



Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care

October 2002

Southern Regional Action Plan
to Improve the Quality
of Early Care and Education

THE SOUTHERN INSTITUTE
on Children and Families

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Southern Regional Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education

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on Child Care**

October 2002

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Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care

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Introduction

“The developmental effects of child care depend on its safety, the opportunities it provides for nurturing and stable relationships and its provision of linguistically and cognitively rich environments. Yet the child care that is available in the United States today is highly fragmented and characterized by marked variations in quality, ranging from rich, growth-promoting experiences to unstimulating, highly unstable and sometimes dangerous settings. The burden of poor quality and limited choices rests most heavily on low-income, working families whose financial resources are too high to qualify for subsidies yet too low to afford quality care.”

— National Academy of Sciences, 2000

The Southern Institute on Children and Families in January 2000 established the 24-member Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care. Support for the initiative was provided by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Appointments to the Task Force were made by 16 southern governors, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the Southern Growth Policies Board and the Southern Institute. The initial charge to the Task Force was to collaborate in the development of a plan of action to improve access to child care financial aid for low-income families in the southern region.

In December 2000, the Task Force met that charge, releasing its first product, a publication titled ***Sound Investments: Financial Support for Child Care Builds Workforce Capacity and Promotes School Readiness***. The report’s *Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families In the South* sets forth 10 goals and 52 action steps calling on public and private sector leaders to support specific initiatives. The Action Plan calls for significant increases in child care resources, eligibility simplification, improved customer services, implementation of tax strategies and creation of employer partnerships. The Action Plan and additional publications of the Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care are listed in the bibliography and are available at www.kidsouth.org.

In January 2001, the Southern Institute received support from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation for an additional two years to continue the work of the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care. The Task Force focused its efforts on two objectives:

- △ Implementation of the *Action Plan to Improve Access to Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families in the South*, including site visits to the southern states and a status report to track progress.
- △ Development of an action plan to improve the quality of child care in the southern region.

Research has shown that the first three years of life are critical in children's brain development and that quality child care and education in the preschool years can greatly enhance a child's lifetime potential. All too often, however, children from low-income families do not have access to quality early childhood learning opportunities.

Under the guidance of the Southern Institute, the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care embarked on the development of an action plan to achieve quality early care and education programs. The Staff Work Group provided invaluable assistance with this complex and bold undertaking.

One of the first challenges facing the Task Force was reaching consensus on a definition of "quality." After a lengthy and thoughtful discourse, the Task Force reached agreement that quality child care includes:

- △ Nurturing, responsive and developmentally appropriate care and education;
- △ Consistent, educated, trained and professionally compensated early childhood education teachers;
- △ A safe and stimulating environment; and
- △ Age-appropriate staff-child ratios and group sizes.

In its accreditation procedures manual, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) notes that accreditation is "one level of quality control." Licensing alone only establishes that a facility meets minimum state-determined health and safety requirements. To be eligible for NAEYC accreditation, programs must be licensed and in good standing. NAEYC defines a high-quality early childhood program as "one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children and adults — parents, staff and administrators — who are involved in the program."

The Task Force determined that information must be collected from southern states to lay the groundwork for the action plan on quality. The Southern Institute conducted a survey of the 16 southern states and the District of Columbia to collect data on each state's quality standards and initiatives, including licensing standards, and to compare state standards with accreditation standards developed by NAEYC.

The Southern Institute quality survey was sent to child care administrators, licensing officials and advocacy groups in each of the southern states. States and public/private representatives who participated in the survey are listed below:

- Alabama (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Arkansas (administrator, licensing)
- District of Columbia (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Florida (licensing)
- Georgia (administrator, licensing)
- Kentucky (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Louisiana (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Maryland (administrator, licensing)
- Mississippi (administrator, licensing)
- Missouri (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- North Carolina (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Oklahoma (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- South Carolina (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Tennessee (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Texas (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- Virginia (administrator, licensing, advocate)
- West Virginia (administrator, licensing, advocate)

Task Force members used results from the state survey as a key reference in developing the *Southern Regional Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education*. The Action Plan presented below addresses child care for children from birth through age 12. The Action Plan sets forth a “gold standard” that the Task Force feels every southern state should achieve on behalf of all children in early care and education. The Southern Institute will monitor developments during the upcoming year and will issue a report on the status of implementation efforts.

Southern Regional Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education

Vision Statement

All children who are in early care and education programs will be in environments that are safe, nurturing and encourage their development.

GOAL 1

All children and families will have the benefit of a quality, comprehensive and coordinated early care and education system.

Action Steps

- 1.1 Public policy at the federal, state and local level will require planning and coordination across major systems to improve quality, including Head Start, state pre-kindergarten, subsidized child care and licensing.
- 1.2 Public policy at the federal, state and local level will support families by linking early care and education programs to health coverage, physical and mental health care, nutrition, economic support, transportation and parenting education services.
- 1.3 Federal, state and local policies and systems will ensure coordinated, seamless transitions for children moving among early care and education programs and into kindergarten.

GOAL 2

Rigorous licensing requirements and/or regulatory processes will be enacted to ensure that children are adequately protected in all early care and education settings.

Action Steps

- 2.1 States will establish staff-child ratios and maximum group sizes for centers and homes that meet NAEYC (National Association for the

GOAL 2 (continued)

- Education of Young Children), NAFCC (National Association of Family Child Care), APHA (American Public Health Association) or AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) national standards.
- 2.2 States will develop and enforce health, fire and safety requirements for all early care and education settings that reflect standards set forth by the APHA and the AAP.
 - 2.3 State law will require strict enforcement of licensing requirements. States will use a range of sanctions that will include license revocation when a provider is unable or unwilling to meet requirements.
 - 2.4 States will conduct at least three unannounced monitoring visits per year to verify compliance with requirements.
 - 2.5 States will require that child care providers, early childhood teachers and others who have regular access to children in early childhood settings have federal and state background checks using fingerprinting and screening against the state child abuse registry.
 - 2.6 States will ensure that all licensing and early care and education staff are educated in recognizing signs of child abuse and are trained in the state's child abuse reporting laws.
 - 2.7 States will have a well-trained regulatory workforce with average caseloads between 50 and 75 per staff person and a system capable of providing technical assistance.
 - 2.8 States will ensure parental right of access to their child's early care and education facilities.

GOAL 3

States will support development of quality early care and education programs for all children.

Action Steps

- 3.1 States will provide all early care and education providers with resources to help them improve the quality of care and education they deliver, such as technical assistance and training, accreditation support, grants to meet health and safety requirements and grants to support family child care home networks.

GOAL 3 (continued)

- 3.2 States will have Child Care Resource and Referral networks to deliver quality early care and education enhancement support services to providers, such as outreach, training and technical assistance.
- 3.3 States will implement a rating system to recognize providers for incremental levels of quality.
- 3.4 States will implement tax and other incentives to develop and expand early care and education programs that demonstrate a higher level of quality.
- 3.5 States will use a formal mechanism to seek parental input in program evaluations and will use that information in making policy decisions related to early care and education programs.
- 3.6 States will identify and support the use of effective research-based curricula.

GOAL 4

Staff in early care and education settings will be appropriately credentialed and adequately compensated.

Action Steps

- 4.1 States will maintain a professional development system that ensures, at a minimum, providers in early care and education settings meet standards set forth by NAEYC, NAFCC, APHA or AAP.
- 4.2 States will require approved ongoing annual professional development for staff, appropriate to their education levels and job requirements, as specified in APHA and AAP. States will provide and implement a professional development system that verifies trainers, approves training and tracks the training of participants.
- 4.3 The federal government and states will provide universally available, comprehensive scholarships to early care and education providers who are pursuing a Child Development Associate (CDA) or two- or four-year degree in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education or child care administration. Scholarships will address the costs of tuition, fees and books and will support components such as travel costs, paid release time and child care.

GOAL 4 (continued)

- 4.4 States will work with educational institutions to ensure that coursework is accessible in order to meet the early care and education workforce training needs, such as courses offered at night, on weekends, in accelerated formats, on-line and in various languages. Courses will address the varying educational levels of the workforce.
- 4.5 The federal government and states will provide financial incentives that reward completion of approved levels of professional development.
- 4.6 The federal government and states will provide college loan forgiveness programs for persons earning an approved degree who work for a specified period of time in early care and education programs.
- 4.7 States will work toward a system whereby staff with approved degrees or credentials will receive employment benefits and compensation at comparable levels to the state's public education system.
- 4.8 States will ensure meaningful agreements and processes to enable the transfer of credits between and among approved two- and four-year degree programs.

GOAL 5

Families will have the information to make well-informed decisions about the quality of their child's care and education and to be actively involved in their child's care and education.

Action Steps

- 5.1 States will support Child Care Resource and Referral networks that are easily accessible to parents and that provide information on child development, quality indicators, provider choices, vacancies and linkages to additional information.
- 5.2 States will support early care and education providers in promoting parental involvement and in seeking parental input into the development and improvement of their programs.

GOAL 6

Quality early care and education programs will be financially accessible to all children.

Action Steps

- 6.1 Federal and state governments will adjust the child care tax credit expense limits to accurately reflect the cost of quality care.
- 6.2 States with income taxes will establish refundable child and dependent care tax credits.
- 6.3 State and federal child and dependent care tax credit income-eligibility and expense limits will be indexed for inflation.
- 6.4 Federal, state, local and private funds will be sufficient to meet 100% of the need for direct early care and education financial aid, based on initial eligibility levels at 85% of the state median income. Federal law will allow and states will implement redetermination policies that allow families to retain early care and education financial aid until they reach 100% of the state median income.
- 6.5 Federal and state governments should develop policies and systems to ensure families receiving financial aid pay no more than 10% of their gross income for early care and education.
- 6.6 States will set payment rates at no less than the 75th percentile based on a market rate survey conducted every two years for each level and type of care. Annual inflation adjustments to payment rates will be made between market surveys.
- 6.7 States will implement payments to providers commensurate with the quality-rating level achieved by the early care and education programs.
- 6.8 States will examine the financing of quality early care and education in their state and work toward providing payment rates that recognize the cost commensurate with the standards set forth in this action plan.
- 6.9 States will design and aggressively implement outreach initiatives to provide families with easy-to-understand early care and education financial aid information and application assistance.

GOAL 7

States will ensure that accountability is built into all systems, programs and activities undertaken to achieve the goals of this action plan.

Action Steps

- 7.1 States will convene appropriate stakeholders to develop written strategic plans for improving the quality of early care and education programs in the state. These plans will include key goals, quantifiable measures of progress and program outcomes for all quality enhancement activities.
- 7.2 States will collect and analyze data and produce written annual reports on progress toward identified goals. Reports will be made readily available to the public.
- 7.3 States will use data and annual reports to make continuous policy improvements and evaluate quality enhancement activities.

References

American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics, Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards — Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 2002).

National Association for the Education of Young Children, Accreditation Criteria & Procedures of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998).

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Table 1
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Number and Percentage of Children Under 6 Living with Parents in the Labor Force

| State | Living with Two Parents | | Living with One Parent | |
|----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | Number of Children Both Parents Working | Percentage of Children Both Parents Working | Number of Children Single Parent Working | Percentage of Children Single Parent Working |
| United States | 8,162,027 | 53.9% | 4,993,026 | 75.5% |
| Alabama | 120,363 | 54.9% | 85,798 | 73.8% |
| Arkansas | 76,305 | 59.5% | 49,170 | 69.8% |
| Delaware | 21,163 | 59.5% | 16,817 | 80.4% |
| District of Columbia | 7,569 | 62.7% | 17,228 | 75.6% |
| Florida | 389,575 | 56.8% | 284,741 | 78.5% |
| Georgia | 219,751 | 50.4% | 184,313 | 76.2% |
| Kentucky | 107,983 | 51.7% | 67,611 | 75.1% |
| Louisiana | 106,508 | 51.8% | 103,247 | 70.7% |
| Maryland | 167,169 | 61.5% | 101,102 | 76.6% |
| Mississippi | 76,299 | 63.0% | 80,040 | 77.8% |
| Missouri | 169,301 | 59.0% | 109,841 | 78.9% |
| North Carolina | 237,133 | 59.1% | 144,251 | 78.2% |
| Oklahoma | 85,419 | 47.8% | 64,728 | 79.0% |
| South Carolina | 104,076 | 54.4% | 65,013 | 70.1% |
| Tennessee | 156,284 | 55.0% | 103,866 | 72.9% |
| Texas | 617,771 | 49.2% | 402,061 | 71.7% |
| Virginia | 233,001 | 57.8% | 107,842 | 81.2% |
| West Virginia | 38,144 | 52.7% | 24,129 | 62.2% |

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, derived from Census 2000 data.

Table 2
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 1 - Coordinated Systems
State Child Care Subsidy Program Efforts to Collaborate with Other
Publicly Supported Early Childhood Programs

| State | Pre-Kindergarten | | | Head Start | |
|----------------------|------------------|--|---------------|---|-----|
| | Collaboration | Assistance to Providers in Meeting Public School Standards | Collaboration | Assistance to Providers in Meeting Head Start Standards | |
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kentucky | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Louisiana | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Mississippi | No | No | No | No | No |
| Missouri | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| North Carolina | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| South Carolina | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tennessee | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Texas | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Virginia | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| West Virginia | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 3
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 – Licensing and Regulatory Processes
Percentage of Subsidized Children by State Monitoring or Regulatory Policies

| State | Percentage of Subsidized Children | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | Regulatory Policies | | Monitoring Policies | |
| | Unregulated | Regulated Care | Care is Not Monitored | Care is Monitored |
| Alabama | 21% | 79% | 21% | 79% |
| Arkansas | 0% | 100% | 0% | 100% |
| District of Columbia | < 1% | > 99% | < 1% | > 99% |
| Georgia ¹ | See Note | See Note | See Note | See Note |
| Kentucky | 24% | 76% | 0% | 100% |
| Louisiana | 14% | 86% | 0% | 100% |
| Maryland | 0% | 100% | 0% | 100% |
| Missouri | 36% | 64% | 36% | 64% |
| North Carolina | 3% | 97% | 3% | 97% |
| Oklahoma | 0% | 100% | 0% | 100% |
| South Carolina | 12% | 88% | 12% | 88% |
| Tennessee ² | 10% | 90% | 10% | 90% |
| Texas | 18% | 82% | 18% | 82% |
| Virginia | 15% | 85% | 15% | 85% |
| West Virginia | 7% | 93% | 0% | 100% |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey. Mississippi did not provide responses to this question.

¹ Georgia is unable to break out regulated and unregulated center data.

² Tennessee child care program staff regulate legally exempt family child care homes.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator and Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001. Table replaced May 2003.

Table 4
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
State Licensing Standards for the Maximum Number of Children Allowed to Be
Cared For by One Adult in Licensed Child Care Centers

| Age of Child | 6 Months | 13 Months | 25 Months | 37 Months | 4+ Years |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| NAEYC Standards¹ | 1:3 - 1:4 | 1:3 - 1:5 | 1:4 - 1:6 | 1:7 - 1:10 | 1:8 - 1:10 |
| State | | | | | |
| Alabama | 1:6 | 1:6 | 1:8 | 1:12 | 1:20 |
| Arkansas ² | 1:6 | 1:6 | 1:9 | 1:12 | 1:15 |
| District of Columbia | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:8 | 1:10 |
| Florida | 1:4 | 1:6 | 1:11 | 1:15 | 1:20 |
| Georgia | 1:6 | 1:6 | 1:10 | 1:15 | 1:18 |
| Kentucky | 1:5 | 1:6 | 1:10 | 1:12 | 1:14 |
| Louisiana | 1:5 | 1:7 | 1:11 | 1:13 | 1:15 |
| Maryland | 1:3 | 1:3 | 1:6 | 1:10 | 1:10 |
| Mississippi | 1:5 | 1:9 | 1:12 | 1:14 | 1:16 |
| Missouri | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:8 | 1:10 | 1:10 |
| North Carolina | 1:5 | 1:6 | 1:10 | 1:15 | 1:20 |
| Oklahoma | 1:4 | 1:6 | 1:8 | 1:12 | 1:15 |
| South Carolina ³ | 1:6 | 1:6 | 1:10 | 1:13 | 1:18 |
| Tennessee ⁴ | 1:4 | 1:4-1:6 | 1:6-1:7 | 1:9 | 1:15 |
| Texas | 1:4 | 1:5 | 1:13 | 1:17 | 1:20 |
| Virginia | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:10 | 1:10 | 1:12 |
| West Virginia | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:8 | 1:12 |
| Number of States Below Standards | 8 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 14 |
| Number of States Meeting Standards | 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 |

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children - Ratios vary based on number of children in a group.

² Arkansas sets higher standards for providers participating in the state funded Pre-Kindergarten program, Arkansas' Better Chance.

³ South Carolina has established more stringent staff:child ratios for providers voluntarily agreeing to meet higher subsidy standards.

⁴ Ratios effective July 1, 2002.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 5
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
State Licensing Standards for the Maximum Number of Children
Allowed in a Group in Licensed Child Care Centers

| Age of Child | 6 Months | 13 Months | 25 Months | 37 Months | 4+ Years |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| NAEYC Standards¹ | 6-8 | 6-12 | 8-12 | 14-20 | 16-20 |
| State | | | | | |
| Alabama | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards |
| Arkansas ² | 12 | 12 | 18 | 24 | 30 |
| District of Columbia | 8 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 20 |
| Florida | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards |
| Georgia | 12 | 12 | 20 | 30 | 36 |
| Kentucky | 10 | 12 | 20 | 24 | 28 |
| Louisiana | 10 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 15 |
| Maryland | 6 | 6 | 12 | 20 | 20 |
| Mississippi | 10 | 10 | 14 | 14 | 20 |
| Missouri | 8 | 8 | 8 | No Standards | No Standards |
| North Carolina | 10 | 12 | 20 | 25 | 25 |
| Oklahoma | 8 | 12 | 16 | 24 | 30 |
| South Carolina | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards |
| Tennessee | 8 | 8-12 | 12-14 | 18 | 20 |
| Texas | 10 | 13 | 22-26 | 30-34 | 35 |
| Virginia | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards | No Standards |
| West Virginia | 10 | 10 | 10 | No Standards | No Standards |
| Number of States with No Standards | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Number of States Below Standards | 8 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Number of States that Meet Standards | 5 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 5 |

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children - Ratios based on number and ages of children.

² Arkansas sets higher standards for providers participating in the state funded Pre-Kindergarten program, Arkansas' Better Chance.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 6
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
State Regulatory Policies and Practices Related to Child Care Facility Monitoring Visits

| State | Number of Monitoring Visits Per Year | Hours Spent Per Monitoring Visit | | Periodic Monitoring Visit is Unannounced | Facility Caseload for Monitoring Staff (NAEYC Caseload Standard is 50-75) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| | | Centers | Homes | | |
| Alabama ¹ | 0.5 | 6-8 | 4-6 | Yes | 42 |
| Arkansas | 3 | 2.5 | 1.5 | Yes | 68 |
| District of Columbia | 1 | 4 | 2 | Yes | 73 |
| Florida ² | 3 | 3 | 1.5-2 | No | 49 |
| Georgia | 1 | 6 | 2-4 | No | 137 |
| Kentucky | 1 | 4-5 | 4-5 | No | 60 |
| Louisiana | 1 | 5.25 | 1 | Yes | Data Not Provided |
| Maryland ³ | 1 | 4 | 1.9 | Yes | Data Not Provided |
| Mississippi ⁴ | 2 | 2 | 2 | Yes | 103 |
| Missouri | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | Yes | 68 |
| North Carolina | 1 | 4.5 | 2 | Yes | 71 |
| Oklahoma | 3 | 1.5 | 1 | Yes | 54 |
| South Carolina | 2 | 2-3 | 1-2 | No | 73 |
| Tennessee ⁵ | 7 | Data Not Provided | Data Not Provided | Yes | 30 |
| Texas | 1 | 2.4 | 2.4 | No | 85 |
| Virginia ⁶ | 2 | 3.5 | 2.5 | Yes | 98 |
| West Virginia | 1 | 3 | Data Not Provided | No | 80 |

¹ Data for facility caseloads applies to centers only; incomplete data on homes.

² Family day care receives two monitoring visits per year.

³ 20% of centers selected randomly for unannounced inspection each year. 100% of homes receive an unannounced inspection every other year.

⁴ For Mississippi, visits to a facility for routine inspections, i.e. mid-year and renewal, generally last between two hours to 2-3 days, depending on the size of the facility.

⁵ Only the first of seven visits is announced.

⁶ Three visits per year for Family Day System Homes.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 7
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
State Policy Requirements for Background Checks
On Child Care Center Staff

| State | Background Check By Fingerprints | | State Background Check By Name | State Check of Name Against Child Abuse Register |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|--|
| | Federal | State | | |
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | No | No | No | No |
| Florida | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Kentucky | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Louisiana | No | No | Yes | No |
| Maryland | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Mississippi | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Missouri | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| North Carolina ^{1, 2} | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Oklahoma | No | No | Yes | No |
| South Carolina | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Tennessee | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Texas ³ | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| West Virginia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

¹ North Carolina requires a federal check by fingerprints only if they have not lived in North Carolina in the past five years.

² North Carolina requires that, once a month, the state data base is cross checked against the North Carolina Sex Offender Public Protection Registry.

³ Federal check by fingerprint required only if recently moved to Texas from another state.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 8
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
Required Training Topics by State Licensing Standards
for Licensed Child Care Staff

| State | Training Topics | | | | | | Detection of Abuse |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------|-----|-----------|--|-----|--------------------|
| | Safety | Health | CPR | First Aid | | | |
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| Arkansas ¹ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| District of Columbia | No | No | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| Florida | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Kentucky | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Louisiana | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| Maryland ² | No | No | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| Mississippi | No | No | No | No | | No | |
| Missouri | No | No | No | No | | No | |
| North Carolina | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Oklahoma | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | | Yes | |
| South Carolina | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| Tennessee | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Texas | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| Virginia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | No | |
| West Virginia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |

¹ Arkansas mandates Safety Training for directors only.

² Maryland requires that each center have at least one staff member present for every 20 children in care who is currently certified in CPR and First Aid.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 9
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 2 - Licensing and Regulatory Processes
(Also Goal 5 - Parental Relationships)
State Licensing Standards for Parent Involvement Required
for Licensed Child Care Centers

| State | Parents Have Unrestricted Access to Child Care Facility | Parent Meetings | Parent/Teacher Conferences | Parent Satisfaction Survey |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alabama | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Arkansas | Yes | No | No | No |
| District of Columbia | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Florida | No | No | No | No |
| Georgia | Yes | No | No | No |
| Kentucky | Yes | No | No | No |
| Louisiana | Yes | No | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | No | No | No |
| Mississippi | No | No | No | No |
| Missouri | Yes | No | No | No |
| North Carolina | Yes | No | No | No |
| Oklahoma ¹ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| South Carolina | No | No | No | No |
| Tennessee | Yes | No | No | No |
| Texas | Yes | No | No | No |
| Virginia | Yes | No | No | No |
| West Virginia | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

¹ Centers must offer 3 of 8 parent involvement options.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 10
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
Initiatives to Improve Quality Used in More than Half the States

| Quality Initiative | Number of States Employing Initiative |
|---|--|
| Resource and referral programs. | 17 |
| Provides services and support to address the additional needs of Special Needs children. | 17 |
| Availability of technical assistance to providers. | 17 |
| Collaboration with Head Start. | 16 |
| Collaboration with Head Start that includes providing assistance to providers to meet Head Start standards. | 16 |
| Support for national accreditation. | 16 |
| Student loans or scholarships for child care workers. | 16 |
| Mentoring programs for professional development of child care staff. | 16 |
| Consumer education. | 16 |
| Community partnerships. | 15 |
| Public awareness on brain development of very young children and the implication for providers. | 15 |
| Partnerships with business. | 14 |
| Upgrading facilities/programs to exceed licensing standards. | 14 |
| Literacy for children in care. | 14 |
| Language development activities for children. | 14 |
| Parent satisfaction surveys. | 14 |
| Public awareness on brain development of very young children and the implication for providers. | 14 |
| Public awareness on brain development of very young children and the implication for policy makers. | 14 |
| Career development system coordinated with higher education system. | 14 |
| Collaboration with Pre-Kindergarten. | 13 |
| Provider satisfaction surveys. | 13 |
| Basic parent education printed material. | 13 |
| Regulated family child care networks. | 12 |
| Collaboration with Pre-Kindergarten that includes assisting providers in meeting public school standards. | 12 |
| Literacy for adults. | 12 |
| Credentialing or licensing system for child care workers. | 11 |
| Tiered reimbursement. | 11 |
| English as a second language. | 11 |
| Training for eligibility workers/resource and referral workers in basic parent education. | 11 |
| Credentialing system for child care administrators. | 11 |
| Coordinated state planning systems. | 11 |
| Coordinated local planning systems with oversight authority. | 10 |
| Increase wages for child care staff that complete specific training or education courses. | 10 |
| Enhance benefits for child care staff. | 10 |
| Coordinated state planning systems with oversight authority. | 10 |
| Enhance benefits for child care staff that complete specific training or education courses. | 9 |
| Coordinated local planning systems. | 9 |

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator, Child Care Licensing Administrator and Advocate). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 11
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
Top 12 Quality Initiatives Rated Most Often by Survey Respondents
as Having a "Very Good Impact" on Improving Quality

- Resource and Referral programs.
- Student loans or scholarships for child care workers.
- Availability of technical assistance to providers.
- Upgrading facilities/programs to exceed licensing standards.
- Health consultants.
- Tiered reimbursement.
- Community partnerships.
- Collaboration with Head Start.
- Collaboration with Head Start that includes assisting providers.
- Support for national accreditation.
- Provides services and support to address the additional needs of Special Needs children.
- Credentialing system for workers.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator, Child Care Licensing Administrator and Advocate). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 12
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
(Also Goal 4 - Professional Credentials and Compensation)
States Offering Support to Child Care Programs
Seeking National Accreditation

| State | Provides Incentives For National Accreditation |
|----------------------|--|
| Alabama | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes |
| Kentucky | Yes |
| Louisiana | Yes |
| Maryland | Yes |
| Mississippi | No |
| Missouri | Yes |
| North Carolina | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes |
| South Carolina | Yes |
| Tennessee | Yes |
| Texas | Yes |
| Virginia | No |
| West Virginia | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.
Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 13
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
State Child Care Subsidy Policies Established to Improve Quality

| State | Allocates More Funding than the 4% Required by the Child Care and Development Fund for Quality Initiatives | Sets Provider Standards That Are Higher Than Licensing Standards | Provides Technical Assistance or Grants to Exceed Licensing Standards | Provides Multi-Level Reimbursement for Incremental Levels of Quality |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Alabama | No | No | Yes | No |
| Arkansas ¹ | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia ² | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Kentucky | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Louisiana | No | No | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Mississippi | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Missouri | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| North Carolina | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| South Carolina | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tennessee | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Texas | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia | Yes | No | No | No |
| West Virginia | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

¹ Arkansas sets provider standards that are higher than licensing standards for centers.

² Georgia sets provider standards that are higher than licensing standards for legally exempt family child care homes. Georgia began piloting a tiered reimbursement program in January 2002.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 14
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
State Child Care Subsidy Policies to Improve Quality
of Family Child Care Homes

| State | Networks for Family Child Care Homes | Networks for Legally Exempt Family Child Care Homes | Child Care Subsidy Standards for Legally Exempt Family Child Care Homes | Monitor Legally Exempt Family Child Care Homes |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Arkansas | Yes | No | No | No |
| District of Columbia | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Kentucky ¹ | No | No | No | No |
| Louisiana | No | No | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Mississippi | No | No | No | No |
| Missouri | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| North Carolina | No | No | Yes | No |
| Oklahoma | Yes | No | No | No |
| South Carolina | No | No | Yes | No |
| Tennessee | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Texas | No | No | No | No |
| Virginia | No | No | No | No |
| West Virginia | No | No | No | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

¹ Kentucky monitors unregulated care upon receipt of a complaint.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 15
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 3 - Quality Improvement
(Also Goal 6 - Financial Support)
State Child Care Subsidy Rate Policies That
Promote Quality

| State | Employ a Tiered Reimbursement System | Adjust Rates Annually From Market Rate Survey | Set Rates At or Above 75th Percentile of Market Rates | Pay Above 75th Percentile for Special Circumstances |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Alabama | No | No | No | No |
| Arkansas ¹ | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Georgia ² | No | No | No | No |
| Kentucky | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Louisiana | No | No | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Mississippi | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Missouri | Yes | No | No | No |
| North Carolina | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes | No | No | No |
| South Carolina ³ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tennessee | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Texas | Yes | No | No | No |
| Virginia | No | No | No | Yes |
| West Virginia | Yes | No | No | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

¹ Arkansas adjusts rates annually based on State Median Income. Market Rate Survey is conducted biannually.

² Georgia began piloting a tiered reimbursement program in January 2002.

³ South Carolina establishes rates above the 75th percentile; information provided in State Survey on Quality Child Care.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator) and from *Survey Results on the Status of State Implementation*, February 2002. State Survey on Quality Child Care requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 16
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 4 - Professional Credentials and Compensation
Licensing Standards Related to Number of Annual Training Hours
Required for Staff in Licensed Child Care Centers

| State | Director | Teacher |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alabama | 24 | 12 |
| Arkansas ¹ | 18 | 10 |
| District of Columbia ² | No Standards | No Standards |
| Florida | 8 | 8 |
| Georgia | 10 | 10 |
| Kentucky | 12 | 12 |
| Louisiana | 12 | 12 |
| Maryland | 6 | 3 |
| Mississippi ³ | 15 | 15 |
| Missouri | 12 | 12 |
| North Carolina ⁴ | 5-20 | 5-20 |
| Oklahoma | 20 | 12 |
| South Carolina | 20 | 15 |
| Tennessee ⁵ | 18 | 12 |
| Texas | 20 | 15 |
| Virginia | 8 | 8 |
| West Virginia | No Standards | No Standards |

¹ Arkansas requires higher standards for state funded public Pre-Kindergarten programs: 30 hours for director and teacher, 20 hours for teacher's aid.

² The District of Columbia requires 18-24 hours for providers participating in child care subsidy program. More than half of all providers are part of the subsidy system.

³ Additional training on regulation of playground safety required every two years.

⁴ North Carolina has various requirements based on educational levels.

⁵ Tennessee requires that directors receive 36 hours the first year and teachers 18 hours the first year.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 17
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 4 - Professional Credentials and Compensation
State Child Care Subsidy Programs Offering Scholarships to Child Care
Staff to Improve Their Education and Training

| State | Scholarships Offered |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Alabama | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes |
| Kentucky | Yes |
| Louisiana | No |
| Maryland | Yes |
| Mississippi | Yes |
| Missouri | Yes |
| North Carolina | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes |
| South Carolina | Yes |
| Tennessee | Yes |
| Texas | Yes |
| Virginia | Yes |
| West Virginia | Yes |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 18
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 4 - Professional Credentials and Compensation
State Child Care Subsidy Programs Offering Financial Support to
Increase Wages and Benefits for Child Care Staff

| State | Increased Wages | Enhanced Benefits |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alabama | No | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes |
| Kentucky | No | No |
| Louisiana | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | Yes |
| Mississippi | No | Yes |
| Missouri | Yes | Yes |
| North Carolina | Yes | Yes |
| Oklahoma | Yes | No |
| South Carolina | Yes | No |
| Tennessee | No | No |
| Texas | No | No |
| Virginia ¹ | Yes | No |
| West Virginia | No | No |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey.

¹ Virginia has increased wages, as of July 2002, through an expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. program.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 19
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 5 - Parental Relationships
Training Topics Required by State Licensing Standards
For Licensed Child Care Center Staff

| State | Provides Training on Working with Families |
|-----------------------|--|
| Alabama | Yes |
| Arkansas ¹ | Yes |
| District of Columbia | No |
| Florida | Yes |
| Georgia | No |
| Kentucky | No |
| Louisiana | No |
| Maryland | No |
| Mississippi | No |
| Missouri | No |
| North Carolina | Yes |
| Oklahoma | No |
| South Carolina | No |
| Tennessee | No |
| Texas | Yes |
| Virginia | No |
| West Virginia | Yes |

¹ Arkansas mandates training for directors only.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Licensing Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 20
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 5 - Parental Relationships
States Investing Child Care Funds in Quality Initiatives Targeted to Parents

| State | Adult Literacy | English as a Second Language | Public Awareness on Brain Development and the Implications for Parents | Basic Parent Education Printed Material | Material on the Importance of Sensitivity and Responsiveness in Caregivers | Parent Satisfaction Survey |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Arkansas | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| District of Columbia | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Kentucky | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Louisiana | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Maryland | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Missouri | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| North Carolina | No | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Oklahoma | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| South Carolina | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Tennessee | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Texas | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| West Virginia | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |

Note: Florida did not respond to the Child Care Administrator Survey. Mississippi did not provide responses to this question.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

Table 21
Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education
Goal 6 - Financial Support
Funds Allocated to Child Care in FFY 2001

| State | State | | Federal | | Other | | Total |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | Percentage | Allocation | Percentage | Allocation | Percentage | Allocation | |
| North Carolina | 48.3% | \$254,301,918 | 51.7% | \$271,805,285 | 0.0% | | \$526,107,203 |
| Arkansas | 38.8% | \$15,662,168 | 60.9% | \$24,613,601 | 0.3% | \$125,357 | \$40,401,126 |
| Virginia | 36.0% | \$42,877,739 | 64.0% | \$76,319,266 | 0.0% | | \$119,197,005 |
| District of Columbia | 33.3% | \$22,837,038 | 66.7% | \$45,654,128 | 0.0% | | \$68,491,166 |
| Maryland | 24.0% | \$40,617,483 | 76.0% | \$128,336,213 | 0.0% | | \$168,953,696 |
| Georgia | 22.8% | \$53,607,881 | 77.2% | \$181,989,011 | 0.0% | | \$235,596,892 |
| Texas ¹ | 21.5% | \$106,122,709 | 78.5% | \$386,912,566 | 0.0% | | \$493,035,275 |
| Tennessee | 15.7% | \$33,000,000 | 84.3% | \$177,200,000 | 0.0% | | \$210,200,000 |
| Kentucky | 10.7% | \$14,800,000 | 89.3% | \$123,400,000 | 0.0% | | \$138,200,000 |
| Missouri | 10.6% | \$13,244,700 | 89.4% | \$111,550,024 | 0.0% | | \$124,794,724 |
| Oklahoma | 10.5% | \$13,600,000 | 89.5% | \$116,170,000 | 0.0% | | \$129,770,000 |
| Alabama ² | 9.1% | \$9,700,000 | 90.4% | \$96,500,000 | 0.5% | \$580,000 | \$106,780,000 |
| West Virginia | 8.4% | \$5,372,843 | 91.6% | \$58,478,811 | 0.0% | | \$63,851,654 |
| South Carolina | 8.1% | \$6,290,817 | 91.9% | \$71,216,960 | 0.0% | | \$77,507,777 |
| Louisiana | 3.6% | \$5,200,000 | 96.4% | \$139,296,409 | 0.0% | | \$144,496,409 |
| Mississippi | 2.9% | \$2,701,026 | 97.1% | \$91,856,660 | 0.0% | | \$94,557,686 |

Notes: Funds may include CCDF, TANF (transferred and direct), SSBG, Pre-Kindergarten Federal Funds, State Funds and "other."

¹ For Texas, the federal funding sources also include Food Stamps/Title IV-E/Title IV-B/Welfare-to-Work.

² For Alabama, the other funding source is Local Funds.

Source: Southern Institute on Children and Families, December 2001, derived from data in State Survey on Quality Child Care (Child Care Administrator). Survey requested information as of July 1, 2001.

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