

# Child Care in Whitman County

September 2008

## Child Care Resource & Referral Across Washington State

Since established by state statute in 1989, the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Network) has been a key component of the child care infrastructure. The Network is charged with helping parents find child care; educating parents, providers and the community about what quality child care looks like; supporting providers through training and technical assistance; strengthening the child care system at all levels; and collecting data about child care supply and demand in Washington State.

During 2007, the Network's member agencies:

- Handled 121,327 calls;
- Processed 33,247 public referral calls;
- Served 25,078 families and 35,289 children; and
- Assisted 21,954 low-income families find child care.

## Child Care Resource & Referral Supports Communities by:

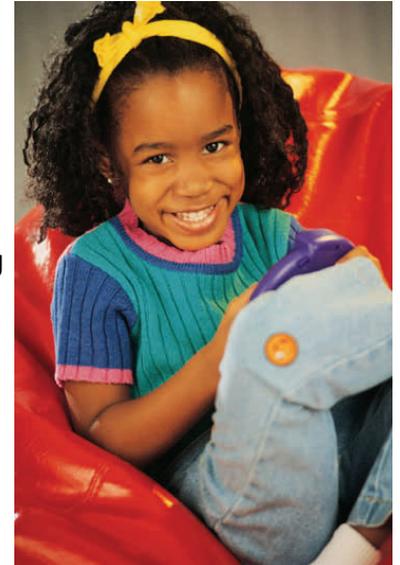
- Helping parents find child care and financing options;
- Improving the quality of child care, early learning and after school programs;
- Advocating for children, parents, and child care providers;
- Increasing the availability of child care;
- Bridging child care and K-12 education; and
- Supporting families to raise healthy children.

## Child Care Resource & Referral In Whitman County

Family Care Resources hosts the child care resource and referral (R&R) program serving Whitman County, in collaboration with Washington State University. In 2007, staff responded to 9,664 calls in the region from parents, providers and community members seeking information and assistance navigating the child care system. R&R staff and consultants are also out in the field: conducting training, collaborating with community partners, and reaching out to families across income levels, geographic barriers, and ethnic identities to provide them with vital child care consumer education.

### Notable highlights of this report:

- Over the last five years, Whitman County has seen a 35% decline in the number of family child care providers and a 54% increase in the number of center facilities, resulting in a large gain of 306 potential slots, all center-based.
- Infant care continues to be the most difficult care to find and the most expensive. Two-thirds of families (66%) looking for care are seeking care for an infant or toddler.
- For a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time care, the median cost represents 42% to 50% of the county's median household income for 2007.



### Local Resource & Referral Contact Information:

**Family Care Resources  
Community-Minded Enterprises  
25 W Main St., Suite 310  
Spokane, WA 99201  
(509) 484-0048 1-800-446-2229  
<http://www.community-minded.org/>**

*Our mission: to facilitate and enhance community well being.*

*Proud Member of the:*





### People

Population	42,700
Change since 2003	1,700
Children under 5 years	1,956
Children under 13 years	4,980
% of Children under 13 living in poverty	17%
Ranking among WA Counties in rate of child poverty	28
K-12 enrollment	4,531
Children in Care Zone <sup>1</sup>	3,329
Average number children on child care subsidy	182/month
Head Start/ECEAP Slots	72

### Economics

Living Wage <sup>2</sup>	\$41,300/yr
Median Household Income	\$35,589/yr
Unemployment Rate	3.4%

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup>Care Zone is defined as the number of children who live in a single-parent or two-parent home where the parent or both parents are working.

<sup>2</sup>The living wage measure is based on a family of four and represents twice the federal poverty level income. Twice the federal poverty level is the income cut off for families receiving child care subsidies.

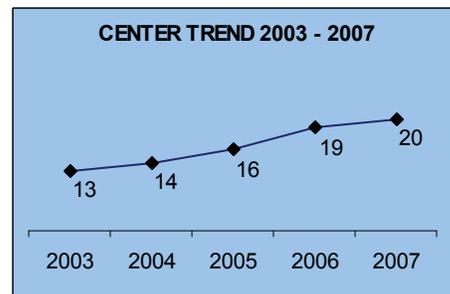
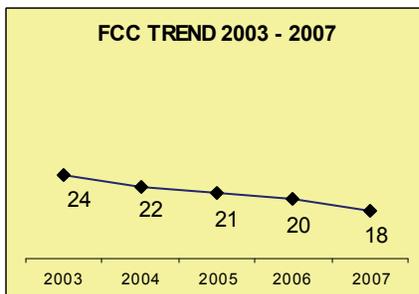
**Data Sources for the Report:**

American Federation of Teachers, Children's Defense Fund, WA Dept of Early Learning, WA Employment Security Dept, WA Head Start State Collaboration Office, WA Office of Financial Management, WA Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, US Census Bureau, US Dept of Health & Human Services, US Federal Registry and the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

## Licensed Child Care in Our Community

### How many providers are there in my area by type?

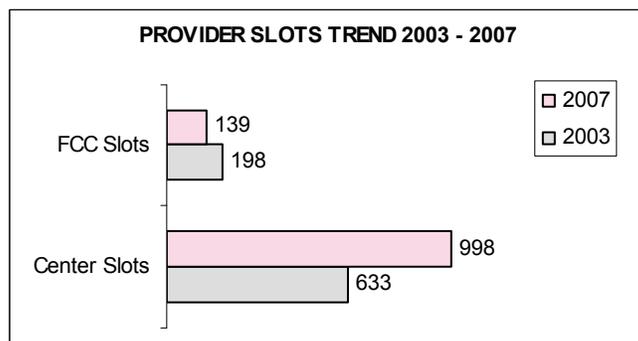
Family child care (FCC) businesses account for 47% of the 38 licensed facilities in Whitman County. In the past 5 years, the overall number of licensed facilities has increased by a net of 1, or 3%.



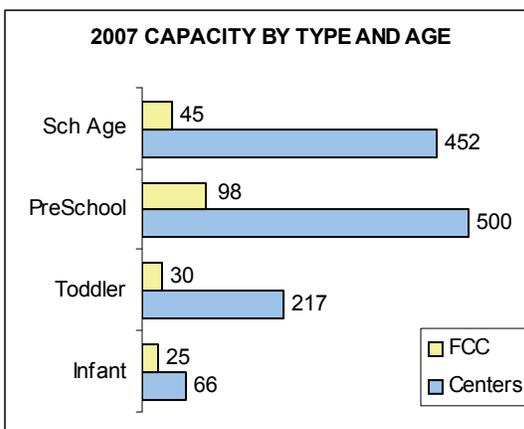
Between 2003 and 2007, there has been a 25% decline in the number of family child care businesses, with a net loss of 6 facilities. Center facilities have increased by 7, or 54%, during that same time.

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

Since 2003, the county has experienced a net loss of nearly one-third (59) of its potential family child care slots. During that same time, the increase of 7 new center facilities has resulted in a gain of 365 (or 60%) potential center slots. Overall, in the past 5 years, Whitman County has gained 306 potential slots.



### What is the distribution of slots by type of care and by age?



Because of a higher required ratio of adults to children under 2 years old in licensed care, there are fewer slots for infants and toddlers than for other age groups. Unlike most counties, in Whitman County there are more center-based infant and toddler slots than in family child care businesses.

*Note: This chart does not represent actual enrollment of children in care. The number of slots for all children is overstated in this comparison. It shows each age group filled as if there were no other children in the other age group. If a slot is filled for one age group it cancels out the potential slot for the other age group.*

### What languages do providers speak in my community?

All providers in the community speak English, and 1 provider speaks Spanish. Other languages reported include Chinese, Farsi and Persian.

Languages Spoken by Providers	
English	100%
Other	21%

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

Nearly all providers offer full- and part-time care during weekdays only. Only one provider regularly offers evening care past 6:30 PM, and no providers offer weekend or overnight care.

## Economics of Child Care Providers

### What do child care providers earn compared to kindergarten teachers?

2006 Average Salary Comparisons: Kindergarten Teachers and Child Care Providers			
Public School Kindergarten Teacher (2005)	Director Child Care Center	Teacher Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider Business Gross Income
\$45,722/yr \$3,810/mo	\$28,860/yr \$2,405/mo	\$19,406/yr \$1,617/mo	\$23,698/yr \$1,975/mo

Washington's kindergarten teachers earn 58% more than center directors, more than double what child care teachers earn, and 93% more than family child care providers' gross earnings in the region. The substantial wage differential can be attributed to higher educational requirements for kindergarten teachers and relatively low turnover in public schools. The lack of competitive wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain educated child care workers and can have a negative impact on the quality of care.

### How does the child care subsidy reimbursement rate affect provider profitability?

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

2007 Ranges: Monthly Full-Time Subsidy Reimbursement Rates			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
<b>Centers</b>	\$600	\$505	\$477
<b>Family Child Care Homes</b>	\$451	\$444	\$444

To support the average salary of a teacher, aide and part of the cost of the director for an infant classroom in a center, a program would need to enroll at least **6.1** of the licensed maximum of 8 subsidized full-time infants. Income generated from the other **1.9** infants would have to cover all other classroom costs including benefits, training, rent and supplies.

In a typical family child care home, one provider might have two infants and four preschoolers. A provider's gross earnings if all the children are on subsidy would be **\$2,798** per month. Out of these earnings, the provider must pay all expenses, including salaries, benefits, taxes, rent, meals, training, equipment and supplies.

## Professional Development for the Child Care Workforce

### Training and Scholarships

Family Care Resources provides state-mandated training for providers. In 2007, the R&R offered **76 trainings for the child care workforce in the region, averaging 34 students each.**

**Washington Scholarships for Child Care Professionals (formerly T.E.A.C.H.)** is a scholarship program that provides financial support for center and school-age staff and family child care providers to enroll in community and technical college degree programs. In Whitman County, **4** scholarships were awarded in 2007.

### National Standards for Quality

Training, education, experience and applied knowledge are important to child care quality. Accreditation recognizes facilities who have achieved national quality standards:

<b>Center-based Accredited Programs</b> <i>National Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>School-Age Accredited Programs</b> <i>National AfterSchool Association</i>	<b>0</b>
<b>Accredited Family Child Care Homes</b> <i>National Association for Family Child Care</i>	<b>0</b>
<b>Accredited Montessori Programs</b> <i>American Montessori Society</i>	<b>0</b>

### Professional Associations

**Association for the Education of Young Children Chapter:** Palouse Area AEYC

**Family Child Care Association Chapter(s):** No Chapters

### Providers say R&Rs help:

- 1) Increase parent referrals to fill my openings
- 2) Increase my quality of care
- 3) Increase my ability to operate my child care business

## About the Families

Callers to the referral lines are regularly surveyed by the R&R Network in order to enhance our services and inform policymakers. Parents report that R&Rs significantly increase their knowledge of:

- 1) How to choose child care that fits their family's needs; and
- 2) How to identify a quality child care setting.

Families consider a variety of factors when seeking a child care, including practical considerations such as the accessibility of programs to their work-place or home, the cost of care and the hours of operation.

### Parents seek child care where:

- 1) The center/home is clean and safe
- 2) The provider really likes children
- 3) Parents feel comfortable with the provider
- 4) Children's individual needs are met

**Top three challenges** parents identify when seeking child care:

- 1) Affordability
- 2) Inconvenient locations
- 3) Hours that match parents' needs



**95%** of families surveyed indicate that child care resource and referral staff responded helpfully to their individual questions and concerns.

## Affordability for Families

### How much does child care cost in my community?

Countywide, the annual median household income in 2007 was **\$35,589**. The tables below indicate the annual median price of full-time care for one child by age group and type of care. The median price indicates that half the providers in the area charge more and half charge less than the prices quoted here.

Centers	2007 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2007 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$9,993	28%
Toddler	\$8,364	24%
Preschool	\$7,800	22%
School Age	\$3,750	11%

Family Child Care	2007 Median Annual Cost for 1 Child	% of 2007 Med. Household Inc.
Infant	\$7,800	22%
Toddler	\$7,670	22%
Preschool	\$7,176	20%
School Age	\$3,900	11%

While the median cost of family child care can be up to 28% less than the cost of care in a center, child care continues to represent a substantial cost for families. The cost of full-time care for an infant represents 22% to 28% of the median income. Care for an infant and a preschool child would represent 42% to 50% of median income, the highest in the state.

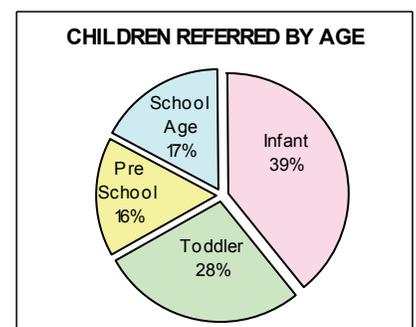
## Families Using R&R Services

### Who are families that call the R&R Line?

In 2007, **179** families received referrals. Nearly one-third of the families served (31%) were low income. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of families were headed by single parents.

### What ages of children are referred?

Infants represent the largest category of children referred for licensed care (39%), followed by toddlers (28%). Significantly, children under five years old represent 84% of those referred for care, higher than any other county in the state.



### CHILDREN NEEDING NONSTANDARD HOURS



### How many children need non-standard care?

There were **10** requests for referrals to licensed facilities offering non-standard hour care. Most requests (80%) were for evening care (extending past 6:30 PM). No one requested overnight care.