

**WOMEN'S  
POLICY  
GROUP**

*Focus  
Series*

## **Putting Families First = Affordable Quality Child Care for Every Working Parent**

**Georgia's demand for subsidized childcare exceeds supply.** The waiting list for subsidized childcare is estimated at 12,000-14,000 yet the FY 2009 budget eliminates a \$29 million TANF transfer to child care services—the equivalent of at least 8,000 child care subsidy slots.

**Low-income families especially need child care assistance to build self-reliance.** 71% of children ages 6-17, live with working parents. In Georgia, almost in 1 in 4 children under age 5 is living in poverty. A family with both parents working full time at minimum wage earns just \$21,400 a year.

**Unaffordable child care is a barrier to successful transition into work.** Child care services should not exceed 10% of a family's annual income according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A two parent family with both parents working full time at minimum wage in metro Atlanta would spend 31% of their income on child care for one infant. A single mother of two children making \$28,000 could easily spend half her income on child care. The federal government provides child care subsidies through TANF and the Child Care and Development Fund to address this barrier to economic self-sufficiency.

**Georgia could expand services to more families.** Federal guidelines permit families with income of up to 85% of the state median income to apply, but Georgia has set more stringent guidelines and only allows families up to 50% of the state median income.

**Why did the number of children in care fall from 2006 to 2007?** In FY 2006 67,860 children received subsidized child care but in FY 2007 only 55,455

children did. This drop in service occurred despite an increase in the number of eligible children on the waiting list of more than 12,000 children.

**A greater commitment of state dollars is needed to expand services.** Georgia's Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program totaled \$233 million in FY 2008, with 75% of funds coming from federal sources and 91% of dollars going directly to service for families. Additional state dollars are needed to serve all eligible families.

**Accountability is needed to ensure all childcare assistance dollars are drawn down and spent.** The Department of Human Resources needs to hear from you that the \$29.7M TANF transfer is needed in childcare. The possibility that these funds appropriated for additional childcare vouchers in 2008 were never actually spent is troublesome.

**What happens when working parents cannot access affordable, quality care?** They may be forced to leave their children with neighbors, older siblings, or boyfriends or to choose poor quality settings. Without age appropriate stimulations, children will fail to grow intellectually and social, requiring expensive interventions as they age. Moreover, a commitment to child safety demands that working parents have the ability to place their children in quality childcare settings while they work to provide for their children.

**Quality child care is crucial, but costs more.** Children benefit from high-quality care however accredited child care centers cost an average of \$1,404 more per year than for non-accredited centers.

**Thank you for your support in this matter of extreme importance to Georgia's future.**

**SOURCES:** Quality Care for Children, "Child Care in Metro Atlanta", August 2006, ([www.qualitycareforchildren.org](http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org)); Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, "Strengthening the Foundation: Investments in the Adult Workforce Build a More Prosperous Georgia" January 2008, [www.gbpi.org](http://www.gbpi.org); Georgia Department of Human Resources; Voices for Georgia's Children, [www.georgiavoices.org](http://www.georgiavoices.org); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Child Care Information Center, [www.nccic.org](http://www.nccic.org);

**Women's Policy Group  
P.O. Box 55553  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
Capitol Representative:**

**Janice Barrocas, Attorney at Law  
Cell: 404.805.5134; [janicebarrocas@yahoo.com](mailto:janicebarrocas@yahoo.com)**