

Acre Family Child Care
Lowell, MA
<http://www.acrefamily.org/>

Sponsoring Organization

Acre Family Day Care
14 Kirk Street, Lowell, MA 01852
978.937.5899
FAX: 978.937.5148
info@acrefamily.org

Contact Person

Kathy Reticker, Executive Director
kreticker@acrefamily.org

Service Delivery Area

City of Lowell, Massachusetts

Type of Organization

Independent, non-profit ECE agency

Summary of Approach

Acre Family Day Care oversees a network of 39 family child care homes that serve, on average, 234 children each day. Acre provides training and technical assistance to both member homes as well as other current and prospective family child care providers, business training, loans, transportation for children, referrals for families, and subsidy assistance for low-income families. Acre also provides “peer to peer” TA to other organizations seeking to establish a family child care network.

Type of Approach:

FCC Network w/ non-profit “umbrella”

Services Provided:

Billing and fee collection – for all except private, fee-paying families who receive no subsidy. (Non-subsidized families pay the provider directly.)

On-site Technical Assistance (see below)

Training

Classroom Observations

Child Assessment

Substitutes

Shared Staff for Program Support – social worker, transportation

Loan program (for liability insurance, supplies and expenses, repairs, etc.)

Shared Staff for Administrative Support, e.g. mgmt, fundraising, etc. (explain)

[Note: Acre does NOT administer the USDA Food Program management for participating FCC homes because there are many other FCC food sponsors in the area, so they refer to others.]

Narrative describing services provided:

Acre staff provides the following *pre-service* support to prospective family child care providers: 120 hours of pre-service training in business management and child development and pre-service technical assistance including help in meeting MA licensing requirements. Once the providers are licensed and part of the network, Acre staff provide the following supports: site visits at least monthly but often more frequently; in-service technical assistance, by phone and on-site, on business issues as well as child-specific concerns; in-service training; transportation for children. At present, classroom observations and child assessment are done on an “as needed” basis, however, the agency is moving toward making these a standard practice in all homes for all children.

Acre pays providers a per-child allocation every two weeks, based on the child’s attendance. The allocation is based on the family child care reimbursement rate established by the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services. Acre receives an additional allocation of approximately \$9 per day per child to cover network costs. Acre bills both the state and the parent for their portion of the child care fees. Additionally, Acre administers a loan program that makes low-cost loans available to help providers purchase required liability insurance or equipment/repairs needed to provide in-home child care. Payment of the loan is deducted from the providers bi-monthly child care reimbursement check.

Family child care providers that participate in the Acre Network do not all use the same curriculum.

Staff at Network Coordinator or “Umbrella” Organization

Administration and Finance: Executive Director, Deputy Director, Staff Accountant, Accounting Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Director of Resource Development

Institute for Family Child Care Systems at Acre Family Day Care:

Research, Training and Policy Director, Training Coordinator

Child Care: Child Care Instructor (Spanish), Child Care Specialist (Khmer), Child Care Business Specialist (Spanish/English), Social Worker, Contract Manager

Transportation: Transportation Manager and 4 drivers.

Typical Staff in local sites

One provider is in each home of up to 6 preschool children and two additional school-age children after school or on holidays. One provider and one assistant is in each large family child care home of up to 10 children. (Note: the providers are all independent and have no employee relationship with Acre.)

Date Program/Alliance Began

Acre Family Day Care was established in 1988.

Funding

Acre has over 31 public and private funders, including: City of Lowell Community Development Block Grant, Lowell Enterprise Community, Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership and many private foundations and businesses.

Participating Providers

In June, 2003 a total of 33 providers were participating, 9 Spanish-speaking, 7 Spanish/English bilingual, 7 Khmer-speaking, 4 Khmer/English bilingual, 6 English-speaking.

Population Served

97% of the families served by Acre receive a public child care subsidy.