

Introduction

Research continues to demonstrate that the quality of care given to young children in a child care setting depends largely on the training and education of the teachers and others who care for the children. It is therefore necessary for early childhood programs to assess these factors in the communities they serve.

Dubuque County Empowerment contracted with Rhode Bicknell, an experienced Early Childhood Consultant, to gather baseline information on the child care workforce in Dubuque County. The information included education, training, wages, benefits and needs of center and family home based child care professionals. The Quality Child Care Alliance, a committee of Dubuque County Empowerment, is sharing the results with the child care community and the general public, in hopes that the information gathered will serve as a planning tool to help meet the needs of the child care community.

Impact on National Work Force

U.S. Department of Labor studies firmly establish that when employees know their children are safe and well cared for:

- > Productivity Increases
- > Absenteeism Decreases
- > Morale Increases
- > Turn-over Decreases

Child Care Centers

The following services were available based on information from 43 centers.

- The average time centers open is 6:00 A.M. Most centers (82%) close at 6 P.M.
- Two centers (3%) offer evening care.
- Twelve centers (18%) offer transportation.

Child Care Center Professionals

A total of 599 questionnaires were mailed to center based child care professionals; 361 were completed. The following profile of the child care center professionals emerged from the responses.

Experience and Training

- Center based child care professionals have an average of 8.2 years experience working in child care. The maximum number of years working in child care was 36 years.

Education	Percent
High school diploma/GED or less	29.3%
Some college, 1 year certificate, or 2 year degree	47.2%
4 year degree or higher	22.8%
Unknown	0.8%

- Only 6% of center based professionals with a two-year degree hold a degree related to early childhood education.
- Twenty percent of center based professionals stated they had an Early Childhood/Child Development diploma. Additionally, of those with four-year degrees, there were almost 14% with a teaching endorsement from the state of Iowa.
- Eighty-nine percent of child care professionals state they regularly receive information regarding training or workshops.
- Seventy percent of professionals stated they followed a curriculum. Fifty-three percent developed the curriculum themselves.

- Over half of the center based child care professionals stated they planned to remain in child care longer than 5 years.

Compensation

- The average hourly salary reported was \$8.32.
- Health insurance benefits were available to 48.6% of professionals.
- Forty-two percent had retirement benefits available.
- When asked what other kinds of benefits would permit them to remain in the child care field, the most common response of center based professionals was “affordable health insurance” and “better pay.”

Family Child Care

A total of 302 questionnaires were mailed to family (home based) registered and non-registered child care professionals; 105 questionnaires were completed.

Family Child Care Services Available	Percent
full-time care	90%
part-time care	81.2%
sick child care	27.7%
transportation services	20.8%
before and after school care for school age children	69.3%
night/evening care	27.7%
weekend care	20.8%
24 hour care	14.9%
drop in care	50.5%
care on legal holidays	21.8%
meals for children	86.1%