

**Submitted to the New Jersey Department of Human Services**

**JULY, 2006**

**Ocean County 2000 Child Care Plan 2006 Update**



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# Ocean County 2006 Child Care Plan Update

Updated May, 2006

## TABLE of CONTENTS

I.	Executive Summary .....	Page 4
II.	Existing Child Care in Ocean County.....	Page 7
III.	Resource and Training Information.....	Page 17
IV.	Child Care Supplemental Fees.....	Page 19
	and Rates in Ocean County.....	
V.	Overview of the 2006 Update Planning Process.....	Page 24
VI.	2006 Ocean County Focus Group Analysis.....	Page 26
VII.	Tools used in Focus Groups.....	Page 37

## **Executive Summary**

The Ocean County Department of Human Services has provided in this “2006 Child Care Plan Update” a strong and reliable collaboration among many agencies and local government within Ocean County. It was with this collaboration that the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) and their Child Care Committee were able to engage, strategize and develop open and willing communications with the network of resources Ocean County offers.

This document provides a more comprehensive review of the child care system in Ocean County than the 2000 child care plan. See Insert I.

The Ocean County population has grown continuously since the original 2000 Child Care Plan inception. See Insert II. As of the 2000 census, Ocean County had 510,916 residents with a U.S. census estimate in 2003 showing a population of 546,081. Clearly, Ocean County has developed into one of New Jersey’s largest counties by population. Collaboration has proved many services provided in Ocean County need to be increased due to waiting lists with the population increase. The increase of children needing child care is on the rise. Consistent and quality Child Care services in Ocean County is one service the communities need, require and deserve. This 2006 Child Care Plan Update will provide a look into the issues and recommendations that were presented by this ever-growing population.

In conclusion, the HSAC with their Child Care Committee has the responsibility of overseeing the recommendations set forth and monitoring improvements in the Ocean County Child Care System along with The Children’s Home Society of NJ. The HSAC will create a quarterly meeting schedule for the Child Care Committee.

## 2000 Child Care Plan vs. 2006 Child Care Plan Update

The chart below shows some of the differences in the 2000 Plan compared to the 2006 Update

<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>2000 Plan</u></b>	<b><u>2006 Update</u></b>
Population Targeted	TANF and WFNJ Clients only, as per the guidelines provided	County residents served by the Ocean County child care system
Existing Child Care	2000, The Children's Home Society of NJ facts	2006, The Children's Home Society of NJ updated facts
Child Care Supplemental Fee and Rates in Ocean County	Not provided in 2000	Figures supplied by The Children's Home Society of NJ
Overview of the Planning Process	Not provided in 2000	Narrative completed by HSAC Staff
Focus Group Analysis	Narrative completed by WIB Staff	Using a different format, the Narrative was completed by HSAC Staff
Issues Presented	Client and Provider focus groups identified top issues	Using the 2000 identified top issues, parents, child care directors and providers verified if old issues are still relevant and identified new and/or continuing issues
Tools Used	Not provided in 2000	In order to get a sense of the discussions, tools are provided in 2006

Insert I



## **Registered Family Child Care Registration**

Family child care is care that is provided in a private residence for five or fewer children. Registration for family child care is voluntary.

As of June 2006, Ocean County has 132 state registered family child care providers. (This number is constantly changing)

A registered family child care provider must follow the Manual of Requirements for Family Child Care Registration developed by the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development.

As part of the voluntary family child care (fcc) registration program, The Children's Home Society of New Jersey complies with regulations governing the sponsoring organizations, in accordance with the Manual of Requirements. The agency assumes responsibility for both the regulatory and support aspects of the fcc registration process. The regulatory aspect includes: inspecting and evaluating prospective providers' homes and existing homes for renewal, conducting program observations with children in care, and investigating complaints.

Family child care providers receive support services that consist of: technical assistance on completion of the application process, eight hours of pre-service training, technical assistance on child care topics and concerns, use of The Children's Home Society of NJ's resource library, and referrals to parents in need of child care. Providers are offered over 60 hours of early childhood training by The Children's Home Society of NJ.

The 132 providers are located throughout Ocean County as follows:

Barnegat-4	Little Egg Harbor-7
Bayville-5	Manahawkin -4
Beachwood-6	Manchester-8
Brick-9	New Egypt-4
Cream Ridge-1	Ocean Gate-2

Forked River-4	Point Pleasant-3
Jackson-7	Seaside Heights-1
Lakehurst-3	South Toms River-1
Lakewood-21	Toms River-38
Lanoka Harbor-2	Tuckerton-1
Waretown-1	

There are no registered family child care providers in Island Heights, Lavallette, Long Beach Island, Pine Beach, Seaside Park and Whiting.

Ocean County is the only county in New Jersey to have a Special Needs Network of family child care providers who agree to save a space for a special needs child. These providers receive extra training in the different disabilities. As of June 2006 there are 57 providers in the Special Needs Network.

### **Family Child Care Accreditation**

In keeping with the mission to provide quality early care and education in family child care homes, the National Association of Family Care (NAFCC) has developed their own National Accreditation.

Accreditation is an indicator that family child care homes offer safe, inviting spaces and warm, nurturing care complete with educational activities designed to meet the needs and interests of all children while promoting individual development. NAFCC has developed Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation which must be met by the provider in addition to 90 hours of documented early childhood training.

As of March 2006 we have two accredited family child providers in Ocean County, Panagiota Julie Yousef and Carmen Camacho, both of Toms River, NJ. There are six providers in the process of becoming accredited family child care homes.

### **Child Care Facilities**

(Facilities do not include registered family child care providers)

There are 141 licensed child care facilities in the county that are part of The Children's Home Society of NJ's database, the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for Ocean County. Of the 141 facilities, 99 offer full time care, 14 are nursery school programs offering only half day, 19 are school-based before/after care (SACC) and 9 are Head Start programs. Many full time facilities also offer before/after school care.

Here is a breakdown of programs by town.

Barneget- 4 full time	Beach Haven- 1 half day
Bayville- 5 full time	Brick- 1 half day
Beachwood- 2 full time	Forked River- 1 half day
Brant Beach- 1 full time	Jackson- 1 half day
Brick- 16 full time	Lakewood- 1 half day
Forked River- 3 full time	Lanoka Harbor- 1 half day
Island Heights- 1 full time	Little Egg Harbor- 1 half day
Jackson- 6 full time	Manahawkin- 3 half day
Lakehurst- 1 full time	Manchester- 1 half day
Lakewood- 18 full time	Toms River- 3 half day
Lanoka Harbor- 2 full time	
Lavallette- 1 full time	
Little Egg Harbor- 1 full time	Brick- SACC-1
Manahawkin- 2 full time	Jackson-SACC-1
Manchester- 1 full time	Lakehurst- SACC-1
New Egypt- 1 full time	Lakewood- SACC- 1
Point Pleasant- 8 full time	Lanoka Harbor-SACC-1
Seaside Heights- 2 full time	Little Egg Harbor-SACC-2
South Toms River- 1 full time	Manahawkin- SACC-3
Toms River- 20 full time	Manchester- SACC-2
Tuckerton- 1 full time	New Egypt- SACC-2
Waretown- 2 full time	Point Pleasant- SACC-2
	Toms River-SACC-1
	Waretown-SACC-1
	West Creek-SACC-1

The only Ocean County towns that do not have a child care facility are Cream Ridge, Ocean Gate and Pine Beach.

The county currently has 284 Social Service Block Grant slots located in 8 centers throughout the county. They are located in Brant Beach, Jackson, Lakewood, Toms River and Tuckerton.

St. Francis Center, Brant Beach- 60 contracted slots

Jackson Child Care, Jackson- 21 contracted slots

Here We Grow, Lakewood-15 contracted slots

Give & Take, Lakewood- 10 contracted slots

Lakewood Multicultural, Lakewood- 72 contracted slots

Jane Addams Day Care, Toms River- 63 contracted slots

Ocean County YMCA, Toms River- 31 contracted slots

Kangaroo Kourt, Tuckerton- 12 contracted slots

Ocean Inc. Head Start currently has 9 sites. They are located in Barnegat, Berkeley, Brick, 3 in Lakewood, Manchester, Toms River and Tuckerton. (One of the Lakewood programs includes Early Head Start which is a home based program; it is not actually a site) Currently Brick, Lakewood, Manchester and Tuckerton sites offer full day programs.

Ocean County does not have any Abbott districts but does have 8 Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) districts. They are: Eagleswood Township, Lakehurst Boro, Lakewood, Little Egg Harbor, Ocean Gate, Seaside Heights, Seaside Park and Tuckerton.

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NAEYC- National Association for the Education of Young Children

The NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation administers a national, voluntary accreditation system to help raise the quality of early childhood education.

Accreditation helps families and others identify high quality child care centers, preschools, kindergartens, and other early childhood programs.

NAEYC accredited programs are committed to providing high quality educational services to young children and their families. While the accreditation process examines all aspects of a program, including health and safety, teacher qualifications, and administration, the focus is on the quality of interactions between teachers and children and the nature of the child's experience.

Currently in Ocean County the following centers are accredited:

Barnegat Head Start-Barnegat

Treasured Angels-Barnegat

Beachwood Nursery School-Beachwood

St. Francis Center- Brant Beach

Brick Head Start-Brick

Meridian Early Childhood-Brick

Tudor Time-Brick

Give & Take-Lakewood

Lakewood Early Childhood-Lakewood

L.E.A.P. Inc., Lakewood Head Start-Lakewood

Learning Express-Lakehurst

George Mitchell Preschool-Little Egg Harbor

Manchester Head Start- Manchester

Berkeley Head Start- South Toms River

Kindercare Learning Center-Toms River

Toms River Head Start- Toms River

Toms River Nursery School- Toms River

### **Voucher Programs**

The Children's Home Society of NJ administers the Work First NJ (WFNJ) and the New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK) subsidy programs.

### **Work First New Jersey (WFNJ)**

The Children's Home Society of NJ staff is responsible for assisting welfare recipients in securing appropriate child care. Clients receive information regarding child care options and

informative literature to assist them in choosing the child care that is best for their family. Clients receive ongoing technical assistance in child development topics and parenting skills. In a collaboration with the Ocean County One Stop Career Center and the Ocean County Board of Social Services, a staff member gives a child care orientation for new clients at the One Stop Career Center. This helps clients understand their child care options and familiarizes them with The Children's Home Society of NJ and the many services that they may utilize. Clients have the option of choosing a licensed child care center, a registered family child care provider or a friend or relative (self-arranged unregulated care) to provide child care services.

The staff is responsible for providing referrals for child care and checking vacancies. In addition, inputting child care arrangements and attendance vouchers into OMEGA (the state's WFNJ software) insures that providers of care receive payment for their services. Child care is also available for up to 24 months for those who find employment and leave public assistance because their earnings have made them ineligible to continue to remain on welfare. A co-pay is assessed to offset some of the cost of care at this time based on earnings and family size.

The staff determines eligibility for the clients' second year of subsidized child care and re-evaluates the clients' co-payments. The staff is also responsible for coordinating home inspections for clients who select self-arranged care to ensure that the homes meet the state's health and safety requirements. This inspection can occur after all members of the approved home household over the age of 14 have submitted a Child Abuse Record Information form. These forms are submitted to DYFS Office of Licensing and if returned with "no record" the home inspection is scheduled.

### **New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK)**

This program provides child care subsidies through seven different funding streams. The At Risk Child Care (ARCC) and Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding streams are for income eligible parents who must be working, in job related training, or in school full time. Parents receiving a subsidy must still pay a portion of their child care

costs. This co-pay is based on income and family size. The subsidy then pays the balance, up to the provider's rate or the state maximum allowable rate, whichever is less. Parents may continue to receive these subsidies as long as funding is available and they remain eligible.

The Kinship Navigator Child Care (KIN) funds are for guardians of the child(ren) of a relative. To be eligible, an applicant under 60 years of age must either be employed, in school or training, or disabled. Those over 60 years of age do not have to be employed or in school or training. Applicants must be income eligible. Guardians are assessed a co-pay.

Post Transitional Child Care (PTCC) funds are for those who have utilized their two years of Transitional Child Care (TCC) through the WFNJ program. They must be employed thirty hours a week or more and be income eligible.

DYFS funds are for children determined to be at risk and placed in the DYFS Child Protective Services Program. The parent, resource parent or custodial relative must be employed or have a proven need for a child care program. Generally there is no co-pay associated with this program.

The Early Employment Initiative (EEI) funds are for parents who have applied for public assistance, have a good work history and are deemed readily employable. The application for cash assistance is withheld for 30 days while the client receives enhanced employment counseling. If a parent secures employment within the 30 day period, he/she is eligible for a child care subsidy beginning with the first day of work. EEI parents are assessed a co-pay dependent upon their earnings and family size. The client may retain the subsidy for 24 months as long as he/she continues employment.

As a result of Child Welfare Reform in New Jersey, the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) has established a new program called Post Adoption Child Care (PACC) to help facilitate the adoption of children in foster home placement. It is only open to those adopting parents who are employed 30 or more hours per week or engaged in full time education, training or a combination of employment and school/training. Child care is open to children from birth until August 31 of the year the child turns 6 or when the child begins kindergarten, whichever comes first. Adoptive families are eligible regardless of income. The

parents must provide supporting documentation as proof of their employment, training or education.

The NJCK staff:

- monitors the funds to insure that it serves the most families possible while staying within the funding limits
- provides information on these subsidies throughout the county
- determines initial and continued eligibility for subsidies
- provides informative literature to clients to assist them in choosing appropriate child care
- maintains a waiting list
- inputs child care agreements and vouchers into CARES (the state's NJCK software)
- issues payments to providers
- coordinates home inspections for clients who select self-arranged unregulated care

### **Specialized Care**

Currently Ocean County does not have any centers that offer any sick child care. There are 35 registered family child care providers that do offer mildly ill child care. A center in Barnegat offers Saturday care. Most centers open as early as 6:30a and close by 6:30p; however 2 centers in Toms River are open until 7p and one until 8p.

There are 14 registered family child care providers who offer extended hour care and 19 of them offer 24 hour care.

Many centers are cooperative in working with special services such as an outside source of therapy or a child enrolled in the preschool handicapped program.

There are 57 registered family child care providers who are part of The Children's Home Society of NJ's Special Needs Network. They are trained in various areas of special needs and hold one slot open for a special needs child. There are also 36 respite providers offering after hour and weekend care. Ocean County is the only county to have a Special Needs Network.

## **Infant/Toddler Care**

Ocean County has 62 child care centers that accept infants and 70 child care centers that accept toddlers. 94 family child care providers accept both infants and toddlers in their programs.

Based on the 2000 census, it was estimated that 32,181 children under 5 years of age reside in Ocean County. A large percentage of these children may be in, or in need of, child care.

## **Early Brain Development**

There is mounting evidence on the importance of early brain development. During the first years of life, the brain develops most rapidly, establishing neural connections that form the brain's hardwiring.

Young children's capacity is not determined entirely by their genetics. The environmental context in which they are nurtured matters. With more parents working when their children are very young, it is important that they receive good quality early care and education.

Longitudinal studies show that high-quality early care and education programs provide significant economic gains and decreased public expenditures on special education, delinquency, adult incarceration, health care and social services. Quality child care increases children's potential for social and intellectual growth.

**Benefits For All: The Economic Impact of the New Jersey Child Care Industry**

The child care industry generates \$2.55 billion annually in gross receipts, which is more than scientific research and development, clothing stores and all farm commodities in the state.

The average annual rate for full-time, licensed center-based infant child care in New Jersey is almost \$10,000 per year. The average annual cost of incarcerating someone in New Jersey is \$28,000.

## **Child Care Resources**

***For all Ocean County Child Care needs and help, first contact the Ocean County Resource and Referral Agency:***

***The Children's Home Society of NJ  
1433 Hooper Avenue, Suite 340  
Toms River, N.J. 08753  
(732) 557-9633***

## **Resources for Special Needs**

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
35 Halsey St., 4th floor  
Newark, NJ –07102  
(973) 642-8100  
(800) 654-SPAN  
[www.spannj.org](http://www.spannj.org)

Family Support Center  
2516 Route 35 North  
Manasquan, NJ 08611  
(800) FSC-NJ10  
[www.familysupportnj.com](http://www.familysupportnj.com)

Project Child Find  
1-800-322-8174  
[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education)

MAP Team  
Interagency group that meets bi-monthly to address issues of inclusion of children with special needs in child care.  
(609) 292-8444

## **Training Resources**

*For all Ocean County Child Care training needs or help, first contact the Ocean County Resource and Referral Agency:*

*The Children's Home Society of NJ  
1433 Hooper Ave., Suite 340  
Toms River, N.J. 08753  
(732) 557-9633*

## **Statewide Training Resource**

New Jersey Professional Development Center  
Kean University  
1000 Morris Ave.  
Willis Hall - Rm 300  
Union, NJ 07083  
(908) 737-4240

Southern Office  
Rutgers University – Camden  
405-407 Cooper St. 3rd floor  
Camden, NJ 08102  
(856) 225-6445  
[www.njpsc.org](http://www.njpsc.org)

## **On-Line Training**

Care Courses  
P.O. Box 10526  
McLean, Va. 22102-8526  
800-685-7610  
[www.carecourses.com](http://www.carecourses.com)

## **On-Line Training**

New Jersey NAEYC Chapter  
Helen Muscato  
P.O. Box 426  
Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852  
(732) 329-0033  
[www.njaeyc.org](http://www.njaeyc.org)

## **Ocean County Training Resource**

NJAEYC Local Chapter  
Carol Sullivan  
[casul@comcast.net](mailto:casul@comcast.net)

## CHILD CARE CENTERS ESTIMATED SUPPLEMENTAL FEES

	INFANTS - 2.5	2.5 - 13 YRS.	<u>ESTIMATED SUPPLEMENTAL FEE</u>
<b><u>BARNEGAT 08005</u></b>			
BARNEGAT COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
BRIGHT START		\$168.00 - WKLY	\$40.60
<b><u>BAYVILLE</u></b>			
HILLTOP II	\$177.00 - WKLY		\$22.60
<b><u>BRICK</u></b>			
ABC DAYCARE	\$170.00 - WKLY		\$15.60
CREATIVE STARTS	\$157.00 - WKLY	\$138.00 - WKLY	\$2.60 - \$10.60
LITTLE GIGGLES	\$205.00 - WKLY	\$175.00 - WKLY	\$50.60 - \$47.60
TEACHERS PET		\$140.00 - WKLY	\$12.60
TUTOR TIME	\$980.00 - MNTHLY	\$850.00 - MNTHLY	\$90.60 - \$85.10
<b><u>FORKED RIVER</u></b>			
PRECIOUS JOURNEY		\$180.00 - MNTHLY PT	\$0.00
<b><u>JACKSON</u></b>			
APPLE - A - DAY		\$173.00 - MNTHLY PT	\$0.00
BUTTONS & BOWS	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
CHILDRENS WORLD	\$275.00 - WKLY	\$222.00 - WKLY	\$120.60 - \$94.60
PRECIOUS MINDS	\$230.00 - WKLY	\$155.00 - WKLY	\$75.60 - \$27.60
<b><u>LAKWOOD</u></b>			
HERE WE GROW	\$173.00 - WKLY	\$166.00 - WKLY	\$18.60 - \$38.60
KIDDIE UNIVERSITY	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
KIMBALL KIDS	\$204.00 - WKLY	\$189.00 - WKLY	\$49.60 - \$61.60
LAKWOOD LATCHKEY	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00

LIGHTHOUSE PRESCHOOL	\$230.00 - WKLY	\$155.00 - WKLY	\$75.60 - \$27.60
MACEDONIA DAY CARE		\$130.00 - WKLY	\$2.60

**LANOKA HARBOR**

HAPPY DAYS		\$255.00 - MNTHLY PT	\$0.00
LACEY TWNSHP. COMM. ED.		\$80.00 - \$100.00 - WKLY PT	\$0.00

**MANCHESTER**

AS WE GROW		\$165.00 - WKLY	\$37.60
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**NEW EGYPT**

NEW EGYPT LEARNING STEPS		ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
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**PT. PLEASANT**

MAGICAL MOMENTS		\$171.00 - WKLY	\$43.60
TATTLE TALES	\$825.00 MNTHLY	\$725.00 - MNTHLY	\$51.85 - \$53.85

**TOMS RIVER**

BUTTONS & BOWS	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
CHERRY LANE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	ACCEPTS STATE RATE	\$0.00
CHESTERBROOK ACADEMY	\$217.00 - WKLY	\$183.00 - WKLY	\$62.60 - \$55.60
GIRL SCOUTS OF OCEAN COUNTY		\$160.00 - WKLY	\$32.60
GRACE & PEACE	\$789.60 - MNTHLY	\$648.00 - MNTHLY	\$43.00 - \$34.60
HILLTOP	\$177.00 - WKLY	\$166.00 - WKLY	\$22.60 - \$38.60
KINDERCARE	\$249.00 - WKLY	\$225.00 - WKLY	\$95.00 - \$97.60
LIL SPROUTS	\$728.00 - MNTHLY	\$695.00 - MNTHLY	\$27.60 - \$46.35
SMART START	\$190.00 - WKLY	\$175.00 - WKLY	\$35.60 - \$47.60
THE SONSHINE CLUB	\$175.00 - WKLY	\$170.00 - WKLY	\$20.60 - \$42.60

**WARETOWN**

WARETOWN EXT. SCHOOL PROG.			\$0.00
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# State Registered Family Care Provider

## Provider Cost Analysis by Age Group

### Day Shift

#### Monthly, FT Rates

Age Group	Total	Min \$	Max \$	Avg \$
0 to 18 months	8	600.00	866.00	652.00
0-0	0			
18 months to 2.5 years	8	500.00	758.00	589.12
0-0	0			
2.5 years to 4years	8	350.00	758.00	557.25
4 years to 5 Years	7	350.00	700.00	531.43
Kindergarten	6	325.00	650.00	449.17
6 years to 13 years	6	215.00	650.00	418.33

### Day Shift

#### Weekly, FT Rates

Age Group	Total	Min \$	Max \$	Avg \$
0 to 18 months	77	125.00	200.00	156.82
0-0	0			
18 months to 2.5 years	79	125.00	247.50	149.69
0-0	0			
2.5 years to 4years	82	80.00	247.50	139.60
4 years to 5 Years	81	80.00	247.50	138.24
Kindergarten	63	70.00	220.00	129.90
6 years to 13 years	58	70.00	220.00	128.26

## Child Care Centers

### Provider Cost Analysis by Age Group

**Day Shift**

**Monthly, FT Rates**

Age Group	Total	Min \$	Max \$	Avg \$
0 to 18 months	17	600.00	980.00	714.15
0-0	0			
18 months to 2.5 years	18	540.00	940.00	662.59
0-0	0			
2.5 years to 4years	20	460.00	736.00	591.90
4 years to 5 Years	20	460.00	736.00	589.00
Kindergarten	8	520.00	668.00	568.25
6 years to 13 years	5	80.00	625.00	415.00

**Day Shift**

**Weekly, FT Rates**

Age Group	Total	Min \$	Max \$	Avg \$
0 to 18 months	55	120.00	275.00	174.03
0-0	0			
18 months to 2.5 years	62	120.00	275.00	163.48
0-0	0			
2.5 years to 4years	67	75.00	221.00	148.10
4 years to 5 Years	67	75.00	221.00	146.97
Kindergarten	39	74.00	184.00	129.85
6 years to 13 years	31	75.00	183.00	125.85

Staff Wages Report				
Title	# of Records	Min Wage	Max Wage	Avg Wage
Director	79	0	30	14.14
Master Teacher (Supervisor)	50	8	20	12.73
Lead Teacher	87	6.5	24	11.09
Assistant Teacher	71	5.5	18	8.82
Teacher's Aide	68	5.5	11	7.94
Program Assistant	12	6.5	15	8.91
Cook	9	7.5	10	8.6
Driver	5	8	10	9.75
Nurse	3	0	0	0
Family Service Worker	2	0	0	0
<b>ALL TITLES</b>	386	0	30	10.21
Hourly Rates				

## **Overview of the 2006 Child Care Plan Update Planning Process**

The State Department of Human Services required that an update be completed for the 2000 Child Care Plan for Ocean County. The Ocean County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) convened their Child Care Committee and prepared a strategy for the 2006 update.

The 2000 Ocean County Child Care Plan was specifically focused around TANF clients as the planning guidelines required. In order to present a broader perspective of child care in Ocean County, the HSAC Child Care Committee decided to conduct focus groups to include non-TANF parents, TANF parents, Child Care Directors and State Registered Family Child Care Providers from all the areas in Ocean County.

Flyers, advertising the focus groups were made for each of the following groups, non-TANF parents, Child Care Directors and State Registered Family Child Care Providers. The Child Care Committee then determined that since Jane Addams Day Care Center in Toms River, N.J. had the most diverse population, the non-TANF parent flyers would be distributed at this facility. The Director flyers were mailed to thirty Directors of centers in both the northern and southern areas of the county. The State Registered Family Care Provider flyers were mailed the same way.

The HSAC Child Care Committee proceeded with locations to hold the focus groups. Jane Addams Day Care Center located at 1542 N. Bay Avenue, Toms River, hosted the focus group for the non-TANF parents on February 21, 2006 at 5:30 PM. As it is difficult to reach TANF parents due to their mandated activity schedule, it was decided that the best way to get their opinions and recommendations was to meet with the TANF parents at the One-Stop Career Center located at 1959 Route 9, Toms River on March 2, 2006 at 10:00 AM. The northern Director focus group was held in the Ocean County Department of Human Services conference room located at 1027 Hooper Avenue, Bldg. 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Toms River on March 6, 2006 at 10:00 AM. To make it convenient for the southern Ocean County Directors, this focus group was held at the Ocean Club Resource Room located on Route 9, Manahawkin on March 1, 2006 at 10:00 AM. The Children's

Home Society of NJ located at 1433 Hooper Avenue, Suite 340, Toms River was to host the State Registered Family Child Care Provider focus group on March 2, 2006 at 6:00 PM. It was agreed that all the locations used were to accept their own registrations via telephone, e-mail and word of mouth.

The HSAC staff prepared relevant questions pertaining to child care for each focus group. Charts were distributed at all of the focus groups with the 2000 Child Care Plan issues, dialogue, recommendations and actions that were to be taken.

It should be noted that it was determined by the HSAC staff that all non-TANF and TANF parent names would remain anonymous. It was explained at each of the parent's focus groups that though their name would be anonymous, their responses and/or recommendations could be used in the update to verify information.

It should also be noted that due to a very low registration within the State Registered Family Child Care Providers and time was of the essence, The Children's Home Society of NJ recommended a telephone survey be conducted by them using the chart prepared by the HSAC staff and it was agreed to by the HSAC staff.

As The Children's Home Society of NJ is the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency in Ocean County, it was decided and agreed upon for them to conduct a poll of their staff concerning child care issues in Ocean County.

## **Focus Group Analysis**

In order to get a clear perspective on child care issues in Ocean County, the Ocean County Human Services Advisory Council conducted four focus groups, two parent focus groups, one TANF Parents and one non-TANF parents who have utilized both child care facilities and in home child care and two child care director focus groups. Additionally, The Children's Home Society of NJ conducted a telephone survey with state registered family child care providers and a poll among their staff to determine their recommendations for the Ocean County child care system. The issues presented at the focus groups and the survey was adapted from the original Ocean County 2000 Child Care Plan.

## **Parents Focus Group - Issues and Recommendations**

The non-TANF parent focus group was held at Jane Addams Day Care Center. As Jane Addams Day Care Center had the most diverse and geographic population, it was determined to distribute flyers inviting parents to the focus group at this child care center. There were seventeen non-TANF parents who participated in this parent focus group.

The TANF parent focus group was held at the One-Stop Career Center. As the One-Stop Career Center serves TANF parents on an ongoing basis, it was determined to speak with the TANF parents while they were involved in their activities. There were nine TANF parents in attendance.

The original issues presented in the Ocean County 2000 Child Care Plan were discussed in all the parent focus groups. These issues are as follows:

1. Lack of affordable child care
2. Lack of child care for ill children
3. Lack of sufficient choices of child care by location and not enough child care available in general
4. Lack of trained staff
5. Lack of transportation

6. Lack of weekend or evening child care

The following are the findings of both TANF and non-TANF parent focus groups:

**1. Lack of affordable child care** – This issue was determined by parents, that there is still insufficient affordable child care in Ocean County, as was determined in the 2000 Child Care Plan. Though there are a vast amount of child care centers at a variety of tuition rates, it was felt “you get what you pay for”. Parents stressed that just because a child care center is affordable doesn’t always mean you get quality child care. Additionally, some parents believe that if they must pay more for quality child care that they couldn’t afford to work except for single parents who did not have that option.

**Recommendation from the Parents:**

- A. Have a child care directory available at hospitals, WIC offices and agencies with a parental review rating system developed in it.

**2. Lack of child care for sick children** – The parents in general felt if a child is sick the child should remain home, as compared to the 2000 Child Care Plan finding. Most parents have to rely on family, neighbors, friends or baby-sitters, but still felt the comfort of the child when sick is a priority and should stay at home.

**Recommendation from the Parents:**

- A. Outreach Employers to get their perspective on employee family sick issues.

**3. Lack of sufficient choice of child care by location and not enough child care available in general** – As most parents choose child care according to the school children will attend later on and as there are sufficient choices for child care, this is not much of an issue now, as it was in the 2000 Child Care Plan.

**Recommendation from the Parents:**

- A. It was expressed even though there is enough child care by location and enough child care in general, that parents felt enough does not mean affordable.

**4. Lack of trained staff** – All parents agreed that staff is a critical key to the child care environment and staff should be certified, as well as trained. Repeated staff turnover is a large concern among parents today.

**Recommendations from the Parents:**

- A. Staff should know CPR
- B. More training should be available for staff.

**5. Lack of transportation** - Parents did not feel transportation was as big an issue as in the 2000 Child Care Plan. It was felt that transportation was a parent issue rather than a child care issue. The only issue concerning transportation was the fact that before and after school transportation was not available for all children to be transported to child care. Some areas in Ocean County do not offer transportation before or after school to child care.

**Recommendation from the Parents:**

- A. A dialogue should be opened between the school districts and the parents to discuss this issue.

**6. Lack of weekend and or evening child care** – This was under utilized when it was available on a limited basis and is not seen as much of an issue as it was in 2000. As most child care closes at 5:30 PM or 6:00 PM, some parent's felt it wasn't opened long enough to accommodate their workday schedule. This issue was seen more necessary for parents who work weekends or non-traditional work hours. A child care center in Barnegat recently opened for Saturday child care hours.

**Summary**

The HSAC Child Care Committee, as a result of the focus groups, determined that the majority of participating parents were pleased with the child care services they were receiving; although there still remain issues that need to be addressed as listed above. Their recommendations and comments were made from real life situations. The committee found the parents to be very honest, open and cooperative during these sessions. It is the opinion of the HSAC Child Care Committee that the focus groups

conducted proved to be a vital and informational tool in achieving the results stated in this Child Care Plan Update. It is the responsibility of the committee to follow up on recommendations and monitor the progress in child care within Ocean County.

### **Child Care Directors Focus Group – Issues and Recommendations**

Flyers were mailed to both the northern and the southern areas of Ocean County inviting directors to participate in these focus groups. The Northern Ocean County center directors meeting took place at the Department of Human Services Conference room and the Southern Ocean County center directors met at the Ocean Club resource room. A total of fifteen child care center directors attended both director focus groups.

The original Ocean County 2000 Child Care Plan issues that were presented and discussed with the directors at the focus groups were:

1. Behavior of children and/or parents
2. Lack of affordable child care
3. Lack of child care for ill children
4. Lack of child care by location and not enough child care available in general
5. Lack of trained staff
6. Lack of transportation
7. Lack of weekend or evening child care
8. State regulations

The following are the findings of the director focus groups:

**1. Behavior of children and/or parents** – The overall consensus from the directors were that violent, aggressive and extreme behavior is on the rise among child care children as well as parents with negative behaviors.

**Recommendations from the Directors:**

- A. Build relationships and communications with parents.
- B. Parenting skills workshops.
- C. Increasing staff would help, but there is no funding.

2. **Lack of affordable child care** – A decrease in funding and increasing costs present a big problem in child care today. Increased costs are being passed on to the parents. The issues do not help with staff retention. Many child care centers are using more costly resources to recover revenue from bounced checks, non-payment, etc.

**Recommendations from the Directors:**

- A. Offer payment plans.
- B. Advocacy.

3. **Lack of child care for sick children** – Directors feel there has been no change in ill child care, as their hands are tied with this issue.

**Recommendations from the Directors:**

- A. Educate employers to urge them to be more flexible and understanding.
- B. Parents need a back up plan.

4. **Lack of sufficient choice of child care by location and not enough child care available in general** - Although there has been an increase in licensed child care centers and there is significant competition now, the directors feel there is little to be done.

**Recommendation from the Directors:**

- A. Parents should research child care options.

5. **Lack of trained staff** – This issue has improved over the years, but directors feel more training is needed for teachers. There seems to be more training for directors and assistants than teachers. Staff retention is a problem area, as well. Trained

teachers look for better paying positions. Child care teachers feel they do not get treated as professionals in this industry.

**Recommendations from the Directors:**

- A. More variety of trainings needed.
- B. Expand trainings towards teacher.
- C. Benefit program needed to retain staff.
- D. Create a list of available trainers

**6. Lack of transportation** – This seems to be a parental issue rather than a child care center issue.

**Recommendation from the Directors:**

- A. Parents should open a dialogue with their school districts.

**7. Lack of weekend and or evening child care** – Directors do not see this as an option as it is very costly and would create a staffing problem and be underutilized.

**Recommendation from the Directors:**

No recommendations at this time.

**8. Regulations** – Regulations seem to change on an on going basis and the interpretations are hard to keep up with issues such as staff retention, limited funding and communication.

**Recommendations from the Directors:**

- A. Conduct an Economic Impact Study.
- B. Hold a summit with the NJ Department of Human Services, Office of Licensing.
- C. Advocate.

## **Summary**

The focus groups conducted with the Directors of child care centers proved to be extremely positive, forthcoming and useful in developing the recommendations made in this plan update. On the whole, the Directors felt there are many issues that need to be addressed by the centers, parents, State, County and local governments. The HSAC Child Care Committee will engage the State, County and local levels through advocacy and will track on going improvements in Ocean County.

## **State Registered Family Child Care Providers Telephone Survey Issues and Recommendations**

As time was of the essence, it was determined that Children's Home Society of NJ would call state registered family child care providers to conduct a telephone survey rather than run another focus group. Children's Home Society of NJ surveyed seventeen state registered family care providers.

The original Ocean County 2000 Child Care Plan issues that were presented to all state registered family child care providers participating in the telephone survey were:

1. Behavior of children and/or parents
2. Lack of transportation
3. State regulations

The following are the findings of the State Registered Family Child Care Providers surveyed:

**1. Behavior of children and/or parents** – Most Family Child Care Providers feel that they are not having much difficulty with the children, but some parents are difficult to deal with.

**Recommendation from Registered Family Child Care Providers:**

- A. Parents need trainings and workshops.

**2. Lack of transportation** – As transportation is more of a parental issue, the Registered Family Child Care Providers are finding it hard to deal with transportation within school districts. Most school buses will not stop at a Registered Family Child Care Provider for transporting children to or from the facility.

**Recommendations from Registered Family Child Care Providers:**

- A. The county could endorse State Registered Family Child Care Providers.
- B. Open a dialogue with school districts.

**3. Regulations** – Most State Registered Family Child Care Providers do not have much of an issue with Regulations, but it was noted that many providers feel the ratio of children in a home should be increased to provide more potential income.

**Recommendation from Registered Family Child Care Providers:**

- A. Advocate.

**Summary**

The State Registered Family Child Care Providers surveyed were an enlightening and clear source of information for this plan update. Though, not all issues were presented to the providers, due to a time restraint, it was the impression of the HSAC Child Care Committee that their valid questions need to be answered. The committee will work through advocacy to help assist registered family child care providers.

**As Children’s Home Society of NJ is the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency in Ocean County, a poll was conducted among their staff to determine the needs they identified.**

- 1. Quality
- 2. Affordability
- 3. Accessibility

The following are the findings from the poll conducted at Children's Home Society of NJ:

1. **Quality** –Good quality affordable early child care and education is necessary if children are to be ready for school. We know that a child's brain grows to 90 percent of its adult size by the age of three. Essential brain synapses that provide the foundation for future learning are formed during this time. Early learning experiences not only determine which synapses are retained, but can also cause the final number of connections to increase or decrease by as much as 25 percent.

Poor quality early learning experiences are detrimental to the crucial early development of the brain. Therefore, it is imperative that early childhood staff and parents are well trained and given the supports to help them serve our youngest, most vulnerable children. Documented research tells us that the amount of training hours staff receives directly affects the quality of care provided to our youngest children.

- **Offer more training for early childhood providers and parents.**

The Ocean County Early Learning Council can establish a framework to provide countywide developmentally appropriate presentations for parents and child care providers. Financial assistance and support from the county will be needed.

- **Promote the child care profession and the importance of early childhood care.**

County sponsored billboards or advertising would raise awareness for quality in child care. Possibly initiated by O.C. Freeholders to present a united Ocean County for children and families. Come up with a slogan for Ocean County.

- **The county could encourage centers to pursue the National Association for the Education of Young Children, (NAEYC) child care center accreditation. Then give recognition and incentives to centers that achieve national accreditation.**
- **Contracted centers should be accredited.**
- **Advocate to the State to increase the resource and referral early childhood training budget to meet the needs of the county.**

2. **Affordability** – Many children are left in dangerous child care situations because working parents cannot afford the high cost of child care.

- **Encourage the State to reorganize the criteria for New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK) and increase funding to reduce the waiting list. Suggestion: Reduce income requirements reflective of the cost of living in each county and look at the median income per county.**
- **Provide some County scholarships to working parents.**
- **Encourage businesses to help subsidize child care for their employees and become involved in promoting quality affordable child care. Join the Ocean County Early Learning Council.**

3. **Accessibility** – Lack of transportation for many low income and single parents is a large barrier to locating employment and child care.

- **Provide better mass transit within the county, especially in the southern part of the county.**
- **Provide transportation funding for parents and children with special needs who cannot use regular transportation.**

### **Summary**

This was a unique and new approach, not used in Ocean County before, to identify the needs seen by the lead resource and referral agency. The results were an accurate means to provide a look at child care through the eyes of the agency responsible for child care issues in Ocean County. The HSAC Child Care Committee plans to work with Children's Home Society of NJ to achieve the goals and to provide support to this agency.

It should be noted that when asked to define quality child care most parents and child care staff agreed that the following characteristics were most important:

1. COMPASSION
2. PATIENCE
3. UNDERSTANDING
4. COMPETENCY
5. CLEANLINESS

They also agreed that the facilities/homes should be:

1. COMFORTABLE
2. HAVE A STRUCTURED ROUTINE
3. PROVIDE BASIC ACADEMICS ALONG WITH ARTS AND CRAFTS

Ocean County Department of Human Services--2006 Child Care Plan Update  
**TANF and non-TANF Parent Issues**

**Issues from the 2000 Child Care Plan**

**Issue # 1 :**

Lack of affordable child care

**Recommendation:**

The Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) was to advocate with the Legislators in the form of a letter writing campaign and hosting a Legislative Breakfast.

**Action Taken:**

Since the 2000 Child Care Plan, the HSAC has made an active effort to advocate for affordable child care. It has sponsored several successful Legislative Breakfasts and has a functioning sub-committee strictly for advocacy, the Legislative Advocacy Committee.

**Issue # 2:**

Lack of child care for sick children

**Recommendation:**

It did not appear to be an area that the committee/plan could improve on.

**Action Taken:**

As in the past, Community Medical Center and Kimball Medical Center still accept mildly ill children at their child care facilities.

**Issues # 3and # 4:**

Lack of sufficient choice of childcare by location and not enough child care available in general

**Recommendation:**

The total number of child care centers has increased from the 2000 Child Care Plan. As per Children's Home Society of NJ the total number of child care centers presently operating in Ocean County is 144, up from 138 in the 2000 Child Care Plan.

**Issue # 5:**

Lack of trained staff

**Continuing and New Issues**

Please list any continuing issues that have not been addressed in the 2000 Child Care Plan.

Please list any new or present issues you are having with child care.

**Suggested recommendations in 2006**

Please make any recommendations to resolve any of the continuing and new issues.

**Recommendation:**

Form a collaborative with the provider community to identify training programs for child care staff.

**Action Taken:**

The Children's Home Society of NJ offers child care staff training workshops on a regular basis.

**Issue # 6:**

Lack of transportation

**Recommendations:**

The transportation issue recommendations were as follows:

- A. Encourage the coordination among schools, child care centers and the County Transportation Dept. to develop transportation programs.
- B. Encourage providers to locate near major transportation routes.
- C. Encourage employers to provide on-site child care for employees.
- D. Encourage agencies to develop non-traditional transportation plans such as the St. Francis Community Center Clair Fund that donates vehicles to TANF clients.

**Action Taken:**

The Department of Human Services continues to fund the St. Francis Auto Ownership Program, the Ocean Ride Route 37, Toms River Connection and the Route 88 Link.

**Issue # 7:**

Lack of weekend or evening child care

**Recommendation:**

Encourage child care centers to provide weekend and/or evening hours to parents/guardians.

**Action Taken:**

Extended hours and weekend hours have been tried and appear to be underutilized. A Barnegat day care has just started a Saturday schedule.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 1: Lack of affordable child care**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
The Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) was to advocate with the Legislators in the form of a letter writing campaign and hosting a Legislative Breakfast.	Since the 2000 Child Care Plan, the HSAC has made an active effort to advocate for affordable child care. It has sponsored several successful Legislative Breakfasts and has a functioning sub-committee strictly for advocacy, the Legislative Advocacy Committee.	TANF parents and non-TANF parents both agree that there are less affordable child care facilities. It was noted that even though there was a child care center on every corner, it was still not affordable. Some parents felt it may not be worth going to work for. While single parents have no choice but to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a child care directory with a rating system to be given out at Hospitals, libraries, The Children’s Home Society of NJ, Inc. and the One-Stop Career Centers.</li> </ul>		Some Employers gave discounts for child care.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 2: Lack of child care for sick children**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
It did not appear to be an area that the committee/plan could improve on.	As in the past, Community Medical Center and Kimball Medical Center still accept mildly ill children at their child care facilities.	The majority felt a sick child doesn't belong in child care. They belong at home. During the discussion it was noted that Kimball Medical Center no longer accepts mildly ill children.			It was noted well after the discussions that neither Community nor Kimball Medical Centers accept mildly ill children.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 3 and 4:** Lack of sufficient choice of child care by location and not enough child care available in general

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
The total number of child care centers has increased from the 2000 Child Care Plan. As per CHS of NJ the total number of child care centers presently operating in Ocean County is 144, up from 138 in the 2000 Child Care Plan.		Most parents felt that there are sufficient choices of child care in Ocean County. However, they all are not affordable.			One parent expressed that there are some child care centers that she “wouldn’t leave her old couch cushion in.” Some felt that besides DYFS monitoring child care centers another entity such as the Health Dept. should inspect all child care facilities, unannounced.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 5:** Lack of trained staff

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
Form a collaborative with the provider community to identify training programs for child care staff.	The Children’s Home Society of NJ offers Child care staff training workshops on a regular basis.	Parents on the whole felt more training is needed for staff. One parent suggested not to hire anyone unless they have already had children. Repeated turnover is a major concern of the parents. Staff are a critical key to the child care environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More trainings should be available to staff.</li> <li>• Staff should be certified not only in curriculum but in CPR as well.</li> <li>• DYFS should reduce the ratio in infant rooms.</li> </ul>		Again, well after the discussions, unbeknownst to the parents all child care Staff must be CPR certified.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 6: Lack of transportation**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
<p>Transportation issue recommendations were as follows:  Encourage the coordination among schools, child care centers and the County Transportation Dept. to develop transportation programs.  Encourage providers to locate near major transportation routes.  Encourage employers to provide on-site child care for employees.  Encourage agencies to develop non-traditional transportation plans such as the St. Francis Community Center Clair Fund that donates vehicles to TANF clients</p>	<p>The Department of Human Services continues to fund the St. Francis Auto Ownership Program, the Ocean Ride Route 37, Toms River Connection and the Route 88 Link.</p>	<p>All of the parents seem to feel there is a lack of transportation from schools to child care centers.</p>			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**  
**Focus Group – TANF and non-TANF Parents with children in Day Care Centers**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 7:** Lack of weekend or evening child care

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
Encourage child care centers to provide weekend and/or evening hours to parents/guardians.	Extended hours and weekend hours have been tried and appear to be underutilized. A Barnegat day care has just started a Saturday schedule.	Some parents who work weekends feel there should be more child care available. On the average though, parents were not looking for weekend or evening child care.			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services--2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**Issue # 1: Behavior of children and/or parents**

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>2000 Recommendations:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning children and/ or parents behavior.</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning children and/or parents behavior.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to be resolved concerning children and/or parents behavior.</i>
<p>The extreme behavior of children served was identified as the number one problem area. Specifically, acting out, showing disruptive and/or violent tendencies. Parent's negative attitudes were tied in as contributing factors often leading to the escalation of the child's poor behavior.</p>	<p>Some Providers/Directors, thought that these children need to seek specialized services to address the problem.</p>				

## Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update

### Child Care Directors/Providers Issues

#### Issue # 2: Lack of affordable child care

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>2000 Recommendations:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning lack of affordable child care that have not been addressed in the 2000 Child Care Plan.</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning lack of affordable child care.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning lack of affordable child care.</i>
The group identified and recognized that the cost of child care was increasing.	The Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) was to advocate with the Legislators in the form of a letter writing campaign and hosting a Legislative Breakfast.	Since the 2000 Child Care Plan, the HSAC has made an active effort to advocate for affordable child care. It has sponsored several successful Legislative Breakfasts and has a functioning sub-committee strictly for advocacy, the Legislative Advocacy Committee.			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**Issue # 3: Lack of child care for sick children**

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>2000 Recommendation:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning lack of child care for sick children that have not been addressed in the 2000 Child Care Plan.</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning lack of child care for sick children.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning lack of child care for sick children.</i>
A discussion resulted in the position that centers cannot provide facilities, nurse/trained staff, isolated space and supplies for ill children due to lack of funding.	It did not appear to be an area that the committee/plan could improve on.				

## Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update

### Child Care Directors/Providers Issues

**Issues # 4 and # 5:** Lack of sufficient choice of child care by location and not enough child care available in general

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>2000 Recommendations:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning lack of child care for ill children that have not been addressed in the 2000 Child Care Plan</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning insufficient choice of child care by location or not enough child care in general.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning insufficient choice of child care by location or not enough child care in general.</i>
<p>It was determined that the increased cost in child care has led to the lack of child care. It was noted that if resources were not available there was no feasible way to expand, upgrade or develop child care centers, therefore, a lack of child care will continue to be an issue.</p>		<p>The total number of child care centers has increased from the 2000 Child Care Plan. As per The Children's Home Society of NJ the total number of child care centers presently operating in Ocean County is 144, up from 138 in the 2000 Child Care Plan.</p>			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

***Issue # 6: Lack of trained staff***

<b><i>2000 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Recommendation:</i></b>	<b><i>Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>Please list any continuing issues concerning lack of trained staff.</i></b>	<b><i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning lack of trained staff.</i></b>	<b><i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning lack of trained staff.</i></b>
<p>As quality child care became an increasing demand, centers could not compensate staff for the training/education required meeting the needs of future child care requirements. It was identified that the children that were receiving care were becoming more and more specialized in the care that they required, leaving an increased demand for trained staff in all child care facilities.</p>	<p>Form a collaborative with the provider community to identify training programs for child care staff.</p>	<p>The Children’s Home Society of NJ offers child care staff training workshops on a regular basis.</p>			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**Issue # 7: Lack of transportation**

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>Recommendations:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning transportation that have not been addressed in the 2000 Child Care Plan.</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning transportation.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning transportation.</i>
<p>This was not identified as a top issue with the Directors/Providers. It was however, a top priority among parents.</p>	<p>The transportation issue recommendations were as follows:                      Encourage the coordination among schools, child care centers and the County Transportation Dept. to develop transportation programs.                      Encourage providers to locate near major transportation routes.                      Encourage employers to provide on-site child care for employees.                      Encourage agencies to develop non-traditional transportation plans such as the St. Francis Community Center Clair Fund that donates vehicles to TANF clients.</p>	<p>The Department of Human Services continues to fund the St. Francis Auto Ownership Program, the Ocean Ride Route 37, Toms River Connection and the Route 88 Link.</p>			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**Issue # 8: Lack of weekend or evening child care**

<b><i>2000 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>Recommendation:</i></b>	<b><i>Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>Please list any continuing issues concerning lack of weekend or evening child care.</i></b>	<b><i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning lack of weekend or evening child care.</i></b>	<b><i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 to resolve continuing or new issues concerning the lack of weekend or evening child care.</i></b>
<p>This was not identified as a top issue with Directors/Providers. It was however, a top priority among parents.</p>	<p>Encourage child care centers to provide weekend and/or evening hours to parents/guardians.</p>	<p>Encourage child care centers to provide weekend and/or evening hours to parents/guardians.</p>			

**Ocean County Department of Human Services-2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**Issue # 9: Regulations**

<i>2000 Dialogue:</i>	<i>Recommendations:</i>	<i>Action Taken:</i>	<i>Please list any continuing issues concerning regulations.</i>	<i>Please list any new issues you are experiencing concerning regulations.</i>	<i>Suggested recommendations in 2006 concerning regulations.</i>
Regulations were identified as a top issue. It was felt that some regulations and requirements were hard to meet without the proper funding. Some expressed that regulations can sometime prevent them from upgrading services.	No recommendations were given at the time.	No recommendations were given at the time.			

## Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update

### Focus Group - Child Care Directors/Providers Issues

#### CONCLUSIONS

##### Issue # 1: Behavior of children and/or parents

<b>2000 Recommendations:</b>	<b>2000 Actions Taken:</b>	<b>2006 Dialogue:</b>	<b>2006 Recommendations:</b>	<b>2006 Action to be Taken:</b>	<b>2006 New Issues:</b>
<p>Some Providers/Directors thought, that these children need to seek specialized services to address the problem.</p>		<p>The majority agreed behavioral issues continue toward staff, other children and parents. It was noted that the violent, aggressive and extreme behavior may result from a variety of causes and environmental climates such as substance abuse in the home, domestic violence and homelessness. Others felt that Special Needs Children with Autism, learning disabilities or ADHD could also contribute to behavior problems. It was voiced that parent’s negative attitudes are a factor in the child’s behavior as well. Some Family child care Providers are not experiencing these behaviors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate parents through workshops, seminars, trainings.</li> <li>• Build relationships and communication with parents.</li> <li>• Put more staff in rooms, which is costly.</li> <li>• Create behavioral modification plans with parents.</li> <li>• Train Child Care professionals on how to deal with parents and children with behavioral problems.</li> <li>• Have a Parenting Handbook including a Parent Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of discipline from parents.</li> <li>• Lack of respect in both parents and children.</li> <li>• Staff retention.</li> </ul> <p>Some comments were that Child Care is enabling parents not to be parents. Parents look to blame something or someone out of guilt. There is little time for families to share together.</p>

## Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update

### Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues

#### CONCLUSIONS

Issue # 2: Lack of affordable child care

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Actions Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Action to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
<p>The Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) was to advocate with the Legislators in the form of a letter writing campaign and host a Legislative Breakfast.</p>	<p>Since the 2000 Child Care Plan, the HSAC has made an active effort to advocate for affordable child care. It has sponsored several successful Legislative Breakfasts and has a functioning sub-committee strictly for advocacy, the Legislative Advocacy Committee.</p>	<p>There is less affordable child care now in 2006 than in 2000 due to many reasons. Funding has decreased and requirements have increased. Ocean County is losing affordable child care due to budget cuts. Child Care is doing more with a lot less. Long waiting lists in the voucher program is causing children to age out. Family child care Providers were not surveyed on this issue, It was felt this issue did not apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active advocacy through petitions and letter writing campaigns to local officials and State Legislators through parents, child care centers and HSAC.</li> <li>• An affordable benefit plan to foster staff retention.</li> <li>• DYFS needs to change ratios.</li> <li>• Regulations need to be realistic and have a purpose in providing a safer environment.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care is dealing with banks and collection agencies due to non payment.</li> <li>• Increased overhead and salaries.</li> <li>• Staff retention.</li> <li>• Seasonal employment.</li> </ul>

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 3: Lack of child care for sick children**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
It did not appear to be an area that the committee/plan could improve on.		This is not considered an issue for Directors. It's more of a parental issue. Family child care Providers were not surveyed on this issue. It was felt this issue did not apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need a back up plan.</li> <li>• Create a call list of providers who would care for ill children.</li> </ul>		

## Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update

### Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues

#### CONCLUSIONS

**Issue # 4 and 5:** Lack of sufficient choice of child care by location and not enough child care available in general

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
	<p>The total number of licensed child care centers has increased from the 2000 Child Care Plan. As per The Children’s Home Society of NJ the number of child care centers presently operating in Ocean County is 144, a 5% increase, up from 138 in the 2000 Child Care Plan.</p> <p>Registered Family child care Providers were 171, in the 2000 Child Care Plan and is currently 128, a 26% decrease, as per The Children’s Home Society of NJ.</p>	<p>Although there has been an increase in Licensed Child Care Centers and there is significant competition now, the Directors feel there is little to be done.</p> <p>Family child care Providers were not surveyed on this issue. It was felt this issue did not apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should research child care options.</li> <li>• Outreach Employers to get their perspective on the child care issue and determine if Employers need training on the child care issue and their role and responsibility in general.</li> </ul>		

**The Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 6: Lack of trained staff**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>20006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
Form a collaborative with the provider community to identify training programs for child care staff.	The Children’s Home Society of NJ offers child care staff training workshops on a regular basis	Most felt the issue of trained staff is improving, but teaching requirements are changing. Some training’s are during work hours. Many training’s are targeted towards Directors and Assistants and not the teachers. It is expensive to pay staff and pay for trainings. There is not a lot of staff retention due to the lack of paid benefits and better paying jobs. Family child care Providers were not surveyed on this issue. It was felt this issue did not apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand trainings towards teachers not only Directors and Assistants.</li> <li>• More variety in trainings needed.</li> <li>• Have trainings in evening hours.</li> <li>• Create a list of available trainers.</li> <li>• Benefit program needed to hold on to staff.</li> <li>• Staff needs to be recognized as professionals.</li> </ul>		Some comments made: For the pay, some could get paid more pumping gas or at McDonalds. One Director provides an umbrella benefit package through a leasing firm in Cranbury, N.J.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 7: Lack of transportation**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
<p>The transportation issue recommendations were as follows:                      Encourage the coordination among schools, child care centers and the County Transportation Dept. to develop transportation programs.                      Encourage providers to locate near major transportation routes.                      Encourage employers to provide on-site child care for employees.                      Encourage agencies to develop non-traditional transportation plans such as the St. Francis Community Center Clair Fund that donates vehicles to TANF clients.</p>	<p>The Department of Human Services continues to fund the St. Francis Auto Ownership Program, the Ocean Ride Route 37, Toms River Connection and the Route 88 Link.</p>	<p>The majority felt transportation is a parent’s responsibility and not the child care Director or Home Provider. Some Directors and Home Providers get bus transportation for school children. Some Family child care Providers are recognized as a bus stop for school children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to open a dialogue with the school districts.</li> <li>• The County should endorse all Family child care Providers as a bus stop for school children.</li> </ul>		

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 8: Lack of weekend or evening child care**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
Encourage Child Care Centers to provide weekend and/or evening hours to parents/guardians.	Extended hours and weekend hours have been tried and were underutilized. A Barnegat child care has just started a Saturday schedule.	Directors expressed this to be a costly endeavor. There is also a staff issue. It is not for the Pre-School facilities. Family child care Providers were not surveyed on this issue. It was felt this issue did not apply.			Comment: Most felt parents were just looking for a baby sitter. Survey showed most parents rely on family, friends and neighbors for weekend or evening child care.

**Ocean County Department of Human Services – 2006 Child Care Plan Update**

**Focus Group – Child Care Directors/Providers Issues**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Issue # 9: Regulations**

<b><i>2000 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2000 Action Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Dialogue:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Recommendations:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 Actions to be Taken:</i></b>	<b><i>2006 New Issues:</i></b>
No recommendations were given at the time.	As no recommendations were given, there were no actions taken.	Meeting regulations is more costly. Credentialing is not an easy task. New DYFS regulation manuals are constantly being updated and hard to keep up with. Home Providers feel limiting children prevents income potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reimbursements.</li> <li>• View child care Providers as professionals.</li> <li>• Credentialing hours should count toward CEU's.</li> </ul>		Comments: Please view child care Providers as professionals and not glorified baby sitters.