

Oregon Commission for Child Care

Interim Report to the Governor and Legislature

July 2004

More than two-thirds of Oregon's children under the age of five spend time in a non-parental care arrangement. It is important that children are in care arrangements that promote their health, safety and well-being, particularly during the critical early years of development. Research on children's brain development highlights the need for quality child care. Governor Kulongoski's Children's Charter supports high quality, accessible and affordable child care as an essential component of Oregon's economic well-being, allowing families to work and ensuring that children enter the public school system ready to learn. Outlined in this report are some highlights of the Commission's accomplishments during 2004.

Rural Collaboration Addresses Child Care

More than 50 parents, child care providers, business representatives, elected officials and community leaders packed the Commission for Child Care's April 22nd community forum in Pendleton, sharing issues and concerns related to accessible, affordable and quality child care in rural Oregon. The forum coincided with the announcement of the closure of two major businesses in Umatilla County: Simplot and Sykes. The closure of St. Anthony Hospital's on-site child care center has further impacted parent's ability to find affordable child care in this remote area of the state.

After the forum the Commission contacted Children First for Oregon, who had staff available to work with the community in developing long and short term solutions to their child care problem. As a result of the collaboration between the Commission for Child Care and Children First for Oregon, a building has been found to house a new child care center, and the center's Board of Directors is currently seeking non-profit status. A community planning process is underway to address long-term solutions. The Child Care Division has also agreed to examine a policy change that would increase the supply of quality infant and toddler care in more isolated counties in Oregon.

Measuring Child Care's Impact on the Oregon Economy

Across the nation, states and municipalities are seeking to increase public support for child care by conducting research analyses that demonstrate the benefits of child care to sectors of the economy. Last spring the Commission for Child Care, in conjunction with funding provided by the Child Care Division, contracted with two economists from Oregon State University to conduct a similar study in Oregon. According to Mildred Warner, a nationally renowned researcher at Cornell University, "the child care industry is composed of many small businesses that directly contribute to growth in jobs and income. These providers are small businesses that form an integral part of the regional economy, although they are not typically viewed as such." The Commission for Child Care plans to utilize Oregon's economic impact analysis to build a policy framework that will increase funding and support to this important sector of the economy. Findings from the Oregon study will be published and publicized later this fall.

Strategic Plan for Financing Quality Child Care Nears Completion

The Oregon Commission for Child Care's Strategic Plan for Financing Quality Child Care is the culmination of three year's work. In 2001 Oregon's 71st Legislative Assembly passed HB 3659 directing the Commission to create a Task Force on Financing Quality Child Care. The Task Force researched state and national best practice to develop a set of 15 comprehensive recommendations. A report was submitted to the Legislature in 2003.

Later that year, the Commission prioritized the recommendations in order to develop a foundation

for a strategic planning process. A strategic planning group was convened in 2004, resulting in a "working" document, which will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The document is called a "working" document because it provides an opportunity for the Oregon Commission for Child Care to measure progress on the issues. The document is significant because it clarifies the Commission's relationship with child care partners, as well as reinforces the Commission's role in the development of child care policy in Oregon.

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 – 657A.630).

Commission Members

Rosetta Wangerin, Chair
Marion County
State and Local Government; Senate

Lynne Angland, Vice Chair
Crook County
Tax/Legal; Governor

Katherine Criswell
Clackamas County
Business; Governor

Rep. Pat Farr
Lane County
Legislator; Speaker

Martha Longworth
Lane County
Consumer; Senate

DeeDee Overholser
Linn County
Consumer; Speaker

Kitty Piercy
Lane County
At-Large; Governor

Cheryl Reece
Clackamas County
Provider; Governor

Nina Roll
Lincoln County
Resource and Referral; Governor

Frieda Ryan Anzur
Marion County
State and Local Government; Speaker

Rep. Wayne Scott
Clackamas County
Legislator; Speaker

Stephanie Swan
Multnomah County
Labor; Speaker

Martha Young
Douglas County
At-Large; Governor

Claudia Grimm
Executive Officer

Visit OCCC's website: <http://findit.emp.state.or.us/occc/>