

Dr Richard Fiene's Impact on Child Care Quality

In my opinion, there is no researcher that has contributed more to the national child care landscape than Dr Richard Fiene. His work is instantly recognized by nearly everyone working in child care and early education and his expertise and the quality of his research is never questioned. His research has guided the work of the Department of Health and Human Services, The Department of Defense and nearly every state in this country. His indicators have served as the foundation for promoting quality child care for numerous non-profit organizations working to ensure higher quality care for the nearly 12 million children served in these programs every week. These organizations include the National Association for Regulatory Administration, the National Child Care Association, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). Dr Fiene is widely respected for his groundbreaking research in the area of child care standards and assessment. His research has withstood the test of time and is as relevant today as it was three decades ago. Dr Fiene's research has influenced numerous projects such as the National Health and Safety Performance Standards, the Department of Health and Human Services State Planning Guidance, and NACCRRA's "We Can Do Better Report" measuring state by state standards and oversight.

Linda K. Smith, Executive Director, National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Dr Fiene's 35 years of research on child care quality has had an enormous impact on the child care licensing field, as well as the entire field of human care regulation. His work on more innovative child development program evaluation systems, beginning in the 1970's, has resulted in more efficient/effective systems for monitoring and enforcing licensing rules. The Licensing Indicator Checklist system, first piloted by five states, has been used extensively across the country by licensing agencies and national organizations. Through Dr Fiene's research on the use of the Licensing Indicator Checklist technology, a small group of key licensing child care indicators, known as the "13 Indicators of Child Care Quality" were identified. The indicators and the key indicator approach continue to be used by a growing number of states in the refinement of their regulatory systems for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Once again discussion that he began in the 1970's on national child care standards has resurfaced, influenced by the use of the "13 Indicators" in the "NACCRRA 2007 and 2009 Report Card on Child Care Quality – We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight" and their companion 2008 study on small family child care homes. Discussion continues on the use of these indicators as benchmarks of program quality in a more streamlined licensing and monitoring system and as the start of national licensing standards.

Pauline D. Koch, Past Executive Director, National Association for Regulatory Administration

A hallmark of Dr Fiene's research has been its steadfast focus on key issues facing child care administrators and policymakers, and his lucid writing has always been highly accessible to those audiences. I first encountered Dr Fiene's valuable work on weighted child care licensing indicators in the late 1980's when I was serving as a child care administrator in Illinois. Like so many states, Illinois has benefitted from Dr Fiene's research on streamlined licensing enforcement based on targeting key indicators of healthy and safe child care and overall program quality. Numerous influential national groups have helped support and disseminate Dr Fiene's work to the policy world, including the National Association for Regulatory Administration, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, Maternal and Child Health Bureau in the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, also in HHS. From my present vantage point as Director of Child Care and Early Education Research Connections at Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty, I have been able to track Dr Fiene's valuable ongoing contributions to research in the field. As the field has worked to develop new approaches to improving child care quality—child care provider training programs, early childhood teacher education programs, mentoring interventions, Quality Rating Systems, Dr Fiene has conducted insightful evaluations to guide the next rounds of these quality initiatives.

J. Lee Kreader, Ph.D., Director, National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University

In 1971, I was a licensing worker for the state of Oklahoma. When we made our monitoring visits, we had a blank sheet of paper, pencil and took notes on what was observed during our time at the child care center. This subjective, narrative based monitoring was commonplace and continued until the early 1980's when news of Dr Fiene's new approach to monitoring began to spread its way across the country. Dr Fiene's new approach to monitoring helped not only Oklahoma, but the rest of the country to move to a more effective, efficient and consistent method to determine compliance in child care facilities. Dr Fiene is highly respected throughout the field of human care regulation. Dr Fiene has made an undeniable impact on the quality of licensing systems, monitoring systems and standards development in our states, our tribal communities and our territories. Millions of children in regulated family child care homes, child care centers, school-age programs, part day programs and other forms of group care are in programs which offer safer and higher quality care because of Dr Fiene's work.

Judy Collins, National Policy and Licensing Consultant, National Child Care Information Center

Because of his well-known reputation in the national child care licensing and quality field, in the late 90's, Rick led the planning, development, and realization of the Capital Area Early Childhood Institute. Rick was the founding Executive Director, and more recently the Research Director. This is a model institute that has not only served as a "test-bed" for new ideas in Pennsylvania, but has developed a national reputation. He has used his extensive research and policy knowledge to help guide Pennsylvania's dramatic progress in early childhood education. His work speaks to a wide range of audiences, from academic researchers to school- and community-based and policy-makers. Rick led a major study on the quality of early child care for Governor Schweiker which had a profound effect on Governor Rendell's plans that has dramatically increased the quality of care in Pennsylvania.

Mark T. Greenberg, Ph.D., Bennett Chair of Prevention Research, The Pennsylvania State University

He served as a leader to build a system that over the years has come to fruition and is integral to the current practices and policies in the state. His research work has also influenced the creation and the development of the Keystone STARS system used widely in evaluating center based early care and education programs. Our state has gained national recognition for these developments triggered in an important way by Dr Fiene's research. Dr Fiene's research is an excellent example of outreach scholarship so prized by Penn State as a critical part of its mission as a leading institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

James E. Johnson, Ph.D., Professor-in-Charge, Early Childhood Education, The Pennsylvania State University

I became aware of Dr Fiene's research in the mid 1970's while involved in the state's effort to address children's issues. In subsequent years, Fiene's studies began to impact policy decisions both at the state legislative and departmental levels. As a direct result of Fiene's work, the state made major changes in the policies that govern the care of children outside the home. Because of his scholarly reputation gained over the years, he was able to not only provide a rationale for major policy changes, but was also able to provide guidance to a number of other state agencies and departments on children's issues. Fiene's research contribution, however, is not limited to Pennsylvania. On the national level, his impact is evidenced by the adoption of the evaluation instrument developed and used by the Department of Defense to evaluate civilian child care programs. This evaluation process and instrument were based on Fiene's research.

James E. Van Horn, Ph.D., CFLE, Professor Emeritus Rural Family Sociology, The Pennsylvania State University

I have worked with Dr Fiene as an advisor to research and evaluation activities of my work for more than 30 years. His advice, development, and implementation of the design of studies to assess the needs and measure the outcomes of interventions have been essential to my work to improve health and safety practices in early education and child care programs. In the late 1970's, he shaped and advocated for quality improvement systems models that we used as the foundation for working with organizations and agencies at the state and national level. His work to identify predictors of quality is still used today.

Susan S. Aronson, MD, FAAP, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Pennsylvania, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Rick has been involved in nearly every important quality study of child care in Pennsylvania that has occurred during his professional career. All of these works have shaped and informed the direction of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare programs and services related to child care. Rick has had an unwavering commitment to this line of research over the years and has accumulated a knowledge base and repertoire of skills and experiences that make him unique and incredibly valuable to the field.

Elizabeth E. Manlove, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Prek-4/Early Childhood Education, Lockhaven University of Pennsylvania

Throughout Dr Fiene's career, he has been recognized as a leader and respected researcher in the field of early learning and the role that quality care and education plays in producing positive outcomes for children. His research and other professional contributions have greatly influenced Pennsylvania's development of programs to improve the knowledge and skills of child care providers and the overall quality of ECE programs provided for young children. Given this, he has played a significant role in positioning Pennsylvania's quality improvement program for early care and education (Keystone STARS and PA Early Learning Keys to Quality) as one of the best in the United States. As well, his research and publications have been widely cited by other researchers in this field of study.

Joyce A. Miller, Ph.D., President Emeritus, KeyStone Research Corporation

In 2010, Dr Fiene received the ***President's Award from the National Association for Regulatory Administration*** for his contributions to establish child care licensing as the foundation of a high quality early childhood system.

In 2011, Dr Fiene had been nominated for the ***Penn State Harrisburg's Research/Scholarly Activity Award.***

Michael Giglia

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June 7, 2012

Dr. Richard Fiene
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Dear Rick,

Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement from The Pennsylvania State University! I regret that a family matter prevents me from traveling from Miami to Harrisburg to join the celebration of your 40 year career.

As you well know, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (RCL) cares for hundreds of thousands of children each year in one of the world's most unique child care environments. I believe RCL's efforts in providing quality child care are exceptionally good. But who am I to say? Therefore two years ago RCL set out to find the very best expert authority on child care standards to evaluate and guide our youth programs.

Not having a clue on how to find that expert authority, I initially thought this task would be more difficult than locating the most elusive fugitive that I had sought in my 30 year career with the FBI. I could not have been more wrong. Every inquiry that I made with leading persons, Government agencies, and nationally recognized universities engaged in child care yielded the same result: *"You need to speak with Dr. Rick Fiene!"* Who knew the search would be that easy!

Seriously, the fact that everyone told me to contact you speaks volumes to your national reputation for excellence. And now looking back, I am so glad you and your colleagues agreed to assist RCL in developing standards for child care on cruise ships.

I have enclosed a small retirement gift, which may require a little explanation. Although modern cruise ships possess state of the art electronic navigation systems; those systems are still supplemented by paper maps to chart a ship's course and position. And since the earliest days of seafaring, chart weights have been used to keep the paper map's corners in place on the navigator's table. The enclosed chart weight is special, in that it inscribes a compass. To all your many friends at RCL; that compass represents your guidance in helping us chart the best course to providing children with a safe, secure, and healthy cruise vacation.

Again congratulations on your retirement, and best wishes to you and Judy in all future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Mike