

OUTCOME
GOAL 3.3 -
SUPPORT A
GREATER
BALANCE
BETWEEN
WORK AND
FAMILY



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Overview

The demand for child care services continues to escalate with the increase in the number of mothers entering the workforce. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of mothers in the workforce with children under age 3 increased from 54 percent to 61 percent. Today, three out of five preschoolers have mothers in the workforce. Quality child care is a significant workforce issue. Recent welfare reform coupled with a growing trend in families with two wage earners has increased the need for quality child care services regardless of economic class.

Improving the overall quality of child care services remains a challenge. One factor leading to poor quality is the high turnover rate of knowledgeable and experienced child care workers, which is due in large part to workers' dissatisfaction with the minimal pay and benefits their profession provides. Another factor affecting the quality of child care services is the caregivers' level of education and training, which can impact the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children. The Department of Labor is committed to promoting initiatives that improve child care providers' working conditions and increasing access to affordable, quality child care, thus helping parents carry out job responsibilities without sacrificing family commitments.

Serving the Public

In the Department of Labor, the Employment and Training Administration has launched a national initiative to develop a cadre of professional child care specialists and to enhance a system for training and certifying child care workers.

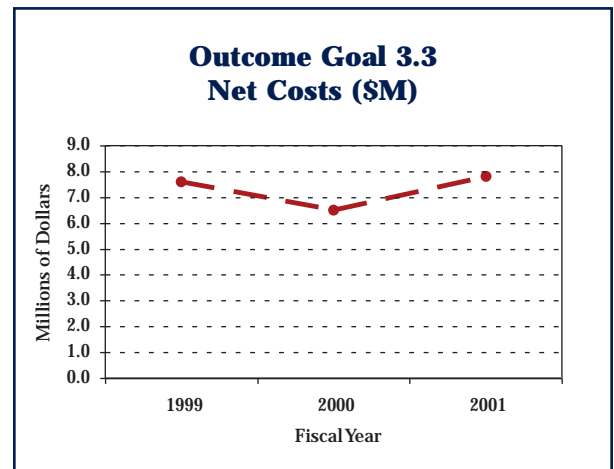
Through quality improvements such as the Credentialed Career Path of the National Registered Apprenticeship System, which the Employment and Training Administration sponsors and facilitates, the Department is playing a pivotal role in benefiting children, working parents and child care workers. The Department's critical investment in the Quality Child Care Initiative will help ensure American families have access to quality child care and child care practitioners have access to education and training for professional development. This high quality training has the potential to change the culture of the child care industry from one characterized by low pay and high turnover to one of retention, stability, high quality care and a respected professional service that meets the needs of working parents in the 21st Century workforce.

Program Costs

Outcome Goal 3.3 includes direct program funds principally for the child care apprenticeship program. Net program costs for this outcome goal have fluctuated somewhat over the past three fiscal years (FY 1999-2001), ranging from \$6.4 million to \$7.8 million.

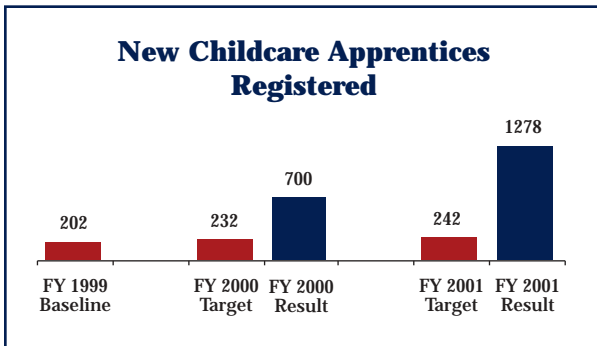
DOL Challenges for the Future

The challenge for the Department is to continue strengthening child care for working parents within the constraints of limited resources. DOL harnesses the power of all levels of government working together with businesses, experts, advocates, child care providers, child care workers, and parents. The Department continues to pursue expanding and maintaining sustainable, safe, quality child care, and in cooperation with its partner, the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors, fostering individual States' participation, and conducting marketing activities with Workforce Investment Boards and ongoing consultations with industry representatives and associates.



PROVIDE SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

The number of states with registered child care apprenticeship programs will increase to 49 and the number of new child care apprentices will increase by 20% over FY 2000.



Results: The goal was not achieved. The number of States with registered child care apprenticeship programs did not increase and remains at

39. The number of new child care apprentices increased by 83 percent over FY 2000.

Program Description: The Quality Child Care Initiative addresses the need to provide working families with safe, affordable, quality child care and an adequate supply of competent, professional child care providers. The initiative is part of an

upgrading effort currently taking place in the child care industry. The Department provides technical assistance to the States in developing Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship programs to improve the quality of formal training that child care providers receive.

Analysis of Results and Strategies: The Department did not expand the number of States participating in the program in FY 2001 since it was conducting a review of child care grant and program performance. DOL encouraged States without pilot grants to register at least one child care program and increase the number of new apprentices in each State by 20 percent. This strategy helped to increase the total number of new child care apprentices from 700 in FY 2000 to 1,278 in FY 2001, resulting in a significant overachievement of the target for the second consecutive year. The Department has also contributed to the success of the child care apprenticeship program by distributing information on best practices and fostering closer working



Betty recently graduated in the first class of the Pre-Apprenticeship Child Care Program. Betty and her classmates - all of whom were previously on welfare - quickly found positions in the child care field. Betty works for the Esther B. Peterson Day Care Center at the Department of Labor. "I am now a member of the freshman class of Southeastern University," Betty says with pride. "Southeastern University partners with DOL providing three credits toward an Associates Degree for program graduates." Betty, the parent of a 10 year and a 2 year old, now is very busy working in the child care field as she continues her education and caring for her own children.

Photo by: Michael Carpenter

relationships between professionals providing child care services and State government representatives.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans:

The Department has revised its FY 2002 apprenticeship goal to target program expansion, by offering apprenticeship as a means for meeting the training needs of business and workers in areas where the program has not been traditionally used. Specifically, the Department has established the following performance measures:

- Increasing the number of new apprenticeship programs;
- Increasing the number of new businesses involved in apprenticeship;
- Increasing the number of new apprentices; and
- Increasing the number of new programs in new and emerging industries.

In the longer term (2-4 years), as the number of programs and apprentices increase and the data system improves, the Department will add goals for the percentage of individuals enrolled who complete apprenticeship programs and for average wage gains.

The Department's focus on increasing the number of child care apprentices will continue in FY 2002 with program results integrated into the broader reporting of results against the new performance measures above.

(Goal 3.3A — FY 2001 Annual Performance Plan)