



SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Summary

There is a significant need for increased access to safe, affordable, quality child care programs, as families move into an era of welfare reform which relies heavily on work. Without an increased investment in expanding child care programs, many working low income families will find themselves without safe, affordable, quality child care.

Conference Position

The Catholic Conference supports efforts to expand the availability and use of quality, affordable, subsidized child care opportunities to meet the needs and demands of families transitioning out of public assistance, as well as other low income families.

Rationale

Young children should not be left unattended while their parents attempt to earn a living. Families who have come to rely on child care subsidies to provide safe, affordable, quality child care should continue to have these services available as additional families move from public assistance into work as a result of on-going welfare reforms.

To achieve this end, the Conference seeks a number of specific actions including:

- increased funding to ensure the adequate training and oversight of child care workers with targeted funding to train community service and other workers moving from public assistance to greater financial independence;
- additional funding and technical assistance to help prepare, monitor and ensure the quality of increased numbers of family and center-based child care providers, and especially to assist persons leaving public assistance for work in the child care arena;
- expanded subsidies for child care to provide a sliding-scale fee for families up to 85 percent of the State Median Income;
- development of tax credits and similar incentives to encourage the development of before and after-school and non-traditional programs such as those designed for the mildly ill and late-hour users, in sites accessible to working families;
- increased use of early childhood development and child care systems that seek to maximize a more comprehensive, developmental approach;
- increased funding for early childhood development and child care start-up efforts to accommodate growth in demand for these programs; and
- increased funding to elevate salaries of child care workers to reflect the value of the work performed.