

Metropolitan Council on Early Learning

2005 Survey on Early Learning Programs

Each year, MARC's Metropolitan Council on Early Learning (MCEL) conducts a survey of early learning programs in Greater Kansas City to assess the status of early learning in the region.

Through a questionnaire, MCEL requests a variety of information from each program, including the number and age of children enrolled, fees charged, providers' concerns and the levels of training, education and turnover. In the fall of 2005, more than 2,100 surveys were sent to area providers, and 1,134 were completed for a return rate of 50 percent. Additional data for this report was provided by The Family Conservancy Accreditation Project.

This executive summary of the results includes some of the key findings from the 2005 survey, focusing on four major benchmarks: **Quality, Workforce Development, Workforce Stability and Access to Services.** This data is also used to help determine grades in Partnership for Children's annual *Report Card on the Status of Greater Kansas City's Children and Youth.*

A more comprehensive survey of early learning programs in the metropolitan area will be conducted in the fall of 2006. The data and findings of that survey will be included in MCEL's 2007 *Status Report on Early Learning.*

Quality

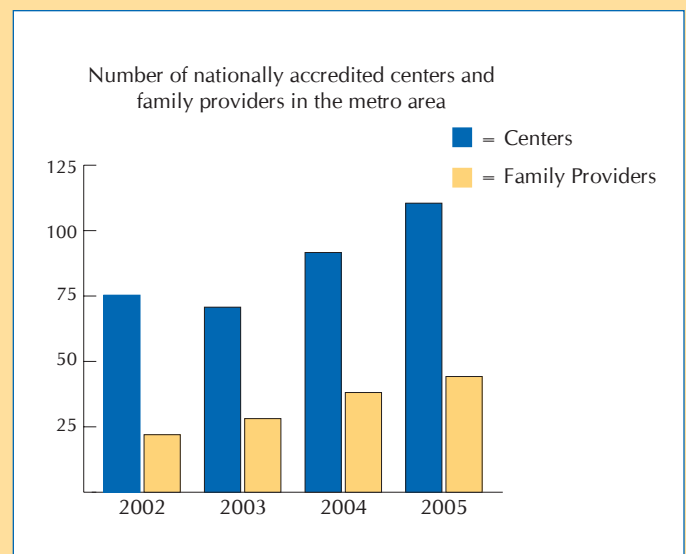
The quality of the early learning experience prior to entering school impacts a child's long-term chances of success. One indicator of quality is the number of nationally accredited centers and family home child care providers in the eight-county metro area.

The number of nationally accredited early learning centers and family providers in the metropolitan area continued to grow.

In 2005, 118 centers and 47 family providers were nationally accredited. Just 15 centers and three family child care homes in the metro area were accredited when the accreditation project began in 1996.

In addition to the increase in the number of accredited programs, Kansas City's Quality Rating System (QRS) pilot project continues to grow. Currently, 118 programs participate in the QRS, including 71 centers and 47 family providers. Another 20 programs are scheduled to become part of the QRS by the end of 2006.

Centers and family providers participating in QRS are awarded stars based on points assigned according to performance in key areas of program quality. The majority of participating programs show gains in their QRS scores at the time of their second rating. Of the programs that have completed two QRS assessments, 67% have increased their overall QRS points and 38% have increased their star rating.

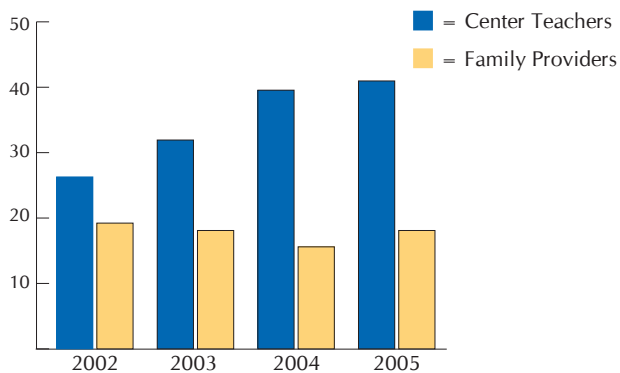


Workforce Development

A key element of quality early learning is well-trained and qualified teachers. A measure of workforce development is the percentage of teaching staff in centers and home provider programs with a credential or degree in early learning.

The overall percentage of center teachers and family home providers with a credential or degree was 39 percent in 2005. The data shows that 43 percent of center teachers and 17 percent of family providers have an early learning degree or credential. An additional 13 percent of teachers and providers are pursuing a degree or credential.

Percentage of early learning professionals with a credential or degree in early learning



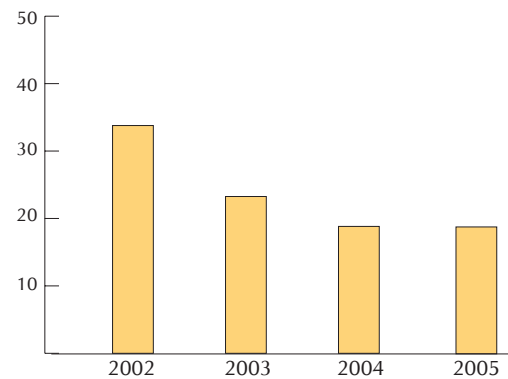
Workforce Stability

Children need a stable and safe environment with a consistent early learning staff to learn and thrive. A measure of workforce stability is the average turnover rate reported by area early learning centers.

Early learning centers reported that 20 percent of their employees left their jobs in 2005. The top reason cited for staff turnover was better pay elsewhere, followed by poor performance.

The turnover rate has shown a steady decline in recent years, which is one indicator of a better learning environment for young children.

Early learning center teacher turnover rates

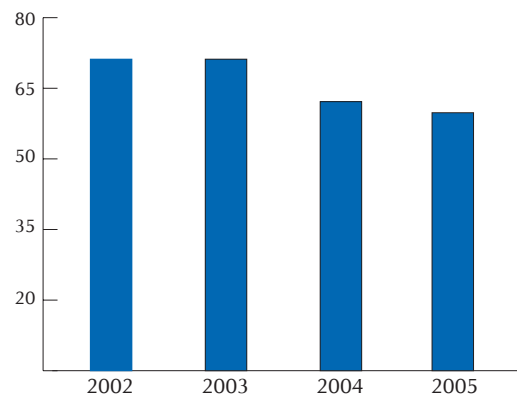


Access to Services

Subsidies for low-income families can provide greater access to early learning programs for at-risk children. An indicator of access to services is the percentage of early learning centers and family home providers willing to serve children receiving child care subsidies.

The 2005 survey found that 63 percent of programs accepted children who were on state subsidies. The number of programs accepting subsidies has steadily decreased, perhaps due in part to lower-than-market subsidy rates offered in Missouri and Kansas, and the low eligibility rate for families to qualify in Missouri (it ranks worst in the nation.)

Percentage of early learning programs willing to serve children receiving child care subsidies



For more information about this survey, or to learn more about the efforts to improve the quality and availability of early learning in Greater Kansas City, contact the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning at 816/474-4240.