

Oklahoma Child Care  
RESOURCE & REFERRAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

2008

# STATE SUMMARY

OKLAHOMA CHILD CARE & EARLY EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

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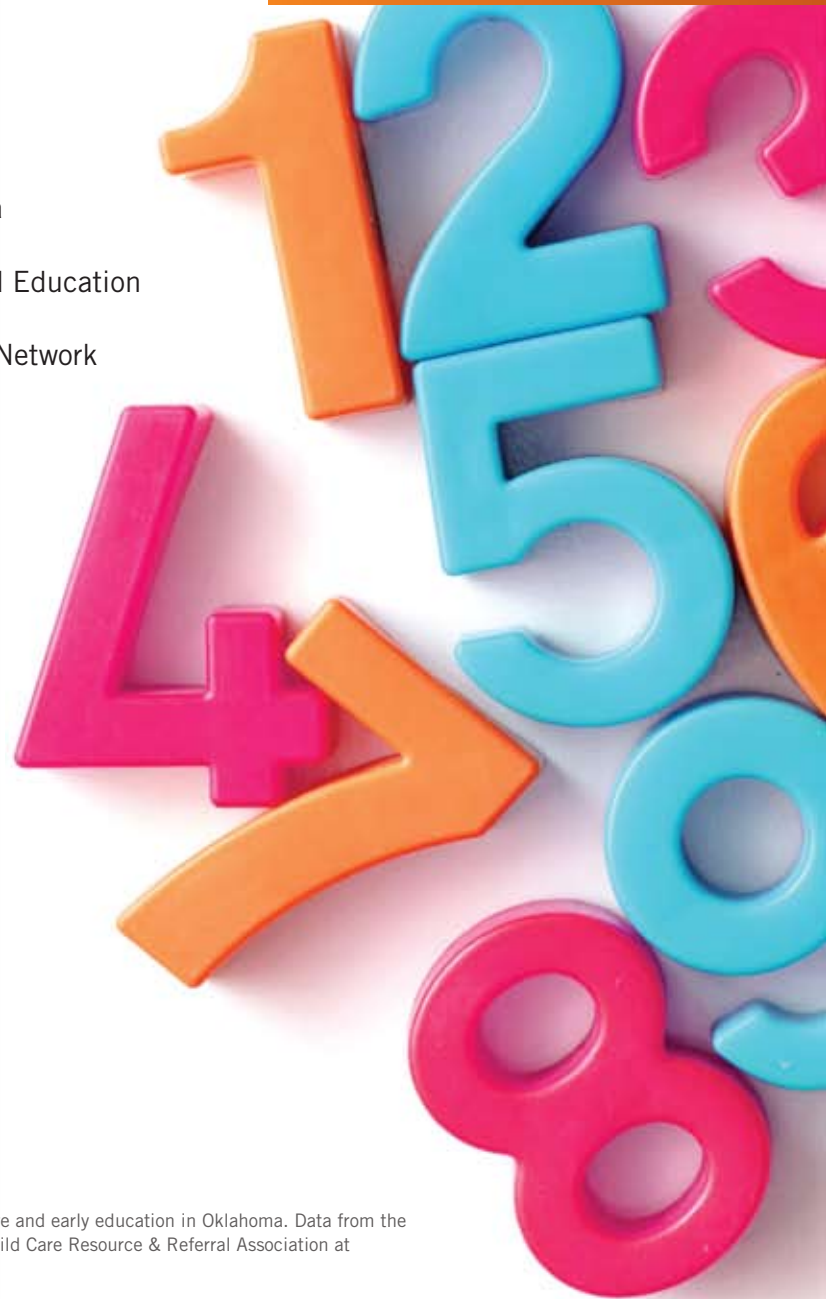
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TO VIEW THE COMPLETE  
COUNTY DATA PROFILES  
AND DATA TABLES:  
[okchildcareportfolio.org](http://okchildcareportfolio.org)



*2008 Oklahoma Child Care & Early Education Portfolio*

A publication reporting on the quality, affordability and availability of child care and early education in Oklahoma. Data from the Oklahoma Child Care Portfolio is included on the website for the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association at [www.okchildcareportfolio.org](http://www.okchildcareportfolio.org)

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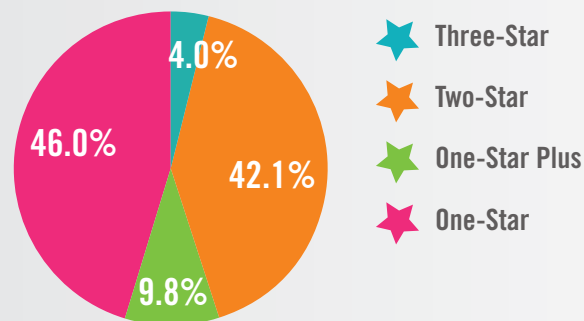
## NEED

### Children Needing Care while Parents Work (2006 Data)

Age	Child Population	Children with Working Parents	
	NUMBER	NUMBER	PERCENT
0-5	304,136	177,188	58.3%
6-12	335,300	227,543	67.9%
0-12	639,436	404,731	63.3%

## QUALITY

### Star Ratings for Child Care Facilities



Average Hourly Starting Wage for Providers in Child Care Centers: **\$6.85**

Turnover Rate for Providers in Child Care Centers: **36.7%**

**91.8% of children** receiving DHS subsidies received child care in 2- or 3-star facilities.

## AVAILABILITY

### Licensed Child Care Capacity

Type of Facility	Number of Facilities	Number of Spaces	Percent w/Waiting List
Family Child Care Homes	2,968	26,242	51.9%
Child Care Centers	1,943	119,661	68.3%
<i>Non-Head Start Centers</i>	1,523	102,736	
<i>Head Start Centers</i>	420	16,925	
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	<b>4,911</b>	<b>145,903</b>	<b>58.3%</b>

# AFFORDABILITY

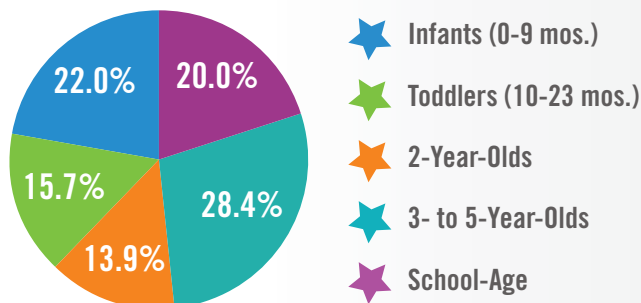
Average Costs of Child Care in Oklahoma (dollars per week)

Type of Facility	0–1 yr	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4–5 yr	Kinder-garten	School Age
Child Care Centers	\$101.58	\$96.12	\$89.35	\$85.20	\$79.15	\$71.67	\$68.62
Family Child Care Homes	\$97.53	\$94.91	\$89.27	\$86.03	\$82.67	\$78.77	\$75.42

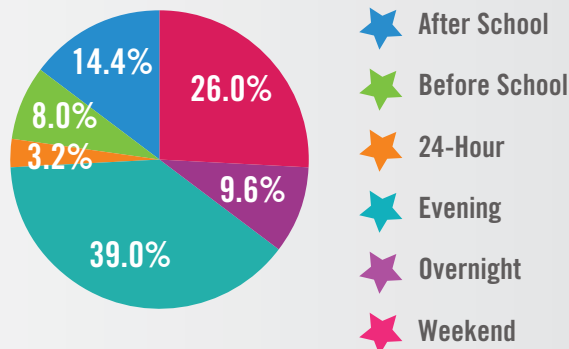
10.7% of children whose parents work receive subsidized child care.

# REQUESTS TO R&R

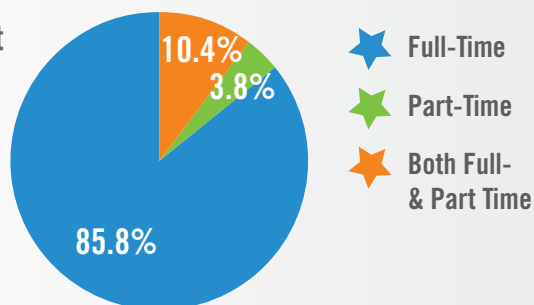
Ages for Whom Care is Sought



Non-Traditional Schedules Sought



Amount of Care Sought



# EARLY EDUCATION

	Pre-Kindergarten (4-Year-Olds)		Kindergarten (5-Year-Olds)	
	1/2 DAY	FULL DAY	1/2 DAY	FULL DAY
# Programs	373	463	185	758
Enrollment	17,413	17,039	9,995	39,449

69.5% of 4-year-olds are enrolled in a full- or part-day Pre-K program.

98.7% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in a full- or part-day Kindergarten program.

**The 2008 Oklahoma Child Care Portfolio is the third biennial compilation of data and information about how Oklahoma is caring for its youngest residents.**

The project reports and analyzes Oklahoma licensed child care statistics, by age group, to allow the assessment of child care supply, demand, quality, cost-per-child, and to explore the economic factors that impact the status of child care in the state. In addition to licensed child care providers, the Portfolio also addresses programs including Head Start and public school kindergarten and pre-kindergarten, which sometimes collaborate with child care providers to deliver the best possible early care and education to Oklahoma families.

The lead organization for the project is the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association, a private, not-for-profit corporation that contracts with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Child Care Services (OKDHS-OCCS) to guide and administer the statewide network of resource and referral agencies. The Association:

- helps parents find quality care that meets their needs and helps those eligible to locate and apply for assistance in paying for care
- assists child care providers in their efforts to offer age-appropriate learning experiences in a healthy, safe environment that meets the OKDHS licensing

requirements, including training, technical assistance and consultation

- provides information to enable policy-makers and community members to advocate effectively for continuous improvements in Oklahoma's child care system

In the State of Oklahoma, child care must generally be licensed by OKDHS, unless it

- is provided by a relative of the child or by a nanny or housekeeper in the child's own home
- operates 15 hours or less per week
- takes children who attend on a drop-in basis while parents are nearby in the same building
- consists of informal arrangements which parents make with friends or neighbors to care for their children once in a while

For complete information on the Oklahoma Child Care Facilities Licensing Act—its requirements, enforcement and exemptions—please contact the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

For the most part, the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association concerns itself with licensed child care. However, some tribal resource and referral agencies also serve relative providers who are exempt from licensing requirements.

The 2008 Portfolio particularly examines the quality of licensed care in Oklahoma.

What determines quality of care? While definitions and assessments tend to be subjective, the Association and OKDHS have traditionally focused upon the importance of early learning environments, including more highly qualified and educated staff; small child to teacher ratios; access to developmental toys, games, books and crafts; and communication with, and involvement of, parents—all of which must exist within the context of safe, sanitary and healthy facilities that consistently maintain adequate records and documentation. ★



**Licensed child care in Oklahoma, often cited nationally for its ground-breaking incentives for early education,** found itself under a microscope in 2007 and 2008, after several events captured the attention of parents, media, legislators and advocates. Incidents of child injury or death while in licensed care galvanized the state's focus on the entire system, hastening the expansion of background investigations of child care workers, the specification of enforcement options when licensing conditions are violated, and the consideration of provider liability insurance issues.

While the tragic events were not representative of the experience of the thousands of Oklahoma children in safe, nurturing child care environments, Oklahoma recognized that even one death or injury was intolerable. The state's child care community, along with invited national experts, Judy Collins and Lee Kreader, rapidly swung into deliberative and informed discussions that resulted in new legislation to create stronger standards.

Because a death occurred in a facility that had been targeted for forced closure, HB 2643, authored by State Representative Ron Peters, was enacted and signed by Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry on June 2, 2008. The Act, which amended and revised the existing Child Care Facilities Licensing Act, set forth the following policies:

- Creates term limits for Child Care Advisory Committee members;
- Prohibits persons under 18 from being left alone with children;
- Compels OKDHS to search the Oklahoma State Courts Network website regarding new employees, persons over 18 residing in a child care facility, and applicants for licensure;
- Requires providers to search the Child Care Worker Registry (effective July 1, 2010) before employing a worker or allowing a person over age 18 to reside in a child care facility;
- Requires background checks from previous states of residence for persons living in Oklahoma fewer than three years;

- Prohibits OKDHS from issuing a permit or license until certain records searches and trainings are completed;
- Compels OKDHS to provide additional information to providers regarding complaints;
- Compels OKDHS to make certain notifications upon revocation or denial of a license;
- Provides OKDHS with authority to issue an emergency order for unlicensed facilities;

**deliberative  
and informed  
discussions...  
resulted in new  
legislation...**

- Compels OKDHS to establish a review process for emergency orders;
- Authorizes a CLEET-certified officer to issue a citation and fine for unlicensed care, or for continuing to operate after a provider's license has been revoked or denied;
- Establishes the Child Care Worker Registry (effective July 1, 2010), including processes for recording persons who have confirmed cases of abuse or neglect in a child care facility, have had their license revoked or denied, or who have certain criminal histories;
- Creates a development fund for quality of care

In addition, Oklahoma passed HB 2863, requiring that licensed child care facilities notify OKDHS, as well as every parent, regarding the status of their liability insurance. Parents are now able to make more informed decisions about using particular providers. ★

## OVERSIGHT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Even before the 2008 legislative actions and policies were developed, Oklahoma ranked first in the nation in a broad study<sup>1</sup> of standards, policies and oversight of child care in small family homes. Conducted in March 2007 by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies—the premier advocacy group for child care in the U.S.—the state-by-state study was released in January, 2008.

In its news release, NACCRRA scored Oklahoma with 105 out of a possible 140 points (75 percent) based upon 14 factors including a licensing requirement for providers caring for even one unrelated child; pre-licensing inspections; execution of no-notice monitoring visits after licensing and when complaints have been filed; criminal background investigations of child care workers; access to learning materials; and training/educational requirements for providers. By comparison, the national average score was 59 percent, with 15 states scoring zero.

Although our state was deemed better than all others, NACCRRA's report noted that a score of 75 percent left much room for improvement. Because “care offered in a family child care home is one of the largest segments of the child care industry,” it is imperative that these environments be safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate. This can only be assured with adequate state licensing requirements, continual monitoring and quick, effective enforcement actions when problems are discovered. NACCRRA also urged enactment of federal regulations establishing licensing requirements and standards for all states regarding family child care homes.

## OVERSIGHT OF CHILD CARE CENTERS

In a report<sup>2</sup> issued in January 2007, NACCRRA reviewed states' policies, standards and oversight of child care centers, ranking Oklahoma fifth among the 50 states (or sixth when the

Department of Defense's independent system is included in first place). Earning 85 out of a possible 150 points, Oklahoma beat the national average of only 70 points based on 15 separate criteria, ten of which relate to basic state standards, with the other five relating to oversight of compliance with the standards.

Although 56.7 percent leaves much to be desired, Oklahoma's rank, when compared with the other 45 states, reflects progressive leadership and commitment to improving the quality of care for its children.

## THE COST OF CHILD CARE

In a third NACCRRA study, Oklahoma ranked in the middle of states with respect to affordability of child care. Reflecting 2007 data and released in January, 2008, the report<sup>3</sup> surveyed the costs of caring for infants, four-year-olds and school-age children—in centers and family care homes—in every state.

Oklahoma's mid-position in the rankings is significant in light of its relatively high rank in standards, policies and oversight, as higher standards and quality inevitably lead to higher prices. Despite the demand for high quality, this state still offers less expensive child care than most, possibly because of its lower cost of living.

According to the report, 2007 national prices of full-time care in a center ranged as high as \$14,591 a year for an infant, \$10,787 for a 4-year-old, and \$8,600 a year for a school-age child. In family child care homes, full-time care ran as much as \$9,630 for an infant, \$9,164 for a 4-year-old, and \$6,678 for a school-age child.

By contrast, Oklahoma's prices for full-time care in a child care center averaged \$6,219 per year for an infant, \$5,277 for a four-year-old and \$3,915 for a school-age child. In family child care homes its average prices were: \$5,392 for an infant, \$4,439 for a 4-year-old, and \$3,901 for a school-age child.

<sup>1</sup>*Leaving Children to Chance: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Standards and Oversight of Small Family Child Care Homes.* For the full report, see: [http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent\\_reports/fcc\\_report.php](http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent_reports/fcc_report.php)

<sup>2</sup>*We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight.* For the full report, see: [http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent\\_reports/scorecard.php](http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent_reports/scorecard.php)

<sup>3</sup>*Parents and the High Price of Child Care: 2008 Update.* For the full report, see [http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent\\_reports/#price\\_report2008](http://www.naccrra.org/policy/recent_reports/#price_report2008)



Although Oklahoma's prices may appear low when compared with, say, those of New York, it must be noted that median household incomes are far lower in Oklahoma than in New York. In fact, Oklahoma's median household income in 2007 ranked 43rd in the nation in the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (see [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

According to NACCRRRA's report, an Oklahoma family with one infant in care at a center pays nearly the equivalent of a month's rent (\$518/month for child care vs \$580/month for rent). A family with two children in care at a center pays almost as much for child care (\$958/month, on average) as for their home mortgage payment (\$971 being the median).

From another perspective, care in a center for an Oklahoma infant costs more per year than the total of one year's fees and tuition at a public college (\$6,219 vs \$4,993).

Even with a relatively low cost of living and a mid-range average cost for licensed care, Oklahoma parents find child care is one of their largest budget items; and for single parents the price is too high without the aid of subsidies. In NACCRRRA's report, Oklahoma ranked 24th among states in affordability for single-earner families. ★

## first among states in oversight of family child care homes



**Some 11 million U.S. children under age five spend time in some form of child care** every week

while their parents work. On average, that time comes to 36 hours a week.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, 64 percent of American mothers of children under six years old are in the workforce.

All parents need child care at some point, if only to go to the grocery store. In Oklahoma, as in the rest of the nation, child care is a necessity for families who need two incomes in order to make ends meet, as well as for single parents working to support their children. Of Oklahoma's 927,086 families, 15 percent (138,643) are headed by a single parent.<sup>2</sup>

In all, over 177,000 (58.3 percent) of our children under six need care because both parents work or because a single head-of-household parent works. In addition, almost 375,000 (68.8 percent) of Oklahoma's children aged six to 17 live in families where all parents work. These children may need care before and/or after school and during holidays and breaks from school.<sup>3</sup>

It is a fact of life that working parents must find care arrangements for their children during at least part of the week. When a child regularly

spends time with a non-relative caregiver, the provider must be licensed and should furnish a safe and educational environment. The more time spent with a non-parental caregiver, the greater the impact of the caregiver on the child's development.

In 2007, the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association and Smart Start Oklahoma commissioned a study by the Bureau of Social Research at Oklahoma State University. A telephone survey questionnaire was constructed and trained research assistants interviewed 1,385 parents of children under six across the state.

When Oklahoma parents were asked to select the criteria of child care that mattered most to them, 46.1 percent said a safe, healthy environment



**TABLE 1: Children Needing Care while Parents Work (2006 Data)**

Age	Child Population	Children with Working Parents	
	NUMBER	NUMBER	PERCENT
0-5	304,136	177,188	58.3%
6-12	335,300	227,543	67.9%
0-12	639,436	404,731	63.3%

<sup>1</sup>Child Care in America: State Fact Sheets. NACCRRA. For full report, see: <http://www.naccrra.org/policy/docs/childcareinamericafactsheet.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>2008 Child Care in the State of Oklahoma. NACCRRA. For full fact sheet, see <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/data/docs/OK.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>2006 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=04000US40&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_DP3&-context=adp&-ds\\_name=&-tree\\_id=306&-lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US40&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_DP3&-context=adp&-ds_name=&-tree_id=306&-lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=)

<sup>4</sup>2008 Child Care in the State of Oklahoma. NACCRRA. <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/data/docs/OK.pdf>

was most important, followed by a loving environment (29.7 percent). Nearly 15 percent (14.2%) highly valued a learning environment.

To assist parents in finding a child care provider that meets their needs, the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association maintains a presence in all 77 counties to offer referrals, along with consumer education that helps families make knowledgeable selections. From their personal, telephone and electronic contacts with parents who seek child care, the community agencies maintain records about what types of child care parents need. Of those who requested referrals in FY2008, 85 percent needed full-time care for their children. Over half (51.6 percent) needed care for their infant or toddler, while another 28 percent needed care for a pre-school-aged child. Another eight percent needed care before and/or after school for their school-aged child.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the typical Monday through Friday daytime work schedule, many parents need

care while they work non-traditional shifts at night and on weekends. Thirty-seven percent of parents who sought assistance finding child care needed an atypical schedule.

There is a wide disparity in levels of need from county to county in our state. In four counties, more than 70 percent of children under 13 live with a single working parent or with two parents who both work. Two more counties approach that level closely, with 69.1 percent.

Single working parents are perhaps the group with the most urgent need for child care. In Oklahoma County, 26.9 percent of children under 13 live with a single parent in the workforce. Greer and McCurtain Counties also have high numbers, with 25.7 percent and 25.0 percent, respectively. ✨

**TABLE 2: Counties with Greatest Need (children under 13 with working parents)**

County	Percent
Woods	75.1%
Ellis	70.9%
Grant	70.6%
Alfalfa	70.1%
Roger Mills	69.1%
Canadian	69.1%

**TABLE 3: Counties with Least Need (children under 13 with working parents)**

County	Percent
Latimer	56.3%
Okfuskee	56.3%
Tillman	56.7%
Johnston	56.8%

When parents need care for their children while they work or go to school, most have a number of options, including relative care, a family child care home, a large child care center, a local Head Start center or even a nanny or housekeeper who will provide care in the child’s own home. Some will turn to care by a friend or neighbor—which may or may not be a legal option.

**RELATIVE CARE**

If they have extended family members available and willing to care for their child, parents may prefer relative care over other options, primarily because they are familiar with the relative and share common values, and because the care may be more affordable. Even the most loving aunt, uncle or grandparent may not be qualified to provide an age-appropriate learning environment or opportunities for the child to interact with peers. On the other hand, this type of care can build and strengthen generational ties and cultural affiliations. Unfortunately, in our modern, mobile society, extended family members may not live nearby, or may, themselves, be employed outside the home. Because relative care is not licensed, no records are available to indicate how many parents choose this option.

**FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR CARE**

In Oklahoma, a friend or neighbor who cares for an unrelated child more than 15 hours per week must be licensed by OKDHS. Because many who provide this type of care are not licensed, parents need to be advised of the potential hazards of this type of arrangement. Without training, inspections and standards to meet, the friend or neighbor may not be able to provide the basics of health and

safety. Financial considerations may entice a parent to choose an unlicensed home that is operating illegally, but this places the entire responsibility for the child’s health, safety and development of the child on the parent’s shoulders.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME**

When a provider cares for one or more unrelated children in his or her own home, the provider is regulated as a family child care home. Many parents prefer this type of small, home-like setting for their child. The number of children allowable in a home can vary from one to as many as twelve in a large family child care home. The caregiver to child ratio is generally smaller than in a center and depends upon the mix of ages in the home. To be legal, all such homes must be licensed and are subject to periodic unannounced inspections. Throughout Oklahoma, there are 2,968 licensed family child care homes, making 26,242 spaces available statewide.

**CHILD CARE CENTER**

A child care center typically offers more structured activities, a greater variety of learning materials and equipment, more children of like ages and multiple caregivers. They are typically more costly to operate and, therefore, must charge higher fees. Many parents prefer this type of setting precisely because it is larger and offers a wider range of services. In Oklahoma, there are 1,786 licensed child care centers (exclusive of Head Start Centers), offering a total of 111,383 spaces.

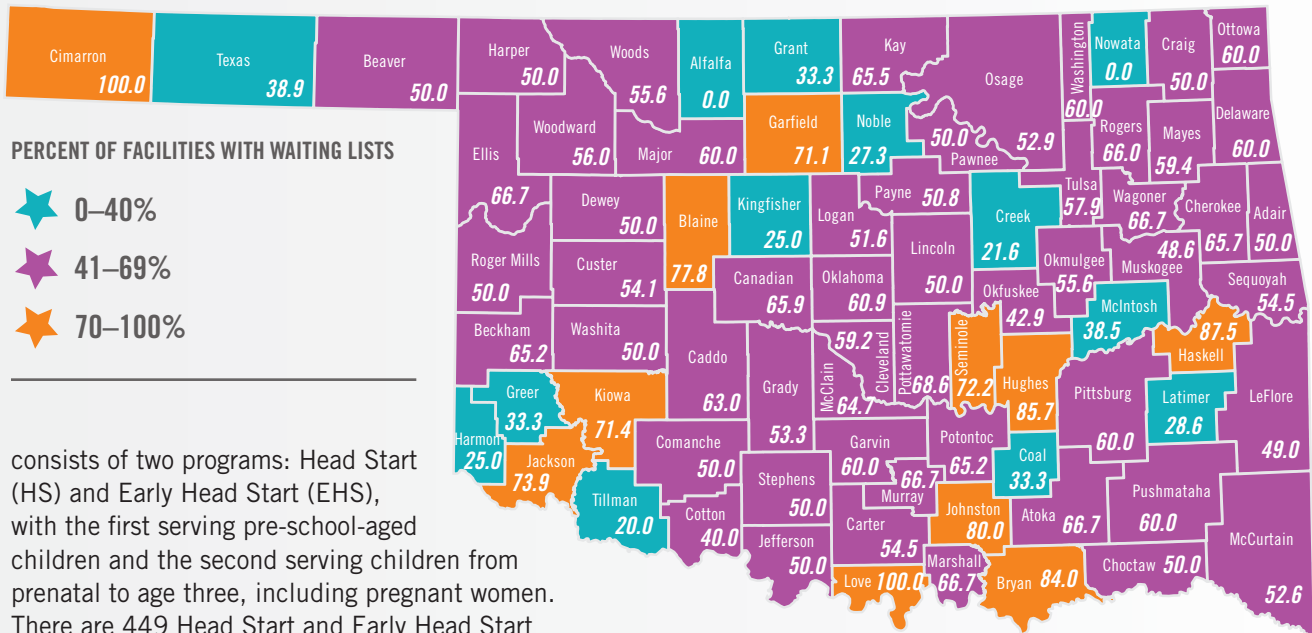
**HEAD START CENTER**

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive child development program serving low-income children and their families. Head Start actually

**TABLE 4: Licensed Child Care Capacity**

Type of Facility	Number of Facilities	Number of Spaces	Percent w/Waiting List
Family Child Care Homes	2,968	26,242	51.9%
Child Care Centers	1,943	119,661	68.3%
<i>Non-Head Start Centers</i>	1,523	102,736	
<i>Head Start Centers</i>	420	16,925	
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	<b>4,911</b>	<b>145,903</b>	<b>58.3%</b>

## MAP 1: Percentage of Facilities with Waiting Lists by County



consists of two programs: Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS), with the first serving pre-school-aged children and the second serving children from prenatal to age three, including pregnant women. There are 449 Head Start and Early Head Start centers in Oklahoma, for a total of 16,925 slots. To be eligible for a Head Start or Early Head Start placement, a family’s income must be at or below the Federal Poverty Level (for 2008, that translates to \$21,200 for a family of four). Nearly 11 percent of all licensed care slots in Oklahoma are in Head Start or Early Head Start facilities.

### VARIATIONS IN AVAILABILITY

Statewide, 58.3 percent of all licensed facilities reported waiting lists of children for whom they had no space. Geographically, child care availability varies considerably from county to county. In Cimarron and Love Counties, for example, all facilities that reported had waiting lists, while in Bryan, Haskell, Hughes and Johnston Counties from 80 to 87.5 percent of facilities reported waiting lists. At the other end of the spectrum, Nowata and Alfalfa Counties had no facilities reporting waiting lists; and in Creek, Kingfisher, Latimer and Noble Counties, fewer than 29 percent of facilities reported waiting lists.

Demand exceeds supply in certain requested hours of child care, too. In Fiscal Year 2008, more than one-third (4,030) of all parental requests for child care referrals fielded by Oklahoma’s resource and referral agencies concerned care during non-traditional times, such as evenings (1,570), overnight hours (385), or weekends (1,046). Because of the nature of employment in Oklahoma, the demand for child care during swing and night shifts will no doubt continue to present a challenge to both parents and providers.

While slots for infants have increased, demand continues to run high, constituting over 22 percent of requests to resource and referral agencies. Caring for infants requires more staff, as well as more specialized supplies and equipment. Because of these additional expenses, many facilities choose not to serve infants. The Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association has, since 2006, offered an array of technical services and support systems to help providers. Infant Toddler Enhancement Programs in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa areas also offer assistance with high-quality care for infants.

Seventy-six percent of all licensed child care spaces in Oklahoma are available for families who need subsidies in order to pay for care, and over 31 percent of all Oklahoma children in licensed care receive subsidies. Furthermore, over 74 percent of spaces in two-star facilities are occupied by subsidized children, as are nearly 18 percent of spaces in three-star facilities. The large number of subsidized spaces in high-quality facilities may be attributable to Oklahoma’s groundbreaking incentive program for providers, Reaching for the Stars, since higher star ratings can mean higher subsidy reimbursements as providers acquire more professional development, create more stimulating learning environments and involve parents in their children’s care. ★

**Child care is expensive. In fact, care for children whose parents work full time represents** a substantial family budget item, often rivaling housing costs. Fees vary widely, depending on the child care setting; the age of the child; the geographic location of the facility; the care schedule used; and the quality of care (as indicated by the provider’s level of professional development, the quality of the learning environment and the degree to which parents are involved in their children’s care).

**CHILDREN UNDER TWO**

Care for an infant (under one year old) is the most costly category, followed closely by care for children under two. In Oklahoma, full-time care for an infant averages \$101.58 per week in a child care center. Care for an infant averages \$97.53 per week statewide in a family child care home.

For a child older than 12 months but younger than 24 months, the state average for a center is \$96.12 per week. The state’s average cost for a child this age in a family child care home is \$94.91 per week. Costs may vary from county to county.

**OLDER CHILDREN**

Costs drop as children’s ages increase, largely because staff-to-child ratios can be higher with older children. Care for a school-aged child averages \$68.62 per week for care in a center statewide and \$75.42 per week for care in a family home. From ages 0-3, rates are generally higher in a center. Beginning with ages four and five, however, a family home setting is generally more expensive.

**CHILD CARE COSTS AND FAMILY INCOME**

Assuming that a family needs care for an infant in a child care center for 46 weeks (52 weeks minus six weeks for maternity leave) during its first year of life, the fees could run over \$4,672, using the statewide average from OKDHS data. If the infant is placed in a family home, the cost can be \$4,586 that first year.

If a single mother has two children, ages 2 and 6, in a center for 52 weeks of care, her expenses will come to \$8,373. An American Communities Survey of 2006 reported the median annual family income of single-parent household headed by a female with children under 18 years of age is \$18,413.<sup>1</sup> To work full time and have her children in licensed care, this mother would have to spend over 45 percent of her gross income on child care.

A study performed in 2002 calculated that a single parent with one school-aged child and one preschooler needed a wage of \$16.66 per hour (\$34,653/year) to be self-sufficient in Oklahoma City.<sup>2</sup> With the increase in costs of basic living expenses in the years since then, that self-sufficiency floor would be even higher today.

Even for a family of four with both parents working and earning the Oklahoma median income of \$58,769, the price of care for two children, ages two and six, is more than 14 percent of their before-tax income, compared with under 20 percent for the average mortgage payment.

**CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES**

For most single parents, as well as some working couples, licensed child care is not possible without a state or tribal subsidy. And yet, little more than ten percent of Oklahoma’s children whose parents work utilize such a subsidy.

**TABLE 5: Average Costs of Child Care in Oklahoma (dollars per week)**

Type of Facility	0–1 yr	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4–5 yr	Kinder-garten	School Age
Child Care Centers	\$101.58	\$96.12	\$89.35	\$85.20	\$79.15	\$71.67	\$68.62
Family Child Care Homes	\$97.53	\$94.91	\$89.27	\$86.03	\$82.67	\$78.77	\$75.42

<sup>1</sup>2006 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

<sup>2</sup>Diana Pearce, PhD, with Jennifer Brooks: *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Oklahoma, Community Action Project of Tulsa County, 2008.* <http://www.captc.org/pubpol/SSS/okFullReport.pdf>

**TABLE 6: Licensed Capacity Accepting Subsidies**

Type of Facility	Accept Subsidies (number/percent)	Spaces w/Subsidies (number/percent)
Family Child Care Homes	2,296 / 77.4%	21,177 / 80.7%
Child Care Centers	1,260 / 70.5%	83,335 / 74.8%
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	<b>3,556 / 74.8%</b>	<b>104,512 / 75.9%</b>

McClain and McCurtain Counties have the largest percentages of children whose care is subsidized, at 23.6 percent and 23.8 percent, respectively. Oklahoma County follows at a distance, with 16.8 percent.

Alfalfa, Beaver, Cimarron, Dewey, Ellis, Major and Washita Counties have fewer than one percent of their children in subsidized care.

**WHEN CHILD CARE IS OUT OF REACH**

Is child care in Oklahoma affordable? For many people in the state the answer is no. A single

parent earning minimum wage for 40 hours per week, will make only \$216 per week before taxes. With an infant in a child care center, almost half of that parent's pre-tax income will go for child care.

Parents cope in a variety of ways. Some arrange their work schedules in alternate shifts, allowing one parent to be home with the children while the other works. Some have an extended family member available. Too many must turn to unlicensed, sub-standard care arrangements or even leave their children unattended at too early an age. ✨

**TABLE 7: Subsidy Eligibility (as of 6/1/2008)**

Working or in school. Contact Local DHS office. Co-payments dependent on income level.

Children in Care	Monthly Gross Income	Annual Gross Income
1 Child	0-\$2,245 / mo.	0-\$29,100 / yr.
2 Children	0-\$2,925 / mo.	0-\$35,100 / yr.
3 or more Children	0-\$3,625 / mo.	0-\$43,500 / yr.

**TABLE 8: Self-Sufficiency Income in Oklahoma (2002)**

Income from one full-time minimum-wage job\* provides only **40.7%** of the amount needed for a **single parent with one infant** to live self-sufficiently in an average **metropolitan** county in Oklahoma.

Income from one full-time minimum-wage job\* provides only **53.0%** of the amount needed for a **single parent with one infant** to live self-sufficiently in an average **non-metropolitan** county in Oklahoma.

Income from one full-time minimum-wage job\* provides only **52.3%** of the amount needed for each of **two parents with one infant and one preschooler** to live self-sufficiently in an average **metropolitan** county in Oklahoma.

Income from one full-time minimum-wage job\* provides only **52.3%** of the amount needed for each of **two parents with one infant and one preschooler** to live self-sufficiently in an average **non-metropolitan** county in Oklahoma.

\*\$5.15 per hour until July 24, 2007.

**In some parts of the U.S., quality of care is measured by the safety and cleanliness of the child care setting,**

the provision of nutritious meals and snacks, low staff to child ratios, the enforcement of immunization requirements and the appearance of caring attitudes and behaviors from attending child care workers. In Oklahoma, however, these factors are viewed as minimum requirements for obtaining and maintaining state licenses.

Not only does this state focus on early education, but it also provides incentives for child care providers to obtain continuing professional development, offer age-appropriate learning activities, and involve parents in their children's care. Furthermore, Oklahoma has programs in place to improve services to infants and toddlers, beyond basic care-taking, and to provide connections for children with health issues to appropriate state services. In addition, the state supports the education of parents about quality as they select child care for their families.

**REACHING FOR THE STARS**

Since February 1998, Oklahoma has used a tiered licensing program aimed at improving child care beyond the basic licensing criteria, especially for children receiving state-subsidized care. The program involves four distinct levels, designated by "stars," including one-star—the basic licensing level; one-star plus—in which a provider has up to two years to progress toward two stars; two-star—in which a facility either attains national accreditation or fully meets

additional quality criteria including additional provider training, reading to children daily, parental involvement and program assessment; and three-star—in which a provider fully meets all the enhanced quality criteria and achieves national accreditation.

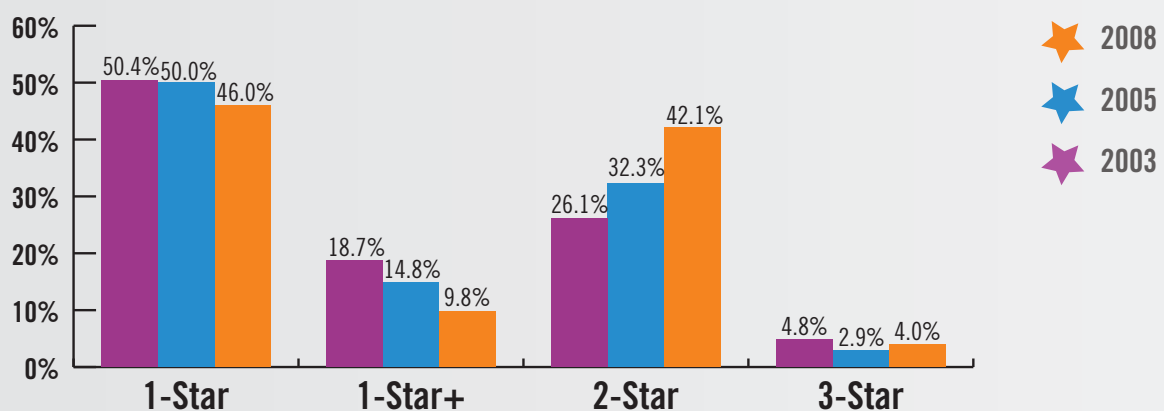
Although participation beyond the one-star tier is voluntary, subsidy reimbursement rates are tied to providers' star ratings, encouraging them to aspire to enhanced quality of care.

By Fiscal Year 2008, less than half (46.0 percent) of all Oklahoma child care facilities and less than one-third (32.3 percent) of all licensed spaces were still at the basic one-star level. Nearly ten percent of facilities (3.4 percent of spaces) were in the transitional one-star plus tier, while another 42.1 percent (52.9 percent of spaces) had attained the full two-star tier. Four percent of facilities (11.3 percent of spaces) had achieved the rigorous three-star level, signifying both national accreditation and the incorporation of all the state's enhanced quality criteria.

While these statewide statistics look good, they must be put into temporal and geographic context:

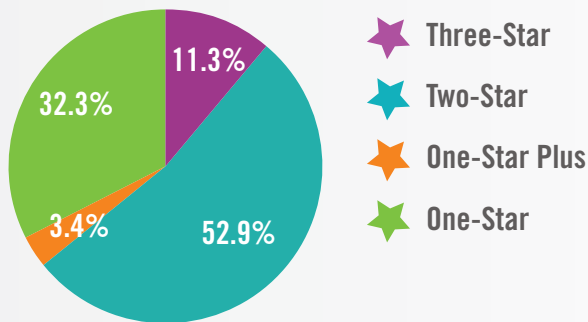
- Time-wise, the percentage of two-star facilities has increased from 32.3 percent to 42.1 since 2005, while the percentage of three-star facilities has increased from 2.9 percent to 4.0 percent during the same time period. The percentage of one-star and one-star plus facilities, on the other hand, has declined from 64.8 percent in 2005 to 55.8 percent in 2008.

**TABLE 9: Star Ratings (Quality Indicators) for Child Care Facilities (2003–2008)**





**TABLE 10: Slots by Star Ratings (2008)**



- Geographically, a number of counties are underserved with respect to two- and three-star facilities. While in 17 counties the percentage of two- and three-star facilities is 50 percent or higher (in Pottawatomie County, the percentage is the highest, at 66.7 percent), Alfalfa, Cimarron, Dewey and Ellis Counties have no facilities above the one-star level, while Beaver County has only one facility with a rating of one-star plus and no facilities with two- or three-star ratings. Washita County has one facility rated as two-star, with all the rest being one-star.

Beyond these bare numbers, an objective study reported in 2003 that goals of the program were clearly being met, with environmental quality and sensitivity of caregivers being higher in the higher-rated facilities. This is especially significant for lower-income families whose children are in subsidized care, given that over 91 percent of all slots in two- and three-star facilities are occupied by subsidized children.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

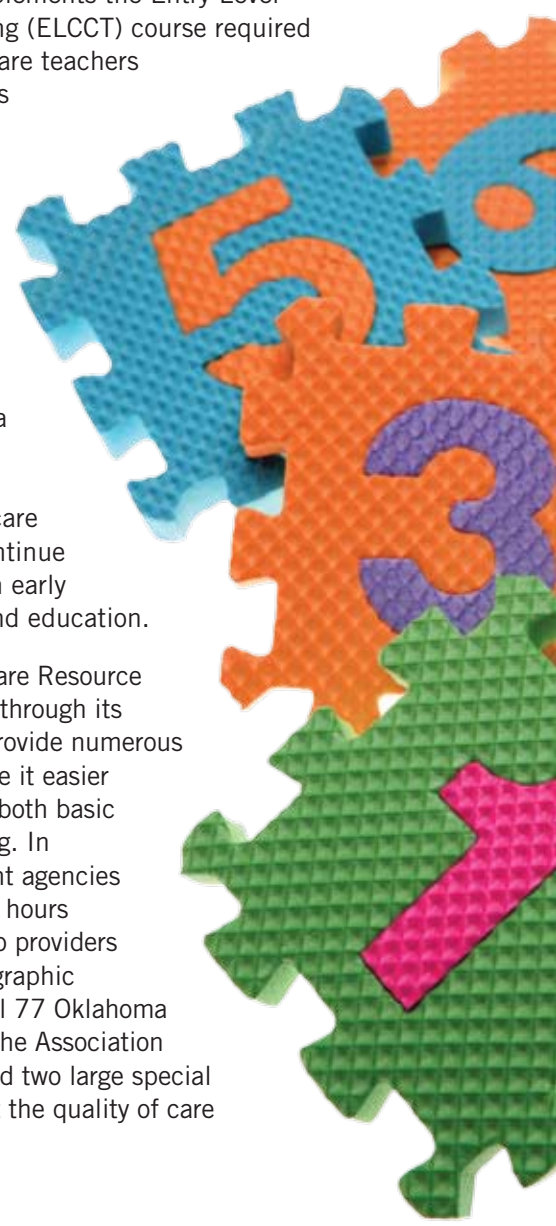
Providers who seek continuing education and training in order to improve the quality of their care have a number of options, from formal course work at Oklahoma's institutions of higher learning, to workshops and conferences within and outside the state, to distance learning opportunities such as videos and printed materials, and membership in professional associations.

The Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, a service of the University of

Oklahoma, is a centralized statewide program that coordinates the training of early childhood professionals, including child care center directors and teachers, as well as family child care providers. Among other functions, the Center:

- Manages the Early Care and Education Professional Development Ladder which tracks the educational progress of directors and teachers
- Implements and maintains the Oklahoma Director's Credential
- Recruits and maintains a registry of educators approved to offer training for child care providers
- Develops and implements the Entry Level Child Care Training (ELCCT) course required of all new child care teachers working at centers
- Offers a variety of training opportunities for child care providers across the state
- Administers the Reward Oklahoma program, which supplements the salaries of child care providers who continue their education in early childhood care and education.

The Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association through its network of agencies, provide numerous opportunities that make it easier for providers to obtain both basic and specialized training. In 2008 alone, these eight agencies administered over 913 hours of classroom training to providers in their respective geographic regions, which cover all 77 Oklahoma counties. In addition, the Association sponsored and executed two large special projects to supplement the quality of care providers can offer.





## INFANT TODDLER SERVICES

In 2008, resource and referral agencies reported that well over half (54 percent) of their requests from parents for child care referrals came from parents seeking care for children under three. From years of scientific research, we know that the majority of vital brain functions are developed—or wired—during these critical years. To improve the availability and quality of care for these youngest children, the Association implemented an Infant Toddler Enhancement Program in 2006 and expanded it in 2007.

Specialized infant/toddler consultants in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas provide a range of free services to help providers deliver high-quality care for children under three. They help locate materials and ideas for activities, advise caregivers on room arrangement, provide six months of intense consulting and technical assistance and

produce a steady stream of newsletter articles to inform caregivers about turning daily care tasks into learning and development activities for their youngest clients.

**in FY 2008, 54%  
requests for child  
care referrals  
were from parents  
seeking care for  
children under age 3**

While any licensed facility may avail itself of some of the specialized services, to enroll in the formal Infant/Toddler Enhancement Program, a facility must already have a one-star plus or two-star rating.

By the end of FY 2008, ten child care programs in the Oklahoma City area—with 168 young children in their care—were taking advantage of the Infant/Toddler Enhancement Program (ITEP), with 37 individual caregivers having received an aggregate of 85 hours of training and 156 hours of hands-on technical assistance. In addition, the specialized consultants provided general assistance to 276 providers in the Oklahoma City area who were not enrolled in ITEP and administered over 52 hours of training and technical assistance to them.

In the same period in the Tulsa area, consultants provided assistance to five enrolled child care programs (a total of 49 staff members serving 143 children), including some 60 hours of technical assistance and over 50 hours of training.

Although the ITEP consultants are located in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas, statewide assistance in providing quality care and education for infants and toddlers is available through local child care consultants in each resource and referral agency and through the state special project coordinator.

### CHILD CARE HEALTH CONSULTATION

To benefit from quality care, a child must be healthy enough to be present, attentive and involved in the learning environment. Furthermore, parents expect their child's care provider to maintain a clean, healthy environment, as indicated by a survey conducted in 2007. Despite licensing requirements, annual basic health and safety training for providers, and at least three OKDHS inspections each year, knowledge about health issues changes rapidly, and both providers and parents have room for improvement in sanitation and illness prevention, medication administration and instilling good health practices in their children.

As another special project, resource and referral agencies in the Tulsa and Oklahoma City regions

hire health care professionals to serve as consultants to providers, parents and children in child care facilities located in those areas. The Health and Safety Enhancement Project (HSEP) provides intensive, hands-on services in assessment, training and technical assistance to enrolled providers, these consultants seek to reduce outbreaks of illness, improve records of immunization, identify children with special health care needs and link them with community resources, and educate parents and children about safe and sanitary practices.

Although any licensed facility may contact a health care consultant for advice, assistance or information, to be eligible for these intensive services, a facility must have earned a rating of one-star plus or two-star.

In FY 2008, the metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City and Tulsa each had ten child care programs enrolled for intensive health care consultant services. In the Oklahoma City area, 120 staff members, caring for 692 children, received a total of 80 training hours and 191 hours of technical assistance. In addition, health care consultants provided 210 hours of general training and technical assistance on health and safety to 530 providers.

In the Tulsa area, 80 provider staff members, caring for 999 children, received nearly 177 hours of intensive services, including 73 hours of training and 104 hours of technical assistance. Another 240 staff members received 46 hours of general assistance involving training and technical assistance.

Although the HSEP consultants are located in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa Metropolitan areas, statewide assistance in providing safe, healthy care for children is available through local child care consultants in each resource and referral agency and through the state special project coordinator. ✨

**Child care providers have a complex, demanding job with relatively low pay.**

From large center directors to owners of small family child care homes, providers struggle to keep costs down and make enough profit to stay in business while meeting the needs of children, parents and licensing officials.

The biggest expense for providers is staff salaries. Since staff-to-child ratios are an important factor in delivering quality care, child care operations, unlike most other businesses, cannot economize by cutting staff and reassigning workload to the remaining employees. As a result, pay for child care workers remains very low, despite rising requirements for education, training, experience and background checks.

The average hourly starting wage for employees in child care centers was only \$6.85 in mid-2007, at a time when the federal minimum wage was \$5.15 per hour. For employees in family child care homes, the average starting wage during the same period was only \$6.06. With the implementation of a new federal minimum schedule (\$6.55 in July 2008 and \$7.25 in July 2009), providers may earn more. In relative terms, however, even the higher rates will be not be sufficient to facilitate staff recruitment and retention.

A full-time child care employee typically works year-round, as opposed to public school teachers, who are paid for a ten-month academic year. Assuming 2,080 hours per year in a year-round occupation, the average child care worker in a center will earn slightly under \$14,250 per year, while the average public school teacher with a bachelors degree earns \$33,040 (2005-2006 school year), plus tangible employment benefits. The child care teacher, then, earns 43 percent of the public school teacher’s pay, for more hours and with fewer—or no—benefits.

Child care teachers, most commonly equipped with only a high school diploma, are encouraged to obtain higher levels of education such as credentials, associates and even bachelors degrees in early childhood development in order to respond appropriately to the children’s needs. Despite the low pay and high demands associated with providing child care, today’s providers are much better trained and educated than their earlier counterparts.

It is no surprise however, that recruitment of competent providers becomes increasingly difficult even as turnover rates soar—to 36.7 percent statewide in 2007. This rate significantly impacts a child’s ability to benefit from a stable relationship with his or her caregiver.

Besides payroll costs, child care providers must budget for the facility and its equipment, for training, for transportation, food, insurance and materials. To make child care more affordable for families, it might be tempting to seek ways of cutting provider costs; but this would negatively affect the safety and quality of the children’s care.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CHILD CARE INDUSTRY IN OKLAHOMA**

The latest formal economic impact study, released in January 2004, was conducted by a research economist at Oklahoma State University’s College of Business Administration and based upon 2003 survey data obtained from the Child Care Division of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

At that time, family child care homes outnumbered child care centers more than two to one. By 2008, family child care homes comprised 57 percent of the state’s licensed provider facilities; but today, as in 2003, child care

**TABLE 11: Provider Salaries (average hourly starting wage)**

Type of Facility	2005	2007
Child Care Centers	\$6.24	\$6.85
Family Child Care Homes		\$6.06

**TABLE 12: Turnover Rates for Providers**

	2005	2007
Turnover Rate	35.1%	36.7%

centers are “the cornerstone of the industry,”<sup>1</sup> caring for nearly 81 percent of the children in licensed care and not in a Head Start program.

The 2003 study identified a total of 6,322 licensed facilities in Oklahoma—nearly twice as many as previously counted in 1990. Today, the number is 5,203, still more than 48 percent higher than in 1990, but also down almost 18 percent from the 2003 count. This is due, at least in part, to the closing of facilities that failed to comply with licensing regulations.

The study reported child care facility revenues of \$410 million for 2003 and estimated total employment in the industry at 25,569 jobs, paying \$240 million in labor income. The child care industry, the study concluded, is comparable in impact to the state’s hotel and lodging industry; and “the total earnings of child care workers is approximately equal to the combined earnings of all private elementary and secondary school, private college and university employees in the state.” The study further noted that the low wages of child care workers (an average of \$6.82 per hour in 2003) would present a long-term recruitment and retention challenge to the industry.

For every dollar in revenue produced within the state’s child care industry, the study revealed, there is a multiplier effect that generates \$0.81 of new revenue for other state firms.

Another significant impact is exerted upon state and local tax collections. The study found that about 6.9 percent of all income earned by child care workers is paid to state and local governments in sales and incomes taxes. Through multiplier effects, the study added, “total state and local tax revenue generated by economic activity in the child care sector is estimated at \$24.4 million in 2003.”

The role of child care in Oklahoma’s economic development must not be overlooked. According to the study, “The availability of formal child care to working parents... generates productivity benefits to employers in the form of reduced absenteeism and turnover, while society benefits from an increase in the overall level of economic activity.”

The child care industry is a vital infrastructure which enables the Oklahoma economy to function. State government’s role of providing subsidies to help families afford the cost of care is key to maintaining a stable workforce. Without that commitment, much of the progress in child safety and early learning will be threatened, and the state’s long-term economy will suffer. ✨



<sup>1</sup>Mark C. Snead, Ph.D.: *The Economic Impact of Oklahoma’s Child Care Industry*. <http://economy.okstate.edu/papers/okchildcareimpact2003.pdf>

## Private providers are not the only ones caring for Oklahoma's children.

Head Start, Early Head Start and public school pre-kindergarten programs all contribute a great deal to the care and early education of young children.

### OKLAHOMA'S PUBLIC PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

It is generally accepted now that a child's first four years provide the best window for cognitive development, and that if that opportunity is not captured, it is extremely difficult to make up the deficit later. Beginning in fall of 1998, Oklahoma implemented universal pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds on a voluntary basis.

In 2004, Georgetown University's Center for Research on Children in the U.S. released a report<sup>1</sup> on the effects of this program on school readiness. At that time, Oklahoma's program had a higher percentage of its children enrolled than any other state (60 percent). By 2007, well over 34,000 (nearly 70 percent) of the state's four-year-olds were enrolled, and that number was almost evenly split between the half-day and full-day options. Seventeen of the state's 77 counties have only full-day programs. Only one county has a half-day program but no full-day option.

As in previous years, Oklahoma still leads the nation in terms of families' access to pre-kindergarten programs, with Florida and Georgia significantly behind in second and third places, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Oklahoma leads all the other states in overall participation in Pre-K. In 19 of Oklahoma's counties, participation is 100 percent, while another seven have over 95 percent participation. At the other end of the scale, Pittsburg County has only a 12-percent participation rate and in four others—Murray, Oklahoma, Osage and Wagoner—less than half the four-year-olds attend a public pre-kindergarten program.

Like other levels of common education, pre-kindergarten requires its lead teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, these lead teachers must be certified in early childhood

and their pay is based on the same scale as other public school teachers. The student to teacher ratio is limited to ten to one, with a maximum group size of 20. This emphasis on quality has paid off. The Georgetown study found that children of all ethnic groups and income levels who participated in public pre-school programs showed substantial cognitive gains over children who did not. In addition, they showed substantial gains over the development that occurs normally as a result of increasing age.

### PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN

Almost 98 percent of Oklahoma's five-year-olds attend public kindergarten, with almost 79 percent of them attending full-day programs. In 58 counties, all five-year-olds attend public school kindergarten, while 14 other counties have participation rates above 90 percent. Wagoner County's rate is the lowest, at 59.6 percent, and Osage County is second from the bottom, with 70.7 percent participation. Ranging from 80 to 89 percent are Oklahoma, Comanche and Texas Counties.

### COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

To maximize educational benefits for children of working parents, public school districts sometimes collaborate with Head Start Programs as well as with a few privately owned child care facilities to provide an integrated learning system that maximizes resources. Obstacles exist. Financially pressed school districts have limited incentives to take Pre-K out of school buildings and into child care settings. Other issues include program-monitoring requirements, teacher turnover, and methods of measuring success. But despite the challenges, progress is being made as each entity learns more about the other's regulations, objectives and funding regulations.

### SMART START OKLAHOMA

A highly significant project for early childhood education is Smart Start Oklahoma. This public-private, community-based initiative focuses on

<sup>1</sup>Gormley, William Jr., et al, Center for Research on Children in the U.S., Georgetown University: *The Effects of Oklahoma's Universal Pre-K Program on School Readiness*. <http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/executive.summary.ok.11.16.04.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>The National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education: *The State of Pre-School 2007: State Pre-School Yearbook*. [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Pre-k\\_education/yearbook.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Pre-k_education/yearbook.pdf)

families needing services in order to provide their young children with a better chance to enter school healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed. Each project begins as a local effort to bring together concerned citizens and providers of services and form a coalition that benefits families with children under six. With a combination of state and private dollars, each Smart Start community identifies the greatest needs and creates a plan for coordinating existing services to meet those needs. By the end of 2008, 52 Oklahoma counties, representing more than 65 percent of the state's under-six population, were being served by Smart Start coalitions.

In May 2007, Smart Start Oklahoma convened an action team to develop a plan for encouraging collaboration among Head Start, public pre-kindergarten and child care programs. That fall, the team capitalized upon a grant opportunity from the Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies. The resulting funds supported a study of existing collaborations in Oklahoma to identify common benefits and strategies and to describe successful strategies. In the report of findings, issued in February 2008, all three parties, Head Start, child care and Pre-Kindergarten, confirmed the benefits of collaboration: the sharing of resources; better coordination of services, with reduced transitions for children; enhanced quality of their programs; and fiscal advantages. Child care and public Pre-K partners also noted greater convenience for parents, while parents surveyed appreciated the use of degreed teachers along with the extended hours that accommodated their work schedules, without disrupting their children's arrangements. The study concluded that:

- Collaboration is an effective and efficient “win-win” situation for all partners.
- It has potential for improving outcomes for children and parents.
- Continued dialogue and sharing of experiences is vital.
- More research is needed to identify and describe effective models and strategies for collaboration. ★



**COLLABORATION:**  
A mutual agreement between a public school and a Head Start program or a child care provider to offer the public school four-year-old program which includes the employment of a bachelor degreed, early childhood certified teacher and the implementation of the public school curriculum as well as compliance with the applicable partnering program's regulations and requirements.

**Throughout the U.S., community-based resource and referral agencies provide**

an essential service connecting working families with child care arrangements. From educating parents about how to evaluate their options and select quality child care that fits their needs, to documenting and reporting on services requested, local agencies form the basis for understanding and improving child care in America.

In Oklahoma, child care resource and referral is coordinated by a state-level managing association. The Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association provides technical support to the eight regional agencies, establishing and administering their contracts and assessing their performance against established criteria. Oklahoma was only the third state to achieve

network-wide certification from the Child Care Aware quality assurance program of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, or NACCRRA. (At the end of 2007, there were still only six states that had attained this distinction, although another 10 states were working through the rigorous process.) With eight strategically located regional agencies, Oklahoma's network serves parents, providers and communities in all 77 counties.

Through first-hand data supplied by these agencies, a picture can be painted of what parents need and what is available in each location.

**SERVICES TO FAMILIES**

The primary function of resource and referral agencies is to help families find quality child care. In Fiscal Year 2008, the agencies answered 7,777 calls from families seeking referrals to child care for over 10,640 children. Over half of these children (51.6 percent) were under three years old, while another 28 percent were from three to five years old. Seventy percent of the families who called needed either state or tribal financial assistance to help them pay for child care. More than one-third of them needed care during non-traditional work schedules (evening hours, overnight or on weekends). In addition, another 2,816 new families visited the state association's web site to search for child care online.

**SERVICES TO PROVIDERS**

Helping providers do a better job and stay in business is another vital role of resource and referral agencies. From informing and advising people who are thinking of launching a child care business, to referring families to established

**in FY 2008, agencies received 7,777 calls seeking referrals to child care**





providers, the agencies provide a valuable service to their local child care industries. Besides referrals, these agencies offer training opportunities, teaching resources, individual technical assistance and consulting services regarding special age groups, Spanish-speaking families, and children with special health and behavioral needs.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the regional agencies responded to 10,773 requests from providers for technical assistance and administered over 913 hours of formal training to providers across the state.

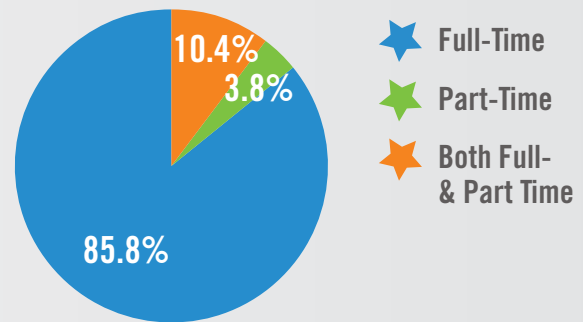
### CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

In 2005, the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association began an outreach program for Oklahoma's rapidly growing population of Spanish-speaking families. By translating informational materials for parents into Spanish, the staff immediately made network services accessible to more families. When the Association's new web site was launched in 2007, all content for parents was translated into Spanish. In addition, Spanish-language radio and television programs, as well as newspapers, were used to communicate publicly about the network's services. Soon, Spanish-speaking families were calling to obtain child care referrals and discuss their needs in their native language.

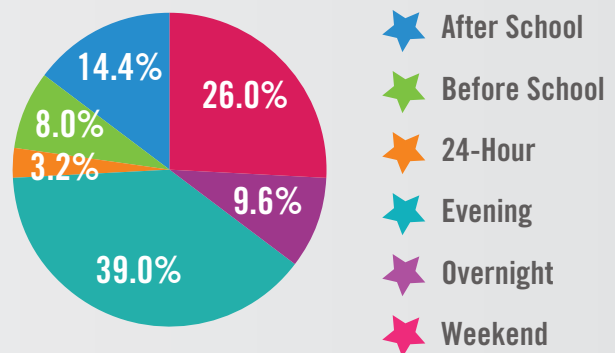
Even though services are available to parents across the state by calling a Spanish hotline (405/942-4179), the metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City are currently the only places where a Hispanic Coordinator is located. The outreach program provided referral services to 173 Spanish-speaking families in Fiscal Year 2008. Hispanic parents surveyed indicated 100-percent satisfaction with the services they received.

The program also addresses providers, by counseling English-speaking child care providers about inclusiveness and helping them to understand Hispanic cultures, and by offering more accessible services to Spanish-speaking providers. In 2007 and 2008, the first and second annual Hispanic Child Care Conferences, conducted entirely in Spanish, hosted Spanish and bilingual providers from all over Oklahoma, with over 100 participants

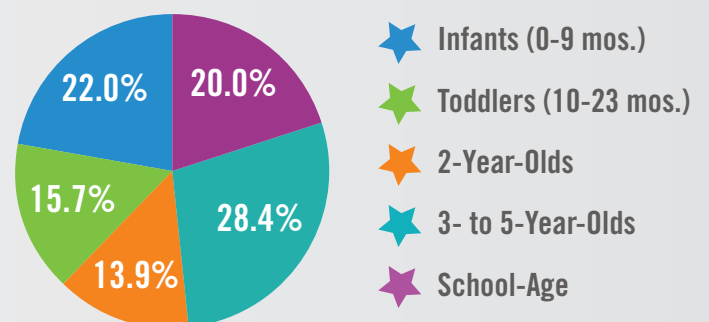
**TABLE 13: Amount of Care Sought**



**TABLE 14: Non-Traditional Schedules Sought**



**TABLE 15: Ages for Whom Care is Sought**



attending in the second year. In 2008, a professional network for Spanish-speaking providers was formed, and two meetings were held with an average attendance of 15.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the outreach initiative provided direct technical assistance to 20 Spanish-speaking child care providers operating in Oklahoma City, Lawton, Pauls Valley, Bartlesville, Ada and Guymon. ★

**Oklahoma’s American Indian tribes may offer child care services to their families, with funding**

from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Tribal funds are distributed by the Child Care Bureau (CCB), Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) to support low-income working families through child care financial assistance and promote children’s healthy development by improving the quality of early care and education and afterschool programs.

During Federal Fiscal Year 2007, 38 Oklahoma tribes administered and implemented child care programs that helped tribal families afford child care and enhanced the quality of early care and education and after school programs.

According to the Tribal CCDF Annual Report, the ACF-700, financial assistance was provided for 8,566 children under 13 in Federal Fiscal Year 2007, as well as another 23 children, ages 13 to 19, who were served because of mental or physical disabilities that precluded self-care. Of the children under 13, almost one-third (31.8 percent) were under three years.

Nearly 97 percent of the children were from 5,333 families who were working and/or attending school, and over two-thirds of these

children (69 percent) were from families earning less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

On average, a child supported by a tribal program receives slightly more than 140 hours of care per month, at an average monthly cost of \$254, of which CCDF expends \$225, or about 88 percent, with families contributing an average co-pay of slightly under \$30.

The majority of CCDF funding is spent on child care services provided directly to eligible children. There are two approaches for families to receive child care assistance through the subsidy system. Depending on the needs of the tribal community and resources available, tribal grantees may operate a child care facility, and/or may contract with eligible providers to have child care available to families. Tribal child care programs stress the participation of parents and extended family in their children’s care and encourage their involvement in decisions about their children’s care and overall development.

Regulations governing the use of CCDF money allow tribes to establish and operate their own child care centers, depending upon a community needs assessment, as well as to provide financial assistance to families who use private child care providers. Depending upon jurisdiction and preference, tribes may either establish

**TABLE 16: Children Receiving Financial Assistance in Tribal Programs (by age)**

Age	Number
0–12 months	660
13–24 months	978
25–36 months	1,088
3–4 years	1,154
4–5 years	938
5–6 years	825
6–13 years	2,921
0–13 years (total of all above)	8,566
13–19 years	23

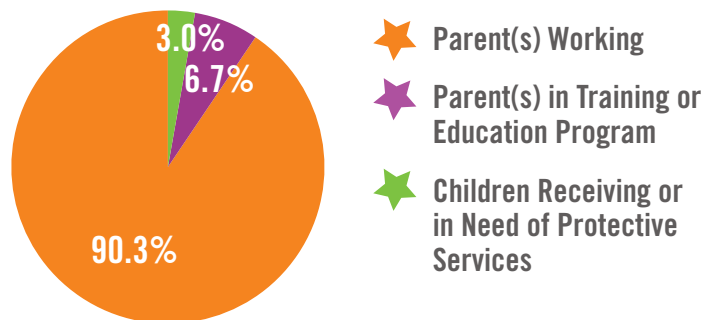


their own licensing (or registration) criteria or participate in the state’s licensing program. The State of Oklahoma has reciprocal licensing agreements with specific tribes that provide for cross-monitoring of child care programs, sharing of monitoring reports and joint investigations of complaints. Tribal child care monitoring staff also participate in all training for licensing and monitoring staff which is provided by the state.

Most tribes choose to enhance and support child care with extended services that improve the quality of care for their members, including resource and referral services, training opportunities for providers, incentives and technical assistance for start-up providers and resources for parents and providers to ensure children the best possible opportunity to grow into healthy adults. Tribes have a unique opportunity to offer services which are culturally relevant and specific to meet the needs of tribal children and their families.

Tribal programs are encouraged to participate, or collaborate, with other child care and development programs in the community in order to provide comprehensive services without duplicating or supplanting established programs.

**TABLE 17: Children Served (by eligibility reason)**



In Oklahoma, an active and long-standing contractual collaboration between tribal child care programs and the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association promotes consumer education, provider training, resource lending libraries and technical support.

A complete list of tribes in Oklahoma that are currently receiving Child Care and Development Funds, along with contact information for child care services within individual tribes, may be found at: <http://www.nccic.org/tribal/grantees.html#OK> ★

**Data and information used in the 2008 Oklahoma Child Care & Early Education Portfolio**

comes from a wide variety of sources in Oklahoma and around the nation. This section identifies the sources for the information found in this document and the method used for computations where applicable.

**CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY** — see **Licensed Child Care Capacity**.

**CHILD CARE COSTS** display the average weekly cost of full time licensed care in child care centers and family child care homes. For child care centers and homes, state and individual county costs are reported for the following age groups: Infants, Toddlers, Two-Year-Olds, Three-Year-Olds, Four- and Five-Year-Olds, and Six and Over (school age). To view individual county child care cost please visit [www.okchildcareportfolio.org](http://www.okchildcareportfolio.org).

Two issues had to be addressed before the 2007 Market Rate Survey (MRS) results could be used to calculate the weekly child care costs for centers and homes. First is low response rate from a number of counties. Second is the differing responses regarding the amount, if any, was charged for child care by the week. Using the codebook provided with the MRS, the following guidelines were established to calculate the average weekly costs:

1. When only given a monthly rate for full and part-time, weekly rates were determined based on 4 weeks in a month.
2. When facility only gave hourly rate on full-time, no weekly rate was computed.
3. When facility only gave an hourly rate on part-time, we assumed the hourly rate was based on a 20-hour week.
4. When facility gave a daily rate, we based the daily rate on a five-day week.
5. When the facility listed different rates for members and nonmembers, we assumed the nonmember rate based on the operational definition in the codebook of weekly rates charged to the "general public."
6. No weekly rates were computed for facilities that gave more than one part-time rate.
7. No values were assigned to subsidized childcare.
8. Summer weekly rates not computed in both full and part-time.
9. Counties that provided a low response rate (averaged 2 respondents or less) were noted in the tables.
10. Caution should be used when reviewing any cost data that had less than five respondents regarding weekly child care costs.

SOURCE: Unpublished data from Oklahoma State University, *Child Care Market Rate Survey*, prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), 2007.

**CHILD CARE SLOTS** — see **Licensed Child Care Capacity**.

**CHILD CARE VACANCIES** displays the proportion of vacancies in state-licensed child care facilities which are available for children of specific ages (infants, toddlers, two-year-olds,

three-year-olds, four- and five-year-olds and school age) at a state level.

SOURCE: Unpublished data from Oklahoma State University, *Child Care Market Rate Survey*, prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), 2007.

**CHILD POPULATION** is the total resident population, including dependents of Armed Forces personnel stationed in the area. In the *Need* section state and county counts are displayed for two age groups (birth through 5; 6 through 12) and the combination of those ages (birth through 12). Ages displayed in the *Need* section omit older children for whom child care is not likely to be sought.

SOURCE: Data provided by Oklahoma State Data Center, Research and Policy, Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC), using Missouri Census Data Center's Population Estimates by Age, using data from the US Census Bureau's Population Estimates Division, 2006. [http://mcdc.missouri.edu/websas/estimates\\_by\\_age.shtml](http://mcdc.missouri.edu/websas/estimates_by_age.shtml)

**CHILDREN NEEDING CARE FOR EVERY LICENSED CHILD CARE SLOT** approximates the child care need which is met in Oklahoma. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of **Children With Working Parents** (birth through five only) by the **Licensed Child Care Capacity** for the state and for each county. The average of county rates will vary from the state rate since it averages individual counties rather than calculates a rate for the entire state. Child care need is reported for the state and for individual counties.

SOURCE: See **Licensed Child Care Capacity** and **Children With Working Parents**.

**CHILDREN RECEIVING SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE** measures the number of children by state and by individual counties who receive child care paid in part by an OKDHS subsidy (June 2008). The percent of children with working parents who receive a child care subsidy is reported for the state and for individual counties.

SOURCE: Data from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 7: Child Care Services Provided*.

**CHILDREN WITH WORKING PARENTS** counts the children under the age of 13 who live in two-parent families in which both parents work outside the home and children who live in single-parent households in which the only parent works outside the home. **Children under the age of 13 living with working parents approximate those for whom child care is most likely to be needed.** The percent of children with working parents displays the proportion of all children in each age group who live in two-parent families in which both parents work outside the home and children who live in single-parent households in which the only parent works outside the home. State and individual county information is displayed for two age groups (birth through 5; 6 through 12) and the combination of those ages (birth through 12). Percentage of children living in homes with working parents from the 2000 Census is used in conjunction with 2006 child population Census estimates to calculate recent numbers of children living with working parents. Calculated totals may vary from the sums of their components due to rounding.

SOURCE: Percentage of children living in homes with working parents from data provided by the Oklahoma State Data Center, Research and Policy, Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC), using Oklahoma Department of Commerce—State Data Center, using data

from the US Census Bureau and Missouri Census Data Center (2006). Reason/Methodology:

- Started with Table P46 Age of Own Children Under 18 Years In Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements by Employment Status of Parents from 2000 Census Summary File 3.
- Calculated ratios of labor force participation for parents by child age groups.
- Assumed ratios were consistent in 2006.
- Multiplied ratios by child population reported by Missouri Census Data Center to get final results.

See also [Child Population](#).

**EARLY EDUCATION** details public school programs and enrollment for preschool age children. State and individual county data displays the number of public pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs and the number of children enrolled in each. Information is displayed by all programs, by full-day programs and by half-day programs. The levels of participation are recorded as a percent of all four-year-olds who are enrolled in either a full-day or part-day pre-kindergarten program and as a percent of all five-year-olds who are enrolled in either a full-day or part-day kindergarten program. In some cases single year population estimates fell below the actual preschool enrollment in a given county. In such an event, the level of participation was recorded as 100%.

SOURCE: Data from Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), 2007–2008 School Year. See also [Child Population](#).

**HEAD START** is a federal program for preschool children primarily from low-income families. Most children enrolled in Head Start are between the ages of three and five years old. Early Head Start services are also available to infants and toddlers in selected sites. Children enrolled in Head Start typically attend either a full-day or half-day center-based program. Head Start and Early Head Start programs and slots are included in the count of Oklahoma's licensed child care center-based programs. See [Licensed Child Care Capacity](#). Data for the state and for individual counties displays the level of participation of children enrolled in either a Head Start or Early Head Start program (full-day or part-day).

SOURCE: Data from unpublished counts collected by individual Head Start Grantees. See also [Child Population](#).

**LICENSED CHILD CARE CAPACITY** (frequently referred to as [Child Care Slots](#) or [Child Care Availability](#)) displays the number and capacity for the state and by county of child care facilities licensed by the State of Oklahoma in June 2008. State and individual county percents are reported for all facilities, by center-based programs and by family child care homes. Center-based programs differentiate between those which are operated by Head Start and regular child care centers. Counts exclude child care not required to be licensed or child care operating in violation of licensing requirements. While licensed Child Care Capacity is used in this report as a measure of child care availability, it is not precise. Capacity overstates available child care when facilities operate at less than full capacity, keeping some licensed slots unavailable to children. Capacity understates available child care because not all child care is required to be licensed.

SOURCE: Number of facilities and total capacity of homes from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 10: Child Care Licensed Facilities and Capacity by Type and County*. Number of facilities and total capacity of regular center-based programs from Oklahoma Child Care Resource &

Referral Association's Database NACCRRAware report. Number of facilities and total capacity of Head Start centers from unpublished data collected from individual Head Start Grantees.

Data from *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 10* does not distinguish between regular center-based programs and Head Start programs so NACCRRAware data had to be used to get the most accurate number of regular center-based programs.

**OKLAHOMA CHILD CARE FACILITIES LICENSING ACT** requires most child care facilities to be licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). Licensing is designed to ensure that minimum standards for the care of Oklahoma children are met and maintained. The specific standards address a wide variety of issues, including staff qualifications and training, programming, safe environment, sanitation, health and record keeping. Exemptions allow some types of child care to operate without being licensed by the state. Child care exempted from licensing primarily includes that provided in a child's own home or by relatives, informal arrangements made by parents with friends or neighbors for occasional care (babysitting), home school programs, pre-school programs operated by school districts, accredited summer youth camps for school age children, and so on. Unlicensed child care programs and providers not falling within a listed exemption violate the law. The examples provided are illustrative only. For a full explanation of licensing requirements and exemptions contact OKDHS or review the cited Oklahoma Statutes.

SOURCE: Oklahoma Statutes Annotated, Title 10, Section 401 et seq. (2004). See also [Licensed Child Care Capacity](#).

**PERCENT OF CHILDREN ON OKDHS CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES RECEIVING CARE IN 2- OR 3-STAR FACILITIES** measures the proportion of low-income children from working families receiving subsidies to help pay for child care who receive that care in a facility (includes both centers and homes) which is Two- or Three-Star rated, indicating the facility provides a higher quality of care. Percents are reported for the state and for individual counties.

SOURCE: Data from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 9: Child Care Facilities and Subsidies, By Type, Stars and County*.

**PERCENT OF FACILITIES ACCEPTING OKDHS SUBSIDIES** displays the proportion of licensed facilities reporting a willingness to serve low-income children whose care is subsidized by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). State and individual county percents are reported for all facilities, by center-based programs and by family child care homes.

SOURCE: Data from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 10: Child Care Licensed Facilities and Capacity, By Type and County: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*.

**PERCENT OF FACILITIES WITH WAITING LISTS** displays the proportion of licensed child care facilities reporting an inability to serve all children seeking care and maintaining a list in the event a slot becomes available. State and individual county percents are reported for all facilities, by center-based programs and by family child care homes. Counties listing no information for center-based programs are those for which no center responded to the survey question.

*continued on next page*

Review of the data presented for the Percentage of Facilities with Waiting Lists for centers and homes requires caution and recognition of the impact of low response rates. Many of the questions associated with the 2007 Market Rate Survey (MRS) had as few as two respondents. Low response rates can skew the data resulting in the reader incorrectly interpreting the data. The reader is cautioned to be aware of very small and very large numbers when comparing county data. Relying solely on the data presented without considering the context and the numbers involved can result in poor interpretations. Other sources of data and viewpoints are available from other sources that can aid in placing the data presented here in a broad and proper context.

SOURCE: Unpublished data from Oklahoma State University, *Child Care Market Rate Survey*, prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), 2007.

**PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS**—see [Early Education](#).

**PUBLIC PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR PRE-K** (4-year-olds)—see [Early Education](#).

**QUALITY OF CHILD CARE**—see [Star Ratings for Child Care Facilities](#).

**QUALITY RANKING** displays the ranking of all 77 counties based on the Star level of facilities. The ranking was calculated using average star level rating by county and weighted against county capacity.

SOURCE: Data from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 10: Child Care Licensed Facilities and Capacity, By Type and Count* and *OKDHS Statistical Bulletin: June 2008. Table 9: Child Care Facilities and Subsidies, By Type, Stars and County: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*.

### **REQUESTS TO RESOURCE AND REFERRAL PROGRAMS**

displays information about care sought by families through local child care resource and referral programs. State and individual county data include the number and proportion of families seeking full-time or part-time child care (or both), the ages of the children for whom care is being sought and the types of non-traditional schedules needed. Ages of the children are reported by categories, including infants (birth through nine months), toddlers (ten through 23 months), two-year-olds (24 through 35 months), three- through five-year-olds (36 through 60 months), and school age children (over 60 months), and are reported as a number and as the percent of all requests each age category represents. Types of non-traditional schedules requested include after-school, before-school, 24-hour care, evening care, overnight care and weekend care, and are reported as a number and as the percent of all requests each schedule represents. County data indicates whether or not the local resource and referral program received requests for providers serving children with special needs, speaking a specific non-English language or using sign-language.

SOURCE: Data from NACCRRAware compliance reports completed by local resource and referral agencies, then submitted to and tabulated by Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association, Inc., FY 2008.

**STAR RATINGS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES** display the proportion of child care centers and homes licensed at each level created by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services *Reaching for the Stars* rating system. Star ratings are reported for the state and for individual counties. Absence of one or more of the Star ratings from the pie chart means that county had no facilities licensed for that Star rating in June 2008.

SOURCE: Data from Office of Policy, Planning and Research, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). *OKDHS June 2005 moment in time data. Child Care Facilities and Subsidies, By Type, Stars and County: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*.

**STARTING WAGE** displays the average starting hourly wage a beginning child care provider is paid to work in a child care center. Wages are reported for the state and for individual counties. Counties listing no wage information are those for which no center responded to the survey question.

Review of the data presented for the Starting Wage for centers and homes requires caution and recognition of the impact of low response rates. Many of the questions associated with the 2007 Market Rate Survey (MRS) had as few as two respondents. Low response rates can skew the data resulting in the reader incorrectly interpreting the data. The reader is cautioned to be aware of very small and very large numbers when comparing county data. Relying solely on the data presented without considering the context and the numbers involved can result in poor interpretations. Other sources of data and viewpoints are available from other sources that can aid in placing the data presented here in a broad and proper context.

Over the period 2005 to 2007, the annual inflation rate decreased from 3.4% to 2.8%. However, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the average starting wage of \$6.24 for providers in child care centers in 2005 would require an increase in the hourly wage to \$6.62 to maintain pace with inflation. Based on the 2007 MRS, the average hourly wage for child care providers in centers was \$6.85 thereby surpassing the inflation rate by \$0.23 per hour.

SOURCE: Unpublished data from Oklahoma State University, *Child Care Market Rate Survey*, prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), 2007.

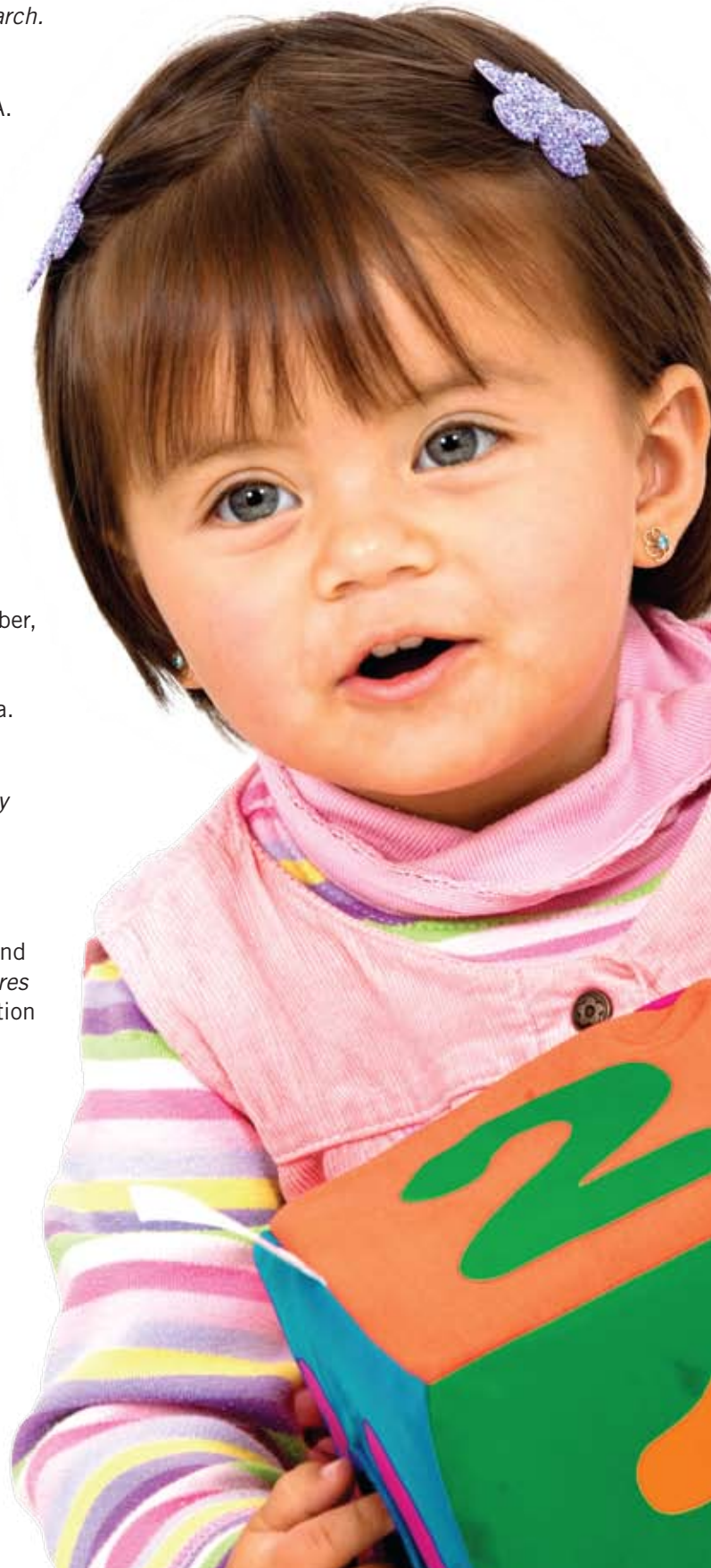
**SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE**—see [Children Receiving Subsidized Child Care](#).

**TURNOVER RATE** displays the rate at which child care workers leave their employment in child care centers each year. Rates are reported for the state and for individual counties. Counties listing no turnover rates are those for which no center responded to the survey question.

Review of the data presented for the Turnover Rate for centers and homes requires caution and recognition of the impact of low response rates. Many of the questions associated with the 2007 Market Rate Survey (MRS) had as few as two respondents. Low response rates can skew the data resulting in the reader incorrectly interpreting the data. The reader is cautioned to be aware of very small and very large numbers when comparing county data. Relying solely on the data presented without considering the context and the numbers involved can result in poor interpretations. Other sources of data and viewpoints are available from other sources that can aid in placing the data presented here in a broad and proper context.

SOURCE: Unpublished data from Oklahoma State University, *Child Care Market Rate Survey*, prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), 2007.

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# QUICK FACTS

**404,731 Oklahoma children**, from birth to age 12 **need** some form of **child care** while their parents work.

**5,203 licensed Oklahoma facilities offer 154,550 licensed slots** for children.

**58.3%** of Oklahoma facilities have a **waiting list**.

The **cost of child care** for an Oklahoma family typically **equals or exceeds** other major family budget items such as mortgage or rent.

Only **10.7% of Oklahoma's children** whose parents work receive **subsidized child care**.

**75.9%** of Oklahoma's licensed child care slots **accept subsidized children**.

**46.1%** of Oklahoma's licensed **facilities provide high quality** care, as indicated by a two- or three-star rating in the state's "Reaching for the Stars" rating system.

**91.8%** of all Oklahoma children who **utilize subsidies** receive their **care in two- or three-star facilities**.

The average **starting wage** for child care providers in centers is **\$6.85**, and the average **turnover rate** is **36.7%**.

**Oklahoma** was among the **first three states** to have its statewide resource and referral network **earn the prestigious certification of Child Care Aware® Quality Assurance**—a national, voluntary certification program.



**Oklahoma Child Care**  
RESOURCE & REFERRAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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