We lead community efforts to ensure that every family can find safe, quality, affordable child care.
Everyday in thousands of family home and center-based child care programs across King County, preschool-aged children are gaining the skills they need to move on to kindergarten and first grade. This report examines the issue of school readiness, the ways in which high quality child care eases the transition into school and Child Care Resources’ role in helping children build solid foundations for the coming years.

Child Care Resources (CCR) has always played a vital part in helping families prepare their children to start school:

• We maintain a database of more than 2000 licensed child care providers who offer preschool and/or out-of-school-hours programs
• We offer training and resources to child care providers
• We help working families connect with reliable programs and cope with challenging child care issues

In one way or another we direct all our energies, our 12 years of experience and the efforts of our 38-member staff toward making sure that all families with young children have access to the kind of secure and nurturing care that forms the basis of school readiness.
The whole world seems to be catching on to the idea that learning starts at birth, and that it takes place, not just in the home, but in the early learning centers that we call “child care.” The science of brain development, coupled with long-term studies that compare children who have received high quality preschool experiences with those who have not, point to the need for public policies that support families in being able to find and afford high quality child care and out-of-school-time programs. Children do better in school and in life if they receive this positive early start.

At Child Care Resources, we feel a strong responsibility to educate parents, providers, public policy makers and other members of the community on why a strong, integrated, high quality child care system is important. Unfortunately, in 2002 we lost important ground in terms of supporting our children’s early learning. State funding for child care was cut by over $20 million. The eligibility level for state subsidies to families was reduced and co-payment requirements were raised.

Of equal concern to us was the elimination of several state funded projects that support child care providers in developing and maintaining high quality programs. For example, a collaboration between child care resource and referral programs and local health jurisdictions was helping families with children with special needs find child care. Another program was training welfare recipients to become child care providers. We mourn the loss of these programs, and others, that were playing such an important role in promoting positive early learning for children.

Because of a serious shortfall in the King County budget, the County Council decided to eliminate the King County Child Care Program. This program administered local subsidies for families, making it possible for working families who were just beyond the cut-off for state subsidies, to find quality child care. The wonderful, dedicated staff of the King County Child Care Program also worked to develop higher standards for care and offered technical assistance to providers. It was a huge loss to our community when that program was closed.

Despite these losses, our advocacy efforts, along with those of our colleagues in the community, helped to ensure that the cuts were not deeper and wider. We organized e-mail and call-in campaigns, traveled to Olympia, testified before the King County Council, and rallied others to do the same. We would like to thank all of our partners who were united in trying to stem the tide of cuts to child care. We will continue to work tirelessly with all of you to help the broader community, and especially our policy makers, understand that our children are our future, and we need to support them from their earliest development onward.

Nina Auerbach, Chief Executive Officer
Reading about the child care program described in this report, I am reminded once again of the enormous capacity children have for learning in the first five years of life. The 2002 Getting School Ready! campaign in which CCR participated focused the whole community on the importance of early childhood education. But for CCR staff and board members, school readiness and child care quality go hand in hand and have always been a priority.

In 2002, the board undertook a self-evaluation that led to several new initiatives. For the first time we developed our own work plan demonstrating how board members will work in various committees and in the community to support the staff in achieving agency goals. We created a public policy committee to look beyond the agency to improvements in the entire child care system. This committee provides guidance to the staff and helps mobilize the board and other community members to take action on specific issues. The board also renewed its commitment to fund development by establishing a major gifts committee and by making fund development one of the agency’s stated goals. Overall in 2002, board members became more visible, actively promoting CCR in their respective communities.

These activities all occurred in a climate of budget cuts that brought drastic changes to the local human services community. Late in 2002 we voted to take over the reins of the homeless child care project, a federally funded program that had been left without an agency to run it when the King County Child Care Program folded due to budget constraints. Throughout the economic downturn we have resolved to go forward, doing what has to be done to support the staff in carrying out our mission.

Although government belt-tightening continues to place roadblocks in our way, I am heartened by the energy and commitment of my fellow board members and the CCR staff. Whether its through Getting School Ready!, taking our message to the politicians, or helping parents find financing solutions in tough economic times, you keep moving us forward. And we all know, the children will not wait.

Thanks to everyone for your dedication to this work and for all you have accomplished in 2002.

Janet Levinger, Board President
When children start school

An estimated 55,200 preschool children regularly attend child care programs in King County and each September thousands of them start school. Although it is sometimes thought that preparing children to enter school means helping them read, write and use numbers, research indicates that social and emotional development are more important components of school readiness.

As a veteran elementary teacher explains, “Chances are children who feel secure and know how to interact with others will thrive in kindergarten and first grade. But kids who don’t know about listening, sharing and respecting people will have a hard time. They can end up feeling frustrated and bad about themselves. And that affects their ability to learn.” Indeed, studies also show that the disparities that exist when children enter school often persist throughout high school.

Other factors that contribute to children's school readiness are: a sense of excitement about starting school; feeling good about themselves; familiarity with written words and counting; physical development; and knowing that family language and culture are valued.

School readiness takes center stage

Aware of the long-term impact of school readiness, in 2002 our community launched Getting School Ready!, a project supported by a federal grant and local funds. As a partner in this effort, CCR participated in over 40 community conversations with parents and educators, helped produce Getting School Ready! guides, and posted school readiness information on its web-site for parents and child care providers. CCR also collaborated in the creation of the “Birth to 5” web-site, linking parents and caregivers to information and local resources for early learning.
8:25 am  Children continue to arrive. Teachers greet parents and coo at baby siblings while kids plunge into a favorite activity or linger at their parents’ sides. One boy brings a picture to add to the gallery of family photos spread atop a low bookshelf. The staff works hard to bridge the gap between home and school, encouraging the children to share family stories, traditions and culture.

9:35 am  Breanna is snuggled up with four other kids while teacher Theresa reads. The story mentions a grandmother. “I call my grandmother abue,” the teacher says. “Breanna, what do you call your grandmother?”

Walking through the center, visitors may have the impression that the staff is not teaching at all. In fact, they are carefully following the children’s leads, allowing them to develop at their own paces and providing them with loving care, hands-on activities, and an environment bursting with wonders to explore.

10:00 am  “Children, look what I have!” Loretta announces as she wrestles a huge block of ice to the center of the table.

Assistance to providers

In Breanna’s child care program (sidebar), teachers have weekly planning sessions to discuss curriculum and the children’s progress. But in all too many child care situations, shoe-string budgets and the minute-to-minute demands of the children leave little time for reflection on quality. During 2002, our state-funded Recruitment and Retention program allowed CCR to help hundreds of providers create better environments for growing children. We guided 318 new providers through the state licensing process and responded to 8,363 requests for technical assistance. Over the phone or during visits to their programs, we suggested ways for providers to deal with difficult behaviors, to recognize developmental needs and to engage more children. In some cases we were able to call on public health nurses to address specific health and safety concerns.

Through the Champions for Children program – supported by the local business community, the City of Seattle and King County – 14 providers embarked on a two-year quest to achieve national accreditation. During 2002 these child care professionals undertook an extensive self-study and implemented improvement plans to bring their centers into alignment with more than 150 standards of quality early childhood programs.

In 2002 our provider services division also

- launched “CCR on Wheels” a mobile resource van that brings equipment and supplies such as a laminator, paper cutter, photocopier, books, toys, puzzle-making kits and other materials to providers throughout King County
- continued to advocate for increased wages and training for child care professionals
Culture matters

Over the years Child Care Resources has paid increasing attention to the importance of culture in creating child care environments in which children thrive. When children have the chance to hear stories, play, and sing in familiar ways and languages, it reinforces their ability to develop important learning and communication skills.

During 2002, CCR took several steps toward increasing the availability of culturally relevant care. We graduated 17 and enrolled 30 more (mostly non-English speaking refugee and immigrant women) in Child Care Careers, a program to help individuals become licensed in-home providers or teachers in child care centers. We added to existing cultural task forces by facilitating the creation of an Indian Community Child Care Task Force to assess the child care needs of the Native American community. We also established support groups for informal caregivers in Spanish-speaking, Vietnamese and Somali communities and produced a toolkit for starting similar groups across King County.

Helping parents find quality programs

Tara's son was still an infant when she started looking for child care. Ambivalent about returning to work, Tara says the CCR database calmed much of her anxiety about finding a suitable program. “It put my mind at ease to know there was this whole community of people out there who believe in good quality care.”

Tara spent many evenings pouring over the database and checked the CCR web-site for tips on choosing child care and details on early childhood education. She eventually chose a small in-home program that highlighted its intimate atmosphere, musical activities and exposure to languages other than English. Her son has attended there for 2 years. Although school readiness was not initially a concern for Tara, she is pleased to see that, as the children get older, the provider incorporates a variety of learning experiences into the day’s activities. “They also do a lot of work on sharing and cooperation,” Tara says. “They are growing up together.”
They are learning to solve disagreements, find safe ways to play, appreciate books, look after their own personal needs, and express their ideas. Staff members help children cooperate; devise creative projects; and take note of children’s needs and accomplishments to be mentioned to parents or recorded in journals.

11:15 am Breanna takes her fleece from her cubby, and with a little help from Theresa, carefully pushes her arms into the sleeves and hurries to link hands with one of her classmates at the door. The three-year-olds are off to the playground. After that there will be lunch, an afternoon nap, group activities, a special art project, clean-up and quiet play until pick-up time.

For Breanna, the center is a cocoon that provides both security and endless possibilities. In less than two years, she will leave its familiar routines to enter kindergarten and, judging by the way she embraces the world – sure that she is loved and eager for new experiences – she’ll be ready.

In 2002 our parent services team helped 7,502 families such as Tara’s find child care that offers age-appropriate activities in a nurturing and safe environment. We also

- worked with 156 families of children with special needs to find qualified providers.
- assisted parents in coping with a range of child care challenges including transportation problems and the need for after-hours care.
- offered intensive assistance – in the form of education, referral and child care visitation – to 608 families whose efforts to move from welfare to work were complicated by challenging child care issues.
- established a scholarship program by encouraging cities throughout King County to help fund child care for families earning too much to qualify for state assistance, but not enough to pay for care.

This is where it starts

Child care – whether in center-based programs, licensed family homes or informal settings – is a prime concern of working families and an integral part of our economy. It is also a crucial factor in our education system: the majority of our region’s zero-to-five-year-olds learn many of their first lessons from child care providers. The Getting School Ready! campaign of 2002 emphasized how important it is to eliminate disparities in readiness. By constantly seeking new ways to guarantee accessible, affordable, quality care, Child Care Resources continues to do its part to ensure that all our children are ready for school. And ready for life.
## 2002 Statement of Unrestricted Activity

### Unrestricted Public Support and Revenue

Unrestricted Public Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Contracts and Grants</td>
<td>$2,704,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of King County</td>
<td>103,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Private Grants</td>
<td>281,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Contributions</td>
<td>100,751</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Unrestricted Public Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,189,588</strong></td>
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Revenue

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Services Fees</td>
<td>172,565</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>24,562</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>4,419</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>268,774</strong></td>
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### Net Assets Released from Restriction

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<th>Amount</th>
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<td>140,521</td>
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Total Unrestricted Public Support, Revenue and Other Support

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<th>Amount</th>
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### Expenses

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<td>Management and General</td>
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<td>Fund Raising</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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Change in Unrestricted Net Assets

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<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$172,998</td>
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The financial records and accounts of Child Care Resources are audited annually by Jacobson Jarvis & Co, PLLC. The audited financial statements are available upon request.
Thank you to our Donors

Child Care Resources is extremely grateful for the generous support received from the community in 2002.

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