evaluations
- Standards of conduct
- Policies and procedures
- Span of supervision



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## Preventative Measures: Relationships

Change will only happen with support and commitment to change from every level of the organization.

- Staff
- Parents
- Policy Council
- Board Members
- Unions
- Community Care Licensing



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## Staff and Parents

- Accountability without blame
- Principles and priorities
- Commitment and buy-in from every level including administrative staff
- Safety committees
- Parents as partners: a focus on the parent role in child safety at the site level



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## Board and Policy Council

- Communication of expectations and support from the highest level is crucial
- A united front in the message of "Zero Tolerance"
- Acknowledging that difficult decisions are just that:

*"I had to begin making decisions using my head instead of my heart" (PC Chair, 2006)*



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## Labor Unions

- Input and partnership in policy development and shared message
- Ongoing communication
- Labor-management team
- Sending the message that “Zero Tolerance” saves jobs



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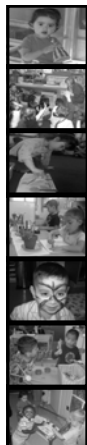
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## Community Care Licensing

- On-going communication
- Self reporting the right things
- Collaboration in training and discussions with staff
- Support through investigations and reports



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## Transparency and the Media

The media will find a way to get information -  
Why not supply it?

“Community Services is the Fort Knox of Childcare”

“A Dramatic Turnaround...”



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## Preventative Measures: Facilities

- Alarmed gates and doors
- Cameras inside and out with on-site and remote monitors
- Half gates and doors at entryways
- The use of security guards



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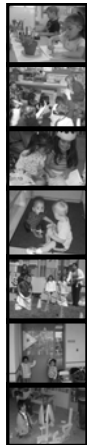
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## Alarmed Doors



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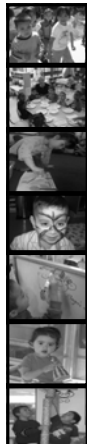
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## Site-level Focus: Headcounts and Transitions

### Headcounts:

- Hourly and daily checks by teachers and supervisors

### Transitions:

- Transition coordinator
- Focus on transitions at every level
- Training
- Monitoring



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## What the Future Holds

- Child Safety System
  - Funded through Quality and Program Improvement funds
  - Real-Time Monitoring
  - Automated Attendance Verification
  - Accident Prevention
  - Security
  - Improved Work Process



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## The Future: Classroom Focus

- Master Teachers
- Intentional Teaching Institutes
- Continued leadership focus
- Focused professional development
  - Reflective supervision
  - Personal accountability
  - Observation



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## Questions and Discussion



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