

## *a MESSAGE FROM the President*

This is my third quarter as your President. I feel more settled now into the rhythm of things and have had a productive few months of work.

We continue to work collaboratively with the Family Child Care Organization, the National Association for Family Child Care and members of the Child Care Advisory Council (CCAC) on the bill that would allow family child care providers to care for up to 10 children. We are in the process of forming an ad hoc committee from members of the CCAC with representatives from key departments such as licensing, the department of education etc to form a cohesive bill that covers all aspects conducive to the efficient running of Expanded Family Child Care. We will create a new bill and then approach the senators concerned to introduce it. I will keep you posted with its progress.

I attended the 2004 NAFCC Annual Conference in Kansas City Missouri from July 28th -31st. The pre-conference trainings were worth every bit of the time and money. One session in particular, "Shared Leadership and Facilitation Skills- Tools for effective FCC Support Groups" was extremely informative and interesting. In general, the whole conference was a real eye opener. To meet family child care providers from all over the country, to discuss our common goals, our common struggles, to hear different ways people are dealing with the same issues we face - all of it really gave me a great sense of community and really got me excited about continuing the work we are doing. Those of you who have children in your care whose parents work for AT&T are entitled to a \$500 scholarship to attend this conference. I hope next year that more of us attend this conference.

On November 20, NJFCCPA held a "train the trainer" workshop for some of its seasoned child care providers. This means that next year, we will have more NJFCCPA trainers available to the whole family child care community from whom we can gain valuable child care knowledge. Our trainer of trainers for this workshop was our very own -Lou Warren Grooms, co-founder of NJFCCPA in the year, 1988!!

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I am pleased to hear from some counties that more of its members are assuming leadership positions. As more members get involved in building up their county chapters, we see a healthier growth pattern where neighboring counties invite each others members to various workshops and social events. If you wish to get to know your county and neighboring county members for social events or even to meet once so that you can network with each other later please do feel



free to call your County Rep or your Regional Rep. (Details on the last page of this Newsletter.) They are always willing to help. After all, who better to understand and help out a FCC provider than another FCC provider who has usually gone through what you are undergoing?

Let's all take a pledge to know our NJFCCPA family better, be there for each other and so grow stronger together.

Thank you,  
Tan Coelho  
President

## Problem Solving in Family Child Care Settings

*excerpted and adapted from ERIC Digest.*

**editor's Note:** *Often we don't pay attention unless we see the words Family Child Care. Early Childhood theory applies, whether we are talking about the classroom or the family child care setting. Read the article that follows, keeping in mind, I have substituted "family child care setting" for "classroom", and "family child care provider" for "teacher."*

Problem solving is the foundation of a young child's learning. It must be valued, promoted, provided for, and sustained in the family child care setting. Opportunities for problem solving occur in the everyday context of a child's life. By observing the child closely, family child care providers can use the child's social, cognitive, movement, and emotional experiences to facilitate problem solving and promote strategies useful in the lifelong process of learning.

### LEARNING THROUGH PROBLEM SOLVING

By exploring social relationships, manipulating objects, and interacting with people, children are able to formulate ideas, try these ideas out, and accept or reject what they learn. Constructing knowledge by making mistakes is part of the natural process of problem solving.

Through exploring, then experimenting, trying out a hypothesis, and finally, solving problems, children make learning personal and meaningful. Piaget states that children understand only what they discover or invent themselves (1963). It is this discovery within the problem solving process that is the

vehicle for children's learning. Children are encouraged to construct their own knowledge when the teacher plans for problem solving; bases the framework for learning in problem solving; and provides time, space, and materials.



## THE FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER'S ROLE

Changing through problem solving is modeled by adults (Bloom, Sheerer, and Britz, 1991) and facilitated by the provider in the family child care environment. When providers articulate the problems they face and discuss solutions with children, children become more aware of the significance of the problem-solving process. Being a problem solver is modeled by the provider and emulated by the children. The provider's role is two-fold: first, to value the process and be willing to trust the learner, and second, to establish and maintain a family child care environment that encourages problem solving. It is the attitude of the provider that must change first in the problem-solving family child care setting. Values and goals must be clearly defined to include a child-centered curriculum, the development of communication skills, promotion of cooperative learning, and inclusion of diverse ideas.

The provider must be willing to become a learner, too. By being curious, observing, listening, and questioning, the teacher shares and models the qualities that are valued and promoted by the problem-solving process.

## PLANNING FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

A curriculum that accommodates a variety of developmental levels as well as individual differences in young children sets the stage for problem solving (Bredenkamp, 1987). Choices, decision making, and a curriculum framework that integrates learning, such as Katz and Chard's project method (1989), are especially appropriate for young learners. The project approach facilitates cooperative learning and promotes diverse ideas. Donna Ogle's K-W-L (what you KNOW, what you WANT to know, and what you have LEARNED) is another method of organizing work that promotes problem solving. Themes, units, webbing, and the KWL method are all ways of organizing curriculum that can support problem solving (Britz and Richard, 1992). Beginning with the needs and interests of the children, problem solving develops from meaningful experiences important to the children. The teacher-designed curriculum provides the classroom basis for these experiences.

## PROVIDING FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving is a skill that can be learned and must be practiced. It is facilitated by a family-child care program schedule that provides for integrated learning in large blocks of time, space for ongoing group projects, and many open-ended materials. The provider provides the time, space, and materials necessary for in-depth learning.

1. **Time:** Providers can provide for problem solving by enlarging blocks of learning time during the child care day. Because making choices, discussing decisions, and evaluating mistakes takes time, large time blocks best suit the problem-solving process. It is important that children know they have time to identify and solve problems.

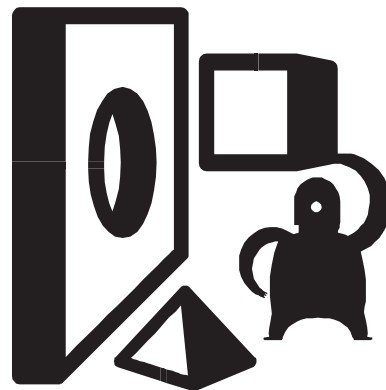
2. **Space:** Projects and group meetings may require an assessment of child care space. Once the provider has observed the patterns of traffic in the family child care setting, equipment can be moved or eliminated to promote problem solving.

3. **Materials:** The open-ended materials that are needed for the construction and concrete solving of problems should be safe, durable, and varied. Well-marked storage units should be easily accessible to children, and materials should be available for ongoing exploration and manipulation. Access to a variety of materials encourages children to use materials in new and diverse ways. This freedom promotes problem solving.

## THE PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Individuals or groups can solve problems. Group problem solving is important to young children because many diverse ideas are generated. Both individual and group processes should be included in the early childhood classroom. Becoming skillful at problem solving is based on the understanding and use of sequenced steps. These steps are:

1. Identifying the problem,
2. Brainstorming a variety of solutions,
3. Choosing one solution and trying it out, and
4. Evaluating what has happened.



Often the most difficult of these steps is identifying the problem.

If Bill cries, "Alice is hitting me," the problem to be solved is not the hitting but, rather, THE REASON WHY Alice is hitting Bill. Therefore, the investigation of solutions must relate to the cause of the problem instead of its effect. Brainstorming gives children practice in communication, negotiation, and cooperation skills. Learning to express individual ideas in a diverse society is important. By choosing and trying out a solution, learners develop empathy, come to consensus, and share the responsibility of the decision. These are valued learnings in a democratic society. Finally, by evaluating the problem-solving process, children assess their choices and mistakes and learn to be independent evaluators of their work. The process of problem solving-making choices and learning from them--is facilitated by providers who observe, listen, and ask open-ended questions that further the process: questions such as, "What will happen if...?" and "What other ways can you think of...?" Problem solving becomes a cycle of learning when mistakes are made and different solutions have to be tried. This discovery process allows children to construct their own learnings. Most problems have more than one solution; some problems cannot be solved. Experiences with these sorts of problems promote learning in young children.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ERIC Identifier: ED355040

Publication Date: 1993-00-00

Author: Britz, Joan

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# Hula Hoops!

## The Fad that NEVER Seems to GO AWAY!

by Christina Chapan

Hula Hoops have been around a lot longer than the 1960s. In ancient times Egyptian children made games out of hoops of dried grapevines. Medieval doctors of the 1300s in England, blamed the use of hula-hoops for dislocated backs and heart attacks. In the early 1960s, Whammo became a household name with its promotion with the hoop. They continue to remain popular. Some games include:

### HOOPSTER

Start by establishing a course--a straight line to a goal (a chair or trash can, for instance) and back, or create a trail around obstacles. Have children take a hula hoop and roll their hoop around the obstacles. This exercise helps teach coordination and agility.

### HORSE AND BUGGY

One partner steps inside the hoop and holds it at waist level. That first person is the horse. The second player is the driver. He steps in front of the driver in the hoop, and sets the pace as the horse skipping and hopping. Together they gallop around a designated area. After a few minutes, they switch places and get to play the opposite roles. This exercise teaches people to work together and make cooperative decisions about moving in the same direction.

### SPACE SHUTTLE RELAY

First and second players run together inside the hoop and go around a turning cone. After they have turned around, they return to the team. The first player drops out and joins the end of the line. The second player picks up the third player and runs together to the turning cone. They proceed around, and back. The second player drops out and the third and fourth player run together around the cone and pick up the next player. The game continues until everyone on that team has had a chance to be in a cone twice, working with a partner. This game teaches sequencing and hand-eye coordination.

### THREAD THE NEEDLE

In this contest, the members of each team join hands in a circle with a hula-hoop hanging from one person's arm. When play begins, the person with the hoop must step through it and pass it to a neighboring player without letting go of her teammate's hands. The next player does the same thing. The team that gets the hoop back to the starting player first wins. This game is great because a wide variety of ages can play. The game is more challenging when students of various heights have to work together to move the hoop from one person to another.

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Christina Chapan is an ACE certified personal trainer, fitness author, education conference speaker and elementary school teacher. She also works in the after school care program at her school. In her spare time, she works as a youth sponsor at her church. If you are interested in learning more about Christina, please visit her websites:

Fit 4 Fun- <http://cchapan.tripod.com/> Fit 4 Fun Kids Fitness -  
<http://worknotes.com/IL/Chicago/Fit4FunKidsFitness/>

# 5 Ways to Market with Business Cards

by Maria Gracia

Whoever thought that a little piece of paper could have so much impact on growing your business? Business cards are rarely used to their full advantage. Here are 5 simple ideas you can begin to use immediately:

## 1. INCLUDE AN OFFER ON YOUR BUSINESS CARDS

Rather than emulating ninety-percent of the business population, by merely putting your name, address, phone number and a few services on your business card, also include an enticing offer. Perhaps you have a free report available. Or maybe you have a free sample of your product. You might even have a complimentary kit or package, filled with helpful tips and ideas. Include this offer on your card, and your prospects will have a compelling reason to contact you.

## 2. INCLUDE MANY WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO CONTACT YOU

Of course, you should always include your name and phone number on your business card. But you might also include, your snail mail address, your e-mail address, your Web site and your fax number. Give your prospects many ways to contact you, so they can choose the method that is most comfortable and convenient for them.

## 3. DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE BACK

If you have something important to say, or something enticing to offer, make use of ALL the space on your business cards--front and back!

## 4. USE YOUR BUSINESS CARDS IN YOUR REFERRAL SYSTEM

Give business cards to your customers. Write that customer's initials on the back of the card and ask him or her to pass your card on to their friends, family and associates. Tell your customers that when they hand your cards out, the recipients can trade that card in for a free sample, or trial or report, etc. Put a description of that special offer on the back of your card, as we described above. When you get the card back, you'll know who referred you, and more importantly, who you should thank.

## 5. HAND YOUR BUSINESS CARDS OUT TO EVERYONE

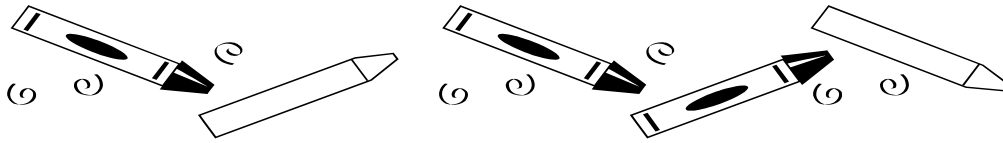
If you're at a business function, and someone asks what you do for a living, immediately hand them a business card. When you're at a networking event, trade cards with other business people--even if they're not direct prospects, they may know someone who is! Include business cards in your sales literature.

Just make sure you apply the above suggestions to your card so you will be handing out a compelling marketing tool, and not just a plain business card, like everyone else. Have business cards with you at all times, no matter where you are. You just never know when your card is going to get into the hands of someone who is really interested in your products or services.

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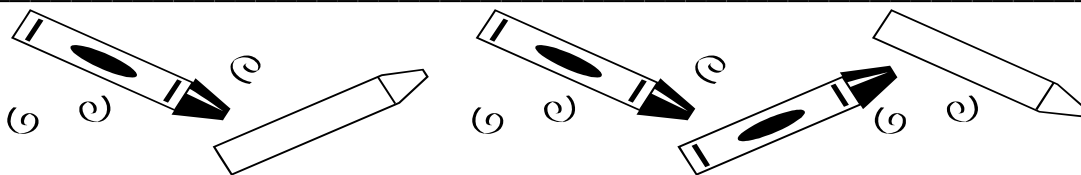
## Why Family Child Care? Family child care homes provide:

- a smaller group size
- a personal relationship with a primary care giver
- warm individualized care in a family setting.

Often these small groups are made up of various ages who develop sibling like relationships. For the little ones it's like having older siblings. They learn quickly from the older ones, and are exposed to a broader range of activities, toys, stories and play, enriching their daily lives.

Eventually, they become the oldest child in care. Now they have the benefits of being the oldest sibling. They become the group leader, are the most knowledgeable, competent, and grow in maturity, confidence and responsibility, promoting the development of natural leadership.

### **Call for INTERVIEW:**





## HOOPING AND HOPPING BASES!

Hooping and Hopping is a game of tag with players hopping after one another. To play the game children must have the balance and coordination to hop of one foot for relatively long periods of time. "IT" hops on one foot, and tries to tag each player by hopping towards him .The players are chased by the tagger and can only be safe when they are inside a hula-hoop. If they are tagged, they become "IT."

## THE CAR GAME

Have the children pretend that their hoop is a giant steering wheel. Children will drive their car at waist level and have designated areas where they may drive their "car". Sounds like a car add to the game. You can add to mood as a group instructor, by playing songs about cars or playing CDs with vehicle sound effects, etc. They must always stop their "car" when meeting a pedestrian or another non-driver. This game is great if you have a lot of space and very active learners.

## RACE CAR DRIVER

This is the same game as before, except that the children drive in a safe, large area. Sounds of screeching and turning sharp corners are encouraged. Student must continue to be careful of obstacles and pedestrians in their way.

## HULA HOOP HOPPING

Put a fresh spin on an old game of jump rope. Use a very large hula-hoop to jump and skip around the neighborhood. Hoops for this exercise are easier to use if they are big enough for the child to jump through.

## MUSICAL HOOPS

(school age)

Materials: CD player, music, index cards with exercises on them, and a pair of dice.

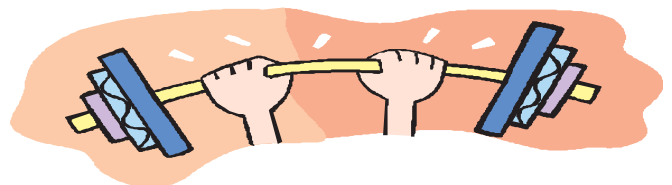
Scatter hoops around gym with index fitness cards inside hoops. Students move freely from one hoop to another. When music stops, each student goes to a hoop and reads the fitness card. One student is selected to roll the dice. Whatever the math problem comes up on the dice students will perform the activity listed on the fitness card. If there are two sixes rolled for example:  $6+6=12$ , students will perform twelve of that particular activity. Some examples of fitness cards include: jumping jacks, crunches, mountain climbers, situps, push-ups, running in place, skipping in place, and free choice.

## HOOP TOSS

Materials: Cardboard, toilet paper, cans, empty soda bottles.

Scatter cardboard boxes, cans, toilet paper tubes, or empty plastic soda bottles around the yard with space in-between each object. Write point numbers on each box or bottle. Take turns gently tossing hula-hoops to encircle the boxes. The player with the most points wins!

Hula Hoops are more than mere children's toys. They teach coordination, agility, and direction. What a fun way to exercise at any age!



## HOOLA HOOPS References

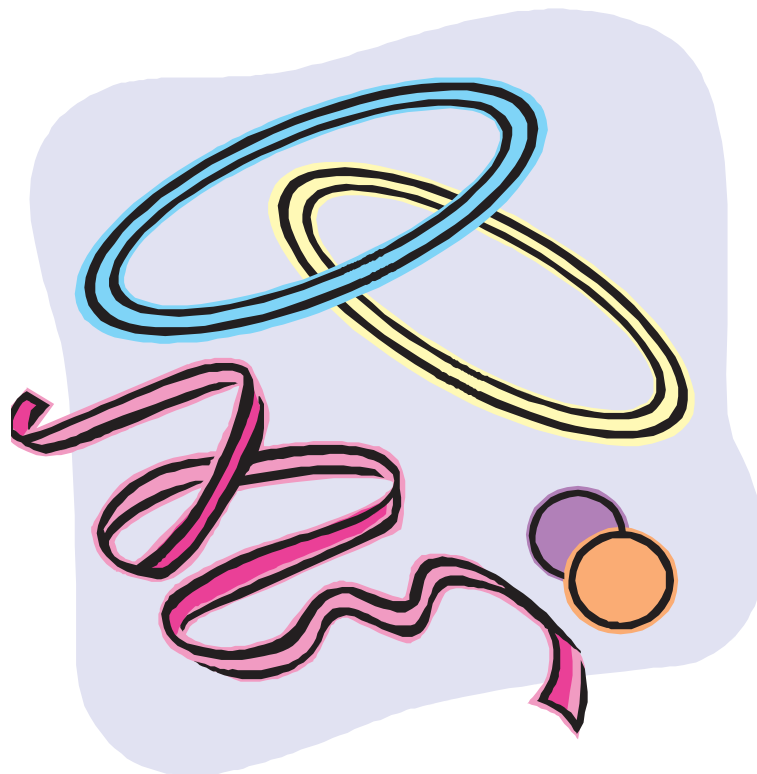
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## JUMP START PERSONAL FITNESS

The Middlesex County Board would like to thank all County Members who participated in an event held on Tuesday, October 5th at 7pm at **Jump Start Personal Fitness, 479 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, NJ.**



The primary focus of this event was "our" well being and personal fitness. Personal Trainer Derrick Brown gave us a 1 hour training session to help us become more physically fit. Some things he shared with us were safety, training tips, essential strategies for lasting weight loss, a firm healthy body, lasting motivation, proper, safe and effective exercise techniques and lastly, how to acquire an abundance of energy, through physical fitness, that will last through out the day. Thank you Derrick Brown!!!!

If you are interested in attending a Middlesex county networking meeting, contact Roselle Coye at (732)968-0381 or Cheryl Ambicki at (732)424-0090.

# Middlesex County Spotlight



## "The Early Start Network"

submitted by Cheryl Ambicki

When I first joined the Early Start Network, it was with great anticipation and excitement. I was inspected, passed and "in". Since then the rewards have been slow but that is usually the case when new programs begin. The benefits I have reaped so far was a reimbursement for liability insurance, the ability to request materials and products and most importantly, the knowledge that I am bringing a higher level of child care to my business and fellow colleagues.

On my initial inspection I was privileged to not only have Yanni's insight but also Lou Warren-Groomes, one of the co-founders for the NJFCCPA. On that day I received some really useful information and many helpful hints. The changes I made were small but seemed to have a very positive effect.

There are so many organizations out there just waiting for us to use them but this one is easy, it's with Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen. All you have to do is call 732-324-4357 and asked for Yanni Ortiz-Cruz. What is the worst that can happen, they'll help to improve you as a child care provider?

Even if you choose not to join this program, I think it would be more than worth your while to at least give it a try.

# 10 Reasons to Buy Liability Insurance

1. Most Homeowners policies specifically exclude or provide very limited coverage for day care business operations.
2. No matter how experienced you are, or how safe your home is, accidents do happen.
3. The cost of defending a lawsuit can be a monumental expense.
4. Daycare insurance protects your family's assets against the financial uncertainty of a claim or lawsuit against you.
5. Daycare insurance provides you with qualified legal council in the event of a covered claim.
6. Daycare insurance provides you with high limits of protection in the event you are found liable.
7. Daycare insurance allows you to stay in business by transferring the financial uncertainty of a claim to the insurance company.
8. Having proper in insurance protection demonstrates your professional responsibility.
9. Having proper insurance distinguishes you from other providers.
10. Having the proper insurance is good for you, the parents you serve, and most importantly, the valuable children in your care.

Prepared by the New Jersey Family Child  
Care Providers' Association.

For more information: [www.njfccpa.org](http://www.njfccpa.org) or call  
908-713-8682

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For information, contact NJFCCPA \* 908-713-8682  
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