



April, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

Easter Seal Child Development Centers has worked with White Hutchinson in a variety of ways to create inclusive play gardens and child care centers for children with a range of disabilities. Our Phoenix center hired White Hutchinson to create their outdoor play space in a remodeled parking garage. Not only was the space challenging due to the developmental needs of the children attending but doing a garden in a desert climate is always interesting. The space was well designed and built to meet a wide range of needs including those of children in walkers and wheelchairs and has been successful a model for outdoor play gardens.

Easter Seal Child Development Centers has created a Design Guide for the Development of Inclusive Child Care Centers and relied upon the expertise of White Hutchinson to review the draft and provide recommendations for changes. They offered to do this task pro bono. They were asked to review the document due to their extensive background and experience in creating accessible environments both indoors and outdoors for children. We have found their knowledge of how to meet the needs of all children of all abilities places them in the forefront of designers.

I had the opportunity to attend the Early Childhood Facilities Design Institute and was pleased to see that an entire session was devoted to designing child care facilities both indoors and outdoors to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Their session spoke not only about the American's with Disabilities Act but how to implement what is called universal design for young children of all abilities. We have also had several of our center directors attend the Institute and they were pleased as well with the variety of content in the course and the resources that were made available. I would highly recommend the course to anyone who is considering a renovation, remodel or new construction either indoors or outdoors.

I have known Vicki Stoecklin, Education and Child Development Director, throughout her career in early childhood education in Illinois. Her leadership contributions include a training manual and game for child care directors on how to include children with disabilities in child care centers. I also know that she worked for many years training Head Start staff in six states on how to include children with disabilities.

Easter Seals Child Development Centers is a leader in advocating for high quality inclusive child care centers. We are pleased to see a design and consultation company like White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group make a commitment to young children with disabilities.

Sincerely


Bob Siegel, National Director
Easter Seals Child Development Center Network