

# Child Care & Education: Building a Firm Foundation for Oregon's Families & Oregon's Economy



Oregon Commission for Child Care  
Report to the Governor  
& the Legislature 2007



Child Care & Education:  
Building a Firm Foundation  
for Oregon's Families  
& Oregon's Economy

Oregon Commission for Child Care  
Report to the Governor  
& the Legislature 2007

# Contents

Acknowledgments	3
A Note About Terminology	3
A Letter from the Chair	4
Introduction	5
Child Care and Education in Oregon 2007: An Overview and Call to Action	5
Child Care Is Early Childhood Education	7
The Four Essentials of Child Care and Education	7
The Economic Impact of Child Care and Education	8
Oregon’s Child Care Challenges	10
<b>Partners &amp; Initiatives</b>	<b>11</b>
Partners: Child Care Division, Employment Department	12
Partners: Department of Human Services (DHS)	13
Partners: The Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN)	14
Partners: Oregon Department of Education (ODE)	15
Partners: Oregon Commission on Children & Families	15
Partners: Oregon Child Care Research Partnership	17
Partners: Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD)	17
Initiatives: Oregon CARES (Compensation And Retention Equals Stability)	17
Initiatives: Child Care Quality Indicators (CCQI) Project	18
Initiatives: Child Care Contribution Tax Credit	19
Initiatives: Child Care Enhancement Program (CCEP)	20
Initiatives: Oregon ASK	21
Initiatives: The Oregon Registry	22
Initiatives: Child Care Health Consultation Demonstration Program	22
Initiatives: The Inclusive Child Care Program	23
Initiatives: The Virtual Degree Project	24
<b>Commission Priorities</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>About the Oregon Commission for Child Care</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Commission Members</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>28</b>

# Acknowledgments

The Oregon Commission for Child Care wishes to acknowledge the many individuals who work with children in child care and education settings throughout the state. We commend those professionals who are committed to caring for children, who actively seek opportunities to expand their knowledge and development, and who make the benefits of their training available to others in the field. They are helping to create quality child care environments that will yield a brighter future for Oregon's children.

The Commission would also like to acknowledge the work of the state's child care system partners profiled in this report. Their ongoing efforts continue to create improvement in the safety, affordability, accessibility, and quality of the child care available to Oregon's families.

Finally, we would like to thank the child care centers that opened their doors to our photographers so that we could augment the text in this report with glimpses of child care and education as it takes place: Little Beavers Preschool, Growing Oaks Center, and Lancaster Center in Corvallis, and Woodburn Children's Center in Woodburn.



## A Note About Terminology

The term "child care and education" is used throughout this report because, in the early years of children's development, child care cannot be separated from education. Good caregivers are constantly teaching. Quality child care takes advantage of the rapid brain development of the very young and prepares young children for school, a lifetime of learning, and a successful place in the economy.

# A Letter from the Chair

Governor Ted Kulongoski  
The Governor's Office  
State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97311

March 2007

Dear Governor Kulongoski:

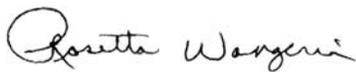
The Commission thanks you for your vision, leadership, and support on behalf of Oregon's children. We greatly appreciate your commitment to the child care and education system of our state.

As you know, child care and education plays a significant role in Oregon's economy. Studies have shown its importance in enhancing children's readiness to succeed in school and beyond. And working parents need to know that while they are in the workplace, contributing to their families' well-being and the state's economic growth, their children are experiencing developmentally appropriate care.

We commissioners are well aware of our responsibility to all Oregonians for maintaining and improving the state's child care system. And we are gratified that your administration is pursuing major steps toward these goals. While the child care system comprises many different components, we are fortunate to have a high level of expertise and engagement behind it. Now, with your support and attention, we are well poised to progress even further.

The need for high-quality, safe, affordable, and accessible child care and education is great. We look forward to working with you and the Legislature to fulfill that need on behalf of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Rosetta Wangerin  
Chair, Oregon Commission for Child Care

# Introduction

## Child Care and Education in Oregon 2007: An Overview and Call to Action

State legislators may not have the opportunity to become acquainted with the multifaceted world of child care and education unless they find it within their legislative purview or have a personal need for it. However, since the majority of Oregon families will use paid care for some of the years that their children are young,<sup>1</sup> it is a field that merits focused attention. This report provides an overview of the state's child care and education infrastructure, introduces the collaborative partners involved and current initiatives and programs, and highlights both the successes that have been achieved and the challenges that remain.

The pivotal importance of child care and education continues to be documented across the nation. Many states have stepped up their research on how it is provided, its cost, and its impact on communities. Studies on early brain development have helped professionals in this field learn how critical early childhood experiences are for young children; in a nutshell, these experiences will shape the course of their lives. Research on the economic impact of the child care and education industry has pointed not only to the direct economic benefit for working families and child care providers, but to a ripple effect bolstering the overall state economy that is remarkable in its scope.

With all of the information that is now at our disposal, we have a very real responsibility to act upon it. We on the Oregon Commission for Child Care are clear: We envision a child care and education system for our state that meets the needs of all Oregon families, and we are committed to achieving this goal.

The partners that comprise Oregon's child care and education system have made great progress over a period of years. Even while grappling with lean budgets and enormous need, they have worked intensively together in a coordinated fashion to keep us moving forward. This has been a truly amazing effort that merits recognition.

We can also be proud of the state's recent accomplishments: We have done intensive study of the significant role that child care and education plays in the state's



economy. We have established indicators of high-quality care and have begun to measure them. Soon we will launch the Virtual Degree Program, which will provide much-needed access to early childhood education training for child care providers across the state. A recent family child care conference brought together community college staff, Child Care Division staff, and Child Care Resource and Referral partners with child care providers, who learned about the services that are available to them and what they can do to become involved in decision making. Additionally, with leadership from the Commission, key partners focused their attention on bridging the affordability gap; the fruit of this work can now be found in budget initiatives that are currently before the legislature.

## It's Time to Build on Our Accomplishments

As this report will show, many things are right with our child care infrastructure, which is the result of diligent work on the part of many people in the child care and education field. But there is much more to do. We have a long way to go before every parent in Oregon has access to safe, affordable, high-quality child care.

So how can we move forward from here? The commitment of leaders in the field of child care and education is strong—let's match it with an equal level of commitment on the part of state government.

## Taking Action

We are extremely pleased to see that important steps forward have been proposed. The Commission fully supports Governor Kulongoski's budget items related to child care, and we thank him for the broad vision and strong leadership he has demonstrated on behalf of Oregon's children. The increased funding for Oregon

Pre-K (Head Start) included in the budget is a wise investment for the state. It will not only improve individual students' achievement levels, but will return the dollars invested manyfold by eliminating future expenditures for such costly items as special education, public assistance, and incarceration. The governor's budget initiatives to increase affordability for low-income parents and students will give more parents access to the child care and education their children need.

We ask the state's legislators to join us in supporting these budget items as well as other ways to better fund the system, including continuation and expansion of the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (see page 19). We also urge that any economic development strategies under consideration include a plan for access to high-quality, affordable care. Finally, we ask that you review the priorities the Commission has identified for 2007, listed on page 25, and support the programs and initiatives that address them.

Taken together, movement in each of these areas will bring Oregon's child care system much closer to its goal of meeting the needs of all Oregonians. This will not only improve the child care and education picture for families in every legislative district throughout the state; it will further fuel the engines of the state's economy. We have learned what we need to do. And now, with the support and attention of our state leadership, we are well positioned to take a quantum leap into the future.

**"Strengthening access to affordable, quality child care should be one of Oregon's top priorities."  
—State Representative Tina Kotek**



## Child Care Is Early Childhood Education

The primary function of child care is obvious: It is an indispensable service that enables parents to work. It is essential for people in every demographic group and every profession, in every corner of the state.

But child care is much more than a place to park the kids while Mom, Dad, or both go off to earn a paycheck: Child care is early childhood education. Scientists have determined that 90 percent of brain growth occurs by age six.<sup>2</sup> Since the child care setting is often a child's first learning environment outside the home, it is easy to see that the level of stimulation and engagement children receive while in care could hardly be more critical for their future development. Quality care is key to making sure that when children enter kindergarten they are ready to learn, and that they have developed the social skills necessary to interact with teachers and other students.

**"A preschooler has twice as many brain synapses as her pediatrician."**

—Helen J. Neville, Director,  
Brain Development Lab,  
University of Oregon<sup>3</sup>



## The Four Essentials of Child Care and Education

An effective child care infrastructure must address the following four areas:

### *Quality*

Studies have shown that children in high-quality child care settings demonstrate better cognitive function and social skills and have fewer behavioral problems than those in lower-quality care. Children who benefit from high-quality care are also more likely to be successful in school and later life.

The level of quality of a given child care site is dependent upon: the ratio of children to adults; the size of the group; the education or specialized training of the site's caregivers; whether it is accredited; staff turnover; and whether there have been substantiated complaints.

**"Beyond the basics of cost, location, and cleanliness, parents are seeking (1) a caregiver they and their children are comfortable with, (2) an environment where their children can learn new things, and (3) a setting in which their children can get individualized attention due to appropriate staff-child ratios."<sup>4</sup>**

### *Safety*

Safety issues are wide-ranging, from making sure that all caregivers pass a criminal background check to purchasing cribs that meet current safety standards to making sure that window blinds and curtains do not have looped cords in which a child's head could get caught. Child



care providers must attend to all of these items and more when setting up and maintaining the site to keep it safe.

### Accessibility

Those who work standard hours in an urban area and have a bright, well-adjusted preschooler may find child care relatively easy to find. But for those who work odd hours or live in a rural area, or have an infant or a child with special needs, a disability, or behavior problems, options may be severely limited—or nonexistent.

**“Four in 10 employed Americans now work non-traditional hours—evenings, nights, weekends, or on rotating shifts.”<sup>5</sup>**

**“Approximately 6.5% of children and youth in the United States have disabilities that significantly affect their participation in activities typical of children their age”<sup>6</sup>**

### Affordability

Parents shopping for child care the first time can suffer sticker shock. The cost varies with the type of care, the age of the child, and the geographic area. Prices generally fall as children’s ages increase because programs are able to care for older children in larger groups. Child care centers and group homes generally charge higher prices than family child care providers. Median monthly prices in urban areas range from \$765 for full-time infant care provided by centers to \$132 for the care of school-age children in a family child care home.<sup>7</sup>

**“The high cost of child care is the main reason parents are forced to compromise on the quality of care their children receive.”<sup>8</sup>**



## The Economic Impact of Child Care and Education

### The Child Care Industry Generates Wages, Sales, and Revenue

When we reflect on the positive impacts of safe, affordable, accessible, quality child care and education, we may think in terms of things that are sometimes difficult to quantify: happy, well-adjusted kids; a warm, positive environment; parents not having to stress about how their children are doing while they’re at work. But there are also hard numbers that tell a quantitative story about the profound economic impact of child care in Oregon.

Thanks to the work of Oregon State University’s Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in collaboration with child care agencies, we now have an understanding of the significant contribution child care makes to the state’s economy. Through their research, we have learned that the child care industry is comparable in size to other large Oregon industries such as highway construction and the Postal Service; it enables production that boosts the state’s economy; and it brings in revenue from outside the state in the form of both export sales and direct revenue.

Consider the following:

- 7,900 child care businesses employ people, pay wages, and make purchases.
- There are 14,420 jobs in child care.
- Child care purchases support 5,900 jobs and \$256 million in sales in other industries, with a total of 20,320 additional jobs being linked to the child care industry.
- The 90,000-plus parents who pay for child care earn wages of \$2.6 billion annually.



- Direct revenue from outside Oregon exceeds \$122 million in the form of federal expenditures, as well as business and philanthropic expenditures. This effectively supports nearly 4,000 jobs.
- Parents who use child care produce goods and services sold outside the state, thus bringing in even more revenue from outside Oregon. Of the 90,297 Oregon parents who use child care, some 26,257 produce exports for sale outside the state. This accounts for \$5.75 billion in annual sales, supporting 52,000 Oregon jobs and generating incomes of nearly \$2 billion.<sup>9</sup>

## Untapped Potential

These are big numbers that contribute significantly to economic development in our state. In addition, there is a story that they do not tell. Since the demand for child care and education in Oregon exceeds the available supply, increasing the access to paid care has the potential to increase the size of Oregon's labor force. If all parents who need paid child care could afford and access it, an estimated 23,700 additional Oregonians could participate in the labor force.<sup>10</sup>

## Taxpayer Savings

Several long-term studies have shown that quality programs, particularly for low-income and disadvantaged children, decrease the likelihood of special education enrollment, juvenile delinquency, adult incarceration, and public assistance. This saves tremendous sums of taxpayer dollars. The Committee for Economic Development, an independent research and policy organization of business leaders and educators, found that for every dollar spent on quality early care and education the state receives between \$2 and \$16 in benefits.<sup>11</sup>

**“American business leaders overwhelmingly favor publicly-supported pre-kindergarten programs. Four out of five agreed that investments in effective preschool programs are important for the success of the U.S. economy.”**

—Zogby International poll, December 2005<sup>12</sup>

## Expanding Oregon's Future Economic Capacity

Children who experience high-quality child care are more likely to do well in school than those who don't. They have significantly higher achievement scores and are more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>13</sup> The foundation they receive in their earliest learning environment outside the home increases their chances of going on to higher education and better-paying jobs. Since Oregon's economic success is inextricably tied to an educated workforce, child care and early education is a critical component of that success. In fact, many economists argue that economic development goals are best met in the long run by investments in early childhood.<sup>14</sup>

**“Traditional economic development subsidies create more jobs for state residents in the short and medium run, but universal preschool education creates more jobs in the long run.”<sup>15</sup>**

In sum, Oregon's fiscal health can only be as robust as its child care infrastructure. Child care's impact on our economy is three-pronged: it creates wages, sales, and revenue, week after week, year after year; it prevents needless expenditures on such revenue-draining programs as incarceration and public assistance; and it jump-starts the education of the entrepreneurs and community leaders who will create tomorrow's wealth.



# Oregon's Child Care Challenges

Even as employment grows within the child care and education industry, child care workers remain among the most poorly paid in the state. This affects worker retention, which in turn affects the quality and consistency of care. In 2003, the annual average covered wage in the child care industry was \$15,705. The average for all industries was \$34,442.<sup>16</sup> (“Covered wage” means employees covered by unemployment insurance.)

Another factor affecting quality is that child care providers often lack education, including both child development-specific education and general education.

Supply has not kept pace with demand. As a result, there is a shortage of services. This is particularly acute for special-needs children and infants and toddlers, who require a higher ratio of staff to children. This kind of care is the most expensive to purchase.

Too often, child care is not affordable. Oregon has an Affordable Child Care Benchmark in which affordability is defined as a family spending less than 10 percent of household income on child care. But according to this benchmark, it is affordable for only 61 percent of families of all income levels who purchase it.<sup>17</sup>

These are all serious impediments to a strong child care and education system. The partners and initiatives profiled in the following pages are doing their best to address them, given current resources. Fully resolving them will require additional commitment on the part of the state.

“Enhancing affordability and access to quality child care is critical for Oregon families. The Child Care Tax Credit and other programs are great ways to give parents more choices and flexibility when deciding what is best for their kids. We also need to keep in mind, child care settings are among the first places our children enter the learning process and these programs are very important to early childhood development.”

—State Representative Linda Flores



# Partners & Initiatives

When parents need child care and education services, they must grapple with several questions.

Where can I find child care in my neighborhood, or along the way to work? How can I tell if a specific site is a safe and healthy environment for my child? How experienced and knowledgeable are the caregivers there? Are its hours compatible with my work schedule? How much is it going to cost? How am I going to pay for it? How easy or difficult will it be to find someone who is willing and able to care for *my* children? (Perhaps they have an infant or toddler, a child with special needs, one who has behavior problems, or a school-age child who needs after-school care.)

Over a period of years, the state of Oregon has developed an infrastructure that is hard at work. It answers these common questions that parents have, helps them to find the right child care and education for their particular situation, ensures that child care facilities are safe, encourages improvement in the quality of care, increases access to care, and helps make child care affordable.

Most people may not even be aware that this infrastructure exists, but it is an efficient, collaborative system that has a tremendously beneficial impact on the working families of the state. It enables tens of thousands of parents to contribute to the economy and affords Oregon's children developmentally appropriate experiences to prepare them for school.



## Partners: Child Care Division, Employment Department

In 1993, the Child Care Division became part of the Employment Department, which reflected the view of advocacy groups and the legislature that child care is a critical component of a workforce support system. In fact, without some form of child care, over 90,000 Oregonian parents would be unable to work.

In broad strokes, as the state's designated lead agency for the child care system in Oregon, the Division:

- Administers the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) block grant, which provides over 90 percent of the financial support the child care system receives
- Regulates more than 5,000 child care businesses in Oregon
- Provides a lead role in statewide child care improvement initiatives
- Provides leadership for a strong and collaborative statewide partnership of child care agencies and community-based organizations.

### Funding Child Care Statewide

Through performance-based contracts, the Division funds:

- Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (see page 14)
- Employment Related Day Care/JOBS, Department of Human Services
- Inclusive Child Care Program, Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Teen Parent Program, Department of Education (see page 15)

#### Child care facilities defined:

*Centers* care for more than 13 children, usually in a facility designed for that purpose.

*Certified family homes* care for up to 16 children, including the provider's own, in a single-family dwelling.

*Family child care businesses* can take care of up to 10 children, including their own, in their own home.

- State and Local Commissions on Children and Families (see page 15)
- Child Care Enhancement Program, Lane County (see page 20)
- Targeted High Risk Populations, through over 200 community-based organizations
- Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (see page 17)
- Oregon ASK (After School for Kids) (see page 21)
- Child Care Health Consultation Demonstration Project (see page 22)
- Child Care Research Partnership (see page 17)

### Regulating and Monitoring Oregon's Care Providers

CCD has licensing staff located throughout the state to inspect child care facilities, investigate complaints, and give technical assistance to child care providers. There are two categories of licensing:

#### Certified Care

The division certifies 989 child care centers and 346 certified family homes through a process that includes a criminal history check of all facility staff, annual announced and unannounced inspections by division staff, and ensuring compliance with local sanitation and fire regulations.

#### Registered Care

The Division licenses 3,973 family child care businesses. Providers must meet basic training requirements and undergo an on-site health and safety review before beginning care for children and renewing their licenses. All providers and anyone over 18 who resides in or frequents the home must pass a criminal background check.



## Partners: Department of Human Services (DHS)

DHS child care subsidy programs help low-income families achieve self-sufficiency by providing the child care assistance necessary for employment and other activities that promote self-reliance. DHS also helps families find and maintain safe, dependable child care that supports children's development. DHS child care-related programs are:

### *Employment Related Day Care (ERDC)*

ERDC helps approximately 9,500 low-income working families pay their child care bills. It also helps families find and keep appropriate child care, and works with providers and child care partners to improve the quality and stability of the child care arrangements parents make. There are approximately 20,000 children in ERDC-paid care throughout Oregon.

The DHS portion of the child care payment goes directly to the provider on behalf of the parent, who is responsible for the co-pay and any additional costs.

It is important to note that, compared to other states, Oregon's co-pays are high and the income limit is low. Oregon ranks forty-second among all states with respect to both co-pays and income limits. In addition, the maximum rates DHS pays, compared to what licensed providers charge, typically are the lowest in the nation.

As a result, the Governor's Recommended Budget for the 2007–09 biennium includes a proposal to lower the parent co-pay by an average 20 percent, increase the income limit to 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and increase provider reimbursements to the 75th percentile of the 2006 Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study. If approved by the 2007 Legislature, these changes would significantly improve parent access to quality child care. In addition, DHS has lengthened the average eligibility

period for subsidy participants from approximately four to 5.8 months. Combined with other improvements to the subsidy system, this should result in longer and more stable relationships between children and providers.

### *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*

TANF provides child care assistance for working parents who receive TANF cash benefits.

### *The JOBS program*

This program helps parents receiving TANF pay for child care so they can participate in DHS-approved self-sufficiency activities. In December 2006, DHS instituted procedural and system changes that have resulted in a faster and more reliable payment system for providers caring for the children of JOBS participants. These changes, as well as the ERDC changes mentioned above, were recommendations made last year by the Commission for Child Care.

### *Partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies*

DHS contracts with the CCR&R Network to provide DHS program services through local CCR&R agencies. The services these agencies provide include recruiting trained providers for DHS child care programs; offering technical assistance for providers concerning DHS procedures; helping providers meet DHS health and safety requirements; and assisting DHS clients in recognizing, finding, and maintaining quality child care.

### *Partnership with the Oregon Registry*

The Registry works with DHS to certify that providers have met the training standards required to qualify for the DHS Enhanced Rate and to encourage these providers to seek additional training.



## Partners: The Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN)

The Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral system is the primary infrastructure for supporting families in choosing child care and supporting child care providers in improving the quality of care. Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) form a community-based conduit that links parents, child care providers, government agencies, schools, employers, health care providers, and other resources to help families meet their child care needs. Mandated by the legislature in 1989, the system now has seventeen CCR&Rs serving all thirty-six of Oregon's counties.

### Supporting Families

CCR&R offers one-on-one assistance in choosing quality child care; refers families to child care providers, both center- and family-based, including hard-to-find care; connects families with community resources; and reaches out to parents with trusted local information that enables them to make informed choices.

### Building the Supply and Improving the Quality of Child Care

CCR&R supports child care providers by offering training in diverse topics including health and safety, child development, and sound business practices, and offering ongoing technical assistance for the improvement of child care and the encouragement of professional development. This results in improved quality and increased supply of child care.



## Documenting Community Child Care Needs and Trends

CCR&R is the primary source of information about the local supply and cost of child care. It provides data for planning and policy making; tracks trends about families' changing needs; and advocates for a high-quality child care system.

### Consulting with Employers

CCR&R works with employers to address the child care needs of their employees and to identify the link to the recruitment, retention, and productivity of their workforce.

### By the Numbers (FY 2005–06):

#### *For Families*

CCR&R staff provided 19,315 referrals to parents, 54 percent of whom were eligible for the DHS subsidy. CCR&R staff had an additional 26,629 contacts with parents, answering questions on child development and child care issues and providing linkages to community resources.

#### *For Child Care Providers*

CCR&Rs maintain a current database of 6,258 child care providers. Of these, 4,169 are also listed on a statewide internet searchable database. CCR&R staff conducted and/or coordinated 1,810 trainings, attended by 17,054 child care providers.

### Strategic Planning

In June 2006, the Board of Directors of OCCRRN approved a Six-Year Strategic Plan that included four core strategies:



- Develop and approve recommendations for changes in how we do business as the Oregon CCR&R system.
- Focus our efforts on behalf of parents, employers, and the community around child care providers by placing a special emphasis on programs that impact the quality and accessibility of child care.
- Develop a Communication and Advocacy Program.
- Create a coordinated fundraising effort to broaden and diversify our funding base.

The Board convened an independent Task Force charged with developing recommendations for the improvement of the child care resource and referral system. The Task Force is seeking feedback on its draft recommendations from multiple stakeholders, and plans to send a final list of recommendations to the Board of OCCRRN in June 2007.

## Partners: Oregon Department of Education (ODE)

### Teen Parent Programs

The Oregon Department of Education, through an agreement with the Child Care Division, works with Oregon public school districts to increase or enhance the availability of child care for and services to teen student-parents. The quality of these programs is increased through:

- Staff training and professional development
- Substitute stipends to allow release of staff for training and professional development
- Scholarship funds to enroll in the Oregon Registry: Pathways for Professional Recognition in Childhood Care
- Grants to school-based programs to assess training needs and develop training plans



- Grants to purchase or update equipment to meet health and safety standards

ODE also assesses the level of school-based services to teen student-parents and provides results that document the level of need for child care and possible areas for quality improvements. Technical assistance is also provided to school districts to improve child development/parenthood education.

Collaborative community partnerships to provide additional resources for teen student-parent programs have been established with local child care resource and referral agencies, Educational Service Districts, and the Department of Human Services.

All public school districts funded with Child Care and Development Fund block grants are required to be certified by the state after FY 2007.

## Partners: Oregon Commission on Children and Families

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) was established to determine what works best for all of Oregon's children and families, by joining with other state agencies and local communities to maximize their input and recognize their individualities. Created by legislation in 1993, and further defined by SB 555 in 1999, OCCF promotes positive outcomes for children and families through a process driven by local decision making.

The Commission works with the governor, legislature, boards of county commissioners, and other public officials to identify obstacles to the efficient and comprehensive delivery of services, and to recommend policies to improve the lives of Oregon's children and families.



The Commission has a focus on prevention and getting results through what works. It measures performance by collecting, evaluating, and reporting program data to ensure accountability and ongoing improvement.

## State Commission

The State Commission uses locally coordinated plans to advise state agencies, the legislature, and the governor of policies that offer solutions to problems facing children and families. There are seventeen commissioners: three from state agencies, two from the legislature, and twelve members appointed by the governor from local business communities, local commissions, social services, juvenile justice, and children's advocates.

## Local Commissions

All Oregon counties have local Commissions on Children and Families, which lead a comprehensive planning process, mobilize communities around issues of local concern, engage the community to make investments of both resources and time, and ensure accountability by measuring results. Local Commission members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners in each county.

## Goal

The goal of the Commission's work in child care is to provide communities with resources and capacity to meet the child care needs of families.

## The Role of OCCF in Child Care and Education

OCCF facilitates the development of a local community plan for the children and families in each county. In every community, the quality and supply of child care are recognized as key needs. Federal child care funds distributed through the OCCF system address local child care needs as they are identified in the local plan and focus on continued development of an integrated system of early care and education in each county. These funds provide a way for communities to extend the reach of CCDF dollars beyond families that are eligible for subsidies.

Strategies contracted by local Commissions on Children and Families include:

- Increasing the availability and quality of hard-to-find child care, and
- Improving child care quality through provider-focused efforts, and development or enhancement of the local child care infrastructure.

These strategies involve activities such as provider professional development, quality enhancements for after-school programming, and provider compensation initiatives.

OCCF works closely with child care partners across the state. Staff from the State Commission convenes the Early Childhood Team and Steering Committee and participates in the Child Care and Education Coordinating Council and its subcommittees.



## Partners: Oregon Child Care Research Partnership

The Oregon Child Care Research Partnership's mission is to ensure that basic information about childhood care and education in Oregon is current, accurate, and available on local, regional, and state levels and is accessible to all decision makers. It operates as a part of the Family Policy Program of Oregon State University.

The Partnership brings together university-based researchers, state agency child care staff, the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and child care practitioners. The group engages parents in its research activities whenever possible. Working together, partners identify research that is needed to support child care decisions, carry out such research projects, and then disseminate their findings.

## Partners: Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD)

Portland State University's Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) provides leadership in the development and operation of integrated and statewide professional development standards and systems. OCCD promotes professional development to achieve high-quality care and education for children and youth, and creates and supports training and education. It retains a comprehensive and integrated focus on professional development in child care and education that includes school age children.



## Initiatives: Oregon CARES (Compensation And Retention Equals Stability)

To be a stable, high-quality source of early childhood education, Oregon's child care system needs skilled, educated providers. But child care providers work for low wages and minimal or no benefits. They lack education; 80 to 90 percent do not have a college degree and over 60 percent have had no college education at all. The lack of education compromises the quality of care, and low wages lead to high turnover rates (30 to 40 percent per year), which in turn lead to children's attachment problems and resulting cognition issues.

The solutions:

- Improve providers' access to, and incentives for, professional development.
- Provide wage stipends so that caregivers can make ends meet while in training.

To implement these solutions, in 2002 the Oregon Commission on Children and Families awarded Quality Child Care Improvement grants to CARES programs in Baker, Benton, Coos, Curry, Jackson, Lane, and Marion Counties. Oregon CARES worked to improve the quality, stability, and safety of child care in these seven counties by attracting and retaining qualified child care providers and encouraging them to pursue additional education. CARES provided children with the single most important determinant of quality child care—consistent, well-educated, and fairly compensated caregivers.

CARES built and rewarded a skilled and stable child care workforce in two ways:

... (P)arents are looking not only for clean child care that they can afford and that is conveniently located, but factors such as how the child care caregiver interacts with them and their children, how much their children learn and the way they learn, and age-appropriate class sizes.<sup>18</sup>

### Scholarships

It provided \$250 to \$1,000 per year to attend college courses and training, pay for books and materials, and hire support staff and/or substitutes so caregivers could attend trainings.

### Wage Stipends

Providers were eligible for monetary awards from \$250 to \$4,000 per year depending on their professional development level. As a condition of receiving these stipends, they committed to continuing their professional development for at least 16 hours per year, and agreed to provide child care services for a specified period of time.

### Outcomes

The CARES program had strong positive effects. In 2003-2004, 96 percent of providers receiving wage stipends stayed in their child care setting. Enrollment in the Oregon Registry: Pathways to Professional Recognition in Childhood Care and Education increased, and hundreds of caregivers received targeted education. Thousands of children benefited from this combination of greater stability and additional training.

### CARES Today: Out of Funds

The program that demonstrated these impressive results is now out of funds. The Commission recommends that this valuable program be funded again. It proved to be an efficient and effective method for addressing the issue of child care quality.



## Initiatives: Child Care Quality Indicators (CCQI) Project

Studies have shown that children in high-quality child care settings demonstrate better cognitive function and social skills and have fewer behavioral problems than those in lower-quality care. But until now we have known very little about the quality of Oregon's child care facilities. This leaves parents virtually in the dark when it comes to selecting the best setting for their children. It also makes it impossible for child care providers to know how their setting's quality stacks up in the marketplace. And, absent any means of measuring outcomes, funding entities can be reluctant to invest in improving quality.

CCQI was launched to fill this information vacuum. It is spearheaded by the Child Care Division of the Employment Department and the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and has been conducted in collaboration with other agencies and with private foundations. It began as a pilot project in Multnomah County.

### What CCQI Measures

CCQI collects data from child care centers to measure seven research-based structural indicators: adult-child ratio; group size; education and specialized training of teachers and other caregivers; teacher and caregiver compensation; staff turnover (a measure of caregiver-child relationship stability); accreditation; and substantiated complaints.

### Progress Report

By summer 2007, the project will have collected a full year of data on child care centers in Multnomah County, and will have begun collecting information on family child care providers as well. Coos and Curry counties



are currently being added to the pilot program; this will gather data on quality in more rural areas. After an evaluation period for these three counties, the program will be rolled out statewide over a period of two years.

## How the Data Will Be Disseminated, and How It Will Help

Once information in a given community has been gathered, the Child Care Resource and Referral Network will mail a report to the family child care provider or center that will include a summary of that facility's individual indicators, the community average, and national recommended standards for each indicator. At that time, providers will be asked if they would like the local Resource and Referral agency to share their individual indicator information with parents and community members who inquire about child care.

The CCQI research will supply Oregon's parents with much-needed information on quality—helping them understand what to look for and what questions to ask and giving them information on specific facilities that have opted to share it. Child care providers will have a clear and meaningful way to measure their performance against others in the field, as well as a built-in incentive to improve if necessary, in order to remain competitive. And both policy makers and funders will at last have a yardstick with which to measure the impact of their efforts to improve quality.



## Initiatives: Child Care Contribution Tax Credit

### Background

Oregon's child care industry has been described as a classic case of market failure. Although child care providers are among the state's lowest-paid workers, parents still have difficulty affording care, and they must pay even more for high-quality care.

There are two types of tax credits available to alleviate this problem in Oregon. One is a credit for businesses that provide child care subsidies to their employees. The tax credit we describe here is available to any taxpayer who chooses to contribute.

In 2003, the state legislature enacted the Oregon Child Care Contribution Tax Credit. Oregon taxpayers—individuals and corporations—who contribute to the program receive a state tax credit of 75 cents for each dollar that they contribute. A total of \$500,000 in tax credits has been available each calendar year for five years, beginning with tax year 2004.

### Goals of the Legislation

- Create an incentive for businesses and individuals to invest in child care.
- Create a funding pool of private contributions that will promote and sustain the operation of quality, affordable child care businesses.
- Target specific community needs, such as infant and toddler, preschool, and school-age after-hours care.
- Assess the actual cost of quality child care by addressing quality, affordability, and compensation simultaneously.
- Strengthen child care businesses while making child care services more affordable for low-income parents.



## Looking Ahead

Proceeds from the tax credits have supported an initial project that shows how child care can work when adequately funded (see CCEP, this page). To further develop this innovative program, a second demonstration project in Multnomah County is under way.

- Funds are used to increase provider wages and professional development, decrease parent cost to no more than 10 percent of family income, and improve the quality of care that children receive.
- The funds are distributed to qualified community agencies selected as demonstration sites through a competitive process. There is no geographic link between the location of the investor and that of the demonstration projects.
- All monies are deposited in the state's Child Care Fund, managed by the Child Care Division of the Employment Department, and annually distributed to the demonstration projects.

By simultaneously addressing quality, affordability, and compensation, this innovative program is revealing the true cost of quality child care and is helping restore balance in this critical sector of Oregon's economy.



## Initiatives: Child Care Enhancement Program (CCEP)

The Lane County Child Care Enhancement Program (CCEP) is a pilot program administered by Lane Community College Lane Family Connections. It was designed to address three issues: the affordability of child care, child care provider compensation, and child care quality. The program is funded through the Oregon Child Care Contribution Tax Credit enacted by the state legislature in 2003.

CCEP tackles affordability by subsidizing the cost of child care to decrease parent cost to a maximum 10 percent of family income for those families whose income is at or below 85 percent of the state median income and whose children are enrolled in participating child care facilities. It addresses provider compensation by providing wage enhancements that are linked to the Oregon Registry. CCEP approaches child care quality by offering funds to enhance child care facilities and by offering mentoring and technical assistance to providers.

In its first year of operation, funded by 2005 tax proceeds, CCEP worked with twenty family facilities and five centers.

- CCEP subsidized ninety-five families (representing 130 children).
- It provided wage enhancements for seventy-two providers who participated in the Oregon Registry at Step 5 or higher. Wage enhancements ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on the Oregon Registry step level.
- It disbursed \$1,000 facility improvement grants to twenty family facilities and \$2,000 grants to five center facilities.

*"I stay engaged [in CCEP] because of the trainings, meetings, visiting other providers, and the subsidy. Gaining experience and training on running a successful day care business is the most important to me. In the past I didn't have any form of guidance. Now there is guidance, with [the Project Director] and the other providers."  
—a CCEP provider<sup>19</sup>*

- The program provided technical assistance and support to providers. The project’s director logged nearly 200 site visits, 800 phone calls, and 200 e-mails during the first year.<sup>20</sup>

Technical assistance included such activities as helping providers establish schedules and curricula, teaching them about the stages of child development, helping them develop and modify contracts, billing systems, and rate schedules, connecting them with relevant classes, and helping them to secure scholarships. This increased the quality of child care environments for over 765 children.

## Lack of Funds Narrows Scope of Services

As the first year of CCEP progressed, it became clear that there were insufficient funds to adequately address both affordability and child care provider compensation to meet community demand. The project will continue to look at innovative strategies to address both child care subsidies and provider wage enhancements. It is impossible to adequately address child care quality without finding ways to retain child care workers. Low wages in this field lead to high turnover rates (30 to 40 percent per year). Enhancements are sorely needed to provide incentives to remain on the job and in the workforce.

**“Oh my gosh, [CCEP has] helped so much. I got better housing, finished college, and it allows me to keep my daughter at that day care. I can work more hours at my job and don’t have to worry about bills and rent anymore.”**  
—a CCEP parent<sup>21</sup>



## Initiatives: Oregon ASK

Oregon ASK (After School for Kids) is a collaboration of public and private organizations and community members that seeks to address common issues and concerns across all out-of-school time services—child care, recreation, education, and youth development. An outgrowth of the Oregon Out-of-School Time Network, Oregon ASK was created in 2006. Its mission is to support, expand, and advocate for quality out-of-school time programs and activities for children, youth, and families throughout Oregon.

## Vision

All Oregon children, youth, and families will have access to quality out-of-school time options within their communities. All services will enhance children’s positive development and future opportunities while keeping them safe from harm. All programs, services, and activities will be of high quality and contribute to strong communities and schools. To accomplish this vision, Oregon ASK has established the following goals:

- Develop, gather, and share resources, including information and technical assistance, which support and sustain high-quality out-of-school time programs.
- Promote professional development, program standards, child/youth outcomes, best practices, and program evaluation.
- Affect policy and public will at both state and local levels.
- Communicate effectively with and provide meaningful ways of involvement for partners, stakeholders, consumers, beneficiaries, and champions.



## Initiatives: The Oregon Registry

The Oregon Registry: Pathways for Professional Recognition in Childhood Care and Education is a voluntary statewide program to document and recognize the professional achievements of people who work in the childhood care and education profession. The Registry involves twelve steps. Each requires training in specific “core knowledge categories” such as health, safety, and nutrition; human growth and development; and learning environments and curricula.

## Initiatives: Child Care Health Consultation Demonstration Program

The Child Care Health Demonstration Program provides a framework for communities to address children’s mental and physical health needs by developing health consultation services for child care providers, giving priority to family child care providers.

The goal is to optimize the physical, social, and emotional health and safety of children in child care settings. The objectives of the program are as follows:

- Identify and assess local child care health needs and develop consultation services and strategies based on local priorities.

- Provide direct support to child care providers through on-site consultation regarding child health, and address safety issues to improve child health outcomes, such as improved immunization status, reduced childhood injuries and illnesses, or reduced exclusions from child care for health reasons.
- Increase access of providers, families, and children to health care through enrollment in the Oregon Health Plan and access to health care services.
- Develop local health care teams to support Child Care Health Consultants and provide referrals to community health resources, such as pediatric specialists, special education services, early intervention, mental or behavioral health resources, and local health department resources.
- Develop information about the incidence of social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children in order to develop consultation strategies.
- Evaluate the program regularly by establishing baselines, collecting and analyzing data on state and local indicators.
- Develop funding resources to build a statewide program.

During Phase III, there were 1,593 contacts with child care providers; 181 providers were visited with a total of 354 home visits; and 263 group events were logged across five sites (i.e., Baker, Clackamas, Jackson, Lincoln, and Multnomah counties). A total of 4,266 people were served.



## Initiatives: The Inclusive Child Care Program

An inclusive child care setting is one in which children with and without special needs are cared for together. Everyone benefits: Children have important personal and social experiences, with a resulting increase in their social skills and understanding of others. Parents benefit by having more child care choices.

However, when children and youth require a different level of care than most children of the same age—or are perceived to require a different level of care—families face major challenges to finding appropriate child care. These challenges become greater as children grow older and bigger. The greatest challenges are faced by families of young people aged 12 and older.

The Inclusive Child Care Program serves families who have children with disabilities, special health care needs, or emotional/behavioral disorders. Its goals are:

- To help families find and keep appropriate child care while parents are employed or participating in training or education programs, and
- To support children to be in inclusive child care and after-school settings with their peers.

### The Inclusive Child Care Program Supplemental Child Care Subsidy

Child care costs are sometimes higher when children require special accommodations or an exceptionally high level of care and supervision. Through an agreement with the state's Child Care Division, the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities offers supplemental subsidies to help a limited number of lower-income working families obtain higher-cost care. These are families with incomes less than 85 percent of Oregon's median income.

Parents pay the provider's customary fee; the subsidy is paid to the child care provider to help with higher costs related to the child's special needs or to cover specific accommodations such as extra staff at high-need times or a wheelchair ramp. The subsidy amount is based upon an individual assessment of each child's needs.

Inclusive Child Care Program staff also complete high-need child care rate assessments for children served by the Department of Human Services Integrated Child Care Program. The assessments are used to determine individualized rates for children with higher-level care needs.

Regardless of the source of subsidy, Inclusive Child Care Program staff work with parents and providers to develop an individual child care plan. This plan looks at additional ways to support and stabilize the child care placement.

### The PICC Project

The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to most child care centers and family child care homes. However, while Oregon's child care providers must accommodate children with special needs, they often need training and support to do so safely and effectively. The Partners for Inclusive Child Care (PICC) Project offers training to increase child care providers' skill and comfort level in serving children with diverse abilities and needs; the project uses the TRAC curriculum developed at Western Oregon University, which combines in-depth training in developmentally appropriate care with training in inclusion practices and skills. It is a proven model that has been used nationally and has been well evaluated. Through combined community and state support, training is provided at little or no cost to child care providers. Stipends are available to encourage provider participation in the training.

Communities are linking the training with follow-up



support to providers. In the second cohort of the project, partners are working together in Baker, Benton, Coos, Curry, Gilliam, Jackson, Josephine, Linn, Lincoln, Sherman, Union, Washington, and Wheeler counties.

## Inclusive Child Care Inventory Project

Through the Inclusive Child Care Inventory Project, state and community partners are joining to identify the array of resources that can support child care and after-school care for children and youth with special needs. These include ways to help families locate and keep appropriate care, as well as resources that support providers caring for children and youth with higher-level needs. The project's information gathering includes interviews with parents, child care providers, and agency staff throughout Oregon, as well as five community meetings in eastern, southern, coastal, central, and Willamette Valley areas. Information from the Inventory Project will be shared in print and web-based formats next summer.

## Initiatives: The Virtual Degree Project

The Virtual Degree Project was created to facilitate the transition of child care providers from community-based training to community college credit training. The project will:

- Award college credit for steps on the Oregon Registry that can be completed at a community college

- Meet the need for classes offered at nontraditional times via distance delivery methods
- Allow degree completion for child care providers who are unable to attend classes at the site of their local community college

The Project began with the goal of finding a single community college sponsor for an online or distance early childhood education (ECE) degree that would give credit for community-based training. This would give the child care provider increased flexibility and therefore encouragement and support in obtaining a higher level of education.

To date, one community college has put its entire ECE program online. Many others are making classes available online as well. Most community college ECE programs award prior learning for credit by using Oregon Registry Step 7 or Child Development Associate degree tools. Access to statewide ECE programs offers child care providers the most scheduling flexibility and connection to their "home" community colleges, and preserves their financial aid package.

The project is still evolving. At the present time, it includes participation by child care providers, child care professional development mentors, and licensing staff statewide in addition to community college ECE program leaders. The current challenges are to increase efficiencies and avoid duplication where possible, and to identify how to reach more child care providers and move them through the education system.



# Commission Priorities

## *Priority A: Children Experience High-Quality Child Care*

Prioritize Oregon CARES.

## *Priority B: Child Care Is Accessible for All Families*

Address hard-to-find care.

## *Priority C: Child Care Is Affordable for All Families*

Expand Child Care Enhancement Program (Child Care Contribution Tax Credit) statewide.

## *Priority D: Child Care Is Safe and Healthy*

Raise licensing standards for registered and certified child care facilities.

## *Priority E: Support an Efficient and Collaborative Child Care System*

Support public and private partnerships.  
Maintain Oregon's collaborative structure.



# About the Oregon Commission for Child Care

The Commission for Child Care is created within the Employment Department to address the issues, problems, and alternative solutions that are critical to the development of accessible, affordable, and quality child care services. (ORS 657A.600 to 657A.630)

## OCCC's Mission

The mission of the OCCC is to advise the governor and legislature on the issues, problems, and solutions related to the development of accessible, affordable, and quality child care in Oregon, and advocate for the availability of safe, quality, and affordable child care. In addition, OCCC acts as an oversight body, ensuring accountability for Oregon's children.

## Membership

The Commission for Child Care consists of 18 members who are appointed by the governor, president of the Senate, and Speaker of the House. Fifteen voting members serve three-year terms as volunteers. They are child care providers and consumers, medical and legal professionals, and representatives of business, labor, government, and the public at large. Three non-voting members are representatives of the Oregon Legislative Assembly; they serve two two-year terms. The governor appoints the Chair for a one-year term.

## Recent Forums

Since our last report in 2005, the Commission has held community forums in Bend, Portland, Salem, Eugene, and Medford. Forums such as these have proven to be very fruitful; for example, a bill that passed last legislative session, expanding certified family child care from 12 to 16 children per site, was an outgrowth of a community forum held in Pendleton in 2004. This legislation has made a tremendous difference, increasing the availability of child care throughout the state, but particularly in rural areas where child care centers are rare.

## Chronology

Since its creation in 1985, the Commission has successfully advocated for major building blocks of Oregon's child care system, including the following:

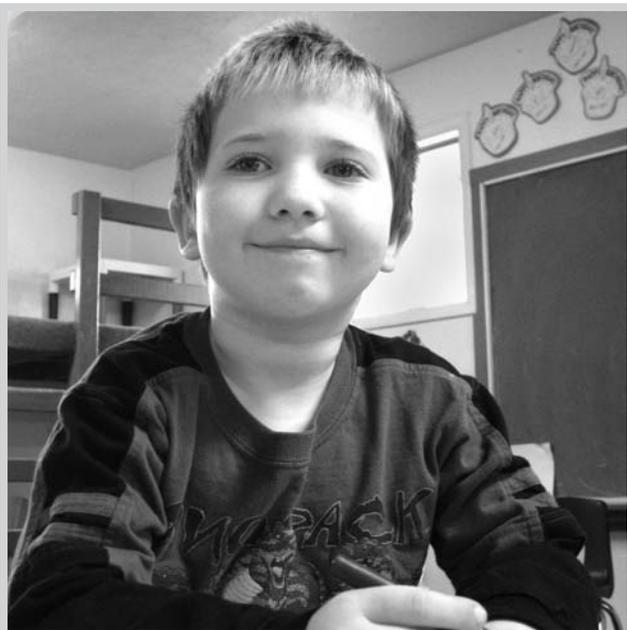
1987: State parental leave law; tax credits for companies that assist with dependent care expenses.

1989: State-funded program for child care resource and referral.

1993: Creation of the Child Care Division in the Employment Department to oversee the administration of federal child care block grants; homeowner's insurance coverage and mandatory registration and training for family child care providers.

1995: Refinements to parental leave law.

1996: "Big Change" campaign promoting awareness of work/life programs.



1997: Increased standards for health and safety requirements for family child care.

1996–98: Collaboration in producing an employers' tool kit that provides how-to information on work/life issues.

1998: Creation of advisory committee on making child care more affordable.

1999: In-home health and safety review visits for newly registering family child care providers.

2001: Establishment of a task force on financing quality child care.

2003: Passage of HB 2191, which includes the Employment Department in the development of a statewide early childhood system.

2005: Passage of HB 2999. Expands the definition of certified family child care from 12 to 16 children per site.



# Commission Members

Rosetta Wangerin, Chair  
*State and Local Government—Senate*

Lynne Angland, Vice Chair  
*Tax/Legal—Governor*

Katie Larive  
*Children's Health—Governor*

Pat Farr  
*Non-Profit—Speaker*

Philip Anderson  
*Business—Senate*

Senator Jackie Winters  
*Senator—Senate*

DeeDee Overholser  
*Consumer—Speaker*

Stephanie Swan  
*Labor—Speaker*

Randy Fishfader  
*At Large—Governor*

Kitty Piercy  
*At Large—Governor*

Cheryl Reece  
*Provider—Governor*

Deborah Murray  
*Provider—Governor*

Representative Linda Flores  
*Representative—Speaker*

Representative Tina Kotek  
*Representative—Speaker*

Nina Roll, OSU Extension Family Care Connection  
*Resource and Referral—Governor*

Heidi East McGowan  
*Executive Officer*

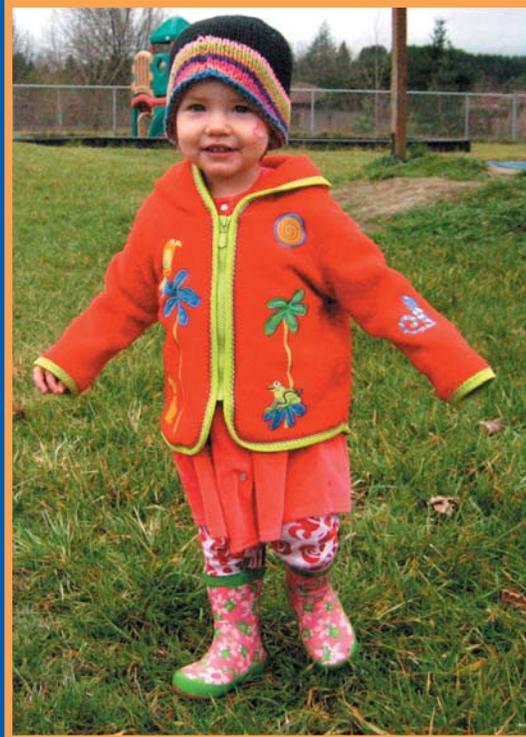
Teresa Stevenson  
*Executive Assistant*

# Notes

1. Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, OSU. Analysis of 2004 Oregon Population Survey.
2. *Children's Institute Issue Brief 1: Early Childhood Development: Investing in Oregon's Economic Future*, Spring 2005.
3. *Children's Institute Issue Brief 2: Investing in High Quality Pre-K: A Strategy for School Success*, Fall 2006.
4. *What Do Parents Think About Child Care? Findings from a Series of Focus Groups*. National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2006.
5. Presser, Harriet B. *Working in a 24/7 Economy: Challenges for Families*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003.
6. Newacheck, Paul and Neal Halfon. "Prevalence and Impact of Disabling Chronic Conditions in Childhood." *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 88, Issue 4, 1998.
7. 2004 Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study. Oregon State University, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership.
8. *What Do Parents Think About Child Care?*
9. Oregon Child Care Information Partnership. *The Economic Impact of Oregon's Child Care Industry*, 2005.
10. Nelson, Jessica Pearce, Bruce Sorte, Bruce Weber, and Roberta Barsotti Weber. "The Oregon Child Care Industry: An Economic Analysis." Corvallis: OSU Extension Service, 2005.
11. *The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool*. Washington, DC: Committee for Economic Development, 2006.
12. "American Business Leaders' Views on Publicly-funded Pre-Kindergarten and the Advantages to the Economy," Zogby International Poll, December 2005.
13. *Children's Institute Issue Brief 1: Early Childhood Development*.
14. Bartik, Timothy J. "Preschool and Economic Development." Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute, *Upjohn Institute Employment Research*, October 2006.
15. Ibid.
16. *The Economic Impact of Oregon's Child Care Industry*.
17. Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Family Policy Program, Oregon State University.
18. *What Do Parents Think About Child Care?*
19. Lane County Child Care Enhancement Program: Year 1 Final Report, 2006.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

All other data was provided by the agencies and programs involved.





Oregon Commission for Child Care  
875 Union Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97311  
[www.emp.state.or.us/occc](http://www.emp.state.or.us/occc)