

Week of the Young Child

April 12 - 17, 2010



Overview of Early Care and Education in Vermont: Major Indicators of Affordability, Accessibility, and Quality

Basic Demographic Information

- # of children under 15¹
 - 33,014 children aged 0-4
 - 32,899 children aged 5-9
 - 40,434 children aged 10-14
- % of children under five live in poverty: 12%²
- % of children under 6 living with working parents: 68%³
- % of women in the workforce who have children under age 6: 77.8% (tied with Iowa at second highest labor force participation rate of women with children under 6)⁴
- # children in a regulated early childhood or afterschool program: approximately 40,000⁵

Affordability

- # served by Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program: approximately 7,400 children 6 weeks to age 13 (5,200 families)
- Income eligibility limits for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program: 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$44,000 for a family of four). Dr. Dynasaur, Vermont's health insurance program for children, is set at 300% of FPL (approximately \$60,000).
 - FY2009 estimated state median income for 4-person family: \$67,884 (that means half of all Vermonters earn less than that)⁶
- Co-payment as % of household income: National experts recommend that families pay no more than 10% of their household income towards the cost of child care. Vermont has not adopted this approach as a way of limiting families' co-payment. Therefore, many families—particularly middle-income families who receive very little or no financial assistance—end up paying much more than that.

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Accessibility

- “The existing regulated child care system is meeting only 65% of estimated need.”⁷
- While difficult to quantify, we know from experience that there is a large unmet need for:
 - infant/toddlers slots, particularly in higher-quality regulated programs
 - children with developmental delays
 - children with a disability or another special need
- Head Start/Early Head Start: In 2008, “only 39 % of eligible children [nationally] were served by Head Start. For Early Head Start, a mere 2 % of eligible kids were served [nationally].”⁸ Anecdotal evidence suggests that Head Start serves about 30% of eligible children in Vermont.

Quality

- Quality rating: Of the 1,798 regulated early childhood and afterschool programs, only 234 (13%) have a 4 or 5 STARS rating. Since 1,381 (76%) are unrated, it is difficult to assess the quality of those programs.⁹
- Program oversight
 - While “...Vermont is ranked number 4 [in the nation] for the strength of its child care regulations,” it is ranked 44th for its “..ability to provide adequate oversight to child care programs, including routine inspections.”¹⁰
 - Licensor caseload: Recommended licensor caseload is 1:50 (one licensor/50 programs. Vermont’s licensor caseload: 1:199 (1:319 when legally exempt providers are included).¹¹

Endnotes

¹ National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC), *State Profile*. < <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/statedata/statepro/display.cfm?state=Vermont> > 24 March 2010.

² Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009 Kids Count, Vermont Profile, p. 110.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Institute for Women’s Policy Research, *Labor Force Participation Rates for Women With Children*, 2008.

⁵ Child Care Advisory Board, *2010 Legislative Report* <http://www.vermontccab.org/pdf/ccab_leg_rept_10.pdf> p. 1.

⁶ Administration for Children and Families, *Estimated State Media Income, By Family Size and By State for FY2009*, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/SMI75FY09.pdf>, 24 March 2010.

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⁷ Windham Child Care Association and the Peace and Justice Center, *The Economic Impact of Vermont's Child Care Industry*, June 2002, pg. 5. This was the last time that a systematic analysis of capacity vs. estimated need was done. While a report published in 2003 by the Child Care Services Division entitled "Child Care Programs in Vermont: A Survey of Market Rates and Capacity" contains more up-to-date data, the report did not provide a comparable figure.

⁸ Senator Bernie Sanders, *Newsroom (March 16, 2009)*.

<<http://sanders.senate.gov/newsroom/news/?id=b87d2638-2bc2-43ec-9d3c-58a51a0e31b5>> 24 March 2010.

⁹ Child Care Advisory Board, *2010 Legislative Report*

<http://www.vermontccab.org/pdf/ccab_leg_rept_10.pdf> p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pg. 2

¹¹ *Ibid*.

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