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2001-2002
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Report on the Status of Child Care and Development Services for Employees in El Dorado Hills

Blue Shield DST Output

June 2002

Prepared for the El Dorado Hills Child Care Consortia by:

Kathi Walker, Coordinator
El Dorado County Child Care and Development Planning Council

Louise Rush, Principal, Tandem Performance
Capitol Regional Resource Center

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El Dorado Hills Child Care Consortia is a public, private, and business partners committed to developing a community plan increasing the supply of affordable, quality child care programs in El Dorado Hills.

Consortia Members:

Gig Codiga, Blue Shield of California, **Elizabeth Drummond**, DST Output, **Bob Ferguson**, El Dorado Union High School District, **Deborah Filbeck-Bates**, JOB ONE, **Jennifer Lawrence**, Choices For Children, **Katie Pearce**, St. Stephens Child Development Center, **Carolyn Shaw**, Blue Shield of California, **Sherri Springer**, Happy Kids Preschool and Day Care, **Dr. Vicki L. Barber**, County Superintendent of Schools, **Lynn B. Lucas**, Child Development Programs, County Office of Education.

This report was developed through grant funding from the Children and Families Commission of El Dorado County, consulting services from the Capitol Regional Resource Center and administrative services from the El Dorado County Child Care and Development Planning Council.

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I. Executive Summary

In October 2001, the El Dorado County Child Care and Development Planning Council (CCDPC) was awarded an \$8,000 grant to develop a community child care plan assessing the supply of affordable, quality child care in El Dorado Hills. The planning body consists of public, private and business partners and is referred to as the El Dorado Hills Child Care Consortia. The members are: Blue Shield of California, DST Output, County Superintendent of Schools, Superintendent of El Dorado Union High School District, Job One, Choices for Children, St. Stephens Child Development Center, Happy Kids Preschool and Day Care, and the EDC Office of Education, Child Development Programs. Consulting services for the project were provided on an in-kind basis from the Capitol Regional Resource Center in the amount of \$4,100.

The goal of the Consortia was three-fold: (1) assess employee child care and development needs from two of the largest employers in El Dorado Hills, (2) assess the capacity of the child care providers to meet those needs, and (3) develop a collaborative plan to bridge the gap between supply and demand for child care services.

It was the original intent of the Consortia to utilize the data collected in the two assessments as the basis for developing a community-based, strategic plan. During the course of the planning process, both DST Output and Blue Shield experienced turnover in representation to the Consortia membership. This change in membership representation and ability to commit to project outcomes has altered the final product from the original grant application.

Rather than develop a strategic planning process to address employee needs, the focus shifted to standardizing a data collection and reporting process to be used with any employer. Included in this report are recommendations on employer best practices addressing employee needs identified in the report.

The employee and early care and education surveys measured four child care and development program areas:

- Quality
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- School Readiness

By surveying El Dorado Hills child care providers and parents, our gap analysis shows that parents are struggling with the balance between selecting care that is of quality, that is affordable and also geographically accessible.

The child care issues expressed by parents in this survey are endemic to the industry at large. Limited access and concerns about quality and cost are unfortunately increasing even in the face of recent research that extols the long-lasting effects of quality child care on learning into the elementary school years.

A landmark study of low income families issued in 1999 by the US Department of Education showed that early childhood education improves a child's readiness for school, especially in the areas of reading and math. Participants in the study consistently outperformed their peers in cognitive and academic tests, were more likely to attend college or hold high-skilled jobs, and were less likely to become parents by age 21.

With these impacts in mind, increasing the quality and availability of early child care and development programs could go a long way in satisfying some of the business requirements cited by the El Dorado Hills businesses in the recent "Business Retention Survey". This survey conducted by the El Dorado County Office of Economic Development, reported that one third of the El Dorado Hill businesses rated the quality of the workforce as either fair or poor. Concerns were also raised about the availability of labor (53%) in El Dorado Hills. Parents who cannot find convenient and affordable child care can unfortunately impact these issues by leaving the workforce.

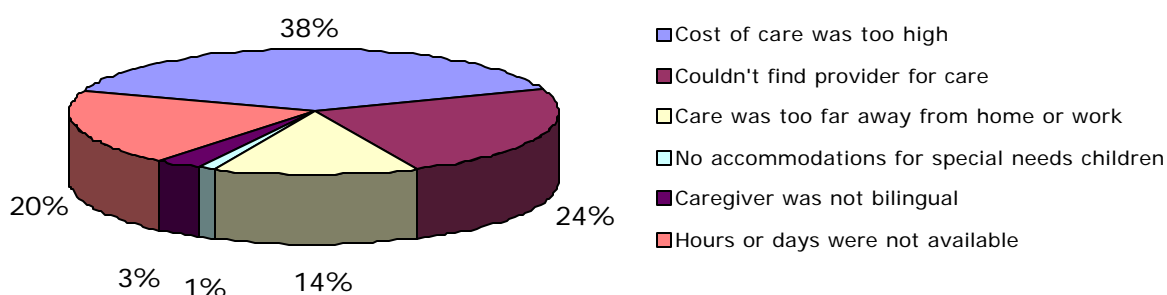
Interestingly, when the El Dorado Hills businesses were asked to rate the availability of "affordable child care" as a necessary community service, 48% did not have enough information to answer the question. Of those who did respond, 32% believed that affordable child care was difficult to find.

Quality

In general, parents' opinions about quality encompass many of the same elements that child care and development experts delineate: experience and stability of caregivers, group sizes that allow for individual care, and safe, stimulating environments. In California, the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, administers the licensing and supervision of child care centers and family child care homes. A licensed program meets the

State’s regulations for health and safety, group size, adult-child ratios and provider training. A very tangible benefit of licensed programs is that they are part of a professional community of child care providers that receive resources and support from local and state agencies. Access to quality programs is a priority for El Dorado Hills employees with both infants and preschoolers. Sixty-eight percent of the parents of infants and 61% of the preschool parents rated quality as a priority in child care arrangements. The majority of the parents in this study selected a form of licensed care for their children, 53% of the parents of infants, 58% of the parents of preschoolers, and 33% of the parents of school age children. Those who didn’t select a form of licensed care cited cost and availability as barriers.

Barriers to Quality Child Care as Reported by El Dorado Hills Employees



Data Source: Blue Shield and DST Output Employee Survey Results, 2002

Current licensing requirements, however, do not address quality measures relating to children’s growth and development. Program accreditation is a measure of quality exceeding licensing. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has an accreditation program for licensed providers whose goal is to meet quality program criteria regarding the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children. In recent years, the NAEYC Accreditation Program has become an important standard that many programs strive for to demonstrate program quality. Other forms of program accreditation exist for family child care homes, Montessori programs and school-age programs.

El Dorado Hills has one of four accredited programs in the county. Furthermore, this program is the only accredited family child care home in the county.

Affordability

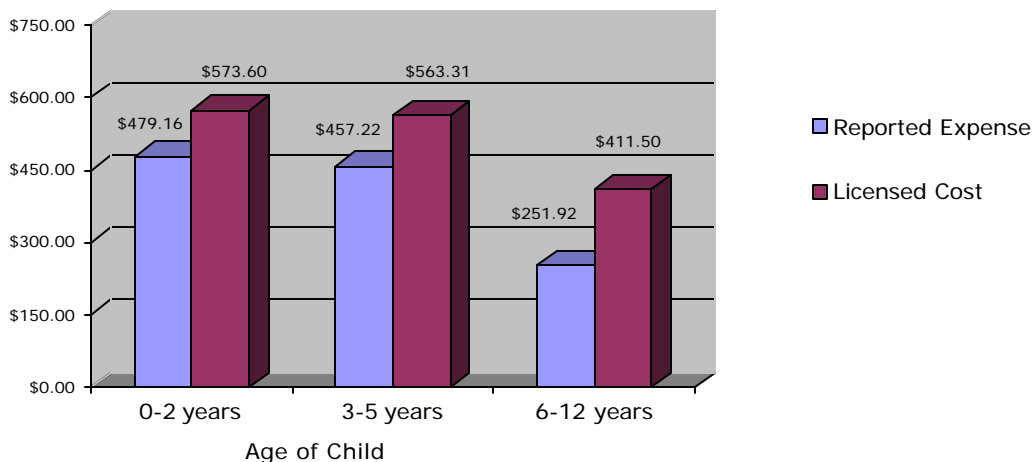
As is the case nationally, parents of infants in this Consortia study report child care services as unaffordable in licensed centers and family child care homes. Thirty-eight percent of the El Dorado Hills employees with infants expressed concern about affordability, citing “cost of care”

as a reason why their child care needs were not met. This is understandable since 32% are using center care averaging \$802 a month in El Dorado Hills, 20-30% higher than preschool fees. Prohibitive center rates might indicate why almost one-half of these parents are using some form of unlicensed care that is historically less expensive than licensed care. Quality is often affected when care is unlicensed and less expensive.

"I am not really fond of the program that I have my child enrolled in, but I did not have any other options, as no other child care is available in the area that I needed as well as costs being too high."

The chart below reflects the reported child care expenses averaged for all types of care. Yet a parent of an infant using center care in El Dorado Hills will pay 40% more than this average (\$802).

Average Monthly Child Care Expenses as Reported by El Dorado Hills Employees vs. Average Licensed Cost of Care in El Dorado Hills



Data Sources: Blue Shield and DST Output Employee Survey Results, 2002
Early Care and Education Survey Results, 2002

According to the 2001 Child Care Portfolio, the median annual household income in El Dorado County is \$48,221. Child care accounts for 25% of the annual budget of families with this income who have an infant and toddler in a child care center. Forty-two percent of the parents in this Consortia study selected center care for their children with their monthly child care expenses comprising a significant portion of their budget.

"Our budget is really stretched to the hilt for child care but she is worth it and although expensive, it is the least expensive I have found."

Accessibility

At a time of growth for the County, licensed child care slots are shrinking. Low staff wages deters people from entering the field and encourages attrition. Since 1998, spaces for infants and preschoolers decreased 25% and 11% respectively. In El Dorado Hills only 26 infant spaces exist in licensed family child care homes and 76 spaces in centers, most of which are full with waiting lists. Due to the high cost associated with providing care to infants, programs generally cater to preschoolers, resulting in greater access for this age group.

Reported Needs in Child Care Arrangements as Reported by El Dorado Hills Employees: Blue Shield and DST Output Employee Survey Results, 2002*

	Highly Needed	Needed	Little Needed	Not Needed
Close to Home	54%	8%	2%	36%
Close to Work	34%	8%	2%	56%
Special needs care	3%	0%	0%	97%
Care for sick children	27%	3%	5%	64%
Half-day preschool	10%	0%	0%	90%
School/Vacation programs	34%	5%	8%	58%
Recreation programs	31%	5%	2%	63%
Licensed family child care home	8%	0%	0%	92%
Care for early mornings	25%	7%	0%	68%
Care for evenings/nights	22%	5%	3%	69%
24 Hour Care	2%	2%	0%	97%
Care on weekends	14%	2%	0%	85%
Drop-in care	17%	2%	2%	80%
All day preschool	20%	3%	3%	73%
Bilingual Care	0%	0%	0%	100%

* Percentages based on categorical responses

In addition to regular, full-time child care, working parents can need several kinds of child care in order to meet their work schedules and particular configuration of needs. Options that were surveyed include: sick child care, occasional or drop-in care, before/after school care, care for bi-lingual children, care for children with special needs care, and care in the evening and on weekends. Of these options, El Dorado Hills parents were most interested in early morning care (32%), care for sick children (30%), and care in the evenings/night care (27%). For the purposes of this report, any child care option in the chart above with a 20 percentage or greater response is considered significant.

School Readiness

Research has shown that care in quality, licensed programs can improve a child's readiness for school.¹ Recent brain research demonstrates that substandard child care can delay cognitive and language development, making children more susceptible to illness and affecting their ability to form positive relationships with adults.² Conversely, quality child care presents an opportunity for children from all economic strata to increase their potential for positive growth and improve a child's readiness for school.

Parents of infants are particularly challenged in their ability to select the care they need. Affordability and availability are clearly barriers in the selection of licensed infant care. Informal, unlicensed care is the alternative many parents chose in this survey (47%).

A child's health is impacted by the quality of care parents are able to select. Licensed programs have staff trained in CPR, pediatric first and basic health and safety. Providers who have taken core child development courses understand the developmental stages of children and are better able to assess whether children in their care are meeting developmental milestones. These observations are critical in the identification and early intervention for children with special needs. Early detection is critical since early childhood is the period when children with any kind of learning challenge can make the most advances.

Licensed child care staff are trained in health practices that positively affect the health of the children they serve. Licensed programs require that parents annually submit records of their children's immunizations, a precaution in the control of early childhood diseases. Additionally, licensed staff are required to implement and model universal precautions such as hand-washing.

¹ Peisner-Feinberg, E.S., Burchinal, M.R., Clifford, R.M., Culkin, M.L., Howes, C., Kagan, S.L., Yazejian, N., Byler, P., Rustici, J., & Zelazo, J. (2000). *The children of the cost, quality, and outcomes study go to school: Technical Report*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center.

² National Council of Jewish Women, 1999. *Opening a Window on Child Care: A Report on the Status of Child Care in the Nation Today*.

II. Employee Surveys

Blue Shield

Headquarters Location:	50 Beale Street, SF, CA , 94501
EDH Employees:	1100
EDH Services:	Provides customer service, claims information, medical management activities, provider relations (communication with doctors), installation and membership and other support services for a health insurance company.
EI Dorado Residents:	40% of the EI Dorado Hills workforce lives in EI Dorado County.
Survey Participation:	All Blue Shield employees have internet access so participated through an online survey. The Child Care and Development Planning Council hosted the survey on their website. The Consortia received 69 online responses from Blue Shield parents which represents 6% of the EDH Blue Shield workforce. Data Source: Blue Shield, 2002

Survey Results:

- The great majority of parents need full-time child care while they work (79%)
- Other care needed while parents work:
 - 42% sick child care
 - 39% drop-in care
 - 27% weekend care
- Child care centers were the most popular option for parents of infants (36%) and preschoolers (59%). Other popular options were in-home care and care by relatives.
- Only 14% of the parents of infants thought their child care needs were fully met. Up to 21% identified problems with availability – they either could not find a provider (21%), the location was inconvenient (14%), or they couldn't find a program that met their requirements for hours and days (11%). Twenty-nine percent reported the cost of care as too high.
- 18% of the parents of preschool children felt their needs were fully met. To a slightly lesser degree they also reported child care availability as problematic. Almost one quarter were concerned about the cost of care.
- All the child care priorities listed in the survey parents considered important. The greatest percentage of parents (87%) listed "quality of child care environment". One parent speaks for many when s/he wrote: "I had to accept that we will spend way more than I want in order to get quality care."
- Popular options that Blue Shield parents will need in the next year are school/vacation programs (48%), care for early mornings (39%), recreation programs (38%) and care for sick children (36%). Parents indicated a preference regarding whether they wanted care close to work (55%) or close to home (56%).

DST Output

Headquarters Location:	Kansas City, Missouri
EDH Employees:	1,170
EDH Services:	Provides printing and mailing billing statements for large businesses.
El Dorado Residents:	26% of the El Dorado Hills workforce lives in El Dorado County.
Survey Participation:	DST Output was surveyed with hard copies of the questionnaire. Surveys were distributed by DST Team Leaders at Production Site meetings. The Consortia received 50 responses from DST Output parents which represents 6% of the DST Output EDH workforce. Data Source: DST Output, 2002

Survey Results:

- Slightly over half of DST parents need full-time child care while they work (55%), while another 36% need half-time child care.
- Other care needed while parents work:
 - 56% sick child care
 - 39% evening care
 - 36% drop-in care
 - 33% weekend care

One parent commented, "I work 12 hour days and weekends."

- In-home care was the most popular option for parents of infants (37%), with care by relatives and child care centers being the second most popular (26%). The majority of preschool parents selected child care centers (43%).
- 27% of the parents of infants thought their child care needs were fully met. About half of the respondents reported cost of care as problematic. Many had difficulty with availability – they either could not find a provider (26%) or they couldn't find a program that met their requirements for hours (26%). One parent put the issue succinctly: "Cost too high and not available for drop-in care when an off schedule meeting or seminar or training class occurs."
- Only 17% of the parents of preschoolers felt their needs were fully met. They also reported child care availability as problematic (23%) as well as cost of care (47%).
- The top three priorities for both parents of infants and preschoolers were child care affordability (71%), finding care that meets work hours/days (55%), and quality of the child care environment (35%).
- Popular options that DST employees will need in the next year are care for evenings/nights (30%), care for sick children and care for early mornings (26%) and care on weekends (24%). Employees desire care close to home (52%) slightly more than work (42%).

III . Community Early Care and Education Survey

An assessment of the El Dorado Hills early care and education community was executed to determine the current and future capacity of licensed providers to meet the growing employee demand for care. A phone survey was developed and each of the four licensed child care centers were interviewed in February 2002 as were the 13 El Dorado Hills family child care providers.

Number of Providers by Type of Care, Licensed Capacity and Ages of Children Served					
Provider Type	Number of Responses	Licensed Capacity	Number of Children Actually Served		
			0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	13	134	26	134	4
Center Based Care	4	451	76	228	11
Total	17	585	102	362	15

Data Source: Early Care and Education Survey Results, 2002

- The chart above shows that few spaces exist for school age children in licensed care.
- Child care centers had three times the number of vacancies for infants and preschoolers than family child care providers, which had very few – 8 and 23 vacancies respectively.
- Parent fees are much higher in child care centers than family child care homes. Infant care in centers averages \$802 monthly as compared to family child care homes which charge an average of \$526 a month. The price differential is not as dramatic with preschool care where the homes and centers on average charge \$551 and \$590 respectively.
- Almost all of the family child care providers who offered infant care provided it on a full-time basis. However, part-time care for preschoolers was offered more frequently than full-time care. This was not true for center-based care which offered full time care and part-time care in equal proportion.
- When asked if they provide care for special needs or bi-lingual children, most providers reported little demand for such services.
- Family child care providers uniformly have no plans to expand. One child care center has expansion plans but not in the near future.
- When El Dorado Hills child care providers were asked to rank their program needs, hiring and retaining qualified staff came out on top.

IV. Appendices

- A. Results and Indicators
- B. Survey Results of Total Employees vs. El Dorado County Employees
- C. Survey Results from Blue Shield Employees
- D. Survey Results from DST Output Employees
- E. Survey Results from Early Care and Education Providers
- F. Best Practices: Family Support Options

A. Results and Indicators for Consortia Planning

Mission Statement

Improve school readiness for children between the ages of 0-5 years in El Dorado Hills by developing a community child care plan to assess the supply of affordable, quality child care programs and expanding the range of service to strengthen families and improve children's health.

Result Area I: Children will have access to affordable, quality child care and development programs.

Indicators:

- A. Increase in the education materials distributed to licensed child care and development providers regarding the care currently utilized by employees with children between the ages of 0-5 years.

Strategy: Consortia Report will be distributed to licensed early care and education providers in El Dorado Hills.

- B. Increase in the education materials distributed to licensed child care and development providers regarding the services desired by employees with children between the ages of 0-5 years.

Strategy: Consortia Report will be distributed to licensed early care and education providers in El Dorado Hills.

- C. Increase in the number of employees reporting their child care and development needs have been met.

Strategy: Upon request, follow up employee survey could be conducted to determine if employee needs have been met.

Result Area II: Families will have access to family support options through employer supported child care and development services.

Indicator:

- A. Increase in the education materials distributed to employers.

Strategy: Employers will receive family service guides for distribution to their employees.

Result Area III: Children will have access to services improving their readiness for school.

Indicator:

- A. Increase in the number of employees choosing licensed child care and development services.

Strategy: Employers will receive Care About Quality Campaign Information for distribution to their employees.

B. Survey Results of Total Employees vs. El Dorado County Employees

Questions allowing for non or multiple responses will not total 100%.

1. How many children do you have in the following age groups?

Total Employee Responses				
Employer	Number Of Responses	Number of Infants	Number of Preschoolers	Number of School Age
BS	69	28	34	47
DST	50	19	30	40
	119	47	64	87

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas				
Employer	Number of Responses	Number of Infants	Number of Preschoolers	Number of School Age
BS	32	7	18	26
DST	27	10	12	25
	59	17	30	51

2. Types of care needed by your children over the past 12 months while you worked:

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	70%	67%	22%
Half-Time Child Care	26%	28%	18%
Evening Care	9%	16%	15%
Before School Care	0%	17%	36%
After School Care	2%	20%	56%
Drop In Care	23%	14%	16%
Sick Child Care	23%	25%	21%
Weekend Care	17%	13%	13%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	76%	67%	20%
Half-Time Child Care	29%	33%	16%
Evening Care	6%	7%	12%
Before School Care	0%	23%	35%
After School Care	6%	27%	57%
Drop In Care	12%	13%	12%
Sick Child Care	12%	27%	18%
Weekend Care	12%	7%	12%

3. Primary way in which care is provided for your children while you work.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	17%	14%	10%
Non-relative in our home	11%	5%	2%
In relative's home	9%	13%	14%
In non-relative's home	9%	8%	9%
Licensed Child Care Center	32%	52%	30%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	21%	6%	3%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	24%	10%	8%
Non-relative in our home	18%	3%	2%
In relative's home	6%	10%	6%
In non-relative's home	12%	13%	12%
Licensed Child Care Center	35%	57%	33%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	6%	7%	0%

4. Were your child care needs met in the last 12 months?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	31%	17%	8%
Some	42%	14%	11%
No	19%	8%	5%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	38%	20%	10%
Some	31%	23%	16%
No	23%	13%	4%

5. If your child care needs were not met, please explain why.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	38%	34%	20%
Couldn't find provider for care	23%	19%	15%
Care was too far away from home or work	15%	11%	7%
No accommodations for special needs child	2%	0%	1%
Caregiver was not bilingual	4%	0%	2%
Hours or days were not	17%	19%	10%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	47%	33%	16%
Couldn't find provider for care	18%	17%	14%
Care was too far away from home or work	6%	10%	8%
No accommodations for special needs child	0%	0%	0%
Caregiver was not bilingual	0%	0%	2%
Hours or days were not available	12%	17%	12%

6. What are the priorities that are MOST important concerning your child care needs?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	68%	56%	46%
Being able to afford the care I want	72%	64%	49%
Reliability of my caregiver	47%	44%	34%
Quality of the child care environment	68%	61%	51%
Location that is convenient to home/work	49%	50%	45%
Health and Safety issues	36%	33%	29%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	65%	63%	49%
Being able to afford the care I want	71%	60%	47%
Reliability of my caregiver	35%	50%	31%
Quality of the child care environment	59%	70%	49%
Location that is convenient to home/work	24%	60%	45%
Health and Safety issues	12%	40%	24%

7. What is the average amount per month that you pay for child care?

Total Employee Responses			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 479.16	\$ 457.22	\$ 251.92
Min Amount Paid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,000.00

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 542.71	\$ 478.65	\$ 240.94
Min Amount Paid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,000.00

8. Where are your current arrangements located?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	45%	44%	38%
Close to Work	9%	9%	5%
Close to Both	26%	27%	14%
Away From Both	6%	6%	3%

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	29%	43%	35%
Close to Work	6%	13%	8%
Close to Both	41%	30%	20%
Away From Both	0%	7%	4%

9. Options that you currently need while you work or will need in the next year:

Total Employee Responses Results for Infants				
	Highly Needed	Needed	Little Needed	Not Needed
Close to Home	32%	11%	4%	36%
Close to Work	38%	17%	0%	28%
Special needs care	2%	0%	2%	79%
Care for sick children	23%	4%	4%	51%
Half-day preschool	15%	2%	4%	62%
School/Vacation programs	15%	4%	4%	60%
Recreation programs	15%	4%	9%	55%
Licensed family child care home	23%	6%	2%	51%
Care for early mornings	23%	9%	0%	51%
Care for evenings/nights	11%	2%	9%	62%
24 Hour Care	6%	2%	6%	68%
Care on weekends	13%	0%	4%	66%
Drop-in care	21%	2%	6%	53%
All day preschool	13%	9%	2%	60%
Bilingual Care	4%	0%	2%	77%

Total Employee Responses Results for Preschoolers				
	Highly Needed	Needed	Little Needed	Not Needed
Close to Home	41%	9%	3%	30%
Close to Work	38%	9%	2%	34%
Special needs care	3%	0%	2%	78%
Care for sick children	25%	3%	6%	48%
Half-day preschool	16%	2%	2%	64%
School/Vacation programs	23%	5%	5%	50%
Recreation programs	17%	8%	2%	56%
Licensed family child care home	13%	2%	0%	69%
Care for early mornings	28%	9%	0%	45%
Care for evenings/nights	23%	3%	3%	53%
24 Hour Care	8%	5%	3%	67%
Care on weekends	11%	3%	2%	67%
Drop-in care	14%	5%	2%	63%
All day preschool	27%	8%	3%	45%
Bilingual Care	2%	0%	2%	80%

9. Options that you currently need while you work or will need in the next year:

Employee Responses in El Dorado County Zip Code Areas				
Results for All Age Groups				
	Highly Needed	Needed	Little Needed	Not Needed
Close to Home	54%	8%	2%	36%
Close to Work	34%	8%	2%	56%
Special needs care	3%	0%	0%	97%
Care for sick children	27%	3%	5%	64%
Half-day preschool	10%	0%	0%	90%
School/Vacation programs	34%	5%	8%	58%
Recreation programs	31%	5%	2%	63%
Licensed family child care home	8%	0%	0%	92%
Care for early mornings	25%	7%	0%	68%
Care for evenings/nights	22%	5%	3%	69%
24 Hour Care	2%	2%	0%	97%
Care on weekends	14%	2%	0%	85%
Drop-in care	17%	2%	2%	80%
All day preschool	20%	3%	3%	73%
Bilingual Care	0%	0%	0%	100%

C. Survey Results from Blue Shield Employees

Questions allowing for non or multiple responses will not total 100%

1. How many children do you have in the following age groups?

Total Employee Responses				
Employer	Number Of Responses	Number of Infants	Number of Preschoolers	Number of School Age
BS	69	28	34	47
DST	50	19	30	40
	119	47	64	87

2. Types of care needed by your children over the past 12 months while you worked:

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	70%	67%	22%
Half-Time Child Care	26%	28%	18%
Evening Care	9%	16%	15%
Before School Care	0%	17%	36%
After School Care	2%	20%	56%
Drop In Care	23%	14%	16%
Sick Child Care	23%	25%	21%
Weekend Care	17%	13%	13%

Employee Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	79%	79%	21%
Half-Time Child Care	21%	18%	23%
Evening Care	4%	9%	9%
Before School Care	0%	21%	47%
After School Care	4%	26%	62%
Drop In Care	21%	18%	17%
Sick Child Care	21%	21%	30%
Weekend Care	18%	9%	11%

Comments:

- I need care 3 days a week.
- My 5 year old is in kindergarten, like most 5 year olds (not pre-school).
- No children.
- No children needs now or later.
- None, I stayed home the first 14 months.

3. Primary way in which care is provided for your children while you work.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	17%	14%	10%
Non-relative in our home	11%	5%	2%
In relative's home	9%	13%	14%
In non-relative's home	9%	8%	9%
Licensed Child Care Center	32%	52%	30%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	21%	6%	3%

Employee Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	14%	18%	11%
Non-relative in our home	7%	0%	0%
In relative's home	11%	15%	13%
In non-relative's home	7%	6%	9%
Licensed Child Care Center	36%	59%	30%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	21%	0%	2%

Comments:

School age program for my 9 year old.
 School age program.
 School Age program.
 Licensed pre-school.
 We've used the "school age program at our childs school" for both before &/or after school care. They charge approx. \$2.00 per hour with a min. required amount per week of 20 hours.
 Up until October 2001, we used a licensed family child care home.
 Non-relative at dad's house.
 No children.
 No children needs now or later.

4. Were your child care needs met in the last 12 months?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	31%	17%	8%
Some	42%	14%	11%
No	19%	8%	5%

Employee Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	14%	18%	6%
Some	14%	12%	9%
No	4%	6%	4%

Survey Results from Blue Shield Employees

5. If your child care needs were not met, please explain why.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	38%	34%	20%
Couldn't find provider for care	23%	19%	15%
Care was too far away from home or work	15%	11%	7%
No accommodations for special needs child	2%	0%	1%
Caregiver was not bilingual	4%	0%	2%
Hours or days were not available	17%	19%	10%

Employee Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	29%	24%	21%
Couldn't find provider for care	21%	15%	17%
Care was too far away from home or work	14%	12%	9%
No accommodations for special needs child	4%	0%	2%
Caregiver was not bilingual	0%	0%	2%
Hours or days were not available	11%	9%	11%

Comments:

Couldn't find appropriate transportation for my 6 year old child from school to the after care.

I am really not fond of the program that I have my child enrolled in, but I did not have any other options, as no other child care is available in the area that I needed as well as costs being too high.

I normally have family members watch my son, but some days when they are unavailable I am forced to take time off from work to watch him.

Monday-Friday 8-5.

My child's need were met, but the cost of child care is very high.

My son has adhd.

N/A

It is difficult to find something structured and fun for my 9-10 year old for the summer break. "A school age program" was a good option last year, however, that is now closing. We need more programs like that.

I had a very difficult time finding a place for my son (11 months at the time) I wanted licensed in home...ended up placing him for about 3 months and then moving him to the "school age program" with his sister.

When sitter is sick, no one else to take care of the kids.

No children.

No children needs now or later.

6. What are the priorities that are MOST important concerning your child care needs?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	68%	56%	46%
Being able to afford the care I want	72%	64%	49%
Reliability of my caregiver	47%	44%	34%
Quality of the child care environment	68%	61%	51%
Location that is convenient to home/work	49%	50%	45%
Health and Safety issues	36%	33%	29%

Employee Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	71%	65%	60%
Being able to afford the care I want	68%	65%	57%
Reliability of my caregiver	64%	59%	51%
Quality of the child care environment	89%	85%	66%
Location that is convenient to home/work	64%	68%	55%
Health and Safety issues	61%	50%	47%

Comments:

Being on time to work is an issue with me because I have to make that stop on the way and it takes off the time for me to get there earlier. Which, then makes me late coming home and less time spent with my family.

All are very important, but unfortunately I cannot find childcare that fills all my needs.

All of the above.

Also, if the child care person/place has a backup in the event that they cannot be open.

I had to accept that we will spend way more than I want in order to get quality care.

No children.

No children needs now or later.

7. What is the average amount per month that you pay for child care?

Total Number of Responses			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 453.31	\$ 430.42	\$ 199.00
Min Amount Paid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,280.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 500.00

Number of Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 479.16	\$ 457.22	\$ 251.92
Min Amount Paid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,000.00

8. Where are your current arrangements located?

Total Number of Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	45%	44%	38%
Close to Work	9%	9%	5%
Close to Both	26%	27%	14%
Away From Both	6%	6%	3%

Number of Responses by Blue Shield Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	50%	41%	45%
Close to Work	7%	9%	4%
Close to Both	21%	24%	6%
Away From Both	7%	9%	4%

Comments:

- Close to school.
- Directly in between work and home. Would rather have her close to work for emergencies.
- In the middle.
- Kids that are in the 6-12 age bracket go home after school day is too expensive to afford.
- On child's school campus.
- At home.
- I currently have childcare because I am unable to find any.
- Reasonably close to both.
- No children.
- No children needs now or later.
- In-home.

D. Survey Results from DST Output Employees

Questions allowing for non or multiple responses will not total 100%

1. How many children do you have in the following age groups?

Total Employee Responses				
Employer	Number Of Responses	Number of Infants	Number of Preschoolers	Number of School Age
BS	69	28	34	47
DST	50	19	30	40
	119	47	64	87

2. Types of care needed by your children over the past 12 months while you worked:

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	70%	67%	22%
Half-Time Child Care	26%	28%	18%
Evening Care	9%	16%	15%
Before School Care	0%	17%	36%
After School Care	2%	20%	56%
Drop In Care	23%	14%	16%
Sick Child Care	23%	25%	21%
Weekend Care	17%	13%	13%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Full-Time Child Care	58%	53%	23%
Half-Time Child Care	32%	40%	13%
Evening Care	16%	23%	23%
Before School Care	0%	13%	23%
After School Care	0%	13%	50%
Drop In Care	26%	10%	15%
Sick Child Care	26%	30%	10%
Weekend Care	16%	17%	15%

Comments:

Holiday care for days school is closed and I work.

I work 12 hour days and week ends.

No child care, mother stays home with children.

Off track care.

Thursdays, and Fridays I need daycare currently I pay \$50 a day for my 1 year old and 3 year old.

3. Primary way in which care is provided for your children while you work.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	17%	14%	10%
Non-relative in our home	11%	5%	2%
In relative's home	9%	13%	14%
In non-relative's home	9%	8%	9%
Licensed Child Care Center	32%	52%	30%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	21%	6%	3%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Relative in our home	21%	10%	10%
Non-relative in our home	16%	10%	5%
In relative's home	5%	10%	15%
In non-relative's home	11%	10%	10%
Licensed Child Care Center	26%	43%	30%
Licensed Family Child Care Home	21%	13%	5%

Comments:

Baby sitter when child is ill.
 "School age program" Elementary School.
 Grandma comes to stay for awhile.
 No day care yet, maternity leave.
 Private school with child care.
 Relative cares for my children if available when at work.
 When she is ill, relatives care for her.
 School/recreation programs.

Husband works Wed, Thurs, Fri & Sat, Mon, Tues, Weds husband watches the boys.

4. Were your child care needs met in the last 12 months?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	31%	17%	8%
Some	42%	14%	11%
No	19%	8%	5%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Yes	27%	17%	10%
Some	33%	13%	13%
No	27%	10%	5%

5. If your child care needs were not met, please explain why.

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	38%	34%	20%
Couldn't find provider for	23%	19%	15%
Care was too far away from home or work	15%	11%	7%
No accommodations for special needs child	2%	0%	1%
Caregiver was not bilingual	4%	0%	2%
Hours or days were not available	17%	19%	10%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Cost of care was too high	53%	47%	18%
Couldn't find provider for	26%	23%	13%
Care was too far away from home or work	16%	10%	5%
No accommodations for special needs child	0%	0%	0%
Caregiver was not bilingual	11%	0%	3%
Hours or days were not available	26%	30%	10%

Comments:

Cost too high and not available for drop in care when an off schedule meeting or seminar or training class occurs.

Lack of academic (School homework) time.

Lack of indoor activities during bad weather days.

Since I work late on occasion and sometimes travel, have had to pay to have a household employee in the home during early evening hours. Would like school site to be open until 6:30pm.

The expense is rather high for day care but you need to pay the people well to find good day care.

Because age problem and behavior school work, depression etc.

Our budget is really stretched to the hilt for child care but she is worth it and although expensive it is the least expensive I have found. It also is difficult to find care on holidays or when she is ill.

6. What are the priorities that are MOST important concerning your child care needs?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	68%	56%	46%
Being able to afford the care I want	72%	64%	49%
Reliability of my caregiver	47%	44%	34%
Quality of the child care environment	68%	61%	51%
Location that is convenient to home/work	49%	50%	45%
Health and Safety issues	36%	33%	29%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Finding care that meets my work hours/days	63%	47%	30%
Being able to afford the care I want	79%	63%	40%
Reliability of my caregiver	21%	27%	15%
Quality of the child care environment	37%	33%	33%
Location that is convenient to home/work	26%	30%	33%
Health and Safety issues	0%	13%	8%

Comments:

I believe these issues go hand in hand.

If I wasn't getting help from my mom I would be paying \$150 per month for after school care for only 1 child.

7. What is the average amount per month that you pay for child care?

Total Employee Responses			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 479.16	\$ 457.22	\$ 251.92
Min Amount Paid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,000.00

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 532.71	\$ 499.33	\$ 324.09
Min Amount Paid	\$ 50.00	\$ 160.00	\$ -
Max Amount Paid	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,000.00

8. Where are your current arrangements located?

Total Employee Responses			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	45%	44%	38%
Close to Work	9%	9%	5%
Close to Both	26%	27%	14%
Away From Both	6%	6%	3%

Employee Responses by DST Output Employees			
Percentages based on number of responses in each age category			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Close to Home	37%	47%	30%
Close to Work	11%	7%	5%
Close to Both	32%	30%	23%
Away From Both	5%	3%	3%

Comments:

I work within 4 miles of my house. School, work and daycare are all close to each other.

On the way to work.

At home.

Won't be able to afford to pay day care so maybe quit job and go on welfare.

In home day care.

E. Survey Results from Early Care and Education Providers

Questions allowing for non or multiple responses will not total 100%

(survey questions begin with number 5)

5. What type of care do you offer and what is the licensed capacity for the ages you serve?

Total Number of Responses					
			Number of Children Actually Served		
Provider Type	# Of Responses	Licensed Capacity	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	13	134	26	134	4
Center Based Care	4	451	76	228	11
	17	585	102	362	15

6. How many vacancies do you currently have for the children you serve?

Total Number of Responses			
Provider Type	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	8	23	2
Center Based Care	25	67	31
	33	90	33

7. Please tell us the type of care you offer.

Total Number of Responses from Family Child Care Providers			
Number of Children Served			
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Full Time Child Care	21	42	4
Part Time Child Care	23	125	4
Evening Care	4	40	0
Before School Care	9	13	4
After School Care	9	25	4
Drop In Care	17	17	3
Sick Child Care	17	70	4
Weekend Care	4	13	1

Survey Results from Early Care and Education Providers

Total Number of Responses from Center Based Providers			
Number of Children Served			
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Full Time Child Care	76	228	11
Part Time Child Care	76	228	11
Evening Care	0	0	0
Before School Care	46	133	11
After School Care	46	133	11
Drop In Care	76	228	11
Sick Child Care	0	0	0
Weekend Care	0	0	0

8. Do you serve families with children who have special needs?

Total Number of Responses				
Number of Children Actually Served				
Provider Type	# Of Yes Responses	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	12	25	134	4
Center Based Care	4	76	228	11
	16	101	362	15

Comments:

Haven't served families with special needs children but would consider serving depending on severity of need.

She would serve special needs but she has never been approached. She has a child with Downs Syndrome on her waiting list which she will take.

ADHD, mildly autistic, speech problems.

Too hard to care for special needs by herself, also too hard on other children.

Would take special needs but hasn't been approached.

Although she hasn't been approached, she would serve special needs children if she thought she could accommodate them.

Although she doesn't have any special needs children at present she has cared for them in past. Examples: cerebral palsy, ADHD.

Would take special needs kids if approached.

Would take special needs kids if she thinks she could handle them.

Would be happy to have special needs children but would only accept if she thought she could really accommodate their needs.

In the past she did care for a deaf child. Will take special needs kids if she thinks she can provide appropriate accommodation.

Don't have any special needs now but have taken children with developmental delays, asthma and a wheelchair bound child.
 Medical needs: intravenous feeding, asthmatic kids needing inhalers; developmentally delayed children; drug addicted babies.

9. Do you serve families who need a caregiver who is bilingual?

Total Number of Responses				
Number of Children Actually Served				
Provider Type	# Of Yes Responses	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	1	1	0	0
Center Based Care	1	0	55	0
	2	1	55	0

Comments:

Although she hasn't been approached she could offer bi-lingual care if the child needed a caregiver who spoke Hungarian.

Hasn't been asked.

Wouldn't turn anyone away but they have no caregivers who are bi-lingual.

Korean.

Will be taking Spanish this summer so can accommodate Spanish speaking children.

Provider would get additional training to accommodate a child who spoke another language. EDH is not very diverse; she has never been approached by multi-lingual family.

10. Do you plan to expand the licensed capacity of your program in the next year?

11. If you plan to expand, how many additional children do you anticipate serving?

Total Number of Responses				
Provider Type	# Of Yes Responses	Number of Additional Children To Be Served		
		0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years
Family Child Care	0	0	0	0
Center Based Care	1	75	75	75
	1	75	75	75

12. What is your current monthly full-time cost of care for the children you serve?

Total Number of Responses Family Child Care			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 526.42	\$ 551.56	\$ 272.00
Min Amount Paid	\$ 200.00	\$ 400.00	\$4.00/hour
Max Amount Paid	\$ 758.00	\$ 693.00	\$ 272.00

Number of Responses Center Based Care			
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Average	\$ 802.33	\$ 589.75	\$ 485.00
Min Amount Paid	\$ 760.00	\$ 520.00	\$ 446.00
Max Amount Paid	\$ 867.00	\$ 672.00	\$ 524.00

13. What are your top three program needs?

	Ranking	% Responses
Retaining Staff	1	20%
Finding Qualified Staff	1	60%
Paying Qualified Staff	2	60%
Paying Qualified Staff	3	40%
Can't reach licensed capacity due to staffing issues	0	0

Comments:

Everything is okay...10 hr day is demanding but she doesn't see a way out of that.

New playground regulations are requiring huge cost outlay.
Finding quality, affordable, age appropriate curriculum.

Provider has had the same 2 employees for 13 years, she's been in business 25 years and so feels she has ironed out all the problems a novice would have.

Needs outdoor play equipment.

Difficulty finding time to communicate with parents and also keep up with professional development.

Need more resources form providers.

Getting enough referrals to fill her program.

#1 Training for staff; hands on ECE training. Since provider has two staff, one who has been with her for 10 years and the other for 12 years, her difficulty is retaining her long-term staff- hard to keep giving pay increases; can't compete with child care.

Overall Comments:

They have a huge waiting list.

There is a great demand for infant care that is not being met. Provider would like to see the regulations allow them to take a greater number of infants to ease the demand.

It is frustrating trying to compete with the large child care chains that are moving into town. Parents often think their child needs to attend one of these preschools in order to prepare for kindergarten.

Instead of state licensing folks acting supportive.

Provider hears from parents that there is a big need for infant care. She also hears from parents that there is a need for the kind of care she provides. For example, the provider has 40 children on her waiting list.

Provider is very involved with the "local" Network so she hears about the problems experienced by providers.

Says providers are stretched so thin with their program's administration, caring for the kids and the professional developed.

There is an extreme shortage of care for infants. She feels bad for parents who keep calling her for infant care. In Folsom she hears providers are grouping parents who need infant care.

Difficult attracting staff due to El Dorado Hills location. Their center is new so still trying to reach capacity.

Pretty happy; she's accredited by NAFCC and is always open to training opportunities.

F. Best Practices: Family Support Options

Program Quality

Kansas' Metropolitan Council on Child Care

Kansas' Metropolitan Council on Child Care has made "Is it Good For The Children?" the rallying cry for a campaign that has created a multimillion dollar fund to develop partnerships and programs to raise the quality of childcare. A network of businesses has committed to asking the question before they make decisions (one company that was considering a four-day, ten-hour workweek decided it was *not* good for the children and changed its mind). Business leaders are participating in the role of "investment bankers" as they develop a quality early education system.

Contact: Laura Reinsel, 816-474-4240, x412 or visit their website: www.marc.org/mccc

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Research by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation has found ten success stories that show the quality impact of increased funding. Those funds have come from both public and private sources, and have enabled them to offer salaries as high as \$15 per hour (the median is \$7.80). All ten centers pay for vacation and sick leave; two out of three offer retirement benefits. **For more Information: Making Child Care Work for Everyone: Lessons from the Program Recognition Project, Young Children, 1/99. Vol. 54, pp. 68-73 Kinch, A.F., Schweinhart, L.J.**

Affordability

Mirage Resorts, Las Vegas, Nevada

Mirage Resorts in Las Vegas helps employees pay for child care. A pre-tax child care savings plan is offered along with discounts ranging from free registration to up to 15% of weekly tuition at community child care centers.

Contact: Mirage Resorts Child Care Benefits, 702-597-9925

General Services Administration, Seattle, Washington

In Seattle the General Services Administration, in partnership with the American Federation of Government Employees and the National Federation of Federal Employees, subsidize their lower income employees so they pay no more than 10% of their total family income.

Contact: Andrea Corwin, 253-931-7149

NationsBank

Child care subsidies impacts turnover. Every time a teller quits, it costs NationsBank between \$2,000 and \$3,000, and nearly half of full-timers quit in a year. So the bank began offering a \$25 per week credit for childcare, provided for employees earning \$30,000 or less per year. That credit has had the most impact on their offerings. Among tellers who have used the subsidy, turnover fell from 46% to 14%; among check processors it has gone from 44% to 19%. **Contact: Heidi Gomula, Bank of America, 704-386-7475**

Accessibility

Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle, Washington

Information & Referral Services improves access and can help parents make more informed decisions. Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle

improved its benefits package in 1996 by contracting for child care information and referral services. Employees can call to receive counseling on the child care services in their communities and receive help determining what is best for their family. **Contact: Melinda Wells, 206-583-6452**

School Readiness Resource Bancshares Mortgage Group, South Carolina

Resource Bancshares Mortgage Group in South Carolina opened a nursing mothers' room at its headquarters office. Research has shown that nursing mothers are absent less because their infants are healthier than bottle-fed babies. **Contact: 803-462-8000**

Washington Mutual Bank, Seattle, Washington

Brenda Frost teaches CPR to workers at a local childcare center; her employer not only approves, but happily pays her to do it. Frost's employer, Washington Mutual Bank, has joined others in Seattle, many of which are too small to provide childcare themselves, in reaching out to help local centers by making donations and paying employees to volunteer their services. Child Care Resources, a Seattle nonprofit, is helping make the connections. Their main rule: the money saved by centers when gifts are received must be used to improve the pay or training of staff. Evergreen Childcare Center recently got a new dishwasher from Starbucks, a new fence from Boeing and flooring from C.A. Newell Inc. Says Evergreen's director, Becki Clark, "My doors would have closed a month ago if I didn't have this help." **Contact: Bill Larrabee, Business Child Care Program, 206-329-1011, x216**

Collaborations: Lexington, Kentucky

Businesses, religious institutions, social service agencies and schools in Lexington have joined together to create "Project Parent" to promote a safer community, stronger families and more successful children by pledging to adopt and uphold policies and practices to support and encourage effective parenting. As their pledges, area businesses have made changes in benefits, hours of work and ways of working and have added counseling and family support services.

Seattle, Washington

The City of Seattle's "Project Lift-Off" has laid out a blueprint to provide care and education to all children. The goals include dramatically boosting quality, affordability and availability of programs, and leading the nation in family-friendly workplaces. Their efforts are already paying off. New grants have been received, corporate champions are pitching in, and care is already being provided for 1,000 new children.

Contact: Office of the Mayor, Seattle: 206-684-4000

Child Care Action Campaign

In a new report, "Partnering for Success: Community Approaches to Early Learning," the Child Care Action Campaign presents 68 such partnerships between local schools, childcare providers and Head Start, nearly double the amount they expected. School superintendents were prime initiators in 80% of the partnerships, and when the impetus came from the school system, chances of success and sustainability were greater

Contact: Child Care Action Campaign, 212-239-0138