

**APPENDIX I
MISSOURI**

**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 Results 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:

In past years, the Department of Social Services has requested additional resources to expand eligibility. However, due to the fiscal crisis in the state this year, DSS' position was to avoid reductions in investment that would reduce eligibility levels. The Governor recommended and the legislature voted to maintain funding levels in FY04 equal to those in FY03. Childcare was among a very few programs not to experience a reduction in allocated revenue.

2002 Response:

An ongoing state process. Requests for budget increases to support an increase in income eligibility continue to be a high departmental priority.

2001 Response:

Ongoing state process. DFS requests, and will continue to request, increases in each year's state budget. In 1997, DFS was a major sponsor of two conferences, one for policy makers and one for practitioners, on quality care and its impact on brain development.

(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 Missouri Resource and Referral Network continues to work with the business community to educate and build support for business investment in child care. In addition, business leaders have been designated and are participating in a task force of the Missouri Children's Services Commission on Early Childhood to make policy recommendations for advancing Missouri's work toward an early childhood system of care.

2002 Response:

Missouri utilizes the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network to work with the business community around the importance of supporting accessible, quality child care for Missouri's workforce.

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

Missouri has advocated for increased investment in the CCDF through the Governor's Washington DC office.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

DSS has consistently requested additional funding to expand the availability of child care assistance to additional families. DSS will continue to advocate for additional expansion and investment. Child care was one of few programs to avoid withholdings and severe reductions for FY04 as a result of state revenue shortfalls.

2002 Response:

An ongoing state process. Missouri has maintained a "no waiting list" policy since 1996 for eligible families seeking child care assistance. The FY-03 state budget includes state funding of \$74,105,214. This exceeds the Matching and MOE requirements to draw federal funds to the state.

2001 Response:

Ongoing state process. DFS requests, and will continue to request, increases in each year's state budget. State funding has increased from \$20,079,782 in our 1995 appropriation to \$79,161,698 in our 2002 appropriation. Our 2001 appropriation, in addition to state general revenue, beginning in 1998 includes gaming funds, and beginning in 2002 includes funds from the state tobacco settlement.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri has strong collaborations among federal, state and local entities on behalf of young children. The Missouri Children's Services Commission, a statutory entity charged with coordinating services for children, has recently designated early childhood as a priority and appointed a task force to assess Missouri's status. The task force will make policy and administrative recommendations to the Governor and legislature regarding a more comprehensive, integrated early childhood system.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

DFS works closely with the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Caring Communities, local foundations, the United Way, other state and federal agencies and a variety of other partners to build capacity to serve Missouri families.

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:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Our state sliding fee scale average co-pay is approximately 10% of gross family income depending upon family size.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri provides child care assistance to students who qualify under income guidelines.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri provides child care assistance to students.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri's policies do provide for the broad use of income exemptions, including the deduction of medical insurance premiums from gross income.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri deducts the amount of any medical insurance premiums from gross income.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri has never used asset testing.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri has been unsuccessful in attempts to secure additional appropriations to support raising income eligibility levels and has, therefore, been unable to index income eligibility levels for inflation.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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:

No change. Information on the availability of subsidy, as well as how to choose quality care can be accessed via the internet at the web sites for the Child Care and Referral Network, or the Departments of Social Services or Health and Senior Services.

2002 Response:

No change. Information on the availability of subsidy, as well as how to choose quality care can be accessed via the Internet at www.dss.state.mo.us/dfs/early.

2001 Response:

Missouri provides information on child care subsidies through multiple sources and venues including the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network, DFS offices which are located in all 115 counties in the state, Caring Communities partnerships, Head Start Collaboration, Community Action Agencies, and numerous interagency collaborative efforts at both state and local levels.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

We provide forms and information in English and Spanish. We provide supplies of application forms to child care centers or local agencies that work with families and that wish to assist families in the application process. We utilize a toll-free translation hotline and have formed partnerships in several counties to utilize resources, such as foreign language parent educators in our Parents as Teachers and Early Head Start Programs, to assist in certain situations.

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

2003 Response:

In Missouri, eligibility for child care subsidy is not dependent on receipt or application for any other program. The process of application and authorization is simple and viewed as routine and normal as a family seeking assistance with higher education expenses. Applications can be mailed or faxed.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

In Missouri, eligibility for child care is not dependent upon receipt or application for TANF, Food Stamps, or any other “welfare” type program.

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

2003 Response:

Through Missouri’s statewide Resource and Referral network information is constantly disseminated to families regarding how to make informed choices for quality child care. Public information campaign materials continue to be disseminated and referral specialists are onsite at metropolitan Division of Family Services offices for immediate, face-to-face assistance. Information is also disseminated via other state agency partners, such as licensing specialists and Parents as Teachers parent educators.

2002 Response:

No change. Literature and information are available at all 115 DFS county offices and via the Internet at www.dss.state.mo.us/dfs/early.

2001 Response:

DFS provided funding to the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network for a 3-year consumer education campaign which utilized a variety of media to disperse information on the importance of quality child care such as brochures, posters, public service announcements, and billboards. DFS also partnered with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to base R&R staff on-site in our metro St. Louis and Kansas City DFS offices to assist TANF, Food Stamp, and Medicaid families in identifying and locating quality child care options. DFS is also involved in other collaborative efforts at the state and local levels such as Caring Communities to provide information to parents. Literature and information is available at all 115 DFS county offices.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri has a long history of excellent coordination and collaboration among the various child serving agencies at the state level through the Early Childhood Interagency Team. This team does an excellent job of collaborating on all types of activities and maximizing resources. The collaborative includes the Head Start Collaboration Office, as well.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri coordinates activities and strategies via our Early Childhood Interagency Team (ECIT), which consists of staff from the Missouri Departments of Social Services, Health, Mental Health, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Head Start. In addition to this ECIT team, DFS works closely with local foundations, coalitions, other state and local organizations, and various advocacy groups to coordinate outreach activities both at state and local levels.

(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:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Please see action step 3.5. Missouri works with the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network to provide information to the general public. DFS encourages staff in their local county offices to work with community organizations, faith organizations, other state and local agencies, and providers in their communities to facilitate the application process by providing supplies of application forms and technical assistance to interested parties. In most counties, the DFS County Director, or his/her representative sits on numerous local boards, committees, and coalitions exchanging information and participating in a variety of local outreach efforts. DFS Central Office staff presents information at various conferences, workshops, and seminars for numerous organizations and agencies across the state.

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 change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri's child care application is a one-page form. Eligibility is based solely on income and need for care.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri allows filing by mail or fax.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri uses documents already on file and requests documentation of only those factors necessary to determine eligibility.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Although applications are actually processed at each of the 115 local DFS county offices, the local offices provide supplies of application forms to interested organizations and providers, such as local health departments, child care centers, resource and referral agencies, and non-profit organizations to facilitate the process.

(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:

Many county offices offer extended day services. Some offer services either before 8:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m., or both, either by appointment or by extending office hours of operation.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Approximately 24 of our 115 county offices offer extended day services. Some offer services either before 8:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m., or both, either by appointment or by extending office hours of operation.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri has a fifteen-day processing guideline for eligibility.

2002 Response:

The time frame for processing child care eligibility is 15 days. Although this is not a presumptive eligibility policy, we have found this time frame to be sufficient.

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri does not require a face-to-face interview.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

DFS provides on-site child care resource and referral (R&R) in our metropolitan DFS offices in St. Louis and Kansas City to assist families in making appropriate choices and refers families to their local R&R in other areas.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri has a 12-month redetermination period.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri has a 12-month redetermination period. However, families are required to report changes and if changes are reported during this time period, caseworkers adjust cases accordingly.

(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:

Missouri continues benefits for 30 days.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri currently allows 30 days.

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:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri has always had a seamless system. Eligibility is based solely on income and need with funding sources invisible to 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:

Missouri has excellent linkages and collaborations between child care, head start, pre-k and Title I programs braiding funding streams to ensure the provision of full day care.

2002 Response:

N/A

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:

Eligibility for child care is not contingent upon participation in any other program. Child care eligibility is based solely upon income and work or educational status. If eligibility in another program ended, child care assistance could continue so long as income and work/educational status requirements were met.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

Missouri coordinates early childhood activities at the state level via an Early Childhood Interagency Team. In addition, Missouri has twenty-one community partnerships with early childhood collaborative sub-structures working to ensure systems of care in these communities. The partnerships encompass approximately 70% of the state's population.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri coordinates early childhood activities at the state level via an Early Childhood Interagency Team. (See action step 3.5)

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:

For FY04, eligibility training has been revised and updated. A team recently completed an assessment of the application, approval and payment processes and the system will be streamlined even more based on these recommendations. There is a strong focus on customer service in these recommendations.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

In 2001, DFS provided training in “Customer Service” to all eligibility staff. This is in addition to the 3 week basic orientation that eligibility staff is required to attend when hired. DFS offers additional training opportunities, including conference participation, as needed and as appropriate.

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

2003 Response:

Eligibility is approved in most cases in 15-30 days.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

DFS is working on a caseload standards project.

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

2003 Response:

DFS provides mail-in consumer comment cards at all 115 DFS County Offices. In addition, 38 focus groups were conducted throughout the state during the past year to obtain consumer and staff input.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

DFS provides mail-in consumer comment cards at all 115 DFS County Offices.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri’s CCRR system offers statewide coverage through a regional delivery system and statewide toll free number. DSS also supports R&R specialists onsite at metropolitan DFS offices.

2002 Response:

DFS provides funding from CCDF to support the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network. DFS provides additional funding to support on site Resource and Referral staff at two of our metropolitan DFS offices, St. Louis City and Jackson County (Kansas City).

2001 Response:

DFS provides funding from CCDF to support the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

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:

While DFS has implemented a variety of rate incentives in the past two years moving certain providers closer to the 75th percentile, rates that would allow access at the 75th percentile would require a significant infusion of revenue. This, however, is our goal toward which we will work incrementally.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

While DFS has implemented a variety of rate incentives in the past two years moving certain providers closer to the 75th percentile, funding to increase rates is dependent upon legislative appropriation.

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

2003 Response:

Missouri's automated system tracks payroll on a daily basis and allows for a direct deposit option. Online invoicing is under development.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

In 2001, Missouri implemented a new automated system which allows for daily payrolls, as opposed to the old system which limited payments to one of 3 specified payrolls per month, allowing for more timely efficient payment to providers. This new system also allows providers to choose the direct deposit option that cuts down on the time it takes to receive payment.

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

2003 Response:

No change.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri currently has this policy in effect only for children receiving child care under our Child Welfare Protective Services system.

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 MOCCRRN continuously works with the business community to educate them regarding the need for and importance of quality, dependable, accessible childcare and its value to the workforce and employer. In addition, business leaders have been enlisted to serve on the executive level task force to make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. A business summit is being considered for FY04.

2002 Response:

Missouri utilizes the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network to work with the business community around the importance of supporting accessible, quality child care for Missouri's workforce.

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

Please see action step 8.1.

2002 Response:

Missouri utilizes the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network to work with the business community around the importance of supporting accessible, quality child care for Missouri's workforce.

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

Our state Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies use the NCICC (National Child Care Information Center) Employer Toolkit to provide information to employers in their service delivery areas.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri provided funding to our state Community Action Agencies to encourage the use of EITC that included outreach to employers in their service delivery areas. Our state Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies use the NCICC (National Child Care Information Center) Employer Toolkit to provide information to employers in their service delivery areas.

(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:

Missouri's twenty-one community partnerships and R&R agencies have reached out to key business leaders to promote and encourage their involvement in child care as well as business to business discussions on child care issues.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

A tax credit for employers is under discussion as a recommendation from the Children's Services Commission to the Governor and General Assembly.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

Through the Children's Services Commission Task Force on Early Childhood, business incentives are being considered for inclusion in an early childhood bill for introduction during the upcoming legislative session.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

Please see action step 8.6.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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:

Missouri is advocating for more family friendly policies through the Office of the Governor in Washington, D.C.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

Missouri does not have a dependent care tax credit, but it is under discussion as a recommendation of the Children's Services Commission tax force.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

The Early Childhood task force of the Children's Services Commission is studying tax credits from various states as well as the national child care tax credit and considering inclusion of a child care tax credit in legislation to be introduced during the upcoming legislative session.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

Missouri does not have a state child care tax credit at this time.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

(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:

Please see action step 9.4.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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

2003 Response:

Through the Children's Services Commission, efforts are underway to build support for the use of tax strategies to support child care.

2002 Response:

N/A

2001 Response:

N/A

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:

Missouri currently coordinates informally at both the executive and mid-management levels through the venues of the Early Childhood Interagency Team (mid-management), the Children's Services Commission and Family and Community Trust Board (both executive level with Department Directors of 8 agencies as members.) The Children's Services Commission task force on Early Childhood is considering various models for more effectively administering an early childhood system at the state level.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri coordinates early childhood efforts via our Early Childhood Interagency Team that meets on a regular basis (see action step 3.5).

(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:

Missouri is participating in a seventeen-state initiative funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman, Packard and Ford Foundations, the School Readiness Indicators Project. Missouri has a draft set of readiness indicators that are being finalized and data is being gathered on the indicators. There are many common data elements across the 17 states.

2002 Response:

No change.

2001 Response:

Missouri is working on common data elements within the state through the Show Me Results and Missouri Results Initiative.