2009 Legislative Talking Points

Office of Work & Family Life
Department of Workforce Services
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Salt Lake City, Utah
(801) 526-4340
jobs.utah.gov/occc

Contact your legislator:
www.le.utah.gov/documents/find.htm

About the Office of Child Care (OCC)
Child care is a topic of importance to families, child care providers and policy makers. Availability of affordable, quality child care is directly linked to economic and social benefits for Utah: parents can work, employers can fill jobs, the tax base can grow and our children’s needs for nurturing, supervision, socialization and intellectual stimulation can be met.

Each of the OCC program objectives integrate aspects of these common goals:
• Help our children in child care grow up safe, healthy, and confident;
• Ensure our children in child care are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities;
• Ensure our children in child care enter school ready to learn and succeed;
• Inform communities of child care resources;
• Support families in becoming self-reliant and contributing to their community and state economy; and
• Optimize all available funding sources.

Defining Quality Child Care
Quality care promotes the optimal growth and development of children. Aspects of quality care include:
• Warm, sensitive and responsive interactions between a well-trained caregiver and a child or youth
• Stable, consistent relationships with a limited number of caregivers
• Safe and supportive physical environments
• Quality nutrition
• Stimulating activities which support learning through play
• Protecting children’s health and safety through licensing regulation or other approved equivalent health and safety standards

Why We Do It
• Utah has the highest birthrate in the country and the youngest population.
• Utah has the highest ratio of any state for children to total population (26% of total population is aged 14 and under).
• In Utah, 136,000 children need child care because both parents (or the only parent) work.
• 62% of Utah women work outside the home.
• There are more than 62,000 single parent families in Utah (20% of all families with children). Access to child care allows parents to work—and that stimulates the economy while reducing the burden on social services.
• Quality care is crucial. Longitudinal studies indicate that children in high-quality care do better in school and stay out of trouble.

Our Vision:
Quality affordable child care is available to every child in Utah who needs it.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.

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The Policy Matters Team completed the inventory of approximately 100 early childhood policies between August and November 2007. Profiles are documented in the Utah’s Early Childhood System Policy Report/Policy Matters. To review the report go to: www.utahchildren.org

SUPPLY*
The state’s supply of child care is defined as the total number of regulated child care spaces. In Utah, demand typically exceeds the supply, requiring an increase in the number of available child care spaces.

Grants originating from OCC also help fund the creation of programs or add child care spaces to existing child care facilities. F1096 data follows:

Infant/Toddler Care
In FY08, the Baby Steps Grant supported 79 child care centers:
- Created 32 new spaces equipped to provide above a minimal level of care
- Upgraded another 8 spaces (created before the grant opened); providing the resources to provide higher quality care
- 37% of all requests for child care at the Child Care Resource & Referral agencies are for infant/toddler age children, often there are no spaces for these children

After-school**
• 54 programs meeting high quality standards funded by Youth Connections grants
• 13 programs funded by the Kidergarten-atch program
• 21 programs funded by Safe Passage-grants
• Approximately 10,500 children served in quality settings

FACT: DWS Needs Assessment data consistently shows need for Infant/Toddler and After-school program spaces across the state.***

* See OCC 2006 Annual Report for details.
*** See 2007 Child Care Needs Assessment

AFFORDABILITY
Affordability relates to the ability of Utah parents to pay for the child care services they need. Parents who cannot afford to pay for child care are forced to choose from three unsatisfactory options: leaving their young children at home with a sibling, leaving their children home alone, or not working at all.

The federal government grants Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) block grant money to Utah income-eligible parents pay three child care costs. This “subsidy” pays for a portion of income-eligible parents’ child care costs.

KEY SUBSIDY FACTS:
• There are currently about 14,073 Utah children served by the child care subsidy program each month.
• The average subsidy payment is $262.00 per child per month.

Utah Full-Time Monthly Average Child Care Price Ranges

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<thead>
<tr>
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TRAINING
• The Career Ladder and Training & Longevity Supplement (TLS) programs support child care providers by teaching best practices and rewarding them with wage supplements.

During the past year:
• 274 Career Ladder Level Awards, 376 Career Ladder Endorsement Awards and 681 Training and Longevity Awards were given for a total of $778,409.
• 60,474 hours of low cost training were accessed by child care providers to enhance their professional development and program quality. That’s the equivalent of more than 29 years of 40-hour workweeks attended after a full day’s work.

PRIORITY
• Obtain increased funding in Department request for SFY2010 to support after school programs in elementary and junior high schools.
• Create a public-private after school task force to create consistent program goals and strengthen quality of after school programs.
• Use the OCC Advisory Committee to identify two or three key domains from audit.
• Release an RFP supply and demand study of infant/toddler care in Utah.

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