

San Diego County Childcare Environmental Scan May, 2001

San Diego at a Glance:

- 4,300 square miles
- The fourth largest population of any county in the United States
- Bigger in area than the State of Connecticut
- The economy exceeds that of Portugal and Israel
- Diverse attributes: beachfront property, mountain ranges and desert; international border; urban and rural areas; a myriad of ethnic groups speaking 68 different languages; and an economy encompassing agriculture, military, tourism and high tech industries; income ranges from extremely high to very low.

Geography:

- San Diego County covers approximately 4,300 square miles.
- It borders Orange, Riverside and Imperial Counties to the north and east, and Mexico to the south.
- The terrain extends from 70 miles of beaches in the west, through the mountains of the Cleveland National Forest to the Anza-Borrego desert in the east.

How it affects childcare:

- Access in rural areas is difficult, often involving travel across mountain or desert terrain.
- Few centers are available in the more rural areas due to sparse population.
- Unique border childcare issues: e.g. childcare on opposite sides of where parent resides or works.

Population:

- San Diego County currently has nearly 3 million residents.
- It is populated by many ethnic groups, speaking 68 different languages.
- There are 18 Native American tribal reservations in the county, more than any other county in the United States.
- Another million people are likely to be added by the year 2020.
- San Diego County is one of the fastest growing regions in the country.
- As of January 2000, San Diego County included 234,557 children, ages 0-4; 223,451 children ages 5-9; and 204,570 children ages 10-14.

How it affects childcare:

- Childcare in San Diego County must be culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Childcare must be available to keep up with the county's growth.
- The large number of Native American reservations has given rise to a number of casinos whose employees live primarily in rural areas and require non-traditional hours of childcare.

Employment:

How it affects childcare:

- The unemployment rate in San Diego County was at 2.6% in February 2001.
- Employed single mothers in San Diego County increased by 24.1% between 1995 and 1999.
- Forty-five percent of the workforce is employed in the retail trade or service industry.
- Low-income jobs often involve evenings, weekends and varying shifts.

Income:

- The median income for San Diego County in 1999 was \$39,749
- San Diego County has a wide variation in median income regionally. National City's median income of \$31,255 and Del Mar's of \$94,052 demonstrate a range of \$62,797.
- The average entry wage for CalWORKs recipients in San Diego County is \$6.40/hour or \$13,312 annually.
- A family earning median wage spends 19% of their income on childcare; a family earning minimum wage spends 63% of their income on childcare.

Subsidies:

- Federal government funds such programs as Head Start, 21st Century Learning Centers, Military dependents childcare and dependent care tax credits.
- The federal government provides Childcare & Development Funds as a block grant to states and tribes to assist low-income and welfare families in obtaining childcare.
- The State funds childcare through both the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education
- The Department of Social Services funds Stage 1 Childcare subsidies for CalWORKs participants when they begin their Welfare to Work programs
- All other programs are funded through the Department of Education These include State Preschools, Childcare & Development programs, Latchkey Programs, CALSAFE, Migrant childcare, Campus Childcare, Severely handicapped program, After-school Partnerships, and Stage 2 and 3 Subsidized childcare for stable and off-aid

- Low unemployment and a larger number of single mothers in the workforce have created an increasing demand for childcare.
- The increasing number of working mothers has resulted in a high need for infant/toddler slots.
- Employees in the retail trade and service industries present a growing demand for nontraditional hours childcare.

How it affects childcare:

- The working poor need subsidized childcare.
- With CalWORKs recipients entering the workforce, there is a high need for subsidized childcare.
- Childcare facilities tend to locate where there is more money, creating an imbalance in the distribution of childcare.
- Areas with middle and high income have more childcare capacity than those with lower incomes, although the child density is greater in the lower income areas.

How it affects childcare:

- CalWORKs childcare remains fully funded, guaranteeing subsidies to CalWORKs recipients for at least two years.
- Funding for the working poor is not adequate to meet the demands of the more than 8,000 families on the Centralized Eligibility List, the county-wide waiting list for childcare subsidies.
- The Federal government has increased funding for Head Start programs, creating a large number of new slots for preschool children in San Diego County. An additional \$10 million has been added locally for state preschool and general childcare. These additions in funding are still not adequate to meet the needs of the 8,000 children on the Centralized Eligibility List.
- The Standard Reimbursement Rate paid by the state for general childcare and state preschool programs has lagged since 1981-82 due to a lack of cost of living adjustments.
- The Reimbursement Rate for infant-toddlers does not cover the cost of care; therefore,

CalWORKs families and other low-income families.

agencies are opting to not provide infant-toddler programs.

Housing/Utilities:

- The average price of a single-family home in 2001 will be \$288,700.
- The region currently has over a million housing units and will need another 400,000 units by 2020 to meet the needs of the projected population increase.
- New housing is being built in the more rural areas.
- Only 23% of the County residents can afford a median priced home.
- California's electric bills are among the highest in the nation.

Transportation:

- The automobile is the primary means of transportation in San Diego County.
- Public transit includes buses, trolley, Coaster trains, car-pooling and organized vanpools.
- There are severe gaps in public transit as identified by the San Diego Regional Welfare to Work Transportation Plan. These include: areas with no public transit; limited transit service at night and on weekends; long travel times due to limited frequency; a complex fare structure and the high cost of transit.
- Fifty-three percent of CalWORKs recipients do not have access to an automobile and must rely on public transit.
- The cost of gasoline in California continues to rise. In May 2001, Californians paid \$1.95/gallon for regular gasoline, compared to the national average of \$1.68/gallon.
- San Diego's rush hour commute is the fifth worst in the nation.

The Economics of Childcare:

- San Diego County's gross regional product was expected to reach \$100.4 billion in 2000.
- San Diego has over 77,000 small businesses,

How it affects childcare:

- The development of the rural areas has created an increased need for childcare facilities in those areas.
- As the cost of housing and utilities climb, the amount a family can spend on childcare will decrease.
- To keep up with the cost of living, the childcare workforce needs to find better-paid employment and leaves the childcare field.
- The high cost of real estate is becoming a barrier to the construction of new centers in San Diego County.
- The soaring utility rate is especially threatening to small business owners, including many childcare providers

How it affects childcare:

- Accessibility to childcare is a critical need for working parents.
- The transit system in San Diego is insufficient to enable a mother to drop children off at childcare or school (or both) then continue her commute to work.
- The limited frequency of public transit makes it even more difficult for parents to pick up children mid-day or during non-traditional hours.
- Time delays on highways can result in late fees being charged to the parent by the childcare facility

How it affects childcare:

- Local government policies and investments that support childcare building will attract new businesses and retain those already here.

employing less than ten people each.

- Only 2.4% of the companies in San Diego have 100 or more employees, yet these firms employ 59.6% of the workforce.
- There is currently a labor shortage in the San Diego area, creating a situation where employers need to recruit outside the San Diego area.
- Prospective employees are now looking at the quality of life in the communities surrounding their potential workplace. One of the most over-looked aspects of this quality of life is affordable quality childcare.
- The childcare industry directly employs over 10,000 people.
- Employers need a stable workforce that takes a minimum of sick days

Quality of Care:

- Child development experts have identified six broad areas of education that are essential to provide quality care for children but are not included in licensing orientation: Child Growth, Development and Curriculum; Children, Parents and Community; Physical Environment; Health and Safety; Business Management; and Evaluation.
- In the state of California, hairdressers are required to complete 1500 hours of training to become licensed. Family childcare provider licensing requires only 15 hours of health and safety training.
- In January 2001, 31% of payments made by Stage 1 Childcare were to license-exempt providers, most often relatives, friends or neighbors of the parent. These providers often have little or no background in child development and safety.
- Childcare workers cite low wages, poor benefits and working conditions, and limited career advancement as barriers to their careers.
- With many providers reporting an almost 30 - 50% turnover rate, a childcare facility could completely change staff per year, thereby disrupting continuity of care.

Education:

- In 1990, the President and state Governors

- Increased quality childcare will contribute to the productivity of the workforce and be a factor in the County's economic growth.
- Employers can attract and retain quality employees by developing family friendly policies.

How it affects childcare:

- Continuity of care is essential to the quality of childcare.
- Childcare workers with Bachelors degrees are moving out of childcare and into better paying elementary teaching jobs.
- The low wages and lack of income growth potential have resulted in a lack of interest in entering profession.
- Licensing of caregivers helps to ensure that the children are being cared for in a healthy and safe environment.
- Childcare providers need resources available to them to deal with the increasing demands of the profession.
- Children in high quality childcare demonstrate greater language development, mathematical ability, greater thinking and attention skills, and fewer behavioral problems in school.
- CARES program to promote staff retention and quality improvement begins in summer 2001.

How it affects childcare:

- Proposition 10 adopted "ready to learn" as their

established the First National Education Goal: By the year 2000 all children will enter school ready to learn.

- A national survey of kindergarten teachers found that 46% of children entering kindergarten have a behavioral or learning problem and one out of thirteen fail kindergarten or first grade.
- In California 6% of six-to-nine year olds and 15% of ten-to-twelve year olds list self care as their primary care before and after school.
- Teenage parents need childcare to continue their education and complete high school. San Diego County's birthrate for teenage girls ages 15-17 was 29.0 per 1,000 teenage girls in 1998.

Special Needs:

- Because there are varying definitions of special needs, the current national figure for children with special needs ranges from ten to eighteen per cent.
- Based on that range, San Diego County has an estimated 57,000 to 102,668 children with special needs.
- Early identification of children with special needs is critical to their development.
- A 2001 survey conducted by the San Diego County Childcare and Development Planning Council reported 1,945 children with significant special needs being served by family childcare homes and childcare centers
- Fifty-eight percent of childcare providers reported having no training in working with children who have exceptional needs according to the above survey.
- While most providers responding to the survey listed the parent as the primary source for identification of the special need, twenty percent of the providers themselves had been the detecting source.

Child Welfare/Foster Care:

- In Fiscal year 1999-2000, an average of 2,997 children under the age of 13 entered Polinsky Children's Center, the San Diego County emergency children's shelter care home, monthly. Of these, 549 had returned to Polinsky from placement with foster parents.

vision.

- Linkages need to be developed between the kindergarten and early education systems.
- Greater demands are put on childcare providers to ensure that children are entering school ready to learn.
- Quality early care and education provide significant long-term gains to children between ages birth to five, especially children at risk.
- Childcare for school age children is essential for both their development and safety.
- The demand for childcare by teen-age parents has created the need for programs within the local high schools to accommodate the needs of those students.

How it affects childcare:

- Based on the estimated number of children with special needs in the county, the identified 1,945 children with significant special needs currently in childcare demonstrates a large gap in availability of services.
- Early identification of children with special needs is critical to their development.
- Providers must have the knowledge necessary to detect areas of concern and make appropriate referrals for diagnosis.
- Training, consultation and on-site mentoring need to be in place for providers to accommodate children needing services.

How it affects childcare:

- Childcare is an essential need for many parents who are, or who are considering becoming a foster parent.
- The availability of subsidized care can be a major selling point in the recruitment of foster parents.

- Funding for respite care for “at risk” children is very low and provides only a minimum number of hours of care.

Health Care:

- In San Diego County it is estimated that 17% of all children (ages 0-18) do not have health insurance.
- It is estimated that in San Diego County 8500 to 15,700 children ages 19-36 months old lack appropriate immunizations.

Resources:

- San Diego County is a large area with many entities and organizations involved in children’s issues. Many, including the San Diego Childcare & Development Planning Council, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, the Commission on Children Youth and Families, the United Way, Welfare to Work in San Diego County, Children’s Initiative 0-6 Task Force, and Proposition 10 list childcare as one of their priorities.
- There are many agencies and programs offering direct services to children, e.g., developmental testing through public schools beginning at age 3, etc.
- Current energy generating capacity in the State of California has resulted in the use of state discretionary funds to offset the cost to the public. This has reduced the dollars for childcare subsidies and other services.
- Together, the State and Local Proposition 10 Commissions have invested \$6.9 million in the CARES program, providing stipends to childcare providers furthering their education.
- Proposition 10 mini-grants to childcare providers of \$50/child resulted in onsite enhancements and improved quality of care.
- San Diego County is losing \$16,000 for training per the state Childcare & Development Fund plan.
- One-time CalWORKs Incentive Funding was used for a variety of childcare programs: Training stipends for license exempt providers to obtain basic health and safety information; Urgent

- Many parents involved in the Child Welfare System need respite childcare services to avoid out-of-the-home placement of their children.

How it affects childcare:

- One of the first concerns of parents placing a child in childcare is that the child is taken care of in a healthy and safe environment.
- In order to ensure that the children in childcare programs remain healthy, providers not only need knowledge of common health practices, but also the ability to recognize and respond to a variety of health needs.

How it affects childcare:

- Developing linkages between agencies can maximize funding for childcare programs.
- Funding sources need to work together to ensure that the gaps are being addressed without duplication.
- Many organizations have much to offer childcare in San Diego County and should be sought as partners: local colleges and universities, the March of Dimes, the United Way, Children’s Hospital, the Children’s Initiative, West Ed, the faith community, neighborhood organizations, service clubs, and sports teams are just a few.
- Proposition 10 funding for the CARES program will increase the knowledge of childcare providers and promote job retention.
- Training stipends for license-exempt providers will enhance their skills and provide a base for becoming licensed.
- CalWORKs Incentive Funds are time-limited and are not sustainable. The loss of the Incentive funds will potentially result in the loss of supports to the childcare system.

Childcare Services for back-up childcare; Behavioral Health & Health Care Consultants for Childcare Providers; Enhancements to the Centralized Eligibility List; and Interim funding for Stages 2 & 3 Childcare Subsidies.

- Health & Human Services Agency Regions have also funded childcare services through CalWORKs Incentive Funds: North Coastal & North Inland have earmarked \$400,000 for childcare projects in those
- Health & Human Services Agency Regions have also funded childcare services through CalWORKs Incentive Funds: North Coastal & North Inland have earmarked \$400,000 for childcare projects in those regions; Central Region is planning on using \$450,000 to work with employers to provide subsidized childcare stipends to CalWORKs participants whose employment is jeopardized by lack of childcare resources.