



FACT SHEET

WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

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06FS076

SUMMARY – EXECUTIVE BRANCH TASK FORCE ON QUALITY CHILD CARE SYSTEM

Background. In the 2006 Budget Session, the Legislature adopted 2006 HB 92 ('06 Laws, Ch. 64) which established the initial, major elements for a child care rating system and authorized incentive payments, professional development incentives, and technical assistance and quality support grants for participating child care facilities. The legislation also directs the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to develop a parental education and public awareness program. Importantly, the bill appropriated \$7.38 million for these activities but restricted the expenditure of \$6 million as well as the activities of the DWS pending further legislative action. Finally, the legislation created an executive branch Task Force and associated Legislative Oversight Committee. The Task Force was charged with developing an outcomes measurement and data infrastructure system for performance measurement and quality improvement. The Task Force is also charged with reporting on: the progress in establishing a quality child care system; participating child care facilities and their ratings; impacts of the services provided by the system; public awareness activities; collaborative efforts to provide comprehensive early childhood development; system expenditures (public and private); and recommendations for change. Below are three sections in this one-page summary: DWS findings on (a) quality assessment; (b) quantity assessment; and (c) program and funding recommendations.

Baseline Child Care Quality Assessment. Based upon DWS's *Assessment Profile* of a random, stratified sample of child care providers, the average performance scores for family child care homes and centers in selected dimensions were: safety (83%); interacting (83%); health and nutrition (80%); professionalism (80%); outdoor environment (78%); and learning environment (54%). Reported scores for child care centers included the following ranges, depending upon type of facility: health and safety (79-81%); interaction (73-83%); scheduling (55-60%); curriculum (48-55%); learning environment (43-55%); and individualizing (45-49%). The report concluded, "Overall, Wyoming's child care businesses provided safe, clean and healthy care for children...The low to moderate scores suggest that teachers/providers may not have sufficient knowledge regarding child development and age appropriate practices that foster learning in early childhood." The report also noted, "The findings of this baseline study indicate that as Wyoming develops its child care system, it is necessary to address issues of quality and to develop effective strategies to raise the quality."

Community Child Care Availability (Quantity) Assessment. With respect to available child care services in Wyoming and anticipated demand, the DWS reports:

- "Approximately 23,710 children, from birth to 12 years of age, were enrolled in some form of child care in the State of Wyoming during the second quarter of 2006.
- There is a shortage in the number of available child care slots for infant and toddler care that are available from child care facilities.
- The anticipated statewide child care demand in 2016 is expected to range somewhere between 28,190 and 48,619 children.
- If the potential demand in 2016 represents a midpoint of the low and high ends of the anticipated unmet demand range, expanded and new child care facilities will be needed to support approximately 14,695 children in Wyoming during the next decade."

Program and Funding Recommendations.

Component	Report Description	Committee Recommended Legislation
1. Business Management Services WBC \$250,000 1 FTE	"Resources for contracted business management assistance for participating child care providers. One new full time position is needed to serve as a specialist for child care businesses to provide in-depth counseling in addition to the assistance provided by the regional offices [of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Wyoming Business Council (WBC)]."	Two options requested for discussion – contract services and WBC services
2. Quality Enhancement Grants DWS \$750,000	"Funds for necessary equipment, resource materials, etc. to assist providers' improvements in quality."	Not adopted.
3. Early Childhood Scholarships DWS	Funding for an individual family determined by need and level of quality of the selected program. The proposed sliding fee scale is based upon the Wyoming Self-Sufficiency Standard. Funding not identified.	Investigate options for qualification; initiate scholarships immediately.
4. Technical Assistance DWS \$645,360 5 FTE	Five technical specialists located throughout the state are recommended to provide outreach, interpretation of assessment results, and develop capacity or quality plans, or both.	Recommended to include in draft; continue current language.
5. Professional Development Grants DWS \$600,000	"[P]rofessional development grants [would] provide resources to encourage...[staff]... to work toward certificates or degrees in early childhood development or related fields." Estimate is 600 grants @ \$1,000 each.	Limit grants to scholarships and recommended to include in draft.
6. Quality Assessment DWS	Voluntary assessments of quality and provision of benchmarks to programs. Four tier, four component rating scale includes family partnerships and community involvement; staff qualifications and education; learning environment; and staff/child ratios.	Recommended to include in draft.
7. Parent Education/Public Awareness DWS \$150,000	"Statewide distribution of resources specific to the Quality Child Care System."	Recommended to include in draft; continue current language.
8. Capacity Grants WBC \$3,030,825 (DWS recommended); 6.5 FTE	A separate funding program based upon the Business Ready Community Gant and Loan Program dedicated for child care infrastructure and a Community Facility Grant and Loan Program for Child Care Business Infrastructure. WBC requests five additional regional director positions at the WBC and 1.5 additional positions to administer increased volume of grant applications.	Modify W.S. 9-12-601.
9. Capacity Enhancements DWS \$750,000	"Resources for existing or new providers to expand or create care for underserved groups." Cited examples include high chairs, cribs, motorized equipment, toys for infants, and changing areas."	Recommended to include in draft restricted to qualifying children.
TOTAL (including administration): \$6,750,000 and 12.5 FTE		

Source: LSO Research staff summary of DWS "Report on Quality Child Care System," November 1, 2006.