Executive Summary

Of the

2002 Survey Results for
Calaveras County Child Care Providers & Families with Children in Child Care

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Executive Summary

Background

The mission of the Calaveras Child Care Council (CCCC) is to *support the success of all children, their families and the economy of our communities through the development of affordable, accessible, quality child care.* In order to carry out its mission, the Council regularly gathers and analyzes data about children using and/or in need of child care and child care providers. In January 2002, the CCCC contracted with Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. to conduct two surveys for this purpose. The first survey targeted child care providers and the second targeted families with children in child care. The data was analyzed and a final report of findings published in May 2002.

Surveys were sent to all child care providers in Calaveras County, with 104 returned, for a response rate of 84%. Forty-one percent of the responses came from private centers and family child care providers Surveys were distributed to 962 families with 246 returned, for a response rate of 26%.

The results of the provider and family surveys will be used by the CCCC to develop an action plan to improve service delivery for families; to identify and prioritize gaps in the professional development and training needs of providers; and, to identify barriers to accessing child care for families currently on a child care waiting list.

This Executive Summary follows the format of the full report, presenting results of the Providers' Survey, followed by the results of the Family Survey. The complete report on the "2002 Survey Results for Calaveras County Child Care Providers & Families with Children in Child Care," is available from the Calaveras Child Care Council.

Provider Respondent Profile

Eighty-one percent of respondents are between the ages of 21 and 40 years old and nearly 60% are married. The ethnicity of respondents mirrored that of the County, with nearly all White/Caucasian. Most provider households have two adults living in the home, and in some cases there are three. Thirty-two percent of providers indicated having children under the age of five in their household and 49% indicated having one or more children at home between the ages of six and seventeen.

Two-thirds of all provider respondents (68%) have a <u>total household income</u> of less than $50,000 annually. Nearly one-third (31%) of all respondents have a total household income of less than $20,000; of that group, 73% are unmarried.

Provider Experience, Longevity, and Compensation

Nearly two-thirds (59%) of providers completed one to three years of college, 17% attended four years of college, and 6% attended graduate school. Another 5% attended technical or vocational school, and 13% completed high school or have a GED; and 24% hold Child Development Matrix permits.

Almost half of all providers (49%) have less than five years working in the field; and almost all (95%) anticipate staying in the field for anywhere from one to 20 years. Motivation for becoming a child care provider and staying in the profession most frequently involve the enjoyment of being with children/spending time with children and a desire to stay at home with their own children while earning money.

About half of all respondents (49%) work 30-40 hours each week, and an additional 20% work 41-50 hours per week. However, when considering only the number of hours worked by family child care providers and private center providers each week, about half work 40-50 hours each week, and another third work from 31-40 hours each week. In addition to paid hours worked each week, 75% of providers work from one to five additional hours unpaid.

Ninety-five percent of respondents earn less than $30,000 per year providing child care services. Nearly half earn between $10,001 and $20,000 annually, and another 33% earn less than $10,000 per year. The median hourly wage for all respondents, excluding benefits is $9.30 per hour, with an average hourly wage of $9.43. These figures are significant considering that the the federal poverty level for a family of four is $18,100 (2002 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines). And although one third of providers earn less than $10,000 per year, not all of them are living at the poverty level due to additional family income.

Benefits offered to providers need to be considered as part of overall compensation. While most respondents indicate some level of benefits, including from health insurance, vacation, sick days, retirement, the percentage of full-time employees receiving benefits is, in all cases, higher than the percentage of part-time providers with benefits. This is significant because nearly one-third of all respondents are part-time employees working less than 30 hours per week.

The survey also asked providers to indicate if they are compensated for training days. Sixty-four percent of all respondents are compensated for training. However, only 33% of Family Child Care and/or Private Center providers are compensated for training. This is important, in that continuing education and training are considered critical factors to the overall quality of child care; and compensation for days spent in training becomes an incentive for providers to continue their education.

Child Care Operations

Of the 104 providers surveyed, 59% work in publicly funded care settings, while 41% work in either Family Child Care or Private Centers.

One hundred percent of respondents indicate they are closed for one or more *normal days* of operation due to holidays, vacation, illness, training, and/or planning. This is important to consider when families are seeking access to care during those times, and the number of children impacted by closing can be as few as one, or as many as 300.

Access to child care is a pressing concern for many families. Sixty-four percent of providers indicate that they maintain a waiting list for families needing care. The number of children on waiting lists ranges from one to fourteen, with the average of six children.

Almost all providers offer care Monday through Friday; only three providers offer care on Saturday, and only two on Sunday. All Saturday/Sunday care options are provided by Family Child Care providers. Hours of operation are fairly standard with few options for families needing extended or non-traditional hours.

Thirty percent of providers responding to the survey care for ten or fewer children, while more than one third (36%) care for 11 to 20 children; 50% state they care for children with disabilities. The types of disabilities for children in child care varied, with children frequently having more than one disability. The most frequently noted disability in children was speech at 57%, followed by learning and emotional disabilities, at 41% and 39% respectively.

Provider Resources and Supports

Families frequently turn to their child care providers for information and referrals. The survey asked providers for the top three services requested by families related to child care, and the top three services families request <u>not</u> related to child care. Not surprisingly, given the uniformity of child care providers hours of operation, the most frequent request for information related to child care was for extended care or substitute provider options. When it comes to requests for information <u>unrelated</u> to child care, families are asking most often for referrals to counseling/therapists and to health/medical professionals.

The knowledge and training level of providers are important factors which contribute to their ability to provide quality child care. Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that they spend at least one day a year in training. Of that group, the largest percentage (30%) attended two to five days of training, while another 17% attended six to ten days of training.

Providers were asked to assess their interest levels in training related to (1) child learning and education needs, (2) business management, and (3) working with families. Providers are most interested in participating in classes and workshops related to child learning and education needs that address behavior management and they are least interested in training about school-age children and infant/toddler training. When rating interests related to business management, respondents were most interested in health and safety trainings, followed by training related to funding and resources. Interest levels were similar for the topics related to working with families.

Although providers consider training important, they experience barriers to attending. The largest barrier is that providers have no substitute to care for their children while they're in training. The next most frequent barriers to providers attending training, were the location for training, and the hours/days trainings are offered.

Family Respondent Profile

Eighty-one percent of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 40 years old, while another 15% are 41 to 50 years old. The majority of respondents (59%) are married. Nearly one-fifth (19%) are single and slightly more than one-fifth (21%) are either divorced or separated. The ethnicity of respondents reflects the ethnic composition in Calaveras County, with 84% of respondents indicating they were While/Caucasian, followed by Native Americans at 8% and Latino/Hispanic at 3%.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents are employed on a full-time basis, 17% work part-time, 2% are retired, 1% are seasonally employed, and 10% are unemployed. Another 13% identified their employment status as “other,” which includes students, self-employed, homemakers, or people with multiple jobs.

Sixty-seven percent of households have two adults living in the home, while 26% have one adult, and 8% have three or more adults living in the home. Eighty-one percent of households have one or more children under the age of five, and 63% have one or more children between the ages of six and seventeen. Thirty-four families (14%) indicated having a total of 54 children between the ages of 0 and 17 with disabilities. The largest percent of children (30%) were identified as having Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD), followed by 24% of children with learning disabilities.

Two-thirds of all respondents (68%) have a total household income for all adults living in the home of less than $50,000 annually. Nearly one-third (31%) of all respondents have a total household income of less than $20,000. Of that group, 73% are single, separated, divorced or widowed (unmarried).

More than one-third (40%) of family respondents completed one to three years of college, 11% attended four years of college, and 5% attended graduate school. Another 12% attended technical or vocational school, and 27% completed high school or have a GED. Twenty-nine percent have some sort of formal degree or certificate.

Families’ Child Care Situation and Needs

The survey asked a series of questions to determine the number of children in the home currently in care, the number and ages of children needing care, and the schedules and costs of care for those children. Families with more than one child in care were asked to indicate if any of the child care schedules are the same.

Sixty-one percent of respondents have one child in care, 31% had two children in care, 7.5% have three children in care, and only 1.5% has four children in care. In addition to the children already in care, another 395 children were identified as needing care by the respondents. The largest need for care was for children between the ages of six and ten representing 57% of the total children needing care. This was followed by children between the ages of three and five which represents another 26% of children needing care.

Most families utilize child care during the traditional hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. This is likely the result of hours child care is available, as indicated earlier by the families’ requests of providers for extended hours of care or substitute care options. Out of all respondents, only 20 children were in child care on Saturday and/or Sunday.

The majority of families with one or two children in care, have their children in public child care settings, followed by private centers, and then exempt care. The costs for child care ranges from less than $100 per month to more than $300 per month, per child. Two-thirds of families pay less than $300 per month for their first child in care; 88% of families with two children in care pay less than $300 per month for the second child in care. Depending upon a family’s total income, the combined costs of care can represent a significant portion of total household expenses.

Families were asked to identify any barriers they may experience when accessing child care, and to rank the level of the barrier on a scale of “Not a Barrier” to “Very Large Barrier.” The largest barrier identified by family respondents to accessing child care is the cost of care; half of all respondents stated the cost was an average, large, or very large barrier for their family. This is consistent with information given by child care providers that states family requests for information about financial assistance/subsidies for child care are the third most frequent type of request made of providers.

In general, families express high confidence in their child care provider’s knowledge and ability to provide a variety of services. More than half of all respondents believe their providers have above average or excellent knowledge and skills in all service areas except non-child care related referrals/resources.

Families' Priorities in Choosing Child Care

Families were asked to indicate the level of priority (from one to six) placed on five different areas of consideration for choosing child care. The six options families were asked to prioritize were: a) cost, b) location, c) type of care, d) quality of care, e) provider qualifications, and f) "other."

Ninety-five percent of all respondents indicate quality is their first or second priority when choosing child care. The characteristic families most associate with quality care is caring, nurturing providers who love and enjoy working with/teaching children. The next most important priority area when choosing care for their children is the provider's qualifications; 59% of respondents rank this as their first or second priority.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Highlight of the key findings found throughout the full report on the 2002 Survey Results for Calaveras County Child Care Providers & Families with Children in Child Care are listed below.

Provider Survey

- 100% of all respondents providing weekend care are Family Child Care providers.
- 100% of providers indicate they close for one or more normal days of operation each year.
- 97% of all respondents provide care Monday through Friday.
- 95% of all respondents earn less than $30,000 as child care providers.
- 95% of all respondents expect to continue caring for children; however, almost half expect to leave the field in the next five years.
- 90% of all respondents own a computer; 58% use is to manage or provide child care services.
- 88% of all respondents working full-time and 65% working part-time receive some level of benefits. However, Family Child Care providers and private centers offer fewer types of benefits than publicly funded programs.
- 82% of all respondents have college and technical school backgrounds; 24% have degrees and/or certificates.
- 75% of all respondents spend at least one day a year in training; 64% of all respondents are compensated for training days.
- 70% of all respondents are married.
- 64% of providers maintain waiting lists for children needing care.
- 59% of all respondents work in publicly funded child care programs.
- 52% of all respondents state the largest barrier to attending training is lack of substitute care providers.
- 49% of all respondents have been providing child care less than five years.
- 47% of all respondents open between the 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.; 82% close at or before 6:00 p.m.
- 37% of all respondents have a total household income of less than $30, 000; and 56% have a total household income between $30,000 and $75,000.
- 32% of all respondents have one or more children under the age of five living in their home; 49% have one or more children between the ages of six and seventeen.
- The average hourly wage of all respondents is $9.43; however, 30% of Family Child Care providers have an hourly wage of less than $8.00.
- 11% of all respondents entered child care because they want to become teachers and consider child care part of the career path.
- The most frequent request families make of their provider related to child care is for extended hours and/or substitute child care options and referrals.

Family Survey

- 92% of all respondents have one or two children in care; 8% have three or four children in care.
- 78% of all respondents indicate their first child is in care for six or more hours per day; and 50% state their second child is in care the same amount of time.
- 68% of all respondents have college and/or vocational school background; 29% have a formal degree or certificate.
- 60% of all respondents consider caring, nurturing providers who love and enjoy working with and teaching children to be a key characteristic of a quality setting.
- 59% of all respondents are married; 40% are single, divorced or separated.
- 57% of all respondents drop their first child off in child care between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m.; 50% leave their second child in care during the same hours.
- 54% of all respondents have their children in publicly funded programs.
- 51% of all respondents pay less than $200 per month for their first child in care; and 82% pay $200 or less for their second child in care.
- 50% of all respondents indicate cost as the biggest barrier to accessing child care for their family.
- 49% of all respondents have had to go without needed child care at least once; 47% stated the primary reason for going without care was their provider was closed.
- 47% of all respondents did not go to work (either called in sick or took leave time) in order to stay home due to their provider's closing.
- 35% of all respondents have one or more children under five living in their home; and 63% of have one or more children between the ages of six and seventeen living in their home.
- 31% of all respondents have a total household income of less than $20,000; 68% have total household incomes less than $50,000.
- 17% of all respondents have one or more children with disabilities; for a total of 54 children for all respondents.
- 395 children were identified as needing care.
- Although infant/toddler care (for children 0 to 2 years of age) is not the most needed type of care in terms of numbers of children, this type of care is one of the least available.
- Although families consider cost to be a barrier, they prioritize quality over cost seven times to one, as their number one consideration when choosing care. 94% of all respondents consider quality as the first or second deciding factor in choosing care.