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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 91 LCM-41

Date: March 13, 1991

Division: Family and Children
Services

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Child Care: Use of Community Resources

ATTACHMENTS: There are no attachments to this LCM.

The federal Family Support Act of 1988 requires that child care activities be coordinated with appropriate child care agencies. Such agencies include Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Head Start programs, preschool programs funded through the public schools, school and nonprofit child care programs and community-based organizations which provide preschool programs for handicapped children.

As part of the JOBS Plan and Consolidated Services Plan social services districts are required to describe their involvement and participation with all other appropriate organizations in the planning and development of child day care services and the identification of unmet needs. This includes how the district coordinates activities among the various providers and organizations to meet client specific needs and methods by which the district involves or provides forums for the participation of these organizations.

Districts have been provided with a list of day care organizations and groups with whom they may wish to coordinate in order to identify and meet client needs (refer to 90 LCM-159). While this list is not an all-inclusive roster of child day care community organizations in each county, it does provide a good base from which you can begin to build a child day care network. Organizations/groups not listed in 90 LCM-159 may be identified within each local district and may be included in the district's collaborative efforts. These could include Child Care Councils, Family Day Care Provider Associations, community agencies that serve handicapped children and other task forces and agencies that respond to the needs of children and families.

The purpose of the LCM is to assist local districts in developing strategies to coordinate and collaborate with the child care community. Specific types of collaborative efforts which might be developed with Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Head Start programs will be highlighted.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

In general terms Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R's) provide the following services:

- o Provide consumer information and referral services on day care to all parents who need it;
- o Expand the supply of quality child care through the recruitment and training of providers;
- o Improve the quality of existing day care by offering training to providers, providing parent education and publicizing child care standards and regulations; and
- o Enhance employer support of child care services.

These agencies can often tailor their program to provide a variety of services for which a district may elect to contract to meet the district's unique needs. These services might include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Personalized consultation -- Child care counselors will work closely with your clients to explore the available child care options, providing guidance on the best choices.
2. Child care referrals -- You may specify that the CCR&R provide your clients with at least two choices of regulated child care providers.
3. Caregiver vacancy checks -- You may be able to have the CCR&R confirm that the child care provider has openings prior to giving a referral.

4. Follow-up calls -- You may wish to have child care counselors continue to contact clients until child care placement is concluded.
5. Parent education -- CCR&R child care consultants are able to discuss child care issues with your clients. Topics might include how to select quality child care, how to assess child care needs and how to balance work and family needs.
6. On-site client counseling -- In some districts you may be able to have a CCR&R child care counselor based at your site.
7. Data collection and reporting -- The CCR&R may provide you with periodic reports to help you more accurately assess the child care needs and supply in your district.
8. Family Day Care Start-Up -- You may wish to contract with a CCR&R to recruit and train prospective family day care providers and to assist in the certification process.

The district may negotiate a contract with a Child Care Resource and Referral agency for the provision of services such as those listed above. The contract should clearly identify the nature and level of the specific services for which the district is contracting. Districts may contract with CCR&R's whether or not they are receiving funds under a state contract.

HEAD START PROGRAMS

Head Start is a federally funded early childhood program which provides comprehensive services to children aged three to five years and their families who are living in poverty. These services include: education, health and nutrition, special needs, parent involvement and social services. Most Head Start programs operate on a part-day basis. In many instances the families served by Head Start are clients of the Department of Social Services.

Districts may elect to collaborate with Head Start programs in a variety of ways. These collaborative efforts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Local districts may contract to expand the hours of service provided by the Head Start program to provide extended day care for clients who are working or participating in the JOBS program. This is a good potential source of additional regulated slots to meet the child care needs of clients and can help assure that the district is able to provide choices to JOBS participants who request assistance in locating care for their children. Several factors need to be considered in the implementation of this collaborative effort including whether the Head Start program has space which is not utilized for a portion of the day which allows them to provide extended programming. The local social services district and the Head Start program will also need to resolve how coordination of recruitment and selection will be accomplished.

For this type of effort to succeed it will be necessary for the district to be actively involved in the process of identification of children and families who meet the Head Start eligibility requirements and are also appropriate for subsidized child day care services.

2. The local social services district may wish to contract with the Head Start program to have Homebased Visitors provide services to family day care providers and the children in their care. The purpose of this type of collaborative effort is to provide family day care providers with supportive services and information which will enhance the quality of care received by children.
3. Most Head Start programs have a transportation component. It may be possible to arrange to have children taken to a family day care provider, day care center or informal provider when children must go to a second provider in order for the parent to work or participate in education or training activities.
4. Head Start programs traditionally place a strong emphasis on staff development. The local social services district may wish to coordinate with the Head Start program for the provision of training for other child care providers in the county. Training could be offered for both current providers (center and family day care) and prospective providers, including JOBS participants.
5. Head Start programs employ individuals with special skills and training to provide supportive services to both children and families. It may be possible for a local social services district to contract for a Head Start program to provide similar supportive services to family day care providers. These services might include services for children with special needs, health services, family services, or parenting education and support groups.
6. Head Start programs have on-going contact with many individuals who are potential JOBS participants. Head Start staff can be instrumental in assisting the families with whom they work understand the benefits of JOBS participation. In addition, the Head Start staff can be supportive of parents and their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.
7. Head Start programs have a strong history of employing parents and former parents in a variety of capacities (i.e. teacher aides, bus drivers, cooks, parent involvement coordinators, family workers, etc.). Therefore Head Start may be a potential employer of parents currently receiving public assistance. Local social services districts may wish to learn more about the employment opportunities within a Head Start program and the type of education and training clients will need to obtain to meet the program's employment criteria.

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ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Local districts may incur costs when implementing collaborative efforts with the child care community. Such costs and expenditures may be subject to federal and State reimbursement. Additional information on child care administrative costs will be released to districts under separate cover.

We would appreciate your advising us of any collaborative efforts you undertake which are not reflected in your current JOBS Plan. Please direct update information and any questions to Dee Woolley, Bureau of Child Care, 1-800-342-3715, ext. 4-9627 or dial direct (518) 474-9627.

Joseph Semidei
Deputy Commissioner
Family & Children Services