

Child Care in Washington State

September 2007



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.

Key Child Care Trends in 2006

With about 175,000 children in licensed care with an estimated 35,000 or more caregivers in Washington State on any given day, child care is a key component of the state's economic and social picture. Parents and policymakers alike have a stake in ensuring that care is affordable, accessible and high quality. In terms of affordability (see p. 4), parents still stretch to meet a cost of care that can amount to a quarter or a third of their income. Cost impacts providers as well, who must operate on the thinnest of margins in order for parents to afford their fees (p. 3). Accessibility is variable—with large declines in the number of family child care facilities (p. 2), some parents are finding fewer choices in their communities. Quality is the most difficult to gauge, but R&Rs and other components of the professional development system continue to provide training opportunities that encourage providers to reach their highest potential.



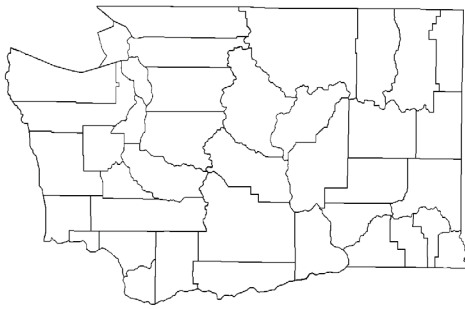
Notable highlights of this report:

- Over the past five years, the number of licensed facilities has declined by about 17% overall. Family child care closures account for nearly all of the net decline.
- Fully a quarter of licensed facilities report that one or more staff members speak Spanish, continuing a steady increase.
- Infant care continues to be the most difficult care to find and the most expensive; the median annual cost of infant care ranges from \$7,020 to \$9,308.
- For a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time care, the cost represents a quarter to a third of the state's median household income for 2006.
- Families count on resource and referral to help them find child care: 94% of those surveyed would share the phone number with a friend or family member.

Contact Information:

**Washington State
Child Care Resource & Referral Network
1551 Broadway, Suite 300
Tacoma, WA 98402
253-383-1735
www.childcarenet.org**

The Network's mission is to support families and caregivers, shape policy, and build communities that promote the learning and development of children and youth throughout Washington State through a strong statewide network of local child care resource and referral programs.



People

Est. Population	6,375,600
Est. Change since 2002	333,900
Children under 5 years	412,272
Children under 13 years	1,094,866
% of Children under 13 living in poverty	16%
Ranking among states in percent of poor children K-12 enrollment	18
Children in Care Zone ¹	697,823
Average number children on child care subsidy	63,411/month
Head Start/ECEAP Slots	16,751

Economics

Living Wage ²	\$40,000
Median Household Income	\$56,807/yr
Unemployment Rate	4.4%

Notes:

¹Care 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.

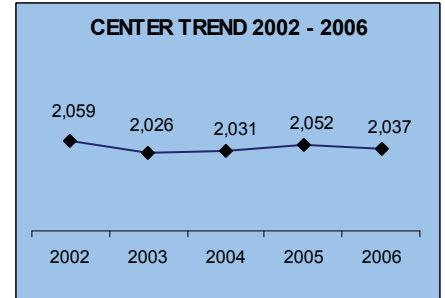
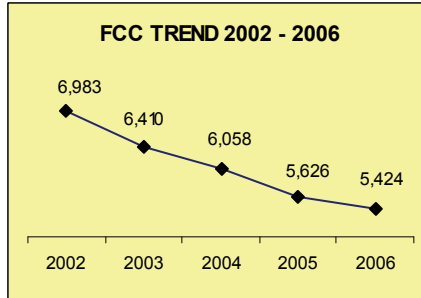
²The living wage measure is based on a family of four and represents twice the federal poverty level income. Twice the federal poverty level is the income cut off for families receiving child care subsidies.

Data Sources for the Report:

American Federation of Teachers, Children's Defense Fund, Department of Early Learning, Head Start State Collaboration Office, Office of Financial Management, Federal Registry, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, U.S. Census Bureau and the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

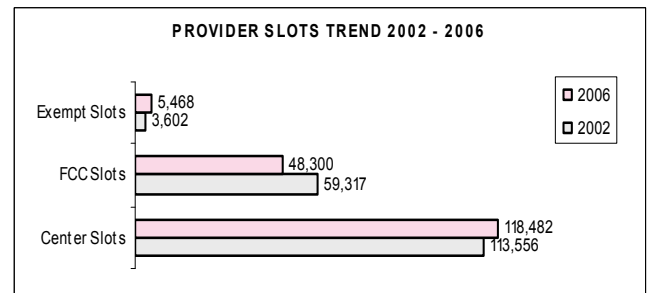
Licensed Child Care in Washington State
How many licensed child care facilities exist in our state?

Family child care (FCC) businesses account for 73% of the 7,461 licensed and 83 exempt (primarily school age care) facilities in the state. In the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has declined by a net 1,581, or 17%.



Since the peak in 2002, there has been a 22% decline in the number of family child care businesses, with a net loss of 1,558 facilities. Center facilities continue to fluctuate slightly. Over the last five years, there has been a 1% decline or a net loss of 22 facilities.

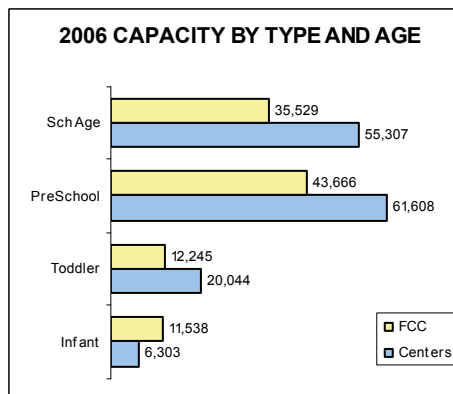
How has the number of child care slots changed over the last five years?



Over the past five years, the state has experienced a net loss of 4,225

potential slots, with the decrease of 11,017 family child care slots offset by the 6,792 increase in center and exempt slots. Exempt slots have increased due to the expansion of the number of school-age only facilities.

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. The ratio is highest (1 adult to 4 infants) and the smallest in centers. Family child care represents roughly two-thirds (65%) of the available infant slots, making it a critical option for working parents.

*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?

Over 90% of providers speak English, and a quarter speak Spanish. Over 30 additional languages are spoken, including French, Vietnamese, Tagalog, German Japanese, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Arabic, Ukrainian, and Punjabi, among others.

Note: Percentages include providers who speak more than one language.

Languages Spoken	
English	92%
Spanish	25%
Somali	2%
Russian	2%
Other	11%

How much non-standard care is available in my community?

Most providers offer full- and part-time care during weekdays only. A few regularly offer care past 6:30 PM, overnight, or on the weekend. About 44% or **3,335 facilities** report offering regular non-standard hour care, of which 43% offer evening care, 37% weekend and 20% overnight.

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

2006 Average Salary Comparisons: Kindergarten Teachers vs. Child Care Providers			
Public School Kindergarten Teacher (2004)	Director Child Care Center	Teacher Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider Business Gross Income
\$40,330/yr \$3,361/mo	\$29,856/yr \$2,488/mo	\$20,925/yr \$1,744/mo	\$29,124/yr \$2,477/mo

Washington's kindergarten teachers earn 35% more than center directors, almost double what child care teachers earn, and 38% more than family child care providers' gross earnings in the state. 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.

2006 Ranges: Monthly Full-Time Subsidy Reimbursement Rates (rates vary by geographic area)			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
Centers	\$561 - \$873	\$472 - \$729	\$438 - \$611
Family Child Care Homes	\$461 - \$692	\$415 - \$684	\$392 - \$577

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 **5 to 7** subsidized full-time infants. Licensing permits a maximum of 8 infants in a room at any one time. Income generated from the other **1 to 2** infants would have to cover all other classroom costs including benefits, training, meals, 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 to \$3,691** per month. Out of these earnings, the provider must pay for all expenses, including salaries, benefits, taxes, rent, meals, training, equipment and supplies.

Professional Development for the Child Care Workforce**Training and Scholarships**

Local R&R programs provide state-mandated training for providers. **In 2006, R&R programs offered over 800 trainings for the child care workforce.**

Washington Scholarships for Child Care Professionals 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 Washington State, **553** 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 <i>National Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	157
School-Age Accredited Programs <i>National AfterSchool Association</i>	18
Accredited Family Child Care Homes <i>National Association for Family Child Care</i>	13
Accredited Montessori Programs <i>American Montessori Society</i>	9

Professional Associations

The Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) has **15 affiliates** statewide.

The Washington State Family Child Care Association has **19 chapters** and accepts non-chapter members statewide. The Eastern Washington Family Child Care Association also accepts members from select counties across the state.

Feedback from Providers
What percentage of providers...

Read R&R newsletter	96%
Indicate that referrals help sustain their child care business	70%
Are satisfied with service received from R&R	87%

About the Families

Callers to the referral lines are regularly surveyed by the R&R Network 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 did parents find their child care arrangement?

- 46% through the R&R
- 20% through friends or family
- 13% were still looking for care
- 1% chose to stay home
- 20% through providers, the phone book, or other means

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

1. Openings
2. Affordability
3. Quality



94% of families surveyed would share their local child care resource and referral contact information with a friend or family member.

Affordability for Families

How much does child care cost in Washington State?

Statewide, the annual median household income in 2006 was **\$56,807**. 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.

Centers	2006 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2006 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$9,308	16%
Toddler	\$7,800	14%
Preschool	\$7,124	13%
School Age	\$4,065	7%

Family Child Care	2006 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2006 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$7,020	12%
Toddler	\$6,500	11%
Preschool	\$5,980	11%
School Age	\$3,120	5%

While the median cost of family child care can be up to 26% less than the cost of care in a center, child care continues to represent a substantial cost for families. The cost of full-time care for an infant represents 12% to 17% of the median income. Care for an infant and a preschool child would represent 23% to 29% of median income in the state.

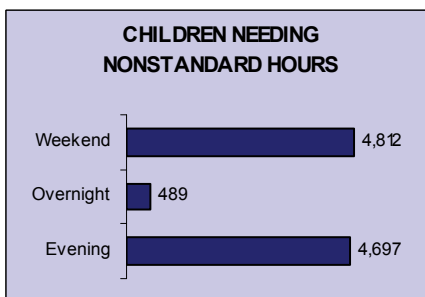
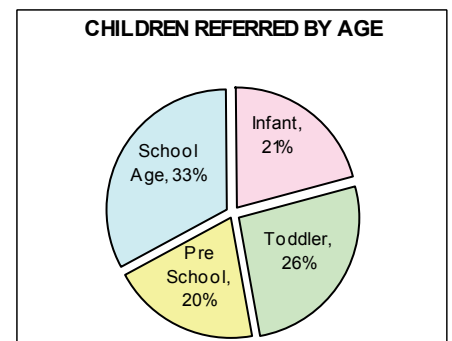
Families Using R&R Services

Who are families that call the R&R Line?

In 2006, **25,073** families received referrals. A majority (55%) of the families served were low-income. Almost half (49%) were headed by single parents.

What ages of children are referred?

There is a relatively even distribution of children served across age groups. However, even though the largest population of children eligible for licensed care are school-age (5-12 years old), over two-thirds of the children referred are birth through four years old.



How many children need non-standard care?

Parents of 9,998 children requested referrals to licensed facilities offering non-standard hour care. Evening and weekend care represent 95% of the non-standard care requests.