

## **DENVER POST: JANUARY 27, 2005**

### **Boulder Day cares for low-income families**

Boulder: Mornings are noisy in the toddlers' room at Boulder Day Nursery as 10 or so babies signal their hunger with ear-ringing enthusiasm.

But the room is a point of pride for Steve Callander.

"You go in a lot of places - a lot of expensive places - and these kids would just be sitting here crying," he said over the chorus. "We have enough staff that we are able to give these kids a lot of one-on-one time."

The nursery emphasizes low child- to-teacher ratios for the best care, he says. Last year, the staff provided care for 114 children.

"It's a wonderful program," said Sarah Scully, the child health promotion coordinator for Boulder County Public Health. "Boulder Day is really valuable to us."

Callander has been the executive director of the nonprofit day care center that focuses on helping single-parent and low-income families since 1998.

Before that, he worked with troubled teens and decided he could do a lot more to shape young people's lives if he started earlier - a lot earlier.

Boulder Day Nursery began to help families in 1917 during World War I. In the 1970s, the focus shifted to families that had difficulty affording child care. The nursery is seeking funding from the Post-News Season to Share campaign.

Today, the nursery accepts children as young as 6 weeks old. Callander said while that is a very young age, to a single mother trying to get back to work to pay for rent, food and utilities, "six weeks can seem like a lifetime."

While the nursery's focus is to provide outstanding child care to families that must work but can't afford day care, it also serves several families who can afford child care and choose Boulder Day over others.

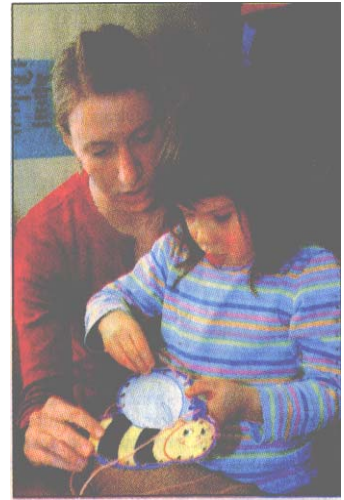
"We strive to have a diverse group of children, and that includes socio-economic diversity" Callander said. "We're exposing kids from both ends of the socio-economic continuum to each other in a way that doesn't happen all that often anymore in this community."

But Callander said too many people overlook poverty in Boulder.

"It's Boulder," he said. "It's the second most affluent city in the state behind Aspen. A lot of people ask, 'What are you talking about...there's poverty in Boulder?'" But Callander said more than 14 percent of Boulder families live at or below the poverty level.

"Those are our families," Callander said.

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John Prieto | The Denver Post  
Cristi Carman, a teacher at Boulder Day Nursery, helps Megan Schroeder, 4, with a project. Boulder Day accepts kids as young as 6 weeks old.