

# Play by rules if child is ill

Who determines when a child is too sick to attend a day care program? The issue is complex and largely appears to rest with common sense exercised together by the caregiver and parent.

Most centers have guidelines, but those issued by the state are vague.

Michigan's licensing rules for child care centers state that when a child is too ill to remain in the group, he or she should be placed in a separate area to be cared for comfortably until taken home or cared for elsewhere.

Any bedding, toys and toilets used by ill children should be sanitized. Rules for group and family day care homes are largely the same, and also exclude people living in the home or caring for children from contact with the children if they have a confirmed communicable disease.

**MILD ILLNESS** is an on-going problem for both caregivers and working parents. While the welfare of the child is of primary concern, children can have colds and diarrhea frequently. A caregiver may also want to spare parents a mid-day call to work asking them to pick up their child.

Parents certainly do not want their children to come in contact with other ill children, and yet, when



child care  
**Marcie Walker**

their own children have mild symptoms, according to caregivers, some will try to slip the child in by reducing their fever with medication. Such practices are almost certainly prompted by the inability of the parent to stay home or afford a daytime babysitter.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children states that unilateral exclusion of sick children is not required since that policy is not consistent with current information about epidemiology.

"Often children are no longer contagious when they become symptomatic. To exclude or isolate them can be an unfair and unwarranted hardship on the parents and child."

They further state that, given the appropriate resources, sick children need not be excluded for uncomplicated respiratory illness.

Joel Bluestein, an epidemiologist with the Oakland County Health Division, concurs that colds or flu are not the primary concern. "Because of the great quantity of such viruses,

each may have different periods of communicability," he said.

He further stated that reasons for exclusion would include diarrhea, fever, and rash diseases (roselia, chicken pox, etc.), among others.

Dr. George Blum, vice president of the Michigan chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, agrees that, within moderation, children with mild respiratory infections can attend day care. However, he cautions that coughing and saliva can both spread germs.

**FREQUENT** hand-washing and disinfecting of toys, especially when caring for infants and toddlers, can be highly effective in reducing the spread of disease.

Hilde Weems, a day-care licensing supervisor with the Michigan Department of Social Services, acknowledges that there is a wide variance in practices from caregiver to caregiver, and that some keep too many sick children.

However, she said, if a child becomes mildly ill during the course of the day, the center or home may have a separate area where the child can remain comfortably for the rest of the day, with the knowledge of the parents.

"While Michigan doesn't define the symptoms for the exclusion of sick children, each center or caregiver should develop a real clear policy of when to exclude sick children, together with a health professional," said Weems.

"The caregiver should do everything possible to break the chain of infection and the parents have to adhere to their policy."

Marcie Walker is a free lance writer who has researched the topic of child care in the metro Detroit area.

## Supreme law

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## Network seeks volunteers for training

The AIDS Volunteer Network, the 75th anniversary project of the Junior League of Detroit, was implemented in April of 1990 to recruit, train and place volunteers in a variety of AIDS service organizations in

the Metro Detroit area. To date, AVN has trained 40 volunteers on issues of prevention and transmission, confidentiality, values and substance abuse. Upcoming training sessions will

be Saturday, Feb. 16 and Saturday, March 23. Those interested in attending, or in finding out more about the AIDS Volunteer Network, can call Roberta Sharpe, 831.4AVN.

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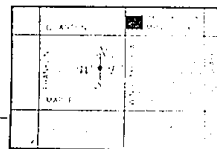
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## Larkshire student wins essay contest

Takafani Inoui, a fifth grader at Larkshire Elementary School, the son of Yochika and Kuniko Inoui, has won this year's American History Essay Contest in the district, sponsored by Three Flags Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAH).

The essay, "What the Bill of Rights Means to Me," has been called "extraordinary" by the chapter's American history committee chairman, Sally Kirsten of Farmington Hills.

Takafani has been a resident here for three years and attends Japanese School in Detroit every Saturday, said his teacher, Norma McAlpine.

His essay, chosen the winner from 70 entries, has been sent on for state competition. There it will compete with winning essays by fifth graders from 54 other DAR chapters in the state.

**TAKAFANI WILL** be a guest of honor when the chapter hosts its annual luncheon to give awards to him, as well as the five Good Citizens sponsored by the chapter, at 12:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11, in First Presbyterian Church of Farmington Hills.

Takafani will receive a DAR medal, a certificate and the DAR publication "Pillars of Patriotism."

Vicki Back, the chapter's Good Citizens committee chairman, is in charge of the activities for the day. She has invited Lonette Morley, an English and history teacher for adults, to furnish the program for the afternoon. Her program is called "The Perilous Ride of Captain Jack Jouett, a Revolutionary War Hero."

Back will give pins, certificates and copies of "Pillars of Patriotism" to each of the Good Citizens.

The Hometown and Observer and Eccentric "Creative Living" section has the largest selection of suburban display real estate ads in the metro area.

## S.P.R.I.N.G. Fashion

To a lot of creative people, at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, spring means that our fashion section is just about to make its colorful appearance. "Fashion central" has been set up, interviews and pictures are on the drawing board and we're ready to give you the definitive look at Fashion '91. Filled with colorful pictures and informative features, SPRING FASHION will answer your questions about what's important, interesting and new on the fashion front. Don't miss this big, beautiful section on Thursday, March 28, 1991.



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