



Helping all children succeed for life.

## OUR VISION

*To measurably improve the lives of at-risk children aged 0-6 in Orange County.*

## OUR MISSION

*Focus all available resources on prevention and early intervention programs for at-risk children aged 0-6, to ensure that they enter first grade ready to learn.*

*To realize our Vision and Mission, Success By 6 is committed to Improving the Quality of Early Care and Education in Orange County:*

**ACCREDITATION** – instituting child care accreditation as the county standard;

**ACCESSIBILITY** – increasing access to child care, especially for low-income working families;

**TRAINING** – planning and coordinating leadership training for early care and education professionals;

**COMPENSATION AND RETENTION** – improving the valuation, compensation, and resulting retention of early care and education professionals;

**SUSTAINABILITY** – as quality is improved, identifying resources and creating action plans for maintaining and extending these improvements in a systemic manner;

**COLLABORATION** – building traditional and non-traditional partnerships in the community to target resources for greatest impact;

**EVALUATION** – measuring the benefits of our efforts to children and their families and instituting a mechanism for continuous quality improvement.



More than 300 United Ways in 42 states have implemented Success By 6 programs. This successful model involves partnerships between local United Ways, corporations, service providers, the media and government.

Our purpose is to promote healthy development and school readiness among young children by making the policies and practices of our community's major child-serving systems more responsive to the needs of young children.

*This work is based upon support from the Bank of America Foundation/UWA Success By 6® Enhancement Initiative.*



*The information in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Bank of America Foundation.*

*The best investment in your community*



*Success By 6, is a collaboration of civic and business leaders, early care and education professionals, children's advocates, and other community volunteers.*

*With this rich collaboration, Success By 6 seeks to affect systemic change to improve the quality and accessibility of early care and education in our county. Success By 6 invites and encourages participation among diverse sectors of our community to continue to address the challenges that this survey has identified.*

*Together, Orange County can find sound, long-lasting solutions that will ensure the success of our youngest children.*

## **You Can Help!**

*Contact Orange County's United Way Success By 6 at (949) 660-7600.*



**Orange County's  
United Way**

*The best investment  
in your community*

18012 Mitchell Avenue South  
Irvine, California 92614  
(949) 660-7600  
Fax (949) 724-3039

[www.unitedwayoc.org](http://www.unitedwayoc.org)



*Orange County*

# Early Care and Education

**SALARY** *and* **WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Survey 2002**



Dedicated to  
the well-being  
of children  
aged 0 to 6.



**Orange County's  
United Way**

*The best investment  
in your community*



## Orange County

# Early Care and Education

## SALARY *and* WORKING CONDITIONS SURVEY

*Early care and education (ECE) is part of Orange County's economic infrastructure enabling parents with young children to be self-sufficient and contribute to the county's economy. Equally important, however, is the critical role ECE plays in children's healthy development and school readiness, particularly among low-income children. Quality ECE programs also strengthen family stability, serving to support and enhance parents' child-rearing efforts and often providing early detection of potential developmental delays and intervention or referral for specialized services.*

*Research confirms that these centers are likely our best strategy for promoting optimal development and school readiness for all children. Studies both in California and the nation have examined the early care and education workforce and the links between quality and compensation. Quality improvements and the maintenance of those improvements are impossible without a stable and well-trained workforce.*

*With funding from the Bank of America Foundation/United Way of America, Orange County's United Way, Success By 6<sup>®</sup>, sought to collect local data and to identify specific local barriers to quality improvements. The Orange County Early Care and Education Salary and Working Conditions Survey was distributed in June, 2001, to licensed child care centers.<sup>1</sup> In this summary of the results, Orange County's United Way, Success By 6, spotlights barriers to a stable workforce and makes recommendations for long-lasting, systemic change within the early care and education community.<sup>2</sup>*

**In a completely  
rational society,  
the best of us  
would be teachers  
and the rest of  
us would have  
to settle for  
something less.**

LEE IACocca

## Key Findings From The Survey

- Salaries for all ECE professionals are low, contributing to a problem with staff turnover. The most common hourly wage for the highest paid teachers is \$12.00 and \$15.00 for center directors. Two-thirds of the centers start teachers at wages less than the average typist (\$14.01/hour).
- Salaries are not living wages. A typical early childhood educator earns \$25,000 annually, less than half the county's Self-Sufficiency Standard (\$53,691) for a family of four.<sup>3</sup>
- Salaries offer little room for growth, and greater experience and higher education have little effect on wages. For teachers, hourly wages increase from highest starting pay to highest paid by only \$2.00.



## Proportion of centers serving children with:

- **Special Physical Needs – 35.6%**
- **Special Learning Needs – 62.7%**
- **Psychological Needs – 43.6%**
- **Inadequate Housing – 24.6%**
- **Inadequate Health Care – 32.2%**



- Staff and administrative positions show small differences in salary, providing little incentive to advance in job responsibilities. Typically, directors earn only \$3.00 an hour more than teachers.
- For-profit centers – especially those that are independent, small businesses – may suffer from the most restrictive salary budgets, affecting program quality and staff retention. The average hourly wage of even the best paid teacher at a for-profit center is \$2.37 to \$5.82 less than other centers. For-profit centers also are less likely to contribute to health or dental insurance for their full-time teachers and directors.
- Few centers meet the highest standards for staff education and retention. At about one of every five (21.2%) child care centers, the best educated teacher on staff has no more than the minimum educational requirements needed to work, or an Associate Degree in a field unrelated to child development.
- High staff turnover (comprising the entire staff of some centers within a year's time) prevents consistent quality care for the children served. Approximately half of the for-profit and publicly funded centers have experienced a teacher turnover rate of 33% or greater, and about 40% of the privately funded non-profits have such a rate.

## Other Barriers To Quality Care For All Orange County Children

- Most ECE centers represent traditional preschools serving 3- to 5-year-olds, rather than infants and toddlers. Only 17.8% of the centers care for infants (0 to 12 months old) and only 22% care for toddlers (12 to 24 months old).
- ECE centers are not representative of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the county, so children and parents may have difficulty communicating with early education teachers. Although 76% of the centers report serving children with Limited English Proficiency, only 45.3% of the centers have a teacher or staff member who speaks the child's language.
- Many centers serve children with special needs and stressors, which make increasing demands on the ability of the ECE workforce to teach effectively.

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*1 The survey, adapted from an instrument developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, was mailed to all 651 licensed child care centers identified by Community Care Licensing. A 36% response rate was received. The Social Science Research Center at California State University, Fullerton, conducted the survey and compiled and analyzed the data.*

*2 For a copy of the full data report, please contact Orange County's United Way, Success By 6, 949-660-7600.*

*3 The Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS) is an alternative measure used to document the costs of living which families of different sizes must meet to move out of poverty. Developed by Dr. Diana Pearce, former Director of the Women and Poverty Project of Wider Opportunities for Women, the SSS calculates the amount of money working adults need to meet their basic needs without subsidies of any kind. For more information, see the Internet at <http://www.equalrights.org/welfare/ssavg.htm>*



If our American way of life  
fails the child, it fails us all.

PEARL S. BUCK



## Key Recommendations From The Survey

*Success By 6 has focused resources to address quality early care and education in five targeted areas of the county. In addition, Success By 6 has organized working groups aimed at sustaining and extending quality improvements. The Early Care and Education Salary and Working Conditions Survey affirms this approach, as staff retention and training influence program quality, and both are clearly at risk. The survey also clarifies that the staffing crisis and its effect on quality care are systemic and countywide, calling for larger interventions for very high-need areas.*

*With a clear understanding that early care and education are essential to our community's economic and social health, Success By 6 offers these recommendations:*

- Collaborative resources should be directed to increase understanding about the value of high quality early care and education and to create a public will to invest in these programs;
- Government investments and incentives should be more widespread so that improvements are more evenly applied and all children have access to high-quality programs;
- Involvement among the corporate community and other non-traditional stakeholders can help infuse capital and human resources into early care and education. These investments are sound ones because quality child care contributes to Orange County's current economic health, supports our current workforce, and helps to prepare our future workforce;
- Salary and benefit improvements aimed at raising the educational levels of the ECE workforce and increasing staff retention should be included in any comprehensive quality improvement initiative;
- Early care and education is an essential component of children's services, and should be tightly linked to the K through 12 educational system, the health and mental health care systems, and family resource services; and
- Greater efforts and resources are needed to build a more culturally and linguistically representative ECE workforce and to reach out to the various ethnic communities to meet the needs of these children and families.

