Developments

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University Collaborative Reports

Declining Quality Weakens Pennsylvania's Child Care And Early Education Programs

The quality of early childhood care and education is slipping in Pennsylvania at a time when demand for those services is high and children are spending significant numbers of hours in the care of others, according to a three-university collaborative studying children's issues.

Recent studies suggest missed opportunities for improving the well-being of Pennsylvania's children are widespread.

The Universities Children's Policy Collaborative (UCPC) reports that quality early education and child care – not simply babysitting – yields benefits ranging from better math and reading scores to less delinquency. And wide access to such services would improve the school readiness of young children and reduce anti-social behavior – two critical needs facing Pennsylvania today.

But fewer than 20% of early childhood programs in Pennsylvania offer the kind of quality environments that tap the full potential of early learning.

"We have decades of science that tells us that it is quality that makes a difference in the outcomes of children," said Christina Groark, Co-Director of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development. "It is absolutely critical."

The findings, published in five reports, are based on six

Social Entrepreneurship

Nonprofits Get Down To Business Hoping To Become Self-Sufficient

When the Shady Lane School bought its Point Breeze building 12 years ago, the nonprofit early childhood center made a decision that ran against the grain of convention in the world of nonprofits. It went into business to earn a few dollars. The business was small scale – the school rented two vacant floors to tenants ranging from ARC to an Internet start-up company – but it was a business nonetheless.

Today, marketing assets from vacant building space to expertise is gaining considerable attention among nonprofits eager to diversify traditional funding streams and become more self-sufficient.

In Shady Lane's case, rental income covered its facility costs until it expanded three years ago and took over one of the previously-rented floors. The school rents one floor to tenants today and Sprint pays rent to keep a cellular phone tower on the roof of the building.

"We don't like the word, business, and as nonprofits, we don't like to think of ourselves as a business," said Howard Booth, Executive Director of the Shady Lane School. "But if you don't think about it that way today, if you don't consider your bottom line, you are doomed."

Engaging in profit-generating business ventures is far from risk free, however. Nonprofits that do not thoroughly and expertly assess business propositions can quickly run into trouble.

About half of the business ventures started by western Pennsylvania nonprofits expect to lose money this year,

(Declining continued from Page 1)

months of research by UCPC, a collaborative of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, the Pennsylvania State University College of Health and Human Development, and the Center for Public Policy of Temple University. UCPC was created to provide nonpartisan information on issues important to the well-being of children, youth, and families.

The UCPC reports recently provided the Governor's Early Childhood Care and Education Task Force with research-based evidence on which to base its recommendations to improve early childhood services in Pennsylvania. Gov. Mark Schweiker released the Task Force report and its recommendations on Oct. 15.

UCPC researchers also reported that:

• Nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvania's children are in child care or some other type of early childhood program, but fewer than half are enrolled in early educational programs.

• In Pennsylvania, the number of well-trained early childhood teachers – a key element of quality programs – falls far short of demand and recruiting students into the field is difficult.

• Although quality early childhood services cost more than custodial care, children and society realize benefits worth at least four times the total program costs.

• A wide majority of parents support spending tax dollars to prepare children for school.

Widespread Demand

Major shifts in the demographics of families in Pennsylvania and across the nation are intensifying the need for quality early childhood care and education. The number of working mothers with young children has almost doubled. The number of children living in single-parent families is climbing steadily. Significant gaps are seen in developmental outcomes of poor children. In Pennsylvania, one in six children live in poverty.

Two-thirds of Pennsylvania families have children in child care or an educational program on a regular weekly basis. Some 43% of children under age 6 spend at least 20 hours a week in child care or early education, and 25% are in child care or a classroom at least 35 hours per week, according to a UCPC survey of Pennsylvania families with children under 6 years old.

"The many similarities across metropolitan, small cities, and rural areas suggest that child care concerns are pervasive across Pennsylvania," said Marsha Weinraub, Ph.D., Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology, Director of the Developmental Division at Temple University.

However, relatively few Pennsylvania children attend programs that emphasize early childhood education. Only 44% of preschool-age children attend an educational early childhood program of any kind. Poor and minority 3- and 4-year-old children are even less likely to attend center-based or educational early childhood programs.

Cost is one reason for low attendance. Only 14% of all families receive some level of financial assistance – less than the percentage of families living in poverty. Also, only about one-half of families eligible for subsidies actually use them.

Quality Matters

UCPC reviewed four decades of research and found evidence that quality early childhood programs can improve a child's chances of succeeding in school and later in life. Quality early care and education is associated with school achievement, less grade retention, higher graduation rates, fewer behavior problems at school, lower rates of crime and delinquency among adolescents, and higher employment rates among adults.

But only high-quality early childhood services achieve such benefits. Characteristics of high-quality programs include well-educated teachers with early childhood training, intensive educational approach, low child-teacher ratios, small group sizes, low staff turnover, high standards, assessments, accreditation, and adequate teacher compensation.

Among these characteristics, the education level of teachers and whether a program uses an appropriate curriculum are particularly influential in determining the quality of the learning environment. "One of the best ways of improving quality – a very cost effective way – is looking at education of staff and training. That has clearly been demonstrated," said Richard Fiene, Ph.D., Director of the Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute at Pennsylvania State

according to a recent study by Olszak Management Consulting, Inc. that was funded by the William J. Copeland Fund. Business ventures can also expose nonprofits to other risks, such as legal and tax problems, strife within the organization, and harm to their reputation.

"It's not for everybody," said Kevin Kearns, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. "Many smaller organizations have jumped on the bandwagon and found out too late that running a business is a difficult thing to do."

Marketable Assets

Public monies for social services, particularly federal funds, are shrinking and competition for private dollars is increasing. Such developments have led to less stable funding streams among nonprofits, which is one of the key factors driving the interest in nontraditional ways of raising money. Another is an increasing interest among funders in coaxing nonprofit programs to become more self-sufficient.

Social entrepreneurship – nonprofits raising money through business-like arrangements to support a social mission – is a growing trend, but not one entirely new. Goodwill Industries has long raised money through businesses to support its core mission, sometimes using its clients to help operate those businesses.

At the heart of social entrepreneurship is the notion that many nonprofits have marketable assets that can be tapped to generate revenue to support and promote their mission. These assets include expertise, services, products, logos, volunteer networks, and even their reputation or standing in the community. Children's Television Workshop, for example, licenses "Sesame Street" characters for books, toys, and other products. The Girl Scouts sells more than $200 million in cookies each year to support the organization. Nonprofits also enter into partnerships with businesses and some generate income from their facilities, as Shady Lane School does.

Success depends on a number of factors, but key characteristics include strong leadership, the ability to recognize and effectively leverage assets, acceptance and support of the new venture from those within the organization, thorough and expert planning and research, and the willingness to take a long-term outlook.

Among the most important considerations for nonprofits thinking about getting into business is whether the organization's mission and expertise are well matched to the new venture.

Look Before Leaping

Another key consideration is that for many nonprofits,

the money they invest in businesses is other people's money. "It is not to be taken lightly that you're playing with charitable assets," Kearns said. "People give money to nonprofit organizations to do specific things – solve hunger, treat abused women, to cure diseases. It is very different than me buying stock in a company I assume is going to use my money to earn money so my stock rises. When I make a donation to a nonprofit, I'm assuming they are there to help solve social problems."

Financial losses are real possibilities, particularly during the early years of a venture. The finding that half of the surveyed businesses run by nonprofits in the western Pennsylvania expect to take losses this year is consistent with a Yale study that found a 50% failure rate among these kinds of businesses, and national surveys that report that about half of all small businesses in the U.S. fail in the first five years.

Strong, astute leadership is a key element of success among these ventures. But careful and expert business planning may be the single most important factor in determining whether business projects end up meeting a nonprofit's expectations.

Local studies, Kearns said, show that nonprofits are often surprised when the public isn't willing to pay for the goods or services they are trying to sell. "That's the kind of thing that a good business person scopes out in advance. They do market analysis, beta testing with potential clients, focus groups to see what the tolerance is for different pricing strategies."

Nonprofits have the ability to assess community need – look at the community and ask what needs aren't being met and how they can be filled, Kearns said. "They're often quite good in looking at a market and identifying a need for a certain service. What they are curiously not very good at is distinguishing between need and demand. It's a subtle difference, but an important one. Demand is the willingness of someone to pay to fill a need."

Risks that also require careful consideration include the possibilities that a profit-generating business may jeopardize its nonprofit status, that it might cause a rift within the organization among those who embrace the new venture and those who do not, and that the new business venture could become a distraction to the organization's social mission.

"You really have to assess your mission and its compatibility of the venture," Kearns said. "And if you don't have the expertise, don't do it. Do what you do well and if you can't translate that into a for-profit venture, then think

> ## *Announcements . . .*

OCD Offers Courses
In Program Evaluation

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development Planning and Evaluation Project is offering a series of training courses designed to develop and enhance evaluation skills and information management techniques to improve service delivery.

These courses are designed to provide directors, program staff, and board members of human services agencies, with the skills needed to meet their evaluation needs. Classes can be chosen, for example, that will help staff or directors develop an evaluation for a program, gain insight from focus groups, and effectively use the data once it is collected.

Spring 2003 Schedule

The courses are held on Thursday mornings at the Office of Child Development, now located in North Point Breeze in Lexington Technology Park at 400 N. Lexington Avenue.

	Name	Time	Date	Cost per Course
I	Developing Models for Evaluation	9-noon	March 13, 2003	$50
II	Collecting Data	9-noon	March 27, 2003	$50
III	Designing Surveys (2 sessions)	9-noon	April 10, 2003 April 24, 2003	$100
IV	Conducting Focus Groups	9-noon	May 8, 2003	$50
V	Using Your Data	9-noon	May 22, 2003	$50

To obtain registration information, REQUEST A COPY OF THE PROGRAM BROCHURE by contacting Charlene Nelson at 412-244-7553, fax: 412 244-5321, or e-mail: ocdpep@pitt.edu.

If your organization needs personalized assistance, the Office of Child Development offers training and consultation on evaluation for staff at your site. Contact us for additional details.

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Economic Development Grants
Offered To Uplift Communities

A range of organizations, including community action groups, are eligible to apply for a state-sponsored program that provides financial and technical support to stimulate economic development and opportunities in Pennsylvania communities who need it the most.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development accepts applications for the Employment and Community Conservation Program (ECC) at any time.
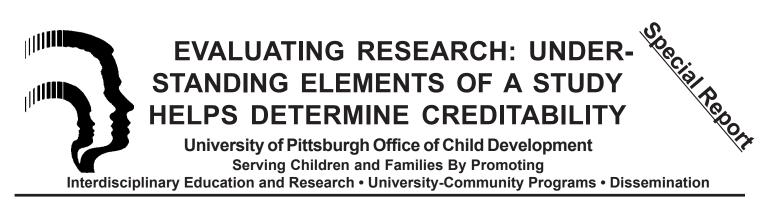
In general, the program seeks to improve the quality of life in communities and to help ease unemployment and other social conditions that contribute to poverty and dependency on government welfare. The program is also interested in:

• Encouraging local government and nonprofit organizations to collaborate on community development initiatives.

• Supporting local, comprehensive initiatives aimed at improving social, physical, and economic infrastructures in communities.

Applicants are encouraged to contact DCED about a project before submitting a proposal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact: Ellen G. Kight, Director, DCED, 413 State Office Building, 300 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222; (412) 565-5002.

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EVALUATING RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING ELEMENTS OF A STUDY HELPS DETERMINE CREDITABILITY

University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development
Serving Children and Families By Promoting
Interdisciplinary Education and Research • University-Community Programs • Dissemination

The influence of research is far reaching. It informs and guides children's policy and practice, provides evidence of the effectiveness of approaches and programs, identifies the characteristics that strengthen and weaken them, and can shape the opinions of policymakers and the public on important issues.

Not all research, however, is equal. Factors ranging from the credibility of those doing the research to the design of the study determine to what degree the findings can be trusted. This report, based on advice published by the National Association of Child Advocates, offers an overview of factors that should be considered when trying to determine the credibility of research related to children and families.

Sources

The source of the study is a factor worth considering. In the absence of detailed information about a study, the reputation of researchers and institutions is a helpful guide. Those who are known in their fields for quality are more likely to produce credible work. The experience of a researcher or institution in the topic being studied is another consideration, although some young researchers produce very high quality work.

It is also important to know a little about who financed the study. Groups with strong political or commercial agendas, for example, are likely to have an interest in research that supports their viewpoints. Although the political position of an organization does not invalidate the studies it supports, it is a factor that should be examined when evaluating the credibility of those studies. Most behavioral studies on children are financed by the government and conducted at universities, which do not have obvious commercial interests.

News Media As A Source

The news media occasionally reports the findings of studies related to children and families, particularly when studies touch on high-profile issues, such as welfare reform or juvenile crime.

However, news media accounts are likely to be incomplete.

Newspapers, magazines, and television and radio news each have constraints that influence their coverage: limits on space in newspapers and magazines, for example, and time limitations in television and radio broadcasts. News organizations focus their reporting on what they perceive to be of interest to the general public. News media accounts also tend to highlight the most attention-grabbing elements of a study.

As a result, news reports of studies tend to be much more concise and far less technical than accounts of the same study that appear in research journals. They necessarily must omit most of the details. In research, however, the "devil is in the details." Credibility is associated with several scholars agreeing with the conclusions.

What Publication Suggests

Studies published in reputable research journals undergo peer review and meet the standards of the publishing organization. These studies, as a result, earn a high-level of credibility.

If a study is unpublished or appears in a publication that does not require peer review – a chapter in an edited book, for example – the fact that it has not undergone the scrutiny of independent experts should be considered when evaluating the weight to give its findings.

That is not to say that all unpublished work or work published without the scrutiny of peer-review is of poor quality. All studies start out unpublished. The reputation of the institution that conducted the study and the reputation of the organization that published it are guides to evaluate the reliability of work that does not appear in peer-reviewed journals. Many professional organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, urge their members not to publicize their research until it has been peer reviewed, but this cannot always be done.

Research Characteristics

Understanding certain characteristics of a study,

such as research design and how the issue in question is defined, helps determine the validity of its findings and more accurately interpret the results and assess their implications for specific purposes.

Research Design Varies

Research design is an important indicator of the quality of a study. Research design is the way a study is structured to answer a question.

Studies using an experimental design provide the best cause-effect information. They compare groups that have been experimentally given different experiences by the researchers. These studies offer the strongest evidence that an outcome was the result of a specific program rather than the result of other conditions, events, or the predisposition of the participants. Among the different types of experimental design, there are two general categories that provide different levels of evidence.

• **Randomized Experimental Design**. True experimental designs compare a *treatment group* – people who have received an intervention – to a similar group of people who did not receive the intervention, known as a *control group* or *comparison group*. The key characteristic of these studies is that participants are randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups. This methodology allows researchers to state with more confidence that the intervention studied was responsible for the outcomes. It is the principal method used to determine a cause-and-effect relation. However, the methodology has its limitations. A single randomized study may not produce the same results in another setting, under different conditions, or with different types of participants. Also, the results are limited to people who are randomly assigned to a treatment, whether they like it or not. Some treatments work better if people choose, like, or have faith in it. Additional trials in other settings that replicate the effects increase confidence in the program's effectiveness.

• **Quasi-Experimental Studies**. Quasi-experimental design compares groups involved in a program or model with groups that are not. These studies *do not* use random assignment to create the groups. Instead, they find groups with similar characteristics to study and give the treatment to one or more and not to the others. Careful statistical controls are required to match comparison groups with treatment groups. To conclude that the treatment caused differences between the groups, one needs to believe the groups or participants were essentially identical.

• **Pre- Post-Test Only Intervention**. They are particularly useful for studying complex systems as they exist in the community. The lowest level of experimental design is the pre-post test design without an adequate control group. Without control groups it is difficult to know if program effects are due to normal growth and development, other programs and services, or other factors that changed between the pre- and post-test, such as changing economic conditions or enthusiasm for any special treatment.

• **Observational Designs.** In some cases, experimental designs are not possible. It is sometimes impractical or unethical to assign children to different treatment groups to attain the control needed for the experiment. For example, researchers, for ethical reasons, cannot assign children to low quality education. Often, researchers simply observe and measure the difference between two or more groups of people with contrasting naturally-occurring experiences. For example, children in early care who have more highly educated teachers score better on school readiness tests than children in care with less educated teachers. Does mean that the better educated teachers produced (i.e., caused) that readiness advantage? Maybe, but maybe not. Perhaps children from more highly educated families go to care settings that have higher educated teachers, but it is their home experience that produces the readiness advantage.

Why Sampling Is Important

Researchers gather information on a sample of people to determine the effects of a program for the full population. Knowing the size of the sample and how it was collected helps determine the reliability of a study and whether its results can reasonably be applied to one group or another or to larger numbers of people.

The minimum size of a sample depends on how large the effects being studied are. A general guideline for a minimum sample size might be 30-50 people. The larger the sample, the smaller the difference needed between groups to attain statistical significance (i.e., the evidence is sufficient to say the differences were not due to just chance).

Even more important than the size of the sample is how it was collected. If researchers are to assume that the findings for a sample of people can be generalized to a larger group, they must be careful to select a sample that fairly represents that group. If sampling is biased toward some types of people (i.e., upper educated, Caucasian), the study's findings might not apply to those people not fairly represented in the sample.

One appropriate sampling procedure is random selection, but it can rarely be implemented. Sometimes participants are randomly selected from a specific group, such as from a single preschool or an agency's client list. But conclusions only apply to that group and similar groups. Some surveys, such as random digit dialing, come close to having a random sample of people in a geographic area.

An important aspect of sampling is the response rate, which is the proportion of people selected to be in the study who actually participated. A low response rate means that a portion of the sample was not studied and suggests that those who did not respond are different in some systemic way from people who did respond. If possible, researchers usually try to determine if those who participate are different in some way than those who refuse, but it is difficult to be certain or comprehensive.

Statistical Significance

Statistics are used to test whether the results researchers find are likely due to the intervention studied and not certain other factors. When studies report a statistically significant outcome, it means that it is unlikely the outcome is simply due to chance.

Here is an example: In a hypothetical case, a study finds that 75% of children given health care had acceptable school attendance but only 50% of children who did not receive health care had acceptable attendance. When researchers report the difference as statistically significant, it means the outcomes of the two groups were not simply due to the fact that any two groups of children would not have identical attendance by chance, even if health care made no difference at all.

In some cases, a finding that may not be statistically significant because the sample size was too small may still be meaningful because it suggests an important change in an outcome. Other times, a result may be statistically significant because of a large sample size but the difference really is not very large or important from a practical or policy standpoint.

Findings Relate To Groups

Studies usually base their findings on comparisons between groups of people. Such findings tend to be particularly relevant for policy decisions, but less relevant for decisions on individual cases.

More Studies, Better Understanding

No single study tells the whole story. Science, in general, is about the aggregation of specific studies, each building upon the other and each representing different aspects or circumstances of an issue to increase the body of evidence on a particular topic. A deeper, more complete understanding of any issue important to children and families comes when many specific studies are examined together, such as in a literature review (which are often reported in *Developments* as Special Reports).

Quality Matters

Studies of varying quality on the same topic should not be given the same weight. Those of higher-quality – randomized experimental studies, for example – should be given more weight when compared to less rigorous research, especially when deciding cause and effect. But observational studies and quasi-experimental studies may be better indications of what actually happens in society.

Sometime it is difficult to find rigorous studies done on new topics because the body of research evidence is still thin. Available studies may be useful in providing information that suggests what is going on, but they should not be considered definitive until numerous studies are done on the topic and a more complete picture is available.

References

Schaefer, S.A. (2001). *Understanding Research: Top Ten Tips for Advocates and Policymakers*. Washington, DC: National Association of Child Advocates.

T*his Special Report, written by Jeffery Fraser, is largely based on the above-referenced report. It is not intended to be an original work but a summary for the convenience of our readers.*

OCD Moves To New Offices; Telephone Numbers Change

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development has moved from its Oakland, Cathedral of Learning, and Penn Plaza locations to new offices in the Lexington Technology Park, North Point Breeze. Our new address is:

>   University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development
>   400 N. Lexington Avenue
>   Pittsburgh, PA 15208

The new general telephone number for OCD is: (412) 244-5447. Staff telephone numbers are:

Employee	Job Title	New Telephone (412 area code)
Barnard, Wendy	Evaluation Specialist	244--5360
Barron, Maria	Family Support Services Specialist	244--5372
Beasley, Sheila	Director, Family Support Outreach	244--5301
Bell, Mary	Administrative Assistant	244--5363
Bennermon, Bernadette	Quality Assessment Coordinator	244--5011
Biseglia, Anne	Health Specialist	244--5374
Colella, Mary Ellen	Administrator	244--5381
Dettore, Ernie	Early Childhood Initiative	244--5012
Etheridge, Wendy	Projects Manager, Policy Initiatives	244--7089
Farber, Anne	Division Director of Policy &Evaluation	244--1769
Firth, Ray	Director, Behavioral Health Policy	244--5361
Fustich, Roger	Director of Administrative Operations	244--5306
Groark, Christina	Co-Director	244--5303
Harris-Bush, Annette	Data Coordinator	244--5010
Huggins, Cheryl	Administrative Assistant	244--5369
Herman, Vivian	Director of EHS	244--5013
Jones, Linda	Early Literacy Coordinator	244--1528
Jones, Susan	Administrative Assistant	244--5387
Kaminski, Mary Louise	Administrator	244--5421
Kuritzky, Nancy	Director, Partnerships for Family Support	244--5027
McCall, Robert	Co-Director	244--5421
Maloney, Peggy	Administrator	244--5305
Maretzki, Bryce	Exec. Dir., Family Support Policy Board	244--5025
Mehaffie, Kelly	Assistant to Co-Director	244--5304
Moeti, Prisca	Graduate Student Researcher	244--7098
Mulvey, Laurie	Div. Director of Service Demonstrations	244--5026
Musewe, Lucas	Data Coordinator & Manager, Webmaster	244--5028
Nelkin, Robert	Division Director of Policy Initiatives	244--7092
Nelson, Charlene	Secretary	244--7553
Nicoll, David	Administrator	244--5307
Ohmer, Mary	Graduate Student Researcher	244--7098
Pelkowski, Jennifer	Evaluation Manager	244--7096
Rishel, Carrie	Graduate Student Researcher	244--7098
Rudy, Kathy	Community and Internal Services	244--5358
Sarneso, Donna	Early Childhood Education Coordinator	244--5366
Stark, Debra	Research Associate	244--7072
Stiller, Tyleta	Secretary	244--5447
Taylor, Jeanne	Family/Community Partnerships Coordinator	244--5367
Taylor, Shannah	Graduate Student Researcher	244--5386
Tittnich, Emie	Child Mental Health/Child Care Coordinator	244--5364
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Yao, Su-Fang	Graduate Student Researcher	244--5373
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Service Demonstrations (fax)		244--5442

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University.

Quality Shortage

Such high-quality programs are the exception rather than the rule in Pennsylvania, according to a UCPC survey that measured the quality of 372 Head Start programs, preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, group child care homes, and legally unregulated/relative/neighbor care arrangements.

More than 80% of the early childhood care and education programs across the state had quality scores ranging from mediocre/adequate to poor – levels not likely to produce the full benefits of early childhood education.

"The survey indicates that most child care settings in Pennsylvania are of mediocre quality, at best," said Mark Greenberg, Director of the Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University. "This is a clear signal, a warning that there is a great need to improve the quality of early childhood care and education to make sure that children are ready for school socially, emotionally and academically."

Head Start programs in Pennsylvania offer the highest quality early childhood services – a ranking due, in part, to having well-educated staff, national standards, and rigorous monitoring. However, the part-day, nine-month program serves only 50% of eligible children.

Preschools and nursery schools ranked second in quality scores. Among center-based programs, child care centers scored the lowest in quality assessments.

The quality of home-based providers was lower than center-based programs. Home-based care – family home, group home and neighbor-relative arrangements – is the most widely used type of child care in Pennsylvania. Legally unregulated/relative/ neighbor care had the lowest quality scores of all of the types of early care and education surveyed.

The survey also found that the quality of child care centers and family/group home child care declined during the last five years to below adequate/mediocre levels. A substantial share of these programs were considered of poor quality. Environments of poor quality risk harming children's development.

"The quality has dropped off significantly in centers and homes, which is a major concern because that is where the majority of the children are," said Dr. Fiene. "If I were a parent, I would be really concerned about where to place my child."

Return On Investment

Quality early childhood services are more expensive, costing about 10%-30% more than custodial care, according to the research. But the return on investment is substantial.

The better outcomes associated with quality early childhood programs can lower special education, criminal justice, and other costs. In fact, quality early childhood programs have demonstrated financial benefits to society worth 4-7 times their total costs.

"A lot of people are concerned about the cost of quality. As best as we could determine, the annual cost of quality early childhood care and education is comparable to the average cost of public school elementary education," said OCD's Groark.

Teacher Supply Low

Employing college-educated teachers is crucial to providing a high-quality educational experience.

But in Pennsylvania, only 58% of preschool teachers, 39% of Head Start teachers, 22% of child care center teachers and 18% of home-based providers have a bachelors degree in any subject. More than half of college-educated teachers who teach children 5 years old and younger have a background in elementary education, not early childhood, which is better suited to their field.

Only half of the early childhood college graduates take jobs working with children kindergarten age or younger – and more than a quarter of them leave Pennsylvania to do so, according to a UCPC survey of higher education programs in Pennsylvania.

"It's harder to recruit students to go into early childhood fields because they know they will make little money when they come out," Groark said.

Accreditation was also found to be related to the quality of early childhood services. Accredited centers have much better ratings of quality than those in the process of seeking accreditation or those that are not accredited.

Task Force Recommendations

The UCPC's findings helped inform the Governor's Early Childhood Care and Education Task Force in preparing its recommendations for improving early childhood programs in Pennsylvania. The blue-ribbon panel was chaired by Marilyn Ware, Chairman of the Board of Ameri-

can Water Works Company, Inc. Family Communications' Fred Rogers served as Honorary Chair.

The Task Force called for taking several steps to widening access to early education and improving the quality of early childhood programs. Recommendations included the following:

• Quality preschool should be available, in a variety of settings, to all 3- and 4-year-olds on a voluntary basis and funded beginning with children who are at risk of school failure.

• Kindergarten should be available and funded for all children at age 5 at the choice of their parents, with funding for full-day kindergarten available to school districts for children determined by research to most likely benefit.

• Research-based standards of excellence should be adopted through a process that fully engages diverse constituencies for all early care and education services, and quality should be supported through promotion of best practices and continuous quality improvement.

• An accountability system should be developed for state-funded or regulated early care and education services through a process that fully engages diverse constituencies, with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

• A statewide system of financial incentives should be established that supports the efforts of all early childhood providers to reach and maintain the standards of excellence.

• Quality in the early care and education work force should be improved through establishing a minimum level of experience and/or training prior to employment, ongoing professional development, developing a system of credentialing early care and education professionals, and appropriately compensating them.

UCPC researchers found evidence that parents are willing to support such measures. Eighty-eight percent of parents sampled felt early care and education was important enough to support with their tax dollars. This sentiment was consistently expressed by parents throughout Pennsylvania, regardless of neighborhood or family characteristics.

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The Universities Children's Policy Collaborative produced the following reports:

Benchmarking Early Care and Education in Pennsylvania: The 2002 Pennsylvania Family Survey (Written by Center for Public Policy, Temple University). www.temple.edu/CPP/current_proj/proj14.htm.

The State of Early Care and Education in Pennsylvania: The 2002 Higher Education Survey (Written by University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development). www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/policy21.htm.

A Baseline Report of Early Care and Education in Pennsylvania: The 2002 Early Care and Education Provider Survey (Written by University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development) www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/policy21.htm.

From Science to Policy: Research of Issues, Programs and Policies in Early Care and Education (Written by University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development). www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/policy21.htm

Pennsylvania Quality of Early Childhood Settings Study (Written by Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University).

Universities Children's Policy Collaborative research reports are available at www.prevention.psu.edu/ECE.

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Announcements . . .

2003 Summer Institute
Family Research Consortium III

"Intervention as Science"

The Family Research Consortium III, supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, will sponsor a 2003 Summer Institute for family researchers. The Institute will provide a forum for dissemination, evaluation and discussion of important new developments in theory and research design, methods and analysis in the field of family research. The Institute accepts a limited number of both junior and senior researchers as participants and allows for intellectual exchange among participants and presenters in addition to the more structured program of high quality presentations. Minority family researchers are particularly encouraged to participate. The theme of the 2003 Summer Institute is "Intervention as Science." The Institute will be held at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico, from June 26 - 29, 2003.

Registration fee:	$390	Junior Attendees (fewer than 8 years post degree)
	$450	Senior Attendees (8 years or more post degree)
Hotel cost:	$179	per room per night plus tax

The Co-Chairs of the 2003 Institute are Marion Forgatch, Oregon Social Learning Center; Andrew Fuligni, University of California, Los Angeles; and Spero Manson, University of Colorado. Deadline for applying is Friday, March 28, 2003. For applications and/or more information contact:

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Parenting Guide Series
Available From OCD

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development is offering a series of easy-to-use parenting guides offering information and advice on 50 parenting topics. These guides are available free of charge to parents and organizations, agencies and professionals who work with children and families.

The You & Your Child parenting guide series, written and edited by the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, covers topics ranging from how to deal with children's fears, finicky eating habits, and aggressive behavior to getting a child ready to read, setting rules, and coping with grief.

Each guide is based on current parenting literature and has been reviewed by a panel of child development experts and practitioners. The series is made possible by the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education.

To receive a printed set of all 50 guides by mail, send a request along with your name, organization, mailing address and telephone number to:

Parenting Guides
University of Pittsburgh
Office of Child Development
400 North Lexington Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

The You & Your Child parenting guides are also available on the Internet for downloading as portable document files at: www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/guides.htm

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Correction

Ronald B. Mincy, Ph.D., was the keynote speaker of the 2002 Annual Family Support Conference that was held in May at the Sheraton Hotel at Station Square, Pittsburgh. An article on his remarks published in the September 2002 issue of *Developments* incorrectly reported his first name.

■

Announcements . . .

Free OCD Parenting Columns Well Suited For Newsletters

Dispensing parenting advice, long the domain of grandmothers and other family relations, is drawing more attention from policymakers and others looking for ways to strengthen families and communities – and for good reason. Studies show effective parenting improves a child's chances of healthy development.

Sound parenting advice on more than 50 topics is now available free of charge in a series of columns written by Robert B. McCall, Ph.D., Co-Director of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development and former columnist for *Parents* magazine.

The columns, well-suited for newsletters and community newspapers, provide clear, concise and accurate information on topics such as dealing with a child's lying, how to toilet train, what to do about nightmares, discipline and finicky eaters, and how to recognize and address grief in children.

OCD offers the columns free of charge as Microsoft Word documents, which can be viewed and downloaded from the Internet at: www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/columns.htm.

The public service initiative is made possible by the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education, whose contributions support production of the columns and other Office of Child Development projects. ■

ACCESS GRANTS State Home Improvement Grants Offered To Low-Income Families

State home improvement grants are offered to low income families and people of moderate income who are disabled.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development accepts applications all year for its PA Access Grant Program. Redevelopment authorities, local government entities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for the grants. Nonprofits, however, must apply through a branch of local government or through a redevelopment authority. And contacting DCED regional office before applying is encouraged.

Grants are provided to government entities or qualified nonprofits to help low-income families and the disabled afford home improvements or to make their homes more accessible.

The program's objective include helping those of limited means afford better housing, encouraging collaboration among housing and disability organizations, promoting consumer control over home improvements, and expanding the living options of the disabled and promoting their safety.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Emily J. White, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, 400 North Street, 4th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 787-7120. ■

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