

# The Condition of Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona: 2004

## Executive Summary

The data on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Arizona are poor. At a time when there is widespread support to strengthen and expand ECEC services in Arizona, much of the data needed to plan this effort is either non-existent or hard to find, and the data that are available often do not allow for the kind of aggregation or analysis needed to guide policy. ECEC programs involve a wide range of public and private providers, operating under a wide range of names, funded by a wide range of sources, and supervised by a wide range of agencies. Sufficient data exist to support only two conclusions: A large number of children are currently on the state's childcare subsidy waiting list; and there is a significant disparity in wage data across ECEC practitioners.

## Recommendations

### It is recommended that:

- The Arizona legislature index the childcare subsidy for eligible families to the most current market rate survey results.
- The Arizona legislature appropriate additional state general fund dollars to increase childcare subsidies to a level that will reduce and ultimately eliminate the waiting list for eligible families.
- The Arizona legislature give the School Readiness Board (SRB) the authority and funding to develop and implement a plan to increase wages for all ECEC personnel so that wages are commensurate with the wages of other professionals with similar levels of education and experience.
- The Arizona legislature give the SRB the authority and funding to develop a comprehensive, coordinated statewide plan for the collection of critical data across the full range of ECEC programs.
- The Arizona legislature give the SRB the authority to coordinate and implement a Quality Rating System (QRS) to identify and improve the level of education and care for all children from birth to five-years.
- The Arizona legislature expand and fund the S\*CCEEDS program to collect training and wage data on the educational levels of all ECEC teachers and providers of care so that universities, community colleges, school districts, and ECEC practitioners can plan appropriately for ECEC teacher preparation and staff training needs.
- The Arizona legislature give the SRB the authority and funding to identify and track annually the amount of federal and state dollars invested in ECEC.
- The SRB develop and implement an evaluation plan that will use the school readiness indicators data to track child readiness outcomes over time and that the Arizona legislature fund the plan.