TWO METHODS FOR QUICKLY ESTIMATING THE COST OF A PROJECT

EXAMPLE A:

HINTS: *State licensing requires only 35 square feet of classroom space per child, but to create quality space you should provide 45 to 55 square feet per child not counting space used by large objects like refrigerators or counters. Even more space is needed for infant and toddler rooms. Double this number to allow for non-classroom space such as multi-purpose space, bathrooms, kitchen, offices, hallways, etc. Remember, you want two estimates, a modest, low-end one and a more ambitious high-end version.*

To estimate the approximate cost for a major new construction or renovation project you need three figures:

	LOW	HIGH
1. Gross square feet per child	70	110
2. Number of children the facility will be licensed to serve	100	100
3. Cost per square foot	125	300
ESTIMATED COST	$875,000	$3,300,000

HINTS: *Child care space tends to be 40-50% more expensive than other commercial space because of more extensive plumbing, child-size fixtures, built-in cabinets and counters and other specialized features. To come up with a cost per square foot, ask some architects or contractors for the "total development costs" (not just the construction cost) per square foot for commercial space in your area and multiply that by 1.5. Once again, look for a range. Use the lowest number and the highest.*

HINT: *Multiply the three numbers in each column. For example, in the "low" column, multiply 70 x 100 x 125 = $875,000.*

HINT: *You could say that your project will cost between $900,000 and $3 million or pick a figure between the two but on the high side, perhaps about $2 million.*

EXAMPLE B:

To estimate the approximate cost for a small-scale renovation or improvement project:

1. Collect contractor estimates	$35,000	$65,000	$80,000
2. Average all but the lowest estimate	$35,000	$72,500	
3. Build in a cushion		25%	
ESTIMATED COST		$90,625	

HINT: Eliminate the lowest estimate.

HINT: Average the remaining estimates.

HINT: Multiply the average estimate by 1.25 (that will increase the average by 25%). The result is your estimated project cost.