

CHILDCARE

Impact Luncheon: Held March 30, 2017, YWCA Utah

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Categories	Current Resources/Strengths	Gaps/Challenges	Potential Interventions
1. Financial incentives and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah Department of Workforce Services Office of Child Care now draws down the full amount of CCDF federal funding (block grant, approx. \$65M) and has for past couple of years (this used to be a challenge but no longer an issue). Total amount of state childcare funding is approx. \$80M. Over \$60M goes to subsidy payments (to low income families that meet eligibility criteria), and the rest goes to administrative costs and quality initiatives; hence, almost all funds go to providers. Head Start is a separate program and funding. The process has moved to online subsidy application/eligibility process, and efforts are being made to get the first payment out more quickly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high cost of childcare statewide is a problem. Utah used to be low in Head Start funding drawdown. Is this still the case? Education not defined as employment in eligibility process; this is a challenge for people trying to complete college and need childcare assistance. A whole range of families not in acute financial distress cannot afford childcare; most of the state money goes to very low income, and many other families slip through the cracks. Even if childcare is subsidized, some families still can’t afford the tuition. Research-based assessments are expensive to implement/administer. There is little incentive for centers to participate if they are happy with their enrollment numbers. Care About Childcare (CAC) system is punitive in terms of reporting. Limited impact due to lack of funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congress should provide funding for all the changes to be implemented rather than unfunded mandates/changes. Income tax deduction cap needs to be raised from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and be on a “per child” basis. Financial aid and claiming children (loan forgiveness). Women in the Economy Commission focus group report includes suggestion where state provides financial incentives to open a child care to encourage more high quality options to meet demand.
2. Technology Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dept. of Workforce Services (DWS) Office of Child Care (OCC) website/database, “Care About Childcare” (CAC), is a great resource; 53,000 searches in Utah last year. UWLP website lists childcare reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care.com is first resource, rather than CAC, that comes up when parents google; it is not comprehensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents need to know about CAC and/or how to use it to its full potential; a statewide marketing campaign is needed for this resource. There is a need for a statewide comprehensive QRIS system, based on research, to rate and evaluate providers consistently across the state to provides a

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			<p>quality tool for parents to use when looking for child care.</p>
<p>3. Creation of economic opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah has some childcare companies that partner with businesses and institutions to help with onsite childcare specifically for their employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of child care is a problem statewide. Women want flexible employment but, even if they find it, they can’t find flexible child care. Wages for childcare providers still not enough even though childcare feels costly for families; providers are clearly not paid enough AND families can’t afford it. Most child care centers are not able to provide insurance for their staff. Families are often at lower earning potential during children’s early years because parents are younger and less experienced at that point in their careers. Childcare is a gender segregated occupation so that is a factor in wages. It also limits young children from having nurturing role models who are male. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide education/invest in providers. Need more public funding and discussion about the obligation of public sphere to subsidize something that can be seen as a public good. This is education funding and should not be seen as separate from public K-12 or higher education; early years are more important in development than higher education AND costs most families more than a college education.
<p>4. Capacity building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC changed process so there are now fewer childcare eligibility workers and they are able to develop true expertise. In other states, religious institutions are among the key purveyors of child care either because they are active in hiring and overseeing the staff or because they allow parts of their buildings for child care use. Generally, faith-based child care is among the best quality. In Utah, we have numerous beautiful religious buildings that could be used for child care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation is the gold standard in excellence in early childhood education, but it is expensive to receive and maintain. The availability of high quality childcare is a problem statewide. There are long waitlists at childcare centers, with infant care in highest need (1-year + wait list). Flexible childcare availability is a challenge for people who work shifts outside M-F; yet, even those who work 8-5 are not able to find childcare. Cost, quality, and accessibility are very intertwined, and they can’t be separated from one another. Research-based assessments are expensive to implement/administer. What defines quality for OCC and providers is not the same as it is for parents. There is a gap when it comes to quality – not just lack of it but what it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah needs more collaboration among all players in the childcare system. The early education sphere tends to be more collaborative, but the younger childcare systems/providers/advocates (age 0-2) do not work together as well. There used to be a coalition of campus childcare centers that met regularly; this group should re-engage. Everyone involved in proving quality needs to be on the same page. Women in the Economy Commission focus group report includes suggestions to expand flexibility of childcare hours and requirements to meet families’ varied child care needs outside of the current system structured around full-time, business-hours care. Families need more options for part-time care, drop-in options, and care outside 8am-6pm. Women in the Economy Commission focus group report includes suggestion of

		<p>means for people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction needs to be part of quality assessment. 	<p>having more on-site childcare at places of work to ease parents’ anxiety, with more flexible and convenience.</p>
<p>5. Advocacy and shaping attitudes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are seeing some level of cultural shift with dads being involved in childcare (drop-off, pick-up, etc.). This provides more work-family support for women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are unaware of what’s out there, which causes anxiety. Parents are understandably risk averse and prefer to stay home with children where they can control the environment and know they’re safe. There’s a perception of home-based care as not being regulated. This causes anxiety for parents about quality. Various perceptions of parents and community about providers; they think they’re “expensive babysitters.” There are similar struggles as we saw with change of higher education to be public at turn of 19th/20th century. Utah has a generation of policymakers who have never had to use childcare; this requires a paradigm shift to understand and acknowledge its importance. Guilt/stigma that parents carry for using childcare is a challenge; some is tied to quality of the childcare. This is a gendered component. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness about available resources. More education and advocacy about existing policies and regulations. Statewide marketing of CAC. Educate parents, particularly that providers are not babysitters. Educational/cultural shift for the state needs to occur regarding the need to childcare, using it, etc. (including the guilt/shame factor). Again, this is still very gendered.
<p>6. Laws, policies, and regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWS implementing 12-month eligibility. Once certified, will create more stability for families. Continuity of care is increased focus. In the meantime, they have already changed eligibility determination time frame from every 6 months to every 12 months. SB100 passed in 2017 requiring DWS to create study of services and resources for children 0-5 and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility criteria only targets very lowest income families. Families going in and out of eligibility is challenging. When people implementing policies and regulations are not involved in creating them, there is a higher likelihood that the policies/regulations will not be as effective as they could be and that there will be greater resistance with the implementation. The generation of Utah policymakers who have never had to use childcare is a challenge; this requires paradigm shift. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change definition of education (so that it counts as employment) in childcare subsidy eligibility criteria. DWS can change regulation, legislation not needed. Pre-tax benefit in Utah for childcare costs. Deduction max is a federal issue but state should be doing something with that. People ultimately affected by the policies/decisions need to be involved in making them/providing input.

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<p>7. Research and data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in the Economy Commission Focus Group Report discusses cost, availability, and quality. • OCC is currently conducting needs assessment on child care through Utah. • Dr. Ann Austin and graduate students (USU) recently found in a recent study that in Wasatch front child care centers quality dropped significantly when more than 20% of center enrollment included state subsidy clients. Thus, the neediest children receive the poorest quality care. • Southern Utah licensed private family care study. • OCC conducts market rate survey every 3 years to set subsidy rates. This year, other purposes because it goes to all providers in the database (2,000+); study asks how much providers/centers charge AND how much they pay for wages (pay range, w/o benefits), education level of employees, etc. First time they’re asking that information in this study. • Study of quality assessments (USU). • UVU study of guilt factor for parents in using childcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive understanding of the full compensation package for childcare providers in Utah is important. The OCC is asking this in their survey, but participants won’t be required to answer. • In the future, data about the full compensation package (wages/benefits) should be gathered. Child care centers should offer benefits to their employees, and the kind and extent of benefits will vary according to the center (e.g., stand-alone, corporate, part of a nonprofit like the YWCA Utah). • Comparison of Utah with other states regarding the amount of funding, number of children in the state, etc. What’s mechanism for state-by-state distribution? • Things move very quickly with federal deadlines and providers often left out of studies/research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCC is going to study economic impact of child care based on needs assessment. • Ongoing ability/method for sharing the research and information among us. • Researchers with universities and DWS need to reach out to providers more when conducting studies. • An annual meeting of researchers may help identify needs and gaps more effectively.
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