



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1997

CR
(202) 616-2777
TDD (202) 514-1888

NATIONWIDE CHILD CARE CHAIN AGREES TO PROVIDE
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Children with serious food allergies, diabetes, and other disabilities will now be able to attend daycare at centers across the country under an agreement reached today between the nation's second largest child care provider and the Justice Department.

According to the agreement, La Petite Academy, Inc., which operates more than 750 day care centers nationwide, will change its policies to ensure that children with disabilities can be cared for appropriately at its facilities. The agreement resolves several complaints filed with the Justice Department under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

"Quality child care is essential for all working parents," said Attorney General Janet Reno. "Today's agreement will ensure that families of children with disabilities will not have to face additional obstacles when seeking daycare."

A major portion of the agreement requires that daycare staff administer epinephrine, a form of adrenaline, to those children who experience life-threatening allergic reactions to certain foods, such as peanuts, or bee stings. If authorized by parents and a physician, La Petite staff will use a small pen-like device (sold as EpiPen, Jr., or under other names) that carries a pre-measured dose of epinephrine to alleviate a reaction. The staff person simply removes a safety cap and presses the pen against the thigh of the child, discharging the epinephrine.

Under the agreement La Petite will also:

- * implement a policy to provide finger prick tests to measure the blood glucose levels of children with diabetes;
- * ensure that staff at two centers help children with mobility impairments gain access to toilets, and make accessibility improvements at another facility; and,
- * pay \$55,000 to children whose parents claimed that their children could not attend La Petite unless the chain modified its policies.

During the Justice Department investigation into the administration of epinephrine, La Petite voluntarily requested

technical assistance concerning the monitoring of blood glucose levels for children with diabetes. The newly-adopted policy is modeled on an August 1996 agreement between the Justice Department and KinderCare, the nation's largest child care provider.

It is estimated that one to three percent of school children nationwide have severe allergies that may require administration of epinephrine and that more than 100,000 children under the age of 18 have diabetes.

"By adopting these new policies, La Petite Academy is providing more opportunities for children with disabilities," added Reno.

Under the policies announced today, La Petite is not liable for the care of children with diabetes or severe allergies as long as it takes reasonable care when following written orders from a child's physician and parents. Parents will be required to provide any special equipment and sign an authorization form every six months.

LaPetite Academy has centers in the following states:
Alabama (18), Arizona(21), Arkansas (9), California (62), Colorado (26), Delaware (1), Florida (116), Georgia (56), Illinois (16), Indiana (17), Iowa (9), Kansas (22), Kentucky (3), Louisiana (1), Maryland (14), Mississippi (7), Missouri (36), Nebraska (7), Nevada (7), New Jersey (1), New Mexico (4), North Carolina (30), Ohio (16), Oklahoma (27), Oregon (3), Pennsylvania (3), South Carolina (28), Texas (135), Utah (4), Virginia (35), Washington, D.C. (1), Washington (16), Wisconsin (2), Wyoming (1).

The Department also released a new publication today entitled, "Commonly Asked Questions About Child Care Centers and the ADA". Individuals interested in obtaining a copy of this publication or in learning more about the ADA can call the Department's toll-free ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 or (800) 514-0383 (TDD). The Department also sponsors an ADA Home Page on The World Wide Web. The Internet address is:

[<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>].

#