



Quality Child Care for All Children

November 10, 2010

By Grace Reef
Chief, Policy & Evaluation
National Association of Child Care
Resource & Referral Agencies



Briefing Overview

- Parent Polling
- Child Care Affordability
- The Road to School Readiness
- Conclusion

Child Care in America

- Over 11 million children are in some type of child care setting every week
- Nearly 60 percent of mothers with children younger than age 6 are working
- Nearly 74 percent of mothers with school-age children are working

NACCRRRA's Parent Poll

NACCRRRA contracted with Lake Research Partners:

- **Telephone survey of 1,000 parents with children under age 12**
- **Conducted June 7-16, 2010**
- **Oversampled for rural parents**
- **Margin of error +/-3.1 percent**

Key Findings

Despite the current economy—

- Many families are still struggling
- Unemployment remains high
- Child poverty has increased

Top Concerns to Parents:

- Quality followed by cost

Summary of Findings

Parents' Logical Assumptions Don't Match Reality

- Parents think child care offers learning (89%)
- Providers have a background check (85%)
- Child Care is licensed (78%)
- Providers trained in child development (73%)
- The government inspects child care (67%)

Summary of Findings

Cost is secondary to quality, but

- **Three-quarters of parents rate affordable child care as the most (31%),**
- **or one of the most (45%),**

important factors in helping working families.

Summary of Findings

A majority of parents agree:

Both parents need to work (54%), while 41% believe if more parents had different priorities a parent could stay home.

- **Families with Young Children:** 57% said both need to work while 38% said different priorities.
- **In 2006:** 49% said both need to work while 45% said different priorities.

Impact of the Economy

- **Despite modest improvements in the economy,**
- **Nearly 40% of parents say their family is worse off now compared to 4 years ago**
- **51% of families with young children say the economy has affected their child care in some way**
- **63% say they worry at least some of the time about paying their bills**

Impact of the Economy

In the past year,

- **15% of parents said they lost a job**
- **17% said their hours were reduced**
- **24% said their wages were cut**

The Economy, Families & Child Care

- When asked about ways to help families in today's economy...
- 76% of parents said affordable child care is one of the most important factors

The Economy, Families & Child Care

Parents Support Requiring Standards:

- Quality Standards (94%)
- Basic Training requirements (94%)
- Background Checks (92%)
- Inspections (89%)
- Ongoing Training (88%)
- Licensing (84%)
- Affordability for low and middle income families (84%)

- Overall reauthorization priorities: 87% of all parents, 91% of parents with children under age 5

Messages That Resonate

#1 Safety

- Only ten states require a comprehensive background check, including a fingerprint check against federal and state records, a check of the sex offender registry, as well as a check of the child abuse registry before allowing adults to be licensed to provide child care. **It is time to hold states accountable for the public funds invested in child care and make sure our children are safe from predators.**

(94% of all parents supported, with 72% strong)

Messages that Resonate

#2 Licensing/Safety

- We are not talking about licensing grandparents or other family members who provide care to their relatives. We are talking about providers who are running a business. **Their business should be treated like any business and have to meet basic safety and health standards. We need to set basic standards and ensure that all children are in safe and healthy places.**

(94% of all parents supported, with 69% strong)

Messages that Resonate

#3 Training

- Over 11 million children under the age of 5 spend time every week in some type of child care setting. Caregivers in most states are not required to have any training -- not in CPR or first aid; not in basic health and safety practices; and not even in child development.
Parents want their children to be safe, but in most states that is left to chance. There should be minimum training for providers who care for unrelated children every week.

(91% of all parents supported, with 59% strong)

Opposing Messages

- Opposing messages DO NOT resonate:
- The government has no business inspecting child care (34% agree, 14% strongly)
- The government has no business inspecting the houses of people who run child care (35% agree, 16% strongly)

Polling Summary

- How the message is framed matters
- Recommendations need to be concrete and understandable to the general public
- Despite the economy, families support improving the quality of care.

Affordability

- NACCRRA released a study in August about the cost of child care in every state.
- “Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2010 Update”
- The costs are high, they are rising, they’re high compared to household income, and high compared to other expenses.

Affordability -- Centers

- Center-based infant care: ranged from \$4,550 in MS to \$18,750 in MA per year.
- Center-based 4 year old care: ranged from \$4,050 in MS to \$13,150 in MA per year.
- School-age care: exceeded \$10,000 per year in NY

Affordability -- FCC

- Family Child Care Homes-- infant care ranged from \$3,550 in SC to \$11,900 in MA per year.
- Family Child Care Homes-- 4 year old care ranged from \$3,750 in MS to \$11,450 in MA per year.
- School-aged care exceeded \$9,400 in NY.

Affordability – the Reality

- In 40 states, the average annual cost for center-based care for an infant was higher than the cost of a 4 year state college.
- Costs affect parent choices.
- Costs affect the supply of care in communities.
- Children pay the price.

Quality Child Care

Quality child care can help children start school ready to learn.

- 80% of brain development occurs between birth and age 3
- Pre-K can help, but children aren't born at age 4
- Children of working moms spend 35+ hours per week in child care

4th Grade Reading – Below Basic

4th Grade NAEP Reading Test Scores

	African American Children
State	Below Basic
Alabama	56%
Arkansas	57%
California	58%
Illinois	60%
Louisiana	63%
Michigan	65%
Minnesota	61%
Mississippi	61%
Oklahoma	59%
Tennessee	62%
Wisconsin	66%

Subsidies & Licensing

	African American Children		% Subsidy Children in	FCC
State	Below Basic		License Exempt Care	Threshold
Alabama	56%		28%	6 children
Arkansas	57%		1%	6 children
California	58%		30%	2 children
Illinois	60%		46%	4 children
Louisiana	63%		21%	7 children
Michigan	65%		64%	1 child
Minnesota	61%		25%	2 children
Mississippi	61%		25%	6 children
Oklahoma	59%		0%	1 child
Tennessee	62%		10%	5 children
Wisconsin	66%		0%	4 children

Quality Care Matters

- The quality of care in a community matters.
- Most families eligible for a subsidy for their children don't receive one.
- Parents need choices among quality providers.
- Children's safety & school readiness depends on it.

CCDBG Reauthorization

- The Child Care & Development Block Grant needs to be strengthened.
- Both children who receive a subsidy and children who do not need access to quality child care.
- What's quality child care?

CCDBG Reauthorization

- Safe Providers: comprehensive background checks including fingerprints
- Minimum training requirements – 40 hours of initial training and 24 hours of annual training
- At least annual inspections
- 12% Quality Set-aside increasing to 25%

Conclusion

- Parents want their children to be safe in child care.
- Parents want quality child care for their children.
- Parents want their children to start school ready to learn.
- The status quo is not ok. We can improve the quality of child care together.
- 2011 is the year!! 😊

Sources

The Economy's Impact on Parent Choices and Perceptions about Child Care, NACCRRA 2010
<http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/economy-impact>

Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2010 Update, NACCRRA 2010
<http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/parents-and-the-high-cost-of-child-care>

Leaving Children to Chance: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Standards and Oversight of Small Family Child Care Homes: 2010 Update
<http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/leaving-children-to-chance-2010>

We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulation and Oversight: 2009 Update. <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/we-can-do-better-2009-update>

The Nation's Report Card, 4th Grade Reading Test Scores, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/stt2009/20104604.asp>

Child Care and Development Block Grant subsidy information, NACCRRA website,
<http://www.naccrra.org/randd/ccdbg-tanf/>