



Child Care in San Juan County

September 2008

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 2007, the Network's member agencies:

- Handled 121,327 calls;
- Processed 33,247 public referral calls;
- Served 25,078 families and 35,289 children; and
- Assisted 21,954 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 San Juan County

The Opportunity Council hosts the child care resource and referral (R&R) program serving San Juan County. In 2007, staff responded to 13,979 calls in the region 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 to the extent funding allows: 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:

- Over the last five years, all licensed family child care homes have gone out of business. The county has 8 child care centers. Overall, the county has 223 potential child care slots, down 66 from 2003.
- There is no licensed care available during evenings, overnight or on the weekend.
- 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 33% of the county's median household income for 2007.

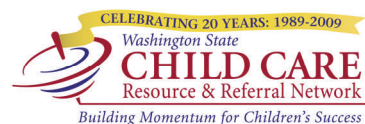
Local Resource & Referral Contact Information:

The Opportunity Council
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Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 734-5121 (800) 649-5121

<http://www.opportunitycouncil.org/ccrr/>

Child Care and Family Resources strengthens the ability of families, caregivers and communities to nurture, support and educate their children, while building a supply of affordable, high quality child and youth care throughout Whatcom, Island, and San Juan Counties.

Proud Member of the:





People

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Population | 15,900 |
| Change since 2003 | 1,100 |
| Children under 5 years: | 552 |
| Children under 13 years | 1,830 |
| % of Children under 13 living in poverty | 15% |
| Ranking among WA Counties in rate of child poverty | 33 |
| K-12 enrollment | 1,713 |
| Children in Care Zone ¹ | 1,263 |
| Average number children on child care subsidy | 53/month |
| Head Start/ECEAP Slots | 43 |

Economics

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Living Wage ² | \$41,300/yr |
| Median Household Income | \$56,535/yr |
| Unemployment Rate | 3.3% |

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.

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.

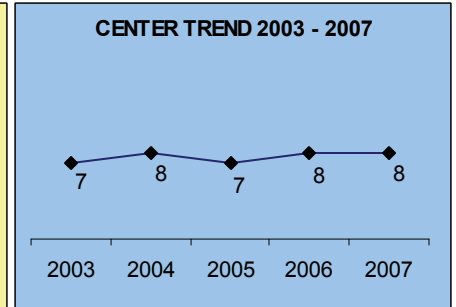
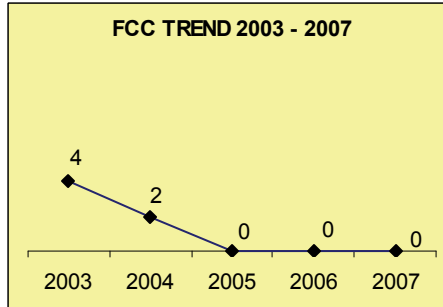
Data Sources for the Report:

American Federation of Teachers, Children's Defense Fund, WA Dept of Early Learning, WA Employment Security Dept, WA Head Start State Collaboration Office, WA Office of Financial Management, WA Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, US Census Bureau, US Dept of Health & Human Services, US Federal Registry and the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

Licensed Child Care in Our Community

How many providers are there in my area by type?

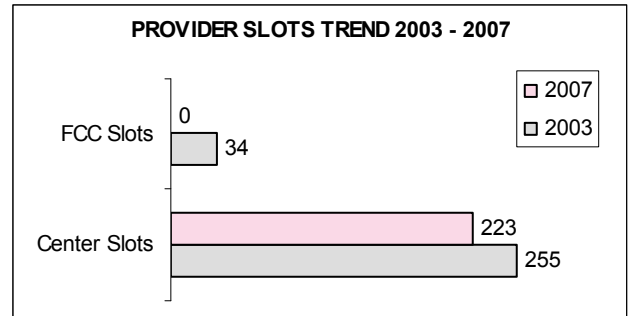
Centers account for 100% of the 8 licensed facilities in San Juan County. In the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has declined by a net 3, or 27%.



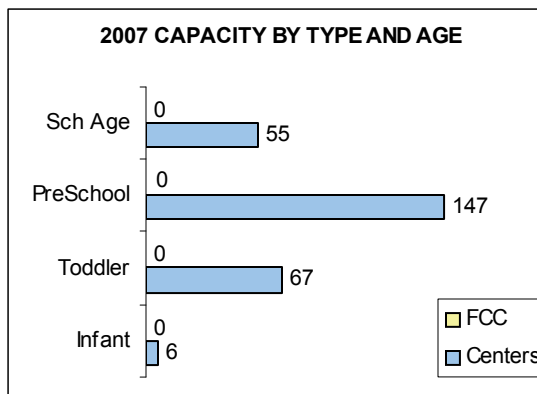
In 2003, there were four licensed family child care businesses. All of them have closed, leaving none operating since 2005. The number of center facilities has fluctuated between 7 and 8 in the last 5 years, now standing at 8.

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

Since 2003, the county has experienced a net loss of 66 licensed potential child care slots, from 289 to 223. With the closing of all the family child care businesses, the county has lost 34 potential FCC slots. At the same time, there has been a 13% decline in the number of potential center-based slots (32 slots).



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. There are at most 6 potential infant slots in licensed care in the community, all in centers.

Note: This chart does not represent actual enrollment of children in care. 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.

What languages are spoken?

All of the providers in San Juan County speak English. Four of the eight facilities indicate they have staff who speak Spanish, and one facility has staff who speak French.

| Languages Spoken by Providers | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| English | 100% |
| Spanish | 50% |
| French | 13% |

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

All of the providers offer full- and part-time care during weekdays only. No providers report offering non-standard care, defined as care past 6:30 PM, overnight, or on the weekend.

Economics of Child Care Providers

What do child care providers earn compared to kindergarten teachers?

| 2006 Average Salary Comparisons: Kindergarten Teachers and Child Care Providers | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Public School Kindergarten Teacher (2005) | Director Child Care Center | Teacher Child Care Center | Family Child Care Provider Business Gross Income |
| \$45,722/yr \$3,810/mo | \$30,168/yr \$2,514/mo | \$21,444/yr \$1,787/mo | \$32,368/yr \$2,697/mo |

Washington's kindergarten teachers earn 52% more than center directors, more than double what child care teachers earn, and 43% 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?

| 2007 Ranges: Monthly Full-Time Subsidy Reimbursement Rates | | | |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|
| | Infant | Toddler | Preschool |
| Centers | \$802 | \$669 | \$578 |
| Family Child Care Homes | \$716 | \$617 | \$543 |

Current state child care subsidy reimbursement rates are one constraint on wages, quality, and financial solvency for providers. 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 **4.9** of the licensed maximum of 8 subsidized full-time infants. Income generated from the other **3.1** 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 toddlers and four preschoolers. A provider's gross earnings if all the children are on subsidy would be **\$3,604** per month. Out of these earnings, the provider must pay all expenses, including salaries, benefits, taxes, rent, meals, training, equipment and supplies.

Professional Development for the Child Care Workforce

Training and Scholarships

The Opportunity Council provides state-mandated training for providers. **In 2007, the R&R offered 20 trainings for the child care workforce in the region averaging 19 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 San Juan County, **one** scholarship was awarded in 2007.

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

Professional Associations

Association for the Education of Young Children Chapter: Skagit/Islands AEYC

Family Child Care Association Chapter(s): No Chapters

Providers say R&Rs help:

- 1) Increase parent referrals to fill my openings**
- 2) Increase my quality of care**
- 3) Increase my ability to operate my child care business**

About the Families

Callers to the referral lines are regularly surveyed by the R&R Network in order to enhance our services and inform policymakers. Parents report that R&Rs significantly increase their knowledge of:

- 1) How to choose child care that fits their family's needs; and
- 2) How to identify a quality child care setting.

Families consider a variety of factors when seeking a child care, including practical considerations such as the accessibility of programs to their work-place or home, the cost of care and the hours of operation.

Parents seek child care where:

- 1) The center/home is clean and safe
- 2) The provider really likes children
- 3) Parents feel comfortable with the provider
- 4) Children's individual needs are met

Top three challenges parents identify when seeking child care:

- 1) Affordability
- 2) Inconvenient locations
- 3) Hours that match parents' needs



95% of families surveyed indicate that child care resource and referral staff responded helpfully to their individual questions and concerns.

Affordability for Families

How much does child care cost in my community?

Countywide, the annual median household income in 2007 was **\$56,535**. 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.

| Family Child Care | 2007 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child | % of 2007 Med. Household Inc. |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Infant | N/A | N/A |
| Toddler | N/A | N/A |
| Preschool | N/A | N/A |
| School Age | N/A | N/A |

| Centers | 2007 Median | % of 2007 |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Infant | \$10,608 | 19% |
| Toddler | \$8,840 | 16% |
| Preschool | \$8,320 | 15% |
| School Age | \$4,810 | 9% |

Child care continues to represent a substantial expense for families. The cost of full-time care for an infant represents 19% of the median household income. Care for an infant and preschool child would represent 33% of median income in the county. There are no family child care providers in San Juan County.

Families Using R&R Services

Who are families that call the R&R Line?

Families in rural counties where there are few licensed child care options rarely request R&R assistance to find care. In rural counties like San Juan County, R&R staff focus on recruiting, training, and retaining providers to meet the needs of the community.

In 2007, **3** families called for child care referrals. Of these, 2 were low-income, and none were headed by single parents. None requested non-standard hour care for their children.