

The Condition of Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona: 2005

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Background

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Arizona remains largely unchanged. A number of new initiatives have been created and implemented since the release of *The Condition of Pre-K-12 Education in Arizona: 2004* but significant systemic change has not occurred. The Arizona State Board on School Readiness (SRB) has been arduously working on creating an efficient and coordinated system of early care and education. Due to limited financial resources, implementing action steps recommended by the SRB and community members will take years.

Additional efforts have been made to initiate a voluntary full-day kindergarten program (see “Recent Developments” section for additional details). Approximately 1,000 new children have been added to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) program.

The number of young children in Arizona enrolled in ECEC programs continues to grow rapidly. Twenty years ago, about one-quarter of 4-year olds in Arizona were cared for outside the home; now the figure is closer to three-quarters.¹ The story of

ECEC remains a story of struggle to assess the need for and balance the supply of quality programs.

For detailed background on specific early care and education programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, kindergarten, center and non-center-based care, and the early childhood block grant program, please refer to the “Background” section in the 2004 report.²

Recent Developments

Policy and budgetary discussions at the national and state levels continue to significantly affect the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Arizona. The following subsections highlight new or enhanced ECEC programs that have been created within the last year.

The Arizona State Board on School Readiness (SRB)

In 2004, teams convened by the SRB identified the initial steps for the implementation of a quality rating system (QRS), a professional development scholarship program for early childhood teachers, increased health screening for young children, and a child care health consultation system. Through the work of these teams, funding was identified for the creation of a professional development system and recommendations were made for a QRS.

In the past year, SRB has accomplished:

- Governor Janet Napolitano announced School Readiness Action Plan which allots \$84.7 million in state funds targeted to early childhood education.
- SRB Quality Rating Team outlined a quality rating system as directed by Governor Napolitano.
- Work of the SRB Quality Rating Implementation Team is used in a QRS innovation project in Tucson.
- Scholarships for Early Education Development (SEEDs), a statewide scholarship program began in 2004 for early education professionals.

- The Arizona Emergent Leaders Project was launched to provide early childhood managers and directors with a year of intensive professional development and leadership skill building.
- The SRB, to improve health screening, supports Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)' goal to increase well-child visits and roll back premiums for KidsCare families and DHS' efforts to improve newborn hearing screening and to train physicians and childcare staff.
- SRB recommended phasing-in a Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) system.³

Arizona Early Childhood Education Fund

With the support of the governor and the State School Readiness Board (SRB), the Arizona Early Education Fund was established at the Arizona Community Foundation to help communities statewide build the quality and capacity of early care and education programs for children birth to age five. The purpose of the Fund is to enhance the early learning experiences of Arizona children by building quality into early care and education programs. Approximately \$1.2 million have been received by the Fund, and there are outstanding pledges yet to be received.⁴

Early Learning Opportunities Act Grant – Tucson

United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (UWTSA) received a \$1 million Early Learning Opportunity Act Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to create, enhance, and implement a number of early care and education quality improvement projects, including a quality rating system (QRS). The QRS will begin with 50 centers in Tucson, and in coordination with other United Ways, add at least one childcare center in Pinal County, Nogales, Phoenix, Flagstaff and Mesa in February 2005 through August 2006. Each of the 50 centers will receive technical assistance, incentives, nurse health consultations, training by early literacy specialists, lending libraries, and evaluations. The UWTSA used the work of the SRB Quality Rating Implementation Team as the foundation for the quality rating levels.⁵

Early Learning Opportunities Act Grant – Phoenix

The Valley of the Sun United Way was awarded \$675,000 to enhance The Early Learning Connections Project, concentrating on Pendergast, Fowler, and Cartwright school districts. The focus of the project is to increase access to community-based services, enhance quality early care and education resources in the community, improve the quality of early childhood education, and to support the social and emotional development of children from birth to age six. The Valley of the Sun United Way and its community partner, the Phoenix Advisory Council for Early Childhood, are committed to promoting children's success upon entering public school.⁶

Emergent Leaders Project

In July of 2004, supplemental grant funding was obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The goal of the project is to build on one of the professional development strategies identified in Governor Napolitano's School Readiness Action plan: A program to improve the education and retention of early education professionals.

The yearlong program will provide the opportunity for 30 selected early childhood professionals to develop professional development projects focused on improving the quality of childcare and to build their leadership, management, and advocacy skills. Program participants will meet and participate in discussions with local and national experts in the field of early childhood education and will receive one-on-one mentoring. The program is a partnership of the Governor's State Board on School Readiness, The Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office, The Arizona Head Start Association, and Southwest Human Development.⁷

Full-Day Kindergarten

During the 46th legislative session in 2004, a priority for Governor Napolitano was to phase in and fund voluntary full-day kindergarten in public schools throughout the state, beginning in 2004-2005 in schools with at least 90 percent of children enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program. This legislation was passed and signed by

Governor Napolitano. Senate Bill 1405, now Chapter 278, requires a school or charter school that provides and accepts monies pursuant to this section 15-901.02 for full-day kindergarten to offer full-day kindergarten instruction to all pupils who meet the enrollment requirement for kindergarten programs. Parents of these pupils may choose either half-day kindergarten instruction or full-day kindergarten instruction. Chapter 278 also requires the legislature to develop a plan, including capital monies, considering recommendations from the Joint Legislative Study Committee on Full-Day Kindergarten, to provide statewide full-day kindergarten instruction in all public schools by fiscal year 2009-2010.

School districts are not required to offer full-day kindergarten instruction to qualifying students if there is insufficient classroom space; in fact, schools shall not accept monies from the full-day kindergarten fund if space limitations result in class sizes that exceed the average class size of the district or charter school. Additionally, schools accepting monies for full-day kindergarten must provide professional development that is directly related to the delivery of kindergarten standards in a full-day program, including a research-based reading curriculum for all kindergarten instructors on staff.⁸

Statewide Child Care and Early Education Development System (S*CCEEDS)

S*CCEEDS recognizes the education levels of child care practitioners by using an established Career Ladder and provides Core Knowledge Elements and Competencies to guide practitioners along a Career Path.⁹ In addition, the S*CCEEDS program collects data regarding trainings that are conducted throughout the state. S*CCEEDS can also provide statistical information regarding the location, frequency, and content of early childhood trainings conducted throughout the state.

School Readiness Indicator Project

The indicators identified for this project focus on monitoring the capacity of child and family programs to prepare children to read by the end of grade 3.¹⁰ The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: Making Progress for Young Children was a multi-

state initiative, inclusive of Arizona, that developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age 8. The goal was for states to use the school readiness indicators to inform public policy decisions and track progress in meeting key goals for young children. The task of participating states was to develop a comprehensive set of school readiness indicators from birth through third grade. In addition to the development of state reports on the school readiness indicators, the states agreed on a core set of common indicators.¹¹

Partners for Arizona Children

Hosted by the Valley of the Sun United Way, representatives from state and community organizations, agencies, United Way agencies, businesses, and philanthropic entities convened to develop social marketing strategies to increase the public will to invest in children through the creation of a statewide communication plan and campaign. The strategies identified by this partnership evolved into the “*You’re It*” campaign. The campaign, which implies the game of “Tag,” is a call to action to all audiences and will be released both in Spanish and English. In addition to the social marketing plan, another goal of this group is to increase access to services by supporting, replicating, and expanding quality early care in local communities.¹²

Early Childhood Education Certification and Endorsement

In December 2004, the State Board of Education approved the creation of an Early Childhood Education Certificate and an Early Childhood Education Endorsement for Arizona teachers to provide improved professional development and teacher preparation programs for educators who will be providing services in the early years, primarily preschool and kindergarten programs. The Board recognizes that early childhood, the years between birth and age 8, are an important and unique period in a child’s life.

The Early Childhood Education Certificate and Endorsement proposals are currently awaiting approval from the Arizona Attorney General’s Office. If approved, all Arizona teachers providing instruction in public schools to children from birth through kindergarten will be required to obtain the Early Childhood Education Certificate or

Endorsement by July 1, 2009. Teachers certified in elementary education or special education by July 1, 2006, and with documented current teaching experience, may automatically qualify for the endorsement.¹³

Available Data

Collection of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) data continues to be extremely fragmented (collected by multiple state agencies and community organizations) and difficult to obtain, creating difficulty in making accurate comparisons or assumptions. No central depository for the collection of ECEC data has been identified, though recognition of the need exists. The following tables highlight Arizona early care and education data on relevant demographics, early care and education programs, professional development, funding, and spending.

Demographics of ECEC in Arizona

Table 1: Number of Children by Age in Arizona

0-5	459,141
Under 1 Year	77,421
One Year	77,174
Two Years	75,241
Three Years	75,990
Four Years	76,560
Five Years	76,755

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *American Fact Finder*. Retrieved March 6, 2004, from <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

Table 2: Projections of the Arizona Population Under 6, 2000–20

Year	Population	Percent increase from 2000
2000	459,141	
2005	531,100	16%
2010	605,800	32%
2015	693,000	50%
2020	790,200	72%

Source: Center for Business Research, L. William Seidman Research Institute, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University. (2004). *The economics of early care and education in Arizona*. Tempe, AZ: Author.

Table 3: Working Parents of Children Under Age 6

Children 0-5	459,151	
With Primary Caregiver(s) in Workforce	270,900	59%

Source: Arizona School Readiness Task Force. (2002). *Growing Arizona*. Phoenix, AZ: Children's Action Alliance.

Table 4: Risk Factors for Arizona's Children Under 5

Children Under 5 in Poverty	21%
New Babies at Risk*	29%

Source: School Readiness Indicator Project. (2003). *Measuring school readiness: How do we know when we're on track?* Phoenix, AZ: Children's Action Alliance.

*In order to be considered at risk, a child must be exposed to two of four risk factors: mother is 19 years or younger, mother is unmarried, mother has less than 12 years of education, birth is paid for by the Arizona Health Cost Containment System, (AHCCCS).

Early Childhood Program Enrollments

Table 5: Enrollments in ECEC Programs

Nursery Schools and Preschools	81,923
Kindergarten	77,930

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *American Fact Finder*. Retrieved March 6, 2004, from <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

Table 6: Enrollments and Capacity by Program Type

	Programs	Enrollment	Capacity
Childcare Centers	1,580 ^a	91,018 ^b	156,927 ^c
Block Grant Preschools (School Districts)	607 ^d	5,059 ^e	64,337 ^f
Head Start	931 ^g	20,908 ^h	
Department of Health Services (DHS) Certified Small Group Homes	373 ⁱ		4,826 ^j
Department of Economic Security (DES) Certified Childcare Homes	1,476 ^k		5,904 ^l
DES Relative Childcare Homes	3,816 ^m		N/A ⁿ
Unregulated Registered Childcare Homes	737 ^o		
ADE Alternate Approval Childcare Homes	2,980 ^p		
Early Head Start		1,497 ^q	

a: Center-based care as defined by DHS, excluding Block Grant Preschools and Head Start Programs. Source: Personal communication (email) with David Douglas at the DHS, Office of Child Care Licensure, March 24, 2005.

b: On an average day

c, d: Personal communication (email) with David Douglas at DHS, Office of Child Care Licensure, March 24, 2005.

e: Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Enrollment Report, Arizona Department of Education, March 2005.

f: Capacity figures for centers and preschools were obtained by personal communication (email) with David Douglas at the DHS, Office of Child Care Licensure, March 24, 2005, and are understated due to a software bug.

g, h: Head Start reports numbers of classrooms, not programs or sites. Source: Program Information Report (PIR) (2003-2004). Includes: Regional, Migrant, and Tribal programs.

i, j: Personal communication (email) with David Douglas at the DHS, Office of Child Care Licensure, March 24, 2005.

k: Based on certification limit of 4 children for compensation per home. Personal communication (email) with staff at DES, Child Care Administration, March 11, 2005.

l, m: Personal communication (email) with staff at DES, Child Care Administration, March 11, 2005.

n: DES only pays for care by relatives for children who are eligible for child care assistance. This figure does not capture the larger population of people who provide care for children to whom they are related.

o: Personal communication (email) with staff at the Association for Supportive Childcare, Child Care Resource and Referral, March 22, 2005; Personal communication with Jakob Raskob at Child & Family Resources, on March 28, 2005.

p: Personal communication (email) with Melissa Steinle at ADE, March 29, 2005.

q: PIR (2003-2004). Based on actual enrollment.

Table 7: Arizona Head Start Facts, 2003–2004

	Regional	Migrant	Tribal	Total
Children Enrolled	15,821	684	5,900	22,405
Percent Under Age 3	8.6%	17.0%	0.3%	7.0%
Percent Age 3 or older	91.4%	83.0%	99.6%	93.0%
Number of Classes	589	37	238	864
Number of Staff	2,848	149	1,202	4,199
Number of Volunteers	22,802	358	4,037	27,197

Source: Program Information Report (PIR). (2003-2004).

Note: Based on actual enrollment; Regional number of children enrolled does not include 181 pregnant women.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 8: Arizona Kindergarten Facts

	Public	Charter
Kindergarten-Aged Children	65,381 ^a	3,367 ^b
In Half-Day Programs	36,326 ^c	1,718 ^d
In Full-Day Programs	28,813 ^e	1,986 ^f
Schools Offering Full-Day K	568 ^g	49 ^h

a-f: Nagle, A. (2003). *Survey regarding kindergarten facts and figures*. Unpublished survey.

g, h: Comparison of Nagle, A. (2003) with ADE funded Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) schools, August 2004. In 2004 FDK funding for schools with 90% + students eligible for free and reduced lunch increased the percentage of FDK schools by 53 % when compared to the number who were offering FDK in all classrooms in 2003.

Table 9: Projections of Demand for ECEC Programs

	Total Non-Parental Care	Center-Based Care
2000	178,200	72,100
2005	206,100	83,400
2010	235,100	95,100
2015	268,900	108,800
2020	306,700	124,000

Source: Center for Business Research, L. William Seidman Research Institute, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University. (2004). *The economics of early care and education in Arizona*. Tempe, AZ: Author.

Early Childhood Professional Development

Table 10: ECEC Professionals, 2004

Assistant Teachers	6,694
Teachers	9,973
Teacher Directors	1,074
Administrative Directors	1,264
<i>Total</i>	<i>19,005</i>

Source: Maricopa County Office of Research and Reporting. (2004). *Arizona wage and benefit survey: A study of child care/early childhood education center based personnel*. Phoenix, AZ. Sponsored by the State School Readiness Board, Children's Action Alliance and the Arizona Community Foundation. Conducted by Maricopa County Research and Reporting.

Note: Licensed centers only.

Table 11: ECEC Practitioners and Trainers Registered with S*CCEEDS

	Applied	Assigned Career Level
Practitioners	4,337	3,789
Trainers	612	557

Source: Personal communication (e-mail) with Boni Lowney of the Association for Supportive Child Care, S*CCEEDS Program, March 28, 2005.

Table 12: Median Hourly Wage for ECEC Practitioners, 2004

Assistant Teachers	\$8.10 ^a
Teachers	\$9.00 ^b
Teacher Directors	\$10.92 ^c
Directors	\$15.00 ^d
Kindergarten Teachers (public school)	\$26.14 ^e

^{a-d} Maricopa County Office of Research and Reporting. (2004). *Arizona wage and benefit survey: A study of child care/early childhood education center based personnel*. Phoenix, AZ. Sponsored by the State School Readiness Board, Children's Action Alliance and the Arizona Community Foundation. Conducted by Maricopa County Research and Reporting.

^e American Federation of Teachers. (2003). Survey & Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2002-2003. Retrieved March 21, 2005, from <http://www.aft.org/research/salary/home.htm> Click on Table I, figure based on average salary.

Funding for Early Childhood Programs

Table 13: Funding Levels for ECEC Programs

Early Head Start	\$12.7 Million ^a
Head Start	\$130 Million ^b
Early Childhood Block Grant	\$19.4 Million ^c
Block Grant Funds Used for Preschool	\$10.5 Million ^d
Childcare Subsidies	\$170.4 Million ^e
Full-Day Kindergarten (new FY2005)	\$25 Million ^f
Kith & Kin	\$238,453 ^g

Source: Early Childhood Programs Matrix. (2003). Phoenix: Arizona State Board on School Readiness.

a: Includes regional and tribal programs. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Funding Guidance, September 2004.

b: Includes regional, tribal, and migrant worker programs. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Funding Guidance, September 2004.

c: Does not include the multiple funding streams being utilized by school districts to fund full-day Kindergarten.

c, d: Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) FY 05 total allocation and amount reported as expended for preschool by grantees in FY 04. Based on personal communication (e-mail) with staff in the Early Childhood Division, Arizona Department of Education, March 18, 2005.

e: Child Care subsidies, SFY 2005 appropriated amount. Personal communication (e-mail) with staff at DES, Child Care Administration, March 11, 2005.

f: House Engrossed Senate Bill, State of Arizona, Senate, 46th Legislature, 2nd Regular Session, 2004, Chapter 278, Senate Bill 1405.

g: Personal Communication (e-mail) with staff at the Association for Supportive Child Care, March 29, 2005.

Table 14: Total and Per Capita Spending by Child

In Millions of Dollars					In Dollars		
Age	State & Local	Federal	Total	# Of Children	Per Capita State /Local	Per Capita Federal	Per Capita Total
0-5	11.50	218.67	230.17	459,141	25	476	501
6-18	5,076.95	441.26	5,518.21	982,098	5,169	449	5,619
19-23	1,003.71	284.37	1,288.09	368,440	2,724	772	3,496

Source: Bruner, C., Elias, V., Stein, D., & Schaefer, S. (2004). *Early learning left out: An examination of public investments in education and development by child age*. Washington, DC: Voices for America's Children. Retrieved February 26, 2004, from <http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org>

Table 15: Average Daily Rates for Full-Time Childcare in Arizona

Age of Child	0-1	1-2	3+
Licensed Centers	\$31.00	\$27.91	\$24.19
Approved Homes	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Certified Group Homes	\$22.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Unregulated Homes	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$23.00

Source: Maricopa County Office of Research and Reporting. (2004). *Child care market rate survey 2004*. Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Employment & Rehabilitation Services, Child Care Administration.

Table 16: Spending Per Child Enrolled

Childcare Subsidies	\$3,660 ^a
Block Grant Preschools	\$2,220 ^b
Head Start	\$7,295 ^c
K-12	\$5,745 ^d

a: Average monthly Department of Economic Security (DES) payment per child in state fiscal year SFY2005 is expected to be approximately \$305/month. Source: Personal communication with staff at Child Care Administration, DES, March 11, 2005.

b: Represents state block grant resources per child only. This figure does not represent total funding per child as school districts supplement with additional dollars for FY 2005. Personal communication with staff at the Early Childhood Division, Arizona Department of Education, March 18, 2005.

Head Start represents Department of Health and Human Services average rate, September 2004. Funding Guidance. Based on funded enrollment versus actual enrollment.

c: Represents the average cost of serving 1,095 Early Head Start (EHS) children and 18,466 Head Start Preschool children Personal communication with Arnold Ramirez, Arizona Head Start Association, March 31, 2005.

d: *Lead with Five* (2005) retrieved from www.rodelfoundationaz.org.

Table 17: DES Childcare Subsidy Waiting List

March 2005	0 Families *	0 Children *
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Source: Personal communication (e-mail) with staff at the DES Child Care Administration, March 18, 2005.

* In the time period between July 1, 2004, and February 3, 2005, the waiting list was as high as 2,400 children. The waiting list was eliminated on February 3, 2005.

Program Quality

Table 18: Arizona Public School Reading Outcomes for 2003

NAEP 4 th Grade Reading ^a	AIMS 3 rd Grade Reading ^b
46% below basic level	8% below the standard
31% basic level	16% approached the standard
19% proficient level	56% met the standard
4% advanced level	21% exceeded the standard

a: Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2003). Reading Assessments. Washington, DC: Author Retrieved March 18, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/profiles.asp>

b: Source: Retrieved March 21, 2005, from <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/>

The collection of specific data can indicate the quality of early care and education services and programs. Without an accountability system for early care and education, only a limited number of indicators are being collected that relate to quality. Several categories of statistics are available that bear some relation to program quality. In the 2004 ECE policy brief, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) report¹⁴ gave Arizona a score of 4 out of 10 on quality of ECEC programs, but this was based mostly on assessments of the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) preschools, which make up a small percentage of the ECEC programs in the state. A continuing way to measure program quality is to chart the frequency of ECEC programs found to be in non-compliance by Department of Health Services (DHS). Between November of 2003 and October of 2004, DHS conducted approximately 4,200 licensing inspections of childcare facilities. During that time frame, DHS issued to ECEC facilities 13 cease and desist orders, held 91 enforcement agreements, applied 88 civil money penalties, and issued 11 intent-to-deny-license notices.¹⁵ DHS licensing surveyors' caseloads continue to remain large: 85 programs per surveyor in 2004, as compared to 56 per specialist in 1997. Between November 2003 and October 2004, DHS did not respond in the prescribed time period 55 times. Of these 55 times, 36 times DHS failed to respond to requests to process licensing applications, and 19 times DHS failed to respond to licensing changes.¹⁶

Accreditation by a nationally accredited childcare organization remains a predictor of program quality. The majority of Arizona's ECEC programs remain unaccredited, but the accuracy of the number of accredited programs is difficult to assess as the data are collected by accessing individual websites. There are 353 programs in Arizona listed as having National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, 22 accredited from the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC), and 26 accredited from the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).¹⁷ Totals for programs accredited by the other four accrediting organizations are not accessible.¹⁸ Of the 2,187 licensed childcare centers and preschools, approximately 401, or 18 percent, are listed as accredited.

There are little data collected or available on student learning outcomes. Of the ECEC programs in the state, only Head Start, the Arizona Department of Education's

Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Preschools, and kindergartens require any assessments of children. These outcome assessment data remain inaccessible and are not organized in any systematic fashion. Each local Head Start or ECBG preschool program may conduct child assessments, but the assessment tools they use vary and the assessment data they collect are not collected or compiled uniformly. Moreover, since there is no entity responsible for systematic data collection, any data that the individual programs may collect are not useful for ECEC program evaluation, child outcome purposes, or general program planning.

Evaluation of Available Data

A lack of aggregated data and the lack of an early care and education database continue to limit the ability to compare statistics between state agencies, community organizations, and national databases. The data presented in this report were gathered by going through various reports and databases and having conversations with representatives from each entity. Without the continued employment of experienced staff within each state agency and community organization, the difficulty of data collection would increase exponentially. The validity of the data and recognition of any changes would also be significantly reduced.

Demographic of ECEC in Arizona

The numbers in Tables 1, 2, and 5 (numbers of young children in Arizona, population projections through 2020, and number of children from birth to age 5 in ECEC programs, respectively) remain unchanged from the 2004 edition of this report, as these figures are drawn from year 2000 U.S. Census.¹⁹ Locating data that incorporate the number of undocumented immigrants either utilizing or in need of child care services in Arizona remains elusive. There is evidence that Hispanics are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the birth-to-age-5 range.²⁰ Reports indicate that undocumented immigrant families use a host of informal care environments, including Kith and Kin providers.²¹

The methodology used by the Center for Business Research in formulating future forecasts is based on recent birth data. Statistics for children living in poverty and babies born to mothers with multiple risk factors (Table 4) continue to speak to the need for better access to resources and improved access to health screening for children that leads to earlier intervention. Figures for poverty and new babies at-risk suggest a continued high need for ECEC intervention. Most demographic data for Arizona are obtained from national databanks and are often not separated by socioeconomic or age group. The lack of specific data contributes to the difficulty in assessing the need and planning for appropriate early care and education services for families and their children.

Early Childhood Program Numbers and Enrollments

Data for both preschool and kindergarten enrollment remain fragmented. Data in these two areas are frequently obtained through special interest surveys rather than through the planned and coordinated effort of a state agency. The state's collection of child-care data continues to be problematic in several ways. The Department of Health Services (DHS) licenses centers and is able to report licensed capacity, but is unable to provide accurate enrollment numbers. The Department of Economic Security (DES), however, estimates enrollment data on an average daily basis that do not distinguish full-time from part-time attendance or pre-school-aged children from school-aged children receiving after-school care. No data from either agency report the specific age of children. DHS does not collect data on the number of slots available for each age range. The data on childcare center enrollments and capacity continue to show that there are sufficient childcare slots available for children, yet parents and early childhood professionals complain about the difficulty of locating high-quality center care for children younger than age one. Arizona does not regulate homes providing care to four or fewer children not subsidized by DES; therefore, there is no way to track the number of homes providing such care. An accurate depiction of the need for childcare remains difficult to portray. Anecdotal data indicate that there is a very limited amount of quality odd-hour care, care that occurs after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends.

Head Start enrollment data are routinely and reliably collected. The reports indicate actual enrollment figures (Table 7), and year after year the percentage of eligible

children who *do not* receive service due to lack of federal or state funding remains unknown. Nationally, it is estimated that only 3 in 5 income-eligible children are served by Head Start.²² If that ratio were applied to Arizona in 2004, then approximately 15,000 eligible low-income children in Arizona were not served by Head Start.

The data profiled on kindergarten-aged children are based on a survey conducted by Ami Nagle in Spring 2003 (Table 8). With the addition of full-day kindergarten classes these figures have undoubtedly increased, yet no state agency has been charged with the responsibility of collecting and reporting the new data. It remains difficult to assess both the number of kindergarten classrooms in each school district and the total number of kindergarten classrooms in the state. The numbers of children enrolled in half-day programs versus full-day kindergarten programs are not currently being compiled and reported in any organized fashion.

Early Childhood Professional Development

The available data on the number and type of ECEC professionals working with children remain limited. The data were recently updated but still do not incorporate early childhood practitioners employed in kindergartens. Due to the self-reporting of data from childcare facilities, the accuracy of the data is not reliable.

The data collected in the 2004 *Arizona Wage and Benefit Survey* show minimal improvement in salaries for teachers and assistant teachers, but the percentage of assistant teachers who remain at their place of employment one year or less remains high at 32 percent. The hourly wage data continue to show a wide disparity in wages paid to ECEC professionals who work with young children in programs other than public school kindergartens. Data on educational levels of early childhood practitioners within specific childcare programs are still not collected. The lack of such data impedes future planning for relevant post-secondary education programs.

Funding for Early Childhood Programs

The data on funding for ECEC programs remain outdated or have limited viability, as certain figures are not reliable. While the data have limited utility, the need

for children and families to have support in accessing intervention services, child care, and other family support programs is critical for the stability and success of the family and children. The recent funding for full-day kindergarten has contributed to an increase in full-day kindergarten classrooms, yet the lack of aggregated data collection makes it extremely difficult to express an accurate depiction of accessibility or need.

Program Quality

The data on ECEC program quality remain limited and fragmented. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) report is now slightly dated and continues to be based only on the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) preschools and does not address the full scope of ECEC program offerings. Even though the DHS licensing inspections doubled from the previous year, the caseloads remain high, which may be contributing to an under-identification of problems in licensed childcare settings. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) data, while more rigorous, still do not identify who received ECEC services. While accreditation is a valid predictor of quality, the differences in benchmarks utilized by each accrediting body reduce the ability to determine clear levels of comparative program quality. No significant progress has been made in the collection of readiness or learning outcomes data on children in ECEC programs. While policy makers seek child outcome data, this report is not recommending *formal* testing of young children.

Key Unanswered Policy Questions

The unanswered policy questions for this update are virtually the same as in the earlier 2004 report.

Demographic and Enrollment Issues

As reported in the 2004 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policy brief, while the census and population projections data offer the big picture on numbers of children age 5 and younger, it remains to be known how many young children need early care and education and what types of programs are most needed and wanted.

Early Childhood Professional Development

Can the universities, community colleges, and school districts meet the training and certification needs of ECEC practitioners in Arizona in the coming years? Will the requirement of additional professional development for early care and education practitioners change society's perceived value of an ECEC professional and in turn lead to a dramatic rise in ECEC salaries? What effect would a rise in salaries have on tuition?

Funding for Early Childhood Programs

What are the costs of meeting the ECEC needs of Arizona's growing population? Where will the funding come from to meet these growing needs, needs that include improvements in program quality, in staff training, in the number of children being served, and in the number of districts providing full-day kindergarten? While there was initial year funding for full-day kindergarten in 2004, it remains to be seen whether the Arizona State Legislature will continue to fund this initiative through 2010.

Program Quality

Will the field-testing of the quality rating system (QRS) currently underway provide sufficient information to support statewide implementation? Will the continued implementation of full-day kindergarten produce measurable growth in state (AIMS) and federal (NAEP) achievement scores in later grades?

Recommendations

The difficulty experienced in accessing data that would inform the state in the development of critical Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policy procedures and initiatives leads to the recommendations that follow. As reported in the 2004 Early Childhood Education policy brief, these recommendations are not meant to address all of the complex issues in ECEC, but merely provide an outline for the collection of data that will be useful for policy analysis. It is recommended that:

1. The Arizona State Legislature give the School Readiness Board (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.
2. The Arizona State Legislature give the SRB the authority and funding to implement a statewide quality rating system (QRS) based on the findings of the QRS being piloted by the Tucson United Way of Southern Arizona.
3. The Arizona State Legislature expand and fund the Statewide Child Care and Early Education Development System (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.
4. The Arizona State Legislature give the SRB the authority and funding to identify and track annually the amount of federal and state dollars invested in ECEC.
5. The Arizona State Legislature give the SRB the authority and funding to develop and implement an evaluation plan that will use school readiness indicators data and the QRS data to track child readiness outcomes over time.

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