



From the Board Chair and President



Jennifer Blumer



Janet Singerman

For nearly three decades, Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) has been the driving force behind efforts to build the central Carolinas' supply of quality early learning and school-age child care programs and to improve access for children and families across the economic spectrum. This relentless pursuit of excellence has paid dividends year after year throughout Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union counties, where the average star rating of licensed child care programs is 4.28 (on North Carolina's 5-star scale) and 87% of children enrolled in star-rated child care now attend higher quality 4- and 5-star programs.

In its 29th year of service, CCRI worked tirelessly to turn vision into reality, advancing *quality* in early education and school-age child care for all children. Still, CCRI was not immune to the economic downturn; despite funding reductions, CCRI continued to deliver training and technical assistance to help providers understand licensing requirements, acquire knowledge in child and family development, and implement best practices in early childhood and business administration. Collectively, CCRI training and technical assistance efforts reached 75% of all licensed child care programs in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union counties (and also numerous license exempt preschools and school-age programs) with a combined capacity to better serve more than 50,000 children birth through age 12.

While program quality is steadily improving across the market, affordability still eludes many families of young children. For many, child care is the second largest budget item exceeded only by housing costs. Based on HUD's fair market rent values and its recommendation that not more than 30% of a family's income be spent on housing, a wage of \$15.50 per hour is required to support a single parent with one preschool child in Mecklenburg County – a wage greater than the average for entry-level positions. Last year, a monthly average of 7,624 children received subsidized child care so their parents could work and/or attend school, and 83% of these children attended higher quality 4- and 5-star programs.

Maintaining access to public pre-kindergarten for educationally at-risk children was another noteworthy accomplishment in FY11. When Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposed a \$10 million budget cut to its Bright Beginnings program, CCRI spearheaded an effort to inform the public about what (and who) was at risk and to help mobilize stakeholders to present the case for Bright Beginnings. As a result of CCRI's collaboration with other child-focused organizations, a significant victory was achieved when the CMS school board voted to preserve 3,100 spaces for eligible four-year-olds, giving these children an opportunity to become better prepared for school before kindergarten.

The report which follows highlights CCRI's FY11 results, none of which would have been possible without the generous investment of its individual supporters and local, regional and state-level public and private sector partners identified later in this report.

On behalf of the board and staff and the children, families and early educators served, we thank you for supporting CCRI's mission and for joining us in the relentless pursuit of excellence in early care and education and school-age child care – for all children.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer D. Blumer".

Jennifer D. Blumer
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet Singerman".

Janet Singerman
President



Consumer Education

I needed a program near a bus line that opened by 6:15 AM, so I could catch the bus and get to work by 7:00 AM. With help from the Child Care Search counselor, I learned what to look for based on my son's age, and I found a five-star program that's just a block from our home! And the best part is my son loves his new teacher and friends.

– Parent served by CCRI's *Child Care Search*

Whether or not they work outside the home, all parents ultimately face the same critically important (and emotionally challenging) question – who will care for my child in my absence? Some parents need a caregiver for times when they will be away from home for a few hours. Others, including those employed outside the home, need a child care arrangement that works for their family over an extended period. Naturally, this decision takes on new meaning when a child spends longer hours in care and the arrangement has the potential for greater impact on his or her learning and development. In every case, accurate information is a parent's best friend.

CCRI's *Child Care Search* serves families across the economic spectrum as they navigate the maze of more than 1,000 licensed early care and education and school-age child care options, helping parents to become better informed consumers on behalf of their children. Last year, CCRI's *Child Care Search* delivered free referrals and supportive services (in English and Spanish) to 4,611 families, helping them make informed child care choices for 6,869 children. As a result, thousands of children were enrolled in higher quality programs that could better prepare them for school while their parents – having achieved peace of mind – were able to work productively.

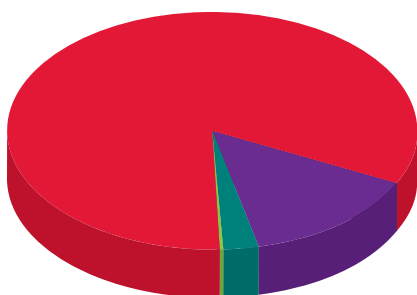
Financial Assistance

CCRI is an administrator of two federal programs that provide financial assistance to low-income working parents and families and to child care programs that serve children across the economic spectrum. In FY11, CCRI continued its sponsorship of family child care homes for participation in the *Child & Adult Care Food Program* administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As sponsor, CCRI provided training and educational resources to a monthly average of 213 family child care homes and expended \$1.2 million to reimburse programs for the cost of providing nutritious meals to a monthly average of 1,406 children enrolled in family child care.

CCRI's *Child Care Financial Aid Program* makes it possible for Mecklenburg County's low-income working parents to afford quality child care so they can work and/or attend school. Under contract to Mecklenburg County through its Department of Social Services, CCRI administers child care financial aid from federal, state and local sources. Last year, CCRI administered \$46.6 million in financial aid that served a total of 11,953 children (average 7,624/month), enabling 5,491 parents to continue working and 90 to continue their education, all while their children attended high quality early learning and school-age child care programs. Despite these strong results, a monthly average of 5,802 eligible children remained on the financial aid waiting list last year due to insufficient federal and state funding.



Child Care Financial Aid Expenditures



■ State Funds	\$38,715,569
Child Care & Development Fund	
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	
Non Smart Start Funds	
■ Smart Start.....	\$6,614,122
■ American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.....	\$1,233,607
■ Other.....	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$46,663,298

With \$46.6 million in child care subsidies paid to small businesses in Mecklenburg County last year, child care financial aid works not only for children and families, but also for the entire community and for the local and regional economy. Based on an average annual expenditure of \$5,865 per child receiving subsidized care, serving all children who remained on the waiting list as of June 30, 2011 (4,093 children) would cost approximately \$24 million per year.

In the words of CCRI's customers...



"I was in the middle of a divorce and trying to get back on my feet with a little one at home when I applied for child care subsidy. Financial aid allowed me to keep working and take care of my son. Since then things have changed. I'm still working full time, but my little one is now in college!"

Because of this assistance, I don't need food stamps and I can afford groceries and clothes for my children.

I want to thank this program. As a single mom, I am able to work with peace of mind.

As a foster parent, I appreciate the funding to help with the additional cost of child care.

I was working full time in the health care industry, but I lost my job when new regulations required a certificate that I didn't have. Fortunately, my child care subsidy payments continued while I returned to school to obtain the license I needed, and I was immediately rehired by my former employer!



By following CACFP guidelines, I feel confident that I'm feeding my children a variety of wholesome foods and the correct portions to get them off to a healthy start. We incorporate learning about the food groups, and the children excitedly tell their parents (in a confident way!) what they know.

CCRI helped me become independent from an abusive marriage. My family doesn't live nearby so they can't help me, but with child care subsidy, I can support my children by myself.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are expensive. CACFP makes it possible for me to afford to feed the children healthy meals that most do not get at home.



I received an email yesterday with good news. Our program's overall score on the (early childhood environment rating) scale was great. Room 2 scored 6.06 on the 7-point scale, and it appears we will be a five-star center! Truly, we could not have done this without your assistance.

– Director of a program served by CCRI

Professional Development

The research is clear – *high quality* early care and education has long-term positive impact on children's school and lifelong success. Last year, owing to the strong partnership between CCRI and its customers and key funding partners, quality was maintained across the regional child care market where 87% of children enrolled in star-rated child care (and 79% of children enrolled in all types of licensed child care) attended higher quality 4- and 5-star programs.

In FY11, CCRI's *Professional Development Services* were provided through an array of initiatives that delivered early childhood training required to maintain child care program licensure; on-site technical assistance to improve program quality; supports for leadership development and small business management skills; college credit-bearing coursework and online learning opportunities. In Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union counties:

- 9,987 early childhood practitioner participants attended 756 CCRI-delivered training sessions (1,888 total training hours);
- 6,498 on-site technical assistance sessions were conducted by CCRI in 1,062 classrooms across 338 programs; and
- CCRI training and technical assistance efforts reached 75% of all licensed child

care programs (and also numerous license exempt preschools and school-age programs) with a combined capacity to better serve more than 50,000 children from birth through age 12.

While high quality programs have positive impact for children across the economic spectrum, the impact of both high and low quality programs is more profound for children from low-income families who are at greater educational risk. Three years ago, CCRI launched *Raising A Reader*® in Charlotte, a nationally-recognized program that promotes book cuddling and read-aloud strategies for children under five from low-income families. Last year, CCRI partnered with Charlotte Public Library to serve 1,047 children (793 families) who made the following gains in family literacy activities which research indicates correlate positively with kindergarten readiness:

- 80% of families reported reading more often with their children on a daily basis.
- Participating families reported a 64% increase in the number of times they visited the library on a monthly basis.

Since its launch, CCRI's *Raising A Reader*® has served 3,083 children and families, increasing the number of books in the homes of 100% of participants.



In the words of CCRI's customers...

“For my teachers with young children at home, taking college courses after work isn’t an option. Success at Online Learning has allowed my staff to participate in college coursework during their normal workday, and that makes higher education attainable.”

.....

“Whenever teachers become more aware of developmental milestones and good early childhood education, the children are going to benefit. And when children benefit, their families benefit. So (professional development) means success for teachers, but it also means success for our children, their families, and the entire community.”

.....

State & Regional Leadership

CCRI is one of three agencies (along with Child Care Services Association in Chapel Hill and Southwestern Child Development Commission in Webster) that comprise the **North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council**. The Council continued to serve in a planning, advising and management capacity under contract to the North Carolina Division of Child Development to ensure equitable statewide access to quality child care resource and referral services.

In FY11, the Council managed three statewide initiatives – Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers (led by CCRI); Infant/Toddler Quality Enhancement Project; and School-Age Quality Improvement. The Council also funded statewide delivery of core services including consumer education and counseling; professional development and training; technical assistance; data collection, evaluation and analysis; and public awareness.



Collectively, North Carolina’s CCR&R agencies served:

- 37,338 children’s families seeking early care & education and school-age child care referrals (30,226 birth through preschool and 7,112 school-age children)
- 32,502 early childhood practitioners seeking training (5,851 total training sessions)
- 9,544 classrooms seeking on-site technical assistance (7,966 preschool and 1,578 school-age classrooms)

Community Awareness & Engagement

CCRI's leadership created believers and supporters of public pre-kindergarten and influenced decision makers to allocate funds. Their campaign raised awareness throughout our community that what happens before you are five is very important and was a huge morale boost for anyone in the early childhood profession.

– Julie Babb, Director Pre-Kindergarten Programs, CMS

CCRI serves parents, families and early educators – all for the benefit of the child. So, when Charlotte-Mecklenburg's educationally at-risk preschoolers were in jeopardy of losing access to public pre-kindergarten programs last year, CCRI rallied other child-focused organizations and stakeholders to make their voices heard on behalf of Charlotte's most fragile young learners.

At the state level, CCRI Board and staff leadership continued to advocate for North Carolina's leading and nationally-recognized investment in early education as legislators grappled with how to address publically-funded pre-kindergarten programs in a declining funding environment.

At the local level, CCRI collaboratively led a public awareness campaign kicked off by

a community meeting at the Wells Fargo Auditorium of the Knight Theater on February 6, 2011, featuring keynote speaker David Lawrence, retired editor of The Miami Herald and past editor of *The Charlotte Observer*. Lawrence presented *Improving the Odds: Prioritizing Education Even – and Especially – Before Kindergarten*. Numerous editorials, community engagement, and meetings with the CMS Board of Education and County Commissioners followed. In the end, a significant victory was achieved with 3,100 public pre-kindergarten spaces preserved for educationally at-risk four-year-olds, giving them access to the quality early learning that every parent wants for their child – and every child needs for school success.

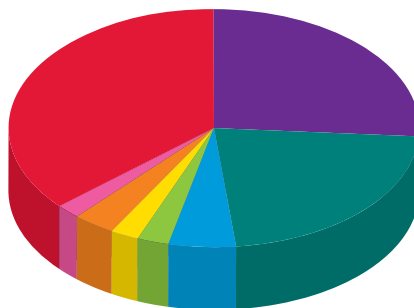




Operating Financials

FY11 Revenue

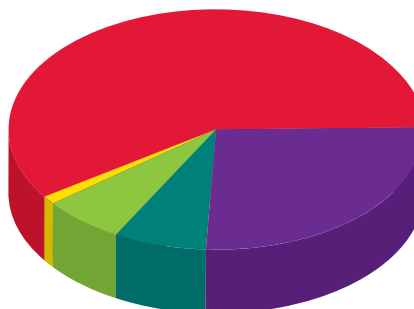
\$7,959,552



- NC Division of Child Dev..... \$2,905,748
- Meck. County DSS
(State & County Funding)... \$2,089,957
- Smart Start of
Mecklenburg,
Cabarrus & Union \$1,763,188
- United Way of
Central Carolinas..... \$408,710
- Child and Adult Care
Food Program..... \$214,880
- Fundraising (Non-grants) \$171,894
- Interest Income &
Investments \$256,123
- Other \$149,052

FY11 Expenses

\$7,634,629



- Training & Technical
Assistance \$4,537,613
- Financial Assistance
Programs \$1,992,206
- Information & Community
Education \$551,861
- Management &
General Assistance \$469,104
- Fundraising..... \$83,845

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“By working with CCRI and using the materials provided, we gained the knowledge to design a space that would accommodate the developmental needs of the infants and the toddlers in this combination classroom. Everything is labeled to promote literacy – even the changing table!”



Special thanks *for your generous support!*

Key Funding Partners

North Carolina Division of Child Development (*Core CCR&R Services, Infant/Toddler Enhancement, Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers, School-Age Quality Improvement*)

Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (*Child Care Financial Aid*)

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County (*Directors Leadership Academy, Families Reading Together, Infant Toddler Quality Initiative, Raising A Reader®, Reach for the Stars, Star Guard, Success @ Online Learning*)

Cabarrus County Partnership for Children (*Smart Start Training & Technical Assistance, Mobile Resource Center*)

United Way of Central Carolinas (*Early Care & Education Services, Family Child Care Networks, Family Information Services*)

United Way of Union County (*Early Care & Education Services*)

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