



NJACCRRRA

Early Care Issues

Declining Family Child Care Provider Workforce

The family child care option features a home-based, reliable, and intimate child care setting that is often located in the family's own neighborhood. Registered family child care homes offer families the added reassurance that the provider's activities, environment, and staff interactions are guided by state regulations. Ensuring that there is a stable and qualified force of registered family child care providers available throughout the state is critical.¹

ISSUE: The number of registered family child care homes in New Jersey has declined by almost one-half over the past decade. Further, the average age of the family child care provider has increased, raising concern that experienced providers may age out of the profession.

# Registered Family Child Care Providers	Change Over Time					
	2010	2004	2001	Between 2004 and 2001	Between 2010 and 2004	Between 2010 and 2001
New Jersey	2719	3783	4689	-19%	-28%	-42%

The overall number of registered child care providers in New Jersey dropped by 42 percent between 2001 and 2010. While county rates do vary, declines were documented in all 21 counties. In addition to declines in the number of registered homes, the population of providers is aging. A 2011 NJACCRRRA survey of family child care providers² revealed that 39% of providers were between the ages of 50 and 64, compared to 27% of providers of the same ages in 2005. While trends reveal a more seasoned, mature workforce (41% of 2011 providers reported they had been in the field of child care for 10 years or more, compared to only 29% in 2005), this also raises a concern that there will be an inadequate supply and less-experienced group of professionals to care for children when these providers retire from the profession.

According to Tan Coelho, president of the Educational Association for Family Child Care, Inc., several factors have impacted the state's registered family child care provider system:

- **Drastic increases in the number of unemployed parents** over the past five years have led families to cut expenses by removing children from child care. This decision, driven by changes in need and finances, leaves providers with an unpredictable and unstable income base.

- New Jersey recently enacted **requirements related to the health status of the entire provider household**, not just the provider. Ensuring that household members have specific vaccinations, can be difficult and costly for providers, especially those without health care coverage
- **In order to be eligible for food program reimbursements, providers are subject to food-related inspections.** These inspections are often conducted by the same "outside" professional responsible for overseeing family child care registration. The process can be a barrier and the relationship can be perceived as punitive or overly focused on compliance. The challenges of receiving the subsidized reimbursement, intended to help supplement the cost of providing nutritional meals among a group of child care professionals already making a minimum living wage outweigh the benefits.

RECOMMENDATION: Roselle B. Coye, president of the New Jersey Family Child Care Provider Association offers her thoughts: "In order to support the growth of the family child care profession, we need to create a positive environment of confidence and dedication among providers by increasing the bar of professionalism for this field. "

To help meet this vision, NJACCRRRA will continue to work advocate for:

- **Investing in the family child care provider workforce by providing targeted resources that help registered providers meet pre-kindergarten teacher education standards—and receive comparable wages to similarly educated school teachers;**
- **Expanding resources and technical assistance to improve the content of early education services in family child care programs and help registered providers meet family child care accreditation standards;**
- **Expanding the Strengthening Families Initiative into family child care homes;**
- **Increasing and promoting the safety of family child care homes through advocacy for stand-alone legislation that requires individuals who care for non-relative children in their homes to have fingerprint-based criminal background checks;**
- **Establishing a quality rating system to inform consumers and recognize and reward the quality of care provided in family child care homes; and**
- **Collecting data and evaluating program quality and impact across settings to encourage ongoing program improvement.**

NJACCRRRA is committed to bringing the issues and concerns of family child care providers to the forefront of their advocacy efforts. For more information please visit

www.njaccrra.org.

¹ While there is some question as to whether this trend is isolated to registered providers, experts from the industry do report similar experiences for both registered and unregistered homes.

² *New Jersey's Family Child Care Providers: Summary of 2011 Survey Results, Comparison of 2005 and 2011 Data*, NJACCRRRA, Nov. 2011.