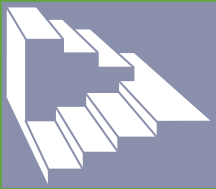


# THE BANISTER

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STAIRS, INC.

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## Greetings, Parents and Providers

I'm Jackie Majors, Crystal Stairs' new Chief Executive Officer. I joined Crystal Stairs in 2009 as Chief Programs Officer, with oversight and management of Resource and Referral, Child Care Assistance, SAGE Child Care Center and Children's Health and Wellness.

Prior to joining Crystal Stairs, I served as an executive for a Los Angeles nonprofit helping low-income, first generation high school students fulfill their dreams of a college education. Prior to that I spent 16 years operating child care centers for a nation-wide organization operating over 2000 child care centers and school-age programs in California. I am a child development instructor, a wife and a mother.

Now that you know about me, let's talk about "us." I say "us" because parents, providers and communities will need to work together towards building the future "we" want to see.

Despite the recent economic impacts, I am enthusiastically optimistic about our future. While the benefits of early care and education demonstrate the value of Crystal Stairs' work with children, families and communities, our efforts to secure funding and resources have encountered significant challenges. Last year, California was 100



days late in passing a state budget, only to have \$256 million in child care funding eliminated with a stroke of the Governor's blue pencil. It took informed and vigorous advocacy by parents, providers and agencies like Crystal Stairs to produce a greater understanding of the need which resulted in supportive legislative action.

I am convinced that to strive and thrive in this landscape we must strengthen and diversify our actions and pursue innovative strategies.

In the coming year, Crystal Stairs

will focus on *enhanced advocacy efforts* to influence government child development policy and funding and *exploration of social enterprise* opportunities to lessen our dependency on government funds and broaden our outreach and service to families and communities.

We are partners in this effort! We want to hear your stories about the value of what we do and about your needs and aspirations. I invite you to join our **Community Voices** action group, watch the Banister and our web site for information and involvement opportunities and share your ideas and experiences with our staff by sending them to [banister@crystalstairs.org](mailto:banister@crystalstairs.org). Echoing the thoughts of our founders, "the work is hard, but there's joy in the journey."

## Martha's Corner

Martha's Corner has

been a featured section of the new *Banister* since it was first published in Fall 2008. Now, after twenty-six exciting and rewarding years,



I've said "goodbye." I'm spending more time with my family and, hopefully, more time traveling. But, I do miss my co-workers and the pleasure I had helping providers and parents do their best to teach and nurture young children.

When I think about my time at Crystal Stairs, what I value most are the opportunities I had to work with and bring resources to child care providers. I learned a lot from you, too. Visiting child care centers and family child care homes reminded me how challenging it is, and how creative providers can be, in order to provide quality child care with limited resources.

I also listened to how you defined your needs as well as your expectations about how Crystal Stairs could and should help you. Our Provider Dialogue Forum and numerous focus groups gave us your feedback about what we do well and where we need to improve. Through this process, we reconnected with the provider community, strengthening a partnering relationship that had been severely strained during our years of rapid expansion and growth.

I leave knowing that during this period of transition, Crystal Stairs will work to ensure communication pathways remain in place so we can truly work together to meet the child care needs in our community. My best wishes to all of you and keep connected by sharing your ideas and experiences with us at [banister@crystalstairs.org](mailto:banister@crystalstairs.org).

## Take Note

### Share Your Story

During our 30th anniversary celebration year, many parents and providers wrote or spoke to us about how Crystal Stairs made a difference in their lives. We've heard how children thrived with caring, qualified providers. Parents accepted new and better jobs or work locations because their child care arrangements were steady and flexible when necessary. Providers received training that enhanced their knowledge, the quality of their programs, their skills as business owners, and abilities to actively advocate for child care services and funding. How about you? If you've had a special experience or would like to share your thoughts about the value of what we do, please let us know at [customerservice@crystalstairs.org](mailto:customerservice@crystalstairs.org).

### Infant Sleep Safety Campaign

Parents and Providers, make sure that babies are safe while they sleep. Cribs are a leading cause of injuries and death due to failures in their construction or the presence of excess bedding, pillows, decorations or other unnecessary items. Find out about the risks of drop-side cribs and sleep positioners, and the names of cribs recalled for safety issues. **Learn about the 2008 federal law that requires replacement of all cribs that do not meet new standards for crib safety.** To learn all about this and more, watch the Consumer Product Safety Commission's video about crib safety at [www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs](http://www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs). For more information about sleep safety go to [www.keepingbabiesafe.org](http://www.keepingbabiesafe.org).

### Why Wait To Be Paid?

Providers, help us pay for children enrolled on your program. Every month, we have providers who don't send us Attendance Records (ARs) or PPRs. Some providers have several months' of ARs or PPRs that haven't been submitted. Parents, do your part by checking your children "in" and "out" each day, explaining their absences, and signing the record at the end of each month. If a provider has to constantly chase you down to complete an AR or a PPR, they could decide to "chase you out" because you're making it hard for us to pay them for your child care.

# Inviting Children to Learn!

## WAYS TO EXPLORE NEW SKILLS, CONCEPTS AND INFORMATION

Most young children are active, curious explorers on their own. But, let's say you as a teacher, provider or parent want to introduce children to a specific concept, such as "shape." Instead of "instructing" them about shape from a blackboard or workbook, try "inviting" them to learn about objects and activities by:

■ **Exploration**—Children are attracted to things they can sense and feel; collect items and natural materials that have different textures, interesting surfaces to touch, things that move or make sounds.

■ **Transformation**—Children really enjoy changing materials and rearranging their world; provide materials and substances that can be moved, reconfigured, manipulated or altered in

different ways, to create something new

■ **Organizing and Designing**—Children will assemble materials to create

new groups and designs; find materials that have similarities and differences that can be used for sorting and patterning.

Need some ideas about how to do this? Check out the "Activities" on page 4.

*Source: Child Care Exchange, 10/28/2010*



# Sick Child Care Policy

## DOES YOUR SICK CHILD CARE POLICY NEED A BOOSTER SHOT?



A sick child care policy is the best way to assure that your program operates in healthy surroundings. This part of the year is "prime sick time." Review your policy to make sure it:

- Is clearly written and explained to newly-enrolling parents.
- Has a full listing of the illnesses and health-related reasons that would not allow a child to attend your program.
- Covers your requirements for accepting a child with a mild illness or one who is recovering from a serious illness (e.g., doctor's note).
- Specifies health procedures you will perform (medication, shots,

spot tests, use of devices) and your health emergency procedures.

■ Includes a description of your disease prevention practices (e.g., daily health checks, hand-washing, isolation of children who become ill).

■ Specifies parents' responsibilities when a child becomes ill or is returning from an illness.

■ Is updated to include new legal requirements as well as "best practices" in childhood health and safety.

■ Is fully understood and enforced by you and your staff.

For more information go to [www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org](http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org).

# Spring into Action! ACTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE SPRING AND SHOW CHILDREN HOW PLANTS GROW

## “Air in Motion” Mobile

You'll need:

Lightweight items (shells, feathers, beads, twigs, bells, puzzle pieces, colored glass with no sharp edges)  
Twine or yarn  
Scissors  
Metal, wood, section of tree branch  
Heavy-duty wire



- Arrange items in sets; move around for best look.
- Decide number of sets and if they will hang at the same or different lengths.
- Cut twine or yarn for each set; make lengths long enough so items don't touch.
- String each set; tie pieces with knot to stay in place.
- Tie sets to metal, wood or other hanging bar.
- Attach wire to each end of the bar to hang.

*Involve children in collecting items and arranging and stringing the sets. They can help find a great place inside or outside to hang the mobile so it can catch the breezes and maybe make sounds like a wind chime.*

## Sponge Garden

You'll need:

Free-form sponges with lots of holes  
Shallow container to hold sponges  
Packet of leaf lettuce seeds  
Water-soluble fertilizer (optional)



- Moisten sponges.
- Put lettuce seeds in sponge holes.
- Put sponges in container with ¼-inch of water.
- Place in a well-lighted area; make sure sponges stay moist but not soggy.

*Children will enjoy tending their garden, watching sprouts grow into lettuce. Add liquid fertilizer to the water and there might be a crop big enough to eat. Try other seeds such as chives, parsley, cilantro or even grass.*

## Eggheads

You'll need:

Hard-boiled eggs  
Egg carton with a lid  
Black and colored felt  
tip pens  
Small bag of potting soil  
Packet of ryegrass or other grass seeds



- Carefully crack and peel eggs to keep lower ⅔ of shell intact.
- Wash and dry egg shells.
- Have children use pens to draw faces and decorate the egg shells.
- Fill shells with potting soil, sprinkle in seeds and lightly press them into the soil.
- Put shells in egg carton, water gently and close the lid.
- Check to make sure soil stays moist but not soggy.

*Open the lid when sprouts have grown into “egghead hair.” Great way to re-use colorful shells from Easter eggs.*

## Painted Rocks for Earth Day

You'll need:

Selection of rocks that have one flat surface  
Thick, water-based acrylic paint  
Paintbrushes or sponges  
Magic markers  
Small pictures or photos  
White glue



- Clean dirt off the rocks and let them dry.
- Have children draw designs or pictures on the rocks with paint or magic markers.
- Cut pictures or photos to size and glue to rocks.
- When decorations are completely dry, seal them on rocks by brushing on glue mixed with a bit of water.

*Children can display their “rocky art” at home, day care or school. They can give them as gifts. If rocks go outside, make sure designs are made with biodegradable, earth-friendly water-based paint.*