

PARA ESPAÑOL, VER AL OTRO LADO.

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S.F. Parents win campaign for cleaner school buses

BY ELISA GAHNG

Until recently, San Francisco children rode to school in buses whose diesel fumes can trigger—and even cause—asthma. “Pollution inside an idling bus is five to fifteen times higher than outside,” says Maria Luz Torre, advocate with the San Francisco chapter of Parent Voices.

But thanks to Asthma Relief for Kids, a project of San Francisco Parent Voices, San Francisco school buses are now less polluting. ARK parents built on previous asthma campaigns, got more informed about asthma, gathered support, and worked with the school board to require new air filters on school buses—the resolution passed in February 2005. ARK’s strategies included

- **Doing research:** ARK members found that the school district allowed its buses to be more polluting than those in other districts—and that the bus contract was close to expiring.
- **Weekly education and training meetings:** ARK invited organizations, including the American Lung Association and the San Francisco Asthma Task Force, to discuss asthma and its triggers. ARK offers dinner and child care at every meeting “so more parents can freely participate,” says Torre.

“It’s a very empowering transformation to be informed and do your own research,” says parent Shirley Castillo. “We were just parents. (These organizations) had all these resources for us—(and) made me

more confident in campaigning, a stronger advocate, and a more active mom in my own kid’s life.”

- **Gathering support:** ARK members collected over 200 signatures in support of cleaner buses from parents, teachers, and other supporters. “We went to schools and explained to (parents and teachers) what happens when a school bus idles, how much the pollution can trigger asthma,” recalls Castillo. “We went to child development classes in city colleges, pediatrician’s offices, ACORN meetings. We talked with as many people as possible.”
- **Making alliances:** “We made alliances with members of the school board and important organizations (including the American Lung Association and the school bus drivers’ union),” says Torre. “Their support gave weight to our argument.”
- **Going to the school board:** ARK brought the signatures to school board meetings. Parents and children with asthma testified about asthma attacks at school—and parents met with school board members to talk about working together.

“I didn’t realize how much power you have when you can talk in front of the board,” says parent Lorie Jones. Parent Sandra Estrada agrees, “I used to be the shyest person. But now, I can go up there and speak from my heart.”

- **Writing a resolution:** ARK parents worked with other asthma organizations and school board members to write a resolution that called for new air filters on new buses within four years as part of the bus contract’s renewal.

“Parent Voices brought a lot of research and education to the table and helped us think through how compromises can be made amid the current budget crisis,” says School Board President Eric Mar.

ARK has been recognized by several Bay Area and federal agencies—and received the 2005 Clean Air Champion Award.

“You have a right to stand up for your child,” says Castillo. “I don’t know politics and public speaking, but I know my child. The rest comes on its own.”

- SF Parent Voices, 415-343-3383, www.parentvoices.org

For more resources, see www.4children.org/news/106gse.htm



PARENT VOICES

Making development accountable

“Community benefits agreements” commit developers to provide jobs—and more—to local residents

BY EVE PEARLMAN

Celia Contreras, mother of two boys, lost her \$6.75-an-hour job as a linen clerk when the Holiday Inn where she worked closed in 1999. But today she’s back at the same location, making \$12 an hour plus health insurance, in the new, redeveloped Renaissance Hollywood Hotel. Now, says Contreras, she’s “able to save and to splurge, to provide my children with a better life.”

Sonia Zepeda lives nearby and works with Contreras in the housekeeping department at the Renaissance Hollywood. It’s much closer to home than her last job in Pasadena and pays \$12.20 plus health insurance, a big increase from \$7.77 with no benefits. Now she can send more to her kids back in Guatemala, and “they are having a better life because of it.”

Family Economic Success is a six-part series supported by Friedman Family Foundation, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, and Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation.

RESOURCES

- Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, 213-977-9400, www.laane.org
- LAANE’s handbook on Community Benefits Agreements is at www.californiapartnership.org/downloads/CBA%20Handbook%202005%20final.pdf
- Working Partnerships USA (in San Jose), 408-269-7872, www.wpusa.org
- Partnership for Working Families, (statewide), 510-834-8503, www.californiapartnership.org
- East Bay Alliance for Sustainable Development, 510-893-7106



Neighbors of L.A. Airport negotiated a community benefits agreement worth half a million dollars.

Community benefits

Contreras and Zepeda got their jobs after the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and other community organizations pressured the developer of the “Hollywood and Highland” hotel/shopping/entertainment complex to meet residents’ needs for well-paid jobs. The developer agreed to provide a local hiring program, on-site job training, and a guarantee of 1,000 living-wage jobs. That was “our first shot at winning some community benefits” from a developer, says Roxana Tynan, LAANE’s accountable development director.

Since then, LAANE has been at the forefront of negotiating community benefits agreements (CBAs) in a half-dozen Los Angeles development projects, with twice that number in the works. “In the long run,” says Tynan, “we’d like to get policies in place that assure a basic package for every development.”

Jobs and housing

Socorro Callejas, a stay-at-home mother of two, first learned from Tynan that developers were planning to build a huge hotel complex just seven blocks from her

house. Callejas got involved in negotiations with the developer and spoke up at City Hall. “I feel good because I was working with the developers and they know me,” she says. “There are a lot of people in this community who are afraid to say what we need, but if I can talk for them, it’s a good thing.”

After negotiating with residents, the developer signed a community benefits agreement including a local hiring program, on-site job training, living wage jobs with health benefits—and more than 50 units of much-needed affordable housing. “It took a lot of energy and time,” says Callejas, but “I learned that if you fight for something you can have it.”

Leadership and vision

In another recent CBA negotiation, neighbors got involved when Los Angeles Airport (LAX) was planning to expand. Maria Verduzco-Smith is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and president of the neighborhood coordinating council for Lennox, a low-income, mainly Spanish-speaking, unincorporated area near LAX.

With LAANE’s coaching, Verduzco-Smith became involved in meetings with developers. “At first it was very intimidating, and I thought I’d just sit there and not say anything,” she says. But she found herself explaining the needs of people in her community—from finding new jobs to keeping trucks off local streets.

“Los Angeles just happens to be at this incredible moment where there is this presence of leadership and vision for advocates who are interested in working together for building common power,” said Chereesse Thymes of the Partnership for Working Families. “And that is the model that we are all striving for as we try to work across the country.”

Going statewide

Learning from Angelenos, a coalition of San Jose community organizations recently negotiated a CBA with the developer of an upscale shopping, residential, and entertainment district downtown. The project is receiving major public subsidies—all the more reason for insisting on accountability, neighbors say. The CBA was approved in April 2003, with participation from unions, clergy, ACORN, neighborhood residents, and downtown small business owners. It includes an increase in affordable housing units (from the 35 first proposed to 509), space for child care, and living wage jobs.

In the East Bay, several organizations are working on developing the CBA process, notably the East Bay Alliance for Sustainable Development.

Reporting by Yulisa Zulaica contributed to this story.

MAKING DEVELOPERS ACCOUNTABLE TO COMMUNITIES

A developer builds a new entertainment or shopping center in a low-income community. The neighbors benefit from all the new jobs and facilities, right?

Not necessarily. Often jobs and other benefits go to people outside the area.

That’s why community groups in Los Angeles and elsewhere are beginning to work out “Community Benefits Agreements” (CBAs), legal contracts between developers and community organizations that spell out benefits the development will bring to local residents—things like quality jobs, local hiring and job training, affordable housing, environmental improvements and, in some cases, community services such as health clinics or youth centers.

Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) has been at the forefront of many campaigns for accountable development. The campaigns:

1. **“Try to get as many people as possible involved, so they have a lot of credibility,”** says Roxana Tynan, LAANE’s accountable development director. Involve unions, schools, churches, environmental groups, and neighborhood activists.
2. **Figure out what’s important to the community—**often that process begins with a large community meeting. The top concerns are usually jobs, housing, neighborhood services, and environmental issues.
3. **Form a negotiating committee** of community volunteers.
4. **Negotiate with the developer** and get involved in the development process.

Most of the time, developers are willing to meet with representatives of the coalition, says Tynan—they know they need community support to make it through the city’s approval process. LAANE sends representatives to all meetings about the project. They make their voices heard and enlist the support of council members or other officials. “Generally developers recognize the power of existing groups and unions to give them a hard time,” says Tynan.

The process works best, says Chereesse Thymes, executive director of the Partnership for Working Families, “when (it’s) community-driven and reflective of an honest assessment of what that project means for the local people and what they themselves would like to see occur at that site.”

Video games and kids

How video games affect kids—and tips to help parents set limits

BY ANDREW ALDRICH

California now bans the sale or rental of “ultra-violent” games to minors. The new law was passed to keep adult-rated games such as *Grand Theft Auto*—where players witness a prostitute getting kicked to death—out of the hands of teens. The video game industry is challenging the law.

While media coverage often centers on older kids, advocates say young children also play games that are too violent—and play them too much. But the game industry and some media experts counter that video games can teach important skills.

Video games have come a long way since I played *Atari* as a child, bouncing a green square back and forth on the television. Now they are played on computers, televisions, and hand-held devices (such as *Game Boy*, *Leap Pad*, even cell phones). Games are categorized by player’s age (see rating system) and by type: for example, educational, sports, combat.

VIDEO GAME RATING SYSTEM

- **EC—Early Childhood (ages 3 and up):** may have cartoon violence (“comic mischief”)
- **E—Everyone (ages 6 and up):** some cartoon or “mild” violence, and/or mild language
- **E+10—Everyone +10 (ages 10 and up):** more cartoon or “mild” violence, and/or suggestive themes
- **T—Teen (ages 13 and up):** violence, suggestive themes, minimal blood, and/or strong language
- **M—Mature (ages 17 and up):** intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content, and/or strong language
- **AO—Adults Only (ages 18 and up):** prolonged, intense violence, and/or graphic sexual content.

For specific game ratings, visit www.esrb.org

Good or bad?

Advocates applaud the new law but say more is needed. “Violence is present in almost all games—(60% of) children over age eight rate (games for people over 17) as their favorites,” says Becca Arnold of the Child-Responsible Media Campaign.

Studies link video games to a host of problems:

- **Exposure to violence:** “Graphic and sexually charged media violence...can be as dangerous to our kids’ health as cigarettes,” says James Steyer of Common Sense Media. The American Academy of Pediatrics finds that playing violent video games increases youths’ violent behavior as much as smoking increases lung cancer.
- **Obesity:** Playing video games can help make children overweight because they don’t get enough physical activity, says the National Institute on Media and the Family (NIMF).
- **Promoting stereotypes:** In a 2000 survey of games, “African American characters showed no reaction to pain,” but Latino characters did, says Eileen Espejo of Children Now. In 2001, 73% of player-controlled characters were male—and 87% of heroes were white (Children Now, Kaiser Family Foundation).

Studies also point to video game benefits:

- **Strengthening** reading, logical thinking, observing, and problem solving (NIFM, KFF).

“I don’t think video games are bad,” says Tessa Jolls of the Center for Media Literacy, mother of a 15-year-old boy. “They are very compelling—my son wants to play them a lot! Parents need to teach children to set thoughtful boundaries.”



Tips for Parents

SHOP SMART: Carolyn Johnson, mother of a seven-year-old girl, Chase, says, “I play the whole game and (decide) whether I want Chase to play (it).” She looks at how women and people of color are represented. Parents can rent games or have the store demonstrate them. Parents should also check the game’s rating (see rating system, page 6).

ASK QUESTIONS: Do characters in the game harm others? How often? Is it rewarded? Shown as funny? Are nonviolent parts less fun than violent ones? Is the “bad guy” always African American? Are there racial slurs? Are the women victims or sex symbols?

SET LIMITS: In my house, we limit our seven-year-old son Nehemiah’s video game time: up to one hour a week for educational games, 30 minutes a week for other games. One game is a bit violent—we’ve stopped letting him play it. But recently, Nehemiah talked about playing a game at his aunt’s house, saying he “kill(ed) the bad guy with a gun. Since he was bad, it was OK.” This was a real eye-opener. We called his aunt—she agreed to limit video games when she’s babysitting: only Early Childhood-rated games and only an hour a day. Other parents recommend:

- **Limiting game time:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children not use electronic media more than one to two hours a day. “I set strict limits for Chase,” says Johnson: 30 minutes on the Game Boy or the computer.
- **Supervising games:** Heidi McLaughlin doesn’t let her son play games without a parent around. Experts suggest children play video games in a main room, so parents can oversee.

- **Allowing only age-appropriate games:** Jolls doesn’t let her son play adult-rated games at home—and explains to him why. “Many movies are not appropriate for children,” adds Michael Romero, a video game developer with two children. “We carefully choose which ones our children watch.”

- **Restricting games with violence:** “(Our) rules are that video games cannot have any guns, no beating people up, and no karate,” says Jennifer Hughes, mother of a seven-year-old boy. Arnold says that although she did not allow violent games in her house, her son would play them at friends’ houses. “Parents need to work together to limit games, so no one is taking all the pressure,” she says.

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD: In my house, we discuss what’s happening in the games Nehemiah plays, to reinforce that some behaviors aren’t good in the “real world.” Johnson adds, “After Chase plays a game, I discuss it with her. (This) equips her to think about what she’s playing.”

ENCOURAGE OTHER KINDS OF PLAY: Children should play without the “screen”—whether it’s TV, computer, or *Game Boy*. Parents suggest physical and pretend play, sharing jobs, art and reading, and playing with friends. See www.4children.org/news/304notve.htm for ideas.

ADVOCATE FOR SAFER GAMES: Parents can talk with retailers about the video games they sell to children—and to restaurants and arcades where children can play games. Parents can also write to their legislators about the need for more “child-positive” games—and talk with their PTA, church, or parent group.

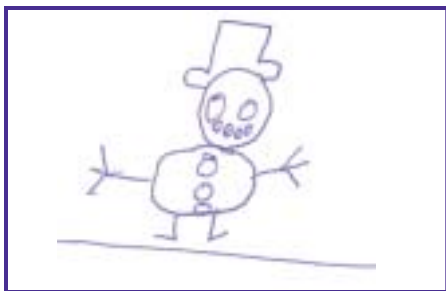
RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics, 847-434-4000, www.aap.org/family/ratingsgame.htm
- Child-Responsible Media Campaign, barnold@childresponsiblemedia.org, www.medialegislation.org
- Tolerance.org, 334-956-8200, www.tolerance.org
- Video game reviews: www.common sense media.org, www.mediafamily.org

For more resources, see www.4children.org/news/106vide.htm

2006 MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR

U.N. INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE



OMAR

JANUARY

- 1** New Year's Day (Gregorian calendar) ■ Emancipation Proclamation took effect 1863.
- 2** Ancestor's Day (Haiti).
- 6** Armenian (Orthodox) Christmas, Epiphany, Día de los Reyes, Twelfth Day: Christians celebrate the visits of the Magi.
- 7** Ethiopian, Greek, and Ukranian (Orthodox) Christmas (Julian calendar).
- 8** Midwife's or Women's Day (Greece): Men do housework and women spend time in cafes.
- 9** Birthday of Rigoberta Menchú (1959-): Quiche Maya activist for indigenous peoples' rights in Guatemala.
- 13** Frisbee invented (1957).
- 14** Makar Sankranti, Gujarat (India): Hindus celebrate the sun's changing position by flying kites.
- 15** Humanitarian Day: celebrates those who changed U.S. racial segregation laws ■ World Religion Day: dedicated to increasing interfaith understanding.
- 16** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1929-68): birthday of African American civil rights leader.
- 17** Día de San Antonio (Mexico): blessing of animals.
- 18** Birthday of Alan Alexander Milne (1882-1956): author of *Winnie the Pooh*.
- 20** Ati-Atihan (Philippines): celebrates an ancient

peace pact between migrants to the islands ■ Babin Den (Bulgaria): Grandmother and Midwives' Day.

- 24** Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) addressed the first African American women's rights convention in 1851.
- 27** Day of Remembrance for Victims of Nazism.
- 29** Yuan Tuan (China): New Year, Year of the Dog, celebrated with firecrackers, parades, and special family meals ■ Tet (Vietnam), Seol-Nal (Korea): New Year, children pay respect to their elders and receive gifts of money.
- 31** Awwal Muharram, Al Hijra (Islam): New Year (1427) begins at sundown.



XIAO

FEBRUARY

African American History Month

- 1** National Freedom Day: commemorates the 1865 abolition of slavery ■ African American students staged a nonviolent protest of segregation at a North Carolina lunch counter, launching civil rights activism, 1960 ■ Birthday of Langston Hughes (1902-67): African American writer.
- 2** Groundhog Day ■ Día de la Candelaria (Mexico): celebration with dances and processions.
- 3** Setsubun (Japan): Bean-throwing Festival celebrates winter's end ■ Birthday of Rosa Parks (1913-2005): civil rights activist.

- 6** Birthday of Bob Marley (1945-81): influential reggae musician in the Rastafarian movement.
- 9** Birthday of Alice Walker (1944-): African American author and activist.
- 12** Teng Chieh (Lantern Festival, China): ends the New Year holiday period ■ Tu B'Shevat (Jewish): day to appreciate trees and plants, begins at sundown ■ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) established, 1909.
- 14** Valentine's Day.
- 15** Birthday of Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906): early women's rights advocate ■ Birthday of John Trudell (1946-): Lakota activist and poet.
- 17** International Friendship Week.
- 18** Birthday of Toni Morrison (1931-): African American author.
- 19** Japanese Internment National Day of Remembrance: remembers the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans ■ Birthday of Amy Tan (1952-): Chinese American author.

- 20** Presidents' Day.
- 23** Birthday of W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963): sociologist who helped found the NAACP.
- 24** Día de la Bandera: Mexican flag day ■ Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890-1964) led 20,000 women in the 1912 "Bread & Roses" textile strike.
- 28** Carnival, Mardi Gras (Brazil, Caribbean, Italy): celebration of the cycles of life with music, costume balls, and parades.



HECTOR



VIRDIANA

MARCH

Women's History Month

- 2** Read Across America Day ■ Birthday of Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel, 1904-91): children's book author.
- 3** Hina Matsuri (Japan): Doll Festival, special festival for girls ■ First law regulating children's hours of employment passed, 1824.
- 6** Birthday of Gabriel García Márquez (1928-): Colombian author.
- 8** International Women's Day: holiday started by U.S. women garment workers demonstrating for the right to vote.
- 9** Barbie debuts 1959.
- 10** Death of Harriet Tubman (1821-1913): Underground Railroad leader and self-liberated slave.
- 12** Youth Day (Zambia).
- 13** Purim (Jewish): celebrates ancient rescue of Jews from religious persecution with plays and pastries, begins at sundown.
- 14** Holi (India): Hindu spring festival of colors.
- 17** St. Patrick's Day (Irish) ■ South African referendum to end apartheid, 1992.
- 20** Vernal Equinox (Northern Hemisphere) ■ Ibu Afo Festival (Nigeria): New Year celebrated with shouts and applause.
- 21** Noruz (Persian): New Year celebrated with ancient rituals, including seven symbolic dishes beginning with the Farsi letter 's' ■ Day of the Indian Child (Mexico) ■ Birthday of Benito Juárez (1806-72): Zapotec leader of resistance to foreign invasion of Mexico ■ International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (U.N.)
- 24** Birthday of Harry Houdini (1874-1926): magician and escape artist.

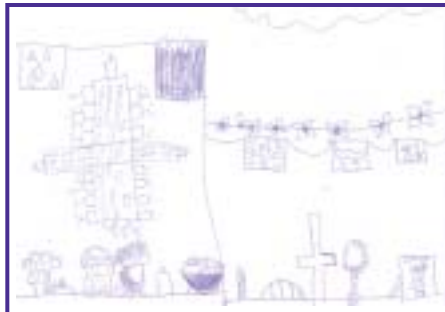
- 29** Youth Day (Taiwan) ■ Varsha-Pratipada (Hindu): New Year begins (2063).
- 31** Cesar Chavez Day (1927-93): celebrates the birthday of the Mexican American labor leader who organized migrant farmworkers.

APRIL

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Month of the Young Child

- 1** April Fool's Day.
- 2** Week of the Young Child begins.
- 4** Birthday of Maya Angelou (1928-): African American author.
- 5** Ch'ing Ming (China), Han Sik'il (Korea): celebrates spring and honors ancestors ■ Birthday of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915): African American leader and educator.
- 9** Birthday of Paul Robeson (1898-1976): African American actor, activist.
- 10** Mawlid al Nabi (Islam): celebrates the birthday of the prophet Muhammad (570-632), begins at sundown ■ Birthday of Dolores Huerta (1930-): Chicana labor rights leader and social activist.
- 12** Passover (Jewish): Jewish celebration of liberation from slavery, begins at sundown.
- 13** Thingyan (Burma), Songkran (Thailand): New Year, celebrated by splashing water on others and on Buddha images.
- 16** Easter.
- 21** Birthday of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852): father of kindergarten, an originator of the progressive education movement ■ Birthday of John Muir (1838-1914): naturalist and conservationist.



LUPITA

- 22** Earth Day: day to honor the earth and promote environment-friendly living.
- 24** Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day.
- 28** Arbor Day.
- 30** Día de los Niños (Mexico, U.S.) ■ Spank Out Day: promotes alternative methods of discipline.

MAY

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- 1** Worthy Wage Day: day to advocate for adequate wages for child care workers to ensure quality care for children ■ International Workers' Day, May Day: honors workers ■ Lei Day (Hawai'i): leis are made and worn ■ Mother Goose Day.



JULIAN

- 2** World Asthma Day.
- 5** Cinco De Mayo (Mexico) ■ Children's Day (Japan and Korea) ■ Occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, by the American Indian Movement ended, 1973.
- 9** National Teachers' Day.
- 12** National Provider Appreciation Day: honors child care providers and teachers.
- 14** Mothers' Day.
- 17** *Brown v. Board of Education* mandated desegregation in public schools, 1954.
- 19** Birthday of Malcolm X (1925-65): African American nationalist, civil rights activist.
- 22** Birthday of Harvey Milk (1930-78): gay rights leader.
- 25** African Freedom Day: independence day for many African countries, celebrated with contests, rallies, and dances.
- 29** Memorial Day.



PALOMA

JUNE

Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

- 1** Stand for Children Day: day to advocate for children ■ International Children's Day (U.N.)
- 4** Dano (Korea): celebrates summer's beginning.
- 11** Multicultural American Children's Awareness Day.
- 12** Philippines Independence Day ■ Birthday of Anne Frank (1929).
- 16** Cherokees were forced to begin the 1,200 mile Trail of Tears to Oklahoma, 1838.
- 17** World Juggling Day.
- 18** Fathers' Day.
- 19** Juneteenth: celebrates the 1865 proclamation that freed the slaves of Texas ■ Birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi (1945-): Burmese leader for democracy and nonviolence.
- 21** Summer solstice (Northern Hemisphere).
- 24** Inti Raymi (Inca): sun god festival, celebrated with bonfires, dances, processions.
- 28** Stonewall Riot (1969): launched the gay liberation movement.
- 29** Birthday of Julia Lathrop (1856-1932): pioneer in the struggle to establish child labor laws.

JULY

- 1** Canada Day.
- 2** Birthday of Thurgood Marshall (1908-93): first African American Supreme Court justice.
- 3** Child laborers struck for an 11-hour work day and six-day work week, 1835.
- 4** U.S. Independence Day.
- 6** Birthday of the Dalai Lama (1935-): Tibet's spiritual leader.

- 7** Star Festival (Japan): children tie poems and wishes to bamboo sticks and offer them to the stars.
- 12** Birthday of Pablo Neruda (1904-73): Chilean poet and diplomat.
- 13** Bon Festival (Japan): lanterns and bonfires honor the dead.
- 18** Birthday of Nelson Mandela (1918-): South African black leader against apartheid. Imprisoned for 27 years, he was president of South Africa (1994-99) ■ Children's Defense Fund founded by Marian Wright Edelman, 1967.
- 19** Seneca Falls convention: women drafted the "Declaration of Sentiments" asserting women's right to equality, 1848.
- 20** First Special Olympics held, 1968.
- 26** Americans with Disabilities Act signed, 1990.



HUMBERTO

AUGUST

- 1** International Clown Week begins.
- 6** Hiroshima Day: remembers the 1945 atomic bombing and promotes peace.
- 9** Raksha Bandhan (India): brothers and sisters promise to be good to each other ■ International Day of the World's Indigenous People (U.N.) ■ Birthday of Jean Piaget (1896-1980): Swiss philosopher and psychologist who studied children's mental development.
- 15** Birthday of Oscar Romero (1917-80): archbishop who worked for justice and peace in El Salvador.

- 18** Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave women the right to vote, 1920.
- 27** Birthday of Mother Teresa (1910-97): devoted her life to caring for the destitute of Calcutta, India.
- 28** March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave the "I Have a Dream" speech, 1963.

SEPTEMBER

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)

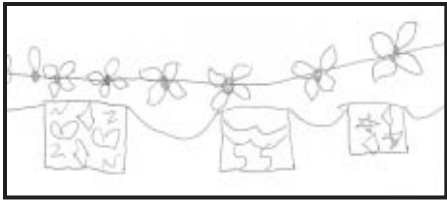
- 1** Childhood Injury Prevention Week begins.
- 3** Frederick Douglass (1817-95) escaped from slavery in 1838 and became a leader in the struggle.
- 4** Labor Day (U.S., Canada): honors workers.
- 10** Grandparents' Day.
- 11** Ethiopian New Year (1999) ■ Coptic New Year (1723).
- 16** Mexican Independence Day.
- 17** U.S. Constitution signed in 1787.
- 21** International Peace Day (U.N.)
- 22** Rosh Hashanah (Jewish): New Year, begins at sundown (Year 5767) ■ California Native American Day: a day to learn and teach about Native American Indian cultures and histories ■ Autumn Equinox (Northern Hemisphere) ■ Birthday of the ice cream cone, 1913. Originated by Italo Marchiony, who sold lemon ice from a pushcart.

- 23** Ramadan (Islam): month of fasting and prayer, begins at sundown ■ Banned Books Week begins.
- 28** Teachers' Day and Confucius's birthday (551-479 B.C.E.), Taiwan, China.

OCTOBER

Child Health Month

- 1** Yom Kippur (Jewish): Day of Atonement, begins at sundown.
- 2** Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948): leader of India's nonviolent struggle for independence ■ Birthday of Charlie Brown and Snoopy (1950).



LUPIA

- 4 Walk to School Day.
- 5 Chusok (Korea): harvest thanksgiving festival ■ Death of Tecumseh (1768?-1813): Shawnee leader who spoke out against unfair treaties with white settlers.
- 6 Tet Trung Thu (Vietnam): autumn festival, children parade through the streets with lanterns ■ Succot: Jewish harvest festival, begins at sundown.
- 7 Birthday of Desmond Tutu (1931-): South African archbishop and leader in the struggle against apartheid.
- 8 White Sunday (Samoa): parents prepare a feast for their children.
- 9 Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- 10 Birthday of Ken Saro Wiwa (1941-95): Ogoni environmental and human rights activist in Nigeria.
- 12 Dia de la Raza (Mexico) ■ Lights on Afterschool! publicizes the need for more after-school programs.
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (U.N.)
- 21 Diwali (India): Festival of Lights, celebrates fortune and generosity.
- 23 Eid-al-Fitr (Islam): end of Ramadan, celebrated with feasting and praying.
- 24 United Nations founded to work for world peace, 1945.
- 31 Halloween.

NOVEMBER

Native American Indian Heritage Month

- 1 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead, Mexico): honors departed loved ones at cemeteries and by decorating shrines ■ Child Protection Act passed, banning hazardous toys, 1966.

- 9 Berlin Wall opened, symbolizing the end of the Cold War, 1989.
- 10 Sesame Street, the children's educational television program, premiered, 1969.
- 11 Veteran's Day.
- 13 National Children's Book Week begins.
- 14 Children's Day (India): commemorates the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), India's first prime minister.
- 18 Birthday of Wilma Mankiller (1945-): Chief of the Cherokee nation (1985-95) ■ *Children's Advocate* newspaper began publication, 1973.
- 20 Universal Children's Day (U.N.)
- 23 Thanksgiving.
- 24 Buy Nothing Day: established to advocate against over-consumption.
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN)
- 29 Education for All Handicapped Children Act passed, 1975.
- 30 Andres Bonifacio Day (1863-97): Birthday of Filipino leader who led the revolt against Spain.



TIRZAH

DECEMBER

- 1 World AIDS Day ■ Arrest of civil rights leader Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat in a bus, 1955. This launched a boycott which ended segregation on buses throughout the southern U.S.
- 3 International Day of Disabled Persons (U.N.) ■ Birthday of Anna Freud (1895-1982): authority on children's mental disorders. She warned against neglect and harsh discipline.



TATIANA

- 10 Human Rights Day (U.N.) ■ Birthday of Thomas Gallaudet (1787-1851), pioneer in the education of deaf people.
- 11 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) established, 1946.
- 12 Feast of the Virgen de Guadalupe: patroness of Mexico.
- 16 Chanukah (Jewish): Festival of Lights, begins at sundown ■ Las Posadas (U.S., Mexico), Simbang Gabi (Philippines): celebrated with candlelight parades, lasts until January 6.
- 20 Birthday of Sandra Cisneros (1954-): Mexican American author.
- 21 Winter Solstice (Northern Hemisphere).
- 25 Christmas.
- 26 Kwanzaa (African American): seven-day family celebration, commemorates traditional African harvest festivals.
- 30 Rizal Day (Philippines): date of execution of Dr. Jose Rizal (1861-96), Filipino reformer and writer.
- 31 New Year's Eve ■ World Peace Meditation.

Calendar compiled by Daphne Muse. Updated by Jessine Foss. Drawings by students attending after-school programs at the Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement (BAHIA) in Berkeley.

For a Multicultural Calendar poster, send \$3 to: *Children's Advocate*, Action Alliance for Children, The Hunt House, 1201 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA 94612-1217.



DANNY

Should the state pay more for “quality” child care?

Advocates discuss the pros and cons

BY LYNLEE MURRAY

Last year, the governor’s budget proposed to pay early care and education providers different amounts based on the quality of care they provide. Called “tiered reimbursement,” his plan would have used training, education, and accreditation to determine the rates that providers get paid by the state to care for children in low-income families. The plan would also have cut rates to most providers, so advocates spearheaded a successful campaign to defeat it.

Later in the year, the legislature passed a bill that would have set up a quality rating system for child care providers. Though at least 35 states have a quality rating system, the governor vetoed the bill.

Many advocates support paying providers more for higher-quality care—but they are also concerned about potential pitfalls. “I think that California will eventually (have) tiered reimbursement,” says Donita Stromgren, public policy manager of the California Child Care Research and Referral Network. “We need to be careful that (it) benefit(s) children.”

Good or bad?

Supporters say “tiered reimbursement” would:

- **reward quality**
- **encourage providers to get more training:** “It would motivate providers to go the extra mile of getting their degree or just being educated in child development,” says Elda Fontenot, second vice president of the California Association for Family Child Care.
- **encourage licensed-exempt providers** to become licensed. (Providers don’t need a license if they care for children of just one family besides their own.)
- **result in better programs for children:** “We know from research that the higher the quality of the program, the more the child will benefit,” says Paul Miller, executive director of Kidango.

Opponents say:

- **Quality is hard to define** (see box, page 13).
- **Tiered reimbursement could create a “two-tiered system”:** “In the higher-income areas, a provider who (goes) to school can charge higher-income parents more. In lower-income areas, families can’t pay higher fees, (so) you could create more of a two-tiered system” with higher quality care in wealthier areas, cautions Nancy Strohl, executive director of

the Child Care Law Center (Strohl supports tiered reimbursement—and paying all providers more).

Scaling up or down?

A system that pays providers based on quality could:

- **Pay more:** keep lower-quality providers at current rates and pay more to higher-quality programs. “I feel I should be compensated for all of the education and time I’ve taken,” says Fontenot. Paying providers more could “promote continuous quality improvement for teachers and early childhood programs,” adds Amanda Stangis, interim executive director of the California Association for the Education of Young Children.

RELATED ISSUES AND HOT TOPICS

- **Chronic under-funding in the state’s child care licensing system:** “Our licensing system has been really decimated in the last few years,” says Stromgren. “So until we (fix) that, it’s difficult to look at quality. We’re building a (quality) system on quicksand.” The legislature has begun an audit of the state’s child care licensing activities.
- **Changes to how the state sets “regional” rates for subsidized child care:** This year, the state used zip codes to determine how much providers are paid, rather than counties, as it has done in the past. Early care and education providers protested, saying this was unfair to providers in lower-income neighborhoods. The state stopped implementing the new rates and is figuring out a new plan.
- **SB 908 (Kuehl) on child care:** this bill will address reimbursement rates and other aspects of the child care system, though specifics are not decided yet.

For more information, contact the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 415-882-0234; www.rrnetwork.org or the Child Care Law Center, 415-394-7144; www.childcarelaw.org



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- **Pay less:** keep higher-quality providers at current rates and pay less to lower-quality programs. Advocates say this would hurt children—because the state already pays too little for high-quality programs. “People think that if you take the same amount of money and spend it differently that you can change things,” says Strohl, “but you don’t want to increase quality to some kids at the expense of so many others.”

What about license-exempt providers?

Advocates disagree on whether license-exempt providers should be paid more or less than they are now:

- **Paid more, to support parent choice:** Parents using exempt-care providers are generally low-income, as are the providers themselves, notes Michelle Stewart, coordinator for the Contra Costa chapter of Parent Voices. “Family members stop going to work

to help the parents of the child,” she says, “(paying them less) makes it impossible for them to live off that money.” This would “penalize families for choosing the best choice for them,” adds Stephanie Simcox, director of data management at the Children’s Council of San Francisco

- **Paid less, because they don’t meet standards:** “License-exempt is a fancy way of saying people who don’t meet the standards,” says Miller. “I personally don’t go to someone to treat me for (a medical problem) if that person has no background or license.” Fontenot adds, “Cuts should go to unlicensed providers. (If) they are doing it as a career...they should get licensed.”

WHAT’S “QUALITY” CHILD CARE?

Advocates note many factors contribute to quality care:

- **Education:** “Child development classes help you set up an age-appropriate curriculum. The more education you have...the more insight you have into child development,” says Fontenot.
- **Culture is important:** “Any type of quality measure (should) include cultural quality,” says Strohl. Child care should honor the culture of the child and family.
- **Different ideas about quality:** “It’s very subjective, what constitutes quality for a parent,” says Stewart.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children offers a list of what parents can look for in a quality child care program:

- Children are generally comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play or activities.
- All groups have at least two teachers.
- Teachers have specialized training in child development and early education.
- All areas of child’s development are stressed equally, including learning, physical skills, and social and emotional development.
- Staff meet regularly to plan and evaluate the program.
- Parents are welcome to observe, discuss policies, and participate.

The complete list is online at:

www.naeyc.org/accreditation/search/choosing.asp

For more resources, see

www.4children.org/news/106cce.htm

Resource for reading: your local library

BY CECELIA LEONG

Parents and caregivers hear a lot these days about how important it is to prepare young kids to read. But they don't necessarily know how. And even trained child care providers need resources.

Children's librarians and your local library can be a wonderful source of ideas and resources.

For parents and kids

"Visit the library!" says Janet Cheung, children's outreach librarian for the Oakland Public Library. Most libraries have:

- Special materials, space, and activities for young children
- Picture books and board books
- Videos, DVDs, and books on tape or CD
- Internet access
- Story times for the under-five crowd
- Books and programs in several languages—at the Alameda Free Library, for instance, weekly story times are offered in English, Spanish, and Mandarin
- Special programs throughout the year—summer reading programs, puppet shows, holiday celebrations, and more.

For child care programs

Many libraries send staff out to work with child care providers. "That's where the kids are!" explains Maida Wong, senior librarian for children's services in South Pasadena.

In San Mateo, for instance, librarians are available for presentations at parent nights in child care centers or preschools. Oakland outreach librarians Janet Cheung



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and Laura Tarango visit Head Start programs and the school district's preschools. At preschool graduation, they sign kids up for library cards and give out free books for children and a calendar for parents with tips on how to help their children with reading.

- Some libraries send out bookmobiles to bring library materials to under-served or remote areas—urban, such as Glendale, or rural, such as Tuolumne County.
- Some libraries have special borrowing programs for preschool teachers and child care providers. San Jose Public Library's Books for Little Hands provides mini libraries for child care providers. San Mateo County libraries have a special Teacher Card that allows teachers to check out more books, keep them longer, and not incur fines.
- Raising a Reader, a program started in San Mateo and now spreading to other counties, supplies child care providers with bags of books in English, Spanish, or Chinese. Each child can take one bag home for a week.

For more resources, see www.4children.org/news/106libe.htm

PREPARE KIDS FOR READING

"It's not as hard as parents think," says Oakland librarian Janet Cheung. Parents can:

- Read to your children!
- Take them to the library
- Sing songs with your children
- Point out signs
- Read labels and menus
- Talk about the world around you
- Ask about a child's day at preschool
- Speak to your child in your native language.

HOW TO GET A LIBRARY CARD

Library cards are free. In many library systems, you don't even have to live in the same city to get a card. Some libraries have a minimum age for children's cards and most ask that a parent or caregiver come along to apply. To get a library card for you or your child:

1. Go to the circulation desk at your local library.
2. Fill out a short application.
3. Make sure you bring some form of identification such as a California driver's license, California identification card, or utility bill showing your name and current address.

California Child Care Portfolio

The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network this month publishes its latest county-by-county survey of child care need, supply, and cost. This year's *Portfolio* includes a special section, "The New Child Care Consumer," highlighting information on the diversity of California families. The *Portfolio* shows that:

- Licensed child care is still not available or affordable for many California families, with the severest shortage of care for children under two—the portfolio details supply, cost, and need for child care in each county.
- California's child care centers and homes reflect the diversity of languages families speak, with many providers speaking Spanish or Asian languages.

Tax fairness

The California Partnership recently published a Tax Fairness Tool Kit, a curriculum that explains problems with the tax system and provides resources for research and advocacy. Among other things, it covers:

- Budget balancing that always happens through cuts to crucial programs and services
- The unfair tax system favoring corporations and wealthy individuals.

The curriculum and tax facts are available in Spanish, English, and Chinese.

For more information or to order the toolkit, go to: www.californiapartnership.org/artman/publish/cat_index_23.shtml or call 510-292-6941 or 562-862-2070, ext. 34.

- The high cost of living in some counties is forcing more families into long commutes—more workers are now traveling an hour or more to work.
- An increasing number of families work night and weekend hours, while most child care is available only during the day.

FOR INFORMATION:

415-882-0234, www.rnnetwork.org.

Children Now California Report Card

Children Now's 2005 *California Report Card*, released in November, highlights generally poor health and education statistics for California's children, for example:

- California ranks 44th in school spending
- Less than 55% of 3rd and 7th graders scored at or above grade level on school achievement tests
- 800,000 California children lack health insurance
- Less than 30% of 5th, 7th and 9th graders meet state physical fitness standards
- 46% of four-year-olds aren't enrolled in preschool.

Recommendations include:

- quality preschool available to all children
- health insurance for all children
- continuing rigorous statewide standards for school achievement
- required daily physical education in schools.

FOR INFORMATION:

510-763-2444, www.childrennow.org



ALAIN MCLAUGHLIN

Children's Health Initiative ballot measure

ACTION: Children Now, PICO California, and The Children's Partnership are asking supporters to join in gathering signatures and passing an initiative for the November 2006 ballot.

BACKGROUND: The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006 would raise the state cigarette tax by \$2.60/pack. (Currently it's \$.87/pack). Funds would

- make sure every child in California can receive affordable health care insurance
- expand other prevention, treatment, and research programs.

Many children are already eligible for Healthy Families or Medi-Cal. This measure would make all other children eligible for Healthy Families if their family income is below 300% of the poverty line (about \$46,000 for a family of three). It would also make it easier to enroll and stay in Medi-Cal and Healthy Families and make the programs operate as one.

FOR INFORMATION:

510-663-2984, 510-763-2444, or 310-260-1220, www.100percentcampaign.org.

Fair rates for state-funded child care centers

ACTION: The California Child Development Administrators Association (CCDAA) is rallying support for a campaign for fair funding for state-subsidized child care programs.

BACKGROUND: Some high-quality child care centers have state contracts to provide subsidized care for low- and moderate-income families. But they've been closing at an alarming rate, saying they can't afford to keep going. Why?

The state subsidizes child care for low- and moderate-income families in two ways:

1. It contracts with some centers for care for a certain number of children *and*
2. It provides child care vouchers that parents of other children can use anywhere.

Quality requirements are much stricter at centers with state contracts. But the amount they get for each child is often lower—sometimes a lot lower—than the amount paid through the voucher system. Why? Because per-child rates for centers with state contracts have not kept up with inflation, while rates paid in the voucher system are set according to the “market rate”—how much people pay for child care in each region.

CCDAA is campaigning for a law that would require the state to pay centers with state contracts at least as much per child as it pays through the voucher program in their area. They say this will preserve high-quality child care for low- and moderate-income families.

FOR INFORMATION:
800-835-3083, www.ccdaa.org

Prevent Child Abuse California: Policy goals

ACTION: Prevent Child Abuse California (PCA-CA) is asking supporters to join in advocating for this year's policy goals.

BACKGROUND: At a policy conference November 8, PCA-CA identified top policy priorities for 2006:

- **Implement a strong statewide home visitation coordinating structure** that would connect home visitation and related programs to coordinate and evaluate programs statewide.
- **Pass legislation to reduce domestic violence** by creating public school programs on healthy and unhealthy relationships and by creating a “differential response system” for reports of child abuse.
- **Conduct a public education campaign** to give people information on what they can do to prevent child abuse.

FOR INFORMATION, including a list of other policy goals:
916-244-1945, www.pca-ca.org.

New funds for prevention of serious mental illness

ACTION: The Mental Health Association in California is urging all children's advocates to get involved in planning for how to spend new mental health funds for prevention and early intervention.

BACKGROUND: In 2004 California voters passed Proposition 63, which placed an additional 1% tax on incomes over \$1 million to fund mental health services. The proposition says at least one-fifth of the money—about \$150 million a year—must go to “prevention and early intervention” to keep mental health problems from getting severe.

Prevention and early intervention are “not currently part of the mental health system,” says Rusty Selix of the Mental Health Association in California. A new system for catching problems early should focus on kids, Selix says, and create partnerships between the mental health system and schools, doctors, child care programs, and community organizations.

This year the state Department of Mental Health will be creating systems and policies to guide county plans. “Every child advocacy organization should be involved” in helping to shape these policies, says Selix.

FOR INFORMATION: The Department of Mental Health sends out emails updating people on the process—sign up at www.dmh.ca.gov/mhsa. Or call the Mental Health Association in California at 916-557-1167.

Alan Watahara

California has lost a dedicated champion of children with the death of Alan Watahara in October. Alan founded and led organizations advocating for children including the California Partnership for Children and Youth, the California Children's Lobby, the Sacramento Dental Care Foundation, and the UC Berkeley Children and Youth Policy project. He was most recently working with First 5 and California Tomorrow.