

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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## *Maine Child Care Advisory Council*

January 13, 2012

Honorable Members of the Maine 125<sup>th</sup> Second Legislature  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Dear Committee Members:

I am pleased to present this annual report of the 2011 activities of Maine's Child Care Advisory Council as well as a brief report of the current state of child care in Maine. The Child Care Advisory Council is legislatively mandated to do three things: 1) advise Maine's Legislature and the Department of Health and Human Services regarding child care services in the state; 2) encourage the development of policies coordinated among state agencies to promote quality, uniformity and efficiency of child care services; and, 3) facilitate community input on child care issues through communication among state government, the legislature, service providers and the public. During the 2010 – 2011 calendar year the following highlights the Councils' efforts at fulfilling the above legislative mandate:

- The Child Care Advisory Council provided input and guidance around the design of the 2010 Child Care market Rate Survey (see brief report to follow for results). This survey gathers critical information about the supply, cost and quality of child care services across the State of Maine.

### **Child Care Advisory Council Members 2011**

Lori Freid Moses, Center-based care

Allyson Dean, USM, Muskie School

Jane Drake, Child Care Licensing

Eileen McAvoy, Resource Dev Center  
(nominee)

Sheila Youmans, School age Child Care

Laura Harper, Maine's Women's Lobby

Linda Labas, Ctr for Community Inclusion  
& Disabilities Studies

Heidi Leblanc, Child Dev. Services  
(nominee)

Judy Reidt-Parker, non-profit advocacy

Kathy Colfer, HS Directors nominee  
(nominee)

Kristen Bowker, Parent not receiving  
subsidy

Deborah Sanderson, House of Reps.  
Linda Sanborn, House of Representatives

Lois Snowe-Mello, State Senator

Doug Ray, Department of Economic  
and Community Development

Christine Theriault, Office of Substance  
Abuse

Joseph Thomas, Assistant Fire Marshal

Janine Blatt, DOE, Early Childhood

Cindy Brown, DOE, Early Childhood  
Special Ed

Ann O'Brien, Children's Behavioral  
Health Services

Liz Ray/Dawn Mulcahey, TANF/ASPIRE

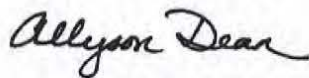
Angie Bellefleur, DHHS

Patti Woolley, DHHS

- The Child Care Advisory Council, through its Quality Rating System subcommittee, provided input on further defining standards within the quality rating system so that child care providers clearly understand the expectations at each Step of Quality for ME, Maine's quality rating and improvement system for child care programs.
- The Child Care Advisory Council partnered with the Maine Children's Growth Council by participating in, and contributing to goal setting, for the Growth Council's Early Childhood Accountability Team.
- The Child Care Advisory Council successfully revised its membership list to ensure diverse and engaged participation on the council. We began recruiting for those members in September, 2011.

Finally, the Council has worked hard this year to monitor changes in Maine's child care system and their impact on children and families. To that end, we present the following report which highlights key characteristics of the child care system including: number of children in need of care, the capacity of the system to meet that need, the cost, for families, in purchasing care, and finally, the quality of child care that families have access to in Maine. We hope this brief summary of Maine's current system is helpful to you as you consider the needs of Maine's families in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allyson Dean".

Allyson Dean, Interim Chair  
Maine Child Care Advisory Council

cc: Mary Mayhew, DHHS Commissioner



## What is the Current Child Care Need in Maine?

Child care is critical component of the state's economic prosperity. Not only because high quality early learning experiences prepare the next generation of Maine's workforce but also because thousands of Maine's families need high quality child care to retain employment. The table below outlines the number of Maine families and children who need some type of child care while families work.

**Table 1.0 Estimate of the Number of Maine Families in Need of Child Care**

How many children under age 6 potentially need child care?	Maine	United States
Children in two-parent families, both parents in labor force	34,380	8,971,157
Children in single-parent families, parent in labor force	18,483	5,856,354
Total children under age 6 potentially needing child care	52,863	14,827,511

Source: American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)), 2005-2009 5-year estimates.

## What are the Current Child Care Options in Maine?

Maine families have several options when choosing child care for their children. Among these options are child care programs licensed by the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services such as:

**Child Care Centers** - Facilities where 13 or more children ages 6 weeks to 13 years may be cared for on a regular or part-time basis. The facility is required to meet minimum requirements concerning health and safety.

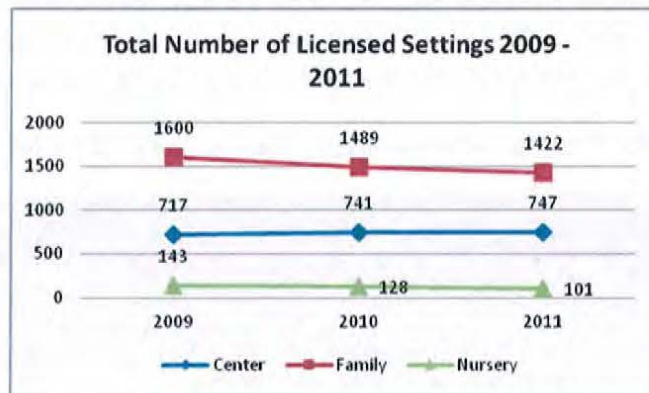
**Family Child Care (FCC) Programs** - Programs in which 3 to 12 children, not related to the care giver, ages 6 weeks to 13 years may receive regular or part-time care. Program must meet minimum health and safety requirements.

**Head Start** – Head Start is a federally funded community-based educational program for low-income preschool children including children with special needs. Other important services such as medical, dental, educational, mental health and social services are also offered. Many programs also have child care services to create a full day program to meet the needs of working families.

**Nursery Schools** - Facilities for 3 or more children between the ages of 3 and 7 that provide half-day care, not including kindergarten programs. Parents often combine these programs with other types of child care to create a full-day child care "package." Nursery schools must be licensed by DHHS and meet minimum standards.

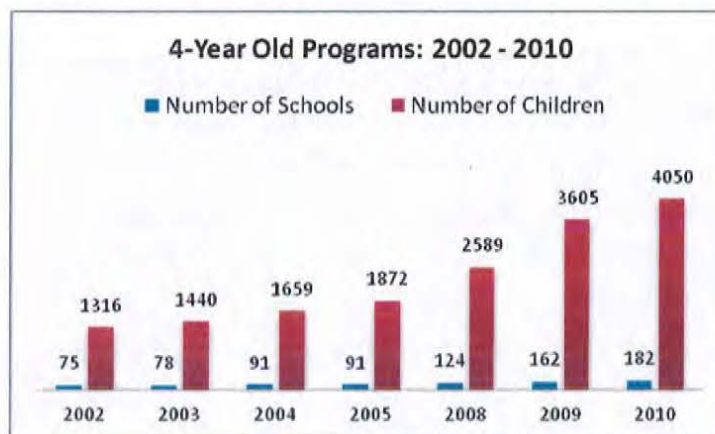
The following figures illustrate the number of licensed child care programs in Maine.

**Figure 1.0 Total Number of Licensed Child Care Settings in Maine**



Since 2002 the number of children attending Maine Department of Education Public Four Year Old Programs has increased by 12% since 2002 as shown in figure 3.0. Some parents may be using this program to address a portion of their child care needs.

**Figure 3.0 Growth of Public Pre-K programming in Maine**



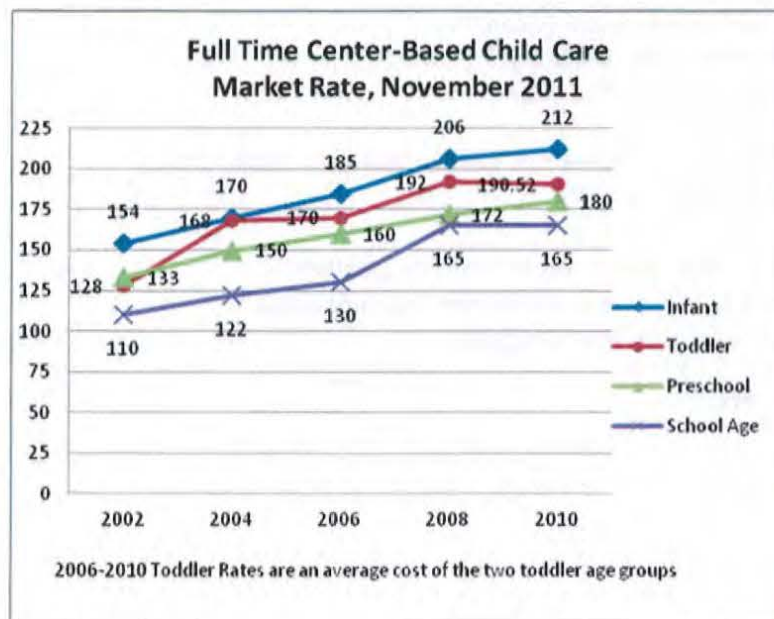
Finally, many families utilize legal unregulated care, or family friend and neighbor care arrangements. These settings may serve only one or two children, not related to the care giver. They are not licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services but if the program receives public funding through the subsidy system the caregiver must pass a State of Maine background check and a water quality check.



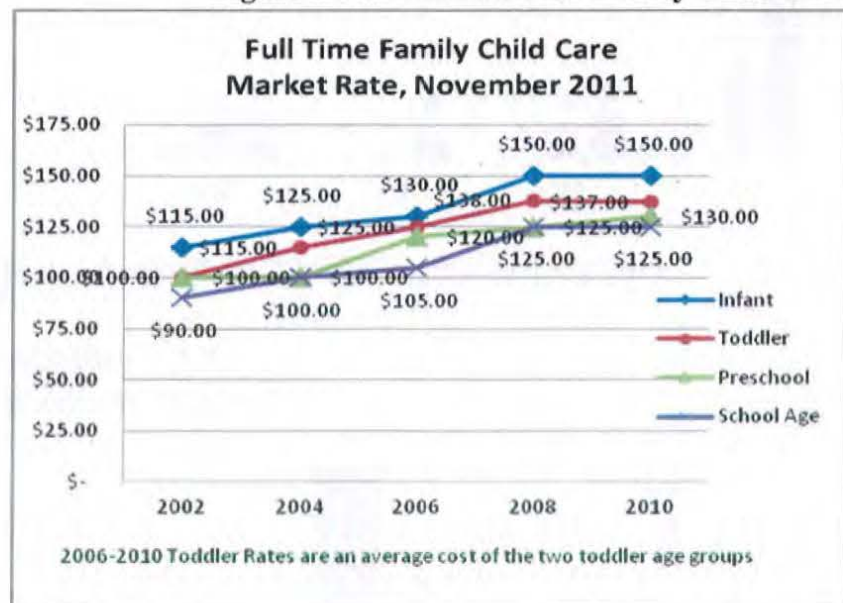
## What do Parents Pay for Child Care in Maine?

The State of Maine is required to conduct a market rate survey of child care every two years. The following figures indicate the latest estimated market rate for full time (30 or more hours a week) child care in Maine at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, indicating that 75% of Maine families pay these rates for child care.

**Figure 4.0 Market Rate for Center-based Care in Maine**



**Figure 5.0 Market Rate for Family Child Care**



## What is the quality of care in Maine's Child Care Programs?

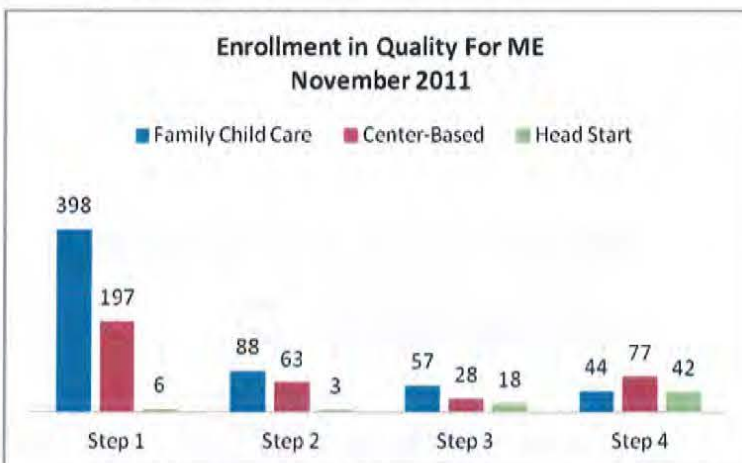
**Quality for ME** is a program of the Department of Health and Human Services that was implemented state-wide in 2008. Quality for ME is a four-step program with quality benchmarks ranging from basic licensing standards at Step 1, to research-based standards that support school readiness for children, at Step 4. Quality for ME was designed to increase awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, to recognize and support providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and to educate the community of the benefits of higher quality care. Quality for ME has three goals.

- To recognize child care programs that provide quality care
- To encourage providers to increase their level of quality
- To provide parents with identifiable standards of quality

Current enrollment in Quality for ME is illustrated in figure 6.0. Current estimates indicate that approximately 47% of licensed settings are enrolled in QRS.

- The majority (68%) of Family Child Care Homes are at Step One (minimal)
- The majority (54%) of Center Based Care Settings are at Step One (minimal)
- The majority (61%) of Head Starts are at Step Four (highest)

**Figure 6.0 Enrollment in Quality for ME**



**Figure 7.0 Quality of Child Care Programs in Maine's CCDF Subsidy System**

