



Child Care in Whatcom County

October 2010

Child Care Resource & Referral Across Washington State

These state and county profiles are compiled by the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCR&R Network) in partnership with the Washington State Department of Early Learning.

Established by state statute in 1989, the CCR&R Network connects families seeking child care with licensed providers; supports child care providers by enhancing the quality of their care and small businesses; leverages resources in order to increase the availability and affordability of quality child care; and informs policy makers using data collected statewide in local communities.

During 2009, the CCR&R Network's 11 member agencies:

- Handled 90,908 calls;
- Processed 19,806 public referral calls;
- Served 17,908 families and 25,425 children; and
- Assisted 10,190 low-income families find child care.

Child Care Resource & Referral Supports Communities by:

- Helping parents find quality child care for their children;
- Sharing parenting and child development information with families who seek it;
- Providing training to providers so their care is high quality and their businesses are strong;
- Collaborating with local partners to ensure that child care is available and affordable in every community; and
- Advocating for effective public policies that support families and child care providers.

Child Care Resource & Referral In Whatcom County

The Opportunity Council hosts the child care resource and referral (CCR&R) program serving Whatcom County. In 2009, staff responded to 3,089 calls in the region from parents, providers and community members seeking information and assistance navigating the child care system. CCR&R staff and consultants are also out in the field: 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:

- Since 2005, there has been a net loss of 4 family child care businesses and a net gain of 1 center facility. Even so, there were 299 more potential licensed child care slots (a 9% gain) in 2009 than in 2005.
- Over one in four of providers reported having Spanish-speaking staff.
- Infant care continues to be the most difficult care to find and the most expensive, with a median cost over \$9,000 annually. For a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time care, the annual median cost represents 35% to 38% of the county's 2009 median household income.

Local Child Care Resource & Referral Contact Information:

The Opportunity Council
1111 Cornwall, Suite 200
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 734-8396 x 227 (888) 444-1862 x 227
<http://www.opportunitycouncil.org/ccrr/>

Child Care Resource and Referral 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.



People

Population	193,100
Change since 2004	15,800
Children under 5 years	11,532
Children under 13 years	30,210
% of Children under 18 living in poverty	14%
Ranking among WA Counties in rate of child poverty	32
K-12 enrollment	27,132
Children in Care Zone ¹	18,800
Average number children on child care subsidy	2,716/month
Head Start/ECEAP Slots	245

Economics

Living Wage ²	\$47,805/yr
Median Household Income	\$47,805/yr
Unemployment Rate	8.0%

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 of income.

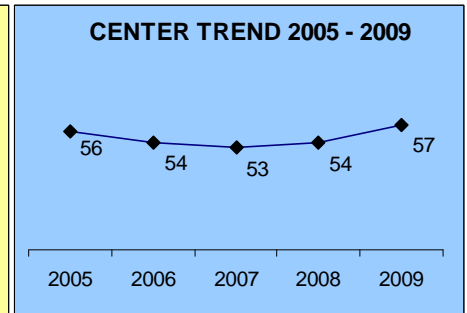
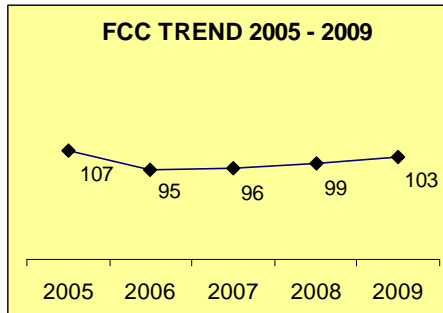
Data Sources for the Report:

Kids Count, WA Dept of Early Learning, WA Dept of Social & Health Services, WA Employment Security Department, WA Head Start State Collaboration Office, WA Office of Financial Management, WA Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, US Census Bureau, US Federal Registry, Washington Guarantee Education Tuition, 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?

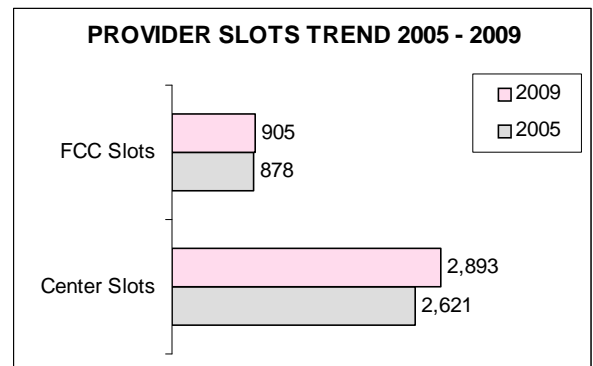
Family child care (FCC) businesses account for nearly two-thirds (64%) of the 160 licensed facilities in Whatcom County. In the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has declined by a net 3, or 2%.



Since 2005, the number of child care businesses dipped and then rose, resulting in an overall 4% decline, or the net loss of 4. In this time, the number of center facilities also dipped, but in the end has increased 2%, with a net gain of one.

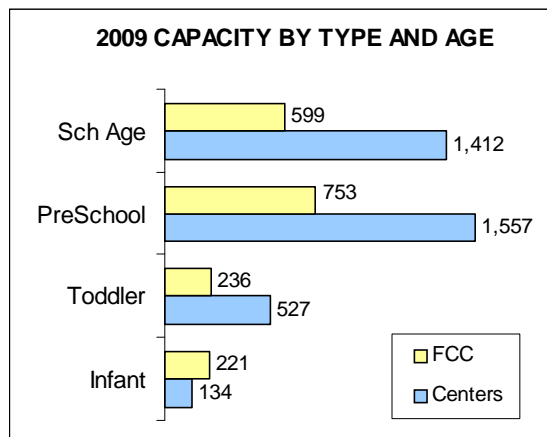
How has the number of child care slots changed over the last five years?

In the past five years, the county has experienced a 3% increase in the number of potential family child care slots (or 27). During the same time, the number of potential center-based



slots has also grown by 272 (or 10%). As a result, there were 299 more slots in 2009 than in 2005, a 9% gain.

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. In centers, the ratio is highest (1 adult to 4 infants) and the potential number of infants is the lowest, making family child care a critical option for working parents of our youngest children.

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 groups. If a slot is filled for one age group it cancels out the potential slot for the other age groups.

What languages are spoken?

Nearly all providers speak English, and 26% reported having staff who speak Spanish. In addition, four providers have staff who speak Russian; one provider reports speaking German, and one Portuguese.

Languages Spoken by Providers	
English	99%
Spanish	26%
Russian	3%
Other	1%

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

Most providers offer full- and part-time care during weekdays only. Few providers regularly offer care during non-standard hours. Out of all providers, most offering non-standard care provide evening care past 6:30 PM (11%) or weekend care (9%); even fewer offer overnight care (4%).

Economics of Child Care Providers

What do child care providers earn compared to kindergarten teachers?

2010 Average Salary Comparisons: Kindergarten Teachers and Child Care Providers			
Public School Kindergarten Teacher	Director Child Care Center	Teacher Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider Business Gross Income
\$48,483/yr \$4,040/mo	\$35,088/yr \$2,924/mo	\$23,724/yr \$1,977/mo	\$35,015/yr \$2,917/mo

Washington's Kindergarten teachers earn 38% more than center directors, more than double what child care teachers earn, and 39% 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?

Current state child care subsidy reimbursement rates are one constraint on wages, quality, and financial solvency for providers.

2009 Ranges: Monthly Full-Time Subsidy Reimbursement Rates				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-Age
Centers	\$826	\$689	\$595	\$578
Family Child Care Homes	\$737	\$635	\$559	\$508

To support the average salary of a teacher, aide and part of the cost of the director for an infant classroom in a center (based upon 2010 salary rates), a program would need to enroll at least **5.3** of the licensed maximum of 8 subsidized full-time infants. Income generated from the other **2.7** 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 infants and four preschoolers. A provider's gross earnings if all the children are on subsidy would be **\$3,712** per month. Out of these earnings, the provider must pay all expenses, including salaries, benefits, taxes, rent, meals, training, equipment and supplies.

Quality Initiatives

CCR&R Training & Education

The CCR&R Network provides state-mandated training for providers. In 2009, this CCR&R offered **17 trainings** for the workforce in the region.

Washington Scholarships for Child Care Professionals is a scholarship program that provides financial support for centers and school age staff and family child care providers to obtain higher education degrees and credentials in early childhood education. In 2010, **15 scholarships** were awarded in the county.

Quality Rating in Communities

Seeds to Success is the voluntary quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care being piloted in Washington. The Washington State Department of Early Learning and Thrive by Five Washington are partnering to test the Seeds to Success standards with the help of **93** voluntary facilities in White Center (King County), East Yakima and in Spokane, Kitsap and Clark counties. In fall 2010, Seeds sites received a baseline rating:

Environment Rating Scales (ERS) - Scale of 1 (Inadequate) to 7 (Excellent)

Early Childhood	4.29
Infant/Toddler	3.84
Family Child Care	3.92
Overall Average	Centers: 4.01 FCC: 3.91

The **3.82 to 4.25** score range on the ERS indicates "minimum to better than custodial care".

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)-Scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high)

	Centers	FCC
Emotional Support	5.12	5.82
Classroom Organization	4.58	5.22
Instructional Support	3.35	3.05

CLASS measures teacher/child interaction. CLASS scores are in the mid-range.

Seeds to Success Quality Standard Areas Scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)

	Centers	FCC
Overall Average	1.08	1.00

The baseline data shows that children are cared for in facilities with warm and responsive providers. The overall **1 to 1.08** average rating also indicates the need for **quality improvement investments that ensure children receive high quality early learning opportunities that promote ready and successful children.**

In spring 2011, programs will receive a second rating after receiving targeted coaching and professional development. In late 2011, DEL will adopt the final seeds model and expand statewide, depending on funding availability.

About the Families

Families who access CCR&R services are regularly surveyed by the CCR&R Network in order to enhance our services and inform policymakers. Parents report that they contact their local CCR&Rs for:

- A list of providers (86%)
- Information on child care options (55%)
- Education about what quality childcare looks like (9%)
- Details on child care rules and regulations (9%)
- Child care payment options (5%)

Parents surveyed indicated that CCR&R services helped them understand:

- The steps to take to find childcare (64%)
- The importance of quality child care for their child's development and growth (64%)
- What their family needs from a childcare provider (59%)
- What a quality childcare provider looks like (59%)

64% of parents surveyed reported that they found child care as a result of contacting their local child care resource and referral.

“This is a wonderful program. I had a tough time sending my child to day-care and they made the process a lot easier. It was a little overwhelming and I didn't know where to begin looking. I would recommend this program to any one of my friends.”

— Anonymous Parent, 2010 Survey

Affordability for Families

How much does child care cost in my community?

Countywide, the annual median household income in 2009 was **\$47,805**. 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	2009 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2009 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$10,556	22%
Toddler	\$8,736	18%
Preschool	\$7,800	16%
School Age	\$2,912	6%
Family Child Care	2009 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2009 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$9,100	19%
Toddler	\$8,814	18%
Preschool	\$7,540	16%
School Age	\$3,458	7%
Four-year Public University	2009 Annual Cost for 1 Student	% of 2009 Med. Household Inc.
Student at WSU	\$11,700	24%

While the median cost of family child care can be up to 16% less than the cost of care in a center, child care continues to represent a substantial expense for families. The cost of full-time care for an infant represents 19% to 22% of the county's 2009 median household income. Care for an infant and preschool child would represent 35% to 38% of the median income, which exceeds the annual cost of tuition for a student at a 4-year public university.

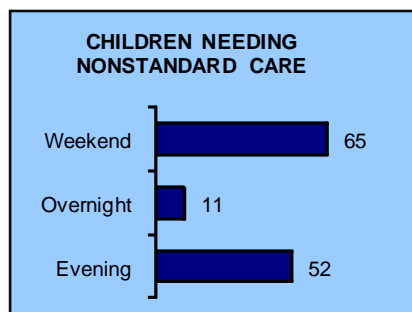
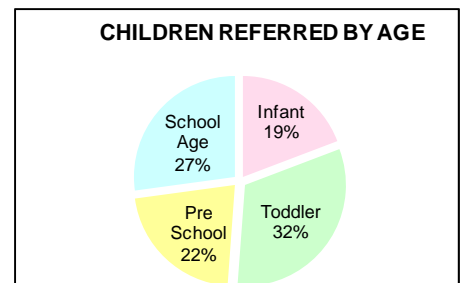
Families Using CCR&R Services

Who are families that call the CCR&R Line?

In 2009, **531** families received referrals. A majority (59%) of the families served were low-income. Slightly fewer (55%) of the families were headed by single parents.

What ages of children are referred?

Even though the largest population of children *eligible* for licensed care are school-age (5-12 years old), nearly three-quarters (73%) of the children referred are birth through four years old.



How many children need non-standard care?

There were **128** requests for referrals to licensed facilities offering non-standard hour care. Just over half (51%) were for weekend care, and 40% were for evening care (extending past 6:30 PM). Few requests (9%) were for overnight care.