

conclusion

Are Greater Kansas City's children ready for school? Not all of them are — yet. But a large network of early learning professionals, advocates and support agencies are working together to make sure they will be.

How can you help?

Be Educated Advocates

Become an educated advocate for early learning by keeping up to date on state and federal policies. Know who your elected officials are and let them know how important early learning is for children. Sign up for the Partnership for Children's legislative updates and learn more about your elected officials at <http://capwiz.com/pfc/mlm/>.

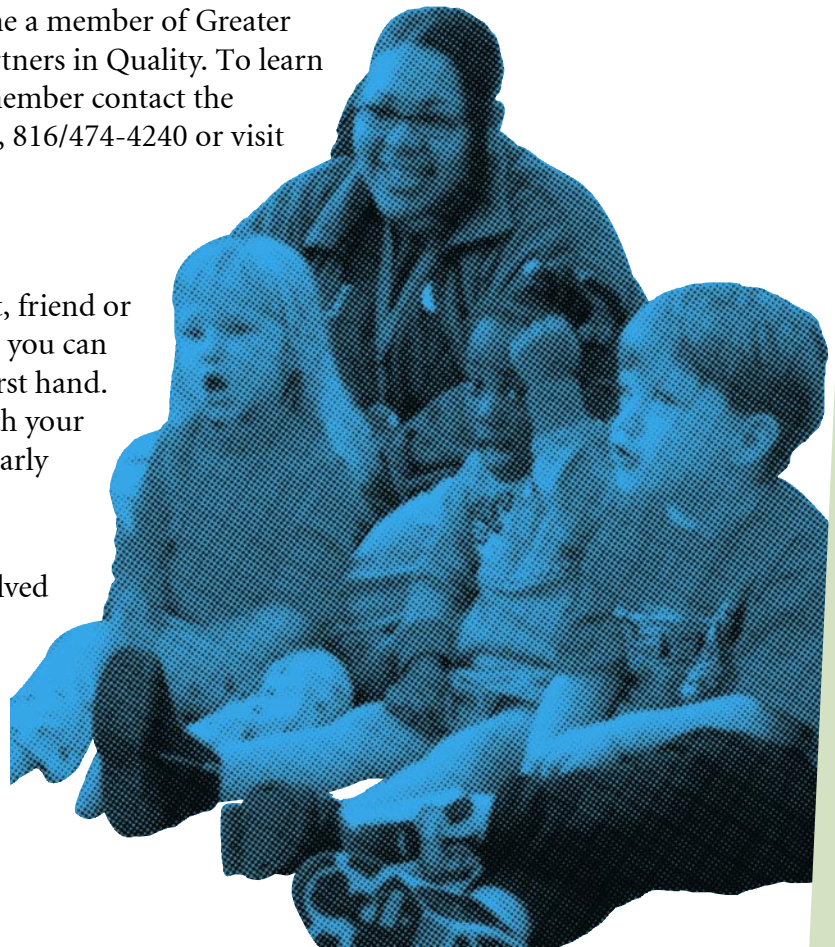
Be Engaged in the Work

Encourage your organization to become a member of Greater Kansas City's early learning network, Partners in Quality. To learn more about PIQ and how to become a member contact the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning, 816/474-4240 or visit www.marc.org/mcel.

Be Involved in Learning

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, friend or interested volunteer there are many ways you can be involved in a young child's learning first hand. For example, read, hug, play and talk with your child at home; volunteer at your child's early learning center; and volunteer to assist other parents.

For more about ways you can get involved in efforts to improve early learning in Greater Kansas City, please contact MCEL at 816/474-4240 or e-mail earlyeducation@marc.org.



Glossary of Terms

Accreditation: Validation of a program's adherence to national professional standards. Centers are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The process includes self-study and documentation, external verification by program experts, and final approval by the Academy for Early Childhood Programs. Facilities must meet rigorous standards for physical space, curriculum content and teacher and/or administrator qualifications. Accreditation does not require licensure but is considered more stringent than many licensing standards.

Center-based Programs: Programs that provide care and education for a group of young children in formal settings outside of a home, including all for-profit or not-for-profit programs, public and private preschools, Head Start programs, religion-based programs, and child and family development programs.

Child Care Center Teaching Staff Classifications: The 2005 Status Report uses the following center teaching staff clarification definitions:

- Aides: assist in the implementation of program activities under direct supervision.
- Assistant Teachers: responsible for implementing program activities under the supervision of a teacher and sharing responsibility for a group of children.
- Teachers: responsible for the care and education of a group of children and supervision of assistant teachers.
- Teacher/Directors: responsible for the care and education of one or more groups of children and supervising other teachers and staff.
- Directors: responsible for the fiscal management of the program, including recruiting, hiring and supervising personnel, and other program management responsibilities.

Child Development Associate (CDA): A credential equivalent to 15 hours of college credit in the field of early childhood care and education. Considered entry-level certification for professionals.

Children with Special Needs: Children who do not function according to age-appropriate expectations in any of the developmental areas and require special adaptations or program adjustments to function in programs with their normally developing peers.

Cultural Competence: The ability to effectively interface with people from different cultures, to honor their heritage and celebrate their differences.

Early Learning: Provision of purposeful experiences, public or private, aimed at guiding the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of young children, birth through eight years.

Early Head Start: A joint endeavor between federal and state governments to provide early intervention through high-quality programs that enhance children's development during their formative years, enable parents to be better caretakers and teachers to their children, and help parents meet their own goals, including economic independence. Comprehensive services provided to program participants include mental and physical health, nutrition, social services, parental involvement, services for children with disabilities and child care.

Family Home Program: Care is typically provided in a private home for more than one family's children.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED): A certificate that is considered to be equivalent to a high school diploma.

Group Child Care Home: Child care is provided outside the provider's residence. In Missouri, licensed group homes can care for up to 20 unrelated children. In Kansas, licensed group homes can care for up to 12 children.

Head Start Program: A federally funded program for child development, operated for six or more hours a day, that provides a comprehensive child care program for eligible working or training parents.

License-Exempt: Facilities are inspected for fire and sanitation considerations. They are not subject to other requirements of licensure like staff-to-child ratios or director qualifications. Religious organizations, nursery schools, public school-based programs, and summer camps are exempt from licensure in Missouri. In Kansas, only public school-based programs and summer camps are exempt from licensure.

Licensed: Meets the health and safety standards set out by the state regulatory body. In Missouri, the Department of Health is responsible for licensure. In Kansas the Department of Health and Environment has licensing responsibility, although inspections are performed by county health departments. Facilities are inspected for fire safety and sanitation. Staff-to-

child ratios and administrator qualification levels must be met. Child care centers, group homes and family homes caring for more than four unrelated children must be licensed or license-exempt in Missouri. In Kansas, child care centers, group homes, and family child care programs caring for more than three children must be licensed or registered.

National Association for the Education of Young Children: NAEYC is a national organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. NAEYC Affiliate Groups work to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education and to build public support for high-quality early childhood programs. NAEYC is the organization which accredits center-based early childhood programs.

One-year Certificate: A one-year, college-level training program in early childhood development and education that earns participants a certificate.

Partners in Quality (PIQ): A collaboration of community organizations that share the vision of building a nationally unsurpassed early education system in Greater Kansas City, ensuring the success of all children in the community. PIQ serves as the unifying voice for the early learning community.

Professional Development: Process for people to renew or acquire skills, knowledge and concepts and to put them into practice. Ongoing job-related training designed to maintain and refine required competencies of staff.

Registered Providers: In Missouri, the department of Social Services registers all providers who receive subsidies to provide care to low-income working families. Providers can be licensed or unlicensed. In Kansas, unlicensed family home providers who care for more than three children but less than six children must be registered with the Department of Health and Environment.

Resource and Referral (R&R): Agencies that provide a variety of services to help parents locate appropriate care. R&Rs collect data and maintain a current, comprehensive source of information about the supply of early care and education.

Staff-to-Child Ratio: The number of caregivers in relation to the number of children in care. Ratios are smaller for younger children.

Unregulated: Caregivers or facilities that are not regulated. This group consists of providers who should be regulated but are not, providers who are not required to be licensed, registered providers, relatives, and informal care arrangements.

Methodology

To gather data for the *Status of Early Learning in Greater Kansas City 2005*, the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning distributed surveys to a random sample drawn from more than 2,000 child care programs that serve children under the age of five in metropolitan Kansas City.

Through the survey, MCEL requested a variety of information, including the number and age of children enrolled, fees charged, and the levels of provider training, education, salaries, benefits and turnover. Different survey forms were distributed to family child care homes and to child care centers, though some identical questions asked on both forms allowed comparison between the two types of programs.

The distribution list for the survey was compiled by the area resource and referral network, Child Care Source. Child Care Source is a collaborative effort between The Family Conservancy and the Midwest WholeChild Development Group.

The providers on these lists are licensed, registered or license-exempt. Child care provided by family members and in-home nannies was not included in the survey. Some unregulated family providers in Missouri were included in this year's survey.

Child Care Centers: 780 surveys were sent to area child care centers including licensed child care centers, license-exempt centers, for-profit and not-for-profit programs, preschool programs, church-based and school-based programs, and part-day and full-day programs. Completed surveys were returned by 272 centers, for an overall return rate of 35 percent.

Family Child Care Homes: 1500 surveys were distributed to family home child care providers including all registered and licensed family home child care providers in Kansas and all licensed family home care providers in Missouri. Completed surveys were returned by 791 family providers, for a 53 percent return rate.

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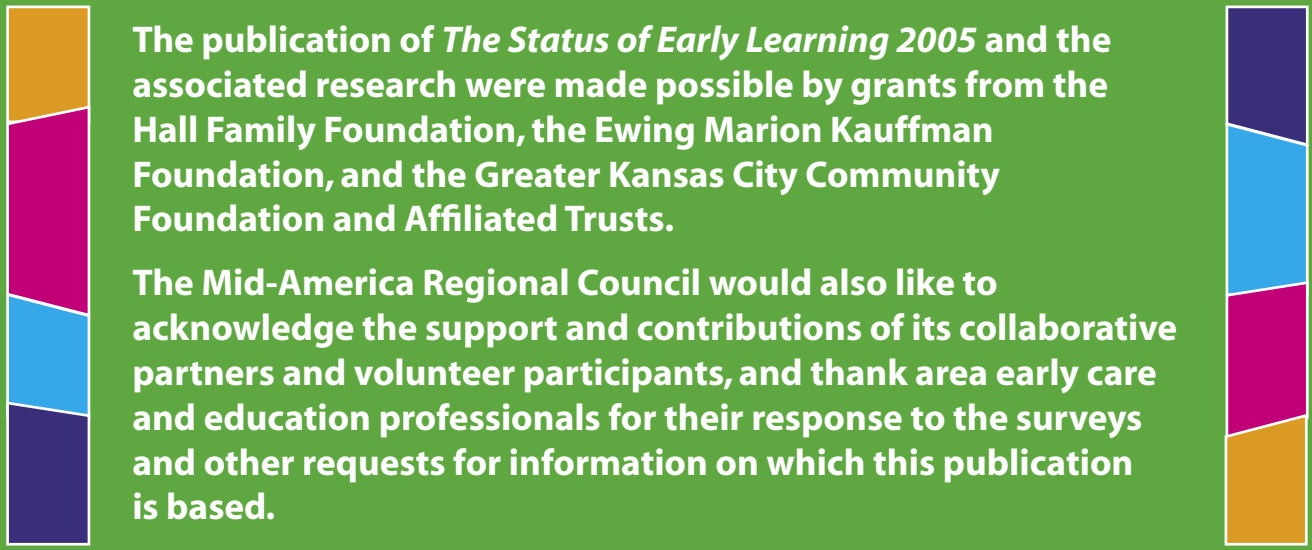
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