Child Care Resource & Referral Across Washington State

Since established by state statute in 1989, the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Network) has been a key component of the child care infrastructure. The Network is charged with helping parents find child care; educating parents, providers and the community about what quality child care looks like; supporting providers through training and technical assistance; strengthening the child care system at all levels; and collecting data about child care supply and demand in Washington State.

During 2006, the Network's 18 member agencies:

- Handled 117,208 calls;
- Processed 33,701 public referral calls;
- Served 25,073 families and 35,667 children; and
- Assisted 13,874 low-income families find child care.

Child Care Resource & Referral Supports Communities by:

- Helping parents find child care and financing options;
- Improving the quality of child care, early learning and after school programs;
- Advocating for children, parents, and child care providers;
- Increasing the availability of child care;
- Bridging child care and K-12 education; and
- Supporting families to raise healthy children.

Child Care Resource & Referral In Columbia County

Walla Walla Community College hosts the child care resource and referral (R&R) program serving Columbia County. Staff responded to over 2,600 calls in 2006 from parents, providers and community members seeking information and assistance navigating the child care system. R&R staff and consultants are also out in the field: conducting training, collaborating with community partners, and reaching out to families across income levels, geographic barriers, and ethnic identities to provide them with vital child care consumer education.

Notable highlights of this report:

- The county lost half of its child care facilities and one-third of its potential licensed slots when three family child care businesses closed in 2006. There are no centers.
- Infant care continues to be the most difficult care to find and the most expensive.
- For a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time care, the median cost represents 17% of the county’s median household income for 2006.
- Families count on resource and referral to find child care: 100% of those surveyed would share the phone number with a friend or family member.

Local Resource & Referral Contact Information:

Child Care Resource & Referral
Walla Walla Community College
500 Tausick Way
Walla Walla, WA  99362
(509) 527-4333  (877) 527-4333
http://www.wwcc.edu/CMS/

The mission of the Early Childhood Education and Educational Support Department is to provide educational and training opportunities to a diverse population of students whose goal is to work with children and their families in programs providing care and early education.

A Member in Good Standing of the:
Licensed Child Care in Our Community

How many providers are there in my area by type?

Family child care (FCC) businesses account for 100% of the 3 licensed facilities in Columbia County. Overall, there has been a loss of 3, or 50%, of licensed facilities since 2002.

In the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has remained relatively constant until last year, when 3 family child care businesses closed. There were no centers in Columbia County in 2006.

How has the number of child care slots changed over the last five years?

With the closing of 3 FCC businesses, the county has lost more than one-third of its potential licensed child care slots, leaving the total number of slots at 30. Since the lone center opened and closed within the past five years, the net change in center slots since 2002 remains at zero.

What is the distribution of slots by type of care and by age?

Because of a higher required ratio of adults to children under 2 years old in licensed care, there are fewer slots for infants and toddlers than for other age groups.

With no centers to choose from, the number of infant and toddler slots is further constrained for parents seeking licensed care.

Notes:
1 Care Zone is defined as the number of children who live in a single-parent or two-parent home where the parent or both parents are working.
2 The living wage measure is based on a family of four and represents twice the federal poverty level income. Twice the federal poverty level is the income cut off for families receiving child care subsidies.

Data Sources for the Report:

Note: The number of slots for all children is overstated in this comparison. It shows each age group filled as if there were no other children in the other age group. If a slot is filled for one age group it cancels out the potential slot for the other age group. This chart does not represent actual enrollment of children in care.
What languages are spoken?
All providers speak English, and one program has Spanish-speaking staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages Spoken by Providers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
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</table>

How much non-standard care is available in my community?
All providers offer full- and part-time care during weekdays only. No providers offer non-standard hour care (evenings, weekends or overnight) on a regular basis.

Economics of Child Care Providers
What do child care providers earn compared to kindergarten teachers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006 Average Salary Comparisons: Kindergarten Teachers and Child Care Providers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School Kindergarten Teacher (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,330/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,361/mo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Washington’s kindergarten teachers earn 49% more than center directors, more than double what child care teachers earn, and 55% more than family child care providers’ gross earnings in the region. The substantial wage differential can be attributed to higher educational requirements for kindergarten teachers and relatively low turnover in public schools. The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated child care workers and can have a negative impact on the quality of care.

How does the child care subsidy reimbursement rate affect provider profitability?
Current state child care subsidy reimbursement rates are one constraint on wages, quality, and financial solvency for providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006 Ranges: Monthly Full-Time Subsidy Reimbursement Rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Child Care Homes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To support the average salary of a teacher, aide and part of the cost of the director for an infant classroom in a center, a program would need to enroll at least 6.4 of the licensed maximum of 8 subsidized full-time infants. Income generated from the other 1.6 infants would have to cover all other classroom costs including benefits, training, rent and supplies.

In a typical family child care home, one provider might have two infants and four preschoolers. A provider’s gross earnings if all the children are on subsidy would be $2,491 per month. Out of these earnings, the provider must for pay all expenses, including salaries, benefits, taxes, rent, meals, training, equipment and supplies.

Professional Development for the Child Care Workforce
Training and Scholarships
Walla Walla Community College provides state-mandated training for providers. In 2006, the R&R offered 5 trainings for the child care workforce in the region averaging 14 students each.

Washington Scholarships for Child Care Professionals (formerly T.E.A.C.H.) is a scholarship program that provides financial support for center and school-age staff and family child care providers to enroll in community and technical college degree programs. In Columbia County, no scholarships were awarded in 2006.

National Standards for Quality
Training, education, experience and applied knowledge are important to child care quality. Accreditation recognizes facilities who have achieved national quality standards:

- Center-based Accredited Programs
  - National Association for the Education of Young Children: 0
- School-Age Accredited Programs
  - National AfterSchool Association: 0
- Accredited Family Child Care Homes
  - National Association for Family Child Care: 0
- Accredited Montessori Programs
  - American Montessori Society: 0

Professional Associations
Association for the Education of Young Children Chapter: Blue Mountain

Family Child Care Association
Chapter(s): No Chapters

Feedback from Providers
What percentage of providers…

Read R&R newsletter: 100%
Indicate that referrals help sustain their child care business: 71%
Are satisfied with service received from R&R: 82%
About the Families

Callers to the referral line are regularly surveyed by R&R in order to better understand what they want and need for children in their care. Often families have difficulty locating child care that meets their basic needs: an accessible location, available the hours needed, affordable, and safe – not to mention a quality program.

How do parents find their child care arrangements?

- 100% through providers

What are the top three challenges that parents have in finding child care?

1) Affordability
2) Openings
3) Not able to get help paying for care

Affordability for Families

How much does child care cost in my community?

Countywide, the annual median household income in 2006 was $37,568. The tables below indicate the annual median price of full-time care for one child by age group and type of care. The median price indicates that half the providers in the area charge more and half charge less than the prices quoted here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centers</th>
<th>2006 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child</th>
<th>% of 2006 Med. Household Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Child Care</th>
<th>2006 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child</th>
<th>% of 2006 Med. Household Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>$6,448</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>$6,448</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>$6,448</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
<td>$3,380</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child care represents a substantial cost for families. The cost of full-time care for an infant represents 17% of the median income.

Care for an infant and a preschool child would represent over a third (34%) of median income in the county.

FAMILIES USING R&R SERVICES

Who are families that call the R&R Line?

In 2006, 10 families received referrals for 15 children. Nine of the families served were low income. Four of the families were headed by single parents.

What ages of children are referred?

Although the largest population of children eligible for licensed care are school-age (5-12 years old), almost half (47%) of the children referred are birth through four years old.

100% of families surveyed would share Walla Walla Community College’s local contact information with a friend or family member.

How many children need non-standard care?

There were 3 requests for referrals to licensed facilities offering non-standard hour care. All of the requests were for evening care (extending past 6:30 PM).