

San Diego CARES

Baseline Program Impact Survey: Centers

Evaluation Report to the YMCA Childcare Resource Service

Report Prepared by:
Health and Human Services Consultants
of Southern California
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Betty Z. Bassoff, D.S.W.
James Tatlow, MSW, MPH
Brian Kuck, MSW, MPH
Maureen Kuck, BA
Jennifer Tucker-Tatlow, MSW

Health & Human Services Consultants
of Southern California

8662 Robles Drive
San Diego, CA 92119
Phone: (619) 668-0436
Fax: (619) 668-0436
bbassoff@cox.net



...specializing in service systems for children and families.

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INTRODUCTION

This document reports the child care center results of the first year San Diego CARES stipend program (Prop 10 and AB212), in its effort to improve the quality of care for young children in child care centers and family child care homes. Specifically, the goals of the program are designed to:

- ▶ Reduce the turnover rate of center staff and family child care providers in order to assure quality continuity of care. The goal of the San Diego County Child Care and Development Planning Council, as articulated in their 2001 Five Year Strategic Plan, is to reduce the turnover rate by 10 to 15% between 2001 and 2006.
- ▶ Advance the professional education of child care providers in order to enrich the learning environment for children in child care centers and family child care homes.

The details of the CARES program for San Diego County are attached in Appendix A. Both Prop 10 and AB212 applicants were included in the survey. A second survey is currently underway to collect impact data on participating family child care providers.

I. SURVEY DESIGN

A survey instrument was developed, with the help of the Child Care and Development Planning Council's Prop 10 Policy committee, and mailed during June 2002 to the directors or site supervisors of all facilities from which first year CARES participants were derived. A follow-up letter was sent in August of 2002, recognizing that many programs close at the end of the school year. The purpose of the survey was to document the impact of CARES on these participating programs, and to receive their perceptions and suggestions about both continuation and changes needed. A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument are included in Appendix B.

II. RESULTS

Surveys were mailed to the directors or site supervisors of 437 child care centers which yielded completed responses from 168 centers, or a return rate of 38%. A total of 476 staff members, 21% of all staff, participated in the CARES program for the first year.

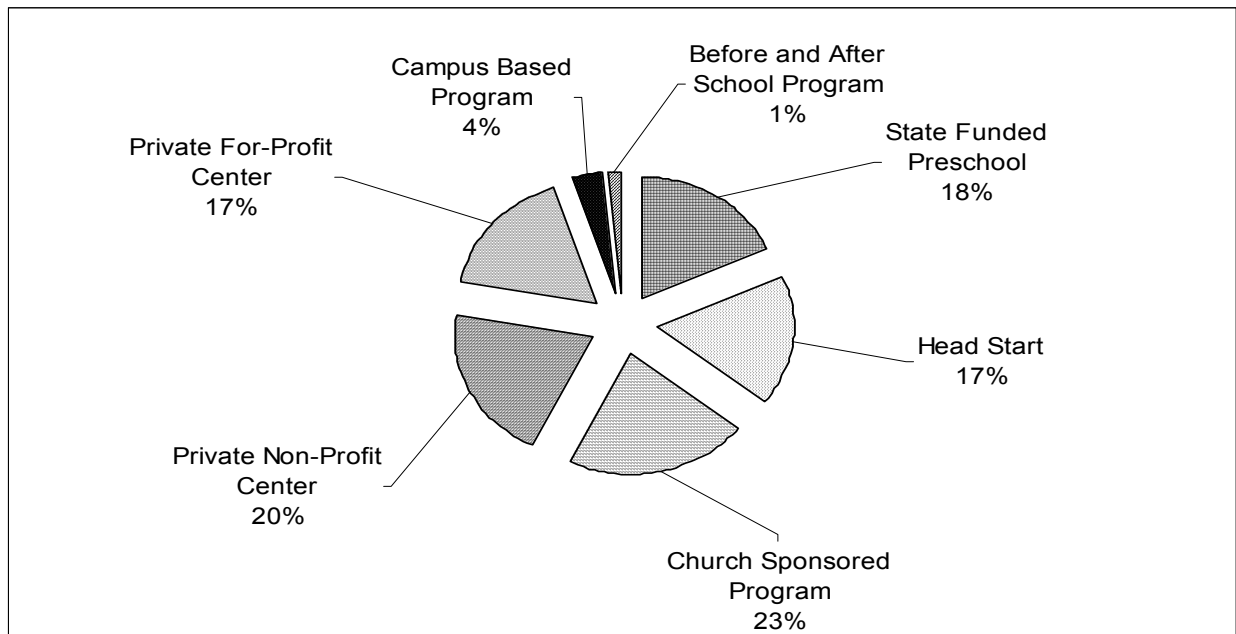
Several characteristics of the responding centers were collected and are displayed in the tables below.

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

Centers responding to the survey were located in all parts of the county. The distribution of respondents is presented in a representation of the county map and is located in Appendix C. As to be expected in terms of population distribution, centers were clustered in the central and east regions of the county, in the South Bay region and in North county Coastal and Inland regions.

Type of Centers Responding

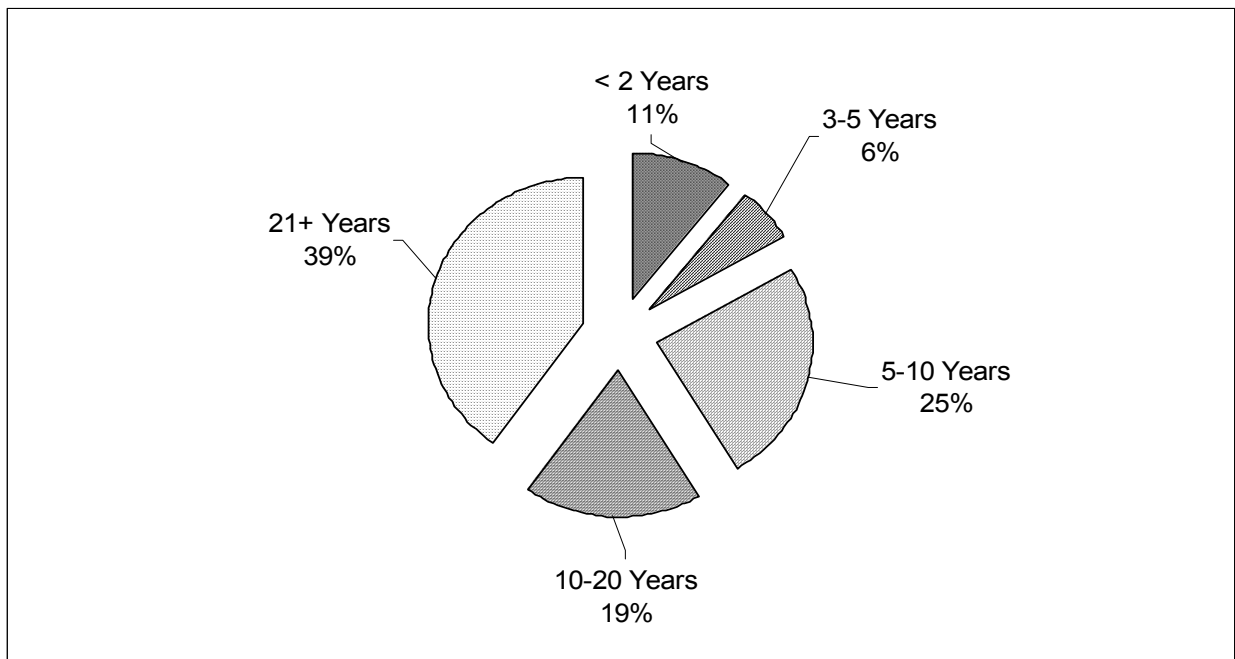
Figure 1.
Types of Centers Responding



Responses from participant centers were well-distributed across the field, representing all of the center facility types in the county. The church-sponsored programs composed the single largest group, closely followed by non-profit centers. For-profit centers, Head Starts and state funded preschools were equally divided next, with small representation from campus based, and before and after school programs.

Year Facilities Were Opened

Figure 2.
Number of Years the Facilities Have Been Open



The majority of responding facilities, 83% in all, have been in business for at least five years. A surprising 39% opened their facilities more than 21 years ago, with another 19% having been in existence for ten to twenty years. Only 11% of respondents have been in existence for less than 2 years, probably representing expansion funds available from the state and from federal Head Start.

Number of Children Served by Age and Facility Type

Table 1.
Number of Children Served by Age and Facility Type

Type of Center	Age Group Served				Total
	0-2 Years	2-3 Years	3-5 Years	5+ years	
Not Stated	55	75	1,040	52	1,222
State Funded Preschool	66	184	1,651	227	2,128
Head Start	183	77	2,564	2	2,826
Church Sponsored Program	96	256	2,363	349	3,064
Private Non-Profit Center	283	462	2,148	393	3,286
Private For-Profit Center	250	451	1,610	416	2,727
Campus Based Program	10	52	234	75	371
Before and After School Program	0	0	0	80	80
Grand Total:	943	1,557	11,610	1,594	15,704

A total of 15,704 children were served by the participating centers. The most prevalent age group was the preschoolers, the three to five year olds. In this study the Head Start grantee agency centers were the most important providers of service to 3 to 5 year olds, as preschoolers are their first target population. The church-sponsored and non-profit centers show a close second place as providers of preschool care, but also provide services to other age groups. Overall, the non-profit programs served the most children in this study. Before and after school programs, the smallest part of the sample, serve only school-age children but were eligible to participate in the CARES stipend program.

Turnover Rate

In this section, the data collected were designed to measure changes in turnover rate from the centers, using fiscal year July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001 as the baseline (the year immediately preceding the CARES initiative). The tables below show the percent of center staff at each level who participated in CARES and present comparisons between the two years for participating centers, by position type and by agency type. A pie-chart demonstrates the overall changes recorded when all centers are taken together.

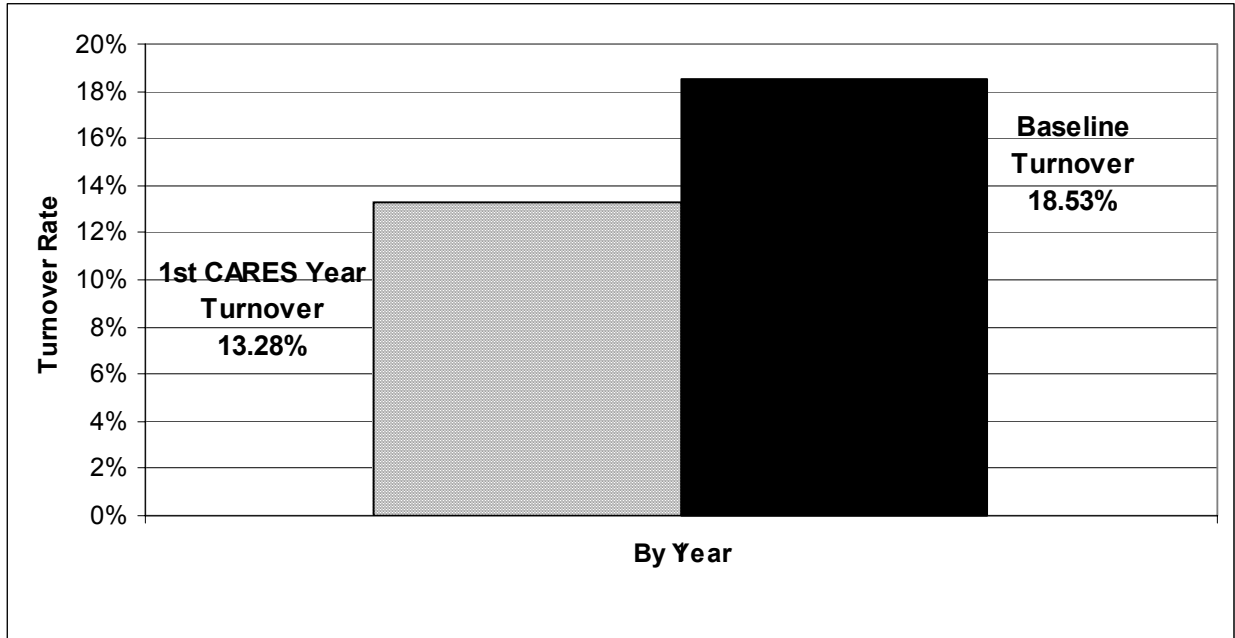
In every type of analysis the turnover rate has been reduced, in some cases substantially. The data show a significant correlation ($p < .05$) between participation in the CARES program and reduction in turnover among teachers, assistant teachers and aides. The higher the participation rate in CARES (11%, 28% and 21% respectively), the greater the reduction in turnover rate from baseline year to year one of CARES. The same correlation does not exist for administrative staff, most of whom are long-term career professionals who, for the most part, have reached the top of personnel grades. **In view of the fact that these reductions occurred in the first start-up year of the CARES program, they should be considered to have met the first purpose for which CARES was created.**

Table 2.
Staff Participating in CARES Program by Position Type

Type of Position	Total Staff	Total Accepted by CARES	% Staff Participating in CARES
Assistant/Aide	652	70	10.74%
Associate Teacher	339	95	28.02%
Teacher	1,075	226	21.02%
Supervisor/Administrator	246	85	34.55%
Grand Total:	2,312	476	20.59%

Participating agencies represented a total of 2,312 staff members in the categories eligible to apply for CARES, and actually yielded 476 staff members who applied and were accepted. Staff had to meet the requirements for eligibility outlined in Appendix A in order to be eligible for the CARES stipend program.

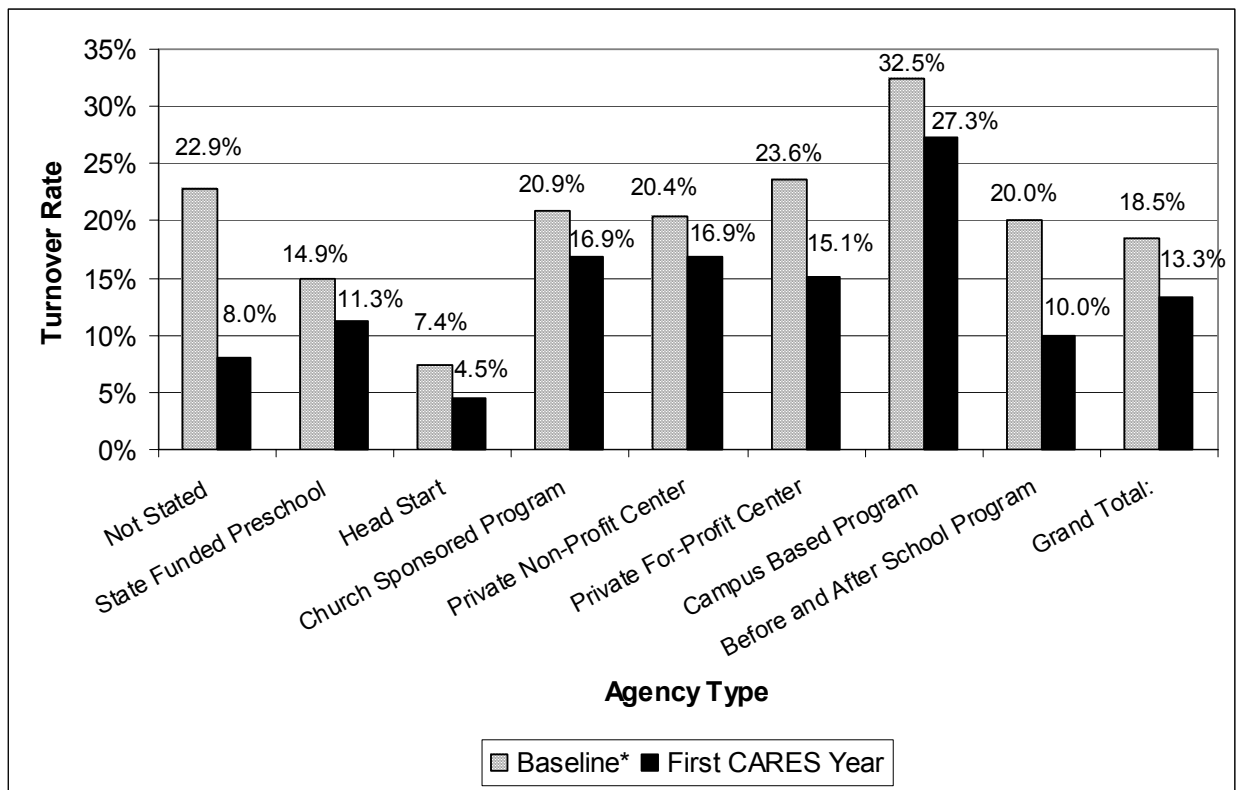
Figure 3.
Turnover Rate: All Centers Combined



The Figure 3 graph above shows the reduction in turnover rate for all responding centers combined, during the first start-up year of the CARES program.

In Figure 4 below, the turnover rate of specified staff is presented in contrast between the baseline (pre-CARES year) and the first start-up year, for each of the program types represented in the survey.

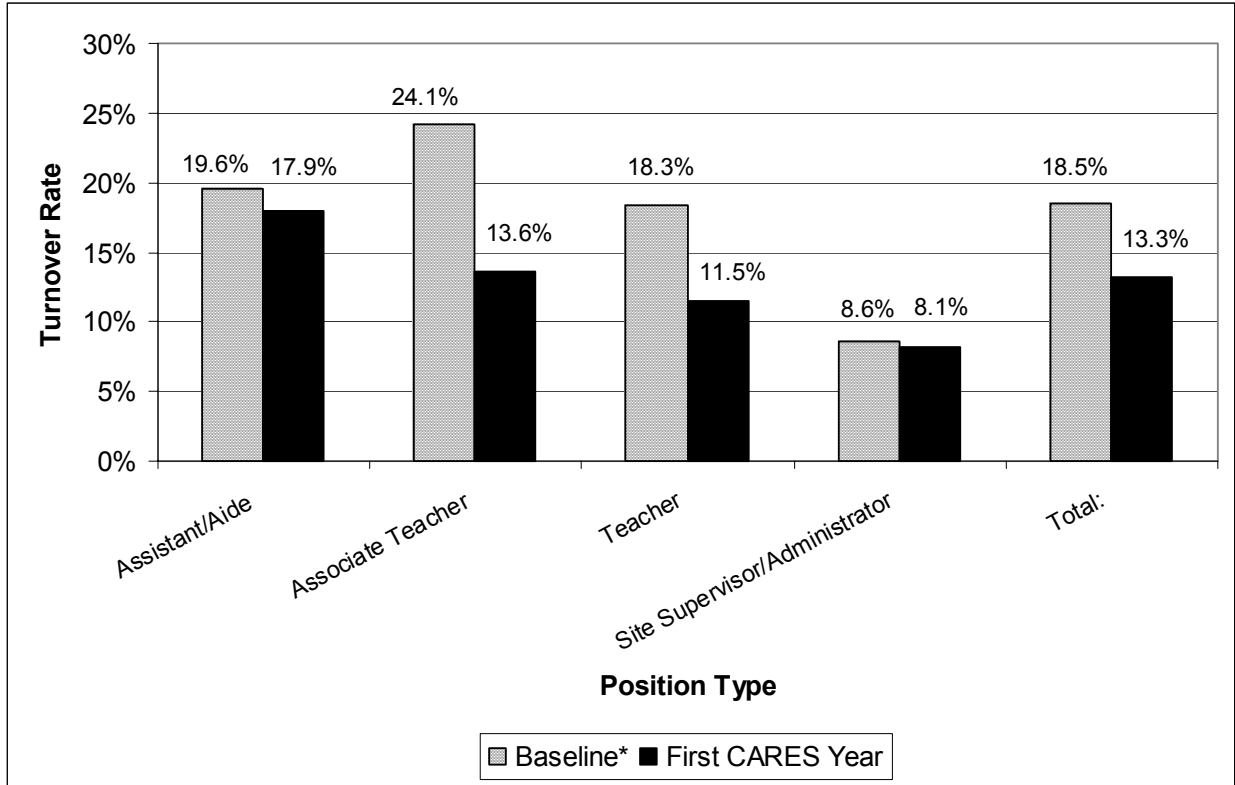
Figure 4.
Turnover Rate by Agency Type
Baseline and First CARES Year



* Turnover rate calculated as the number of people who left divided by total staff in any given year.

It is interesting to note, in the absence of a definitive turnover rate study across all child care sectors, the differences in leaver rate among the various program types. Although this may only be an artifact of the agencies that participated, the overall turnover rate based on the year preceding CARES was 18.5%.

Figure 5.
 Turnover Rate by Position Type
 Baseline and First CARES Year



* Turnover rate calculated as the number of people who left divided by total staff in any given year.

As noted above, the greatest reduction in turnover rate was achieved among teachers and associate teachers who are the essential core staff in child care programs. Site supervisors/administrators show the lowest rate of turnover.

Reasons for Leaving

In the first table below, all staff of participating centers are combined to show reasons for leaving the agency. As expected, income earned is by far the most significant factor in decisions to separate. The next most frequent causes are changing the job field (there are no doubt several reasons for seeking a change in jobs, including pay), and moving out of the area. The relatively high frequency of “fired” was a surprising finding. Several individual reasons were offered under “other,” such as to continue education, to teach in elementary school, and to be a stay-at-home mom.

Figure 6.
Reasons for Leaving
All Staff All Agency Types

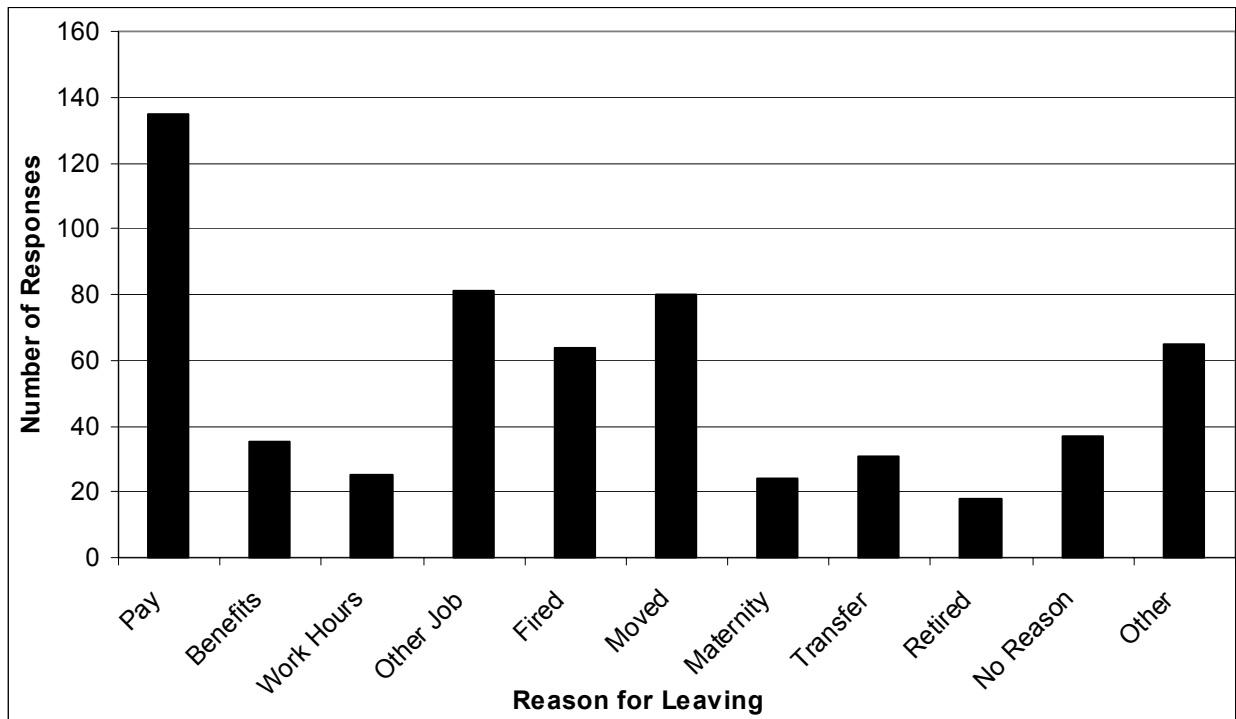
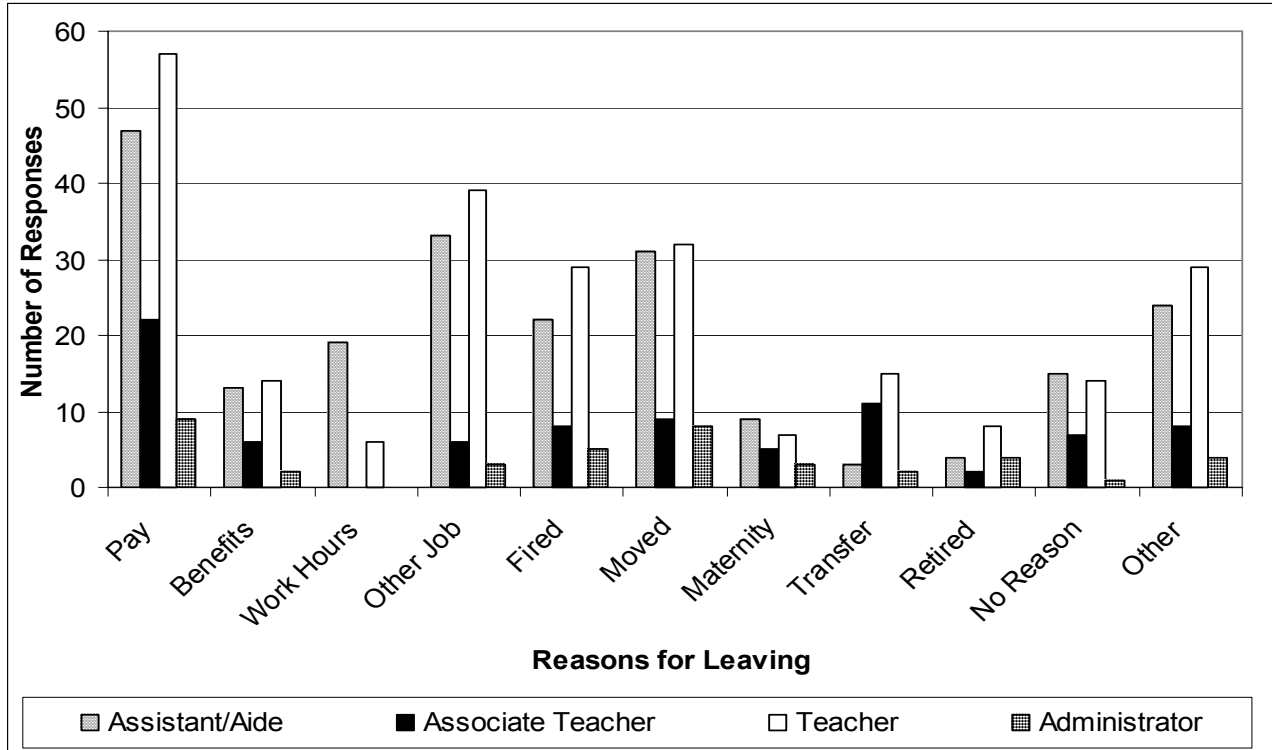


Figure 7.
Reasons for Leaving by Position Type



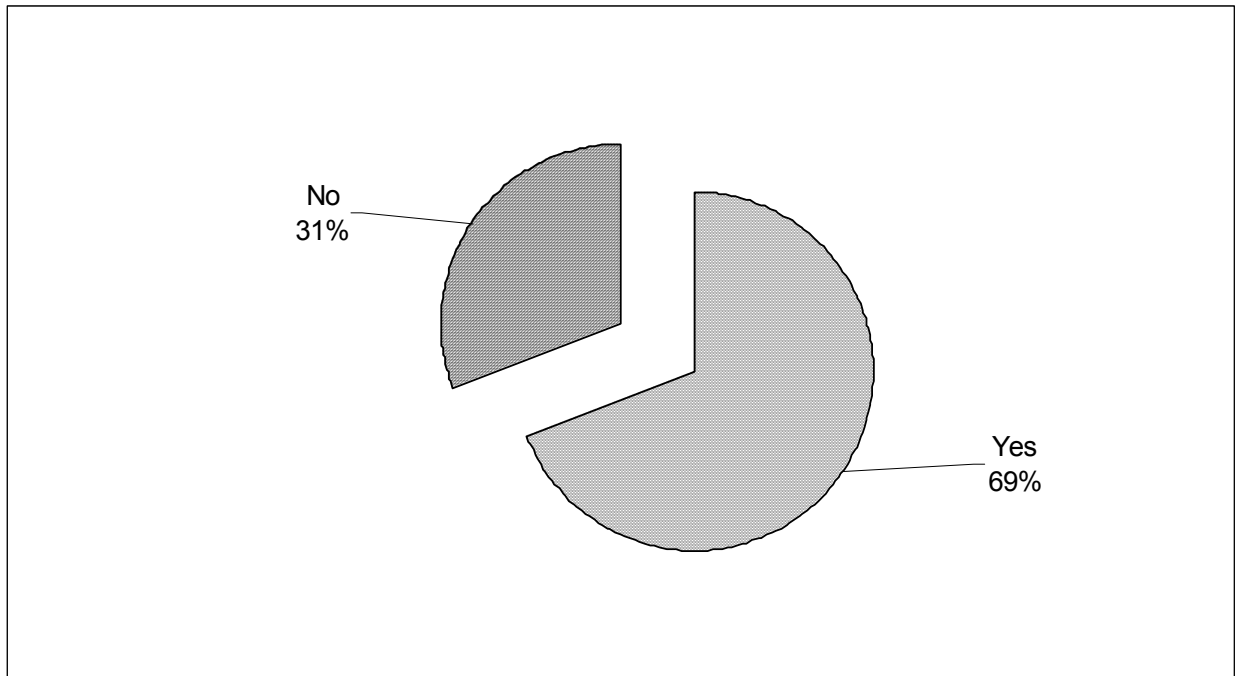
The reader will note that under “pay” and “other job” the teachers and the assistants/aides were the most frequent leavers. During the baseline period of time the public school system was undergoing class reduction and many well-educated child care professionals left the field to teach in the elementary grades. This period also included substantial Head Start expansion which attracted child care professionals for reasons of better pay. Assistants and aides are the lowest paid workers in child care, averaging \$7.00 an hour by earlier studies. They frequently represent new high school/community college graduates or persons moving into the labor force, and may be testing out the child care field.

Impact of the CARES Program

The data in this question were designed to answer the overall purpose of the San Diego CARES Program: The degree to which CARES has had an impact on the quality of the participating programs. Six choices plus “other” were offered to respondents.

Figure 8 below records the response to whether or not CARES has had a noticeable impact on the programs responding.

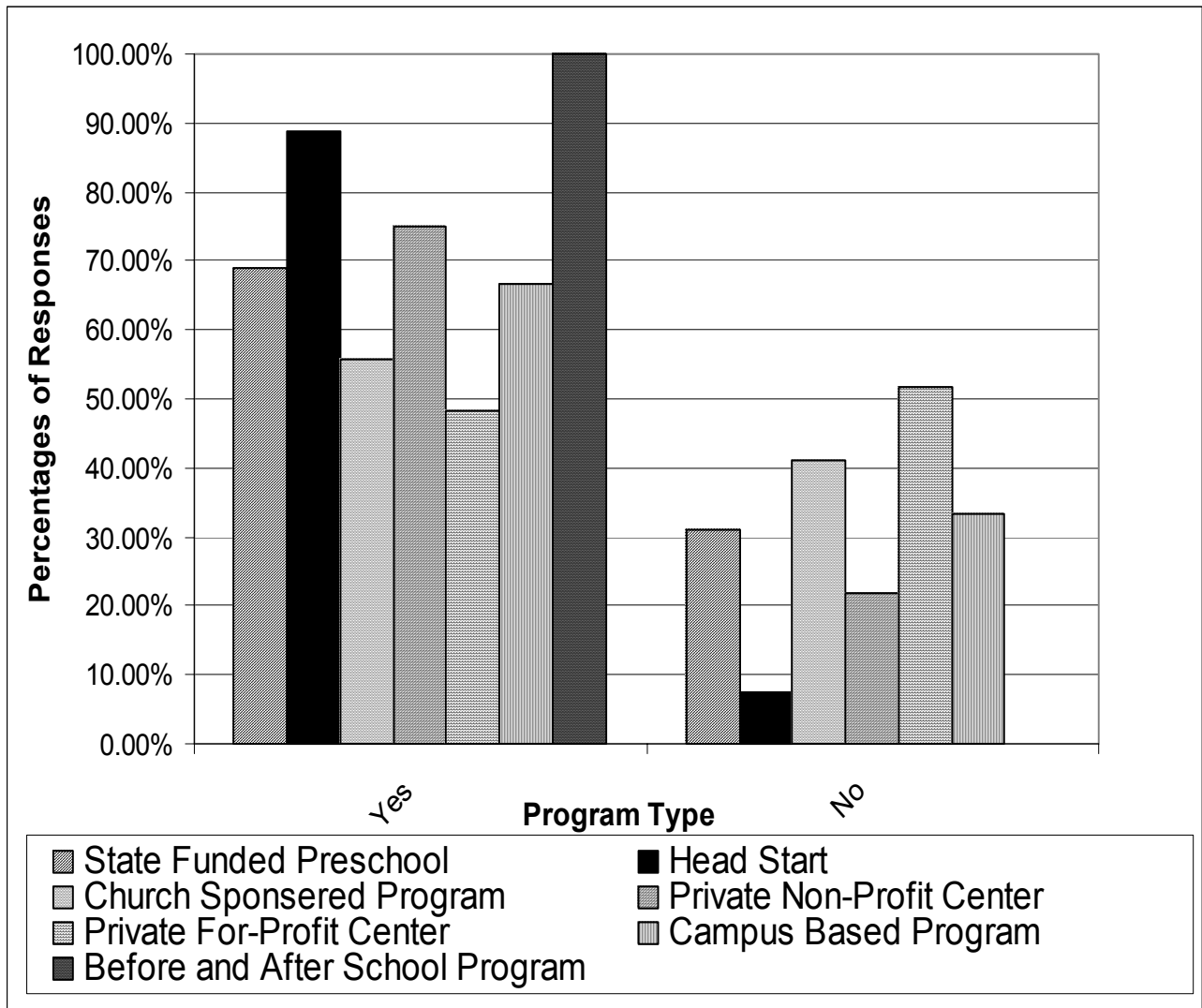
Figure 8.
Noticeable Impact on Program
All Respondents



The data reveal substantial affirmation for effects of the CARES program on responding centers.

In Figure 9 below, the responses (yes/no) were broken down to display how each center type responded to the impact question based on the assumption that center types were affected differently to some degree.

Figure 9.
Impact by Program Type



Finally, Figure 10 displays the responses of all center types to the quality of the impact of CARES on their program. Of the six choices offered, reduction in the turnover rate is the single most prevalent impact noted in all of the data. The next most frequently selected impact is “professional development,” the second goal of CARES. **These data confirm the success of the first year of the CARES program in meeting the intents of the program.**

Figure 10.

CARES Quality Impact by Center Type

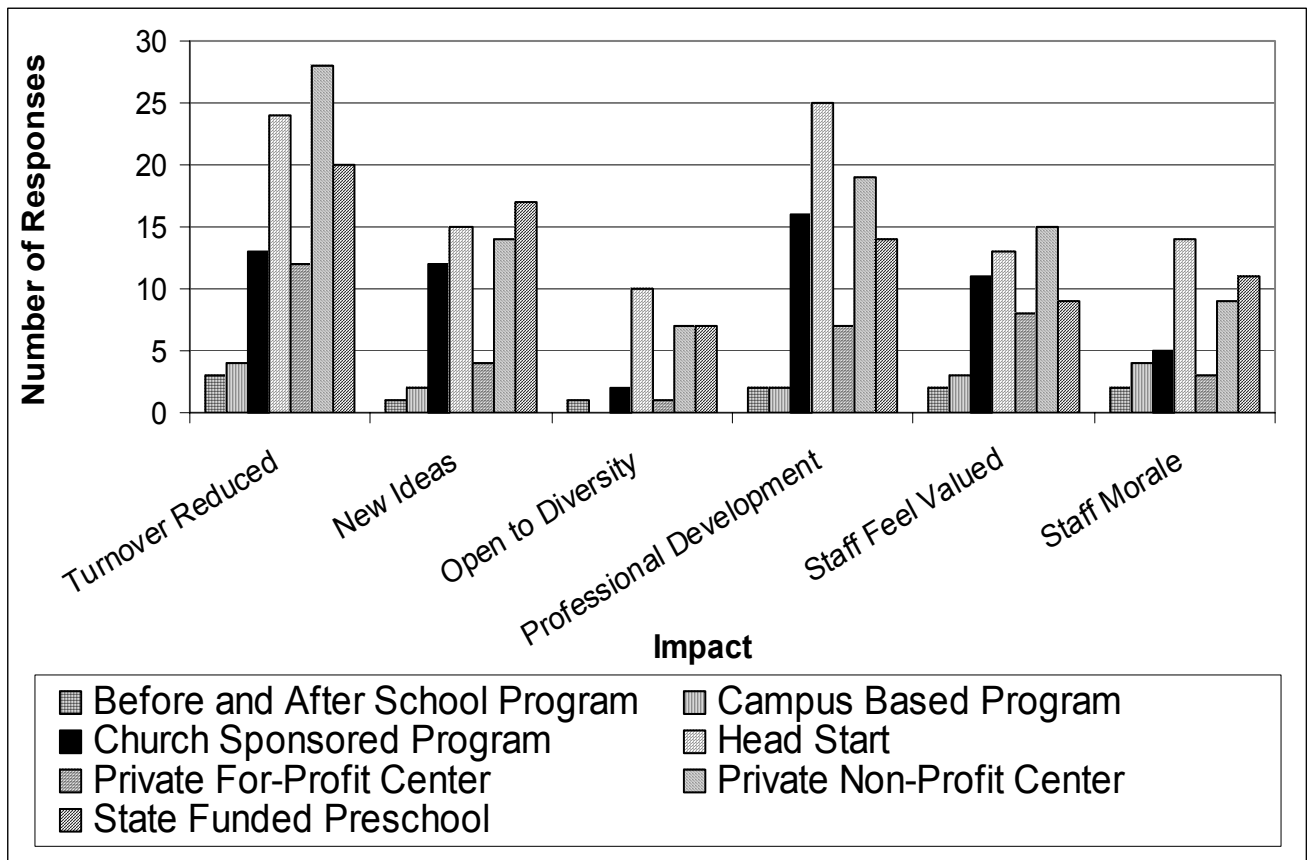


Table 3.

Other Program Impacts

Other Impact	Responses
Staff excited to get money	3
Helps finance school	1
More knowledgeable	1
Refreshed skills	1
Total:	6

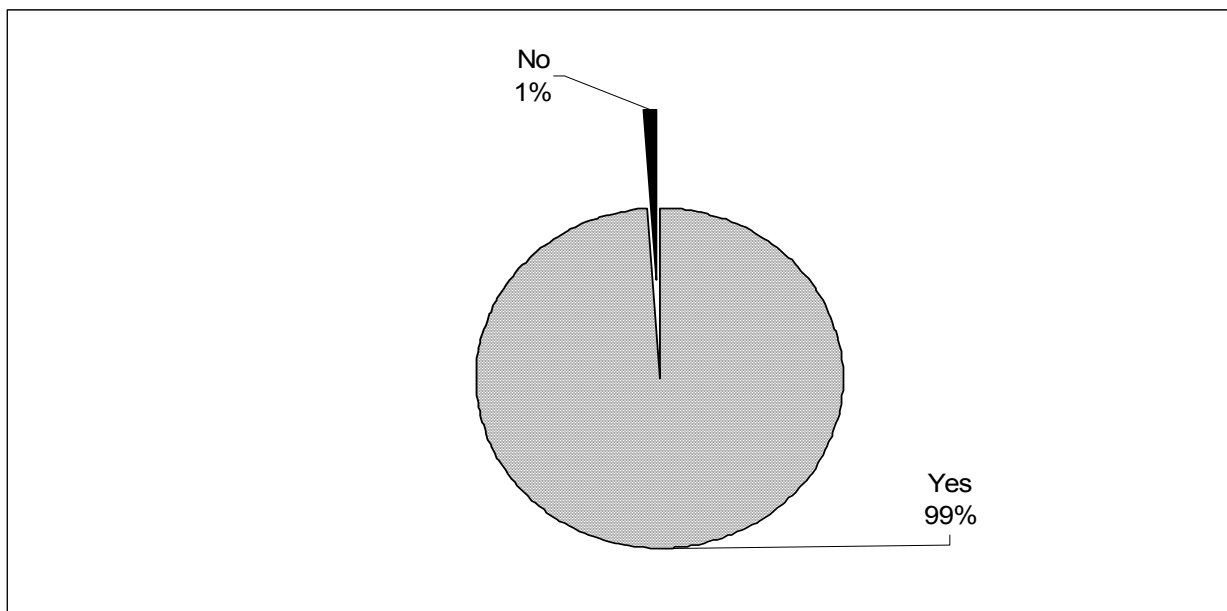
For the 31% of respondents who claimed “no impact,” the following reasons were given:

- ▶ Many teachers did not apply (not enough staff involved)-15
- ▶ Too early to tell-9
- ▶ Already have low turnover-8
- ▶ Staff have not yet received stipends-5
- ▶ Staff are already students-2
- ▶ Older staff not interested in continuing education-2
- ▶ Took unrelated courses-1
- ▶ Staff too busy to take classes-1
- ▶ Staff don't understand how CARES works-1

Should CARES Continue?

In answer to the question, “Would you recommend that it continue?” 99% of all respondents answered in the affirmative, showing the uniform support of the child care community for the San Diego CARES program..

Figure 11.
Recommend to Continue CARES
All Respondents



Suggestions for Program Improvement

Finally, respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the CARES program, generating the following list:

- ▶ Better marketing and clarification of program-45
- ▶ Include all persons working at the centers-6
- ▶ Credit staff for trainings, workshops (e.g., credit towards BA/AA)-5
- ▶ Increase stipend amount-4
- ▶ Annual program with ongoing support-3
- ▶ Work with colleges to change hours-2
- ▶ Waiting period too long-2
- ▶ Obtain more feedback from programs-2
- ▶ More classes for those who already completed basic requirements-2
- ▶ Offer a smaller stipend for staff working 10 hours-1
- ▶ Require less units-1
- ▶ Help pay for classes/books-1
- ▶ Head Start staff subject to transfer, therefore cannot meet 9 month requirement-1

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the CARES program is twofold:

- ▶ To reduce the staff turnover rate in licensed child care centers and family child care homes.
- ▶ To increase the professional education of staff and providers of early care and education services.

The first year experience of the San Diego CARES program began in July 1, 2001 and entailed extensive start-up processes in order to inform the more than 4000 licensed child care providers and facilities of the new opportunities. In spite of the challenges in reaching a far-flung target population, eligible staff from 437 centers participated in CARES during fiscal year 2001-2002. A total of 476 center staff were enrolled for the stipend program, which is 21% of the total center staff represented in the agencies completing this survey.

The evaluation survey was mailed in June and August of 2002, and received a total of 168 responses, 38% of all participating programs (not including family child care homes). The results clearly show that, in spite of the start-up delays in informing eligible staff, the program was successful in meeting its goals, and was able to achieve a 5.25% overall reduction in staff turnover. By September of 2002, over 800 applications had been received to participate in the second year of CARES, more than the amount for the entire previous year. Participating centers were unanimously in favor of continuing the program, and made several good suggestions for improvements. These suggestions will be referred to the San Diego Child Care and Development Council's Prop 10 Policy Committee which has acted as the advisory body for CARES.

CARES Program: Requirements and Eligibility



SAN DIEGO CARES PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

I. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A. Licensed Child Care Center Staff*

1. Currently have 6 units in child development college coursework **completed**
2. Worked in the same child care center for the 9 months previous to the date application was submitted
3. Currently work a minimum 20 hours per week in a classroom with children ages 0-5 at one site
4. Currently work directly with at least three children 0-5 at one site
5. Job titles that qualify: Assistant Teacher, Teacher Aide, Teacher, Head Teacher, One-Site Director or other position that requires working directly with children at one site

B. Licensed Family Child Care Staff

1. Currently have 6 units in child development college coursework **completed**
– OR –
Currently have completed 96 documented training hours related to child care and education to be approved by YMCA Childcare Resource Service staff
– OR –
Combination of both units and training hours to equal 96 hours (1 college unit = 15 hours)
2. Worked in same family child care home for 9 months previous to the date application was submitted
3. Currently work a minimum 20 hours per week with children ages 0-5 at one site
4. Currently work with at least three children 0-5 at one site

* Licensed State-Funded Child Care Center Staff see section C on next page.

– Continue on next page –

A. Licensed State-Funded Child Care Center Staff

(Center must have a contract with the State Department of Education, Child Development Division CDE/CDD)

1. Currently have 6 units in child development college coursework **completed**
2. Worked in same center for the 9 months previous to the date application was submitted
3. Currently work a minimum of 15 hours per week with children ages 0-13 at one site
4. Currently work directly with at least three children ages 0-13 at one site

II. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

After you submit your application to YMCA Childcare Resource Service (CRS)/San Diego CARES Project and satisfy all Entry Requirements, you will receive a notice stating that your application is complete. You will then need to satisfy the following program requirements in order to receive a stipend.

1. Enroll in a college and take six (6) units of coursework as shown on the Child Development Permit Matrix. For assistance with understanding the matrix or what classes you should take, see a Child Development Department instructor at your college.
– **OR** –
Obtain 20 professional development hours if you hold a Child Development Permit at the Master Teacher Level or higher
2. Receive a grade of "C" or better for the six units you complete on the Permit Matrix*
3. Continue to work in the same child care center or family child care program for an additional 9 months from the date your CARES application was approved by CRS
4. Continue to work a minimum of
Twenty (20) hours per week with at least three children ages 0-5 (Prop 10 funding)
– **OR** –
Fifteen (15) hours per week with at least three children ages 0-13 (AB 212 funding—available only for CDE/CDD funded programs)

**State funded (CDD) school-age center based staff qualify under AB212 (part of San Diego CARES) for up to \$3,000 when completing 12 units.*

III. TO RECEIVE A STIPEND

1. All entry and program requirements must be met
2. All documentation must be complete and on file at YMCA Childcare Resource Service
3. Stipend checks will be mailed out to recipients

Cover Letter and Survey



SAN DIEGO CARES BASELINE PROGRAM IMPACT SURVEY

Dear Center Director/ Administrator/ Site Supervisor:

One or more members of your staff group have applied and been accepted to the CARES program during this current fiscal year (July 1/01 to June 30/02). The CARES program provides a \$1500 stipend to qualifying staff of centers and family child care homes for completion of each six units of child development related education they complete (up to \$3000 can be earned by staff of state-subsidized programs who complete 12 units of credit).

It is critically important that we know how or if this stipend program has made a difference to your child care program in comparison with the year before CARES was implemented (July 1/00 to June 30/01). As you may know, the funds for CARES are being provided by the San Diego County Children and Families Commission (Prop 10) to whom we will report the results.

We are asking for your help in evaluating whether or not the results that were intended when CARES was created have in fact occurred:

- To reduce the turnover rate in child care facilities, and
- To promote the educational preparation of child care professionals.

Please complete the enclosed brief survey form and return it to us no later than a week after you receive it, in the enclosed pre-stamped envelope. We are asking that you include all potentially eligible staff in your entire center program. These would include those who have the job titles of Assistant Teacher, Teacher, Teacher Aide, Head Teacher, One-Site Director or other positions that require working directly with children at one site.

The findings from the study will be reported in summary form; no individuals or programs will be quoted or singled out.

We value your partnership: Thanks for your help.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

1. TYPE OF CENTER: (please circle one)

- a) State-funded Preschool
- b) Head Start
- c) Church-sponsored Program
- d) Private Non-profit Center
- e) Private For-profit Center
- f) Campus-based Program
- g) Before and After-school Program

2. Your location by zip code: _____

3. The year your facility opened: _____

4. The number of children you currently serve in all classrooms of your center by the following age groups:

- a) Birth to 23 months _____
- b) 2 yrs. to 2 yrs. 11 months _____
- c) 3 yrs. to 5 yrs. _____
- d) School-age _____

STAFFING IMPACTS.

5. The number of staff who worked directly with children in your center program during the *current year* (July 1/2001 to June 30/2002):

POSITION	# OF STAFF	# ACCEPTED BY CARES	# WHO LEFT PROGRAM
a) Assistant/Aide			
b) Associate Teacher			
c) Teacher			
d) Site Supervisor / Administrator			

6. The number of staff who worked directly with children in your center program the *previous year* (July 1/00 to June 30/01):

POSITION	# OF STAFF	# WHO LEFT PROGRAM
a) Assistant/Aide		
b) Associate Teacher		
c) Teacher		
d) Site Supervisor/ Administrator		

7. The reason(s) for leaving (give the number of staff in each position who left for each reason):

REASON FOR LEAVING	Assistant/ Aide	Associate Teacher	Teacher	Site Supervisor/ Administrator
a) Better pay				
b) Better benefits				
c) More work hours				
d) Took a job in another field				
e) Involuntarily separated (asked to leave)				
f) Moved				
g) Maternity				
h) Transferred to another unit of the agency				
i) Retired				
j) No reason given				
k) Other (please specify): _____				

8. Has the CARES stipend program had a noticeable effect on your program?

a) Yes _____ b) No _____

9. If yes, in what way(s) has it affected your program? (please circle all that apply)

- a) We are experiencing less staff turnover
- b) Staff are more motivated to remain here
- c) Staff demonstrate new ideas in working with children
- d) Staff morale is better
- e) Staff enrolled in CARES promote professional development with peers
- f) Staff are more open to cultural and family diversity
- g) Staff feel more valued
- h) Other (please specify): _____

10. If no, why? _____

11. Would you recommend that it continue?

12. Finally, what suggestions do you have for improvement of the CARES program?

Person completing form, in the event we need to contact you for clarification.

_____ () _____

Name/Title

Phone #

Again, thank you for your help. Remember, mail this back to us promptly.

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Distribution of Survey Respondents by Zip Code

