

**APPENDIX P
WEST VIRGINIA**

**Survey Results on the Status of State Implementation Efforts
October 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003**



Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care: Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families in the South

**Survey on the Status of Implementation Efforts
Current Report Period: October 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003**

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Goal 1 - Federal, State, Local and Private Funds Should Be Sufficient to Meet 100% of Need for Direct Child Care Assistance, Based on Initial Eligibility Levels at 85% of the State Median Income. Redetermination Levels Should Allow Families to Retain Child Care Assistance Until They Reach 100% of State Median Income.

(Action Step 1.1) - Educate federal and state policymakers on the need for action.

2003 Response:

Governor's Summit

- In October 2002, Governor Wise sponsored a Governor's Summit on Early Care and Education. Over 200 people, including parents, advocates, educators and professionals. A report, entitled "Focus on the Future" was released as a result of the Summit. The report addresses a number of priority issues in Early Care & Education that were identified during the summit, including the need for a state public awareness campaign, including child care as a partner in West Virginia's new Pre-k program and identifying adequate resources to sustain the early care and education system in West Virginia. The report also references the Southern Regional Task Force Action Plan.

Public Awareness

- The PIECES Advisory Council created a Public Awareness Committee that is beginning work on a strategic communications plan. The committee is focusing on strategies to deliver a consistent message regarding the importance of the first five years of life; how early experiences effect children's future success, and therefore the significance of early care and education experiences. Building awareness around these issues lays the foundation for building public will and understanding around making adequate investments in early care and education. While the overall target audience is the general voting population, the initial focused target is legislators and policy makers.

In the initial phase of work the committee is working to:

- Identify a consistent early childhood message about the importance of the first five years.
- Create an "identity" for the early childhood system that would include a consistent logo and tag line to be used consistently with a variety of media.
- Develop a strategic plan for public awareness using the identity. The plan will include strategies that can be used at state and local levels and integrated as much as possible into the existing infrastructure.

2002 Response:

In early 2002, expenditures for child care in West Virginia started to exceed available resources. During this time, the Department shared information about the budget crisis with the Governor's office and the State Legislature. During the legislative session, much attention was focused on early care and education, specifically with regard to funding streams and concerns about duplication of effort. The session resulted in legislation that will implement pre-kindergarten services for all four-year-olds in West Virginia by 2013 and that placed the Departments of Education and Health and Human Resources in positions of jointly developing rules for the program and approving collaborative county plans. The two agencies have developed an advisory council called PIECES (Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System) to assist in planning for the new program, as well as to develop comprehensive early care and education programs for children from birth to five. The new council includes staff from the State Board of Education, Head Start, Child Care, advocacy groups and foundations, legislative aides and an assistant to the governor. A web site has been developed to share information about the effort. This new initiative is enabling us to educate many of our state policymakers on the need for high quality, comprehensive early care and education services, including child care.

2001 Response:

In October 2000, a booklet was developed called "Child Care in West Virginia – Then and Now (Improving Affordability, Availability and Quality in Child Care). The book demonstrated the state's progress in child care but also indicated the program improvements that were needed. It was distributed to the state Legislators, the Department Secretary and Commissioner. While not a "call to action", it was a formal attempt to educate state policymakers on child care.

(Action Step 1.2) - Educate the business community on the need for leadership in achieving state, federal and community resources to meet 100% of need.

2003 Response:

The State Division of Early Care and Education has contracted with WV Kids Count to work with the business community. West Virginia Kids Count educates and mobilizes the private sector about the needs and conditions of children through the production of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* and other data-driven products. Kids Count has established a three year project to: conduct child care research and disseminate it to their constituencies; to support child care programs that produce positive outcomes; and lend support to child care policies that promote quality; and to increase the supply of quality care knowing that this can break the cycle of poverty. They will be establishing a section on their web site that will provide a clearinghouse that collects and disseminates information relevant to making positive policy, program, and system changes on behalf of at-risk children and families. Their web site is located at <http://www.wvkidscountfund.org/about.php> They have several influential business leaders on their board of directors and will be targeting business leaders for dissemination of materials.

2002 Response:

The new PIECES advisory council has developed a vision and mission that includes development of business partners for the early childhood community.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 1.3) - Increase federal funding for the Child Care and Development Fund to fulfill current policy allowing federal matching funds for child care assistance up to 85% of the state median income.

2003 Response:

West Virginia's federal allotment of CCDF discretionary funds was decreased by \$800,000 during FFY 2003.

2002 Response:

The Child Care Division is providing information on child care reauthorization to child care resource and referral agencies and the state child care director's association.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 1.4) - Increase state funding to provide child care subsidies to all eligible families who seek child care assistance.

2003 Response:

West Virginia has not been able to increase state funding for child care. Due to cuts in federal discretionary funds, the state is considering tightening eligibility policy even further. The Department continues to use over \$20 million of its TANF allocation to support child care in addition to CCDF funding.

2002 Response:

West Virginia has not been able to increase the amount of state funding for child care. Due to increased expenditures and projected cuts in the amount of state TANF funds that will be available to child care in 2003, the state implemented program cuts in March 2002 that reduced the number of families eligible for child care.

2001 Response:

In 10/2000, WV used TANF funding to increase child care eligibility guidelines from 150% to 200% of FY2000 FPL. While still not at 85% of State Median Income, WV was serving the highest percentage of SMI of any state in Region 2. However, TANF funding may not be available, or not available at the current level, in future fiscal years. It will not be possible to sustain eligibility guidelines without TANF funding.

(Action Step 1.5) - Mobilize federal, state and community resources in support of families who need child care assistance.

2003 Response:

West Virginia's PIECES Advisory Council (Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System) continues to meet monthly to support all early care & education programs. Members of the Council include community and state level leaders who are interested in improving services for young children. The Council provides advice to the Department on policy changes and/or cuts in child care services. Members of the Council have advocated for increasing financial support for families needing care. As a result of advocacy efforts by some committee members, a bill was introduced during the last Legislative session that would have increased financial services for child care, but the bill was not successful. The Committee continues to advocate that the Department not decrease eligibility guidelines any further.

2002 Response:

- In the first quarter of 2002, DHHR was forced to make cuts to the child care program when expenditures began to exceed available revenue. Some families lost child care services, resulting in increased media attention and publication of several articles about the need for child care subsidies in West Virginia.
- Several meetings of a Resource Maximization Work Group were held as a result of interest on the part of the Administration for Children and Families in increasing collaboration between Head Start and Child Care.
- During the last legislative session in West Virginia, a sub-committee was established whose focus was to explore methods to maximize resources and eliminate duplication of early childhood services. A major issue for the subcommittee was the fact that state revenues are projected to be substantially less in 2003.
- The PIECES Advisory Council, which was established to develop a plan for implementation of universal preschool programs, has been charged with development of a comprehensive plan for early care and education that maximizes resources and reduces duplication of efforts. Its vision includes support for working families.

2001 Response:

In 3/2001, key WV officials from Health and Human Resources, Education, Education and the Arts, and Cabinet on Children and Families met with Regional ACF staff to discuss collaboration and partnering for maximizing efficient use of resources, producing more effective services, and improving learning outcomes for children. A joint letter was sent to local schools, child care programs, and Head Start agencies to encourage local collaboration. This partnerships group continues to plan for better collaboration.

Goal 2: States and Communities Should Broaden Their Child Care Eligibility and Subsidy Policies to Meet the Economic, Work and Education Needs of Families

(Action Step 2.1) - Establish co-payments not to exceed 10% of gross family income.

2003 Response:

Over 96% of the families in West Virginia receiving child care pay less than 10% of their monthly gross income in fees.

2002 Response:

In response to budgetary issues, West Virginia recently increased the fees paid by families by approximately 50%. Even with the increase, only about 3.5 percent of families pay more than 10% of their monthly gross income in fees. The other 96.5 percent pay less than 10% of their monthly gross income as fees.

2001 Response:

Since 1991, WV has followed the recommendation of establishing co-payments that do not exceed 10% of gross family income.

(Action Step 2.2) - Provide child care assistance to students who qualify under the income guidelines.

2003 Response:

West Virginia continues to provide child care assistance to students who qualify under the income guidelines.

2002 Response:

West Virginia continues to provide child care assistance to students who qualify under the income guidelines.

2001 Response:

WV has provided child care assistance to students as far back as the 1970's and has not changed that policy.

(Action Step 2.3) - Explore broad use of income exemptions to address affordability of child care.

2003 Response:

West Virginia continues to exempt the following sources of income: loans, tax refunds, gifts, lump sum inheritances, school grants, loans or scholarships, earnings or boarding care payments received by approved foster parents and amounts received through the adoption subsidy program.

2002 Response:

West Virginia exempts the following sources of income: loans, tax refunds, gifts, lump sum inheritances, school grants, loans or scholarships, earnings or boarding care payments received by approved foster parents and amounts received through the adoption subsidy program.

2001 Response:

In 8/2000, WV implemented policy that exempts the following sources of income:

- Subsidy adoption payments
- Income of approved foster parents

(Action Step 2.4) - Eliminate asset testing (e.g. automobile or savings account) from criteria for child care assistance.

2003 Response:

West Virginia continues to exclude asset testing for purposes of determining eligibility for child care.

2002 Response:

West Virginia continues to exclude asset testing for purposes of determining eligibility for child care.

2001 Response:

Since the 1970's, WV's child care program has excluded assets from the determination of eligibility for child care.

(Action Step 2.5) - Index income eligibility levels for inflation.

2003 Response:

Due to decreased federal funding, the State is unable to increase its eligibility guidelines and continues to use the FY 2000 Federal Poverty Level to determine income levels.

2002 Response:

West Virginia uses the FY 2000 Federal Poverty Level for purposes of income guidelines.

2001 Response:

No response.

Goal 3: Outreach Initiatives Should Be Designed and Aggressively Implemented to Assure That Families Have Accessible and Easy-To-Understand Information on Child Care Assistance and Are Provided Assistance in Applying.

(Action Step 3.1) - Provide information on child care subsidies through multiple sources, venues and the media.

2003 Response:

- West Virginia's child care resource and referral agencies continue to be the prime source of information on child care subsidies. The CCR&R agencies educate consumers through brochures, posters, radio and TV.
- The Child Care Division continues to operate a child care web site that contains full policy information, regulations for child care providers, eligibility guidelines and contact information for the child care resource and referral agencies that determine eligibility for child care.

2002 Response:

- West Virginia's child care resource and referral agencies continue to be the prime source of information on child care subsidies. The CCR&R agencies educate consumers through brochures, posters, radio and TV.
- The Child Care Division continues to operate a child care web site that contains full policy information, regulations for child care providers, eligibility guidelines and contact information for the child care resource and referral agencies that determine eligibility for child care.

2001 Response:

- On May 1, 2000, the Child Care Division launched a child care web site that contains information on eligibility requirements, policy and contact information for the child care resource and referral agencies that handle eligibility determinations.
- In the summer of 2001, two of the CCR&R agencies launched a media campaign, obtaining TV coverage which resulted in substantial increase in the number of families receiving child care in two of WV's largest cities.

(Action Step 3.2) - Ensure that information is accurate, family friendly, employer friendly, culturally sensitive and provided in multiple languages, as appropriate.

2003 Response:

- Forms and information are kept as accurate as possible and revised when information changes.
- There are insufficient populations of individuals using another language to warrant providing information in a second language.

2002 Response:

- Forms and information are kept as accurate as possible and revised when information changes.
- There are insufficient populations of individuals using another language to warrant providing information in a second language.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 3.3) - Present information in a manner that would remove the stigma associated with receiving subsidies.

2003 Response:

Parent information is provided mainly by the CCR&R agencies, which determine eligibility for child care. Parents feel less stigmatized when they apply at CCR&R offices rather than DHHR offices. Each CCR&R agency has its own web site, which generally provides information to parents about assistance in paying for child care through government assistance and/or tax credits. The CCR&R agencies offer a full range of child care services, which are available to all families, regardless of eligibility. Since the agencies serve both populations and information is not targeted just to families eligible for subsidies, the stigma is also lessened.

2002 Response:

- WV continues to use Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to determine eligibility for child care, which has removed much of the stigma associated with receiving subsidies. Parents have indicated that they really hated to go to the DHHR office to apply for child care services, and some families did not apply for that reason. Families now identify with the CCR&R agency rather than DHHR. Parents and providers associate their payment not with the Department of Health and Human Resources but with the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. They indicate that payment is made by “Link Child Care Resource and Referral Agency”, not the Department.
- So far, only one agency has coined the term “scholarship” for subsidy payments.

2001 Response:

- In 1992, WV piloted the use of CCR&R agencies to determine eligibility for child care services. We moved statewide in 1999. Parents therefore do not have the stigma of going to DHHR to obtain child care services.
- One of the CCR&R agencies is piloting the use of the term “scholarship” rather than “subsidy”.

(Action Step 3.4) - Provide literature and assistance to help parents make informed provider choices.

2003 Response:

- The CCR&R agencies are required by contract to provide “consumer education designed to inform parents about child care options, how to select quality programs for their children, how to recognize indicators of child abuse or neglect, and information on other resources available, health and safety issues, etc.”
- The agencies are also required to have a web site designed to: “inform the public about available services offered by the CCR&R....., provider consumer education on quality care and how to select quality care.....”
- The state agency website offers a listing of all child care centers operating in the state at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/cccenters/>.

2002 Response:

- The state’s network of CCR&R agencies continue to provide consumer education pieces that they have developed, as well as the “Child Care Workbook” that is available to all CCR&R agencies and is designed to help families seek care.
- A database of all licensed child care centers has been developed and will soon be on the child care web page. The database offers address, telephone numbers, licensed capacity, age range and licensing information for all licensed centers and may be searched by county. A list of selection criteria will be associated with the application to assist parents in selecting a child care center.

2001 Response:

- The state’s network of CCR&R agencies provide consumer education pieces that they have developed.
- The state has a “Child Care Workbook” that is available to all CCR&R agencies that is designed to help families seek care.
- A database of all licensed child care centers has been developed and is ready to be put on the State’s web page, pending the change-over to a new server.

(Action Step 3.5) - Coordinate ongoing and strategic outreach activities among common organizations and providers.

2003 Response:

The WV PIECES Advisory Council has developed a Public Awareness Committee that is working on strategies to deliver a consistent message regarding the importance of the first five years of life; how early experiences effect children’s future success, and therefore the significance of early care and education experiences. The message will be one that will promote supporting children and families served by all providers of early childhood services, including Child Care, Head Start, WV Pre-k, Preschool Special Needs and Birth to Three programs. The Committee is jointly chaired by the Director of WV Kids Count and staff from DHHR’s Division of Early Care & Education. The message and strategies developed by the Committee will be reviewed by all of the above entities to ensure that the message meets the needs of each program.

2002 Response:

- The PIECES advisory council has assumed responsibility for much of the work of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission. The council meets monthly and will be providing recommendations regarding all early childhood programs. Five subcommittees will also be meeting monthly to work on a variety of topics. Over 125 people will assist in this effort. Members are to provide information to their constituency.
- The Department of Health and Human Resources is hiring four positions that will work directly with early childhood collaborative groups in counties to develop their collaborative county plan for implementation of the four-year-old program.
- To provide more information on training, the Child Care Division has been contracting with a collaborative effort called Training Connections, which received funds and support from DOE Preschool Special Education, Birth to Three and Child Care to support training initiatives. Training Connections offers a training calendar, a library of resources and publishes a provider quarterly that distributes information on all early care and education programs, including child care.
- In 2001-2002, the Department's Child Care Division contracted with the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families to distribute consumer education materials to all early childhood providers and to child care resource and referral agencies for use in outreach efforts. The Cabinet also developed "Welcome Wagon" kits with early childhood information that was distributed to employers to provide to all new employees.

2001 Response:

The Child Care Division has worked with a coordinating body – the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission since 1991. The Commission meets quarterly and coordinates many of the state's early childhood initiatives. Members of the Commission include representatives of child care, Head Start, Birth to Three, Education, as well as parents, providers, advocacy agencies. The commission serves multiple purposes, but many people come to find out what is happening in early childhood and they spread the word. Relationships are built that encourage collaboration.

(Action Step 3.6) - Offer cross-training and information to providers, community organizations, faith organizations, and state agencies to inform them about child care assistance programs and how to assist families in filing applications.

2003 Response:

Information about child care assistance programs is offered to the general public through the state child care web page and CCR&R web page. The entire child care policy is on line for families to reach. The web site is being updated in September to provide further information on eligibility and commonly asked questions for parents and providers.

2002 Response:

The state child care web page contains information on child care resource and referral agencies that determine eligibility and contains the sliding fee scale and policy used to determine eligibility for child care. We have promoted use of the web page among state agencies.

2001 Response:

Many of the above named entities are members of the Early Childhood Implementation Commission, so they receive information on any changes in the child care program, at least quarterly, as well as updates on the CCDF State Plan that shows eligibility guidelines, entities providing eligibility determination and other quality initiatives.

Goal 4: The Child Care Application and Redetermination Processes Should Be Uncomplicated and Family Friendly.

(Action Step 4.1) - Simplify applications for child care assistance.

2003 Response:

No action has been taken.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.2) - Allow filing by mail, phone, fax or internet.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

WV requires a face-to-face visit for the first application for child care services. However, reviews for renewal application are all completed by mail.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.3) - Minimize requests for documentation at initial application and utilize documents already on file.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.4) - Provide applications at multiple sites.

2003 Response:

Twenty CCR&R offices continue to be open from 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. CCR&R agencies continue to offer outreach sites in each of the state's remaining counties one day per week. Information may be taken by phone but a follow-up face-to-face visit is required to complete the application.

2002 Response:

Twenty CCR&R offices are now open full time plus the CCR&R agencies continue to offer outreach sites in each of the state's remaining counties one day per week. Information may be taken by phone but a follow-up face-to-face visit is required to complete the application.

2001 Response:

Since January 2000, the state has increased the number of CCR&R offices from 16 to 20 and another site is planned. The CCR&R agencies are required to offer outreach sites in each of the state's remaining counties one day per week.

(Action Step 4.5) - Offer non-conventional hours of operation for eligibility offices and provide toll-free phone lines to include evening and weekend hours.

2003 Response:

Toll free lines continue to be provided, but agencies do not offer evening and weekend hours.

2002 Response:

Toll free lines are provided, but agencies do not currently offer evening and weekend hours.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.6) - Explore presumptive eligibility or otherwise provide immediate eligibility contingent upon final approval.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.7) - Eliminate requirements for a face-to-face interview both for initial application and for redetermination.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

A face-to-face interview is not required for redetermination of eligibility, but is required for the initial application.

2001 Response:

No change.

(Action Step 4.8) - Provide consultation on making appropriate choices when excessive requests for provider changes are filed.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

Policy requires the CCR&R worker to explain the importance of continuity of care and the detrimental effects of frequent changes of provider to all parents during the intake interview.

2001 Response:

In December 2000, the agency changed policy to require the CCR&R worker to explain the importance of continuity of care and the detrimental effects of frequent changes of provider to all parents during the intake interview.

(Action Step 4.9) - Establish a 12-month redetermination period where there are no changes in income or job status.

2003 Response:

No action has been taken since 2002, when policy was changed to guarantee eligibility for a six-month period, regardless of changes in the parent's income. Parents are still required to report those changes to insure the Department has current information on the family.

2002 Response:

Policy was changed to guarantee eligibility for a six-month period, regardless of changes in the parent's income, although parents are still required to report those changes to insure the Department has current information on the family.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 4.10) - Continue eligibility for full subsidy for 12 weeks if family loses employment but can document that a job search is underway.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

West Virginia continues to offer four weeks of child care for families who lose employment but wish to search for a job.

2001 Response:

Since approximately 1998, WV has continued full subsidy for 4 weeks if the family loses employment and wishes to seek other employment.

Goal 5: Establish a Coordinated, Seamless Eligibility System So That Funding Sources Are Invisible to Families and Support Continuity of Child Care.

(Action Step 5.1) - Eliminate the need for families to reapply when eligibility categories change by automatically searching to exhaust all eligibility categories before closing cases.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

West Virginia continues to operate a seamless system for child care services. Funding is blended and includes CCDF monies, State funds, TANF funding and some Title XX funds. The application process is the same for all funding streams.

2001 Response:

- Since the implementation of the Family Support Act in 1988, WV has continued to operate a “seamless” system. All available state and federal child care funds are managed by same agency and a generic application exists that determines the source of funds to use.
- In December 2000, policy was changed to guarantee eligibility for the six month period, regardless of changes in the parent’s eligibility, although parents are still required to report those changes to insure the Department has current information on the family.

(Action Step 5.2) - Explore the potential for policy and procedural changes to achieve linkages with or combined applications for child care assistance, Head Start, Pre-K and Title I.

2003 Response:

Planning for West Virginia's Pre-k program has promoted both state and local linkages between Child Care, Head Start, Pre-k and Title 1 programs. The policy developed for WV Pre-k does develop common policy for all three entities operating WV Pre-k programs. For example, all programs must either be licensed or meet licensing standards and all must meet the same staff/child ratio. County plans for WV Pre-k programs require Head Start and Child Care Providers be invited to work with the Local Education Agency in developing a plan for implementation of pre-k services by 2013.

Child Care, Head Start and WV pre-k are blending funding to serve children in WV Pre-k programs. Child Care will continue to pay the subsidy amount for hours of care provided by a center that is operating a WV Pre-k program. The Department of Education has allowed school aid formula monies to be used to contract with child care and Head Start programs. School aid formula funding will support additional costs associated with meeting the requirements to be a pre-k program, including the cost of a certified teacher, curricula materials, etc.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

N/A

(Action Step 5.3) - Continue eligibility in programs with multiple funding sources to assure continuity of care in the event that eligibility has expired or terminated in one program.

2003 Response:

A Technical Assistance Committee was established under the WV PIECES Advisory Council to provide technical assistance to counties in developing their WV Pre-k plan. Technical assistance efforts highlighted collaborative models to encourage schools that contract with child care centers to provide funding to cover additional costs for children whose parents were no longer eligible for child care or were not eligible for certain days.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 5.4) - Work collaboratively with all public and private programs and funding sources to assure that children receive stable and consistent early child care services.

2003 Response:

The PIECES Advisory Council continues to work toward a system of early care and education services for children from birth to five. Programs represented include Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, Birth to Three, and Preschool Special Needs. Each committee is working on an issue in early care and education that will promote systemic change. For example, the PIECES Quality Initiatives Committee is developing learning guidelines called "Content, Standards and Objectives" that will be provided to all programs caring for 3 and 4 year olds to promote consistency in curricula. Professional Development is working to improve its professional development system to insure it meets the needs of all early childhood programs and that all "teachers" have access to high quality training and education. The Child Well-Being Committee is working on health related issues and is looking at common medical and immunization requirements across programs.

2002 Response:

- New legislation was passed in 2002 establishing universal pre-school programs for four-year olds. The legislation requires DOE and DHHR to work together. The legislation has such an impact on all early childhood services that all of the early childhood funding sources and agencies are working together through an early childhood advisory council called PIECES. The council is charged with developing a plan for all early care and education services for children birth to five, as well as development of program requirements for universal preschool programs, which may be offered by community based partners or the school system. The vision of the advisory council is that, " All children and families in WV will have access to high quality early care and education programs that provide a foundation for academic success and lifelong learning while supporting parent's ability to work."
- In addition, the legislation requires the development of a collaborative county plan to deliver four-year old programs. State DHHR staff will assist each of the local collaborative teams in their planning efforts and will encourage all early childhood programs to participate.

2001 Response:

The Child Care Division has worked collaboratively with the State's new pilot program, Educare, as far as planning, selection of sites and funding. The Department pays for the cost of care for eligible families in Child Care and the Educare program supplements the quality of those programs based on quality standards.

Goal 6: Establish Customer Service Outcome Goals and Set Standards to Ensure that All Families are Treated With Dignity and Respect and Are Served in an Efficient Manner.

(Action Step 6.1) - Provide professional and well-trained eligibility staff who are culturally and linguistically sensitive.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

- WV continues to require eligibility staff who are located in CCR&R agencies to have a four-year degree in social work, early care and education or a related field.
- The state has two field consultants who work with the CCR&R staff to provide technical assistance, answer policy issues and train new staff on policy.
- The state offers training on its management information system for new CCR&R staff on a regular basis.

2001 Response:

- Eligibility staff in the CCR&R agencies are required to have a four-year degree in one of the following fields – social work, early care & education or related fields.
- West Virginia has little diversity as far as language is concerned.
- While eligibility staff still collects information for the application, the applicant information is entered in the state's management information system. In early 2000, the state's information system was revised to automate the eligibility determination process, leaving less room for mistakes.

(Action Step 6.2) - Facilitate quick eligibility determination through reasonable caseloads and/or administrative structure.

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

- CCR&R agencies, which manage the child care certificate system, are required by contract to establish caseloads for eligibility staff of 250 families or less. This provides sufficient time for workers to complete eligibility determinations in a timely manner, if the agency is fully staffed.
- State child care policy requires eligibility determinations for new applications be completed within two weeks.

2001 Response:

- In early 2000, WV issued a statewide CCR&R grant announcement that indicated a caseload of clients should be no more than 250 cases. CCR&R staff increased their budgets in order to hire additional eligibility staff.
- In October 2000, policy was changed to require a decision on eligibility within two weeks of application, rather than 30 days.

(Action Step 6.3) - Conduct periodic, independent and thorough consumer satisfaction assessments, assuring the confidentiality of information collected.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

Due to time and staff constraints, consumer surveys were not mailed as planned. As part of an abbreviated review of the state's six CCR&R agencies, DHHR staff will select a random sample of clients and providers, who will be contacted by phone to answer the survey questions.

2001 Response:

The Child Care Division has developed a survey for parents and providers that will be piloted in October 2001 as part of a planned review of the state's six CR&R agencies. Surveys will go out by CCR&R region. The decision has not been made whether or not the survey will be sent to the full population or a randomly selected sample.

(Action Step 6.4) - Provide adequate support for child care resource and referral services.

2003 Response:

West Virginia continues to invest heavily in its CCR&R agencies, which provide not only resource and referral services, but determine eligibility, and offer training and technical assistance for providers.

2002 Response:

West Virginia continues to invest heavily in its CCR&R agencies, which provide not only resource and referral services, but determine eligibility, and offer training and technical assistance for providers. While many contracts were reduced or eliminated during the recent budget crisis, support for child care resource and referral agencies remained the same.

2001 Response:

WV has been steadily increasing its investment in CCR&R agencies, which serve as the state's major infrastructure for eligibility determination, provider training, technical assistance and resource and referral. From 2000 to 2001, we increased grants to CCR&R agencies from \$5.5 million to \$7.7 million. The increase was due to reductions in the caseload size, increases in the number of eligible families, and the addition of two new technical assistance positions – a behavior support position and a family child care mentor position.

Goal 7: Design the Subsidy System So That Rate Structures Assure That Families Receiving Child Care Assistance Have Access to All Types of Child Care and Disallow Charges Above Established Co-Payments.

(Action Step 7.1) - States should cap reimbursement rates at no less than the 75th percentile based on a market rate survey conducted every two years that accurately reflects the price of all types of care in communities across the state.

2003 Response:
No further action.

2002 Response:
No further action.

2001 Response:
In October 2000, the state increased reimbursement rates to the 75th percentile of the 1999 market rate. The new market rate survey done in June 2001 shows regular reimbursement rates are below the 75th percentile. However, the state offers a supplemental rate for accredited programs of \$4 daily.

(Action Step 7.2) - Establish and evaluate reimbursement policies that encourage provider participation and are responsive to family needs.

2003 Response:
No change.

2002 Response:
West Virginia continues to offer \$4 per day to providers who care for children at least four hours that are considered non-traditional or who care for children at least 12 hours per day.

2001 Response:
In 1998, the state started an incentive rate of \$1 per day for providers that care for children during non-traditional work hours. That rate increased to \$4 in October 2000. This incentive rate has made it much easier for families to locate caregivers for evening, overnight and weekend care.

(Action Step 7.3) - Prohibit providers from charging above the established co-payments.

2003 Response:
No change.

2002 Response:

The state requires providers to accept the department's payment as full reimbursement for child care services, although providers may charge late fees, registration fees and transportation fees.

2001 Response:

The state enters into a provider agreement that indicates the provider agrees to accept the department's payment as full reimbursement for child care services. However, we do allow providers to charge late fees if parents leave children past closing time. We have also allowed reasonable registration fees and transportation fees, which we consider outside of the normal child care services.

Goal 8: Create Partnerships With Employers to Expand Child Care Assistance for Working Families.

(Action Step 8.1) - Educate employers about the bottom line benefits associated with public and private child care assistance.

2003 Response:

- The state is working in partnership with WV KIDS COUNT to bring employers and child care together to increase the quality and availability of child care. This year Kids Count will be disseminating work-family materials and providing technical assistance to businesses around child care issues. A variety of mechanisms will be used to provide materials and assistance to the business community. KIDS COUNT is establishing a clearinghouse for work-family materials on their website to support access to information.
- Contracts with child care resource and referral agencies require agencies to provide consultation to employers, government and community agencies and to encourage and develop business partnerships within the community. Each CCR&R agency has materials developed by the Child Care Division to use with local employers, which offers information on the benefits that accrue to the employer.

2002 Response:

- Contracts with child care resource and referral agencies require agencies to provide consultation to employers, government and community agencies and to encourage and develop business partnerships within the community. Each CCR&R agency has materials developed by the Child Care Division to use with local employers, which offers information on the benefits that accrue to the employer.
- The Child Care Division financed a project through the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families to develop a tool kit for child care directors to use with businesses.
- The Governor's Cabinet continues to distribute materials to business and early childhood programs through its "Family Friendly" campaign.

2001 Response:

- In August 2000, the Child Care Division developed a display for the annual State Chamber of Commerce summit that utilized the materials developed by the Child Care Partnership project and added state information. The display offered a variety of hand-outs for employers, a Power Point presentation and a video developed by the Child Care Partnership Project. All materials have been duplicated and distributed to the CCR&R agencies for use with local businesses.
- In September 2001, a book on “Family Friendly” Practice was developed in conjunction with the WV Governor’s Cabinet on Children & Families, the WV Chamber of Commerce, the Wellness Council and the Department. The effort is designed to educate employers on the benefits of child and elder care to the business community and provides ways they can contribute to develop, expand and support child care programs.

(Action Step 8.2) - Enlist business leaders to champion the involvement of southern businesses and to serve as mentors to other businesses.

2003 Response:

The West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund received a \$60,000 grant from The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation to support its Investing in the “Early Learning” program. This program is part of a three-year campaign to bring business and government together to increase both public and private investment in early childhood education. Part of this grant will be used to develop partnerships with businesses to enable child care centers to become nationally accredited.

2002 Response:

WV Kids Count has been working with business leaders in WV on several efforts. Most recently, they partnered business with early childhood sites identified as an “Educare” site. Educare sites were programs that received funding to improve the quality of care through improvements such as development of curricula, professional development and enhanced compensation.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 8.3) - Provide information to employers on all available tax benefits related to child care assistance, including deductions for donations to tax-exempt child care organizations, capital costs for constructing a child care center and establishing a pre-tax dependent care assistance plan.

2003 Response:

WV Kids Count was given copies of all of the forms developed for a Business Summit held in August 2000. The forms included a section on available tax credits related to child care assistance. CCR&R agencies were given copies of the forms several years ago to use with business.

2002 Response:

Brochures that include information on the information listed in action step 8.3 have been distributed to all child care resource and referral agencies.

2001 Response:

The information presented at the August 2000 Business Summit contains a section on tax benefits for employers that contains all of the information listed in action step 8.3. The current grant agreement with the state's six CCR&R agencies requires them to use these materials to work with local businesses.

(Action Step 8.4) - Facilitate collaborative initiatives that enable employers to share ideas as well as pool their resources to address child care needs.

2003 Response:

WV KIDS COUNT is continuing and expanding its efforts of establishing partnerships between West Virginia businesses and child care centers. The KIDS COUNT project recruits and enrolls local businesses to partner with child care programs to assist those programs in upgrading the quality and/or scope of their program. This year work will continue in the initial two counties and one additional county will be targeted.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 8.5) - Provide matching funds or other tax or financial incentives for employers to invest in child care.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 8.6) - Establish incentives for employers to create child care benefit programs for their employees or to contribute to child care purchasing pools in their state or community.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 8.7) - Reduce the administrative burden on employers participating in any joint public/private child care assistance program.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

Goal 9: Provide Child Care Assistance to Working Families Through Federal and State Tax Laws.

(Action Step 9.1) - Make the federal child dependent care tax credit refundable.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 9.2) - Establish refundable child and dependent care tax credits in states with income taxes.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 9.3) - Raise federal and state child care tax credit expense limits to accurately reflect the price of quality care.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 9.4) - Index for inflation the state and federal child and dependent care tax credit income eligibility and expense limits.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 9.5) - Ensure that child and dependent care tax credits are clearly identified and easy to claim by filers using either the short or long form.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

(Action Step 9.6) - Encourage the use of effective state tax strategies to provide financial support for child care.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.

Goal 10: States Should Have Effective, Coordinated Systems to Guide Child Care and Early Childhood Policy Decisions and Direct Use of Resources.

(Action Step 10.1) - Facilitate greater coordination in eligibility policies across child care and early childhood education programs at state and local levels.

2003 Response:

The Department of Health and Human Resources has increased its commitment in the field of Early Care and Education by creating a Division of Early Care and Education, which now includes child care subsidy funding, licensing of child care centers and quality initiatives. The Quality Initiatives unit is responsible for coordinating with other early childhood programs, approval of WV Pre-k plans and staff support for the WV PIECES Advisory Council. The licensing unit licenses child care, Head Start and starting this year will begin to license schools operating WV Pre-k programs. The Head Start Collaboration Director will be housed with the Division starting in late July. As these various entities are brought together, greater coordination of resources and programs is possible.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

Some of the new Educare program sites have built on our sliding fee scale to provide services to families that are above the State's eligibility. We feel this is an encouraging step and hope that other sites will follow their example.

(Action Step 10.2) - All southern states and the District of Columbia should participate in a collaborative effort to develop and collect common data elements across states.

2003 Response:

No action.

2002 Response:

No action.

2001 Response:

No response.