



# Status of Child Care Report 2008

A special edition of *The Resource* and an overview of child care in Blount, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties

## Why pay attention to child care?

*Imagine if your doctor could not work today because adequate, safe child care was not available. What if the same thing happened to your accountant, lawyer, hairdresser, banker, grocery attendant, gas station cashier or child's teacher who happens to be a parent? What if they had no place to leave their child while they performed their work?*

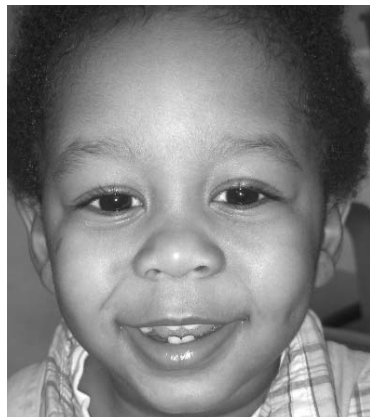
It's much like the plastics commercial where almost everything dissolves because plastic is so embedded in the everyday items we use that make our living and working possible.

Regardless of where you stand on the issue of working women, the fact is that in central

Alabama 59% of the workforce is comprised of women with young children. This is a trend that has seen an increase since 2000 in all counties but Shelby, which reports a slight decline of 1%.

Throughout this report, you will find facts and figures that create a picture of the vital role child care plays in our community. You will discover

who utilizes child care, where child care is available, what types of child care exist, what child care costs — **as much as in-state college tuition for one child annually** — and what the criteria are for providing child care.



As you read this report, ask yourself the following questions — Who do you know that uses child care on a regular basis in order for them to work? What do you think that parent wants for their child while in the care of another person? Who would you want caring for your child or your friend's child? What type of training should those who care for children have? **(A hairdresser is required to have more training than a person who cares for children.)**

What's a reasonable wage for someone who cares for children? **(Did you know that zookeepers earn more than people who care for our children?)** What regulations should there be for those who provide care to children? What would you be willing to pay to get the level of child care you desire?

Childcare Resources is not only the entity that reports this information but also the partner for children, families and the providers of care they use.

**Childcare Resources provides valuable training to 90% of our area's 949 child care providers.**

We have several programs available to child care providers that enhance the delivery of care to the children and families they serve. We help families locate child care and provide them with information to make a quality selection. We help families be able to afford the cost of child care.

We strive to make quality, affordable child care happen. We welcome your questions, comments and assistance to make this a reality in central Alabama. Please feel free to contact us or visit us at [www.ccr-bhm.org](http://www.ccr-bhm.org).

## Terminology in the report

- **Licensed Child Care Center:** In Alabama, all child care centers, unless exempted by law, are required to have a license. Licensing sets minimum standards for operating a child care facility. The licensing authority in Alabama is the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Licenses are valid for two years and should be on display in the center.
  - **License-Exempt Child Care Center:** Child care centers may be exempt from licensing by law if they operate as a church ministry or for less than four hours a day. In addition, programs operating on federal government property or by a state agency other than DHR — such as a public school or college / university — are also exempt from licensure.
  - **Family Day Care Home:** Facility within a family's home with a licensed capacity of up to six\* children. In Alabama, family day care homes are required to have a license. Licenses are valid for two years and should be on display.
  - **Group Day Care Home:** Facility within a family's home with a licensed capacity of up to 12\* children with two caregivers present at all times. In Alabama, all group day care homes are required to have a license. Licenses are valid for two years and should be on display.
  - **Licensed Capacity:** The maximum number of children that a child care provider is licensed to care for at one time.
  - **School-Age Care:** Facilities that provide care for children old enough to attend public school (5 years old and older).
  - **Mother's Day Out / Preschool Program:** Non-residential facility that provides child care less than four hours a day.
  - **National Accreditation:** National, voluntary accreditation systems designed to set professional standards for early childhood education programs and to help families identify high-quality programs. Accreditation is available through organizations such as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) and National AfterSchool Association (NAA).
- \* Number includes children under school age living at home.

# Demographics

In 2005, Jefferson County had a higher percentage of working women with young children (59.3%) than the state of Alabama (56.6%).

Source: Voices for Alabama's Children's Alabama Kids Count 2007 Data Book

"Every week, nearly 12 million children under age 5 are in some type of child care setting. The children of working mothers spend an average of 36 hours each week in child care. Very simply, child care has become part of the daily routine for millions of American families."

Source: We Can Do Better: National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight

## General Demographics

### Income

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount
Median Household Income 2005	\$38,520	\$61,972	\$32,634	\$38,643
Median Household Income 2000 *	\$40,116	\$63,320	\$32,623	\$37,645

### Population

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount
Total Population 2005	657,229	171,465	70,117	55,725
Total Population 2000	662,047	143,293	70,713	51,024
Children Under Age 5 2005	44,650	12,434	4,279	3,361
Children Under Age 5 2000	43,281	10,718	4,520	3,528

### Working Women with Young Children

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount
Percentage of Working Women with Young Children 2005	59.3%	53.9%	48.3%	54.9%
Percentage of Working Women with Young Children 2000	59.0%	54.9%	46.4%	45.2%

\* Adjusted for inflation

Source: Voices for Alabama's Children's Alabama Kids Count 2007 Data Book

## Childcare Resources Parent / Client Demographics

### Child Care Searches

	2007	2003	% Change
Number of Calls for Child Care Searches **	1,765	1,395	21% ↑

### Head of Household

	2007	2003
Single Female	24%	57%
Two-Parent Family	14%	40%
Single Male	1%	1%
No Response ***	61%	2%

### Ethnicity

	2007	2003
American Indian / Alaskan	0.4%	less than 1%
Asian Indian	0.74%	less than 1%
African-American	41%	65%
Hispanic	1%	2%
Caucasian	41%	28%
Asian	0.5%	less than 1%
No Response ***	15%	3%

### Level of Education

	2007	2003
Did Not Complete High School	0.23%	6%
High School Graduate / GED	10%	25%
Some College	11%	36%
Bachelor's Degree	9%	19%
Master's Degree / Doctorate	0.4%	7%
No Response ***	69%	7%

# Demographics

## Reported Annual Income

	2007	2003	% Change
\$20,000 or Less	25%	49%	24% ↓
<b>\$20,001 - \$50,000</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16% ↑</b>
\$50,001 or More	21%	20%	1% ↑
No Response ***	19%	12%	7% ↑

## Child Care Preference

	2007	2003	% Change
Child Care Center	39%	53%	14% ↓
Family Day Care Home / Group Day Care Home	43%	41%	2% ↑
<b>Mother's Day Out / Preschool Program</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>10% ↑</b>
School-Age Care	6%	4%	2% ↑

\*\* An unduplicated count of individuals who requested a child care search. The figure does not include calls requesting consumer education materials.

\*\*\* Many parents / clients using Childcare Resources' Online Child Care Service offered in 2007 opted not to share demographic information.

Source: Parents calling Childcare Resources for child care searches.



# Child care availability

## Number of Child Care Providers by County and Type of Care

### Licensed and License-Exempt Child Care Centers, Family and Group Day Care Homes

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount	Total	% Change
<b>Licensed Child Care Centers 2007</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>12% ↓</b>
Licensed Child Care Centers 2003	214	43	8	8	273	
<b>License-Exempt Child Care Centers 2007</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>3% ↑</b>
License-Exempt Child Care Centers 2003	195	19	7	6	227	
Family Day Care Homes 2007	129	27	3	3	162	30% ↓
Family Day Care Homes 2003	166	34	5	5	210	
Group Day Care Homes 2007	38	19	8	10	75	9% ↓
Group Day Care Homes 2003	47	18	9	8	82	
<b>Total 2007</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>11% ↓</b>
<b>Total 2003</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>792</b>	

Sources: Voices for Alabama's Children's *Alabama Kids Count 2007 Data Book* and *Alabama Kids Count 2003 Data Book*

### School-Age Care, Mother's Day Out / Preschool Programs

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount	Total	% Change
School-Age Care 2007	106	15	1	2	124	16% ↓
School-Age Care 2003	125	15	1	3	144	
Mother's Day Out / Preschool Programs 2007	88	18	3	4	113	11% ↓
Mother's Day Out / Preschool Programs 2003	104	15	2	4	125	
<b>GRAND TOTAL 2007</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>12% ↓</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL 2003</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1,061</b>	

Source: Childcare Resources

*From 2003 to 2007, all counties experienced an overall decrease in the availability of child care.*

Sources: Voices for Alabama's Children's *Alabama Kids Count 2007 Data Book* and *Alabama Kids Count 2003 Data Book*

# Child care availability

*Of the nine NAFCC-accredited homes, two have waiting lists (22%). Of the 11 non-Head Start, NAEYC-accredited facilities, nine have waiting lists (82%).*

Source: Childcare Resources

## Maximum Enrollment Capacity in Child Care Facilities \*

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount	Total
Child Care Centers	24,064	4,554	621	402	29,641
Family Day Care Homes	567	126	36	42	771
Group Day Care Homes	295	226	72	58	651
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,926</b>	<b>4,906</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>31,063</b>

Source: Childcare Resources

## Reported Vacancies in Licensed Child Care Facilities \*

	Jefferson	Shelby	Walker	Blount	Total
Child Care Centers	2,000	297	32	4	2,333
Family Day Care Homes	139	9	2	4	154
Group Day Care Homes	104	15	11	17	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,243</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2,634</b>

\* As reported December 1, 2007. Data is unavailable for 2003.

Source: Childcare Resources

# Child care quality

## National Accreditation

Child care providers often attain accreditation beyond state licensure in an effort to reach and maintain standards of excellence in child care. A total of 44 child care programs are accredited in the four-county area. This is 5% of total child care programs.



The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP) have a national, voluntary accreditation system to set professional standards for early childhood education programs and to help families identify high-quality programs. There are 35 NAEYC-accredited child care centers in Childcare Resources' four-county service area — 24 are Head Start classrooms and 11 are licensed and license-exempt child care centers. Of these 11 centers, four are located in Shelby County, and the remaining 7 are in Jefferson County.

Several programs in the four-county area are working toward national accreditation. Some of these providers are working with **Childcare Resources' RISE (Reaching Improvement through Self-Evaluation) program**, which helps providers engage in self-assessment to achieve higher quality. At this time, two RISE program participants are working towards National Accreditation Commission for the Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) accreditation, awarded by NACCP, and one program is working on NAEYC re-accreditation.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) is the accrediting body for family day care homes and group day care homes. There are nine nationally accredited family day care homes and group day care homes — two are located in Shelby County and seven are located in Jefferson County. The after-school program of one school system in Jefferson County is accredited by the National AfterSchool Association (NAA).

For more information on Childcare Resources' RISE program, please call Valerie Wyatt at [vmattern@ccr-bhm.org](mailto:vmattern@ccr-bhm.org) or (205) 795-2330.

Source: NAEYC, NAFCC, Childcare Resources

# Child care quality

## Child Care Ratio Changes

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) revised child care ratio standards for licensed child care centers and family and group day care homes in 2000. These standards were phased in from 2001-2005.

### Licensed Child Care Centers

	2007 Ratio	2003 Ratio	NAEYC Suggested Ratios *
Age Birth-18 Months	1 to 5	1 to 6	1 to 4
Age 18 Months-2 1/2 Years	1 to 7	1 to 8	1 to 5
Age 2-3 Years	1 to 8	1 to 9	1 to 5
Age 2 1/2 - 4 Years	1 to 11	1 to 12	1 to 5
Age 4-5 Years	1 to 18	1 to 20	1 to 10
School Age up to Age 8	1 to 21	1 to 22	1 to 12 **
Age 8 and Older	1 to 22	1 to 25	1 to 12 **

\* NAEYC ratios are based on group sizes and different age ranges than the Alabama Department of Human Resources' *Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers Regulations and Procedures*, making it difficult to make comparisons between the two.

\*\* NAEYC no longer offers accreditation for school-age care.

Source: NAEYC, Alabama Department of Human Resources

### Family Day Care Homes and Group Day Care Homes

	# Children ***	Maximum # Infants ***	Minimum # Caregivers
Family Day Care Homes	1-6	3	1
Group Day Care Homes	7-12	6	2

\*\*\* Number of children includes children under school age living in the home.

Source: Alabama Department of Human Resources

## Child Care Provider Licensee Qualifications

Licensed providers of child care, whether center-based or family / group day care homes, must meet Alabama DHR licensing qualifications as outlined in the *Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers Regulations and Procedures*, or *Minimum Standards for Day Care Homes / Family Nighttime Homes and Group Day Care Homes / Group Nighttime Homes Regulations and Procedures*, accordingly. Regulations address qualifications for directors and teachers, staff to child ratios, and facility requirements among others. One consistent requirement is pre-requisite and on-going training for those who care for our children.

Current training for those entrusted to care and teach young children is a critical aspect of high quality care and education. Annually, licensed child care directors and teachers must receive training that complies with the six DHR approved categories of child care: child development; health, safety and universal precautions; quality child care and licensing; child care professional and family; language development; and positive discipline and guidance.

Childcare Resources is one of several quality contractors for DHR. As such, Childcare Resources' training programs are approved to meet continuing education requirements through DHR. Additionally, Childcare Resources has been approved as an Authorized Provider by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).\*\*\*\* IACET has rigorous criteria which must be met in order to carry their accreditation.

Childcare Resources trains approximately 90% of child care providers in the Birmingham area. Training programs are offered at Childcare Resources' downtown office or at child care centers and homes through the Training To Go program. Classes vary in length and cost, from two hours to all day and from free to nominal amounts. For more information or to receive a quarterly calendar of training classes and conferences, please contact Brian Stack at (205) 795-2312 or bstack@ccr-bhm.org.

\*\*\*\* Childcare Resources has been approved as an Authorized Provider by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), 8405 Greensboro Drive, Suite 800, McLean, VA 22102.

Sources: Alabama Department of Human Resources, Childcare Resources

*Alabama ranks #31 among the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense for state child care center licensing standards and oversight.*

Source: *We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight*



*"Child care teachers are working with children during the most powerful, formative, foundational time in a person's life. It stands to reason that quality child care should be an issue for us all."*

Source: *Kathi Wales, Child Development Program Coordinator, Jefferson State Community College*

# Child care quality

Child care teachers in Alabama make an average of \$7.12 per hour. Hairdressers make \$11.60, refuse and recyclable material collectors make \$10.67 and non-farm animal caretakers make \$9.01.

Source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

## Demographic Information on Teachers in Child Care Centers

### Level of Education \*

	2005	2003
High School Diploma / GED	62%	79%
Associate's (Two-Year) Degree	14%	5%
Bachelor's Degree	10%	5%

### Ethnicity \*

	2005	2003
African-American	52%	51%
Caucasian	44%	45%
Hispanic	1%	1%

### Job Satisfaction \*

	2005	2003
Very Likely or Somewhat Likely to Leave Their Current Job Within Three Years	51%	52%
Very Likely or Somewhat Likely to Leave Their Current Job in One Year	29%	33%

### Wages \*\*

	2007	2000 ***
Average Hourly Wage	\$7.12	\$7.10

\* Source: Alabama Partnership For Children's 2005 Alabama Child Care Workforce Study

\*\* Source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

\*\*\* Adjusted for inflation

# Child care affordability

Economists say that a family should allocate 10% of the household budget to child care expenses. In order for this to be feasible for an average family in Jefferson County, the household income would need to be \$64,610. The reality is far below this at \$38,520 for a family in Jefferson County. Take note that this reflects a drop in actual income of \$1,600 since 2000; yet, child care costs have risen as much as 12% in that same time. **The picture becomes startlingly clear: working families who are striving to achieve self-sufficiency are truly fighting an uphill struggle, spending as much as 16%-40% of their income just for child care!**



In Alabama, a family making as much as 130% above the federal poverty level — or \$16,680 a year (family of two) — can apply to have a portion of their child care costs subsidized. DHR contracts with local entities to manage the subsidy program. Clients pay according to their income based on a sliding scale ranging from \$5.00 to \$72.50 per week per child.

In an effort to fill the gap, **Childcare Resources** initiated a unique financial assistance program called the **Supplemental Child Care Program** — which enables a family of two earning as little as \$16,681 to reduce their child care expenses by 8%-10%. Funding from various sources makes this program possible, yet there are currently over 600 eligible children on the waiting list.

Source: Childcare Resources

# Child care affordability

## Average Weekly Cost of Care in Licensed Centers

	Infants (Up to 12 months)	Toddlers (1-2 Years)	Preschool (3-4 Years)	School Age (5+ Years)
Jefferson County 2007	\$119.32	\$115.97	\$105.89	\$90.15
Jefferson County 2003	\$110.06	\$104.99	\$98.00	\$87.90
Shelby County 2007	\$156.05	\$148.99	\$134.16	\$123.80
Shelby County 2003	\$128.78	\$121.96	\$109.23	\$105.76
Walker County 2007	\$85.83	\$83.57	\$81.43	\$80.00
Walker County 2003	\$76.83	\$73.50	\$71.66	\$67.42
Blount County 2007	\$90.50	\$86.50	\$77.50	\$77.50
Blount County 2003	\$82.67	\$77.84	\$73.33	\$73.33
Four-County Average 2007	\$124.26	\$119.97	\$109.02	\$95.42
Four-County Average 2003	\$111.32	\$105.98	\$98.25	\$89.87
<b>% Change</b>	<b>10%↑</b>	<b>12%↑</b>	<b>10%↑</b>	<b>6%↑</b>

Source: Childcare Resources

## Average Weekly Cost of Care in Family Day Care Homes

	Infants (Up to 12 months)	Toddlers (1-2 Years)	Preschool (3-4 Years)	School Age (5+ Years)
Jefferson County 2007	\$95.81	\$94.26	\$91.94	\$86.24
Jefferson County 2003	\$86.83	\$85.15	\$83.49	\$81.18
Shelby County 2007	\$121.33	\$121.18	\$120.90	\$143.62
Shelby County 2003	\$102.71	\$101.93	\$101.57	\$92.05
Walker County 2007	\$73.00	\$73.00	\$72.50	\$71.67
Walker County 2003	\$67.50	\$70.00	\$67.71	\$66.67
Blount County 2007	\$80.00	\$79.00	\$75.00	\$75.00
Blount County 2003	\$65.00	\$68.75	\$68.75	\$68.33
Four-County Average 2007	\$98.31	\$96.91	\$94.66	\$92.30
Four-County Average 2003	\$88.39	\$87.16	\$85.81	\$82.07
<b>% Change</b>	<b>10%↑</b>	<b>10%↑</b>	<b>9%↑</b>	<b>11%↑</b>

Source: Childcare Resources

## Average Weekly Cost of Care in Group Day Care Homes

	Infants (Up to 12 months)	Toddlers (1-2 Years)	Preschool (3-4 Years)	School Age (5+ Years)
Jefferson County 2007	\$102.74	\$101.00	\$93.83	\$87.68
Jefferson County 2003	\$88.57	\$86.67	\$85.65	\$81.50
Shelby County 2007	\$118.53	\$117.10	\$115.57	\$111.25
Shelby County 2003	\$103.46	\$103.15	\$102.23	\$99.57
Walker County 2007	\$76.67	\$76.67	\$76.67	\$75.00
Walker County 2003	\$73.00	\$72.50	\$72.50	\$70.56
Blount County 2007	\$74.00	\$73.00	\$72.00	\$71.25
Blount County 2003	\$71.00	\$71.67	\$71.25	\$70.50
Four-County Average 2007	\$102.12	\$101.07	\$97.71	\$90.91
Four-County Average 2003	\$96.93	\$94.92	\$92.14	\$89.54
<b>% Change</b>	<b>5%↑</b>	<b>6%↑</b>	<b>6%↑</b>	<b>1.5%↑</b>

Source: Childcare Resources

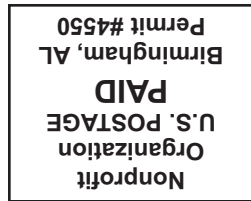
*In central Alabama, parents pay an average annual cost of \$6,461 per child for child care — more than the cost of annual tuition at Auburn University or the University of Alabama.*

Source: Childcare Resources

*The highest fee currently being charged is \$225 per week for infant care in a Jefferson County family day care home.*

Source: Childcare Resources

**About the Data:** All Childcare Resources data was collected during the fall of 2007 and compiled in January 2008.



## What Do We Do Now? Next Steps...

Quality, affordable child care is about more than just being a safe place where kids go while their parents work. Increasingly, child care is found in sentences that include “wise investment” and “a key factor in economic development.”

Volumes of research are being referenced touting the necessity for children to have quality early learning experiences because they respond to it and need it to maximize their potential in school and life.

So what’s a person to do? Consider this:

### Employers

- Ensure that wages are fair so that employees can afford the expense of child care.
- Subsidize child care slots for employees, especially if child care facilities are on-site.
- Offer and encourage participation in Flexible Spending Accounts so that employees can maximize tax savings on their dependent care expenses.
- Purchase sick child care slots for your employees so they have

a place to take their child when he/she is sick and the employee won’t have to miss work.

- Purchase training vouchers or stipends for child care providers so they can send their staff to area trainings.
- Encourage staff to volunteer at local child care centers to read to children or teach a skill like music or art.

### Child Care Providers

- Support staff to attend training courses.
- Sign up for the Early Learning Resource Center and Library or Training To Go offered by Childcare Resources.
- Hire quality staff that truly care for children and support their healthy growth and development.
- Encourage parent involvement in their child’s development.
- Take advantage of resources to strengthen program delivery such as Childcare Resources’ Parents as Teachers, Infant/Toddler Outreach, or RISE programs.

### Families

- Ask your child care provider about training they attend.

- Be informed: Childcare Resources offers training for parents, too. **Remember that children don’t come with instructions!**
- Show your child care provider how much you appreciate them: bring them lunch one day, offer to pay for training for the staff, or share a talent you have like music or art with the class.
- Volunteer to read at your child’s center or share something interesting about your customs or culture.

### General Public

- Be informed: visit the Childcare Resources web site ([www-ccr-bhm.org](http://www-ccr-bhm.org)) or other sites that support children like VOICES for Alabama’s Children, Children’s Health System or National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, to mention a few.
- Advocate for support of children’s issues: contact your state representative or senator.
- Show appreciation for the working parents in your life.

The mission of Childcare Resources is to make quality care and education of children happen by providing information, education, and assistance to families, providers of child care, and the community.

### Childcare Resources Mission

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Editor

REPORT 2008  
SPRING 2008

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Serving Blount, Jefferson, Shelby & Walker Counties

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