



Vol. 16, No. 1  
Feb. 2006

## Early Childhood Education in Missouri: How Well Are We Doing in Providing Licensed Early Childhood Programs and Subsidy to Those Who Need It

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### Benefits of High Quality Early Childhood Education

Research has shown that high quality early childhood education programs have positive short- and long-term effects on young children, especially those who are disadvantaged. In addition to having direct effects on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, high quality early education programs have many beneficial secondary advantages for society, including effects on parents, employers, and governments. Compared to their peers who lack well structured preschool experiences, children who attend high quality preschool programs:

- use fewer special education services,
- repeat fewer grades in school,
- have higher high school graduation rates,
- have lower rates of juvenile delinquency and adult arrests,
- use less welfare as young adults, and
- earn more money as adults.

As a result of these positive effects, governments spend fewer dollars on special education, social welfare programs, and the criminal justice system. Because these children become working adults who earn

more money, government tax revenues increase. In addition, parents with children in high quality care are more likely to remain employed and productive on the job, thereby decreasing turnover and absenteeism for employers. As these children enter the workforce, employers also benefit from having employees who are better educated and prepared to succeed in the workplace. Finally, the society as a whole benefits from high quality early education programs because crime rates are lower, more tax revenue is raised, and fewer government outlays are needed—which means that money can thus be spent on other needed services.

Cost-benefit analyses looking at the economics of early childhood education are another way of touting the long-term benefits of high quality programs. These studies have shown that, for every dollar invested, good quality early education programs will yield returns ranging from \$4 to \$17.

### Licensing of Early Childhood Programs (Centers and Family Child Care)

In general, state licensing provides basic health and safety standards for out-of-family child care settings, including center-based and home-based programs. Missouri's licensing regulations include education requirements for program directors, annual

training requirements for staff, adult-child ratios, health and safety rules, staff background screenings, and space and equipment requirements. Although licensing regulations do not guarantee program quality, they provide a necessary foundation for building a statewide system of high quality early childhood settings. Currently, Missouri's Department of Health and Senior Services licenses approximately 2,000 centers and 1,800 family homes that serve roughly 150,000 children birth to five.

### Subsidy for Child Care/Early Childhood Education

One of the most intractable problems posed by poverty is the issue of child care. For many families, adults must make a choice between caring for their own children—and thus making little or no money but saving on child care—or finding affordable child care that allows them to earn money (much of which must go to paying for child care). The child care subsidy system exists to help families with low incomes pay for child care so that they can work.

Although Missouri currently provides child care subsidies to approximately 45,000 children from low-income families a year (average cost of \$3,400 per child annually), thousands of children from poor working families do not receive subsidies due to our low eligibility guidelines. In Missouri, the current family income eligibility requirement for child care subsidy is 112 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. (In fact, Missouri's income eligibility requirement ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation). That means a mother with two children who earns \$8.65 an hour (\$17,800 a year) earns too much to qualify for child care subsidy funds.

### Licensing, Subsidy, and Poverty in Missouri

[Table 1](#) presents relevant data for all Missouri counties with respect to child care in Missouri for children birth to five. An important caveat to note is that the percentage of children birth to five potentially needing child care does *not* take into account the small proportion of children who already are enrolled in kindergarten. In addition, the percentage of children under five in poverty was used to calculate the estimated number of children birth to five in poverty by county. A final caveat is the slight difference between who qualifies for child care subsidies (112% of Federal Poverty Level) and the Census Bureau designation of poverty status (100% of Federal Poverty Level).

### How Well Do Licensed Programs Meet the Need for Early Education/Child Care in Missouri?

To determine the potential number of children needing child care, the number of children ages 0-5 was multiplied by the percentage of children ages 0-5 who had all parents in the workforce. Then, to determine the extent to which licensing serves the needs for child care in Missouri, the number of licensed slots (licensed program capacity) was divided by the number of children ages 0-5 potentially needing child care. For the entire state, Missouri's licensing system reaches almost half of the needed capacity; specifically, 47 percent of the potential child care need is met by licensed program capacity. As can be seen in [Table 1](#), counties differ widely in the extent to which potential child care needs are met by available licensed slots. **Map 1** shows these data broken down into three categories: dark blue for counties with relatively low percentages; light blue for counties in the middle; and white for counties with relatively high percentages.

## How Well Do the Subsidy and Licensing Systems Meet the Needs of Low-Income Families in Missouri?

**Map 2** shows county-by-county how the subsidy and licensing systems interact to provide child care for families with low incomes (using data from [Table 1](#)). The colors represent the percentage of children ages 0-5 from low-income families with working parents who receive child care subsidies. Counties in dark blue are doing a poor job in providing subsidies to low-income families; those in white are doing a relatively good job, and those in light blue are in the middle. For the state, the average is 41%. Counties with 10 or fewer children who receive subsidy funds are red on this map.

The size of the circle in each county represents the relative percentage of subsidized children in licensed programs by county. For the state, this average was 73 percent. This means that 27 percent of subsidized children are in registered facilities, which do not have to meet the minimum licensing standards and are thus at greater risk of being low quality settings. Small circles indicate counties that have low percentages of subsidized children in licensed care. Large circles indicate those counties that have a high percentage of such children in licensed care; medium circles represent counties in the middle of the range.

As [Table 1](#) and **Map 2** indicate, counties differ widely in subsidy need met and licensed program attendance. For example, in Adair County, there are an estimated 344 children in poverty, 25 of whom receive child care subsidies. Thus,

only 7 percent of the children who potentially need subsidy funds currently receive them, a very low percentage. However, Adair County is doing a good job with respect to the percentage of subsidized children in licensed programs—92 percent of such children attend licensed facilities. In St. Louis City, nearly two-thirds of children receive child care subsidies (better than the state average), but only 62.5 percent of these children attend licensed programs (lower than the state average).

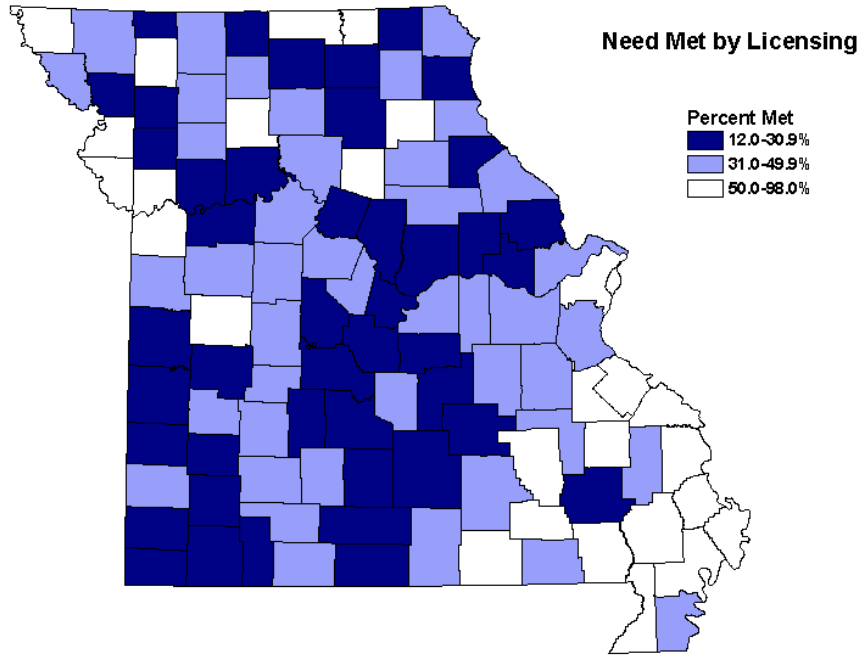
### Conclusion

The information presented in this brief is a challenge to all Missourians—including parents, government officials, early childhood professionals, as well as business and community leaders—to increase:

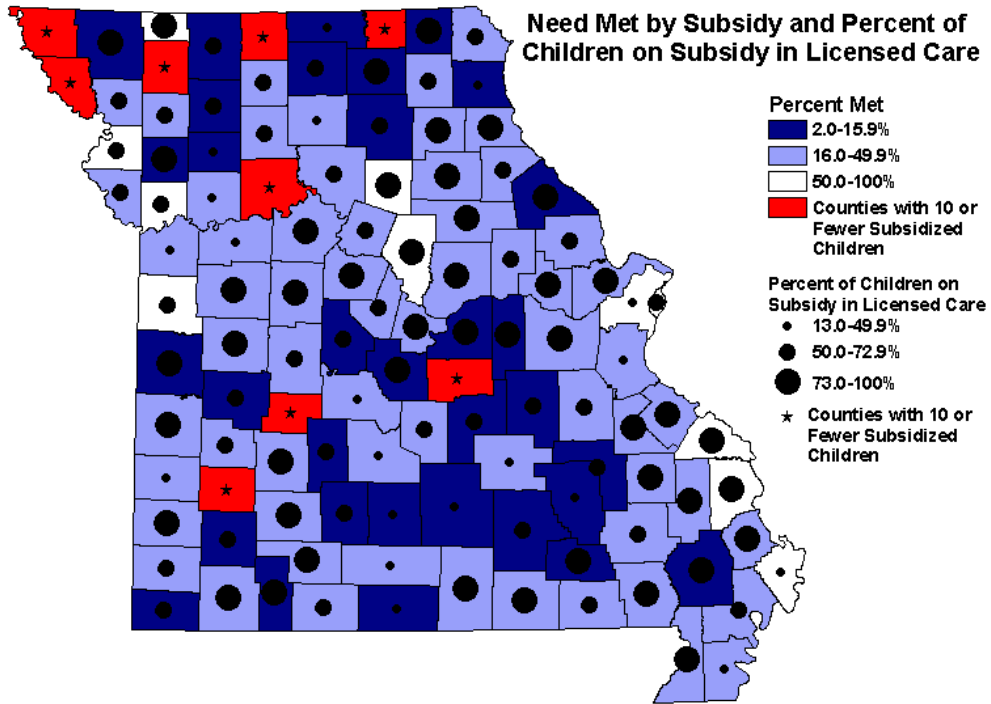
- the number of licensed facilities in the state in order to provide more regulated programs that are likely to be of higher quality;
- the number of low-income families receiving child care subsidy funds;
- the number of subsidized children attending licensed rather than registered programs.

*Thanks to Tanna Klein, Corinne Patton, Doris Hallford, Debra Enochs, Becky Houf, Margee Franklin, and Lance Huntley for help in putting together this brief.*

Map1.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 data and Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Oct. 1-31, 2005 data.  
Prepared by: Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED A)  
Map Generated on: 2.20.2006



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 data and Missouri Department of Social Services, Oct. 1-31, 2005 data.  
Prepared by: Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED A)  
Map Generated on: 2.22.2006

Map 2.

COUNTY	No. of Children 0-5 <sup>a</sup>	% of children 05 potentially needing child care <sup>b</sup>	No. of children 0-5 potentially needing child care	No. of licensed slots for 0-5 <sup>c</sup>	% of child care need met by licensed programs	% of children under 5 in poverty <sup>a</sup>	Estimated no. of children 0-5 in poverty	No. of children on subsidy 0-5 in licensed & registered settings <sup>d</sup>	% of need met by subsidy for children in poverty	% of children on subsidy in licensed care <sup>e</sup>
ADAIR	1,598	66.1%	969	274	28.3%	21.5%	344	25	7.3%	92.0%
ANDREW	1,261	67.1%	776	142	18.3%	10.6%	134	41	30.7%	61.0%
ATCHISON	352	75.9%	245	133	54.3%	12.5%	44	8	18.2%	50.0%
AUDRAIN	2,048	62.5%	1,174	364	31.0%	25.9%	530	99	18.7%	84.8%
BARRY	2,509	63.3%	1,457	384	26.4%	18.3%	459	78	17.0%	82.1%
BARTON	1,127	64.2%	664	165	24.9%	16.7%	188	52	27.6%	34.6%
BATES	1,257	61.8%	712	184	25.8%	14.7%	185	23	12.4%	73.9%
BENTON	930	59.5%	507	177	34.9%	24.3%	226	59	26.1%	50.8%
BOLLINGER	872	56.9%	455	175	38.5%	16.5%	144	50	34.8%	74.0%
BOONE	9,652	71.6%	6,334	1,605	25.3%	14.8%	1,428	924	64.7%	76.6%
BUCHANAN	6,173	67.9%	3,840	2,402	62.6%	17.2%	1,062	554	52.2%	57.6%
BUTLER	2,882	58.6%	1,549	1,359	87.7%	28.7%	827	340	41.1%	79.4%
CALDWELL	655	54.4%	326	112	34.3%	16.2%	106	15	14.1%	26.7%
CALLAWAY	2,983	76.7%	2,098	253	12.1%	12.5%	373	83	22.3%	80.7%
CAMDEN	1,987	61.0%	1,111	275	24.8%	18.1%	360	125	34.8%	36.8%
CAPE GIRARDEAU	4,625	66.7%	2,828	1,865	65.9%	13.7%	634	382	60.3%	86.4%
CARROLL	739	70.4%	477	72	15.1%	17.3%	128	5	3.9%	20.0%
CARTER	423	57.9%	225	221	98.4%	29.6%	125	17	13.6%	82.4%
CASS	7,217	67.5%	4,462	2,198	49.3%	7.9%	570	297	52.1%	69.0%
CEDAR	928	47.5%	404	170	42.1%	26.9%	250	59	23.6%	61.0%
CHARITON	517	86.8%	412	160	38.9%	10.5%	54	22	40.5%	50.0%
CHRISTIAN	4,812	65.6%	2,892	1,150	39.8%	14.4%	693	212	30.6%	77.8%
CLARK	513	73.7%	347	150	43.3%	14.5%	74	33	44.4%	72.7%
CLAY	15,272	67.6%	9,458	5,460	57.7%	6.7%	1,023	545	53.3%	61.5%
CLINTON	1,439	67.9%	896	265	29.6%	13.7%	197	20	10.1%	75.0%
COLE	5,425	75.9%	3,775	619	16.4%	13.6%	738	238	32.3%	92.4%
COOPER	1,153	76.1%	805	294	36.5%	14.6%	168	60	35.6%	83.3%
CRAWFORD	1,639	56.5%	849	346	40.8%	27.0%	443	55	12.4%	67.3%
DADE	520	57.9%	276	74	26.8%	22.1%	115	10	8.7%	40.0%
DALLAS	1,163	55.6%	593	120	20.2%	25.3%	294	41	13.9%	63.4%
DAVISS	651	49.8%	297	146	49.2%	26.1%	170	20	11.8%	55.0%
DEKALB	722	52.1%	345	74	21.5%	11.3%	82	14	17.2%	57.1%
DENT	1,109	59.9%	609	149	24.5%	19.3%	214	52	24.3%	21.2%
DOUGLAS	888	60.5%	492	126	25.6%	24.1%	214	40	18.7%	32.5%
DUNKLIN	2,654	59.3%	1,442	991	68.7%	33.0%	876	152	17.4%	78.9%
FRANKLIN	7,327	63.3%	4,253	1,827	43.0%	8.1%	593	152	25.6%	73.0%
GASCONADE	1,094	73.4%	736	240	32.6%	14.6%	160	19	11.9%	84.2%
GENTRY	520	71.3%	340	246	72.3%	14.3%	74	10	13.4%	70.0%
GREENE	16,829	62.2%	9,591	4,591	47.9%	14.8%	2,491	1,033	41.5%	76.2%
GRUNDY	729	60.4%	403	187	46.4%	29.9%	218	48	22.0%	60.4%
HARRISON	687	79.6%	501	160	31.9%	17.7%	122	15	12.3%	53.3%
HENRY	1,450	65.2%	867	535	61.7%	21.3%	309	133	43.1%	89.5%
HICKORY	420	47.6%	183	62	33.8%	35.0%	147	9	6.1%	33.3%
HOLT	310	65.2%	185	88	47.5%	23.3%	72	9	12.5%	77.8%
HOWARD	660	67.1%	406	124	30.5%	20.0%	132	26	19.7%	61.5%
HOWELL	2,870	63.0%	1,658	625	37.7%	25.4%	729	187	25.7%	88.8%
IRON	765	54.9%	385	186	48.3%	27.4%	210	28	13.4%	67.9%
JACKSON	51,587	62.4%	29,494	16,900	57.3%	17.8%	9,182	4,274	46.5%	12.7%
JASPER	8,685	58.8%	4,678	1,691	36.1%	21.7%	1,885	440	23.3%	77.5%
JEFFERSON	16,381	64.2%	9,639	3,371	35.0%	10.1%	1,654	579	35.0%	46.3%
JOHNSON	3,968	61.0%	2,217	887	40.0%	17.7%	702	196	27.9%	90.8%
KNOX	332	68.1%	207	69	33.3%	22.5%	75	12	16.1%	50.0%
LACLEDE	2,625	65.8%	1,584	305	19.3%	20.5%	538	113	21.0%	43.4%
LAFAYETTE	2,358	67.3%	1,454	401	27.6%	16.0%	377	86	22.8%	22.1%
LAWRENCE	3,019	60.9%	1,685	509	30.2%	21.0%	634	77	12.1%	63.6%
LEWIS	827	72.6%	550	130	23.6%	24.3%	201	28	13.9%	46.4%
LINCOLN	3,368	68.6%	2,117	312	14.7%	9.1%	306	85	27.7%	72.9%
LINN	1,021	72.4%	677	234	34.5%	22.2%	227	38	16.8%	47.4%
LIVINGSTON	1,031	59.3%	560	312	55.7%	21.6%	223	79	35.5%	51.9%
MACON	1,110	72.5%	738	182	24.7%	19.7%	219	32	14.6%	71.9%
MADISON	870	68.0%	543	398	73.3%	23.3%	203	64	31.6%	87.5%
MARIES	680	66.0%	412	95	23.1%	20.5%	139	3	2.2%	33.3%
MARION	2,162	65.6%	1,300	636	48.9%	18.8%	406	163	40.1%	84.0%
MCDONALD	1,896	58.8%	1,022	250	24.5%	27.6%	523	43	8.2%	69.8%
MERCER	241	80.1%	177	41	23.2%	10.7%	26	5	19.4%	80.0%
MILLER	1,891	68.2%	1,182	352	29.8%	24.9%	471	37	7.9%	78.4%
MISSISSIPPI	974	71.1%	635	362	57.0%	24.8%	242	209	86.5%	46.4%

MONITEAU	1,148	76.7%	807	324	40.2%	13.1%	150	51	33.9%	72.5%
MONROE	729	61.0%	408	138	33.8%	14.2%	104	20	19.3%	90.0%

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MONTGOMERY	796	68.7%	501	65	13.0%	16.3%	130	31	23.9%	64.5%
MORGAN	1,372	54.0%	679	150	22.1%	24.1%	331	41	12.4%	53.7%
NEW MADRID	1,491	61.7%	843	553	65.6%	33.5%	499	130	26.0%	55.4%
NEWTON	4,192	62.6%	2,406	731	30.4%	17.8%	746	166	22.2%	62.7%
NODAWAY	1,242	80.9%	921	377	40.9%	13.5%	168	20	11.9%	90.0%
OREGON	739	51.0%	346	190	55.0%	29.4%	217	35	16.1%	74.3%
OSAGE	1,013	75.2%	699	249	35.6%	10.0%	101	14	13.8%	100.0%
OZARK	572	59.4%	312	79	25.3%	38.8%	222	20	9.0%	35.0%
PEMISCOT	1,882	60.5%	1,044	470	45.0%	47.8%	900	182	20.2%	48.4%
PERRY	1,458	68.9%	921	658	71.4%	7.3%	106	67	62.9%	79.1%
PETTIS	3,238	68.3%	2,027	783	38.6%	17.6%	570	159	27.9%	81.1%
PHELPS	2,636	63.3%	1,530	459	30.0%	26.5%	699	103	14.7%	53.4%
PIKE	1,119	71.3%	732	259	35.4%	20.1%	225	21	9.3%	85.7%
PLATTE	5,948	68.4%	3,729	1,880	50.4%	7.8%	464	129	27.8%	71.3%
POLK	2,199	58.3%	1,175	397	33.8%	19.3%	424	81	19.1%	75.3%
PULASKI	3,462	53.6%	1,700	616	36.2%	12.9%	447	85	19.0%	72.9%
PUTNAM	369	62.3%	211	120	56.9%	22.2%	82	12	14.6%	41.7%
RALLS	661	67.9%	412	64	15.5%	12.0%	79	21	26.5%	52.4%
RANDOLPH	1,802	68.1%	1,125	641	57.0%	15.9%	287	183	63.9%	92.3%
RAY	1,807	63.4%	1,050	242	23.1%	10.7%	193	58	30.0%	41.4%
REYNOLDS	398	50.8%	185	160	86.4%	29.2%	116	18	15.5%	38.9%
RIPLEY	945	51.3%	445	198	44.5%	28.1%	266	71	26.7%	67.6%
SALINE	1,731	72.7%	1,154	400	34.7%	17.6%	305	93	30.5%	75.3%
SCHUYLER	284	69.0%	180	92	51.2%	27.6%	78	8	10.2%	87.5%
SCOTLAND	415	54.0%	205	54	26.3%	23.6%	98	12	12.3%	100.0%
SCOTT	3,365	67.8%	2,090	1,542	73.8%	27.7%	932	310	33.3%	81.0%
SHANNON	583	56.6%	303	121	40.0%	34.3%	200	11	5.5%	63.6%
SHELBY	456	67.8%	283	211	74.5%	22.2%	101	22	21.7%	81.8%
ST CHARLES	25,405	65.3%	15,212	7,189	47.3%	5.9%	1,499	729	48.6%	78.6%
ST CLAIR	595	68.9%	376	73	19.4%	30.7%	183	12	6.6%	50.0%
ST FRANCOIS	3,993	62.3%	2,282	2,125	93.1%	22.5%	898	297	33.1%	89.9%
ST LOUIS	75,247	63.6%	43,882	22,935	52.3%	10.4%	7,826	5,753	73.5%	36.0%
ST LOUIS CITY	25,590	64.9%	15,220	10,193	67.0%	35.7%	9,136	5,976	65.4%	62.5%
STE										
GENEVIEVE	1,282	68.3%	802	456	56.8%	10.9%	140	64	45.8%	92.2%
STODDARD	1,976	59.7%	1,082	659	60.9%	25.9%	512	78	15.2%	74.4%
STONE	1,759	67.8%	1,093	277	25.3%	20.3%	357	54	15.1%	83.3%
SULLIVAN	595	69.1%	377	56	14.9%	22.6%	134	12	8.9%	50.0%
TANEY	2,702	63.7%	1,577	654	41.5%	18.3%	494	106	21.4%	69.8%
TEXAS	1,560	56.7%	810	188	23.2%	30.9%	482	49	10.2%	34.7%
VERNON	1,647	67.2%	1,014	296	29.2%	22.9%	377	82	21.7%	75.6%
WARREN	1,809	67.5%	1,119	324	28.9%	13.6%	246	68	27.6%	79.4%
WASHINGTON	1,667	53.6%	819	321	39.2%	26.3%	438	132	30.1%	72.0%
WAYNE	826	56.8%	430	82	19.1%	34.5%	285	64	22.5%	60.9%
WEBSTER	2,835	50.4%	1,310	631	48.2%	18.5%	524	51	9.7%	54.9%
WORTH	141	66.0%	85	20	23.5%	17.4%	25	55	100.0%	87.0%
WRIGHT	1,436	59.1%	778	224	28.8%	32.9%	472	34	7.2%	38.2%
TOTAL	426,499	64.3%	251,168	117,888				70,230	28,772	

<sup>a</sup>Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000.

<sup>b</sup>% of children with all parents in labor force.

<sup>c</sup>Based on MO Dept. of Health and Senior Services data, Oct. 1-Oct. 31, 2005.

<sup>d</sup>Based on MO Dept. of Social Services data, Oct. 1-Oct. 31, 2005.