



## 2007 Report on Child Care in Lincoln County

**Today the most common type of family with children is the two-earner couple.** According to the 2007 Bureau of Labor Statistics, the proportion of married-couple families in which both parents were employed rose to 62 percent in 2006. **Among mothers with children younger than 1 year old, 56.1 percent were in the labor force in 2006.**<sup>1</sup>

**Oregon women have consistently had higher participation rates in the labor force than US women in general.** And, women with children – especially single mothers in the labor force – surged after the passage of the federal Welfare Reform Act in 1996.<sup>2</sup>

**In only a few decades we have experienced a revolution in how we raise our children, yet public and government policies have not kept pace.** Parents have had to make enormous changes in efforts to raise their families and the strain is starting to show.<sup>3</sup> The need for accessible, affordable, high quality early childhood care is critical to the economic development at national, state and local levels. Changes in public policy are imperative to promote both public and private investments in early childhood programs. **These investments will benefit our children, support and strengthen families and ultimately contribute to our economy.**

**Family Care Connection, part of OSU Extension Service, is Lincoln County's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency.** We provide a critical link for parents - to child care providers in their communities, information about available subsidies to help with the cost of care, and consumer education on the importance of choosing a high quality child care environment. In addition, our work with child care providers is focused on increasing the supply of quality child care through the provision of training, technical assistance, consultation and mentoring services. **As the CCR&R, Family Care Connection is the primary organization that works with and relates to all parts of the child care system – families, child care providers, educators, businesses and policymakers.**

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### **This report contains information on the following:**

1. Accessibility of child care in Lincoln County.
2. Affordability of child care in Lincoln County.
3. Quality of child care in Lincoln County.

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN 2006  
<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/fameec.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Women in the Labor Force by Pamela Ferrara Published Mar-22-2007  
<http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/ArticleReader?itemid=00003582&print=1>

<sup>3</sup> Economic Policy Institute May 24, 2007 Briefing Paper #190

## 1. ACCESSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

**How much child care do we have?** The supply of child care known to Family Care Connection as of December 31, 2006 is detailed below:

<b>Child Care Centers</b> (care in a facility that meets code requirements, usually a commercial building)	
a. Full day centers	9
b. Part day centers (preschool and afterschool programs)	15
c. Child care slots at centers	702
d. Infant/toddler slots at centers (children under 30 or 36 months of age; for certified centers, this depends on which CCD regulations the center is operating under)	47
<b>Family Child Care Providers</b>	
a. Registered Family Child Care (care is in the provider's own home)	23
b. Certified Family Child Care (care is in a single family home, usually the provider's)	6
c. Legally exempt family child care	14
d. Child care slots at Family Child Care homes	277
e. Approximate number of infant/toddler slots at Family Child Care homes (children up to 24 months of age)	74
<b>Total number of all child care slots</b>	<b>979</b>
<b>Total number of all infant/toddler slots</b>	<b>121</b>

**How much child care do we need?** The total need for child care is a reflection of the total population of children age 12 and under. The demand for child care is highest for working parents with young children, especially children ages 6 and under. As children start school the demand for full-time care decreases however the need for part-time after-school care increases.

**According to population estimates there were 5810 children age 0-12 in Lincoln County as of July 1, 2006.**<sup>4</sup> Further breakdown of ages is as follows:

- 2105 children age 0-4 years
- 2176 children age 5-9 years
- 1529 children age 10-12 years

Family Care Connection receives calls from parents looking for child care, **which represents part of the need for child care. The requests for care do not reflect children already in existing child care slots.** During the calendar year ending December 31, 2006, Family Care Connection provided child care related services to 737 parents. Comprehensive services including child care referrals were provided to 398 of these parents who needed care for 538 children. The requests for care show the following:

Ages of children needing care	Number of children	% of children needing care
Infant/toddler - Ages 2 and under	296	55%
Preschool - Ages 3 through 5	143	27%
School-age – Ages 6 and over	99	18%

**Do we have enough child care?** Overall we continue to experience a general shortage of child care in Lincoln County but specific types of child care are critically insufficient.

**INFANT/TODDLER CARE: The need for infant and toddler care reached a crisis level during 2006.** While Family Child Care providers have the most infant/toddler slots available, state

<sup>4</sup> Population Research Center, Portland State University – Population by Age and Sex for Oregon and Its Counties: July 1, 2006

regulations only allow providers to care for two children under two years of age, and their own children are counted in their licensed ratios. Caring for infants and toddlers requires more time and energy and specialized equipment that not all providers possess, such as cribs and high chairs. Child Care Centers are allowed more infant/toddler slots per facility, which includes children up to 30 months of age. However, regulations require dedicated staff which can increase the cost of providing care. Only three centers in the county care for this age group. **During 2006 there were 296 requests for infant/toddler care made to Family Care Connection. As of December 31, 2006, there were only 121 infant/toddler slots in the county.**

**NON-TRADITIONAL HOUR CARE:** Non-traditional hour care continues to be a critical need for our families who have to work evenings, weekends or rotating schedules. **Of parents calling Family Care Connection in 2006, 54% needed care during early morning, evening, overnight and weekend hours on a regular basis. Of callers who provided information regarding employment, 38% reported being employed in hotel, restaurant, retail sales, tourism related or health care fields, where non-traditional hour care is typically required.** Thirteen percent were in the process of searching for work, and needing to secure child care to make their job search successful. **Of all child care providers enrolled with Family Care Connection in 2006, about 24% offered care during some evening hours after 6:30 pm and only 13% offered care on either a Saturday or Sunday.** Providers who are willing to do non-traditional hour care fill up their slots quickly and often times burn-out due to the extended hours they work. Families needing non-traditional hour care face significant barriers in finding stable quality care for their children.

## 2. AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

**Affordable, quality child care is a necessity for working families with children, and for employers and the overall economic health of our county and communities.** It supports the ability of families to attain self sufficiency and increases the likelihood that children have good early care and education experiences.

Between 1994 and 2006 statewide rates for child care increased for all ages and types of care. During this time frame family child care hourly rates for toddlers increased by 43% and center care monthly rates for toddlers increased by 59%.<sup>5</sup> The benchmark for affordable child care in Oregon is that families spend less than 10% of their household income on child care. **Based on data from the biennial Oregon Population Survey, families with incomes below \$25,000 spend an average of 37% of household income on child care, while families with incomes over \$45,000 spend an average of 5%.<sup>6</sup>**

**In 2006, of the parents who called Family Care Connection, 47% stated there was only one adult in the household and 52% of those who responded to an income question stated that their household income was less than \$25,000 per year.**

**Significant progress was made during the 2007 legislative session that will increase the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) Program subsidy payments available to low income families through the Department of Human Services (DHS).** The income limit will be restored to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently it is at 150% of FPL) and ERDC co-payments will be reduced by an average of 20%. In addition the child care reimbursement rates for licensed providers will increase to approximately the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 2006 Child Care Market Rate Study, bringing the state payments into alignment with rates charged by providers. DHS providers

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<sup>5</sup> 2006 Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study, Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership August 2006

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved 8/8/07 from <http://www.nccic.org/pubs/usinrgres/parental.html> (National Child Care Information Center)

exempt from licensing will receive an increase to 88% of the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, and for DHS exempt providers eligible for the enhanced rate (those who have taken all the required trainings for licensing but are not licensed) will receive an increase to 95% of the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. (This maintains the 7% differential available for “enhanced” providers.) DHS has three rate areas in the state, which have reflected the differing rates that providers have charged in the past. Providers in Lincoln County should see significant raises in the payments they receive for eligible DHS families because they will also move up to a higher paying rate area.

### 3. QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

**Quality child care takes advantage of the rapid brain development of the very young and prepares young children for school, a lifetime of learning, and a successful place in the economy.** Studies show that children in high-quality child care settings demonstrate better cognitive function and social skills and have fewer behavioral problems than those in lower-quality care. Children who benefit from high-quality care are also more likely to be successful in school and later in life.<sup>7</sup>

Experts who have studied high-quality early childhood development programs agree that these programs have substantial and enduring payoffs. Long-term studies consistently show that investing in children has several lasting, important benefits for the participants, their families, and society at large including taxpayers. These benefits include:

- Higher levels of verbal, mathematical, and general intellectual achievement
- Greater success at school, including less grade retention, less need for special education, and higher graduation rates
- Higher employment and earnings
- Better health outcomes
- Less welfare dependency
- Lower crime rates
- Higher government revenues and lower government expenditures.<sup>8</sup>

**Research has identified the quality of care provided is directly affected by the education or specialized training of caregivers.<sup>9</sup> Family Care Connection offers a variety of trainings and professional development opportunities.**

**The Child Care Health Consultation Program (CCHC) funded since 2003 is a significant effort to improve the quality of care in Lincoln County.** A collaborative effort with Lincoln County Health & Human Services’ Public Health Division, the goals work to improve the physical, social and emotional health and safety of children in child care settings. Services are provided by a Public Health Nurse, Health Educator, Early Childhood Specialist, and an Early Childhood Behavioral/Mental Health Specialist, through: consultations with child care providers on site at their home or facility or via telephone; trainings on a wide variety of topics chosen by providers; and helping providers and the families of children in care access other health and community resources.

**In 2006, through the CCR&R and the CCHC programs, 94 trainings providing 201 hours of training credit were presented, with 345 child care providers participating.** Training topics

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<sup>7</sup> Child Care & Education: Building a Firm Foundation for Oregon’s Families & Oregon’s Economy -Oregon Commission for Child Care Report to the Governor & the Legislature 2007

<sup>8</sup> Economic Policy Institute - Executive summary of Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation Public Investment in High-Quality Prekindergarten by Robert G. Lynch May 2007 [http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/book\\_enriching](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/book_enriching)

<sup>9</sup> *Improving Child Care: Providing Comparative Information on Child Care Facilities to Parents and the Community* Child Care Policy Research Issue Brief, Roberta B. Weber and Jerri Wolfe, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Family Policy Program, Oregon State University Summer 2003

included: health and safety, nutrition, child development, working with children with special needs, specialized infant/toddler training, and various other early childhood related areas. By videotaping our CCHC classes we have increased access to training for more isolated providers in our county. Providers can check out a training video from our CCHC Video Library, which includes the appropriate class handouts, and when the provider completes the corresponding Reflective Paper and returns it to the CCR&R, the provider is eligible to receive credit hours for the training. Providers accessing training in this manner are included in the training statistics cited above.

Through continued grant funding from the **Lincoln Commission on Children and Families** we have been able to maintain a **Provider Scholarship Fund** allowing us to offer trainings at no cost, and to offer reimbursements (up to a predetermined limit) for the cost of trainings accessed through other sources; thereby removing the financial barrier to the continuous improvement in the knowledge, skills and professional development of child care providers.

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## WORK IN PROGRESS

In the year 2000 a group of dedicated parents and community leaders started working to open a certified child care center in Newport. The specific focus was to meet the continuing need for infant and toddler care and for care during non-traditional hours. There have been many ups and downs in this journey. Family Care Connection has been involved every step of the way in collaboration with the **Newport Child Care Committee** and the nonprofit **Lincoln County Association for Family and Community Education**. Through grant funds and donations from local businesses and citizens, in 2006 we finished production of a DVD – ***Making the Case in Newport and Lincoln County: Child Care is a Fundamental Workforce Issue*** – to tell the story of how important child care is to the whole community, raise awareness and build support for the child care center. With just the few presentations done so far at community groups in Newport, we have received commitments of support, including critical financial support, and we are encouraged that more support will follow.

Family Care Connection has also been involved from the beginning with the newly formed nonprofit **ASK (Adults Supporting Kids) in Lincoln City**. **ASK** is committed to increasing the number of quality, affordable child care options available in North Lincoln County. Numerous public awareness activities are currently underway and it is exciting to see the results of raised awareness and growing support, due to the efforts of this group.

## CONCLUSIONS

Societal and workforce demographics have changed dramatically. No longer just an issue for parents, child care is critical to the economic development of our communities. **Just like adequate highways, public transportation and affordable housing, early childhood care and education is part of the infrastructure that supports businesses and the ability of parents to go to work.**

**Child care is education.** We have invested highly in public education but research proves it is the early experiences of young children that have the most profound effect on their healthy growth and development, and their ability to succeed later in life. **Prominent national economists believe investment in early childhood development programs yield returns far greater than most projects that are currently funded in the name of economic development. It is essential for us to start making those investments for our children in Lincoln County.**