

2009 Legislative Talking Points



Office of Work & Family Life Department of Workforce Services

140 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, Utah
(801) 526-4340
jobs.utah.gov/occ

Contact your legislator:

www.leg.utah.gov/documents/find.htm

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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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 their child care resources;
- Support families in becoming self-reliant and contributing to their community and state economy; and
- Optimize all available funding sources.

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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

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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.

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UTAH POLICY MATTERS PROJECT

Policy Matters is a strategic planning process that concludes with policy recommendations designed to enable state policymakers to consider policy options in a coordinated and systemic manner, rather than expending limited resource on various discrete programs or services for young children without considering their collective impact.

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

PRIORITIES

- Professional development enhancements for child care providers, ie: improving wages and education.
- Development of a children's budget.
- Funding an expansion of an evidence-based home visitation model.

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. FY078 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

*Afterschool***

- 54 programs meeting high quality standards funded by Youth Connections grants
- 13 programs funded by the Kindergarten Match program
- 21 programs funded by Safe Passages 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 2008 Annual Report for details.

** See BBC Out-of-School Time Supply-and-Demand Study, 2006.

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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 their child care costs. This "subsidy" pays for a portion of income-eligible parents' child care costs.

KEY SUBSIDY FACTS:

- There are currently about 14,075 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

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Infant/Toddler | \$324 - \$1165 (\$540 avg.) |
| Preschool | \$300 - \$758 (\$354 avg.) |
| Kindergarten | \$229 - \$683 (\$381 avg.) |
| Schoolage | \$139 - \$650 (\$336 avg.) |

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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:

- **774** Career Ladder Level Awards, **376** Career Ladder Endorsement Awards and **681** Training and Longevity Awards were given for a total of **\$710,400**.

- 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.

PRIORITIES

- 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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