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ABSTRACT

Part I of this annual report of the California State Department of Education on child care services addresses policy questions suggested by the legislative reporting requirements for child development programs. These requirements include descriptions of the children and families served, the agencies providing subsidized child care services, and the cost and quality of subsidized child care. (In the report, the term "program" refers to the specific funding source which determines the type of services to be provided.) (MP)

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ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE SERVICES

Part I Child Development Programs

1979-80

A Report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
as Required by Education Code Section 8243.5

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles—Superintendent of Public Instruction
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Education Code Section Requiring This Report:

Section 8243.5 Annual Report

Commencing November 1, 1977, and on or before November 1st for each year thereafter, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall submit to the Joint Budget Committee of the Legislature a descriptive report, as defined by Section 33403, on child development programs operating pursuant to this chapter during the preceding fiscal year. Each annual report shall include, but is not limited to, the following information, derived through sampling methods:

(a) Statistical data enumerating and describing children and families served by the programs, including distributions of families and children by income levels, by ethnic grouping, by children's ages, by marital status of parents, by reasons for receiving child care service (i.e., employment, training, education, protection), by public assistance status, and by family size.

(b) Statistical data enumerating and describing the characteristics of programs, including the types of programs in terms of size and type of facilities utilized, types of agencies operating programs as defined by Section 8313, and the staff-child ratios and the staff composition for each type of program and for each type of operating agency.

(c) Cost data describing the total costs and the average cost per hour of service for each type of program (as defined for purposes of subdivision (b)) and for each type of operating agency as defined by Section 8243.

(d) Evaluate data describing the quality of child development programs in accordance with measurement criteria as established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Each annual child development report shall be in two parts: one part shall relate to subsidized child care services and one part shall relate to services under the State Preschool Program.

(Amended by Statutes of 1978, Chapter 828, Section 3.)

FINDINGS

A total of \$176,368,262 was appropriated for child development services in fiscal year 1979-80. This funding provided subsidized child care services to an estimated 109,084 children. Briefly summarizing the *Annual Report on Child Development Programs*, the following discussion addresses policy questions suggested by the legislative reporting requirements for child development programs. These requirements include descriptions of the children and families served, the agencies providing subsidized child care services, and the cost and quality of subsidized child care.

In this report, the term "program" is used to refer to the specific funding source which determines the type of services to be provided. For example, the School-Age Parenting and Infant Development Program provides mainly child care for the children of high school students, along with parenting classes for the students themselves. In another instance, services in the Migrant Child Care Program are essentially seasonal, as compared to those in the General Child Care Program which are offered year-round.

Finally, the term "agency" refers to the administrative unit, such as an office of the county superintendent of schools, while the term "facility" refers to the actual site, a center or home, where the child is cared for. Responsibilities of the agency are primarily administrative, while the facility is responsible for the daily instruction and care of the children.

Information regarding cumulative yearly enrollments of children was not available for either the school-age parenting or county welfare program. As such, this annual figure does not include estimates of the total number of children served during the year by these two programs. The figure cited represents a slight increase (2 percent) from 1978-79, when child development programs enrolled approximately 107,513 children, again excluding those in school-age parenting and county welfare programs. The count for 1978-79 was taken from the *1978-79 Annual Report for Child Development Services*, Appendix B, adjusted for missing documents. The count for 1979-80 is taken from the final quarterly fiscal reports and has also been adjusted for missing documents.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Are the programs serving the children and families intended to be served?

Child enrollments in the state's child development programs in fiscal year 1979-80 reflected the priorities set forth by the Legislature. Children receiving subsidized child care came from low-income families whose parents were either working, attending school, or enrolled in job training programs. The typical child was between three to five years of age and came from a low-income family headed by a single, working woman.

CHILD CARE AGENCIES

Is there a diversity of publicly and privately administered agencies delivering child development services?

Subsidized child care services are provided through a balance of public and private agencies. In October, 1979, public agencies accounted for 65 percent and private agencies 35 percent of all children enrolled in publicly subsidized child care services.

Is there a variety of child care facilities delivering child development services?

A total of 296 centers and 759 family child care homes provided subsidized child care services under direct contract with the Department of Education. Additionally, the Child Development Vendor Payment Program subsidized care provided through 616 centers and 1,192 family child care homes. Approximately 90 percent of the children served in October, 1979, were enrolled in child care centers, with the remaining 10 percent enrolled in family or group child care homes. The geographical distribution of services approximated the distribution of the state's child population.

Are child development programs adequately staffed in terms of numbers and training of caregivers?

Most child development programs maintained high adult/child ratios.² Facilities reported an average ratio of at least one staff hour for every eight hours of child enrollments. No differences in the adult/child ratios were detected between publicly and privately administered child care centers, either within or across programs.

² "High" ratios refer to a small number of children per caregiver.

COST OF SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE SERVICES

What were the total costs to the state for each child development program?

Of the total \$176,368,262 appropriated by the Legislature for child care services, 98 percent was allocated for direct services to children through the separate child development programs in fiscal year 1979-80 as follows:

- 1. Direct services to children
 - General child care . . . \$146,925,946
(Includes center and home-based programs under the Alternative Child Care Program)
 - Vendor payment 8,467,227
 - Resource and referral 2,649,748
 - Campus child care 3,559,412
 - Migrant child care 4,031,427
 - School-age parenting 2,877,196
 - Handicapped 531,505
 - Annualization 3,000,000
 - Expansion 4,455,701
 - Subtotal \$176,498,162
- 2. Indirect services to children
 - Health administration 272,167
 - Rent 316,462
 - Subtotal \$588,629



3. State administration of child development programs (includes \$1,002,178 of Title XX funding). \$3,465,005
- Total Appropriation. \$180,551,796

This funding³ represented approximately 84 percent of all monies used to provide subsidized child care services. Additional sources of funds, such as parent fees, supplemented child development project funds. Of the total income received by child development agencies, approximately 75 percent was used to pay staff salaries and benefits.

What were the average per child costs to the agencies for child development services?

Agencies reported an average cost of \$15.12 per average daily enrollment. Average daily enrollment unit rates among child development programs ranged from \$9.55 for the Vendor Payment Program to \$20.17 for the School-Age Parenting Program.

IMPLICATIONS

- Publicly subsidized child care is being provided, in accordance with legislative mandate, primarily to low-income families who are working or completing education or training.
- The child development program provides a variety of services, including family child care homes, before- and after-school care, infant care and parent education, child care referrals, and center-based care.

³ These figures are taken from the Budget Act of 1979-80. Funds allocated for "handicapped" services support seven child care programs for handicapped children jointly administered by the Office of Child Development and the Office of Special Education. Data on these centers are not included in this report. Additional federal funds were transferred from the Office of Special Education to the Office of Child Development to increase services to handicapped preschoolers enrolled in child development programs.

- The proportion of services for the handicapped provided in child care programs does not reflect the proportion of such services provided in the general school-age population. Low-income families with handicapped children often cannot afford necessary services. Consideration should be given to the availability of services to these children. This consideration should include a review of the number of handicapped children served through specialized programs, such as development centers, to determine the extent of the unmet need.
- The proportion of bilingual staff does not fully reflect the proportion of bilingual or non-English speaking children enrolled in publicly funded child care. Therefore, bilingual services should be increased to meet the needs of children who cannot benefit from English-only programs.
- Center-based programs in California (subsidized public, subsidized private, non-subsidized private) provide children with an environment which provides them with a range of activities addressing a spectrum of developmental skill areas and caregivers who interact with children in ways associated with the development of competent preschool (younger than five years old) behaviors in children. Differences in program offerings among the various center types seem to be differences of emphasis rather than of substance.
- When characteristics of the physical environment, caregiver behavior, and child activities are compared, subsidized and non-subsidized centers appear similar, except for the number of children enrolled and the provision of supplementary services. These services are provided primarily by referral, rather than being supported by program funds.
- Findings reveal relatively comparable group size and adult/child ratios across subsidized public, subsidized private, and non-subsidized private centers. Included in this finding is the discovery that about half of the non-subsidized private centers met or exceeded group size requirements, and about two-thirds met or exceeded adult/child ratio requirements. This finding suggests that one alternative for the expansion of subsidized child care lies in the use of currently non-subsidized private centers. Such expansion could be accomplished without disrupting existing adult/child ratio and group size requirements.

Findings of the quality of care study support the current practice of regulating and carefully monitoring adult/child ratio. However, the data do not support the need to regulate group size as stringently as is currently specified in regulations. The contribution of group size to the quality of care (defined in terms of caregiver behavior and child activities) is marginal, once the adult/child ratio is regulated. One alternative to regulating group size might be to issue guidelines providing recommendations for appropriate group sizes for various child activities.

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IDENTIFIERS California; *Subsidized Child Care Services

ABSTRACT

The second part of the California State Department of Education annual report on publicly subsidized child care services, this document describes services provided by California's preschool programs during the fiscal year of 1979-80. Included are brief statistical descriptions of the children and families served, the providers of state preschool services, and the cost and quality of these services. (MP)

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ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE SERVICES

Part II State Preschool Program

1979-80

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles—Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, 1982

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(d) Evaluate data describing the quality of child development programs in accordance with measurement criteria as established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Each annual child development report shall be in two parts: one part shall relate to subsidized child care services and one part shall relate to services under the State Preschool Program.

(Amended by Statutes of 1978, Chapter 828, Section 3.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVED

During fiscal year 1979-80, state preschools served over 26,500 children from low-income families. The average child was four years old, of Hispanic background, and came from a two-parent family earning less than half of the state median income. Thus, in keeping with program guidelines, state preschool programs served primarily families needing comprehensive services for their children, rather than families who needed specific support for parent employment or training.

PROVIDERS OF STATE PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Agencies and Facilities

Data indicate that state preschools provided a wide variety of services to children and families. While most preschools were operated by public agencies and conducted in public school or school-related facilities, about one-third were operated by private agencies and conducted in settings ranging from church buildings and community facilities to private homes. Few facilities were licensed to care for more than 50 children. Most public and private facilities served between 11 and 50 children.

Counts of the individual children served are no longer collected by the State Preschool Program. The estimate given here is a projection from the average daily enrollment, using the ratio of a.d.e. for 1979-80 to that for 1978-79. The following formula was used to develop this projection: $((\text{a.d.e. } 1979-80) / (\text{a.d.e. } 1978-79)) \times (\text{number served } 1978-79)$. This estimate has two possible sources of error, the extent of which is not known: 1) the relationship between a.d.e. and the number of individual children served is unclear, and 2) the a.d.e. estimate for 1978-79, upon which the current projection is based, is itself an estimate. Within these limitations, however, it would appear that, on the whole, approximately the same number of children were served in fiscal year 1978-89 and fiscal year 1979-80.

Staff

Most agencies differentiated staff functions, centralizing administrative duties at the agency level. At the site level, staff time centered on providing instructional, custodial, and food services. While there was a fairly even mix of blacks and whites among preschool staff, the number of Hispanic staff was low, and did not reflect the ethnic distribution of the children enrolled in the program. The reasons for these differences went beyond the scope of the study.

THE COST OF STATE PRESCHOOL SERVICES

A total of \$27,016,166 was appropriated by the Legislature for the State Preschool Program in fiscal year 1979-80. Of this amount, \$26,259,987 (97 percent) was allocated to provide approximately 19,200 preschool slots (one enrollment in one 3 to 4 hour session). Overall, the State Preschool agencies were reimbursed² an average of \$7.52 per child per day. Little difference in unit costs per child per day was found between public and private agencies.

THE QUALITY OF STATE PRESCHOOL SERVICES

A survey of services provided during recent years reveals a trend among preschool agencies to provide consistently high-quality preschool services. To minimize reporting requirements, therefore, agencies were not required to submit detailed information about special services. Instead, the report reviews and summarizes information provided over the last few years. Readers interested in more detailed summaries are referred to the state preschool reports for 1976-77, 1977-78, and 1978-79.

On the whole, preschool programs provide a variety of comprehensive services beyond the daily instructional curriculum. These services include health and nutrition services, social services, parent education and involvement in program activities, and cognitive and developmental assessment. Despite family and work responsibilities, and--in many cases--language difficulties, many parents

² Reimbursed costs are reported as the lesser of the contract amount and reported expenditures. Actual reimbursements will vary slightly as a result of adjustments reflecting the level of service provided.

manage to participate regularly in their children's preschool programs. In addition to the services they provide directly, the programs provide other services, such as immunization, dental care, and family counseling, by referring families to local agencies, such as county community health facilities. In attempting to provide social services, however, many agencies report that available public services are insufficient to meet the needs of low-income families.

IMPLICATIONS

- Children served by the state preschool programs were those specified by the Legislature. State preschool services were provided primarily to children four years of age from families needing comprehensive services for their children rather than support for parent employment or training.
- Next to Migrant Child Care Services, the State Preschool Program is the greatest source of subsidized care for Hispanic children in California. However, there appears to be a need to increase the number of bilingual staff and services to limited- and non-English-speaking children.
- On an equivalent per unit basis, state preschool services cost about the same as other subsidized child development services.³
- State preschool programs continue to provide a variety of comprehensive services including health, nutrition, education, social services, parent involvement, and parent education.

³ Considering one preschool enrollment of 3 to 4 hours as approximately half of a full-time equivalent enrollment in OCD child development programs, a comparison with Table 35 in Part I of this report indicates that, during fiscal year 1979-80, one preschool slot cost, on the average, about half that of a full-time equivalent enrollment in the Child Development Program.