



A Resource Guide for Child Care Advocates

Child Care Employee Project

A Program of the Child Care Staff Education Project

MANAGING THE MEDIA MAZE

A Resource Guide for Child Care Advocates

by

Jane Friedman, Gerri Ginsburg and Marcy Whitebook
Child Care Employee Project

Development and publication of this guide was made possible by grants from the Eastman Foundation, New York, the Rosenberg Foundation, San Francisco, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

We extend our grateful appreciation to Jeanne Nelson of the International Child Resource Institute and to Harry Chotiner, for their valuable assistance. Also, special thanks to Chris Cleary, Arlyce Currie, Rory Darrah, Stan Franzeen, Bill Ginsburg, Betty Halpern, Will Hawk, and Mary Hurley for their help.

MANAGING THE MEDIA MAZE: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR CHILD CARE ADVOCATES

Child care is a fact of life for many families; their economic survival depends upon it. Yet upon reading or hearing the news, one hardly gets this impression. The public image of child care fails to capture its importance to the fabric of American family life. On the contrary, recent media coverage has been particularly negative and frightening, leaving the impression that child care is, at best, a necessary evil. Child abuse and sexual molestation in child care settings seem to be the major newsworthy aspect of this important service. Less disparaging coverage still debates the problematic aspects of child care. How often have we read about:

- the potential damaging psychological effects of young children being cared for by someone other than their parents?
- the questions of whether children in child care are more aggressive than their peers cared for at home?
- the increased risks of infectious disease in child care settings?
- the need for more "babysitters" to staff day care facilities?

While it is crucial that parents and the larger community be made aware of these potential hazards, the toll these stories take must also be recognized. They reinforce parental guilt about using child care and demoralize good providers. At the same time, these stories often fail to generate creative thinking about how to improve existing services and to meet the growing need for care. They fuel cultural ambivalence toward child care — reinforcing its low status and its low priority in government budgets.

Understanding the roots of the current public perception of child care is an important step towards changing it. Though it is often difficult to pinpoint all the forces that have created current attitudes, certain historical influences can be identified. Only recently have the majority of women, let alone mothers, worked outside their homes for pay. Thus, most people carry expectations that mothers should be at home with their young children, regardless of financial or personal experiences. And, because child care has historically been considered women's work — part of the biologically determined domain of women, like cooking and cleaning — many feel it takes no special skill to do and thus requires no training in early childhood education. Finally, because women have traditionally performed these services at home without pay, there is great cultural resistance to the notion of spending money on child care.

At the Child Care Employee Project we have become increasingly aware of the need to mount a campaign to counteract negative coverage in the media about child care. We have come to understand that to be successful as a resource and advocacy group for child care

staff, we must work to improve the general image of child care at the same time. Improved working conditions are tied to a better public image and vice versa.

First, we must challenge the notion that child care is a service performed by unskilled people. Rather we must show that most child care workers are highly educated and trained individuals, committed to their work, and that many are women working to support themselves and their families, rather than to earn pin money. Second, we must support parents who choose day care for their children. This involves emphasizing that child care is a necessary and positive part of a developmental process, by providing stimulating activities and emotional guidance for young children. Finally, in order to eliminate the hidden subsidies provided by the low wages of child care staff and to make services affordable to parents, we must convince the public and employers of the need for their increased financial support.

Such a media campaign is no small undertaking. In this booklet we hope to provide incentive and practical suggestions for approaching the local media. We recognize that the public image of child care — and those who provide it — will not change overnight. Yet we believe that local efforts around the country can begin to turn the tide.



PLANNING AN APPROACH TO THE MEDIA

Television, radio and print are very powerful tools for changing social awareness and opinion. However, these tools have intimidated most of us in child care, and we remain uninformed about how to use the media to our advantage. Traditionally, training programs for early childhood education teaching staff and even graduate programs in administration have focused on curriculum and program development, not public relations. Our problems using the media are exacerbated by the limited funds in the field; there are little, if any, financial resources left over after we budget our programs. But if we educate ourselves about the media, access to our local media resources becomes easier. And, if we are organized and strategic in our approach, access can be less time consuming and expensive than we might think.

Getting Started

Whether your agency begins by responding to a negative story or wants to initiate an active image enhancement campaign, a well thought out plan to reach and educate the public is critical to a successful media strategy.

The first step is to designate one person from your staff, board, workers group or parent body to be your *media representative*. This person should be knowledgeable about the program, and able to relay information about your organization. S/he should also be able to speak and write clearly. Media professionals assume your statements represent your point of view; seldom do they have the time to probe for hidden meaning. Therefore, your media representative must be given clear direction and fully understand what you hope to accomplish from a media campaign. Help him/her generate a series of convincing statements on specific topics that are timely and attention getting. Consider these possibilities:

- A discussion of child abuse with suggestions for parents on how to look for quality care.
- A counterpoint to negative publicity received by your center.
- A profile of a family needing care or subsidy.
- A story about activities specific to your center, such as your annual fundraiser.
- A description of an experimental employer-supported child care program.
- A description of an innovative program for children such as mainstreaming or infant/toddler care.
- An analysis of staff salaries and working conditions.

The next step is to *evaluate how much money you have* for a media campaign. Since most child care centers have very little, perhaps several centers can come together to share the work and expense. Local groups such as resource and referrals, unions, or other children's advocacy organizations may want to get involved in devising a media plan in which many child care organizations participate. Don't neglect to enlist volunteer help from skilled parents or local university or college journalism departments. Remember that a media campaign can be as elaborate as a nationwide spotlight on child care in popular magazines (as recently undertaken by the Child Care Action Campaign), or as simple as a press release and a few fact sheets. Keep in mind that media people are looking for interesting facts rather than gimmicky announcements or lots of duplicated copies to search through.

Planning a budget for a media campaign may be the most difficult aspect of your work. Although you may not have to pay for the actual newspaper space, you will have incurred costs getting there! Consider the staff time necessary to write, produce, assemble and distribute media packets and/or press releases and the like. Also

consider costs for stationery, printing, postage, phone, and overhead (a percentage of office rent, utilities, etc.). *The Media Book* (see Resource List) offers these additional suggestions for keeping your budget accurate and under control:

- Allow for unexpected expenses!
- Make sure one person is responsible for overseeing the budget from start to finish.
- Make sure everyone knows the accounting/expenditure procedures.
- Remember to take into account sales tax, and delivery or freight charges when budgeting for materials.
- Get bids for work (e.g. printing) in writing, and ask whether you are getting a firm bid or an estimate. Ask how the price may vary after the work has been completed. If you cannot get a firm price from designers and typesetters, estimate 30% more than what they quote you.
- Don't forget to budget for follow-up materials that you will send to people who respond to your publicity (i.e. brochures, sample materials, etc.). As they say, "Build in for success!"

Depending on how much volunteer help you can muster and how much money you have, the next step is to *develop a time table*. If you want to do a media blitz for an event or fundraiser for your center, leave enough time to develop and distribute your press releases, public service announcements and other publicity. Be realistic: Most radio and television stations require four to six weeks lead time to get something on the air.

Now you must *decide what audience you would like to reach and choose the appropriate form of media*. The child care field needs support from a broad range of interests: the business sector, private individuals, other service organizations, and of course families. Select media that serve these audiences, particularly radio and television stations and periodicals that appeal to people with young children and those who are politically involved. Think about media that affect you. These may include college and high school newspapers, church or synagogue newsletters, and bulletin boards in supermarkets and other public places. Don't forget to include newsletters of local women's and children's organizations, and neighborhood "throw-aways". These are often what people read and respond to. Research the local media field carefully and find out which people in the media are sympathetic to issues involving children and families.

Once you have chosen a media representative, the issue you want to focus on, and the format that best serves you and your agency's needs, the next step is to *develop a Media Book*. This can take the form of a looseleaf notebook or a file card system. The media book is your agency's resource file of local media. It becomes your guide and reference with the necessary information in case you need to publi-

cize an event or contact the media for any other reason. Your book should include a page or card for each local publication, radio and television station. Each page should include the following up to date information:

- Names, addresses, phone numbers and contact person for each entry. Note those who are known to be sympathetic to children's issues.
- Deadlines for receiving materials.
- Policy regarding use of photographs. (i.e. what size, are they returned, etc.)
- Special services offered by the media agency. For example, some stations have a community affairs representative who is available to help develop public service announcements. In addition, these people may be available to lead workshops for non-profit centers on how to gain access to local media.
- Format for public service announcements.

All this information can be found by looking in the Yellow Pages and calling the stations and periodicals to ask about their community affairs policies. Also ask your friends and colleagues in child care about contacts — you may be surprised to find out who knows whom in the media. It may be useful to include a section of examples of public service announcements and press releases in your media book. Be sure to keep copies of all the material that has been developed about your program as well as notes on any media appearances made by your staff.

PLANNING THE APPROACH

- *DESIGNATE A MEDIA PERSON*
- *DEVELOP A BUDGET*
- *TARGET THE AUDIENCE*
- *DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE AND VEHICLE*
- *COMPILE A MEDIA BOOK*
- *CULTIVATE MEDIA CONTACTS*
- *ESTABLISH A TIME TABLE*

MAKING NEWS

So you know that low status and poor working conditions in child care both undermine the quality of services and are in fact an economic injustice to the trained people working in the field...**BUT IS IT NEWS?** Although a media person may be sympathetic to your issues, his/her job is still to cover the news, not push your cause. As some very perceptive media people have noted: "It's all well and good

to be on the right side of important issues, but that doesn't necessarily translate into news." Well, what does?

It's no easy task to make news — it takes imagination and sometimes courage — and you always need to be in control of the event you are creating. According to the *Media How-to Notebook*, (see Resource List), these are some definitions of what is *newsworthy*:

- *actions in the form of events;*
- *actions that are unusual, dramatized, or of human interest;*
- *variations on a theme that is already in the news;*
- *the accomplishments of your group, if they represent a change or announced change;*
- *stories fitted to the format of a particular show or publication.*

There is also *news in numbers*. Often, child care advocates come together for meetings, workshops or especially, conferences, yet the media is absent. Remember that whether you have 25 or 1,000 people in one place, a crowd usually indicates to the media that news is being made. You can take advantage of this!

The *Notebook* goes on to discuss some important "Don'ts" to remember as you set about making news:

- *DON'T make frequent or unexplained changes in announced policy or direction or you won't be taken seriously.*
- *DON'T say anything that can be proved untrue.*
- *DON'T rely on the press to do your work for you — provide reporters with visuals and other items that show, not say.*
- *DON'T be unreliable: be there or call when you say you will, provide what you must, and meet your responsibilities. Preserve your integrity and credibility.*

Keep these tips in mind as you use the tools to make news described in the next section.



SPECIFIC SKILLS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Developing a Media Packet

Developing a media book or file of easily accessible information will give you a clearer picture of who you want to reach and how to make the appropriate connection. Now you are ready to learn the specific skills required to publicize the needs of your agency. To facilitate communication with media representatives who are looking for news you must *learn the language* of radio, television and print media. A first step in this process is *developing a media packet* for your organization. The purpose of the media packet is to communicate information about your agency or organization. When writing your packet use an outline format, type double-spaced on letterhead stationery, and include the following:

- A signed and dated *cover letter* explaining why you are sending the packet and indicating that you will contact the person by phone within the week regarding the next step toward your goal.
- A *paragraph that introduces your organization* and discusses important aspects of the work that you do. For example, "The Association for the Education of Young Children is a professional organization providing a forum for early childhood educators to share ideas and resources." Also, note the date your organization was founded, and the number of members, if relevant.
- In addition, the media packet can include *fact sheets about child care*, particularly those that substantiate the points you are trying to make. For example, if you are approaching the media to publicize the low pay and poor benefits child care staff receive, include a fact sheet describing salary levels in your area or comparing child care salaries and benefits with those of workers in other fields. Also, if you have had *previous positive written media coverage*, include a copy of the article, highlighting points you wish to emphasize. And enclose your *current brochure*, or *program description*.

A program's "printed image" is an important part of a media campaign. Good graphics capture attention and can quickly identify and explain an issue. People ought to be able to recognize your letters, brochures, mailings and handouts by your program's logo or graphics. A few tips to remember when producing brochures or other written materials are:

- Develop a reasonable production schedule for writing, rewriting, proofing, designing, and printing — and then add an extra week. Unexpected delays always seem to occur when you are on a tight schedule!
- Proof, proof and proof again! Have your finished product checked by someone who has not been working closely on it. Even

a small typo becomes a glaring error once it's printed five hundred times on a brochure.

- Print as many as you can afford to. It is the initial printer's set-up charge that is expensive, and making more copies reduces the cost per item. However, try not to be overzealous when estimating your needs — you may find yourself left with excess copies of inexpensive, but outdated (and therefore useless) materials.

The media packet is your introduction to media news staff, providing them with the information you want them to know. Again, always send them to those you know are sympathetic to children's issues. Send the packet before you submit copies of your public service announcements, free speech messages, or requests for time on radio and television programs. Be alert to events in your local community that might make the media more receptive to child care issues. For example, if women and poverty is a topic in the current news, a media packet with information connecting the feminization of poverty with the low wages of child care workers (90% of whom are women), would be timely.

A media packet must succinctly communicate your message in writing. For many of us, writing clearly is a scary and uncomfortable prospect. However, this type of writing is a technical skill that can be developed with good advice and diligent practice. Ask for editing help from colleagues, friends and parents in your center. Learn the elements of newswriting and practice them until you feel comfortable. Remember these pointers:

- Use short action verbs and short paragraphs.
- Always include WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? and WHY?
- Be sure each announcement or press release you write contains a logical beginning, middle, and end.
- Make sure your message is clear to the uninformed reader or listener. Try it out on someone who doesn't know much about child care.

(For more tips on writing see the Director's Survival Kit on Writing in the *Child Care Information Exchange*, March/April 1983, CCIE, C-44, Redmond, Washington 98052.)

MEDIA OPTIONS

By paying close attention to the media world around you, with an eye and ear to who is covering the issues related to yours, you'll be able to analyze and choose the most appropriate media outlet for your group. A full media blitz may be appealing, but it's important to recognize the staff time and money it will cost. If you can't afford the whole "dinner plate", then spend some time determining which "a la carte" media outlets you can target for the most impact.

In this section we describe the most commonly utilized news tools. Note that while their functions are similar, each has a slightly differ-

ent emphasis and purpose. Keep in mind that coverage in one magazine or newspaper will often produce interest in other areas of the media, so be alert to this "ripple effect".

Public Service Announcements

Before 1984, radio and television stations were required by law to provide *free air time* to the general public. With the deregulation of the commercial media, the availability of air time is threatened. Most stations, however, still commit a portion of their air time to free public service announcements (PSAs) from non-profit tax exempt groups as a community service and for the benefit of their own public image.

The rules regarding content, format and length of PSAs will vary from station to station. These guidelines should be noted in your media book. Whatever the rules, PSAs are an essential part of a media campaign, as they can help introduce your group, your services, and your events to the public. Well written announcements can have a strong impact on the listener. (See sample in Resource Section.)

How to Prepare Copy for a PSA:

- On a separate sheet, list the Who, What, When, Where and Why facts about your program and organization. Include the names of important places, people and phone numbers.
- Using this list, prepare a draft of your message. Keep the sentences short, simple and conversational. Be accurate, brief and factual. Make sure the phone numbers and dates are clear.
- Read your copy out loud and time it carefully. Rewrite it to eliminate any stumbling words. Read and time it again.
- Now you are ready to prepare the final copy for the station. Type your announcement double spaced on letterhead stationery, noting the reading time, and whether the announcement is for immediate release or to be held for a specific date.
- At the bottom of the release, give the name and phone number of the staff person that the media can contact for more information.
- If you are preparing announcements of different lengths, write each announcement on a separate page.
- A few stations may invite you to record your message in their studios. Prepare your copy as described above. Practice reading aloud at home. Try to be natural, and check your reading time.

The station will usually send you a card to tell you when your PSA was aired. Make sure you follow up with a thank-you letter to the Public Affairs Director of the station — an important gesture to maintain a good working relationship with the media.

For a public service announcement on television you can have a visual image presented with your copy if you prepare a color slide. For guidelines on how to prepare these slides refer to the *Media How*

To *Notebook* (see Resource List) or contact your local television stations for suggestions.

To prepare a public service announcement, you must know the reading time and word count of the PSA. In general, these figures apply:

Reading Time	Word Count
10 seconds	20 words
20 seconds	50 words
30 seconds	75 words
60 seconds	150 words

Community Calendar Announcements

Community calendar announcements are like PSAs in that they must be non-commercial. But they differ in that they must *announce an event* rather than a position, opinion, or piece of news. For example, if your organization is sponsoring a circus as a fundraiser, you will want the date, time and location of the event announced in a community calendar.

Remember to mail to newsletters, parents' magazines, other news sources that deal frequently with children's issues, and more general publications with calendars. Look at the way their listings are written, and write yours in a similar fashion. Send each announcement to the Public Affairs Director or calendar contact at least three weeks before you want it read or printed. Include date, time, location, purpose, price, where to get tickets, and the phone number of the staff person that the newspaper, magazine or station can contact for more information. Follow up your letter with a phone call to see if and when your listing will be included in the community calendar. If it is aired or printed, be sure to send a thank you letter.

Free Speech Messages

Free speech messages (FSMs) are used to *express an opinion* by an individual or group. These messages are generally used by television and a few radio stations. FSMs should contain the background information about the issue, as well as your group's position on it. You must identify yourself and your group and state what action you want from the viewers (letter writing, contribution etc.). For example, your group can report on proposed statewide legislation to expand child care subsidies and encourage a letter-writing campaign from the public to support the bill(s). Someone from your organization must go to the station and record the message. Though this prospect may seem scary, by practicing beforehand you'll be surprised at how articulate and comfortable even a novice can feel. Messages to be aired are selected on the basis of community interest, variety and relevance. The more timely and specific you can be, the better.

Press Releases

Child care agencies can easily become skilled at using press releases to announce their events. These releases arrive at local newspapers (dailies or weeklies) or radio/tv stations at least one week before an event. Press releases are used to publicize any events that you would like people outside your particular center or organization to attend, such as fundraising benefits, campaigns, etc. In addition, press releases can be used to announce a new development in your program, such as a building expansion or increased funding from a grant or other source. Not every press release will produce media coverage, but if a media person receives a steady flow of releases (providing that the news or events you are pushing are valid and legitimate) it will help to enhance your program's name recognition and give editors and reporters something to file away or refer to. As your group becomes familiar to them, you'll become something more than just a random phone caller when you contact the recipient personally.

As with most correspondence, the two foremost considerations are form and substance: the more professional your release looks the more "trustworthy" or credible you will appear; and the more interesting your release is, the more it will stand out from the hundreds that collect on the editor's desk. Strive for each.

At the top of the page of your press release type "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE", and the date and name and phone number of your contact person. Below this type your heading. It should be typed completely in capitals and should summarize the story. The first paragraph must answer the Who? What? When? Where? and Why? of your event. Try not to use more than one page. Double-check names, spelling, and grammar. To indicate the end of your release type "###"; this journalistic notation means "that's all". Press releases are an inexpensive and simple way to reach many people through the popular media because they do not take special skills other than the ability to write several paragraphs clearly. (See sample in Resource Section.)

The *Media Alliance* (see Resource List) suggests that a personal letter sent with a press release may help your media contact feel that s/he will gain some unique advantage by acting promptly. Try it and see what happens!



GETTING ON RADIO AND TELEVISION

Talk shows are the easiest way to “debut” on tv or radio. While their audiences may be small compared to prime time shows, they frequently reach regular and devoted viewers. Access to these shows can be achieved in several ways. A period in which child care is constantly in the news is a good time to get talk show staffers interested in the local angle. Another approach is to use the talk show format to respond to particularly negative coverage being received by the child care field. Recent publicity given to sexual abuse in child care centers and family day care homes makes it timely to present positive images of child care providers and ideas about how parents can insure children’s safety. A specific event or issue your organization would like to publicize may be an occasion for a media appearance if your agency is well known by the media in your community.

Initially, your agency’s media representative must become familiar with the local radio and television talk shows. Get help here from parents who might watch or listen to daytime or weekend programs. Identify media personalities who have been known to interview people working with children and families. Send an introductory letter and informational media packet to the producer of each program. Within a week follow up the packet with a phone call to the producer to solicit an appearance. Identify your group, saying, for example, “We are a local child care center serving the needs of working parents in downtown Oakland and we are concerned about the low salaries our staff receive despite the importance of the work they do.” Detail as much as necessary to persuade the producer that you have both an interesting topic and an interesting angle on it. Don’t be afraid to be pushy — media people are used to being badgered, and they expect it. But keep in mind the difference between being assertive and being rude. Stick to it until your voice is heard. Try to arrange a date. If they say their schedule is full, ask if a future date can be arranged. If they say no, ask them to file your materials and call you anytime they have an opening.

Once you have been given the go ahead to appear on a talk show you must spend time preparing for the program. If you think your host or hostess is uninformed about child care, you might want to send additional background information and suggested questions and possible answers.

Whoever will appear should be able to speak clearly and explain the organization’s work succinctly. Practice with the person by role playing. Ask them questions, making sure they know the two or three most important points they will repeat during the program. Remember, you must be able to speak most directly to the issues and concerns of a general audience to “hook them in”, and also be able to weave your specific points into that discussion. For instance, if you want to make a point about the low salaries and poor benefits of child care workers, be prepared to focus on why well-trained, committed workers are leaving the field. Tie that directly to what this does to the

quality of care children receive. Then you can forcefully conclude that better salaries and benefits are essential to quality child care.

Make points that most people, not just those in the field, can relate to. Remember, your audience is everyone — parents and providers, and non-parents as well. Be careful not to pit one group against another. Imagine a series of provoking questions the host might ask and develop answers that say what you want to communicate.

Utilize positive arguments. Try not to undermine your point of view by paraphrasing opposing viewpoints. For example, say, "Studies show the following educational benefits of preschool..." rather than, "Some people think preschool is bad for children, but XYZ study states these benefits..."

Prepare yourself for irrelevant questions from the interviewer. For example, you might be asked a very general question about child development that is not relevant to your specific topic. Practice ways to draw the discussion back to points you want to make.

If you are to be questioned on a negative aspect of a topic, remember that by dealing well with the negative, you will be establishing your credibility with the station for the future. For example, an outbreak of infectious disease at your center can bring unwanted media attention. If a reporter calls with questions be informed about disease incidence and control in your program and emphasize what is being done to prevent further outbreaks. (The Fall, 1983 issue of *Texas Child Care Quarterly* contains excellent suggestions on how to handle reporters' questions about infectious disease.)

Try and be yourself. Look relaxed. Act as you would before any small audience, or imagine a good friend is in place of the television camera. Avoid clearing your throat, saying "you know", tapping your feet and other repetitive movements.

Develop a working alliance with the interviewer — discuss rather than debate the issues. Remember, your audience almost always sees things from the interviewer's point of view.

Try to be as personal as possible. For example, you might say, "I've been a child care teacher for 5 years and I'm a parent, so I know the problems of both the low pay and high fees of child care."

Dress neatly and cleanly for television. Avoid flashy jewelry and striped, checked or patterned clothing.

Arrive at the station early and be ready to go on. And, don't forget to follow up the show with a thank you note to the host or hostess and producer.

Television and radio talk programs provide excellent opportunities for getting inexperienced staff involved with the media. You might request permission to bring at least two members for an appearance. One should be an experienced and relaxed speaker, comfortable with the format, whose ability allows the less experienced member to participate as little or as much as desired.

Local radio and tv news programs are often another possibility to make your issues heard in the community. Recently many stations have initiated "human interest" segments at the end of their broadcasts. Child care is a perfect candidate for one of these segments, which often offer a better than average in-depth look at an issue. If you have good relations with a local program or producer you might suggest a segment, offering to find contacts, sources, etc. Or you may just receive a call to be interviewed one day!

Finally, don't forget about "slow news" days. They do happen and programs and newspapers often need "filler". If something is happening at your center (a new program, new sand for the sandbox, or whatever), invite the media. You may be surprised to find yourself traveling over the airwaves or rolling off the presses!



GETTING POSITIVE RESULTS

This pamphlet sets the stage for positive results with the media, but like any "how-to" manual it can't guarantee the outcome. Media relations, like all human relations, fall prey to personal idiosyncrasies, timing, etc.

Over the last few years the Child Care Employee Project has been written about many times in local and national newspapers and magazines, and staff members have been interviewed on talk shows. We've gained lots of technical know-how about how to get access to the media, and some savvy about getting our point of view across accurately. But each media encounter still teaches us something new. Below are some suggestions gleaned from our experience to help you avoid some common pitfalls.

Always keep in mind that the media provides a public service, and in order to do this reporters and interviewers need people to provide information and news, preferably people who are experts. *You are these experts.* Advocates have to look carefully at the topics the media covers, find the links to the issues we are most concerned about, and show these links to the media. More times than not you can assume the media is ignorant about the issues you are raising. If you can capture their interest about these issues, you are half-way home. The rest lies in knowing your objectives, stating them quickly and *taking charge.*

If you have succeeded in making personal contacts with reporters who are interested in child care issues, they may call you. If they ask for a statement and you are not prepared, ask for a few minutes to collect your thoughts and call them right back. If possible, consult quickly with a co-worker before you make a statement. If they ask for written information, get it to them immediately. Being contacted by the media is a reality for many child care resource groups and some centers. Try to anticipate and prepare for these calls by taking some time, perhaps in staff meetings, to discuss current issues.

In general, reporters and newpeople have little awareness of the field of child care or of the specific problems faced by child care workers. After all, they too get their impressions from the public media! This lack of awareness can lead to a misinterpretation of our work. Media people also tend to have their own "agenda". Many reporters do interviews every day and the format never varies, regardless of the issues being discussed. In addition, interviews are done very quickly, often touching only surface issues. In order to counteract these problems be prepared with plenty of information about your program or organization. Begin interviews by stating your most important facts, and remember that the first twenty seconds of a response are the *most important*. Use simple language rather than technical or professional jargon. *Never say anything off the record*. Reporters are always on the record, despite what they might tell you. Remember that something you say half-jokingly may be taken very seriously by some members of the audience. Realize that what you see on the screen or hear on the radio might not reflect your expectation of an in-depth understanding of your ideas by the media—but if it is positive and gets a few of your points across, it can only be helpful.

If someone from the media contacts you for an interview, try to find out as much as you can about the person before your meeting. See if anyone else in your agency or local community is familiar with him/her and their attitudes toward early childhood or social service issues. Send some advance material to the person, to further familiarize them with your work and approach.

Recognize that an interview may not necessarily mean that your name or agency will appear in the story. We learned this the hard way at CCEP. When a national magazine for working mothers did a story on child care workers, they interviewed us at length and also asked us to find workers to interview. We just assumed CCEP would be listed as a resource, but it wasn't. Since then we've learned to request mention of our Project and other groups in a resource list for readers. We've been much more successful!

If distorted or detrimental media coverage is produced about you or related issues, you and your organization must decide whether a response would advance your interests, or just give the distortion more publicity and further antagonize the press. Also, consider the amount of time a complaint or rebuttal would take. Would you and

your agency's time be better spent designing strategies for more positive coverage? A letter to the editor can be a free and effective way to counteract negative or inaccurate coverage. CCEP responded to the magazine article mentioned above with a letter to the editor listing us and several other groups as a resource for child care staff—our goal in the first place! We've received many responses from readers.

Always ask for a final copy of the piece or the air time so you can view your coverage. This is preferable to asking for a draft before publication or airing; such requests are unrealistic given most production schedules. According to several reporter friends, asking to see the rough draft usually discourages reporters from using your material. Be sure to send a "thank you" to a reporter once you see the final story . . . if you have serious concerns raise them then.



EVALUATING YOUR EFFORTS

How will you know if what you're doing is working? While your ultimate goal may be to raise the status of child care work, the main objective of your campaign will be to get coverage of the events or messages you have designed to achieve that goal. Assessing whether you are reaching your objective can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The most obvious is to collect and count clippings of stories about your group. Alert your co-workers, board, parents, family and friends to look for and send you any stories they notice about your group or issue. Remember to look for TV stories and listen for radio reports. You might ask reporters and editors who you know well to tip you off when your story is coming up, so you'll know to look for it. Finally, if you can afford the costs, and your campaign is extensive enough you might want to pay for a clipping service to do this work for you. Save these clippings because you'll want to reproduce the best ones for your media packet. Keep them in a media scrapbook.

Another good way to evaluate your efforts is to count the number of responses or inquiries you get as a result of increased media

coverage. This can be encouraged by asking people to do something like join your organization, or write, or call for information when you are reaching out to them. These activities are an excellent way to quantify your results.

If you are being successful in your media outreach you may notice an increase in the amount of related stories. Keeping track of these is also important. It enables you to spot sympathetic media people for future reference, and allows you opportunities to react and comment on these related issues, thereby raising your visibility.

Good publicity does more than increase your external visibility, it boosts the internal morale of your group. Remember to circulate all clippings among your colleagues and members, and include reports of other media coverage in newsletters and meeting minutes. Display particularly good clippings where others can see them. These items are the most tangible evidence of your hard work, and help keep everyone motivated and enthusiastic.

CONCLUSION

By writing, designing, printing and distributing this packet we have made some assumptions for you, the child care advocate:

CHILD CARE IS NEWSWORTHY. WHAT YOU DO IS NEWSWORTHY.

Once you learn that, the rest is learning how to let the rest of the world know.

It may seem overwhelming that child care advocates, most of whom are underpaid and overworked, should now have to learn yet another skill: how to manage the media maze. Yet without this skill, we will wander about continually debating the "chicken and egg" dilemma of child care:

Without a positive public image, how can child care and its providers receive the supports they need?

Without these supports, how can we develop a positive image?

Working with the media will help those in child care heighten their own self-image and create supports for others in the field. Positive results with the media make you feel good, put you in touch with what your colleagues are doing, and stem the isolation we so often feel. We have designed this booklet as a tool for getting over the first hurdle of initiating communication with the media. We hope you will use it as a guide and check the resource list for more specific help in developing your media campaign.

This final quote from the *Media How-To Notebook* aptly describes why using the media is a *starting point*, or a means to an end, rather than the end itself:

"It's worth knowing what the media can do; it can give recognition to a fact, an issue, an organization. But, action rarely comes about

simply because the media spotlight is turned on. Media action must be coordinated with, but supplementary to, organizing.”

(Since its inception, the Child Care Employee Project has been thinking and writing about how child care advocates can organize to improve the field and gain support from one another. See the CCEP Publications List on the inside back cover for information about the resources we offer.)

A campaign to raise the image of child care and child care providers is relatively new. We are all pioneers in uncharted territory, and the challenge is formidable. But, the results will be **newsworthy!**

We hope you'll share your good publicity with the CCEP so that we may tell others. Good luck and we'll see you in the news!



RESOURCES: FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE MEDIA

Organizations

CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE PROJECT

P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, California 94705
(415) 653-9889

A national resource clearinghouse devoted to improving child care working conditions through research, training, consultation and distribution of a newsletter and other printed materials (see back cover).

Child Care Action Campaign

Box 313
New York, New York 10185

A coalition of leaders in the child care field, representatives of major women's organizations, and editors of magazines oriented toward women. C-CAC's purpose is to alert the country to the growing national need for child care information and services. •

The Family Resource Coalition

230 North Michigan Ave.
Suite 1625
Chicago, Illinois 60601

A national resource and advocacy group devoted to programs which support families. They publish an excellent newsletter containing an on-going series on family resource programs and the media.

Media Network

208 W. 13th St.
New York, New York 10011

A national membership organization which supports the use of media for grassroots organizing and education.

Public Media Center

25 Scotland Street
San Francisco, California 94133

A non-profit advertising and public relations group headquartered in San Francisco. They develop and produce information campaigns for non-profit organizations working for social change.

Books

Media Resource Guide \$5.00

Foundation for American Communications
3383 Barham Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90068

Media How to Notebook \$5.00

Published by Media Alliance, 1983
Building D Fort Mason
San Francisco, Calif. 94123

How to Get Free Press

The Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Media Coverage for Your Business, Organization or Political Campaign by Toni Delacorte, Judy Kimsey, Susan Halas. To order contact: Toni Delacorte
[REDACTED]

Strategies for Access to Public Service Advertising \$4.95
Public Media Center
25 Scotland St.
San Francisco, Calif. 94133

The Media Book: Making the Media Work for Your Grassroots Group \$8.50
A Project of the Committee to Defend Reproductive Rights, 1981
1638 B Haight St.
San Francisco, Calif. 94117

Local Resources

Very often, local institutions such as colleges, the United Way, radio and television stations have media resources available such as those listed below for the San Francisco Bay Area. Try contacting similar groups in your community.

People Behind the News: A Guide to Accessible Bay Area Journalists \$5.00
Published by Media Alliance, 1982
Building D Fort Mason
San Francisco, Calif. 94123

1984 Bay Area Media Guide \$5.50
Communications Division
United Way of the Bay Area
410 Bush Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94108

Focuses on broadcast and print media and covers Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

Access to Bay Area Radio and Television
Chronicle Broadcasting Co.
Lillian Fortier, Director of Community Relations
P.O. Box 3412
1002 Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, Calif. 94119

Radio and television stations in your local community may also have resource materials available.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Child Care Employee Project

P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, California 94705
(415) 653-9889

March 15, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Gerri Ginsburg
Child Care Employee Project
[REDACTED]

"WHO'S CARING FOR THE KIDS?" PRESENTATION TO BE HELD
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1984

A look at child care providers - who they are, what they do, and how they contribute to the quality of care - is the focus of a presentation to be sponsored by the Child Care Employee Project on Wednesday, April 11, 1984 at 7:30 p.m. at Local Community College.

Although child care is an economic reality in the 1980's, most people, including parents, know little about the professionals who provide child care, their working conditions, and what impact they have on the more than 3000 children in day care in Oakland. This presentation will include an examination of the current crises in child care:

- why well-trained and committed day care providers are leaving the field
- who is replacing them
- what this means to the children and families using day care
- what to look for when choosing day care
- how to improve the quality of child care

All interested child care workers, parents, advocates and others are invited to attend this free presentation.

The Child Care Employee Project was formed in 1977 as a resource organization for those seeking to improve the quality of child care staff working conditions, and the quality of child care in general.

For more information contact Gerri Ginsburg at 653-9889.

###

A program of the Child Care Staff Education Project

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Child Care Employee Project

P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, California 94705
(415) 653-9889

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

March 1, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 second spot

People concerned about child care services in Oakland are invited to attend a public strategy meeting on Wednesday, March 21, 7:30 p.m. at Local Community College.

Come and share your ideas about creating affordable and high quality services for children!

For more information, contact the Child Care Employee Project at 653-9889.

Contact: Marcy Whitebook
Director, Child Care Employee Project

A program of the Child Care Staff Education Project

Child Care Employee Project

To Order: Send Payment to the Child Care Employee Project
P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705

PUBLICATIONS LIST

RESOURCES

Health and Safety For Child Care Workers

Includes materials on child care occupational hazards: cleaners, art materials, injuries, infectious diseases, pesticides, stress, burnout, etc., and information on developing personnel policies relating to employee health and safety. \$3.00.

Salary Surveys: How? Why? Who? When?

Includes ideas and suggestions on the pros and cons of salary surveys; ways to collect information; how to make best use of findings and examples of surveys. \$3.50.

Unions and Child Care

An overview of unions and child care, questions and answers about collective bargaining; choosing a union; union contracts; and women workers and organized labor. \$1.50

ARTICLES

Who's Minding the Child Care Workers? A look at staff burnout by Whitebook, et. al. Reprinted from *Children Today*, 1981. \$1.00

Warning: Child Care Work May be Hazardous to Your Health. Taking a look at adult needs in the child's world. Reprinted from *Day Care and Early Education*, 1984. \$1.00

What Can Employer Supported Programs Do For Child Care Staff? Reprinted from *Day Care and Early Education*, 1984. \$1.00

Beyond Babysitting: Changing the Image and Treatment of Child Caregivers. Reprinted from *Young Children*, 1984. \$1.00

NEWSLETTER

The Child Care Employee News

A quarterly newsletter filled with national news for and by child care workers. \$5.00 for a one year subscription.

HANDOUTS

\$2.50 per series; individual handouts free with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Series I

1. Improving Substitute Policies
2. Break Policy
3. Health Coverage
4. Grievance Procedures
5. Shared Decision Making
6. Parent-Staff Relations
7. Employment Rights (Wage and Hour Laws in California)
8. Employment Rights (Under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act)
9. Occupational Health and Safety for Child Care Staff
10. Staff-Staff Relations

Series II

11. Special Stresses of School Age Child Care Work
12. Child Care Work May Be Hazardous to Your Health
13. Worker's Compensation Benefits
14. Payroll Taxes
15. Working in Parent Co-ops
16. Extended Day Care in a Co-op or Nursery School
17. Special Stresses of Infant Caregiving
18. Writing Personnel Policies
19. Staff Evaluation
20. Talking to Parents About Working Conditions

BUTTONS — "GIVE A CHILD CARE WORKER A BREAK" 20¢ each

Child Care Employee Project
PO Box 5603
Berkeley, California 94705

