



Maryland Committee for Children Backgrounder

Maryland Committee for Children, Inc. (MCC), a private, non-profit organization founded in 1945, is an advocate and catalyst for the development of a strong system of quality child care, early education, and family support on a local, state, and national level. MCC has a rich history of action in matters affecting children, families, and the child care community of this state.

MCC (formerly known as the Maryland Committee for the Group Day Care of Children) was founded to present an organized voice in support of continued federal funding for child care programs and to promote better child care services throughout Maryland. Between 1946 and 1964, the primary focus of the organization was to: provide training for teachers in child care programs; help raise money for the operation of child care centers; conduct research; and spearhead the fight for child care regulation.

In 1965, the organization combined its former board and professional advisory committee with members of the public at large, thereby broadening its base and more effectively reaching the general public to interpret the need for quality child care services. In 1966, the organization received its first foundation funding and the first paid staff was hired from an annual budget of \$20,000. The staff, budget, and scope of the organization continued on this level through the 1960s.

In the early 1970s, MCC's board undertook a complex planning process to determine how to best meet the developmental needs of children. Its decision was to expand the organization's ability to offer support services to parents and people who work with young children. With this decision reached, the organization focused its direct services to the child care community.

Today, Maryland Committee for Children is the state's foremost child advocacy organization. Whether it is improving early childhood education and development opportunities, providing technical assistance and training to current and prospective child care providers, promoting the establishment of child care programs and professional opportunities within the field, helping working parents in need of child care, working with employers on work/family policy issues, or stimulating the supply of child care resources across the state, Maryland Committee for Children addresses the issues head on and takes action.

Comprising of a professional staff of 70, a board of 21, and hundreds of members, supporters, and volunteers, Maryland Committee for Children is a private, non-profit, 501 (c)(3) charitable, educational institution which currently has an operating budget of approximately \$7.6 million. Headquartered at 608 Water Street in Baltimore, MCC's building offers over 16,000 square feet of space for MCC's many activities, including office space, workshops, training, meeting rooms, and a library. MCC's programmatic areas include Public Policy; the Maryland Child Care Resource Network; LOCATE: Child

Care; Training and TECHNIC: Child Care; Development and Marketing, as well as the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center.

Public Policy

The constant thread through MCC's history, from its early days to the present, is its activities pertaining to the development of public policy. MCC's Public Policy Committee is composed of children's advocates who are professionals and volunteers in the public and private sectors. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in working in the child care advocacy arena. The only expectation is that each member shares in carrying out the responsibility of the Public Policy Committee by serving on a subcommittee or by performing other tasks as needed.

Priorities are developed and adopted annually by the Public Policy Committee and serve as the basis for deciding which issues will be initiated and responded to during the General Assembly session and throughout the year. Subcommittees are established to deal with priority areas. Each subcommittee is responsible for conducting research, documenting the extent of the problem, and reporting its recommendations to the full Public Policy Committee. The Committee then debates the issues and arrives at a consensus for MCC's positions. New positions are brought to MCC's Board of Directors for approval.

While the policy development process is time consuming, it results in a well-balanced viewpoint and a clear direction for future action. The Committee is able to address a wide variety of issues that affect the quality of life for children and their families, as well as the needs of the child care community. Whether it is a question of the standards in child care funding, training, regulation, child abuse and neglect, welfare reform, child health, early childhood education, or services to children with special needs, the Public Policy Committee studies and evaluates the issues at stake and offers possible solutions. When the Public Policy Committee takes a position on an issue or legislation, it is one arrived at through consensus and, as such, is viewed as reliable by public policy planners.

Although primarily active on a state level, the Public Policy Committee also reviews federal and local initiatives. For example, the Committee actively monitored regulations on federal child care funding and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Committee was involved in advocacy efforts to protect child care programs and funding in federal welfare reform legislation as well as to support a major federal child care initiative in 1998. In addition to taking positions on legislative initiatives, the Committee has developed a variety of resource papers addressing such issues as: the care of infants in groups; the importance of early childhood education; school-age child care; programs for four-year-olds; child care services for children with special needs; collaboration between preschool programs; the compensation of child care professionals; and preventing the spread of bloodborne diseases in child care programs.

For the last 12 years, the Public Policy Department has coordinated a statewide campaign to educate low- and moderate-income Marylanders about the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC). Funded in recent years by the Department of Human Resources and comprising approximately 150 partners, the Maryland Earned Income Credit Campaign has successfully spread the word about the EIC to individuals, families, employers, and employees across the state. The widespread support generated by the EIC Campaign over the years was instrumental in the development and passage of state legislation in 1998 to make a portion of the Maryland EIC refundable. In 2001, the Campaign again led a successful legislative effort to increase the refundable portion of the state EIC. The Campaign has expanded its mission to include information about the state EIC in all of its public education materials.

The Public Policy Department provides advocacy workshops and presentations at various local, state, regional, and national child care conferences. It also serves as a resource to the child care community and the press on child care and other issues of concern to children and families. The Department has frequently operated a strong internship program, utilizing graduate and undergraduate students from several schools in a variety of fields, including early childhood education, social work, political science, and maternal and child health.

Finally, the Public Policy Department has been an active partner in several coalitions and groups that focus on relevant children's and families' issues. These include Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP), Ready At Five Partnership, Maryland Children's Action Network (MDCAN), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Advisory Council, the Coalition for Inclusive Child Care, and Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

Maryland Child Care Resource Network

For the past 15 years, the Maryland Child Care Resource Network has been evolving. The Maryland Committee for Children has provided oversight and guidance to the project from its conception. From a three- year demonstration project that established a Statewide Child Care Resource Center and three Regional Child Care Resource Centers, the vision grew to scale with a total of 13 regional Child Care Resource and Referral Centers in 1999. In 2003 a state budget crisis brought a 33.4% reduction in funding. As a result, one resource center had to be closed Hands-on Technical Assistance services were suspended and Training Services were reduced. A search for new funding to restore all services is underway.

The Maryland Employers Advisory Council on Child Care was initiated in 1988 by MCC as part of its Work/Family Initiatives Project (funded by the Goldseker and Straus Foundations). Its purpose was to apply the acumen of a select group of Maryland's corporate, union, and government leaders to the problems that have plagued child care delivery in this state. Chaired by Sanford I. Weill (Chairman, Citigroup, Inc.), the Council's goal was to develop an effective business plan for improved child care delivery statewide.

With the help of then Governor William Donald Schaefer, Mr. Weill successfully recruited to the Council the leaders and chief executives of corporations and organizations. Included were PHH Corporation, Baltimore Gas & Electric Company, Department of Business and Economic Development, The Baltimore Sun, Baltimore Council of AFL-CIO Unions, Legg Mason Wood Walker, Inc., Blue Cross Blue Shield of Maryland, and Nationwide Fulfillment Systems.

Over the next year, the Council reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of Maryland's child care delivery system, compared it to the delivery systems of Massachusetts and California (which were at the time regarded as the leaders in child care), and considered nationally debated models for improved child care delivery. After substantial study, the Council determined that the child care delivery system in Maryland offered a sound base on which to build, but lacked adequate supports to facilitate the development of quality child care across the state.

Accordingly, the Council's proposal called for the initiation of a public-private partnership project that would develop an infrastructure for the state's child care delivery system through the creation of a private, nonprofit child care resource center network across Maryland. This network would deliver an array of services designed to improve and expand child care resources and would actively involve a broadly defined group of "shareholders" in the development of these resources. The Council identified the

"shareholders" community to be parents, providers, regulators, employers, educators, labor groups, local and state government, public agencies, and civic, charitable, and advocacy organizations.

Ultimately, this new network, now known as the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, would include local child care resource and referral centers in each of the state's 13 child care licensing regions. The Network would deliver services such as helping parents find and learn how to evaluate and select child care; providing training to child care personnel and parents to improve skills; offering technical assistance to employers to help companies become more "family friendly"; providing assistance to those who are starting new child care programs, expanding existing ones, or struggling to stay in business; collecting data which documents the needs of young children and their families as well as the child care delivery system; engaging in public educational activities to heighten awareness about quality child care and strengthen the delivery system; and serving as a catalyst to foster collaboration among all sectors delivering services to young children and their families.

The Council proposed a three-year demonstration of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network in order to test the model. The demonstration would provide for the creation of a Statewide Child Care Resource Center and three Child Care Resource and Referral Centers, one each in an urban, rural, and suburban region of the state, at a total cost of \$7,000,000. In a move that was without national precedent, the Council agreed to raise approximately one-third of its cost from the private sector for the demonstration, provided that the State of Maryland commit to funding the balance of the project's cost. The Council's proposal is documented in detail in the report, *Shareholders in the Future: Marylanders Invest in Child Care*.

In November 1988, Governor Schaefer endorsed the Council's proposal, and during its 1989, 1990, and 1991 sessions, the Maryland General Assembly approved the state's share of the demonstration project's first, second, and third year funding. The Network demonstration project was hugely successful, and in subsequent years the General Assembly approved funding for the continuation of the project beyond the demonstration phase. MCC was initially identified through a request for proposals process, administered by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), as the Statewide Child Care Resource Center and as the operator of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network. As such, it assumed primary responsibility for implementing the demonstration project. In 1993 and in 1995, MCC was again awarded the contract by DHR to guide the Network, as the project was funded and extended beyond its demonstration period.

A request for proposals was issued by MCC to determine the operators of the three Child Care Resource and Referral Centers within the demonstration. As a result of that process, a contract was signed with Western Maryland Child Care Resource Center, Inc. (subsequently Resources for Children & Families) to operate the rural child care resource center and with Prince George's Private Industry Council, Inc. (now Prince George's Child Resource Center) to operate the suburban child care resource center. Since a qualifying proposal was not submitted for the urban child care resource center, MCC was charged with the development of this center and received a planning grant in this regard from the United Way of Central Maryland, Inc.

The second chairman of the Maryland Employers Advisory Council on Child Care was Richard E. Hug, Chairman of the Board of Environmental Elements Corporation. Mr. Hug and the Council committed to raising the private sector funding necessary for the demonstration from a variety of funding sources including their own companies, other employers, local, state and national philanthropies, and United Way Campaigns. Since its inception, nearly \$2,000,000 has been contributed or pledged from the private sector to the Network project.

In 1995, the Joint Chairman's Report of the Maryland General Assembly addressed the long-term plan to expand the Maryland Child Care Resource Network into all regions of the state. It was not until May

1997 that the Child Care and Development Fund Steering Committee of the Department of Human Resources recommended expansion of the statewide system. The 1998 General Assembly approved the Governor's request to fund this expansion. On February 10, 1998, the Maryland Department of Human Resources issued a Request for Proposals to identify a Statewide Coordinating Entity (SCE) to operate Maryland's expanded Network through June 30, 2001. MCC was again awarded the contract on May 1, 1998.

Subsequently, MCC issued a statewide request for proposals to continue Network services and to create new regional child care resource centers (CCRCs). In June 1998, grants were awarded to Resources for Children and Families (Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties), Prince George's CCRC, Baltimore City CCRC, Anne Arundel County Government, Howard County Government, Montgomery County Government, Epilepsy Association of Maryland (Baltimore County), Human Services Programs of Carroll County, Southern Maryland Interagency Consortium for Children and Families (Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties), and Frederick County Mental Health Association. In September 1998, a contract was signed with Open Doors to operate a CCRC in Harford and Cecil Counties. In addition, MCC contracted with Chesapeake College in March 1999 for the Upper Shore CCRC (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties). Negotiations with Salisbury State University for the operation of the Lower Shore CCRC were completed in September 1999, and all thirteen CCRCs were now fully operational throughout Maryland.

On March 9, 2001, the Maryland Department of Human Resources again issued a Request for Proposals to determine a SCE to operate the Network from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2004. MCC was once again successful with its proposal and was awarded the contract. Due to processing difficulties within the Department of Human Resources the start of the new contract was delayed until September 1, 2001 and will continue through August 31, 2004.

MCC also was required, as the current SCE, to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Centers on April 2, 2001 since contracts were due to expire June 30, 2001. All of the previously existing centers responded and ultimately were awarded contracts for the same time frame as MCC. Since that time, Resources for Children and Families, as proposed in their response to the RFP, has helped to create a separate independent agency to assume responsibility for operation of the CCRC. The new agency is Apples for Children, Inc.

In the spring of 2003 we were informed that the State budget for FY 2004 included a 33.4% reduction in funding for the Maryland Child Care Resource Network. After consulting with the Maryland Department of Human Resources and receiving input from regional CCRCs, a plan was developed to deal with the funding crisis. The service to parents (LOCATE: Child Care) remained intact, Training was reduced, and hands-on Technical Assistance was suspended. The CCRC for Carroll County was closed. Carroll County and Frederick County were designated as a region to be served by Child Care Choices in Frederick.

Child care resource and referral centers are designed to become a focal point for child care activity within the community. As the SCE, the primary charge of MCC is to provide oversight and technical support to local CCRCs, and to guide the development of the Network. Acting in its capacity as SCE for the Network, MCC and the Network Advisory Board recognized the need to develop a results-based accountability system for the Network. The challenge was to develop an accountability system that clearly demonstrates and documents the role(s) of the CCRC in contributing to the desired outcomes and that measures how well that role is being carried out. In June 1999, with a workshop presented by Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute, the process was started. Using the concepts learned in that workshop, a work group composed of Advisory Board members, local resource center staff, and MCC staff, with the ongoing support of Kelly Hyde of Accountability Solutions, spent 12 months developing the Maryland Child Care Resource Network Results-Based Accountability System

Based on an exhaustive review of the core functions and services of the resource centers, the workgroup developed a preliminary list of service activities to be measured and evaluated. Due to the high volume of units of service within these activities, a sampling methodology was devised for most of the quality indicators. The Network Advisory Board approved that this preliminary plan be implemented on a demonstration basis beginning July 1, 2000. The demonstration showed that additional software support was needed and it was subsequently developed. In addition, it became obvious that some of the activities being measured were management focused or less critical in documenting the achievement of results. The decision was therefore made to focus on the most important and relevant results for families, providers, and communities. Data on the other activities will continue to be collected and analyzed for management purposes but not, at this time, as an official part of the Results-Based Accountability System. Although some minor adjustments were required and the need for additional software development was identified, the demonstration period was productive and the system became fully operational under the new contract on September 1, 2001. The first report to the Maryland Legislature, based on the first quarter of full implementation, was made in February 2002 and clearly showed the excellent quality of work being performed by the Network. The second report, based on a full year of implementation, was made in February 2003 and continued to document the excellent work done by the Network.

The Maryland Child Care Resource Network has exceeded all programmatic expectations. Between September 1990 (when the Network's three regional child care resource centers joined MCC in providing services) and June 2003, the Network has:

- Helped 307,860 callers find child care for 419,539 children;
- Trained 130,285 individuals who were interested in providing care, improving their programs, or bettering their parenting skills;
- Assisted 104,843 callers needing information on starting or expanding child care programs/resources;
- Helped create 6,330 new family child care homes;
- Helped create 713 new or expanded child care centers; and
- Increased the supply of child care by 62,826 spaces.

There has been significant national interest in this initiative, not only because it embodies the spirit of public-private partnership, but also because it provides a model for other states. In fact, in March 2003, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies announced that all of the Network's local CCRCs had met Child Care Aware Quality Assurance standards--making Maryland the first state in the nation to achieve this superior distinction

LOCATE: Child Care

LOCATE: Child Care is a resource and referral system unlike any other in the country. It is designed as a database management system, to be maintained at a central location and accessed electronically by staff of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network's regional child care resource centers (CCRCs). In this way, parents are served best by counselors and staff who are aware of the local communities' child care strengths and needs.

In 1991, the LOCATE database was converted to an IBM hardware system and a new software program was developed which allows data to be transferred electronically. Over the years, the software was further refined to heighten the reporting capabilities of the LOCATE database. These improvements allow for more comprehensive analyses of child care data in order to determine current trends. Additional advancements and improvements in the LOCATE software program were made allowing LOCATE to streamline processes and provide more cost efficient services. The changes included a quicker and more accurate method of data entry; stronger case management components; improvements in reporting capabilities; and an automation of child care workers' salary and benefits information.

Changes in computer technology created the need for the LOCATE program to be re-written into a Windows-based environment. In 2002, the first phase of the re-write, the counselor search process was completed. All Network counselors were trained and transitioned to the updated system.

The centralized database allows for statistical analysis of the status of child care in Maryland to be addressed through publications such as *Child Care In Maryland - LOCATE Child Care Database Information*, *Child Care Demographics Reports*, and *Family Child Care Providers in Maryland, A Profile*. These publications document issues of concern to the child care community and general public, such as the number of providers/programs; cost of care; salaries and benefits of child care workers; capacity of child care programs; and demand/supply ratios. The information gathered by the regional CCRCs is included in the LOCATE: Child Care quarterly database publications.

LOCATE's beneficiaries include children and their parents, employers, and the child care community. However, its primary purpose is to assist parents in selecting and locating child care best suited to their needs, preferences, and ability to pay. It is an educational and support service that respects parents' rights to choose the child care most appropriate for the child and family. LOCATE's database contains information on every licensed 8-12 hour child care program, part-day program, nursery school, kindergarten, infant program, Head Start, Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP), camp, and family child care provider throughout Maryland. LOCATE is provided with the names of regulated programs/providers by the Child Care Administration, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Annually, LOCATE staff mail out multi-paged questionnaires to all family child care providers and center-based programs to gather information by which child care searches are conducted.

LOCATE provides two levels of resource and referral counseling: basic and enhanced. The basic level of the resource and referral service can be utilized by any parent through a publicly available telephone number or by coming to Maryland Committee for Children or any of the 12 Network sites.

A LOCATE resource counselor discusses child care options with the parent, based on the age of the child and the type, location, hours, and cost of desired care. After receiving this information and providing counseling on the range of child care options available, the counselor searches the database to identify programs/providers which seem to address parental needs as stated. Over the telephone, the counselor provides the name, address, and telephone number of 5-10 child care providers or programs. If desired, parents can choose a more extensive listing of 12-15 facilities in the area indicated. A pamphlet which points out factors to be considered when evaluating and selecting quality child care is also included in this mailing. With this information in hand, the parent then chooses the best situation for his/her child. LOCATE users are charged a basic, nominal fee for mailed information. However, no one is denied assistance because of inability to pay.

LOCATE offers enhanced resource and referral counseling services to the corporate community on an annual subscription basis. By subscribing to LOCATE, employers are able to effectively assist their

employees in finding child care. In addition to the basic counseling and information on choosing child care, their employees receive other services, such as direct access via a private telephone line to LOCATE counselors who offer referrals only to programs with vacancies and conduct 100% child care placement follow-up advice until all community resources are exhausted. Employees also receive information on important up-to-date child care tax benefits and possible federal financial assistance for child care expenses.

LOCATE provides employers with information about their employees' preferences for child care and the availability of programs in the community. Such information assists companies wishing to determine whether the need exists for additional child care involvement, such as employer subsidized child care, parenting seminars and/or on-site child care centers.

In recent years, LOCATE answered to the needs of a growing regional corporate market with the expansion of the database to include regulated providers and child care programs in Washington, D.C. and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Fauquier.

Enhanced child care resource and referral services are also available to parents of children with special needs. When a call is identified as pertaining to a child with special needs, it is referred to a designated counselor who offers support, identifies community resources, and supplies the names of family child care providers or center-based programs that have vacancies and can accommodate the special needs of the child. Since 1994, LOCATE has been receiving funds from Maryland's Infants and Toddlers Program to provide enhanced child care resource and referral services to families of children ages birth through three years who are receiving early intervention services through the Infants and Toddlers Program. Through data collected by LOCATE, it was apparent that there was need for this type of service by families of older children with disabilities as well. In 1999, MCC was awarded a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education to expand the enhanced service to families of children with disabilities, birth through 21 years of age. Demand remains high: for the year ending June 30, 2003, counselors provided this enhanced resource and referral service to 935 Maryland families.

With the increase in full-time staff providing the Special Needs Enhanced Service, a standard of operations manual was needed to ensure that all parents were consistently receiving the same level of service. Therefore, a new manual was developed entitled: *LOCATE: Child Care Resource and Referral Operations Manual, Volume VIII: Special Needs Enhanced Services*. The manual is updated annually to reflect changes in processes and/or policies.

Maryland has seen a remarkable increase in recent years in the number of Spanish speaking residents. Over time, MCC has become acutely aware that many of these Hispanic families do not take advantage of many services available to them due to the language barrier. With this awareness, MCC appealed to MSDE for an increase in funding to allow for hiring a part-time Spanish speaking LOCATE counselor with a special needs background.

Much has been accomplished since the bi-lingual counselor joined LOCATE's staff. The counselor translated all LOCATE materials, such as forms and letters, as well as a brochure describing LOCATE: Child Care to be shared with the Spanish-speaking child care community. Brochures describing the Americans with Disabilities Act and how to choose child care for children with Special Needs were also translated into Spanish. Over time, the counselor contacted over 100 agencies that offer services to Spanish-speaking families throughout the state to inform them of the availability of LOCATE's Enhanced Special Needs Service and to expand the Community Resources Database. The bi-lingual counselor served on a conference committee that organized a well attended conference for Spanish speaking child

care providers from the Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. In addition, she participated in several conferences in Maryland where information on the Spanish service was shared.

In addition to the LOCATE services already described, parents can access LOCATE through the Maryland Committee for Children's website. *LOCATE Assistant* (in English and Spanish), a simplified version of the program used by the counselors when searching for child care for parents, was added to the website in early 2002. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, 88,386 searches for child care in Maryland occurred through the English version of *LOCATE Assistant*. These include 43,575 searches for infant care, 35,393 toddler searches, 3,331 pre-school searches and 6,782 school age searches. There were 89 searches conducted through the Spanish version of the program. These included 16 searches for infant care, 70 for toddler care, and 3 searches for school age child care.

In conjunction with MCC's work in the area of special needs, LOCATE staff continues to be involved in a long range project called *Coalition for Inclusive Child Care*. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that children with disabilities have access to child care alongside their typically developing peers. Maryland is one of ten states involved in this project, which is sponsored by the federal Child Care Bureau. The mission of Maryland's project is to put all children first by providing leadership to facilitate changes in attitudes and services through education, training, and support resulting in high quality, available, accessible, affordable child care that insures acceptance for all children and families.

Children's mental health has been very much in the foreground in recent years. LOCATE developed a brochure called: "Identifying Childhood Mental Illness: How Child Care Providers Can Help." This publication was designed to help child care providers identify symptoms or behaviors that could be signs of mental illness. Along with the development of the brochure, LOCATE staff created a two-part training workshop centered on awareness of children's mental health. LOCATE staff also developed two workshops: "Strategies for Managing Oppositional Defiant Behaviors" and "Positive Discipline Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior". The demand for training that focuses on special needs or children's mental health topics increased significantly during the past year as LOCATE staff gave a total of 14 presentations at nine different local and regional conferences.

In December of 2002, MCC, in a partnership with several state departments and other Maryland non-profit agencies, developed a conference entitled *The Young Children's Mental Health Policy Conference 2002*. This conference brought together many participants interested in current research in children's mental health and the status of the children's mental health system in Maryland.

Annually, LOCATE counselors participate in MCC's Earned Income Credit Campaign by sharing information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC) with callers on LOCATE's Community Line. As part of the intake process, if a parent indicates they are within the family income guidelines, the LOCATE counselor offers an 800 number that allows them to obtain more information about the Earned Income Tax Credit and how to complete the forms for receipt of the credit.

Over the years, LOCATE has extensively expanded the LOCATE: Community Resources Assistant. There are 4,713 entries of non-child care information and resources which are helpful to parents and/or child care providers, but are not within LOCATE's provider database. The fields in each record are the agency name, site and mailing address, telephone number, hours of operation, populations and areas served, fees, eligibility requirements, sponsorship, contact name, and additional comments.

After MCC was awarded the contract in 1998 for overseeing the expansion of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, LOCATE staff provided support to the regional centers which included assistance with space design; equipment selection; staff selection; and an extensive training program for parent

counselors, database specialists, and LOCATE administrators featuring database assessment, risk management, development of a data transfer system, and monthly and quarterly data reporting.

In addition to the technical support provided to regional LOCATE sites, the Statewide Coordinating Entity worked to ensure consistency in database operations and counseling services throughout the Maryland Child Care Resource Network by standardizing all processes and procedures and recording them in several operations manuals. The original *LOCATE: Child Care Resource and Referral Operations Manual* was expanded into three volumes. *Volume 1: Counseling Services* contains all processes and procedures pertaining to the counseling aspects of LOCATE: Child Care. *Volume 2: Database Specialist Handbook* (Statewide Coordinating Entity) contains the processes and procedures for obtaining and managing provider/program lists, data entry into the provider and customer databases, and methods for running reports. *Volume 3: Regional Database Specialist Handbook* contains methods for data entry into the customer database as well as methods for running reports. In addition to these manuals, LOCATE also maintains a database dictionary which contains the definitions and coded responses to every field in LOCATE's provider and customer database as well as the Community Resources Database.

An additional function of LOCATE is to provide training to the counseling and database staff of the regional child care centers. All new counselors participate in an eight-day comprehensive basic training curriculum that involves classroom training and hands-on experience on such topics as child care options, child care regulations, effective listening, using maps, and computer skills. In addition to the basic training program, on-going training is provided on a quarterly basis for counselors through scheduled workshops given by MCC staff and professionals from the child care community. Full-day training workshops have been developed to enrich the skills of those counselors providing an enhanced level of service either through corporate contracts or special needs. LOCATE administrators are encouraged to provide on-site staff development as well.

In addition to the operations manuals which outline LOCATE processes and procedures, LOCATE staff developed *The LOCATE Counselor Resource Handbook*. This handbook is a compilation of many of the resources which are used by LOCATE counselors as they provide child care resource and referral services to parents searching for child care.

To insure that all staff are being trained adequately and consistently, the training program for administrative as well as database staff was formalized. Staff from the Statewide Coordinating Entity train regional LOCATE database staff on how to accurately enter data into the customer database and run reports needed for Network monthly and quarterly activity reports. LOCATE staff also developed a manual that outlines all procedures and processes necessary for the proper functioning of LOCATE: Child Care from an administrator's point of view and provide a full-day training for these administrators as well.

In response to external demands for accountability, LOCATE staff participated in the process of developing a results-based accountability system. The goal of the process was to develop an accountability system that clearly demonstrates and documents the roles of the CCRc in contributing to the desired outcomes and measures how well that role is being carried out. LOCATE tracks the effectiveness of the referrals in finding child care, the level of satisfaction with LOCATE, the parents' understanding of quality child care, and whether or not the parents followed up on the benefits information they received during the intake process.

This results-based accountability system is being used to show that the Community Line service is of value to parents. This proof is more important than ever before in light of the current state budget crisis. As a result of the budget cuts, four staff positions were eliminated from LOCATE at Maryland Committee for Children. These positions were the Community Line Counselor who provided back-up

assistance to the regions, two data entry positions, and the database manager's position. At the time of the budget cuts, three of the positions were unfilled. Although these cuts have resulted in the loss of some service, such as not being able to assist the regions with Community Line coverage, many of the tasks have been assumed by the remaining LOCATE staff.

Training and TECHNIC: Child Care

Training

The provision of superior training for the early childhood community, including family child care providers, child care center staff, and teachers in Head Start, nursery schools, and private and public school settings, is the primary function of MCC's Training efforts. Current research, widely accepted and recognized within the field, indicates that one of the key components of high quality early childhood programs is the level of the staff's training. It has also been demonstrated that continued training has a significant positive impact on the child care staff retention rate. Because continuity of care is an important factor in the social and emotional development of young children, it is critical that those who work with children receive the training, recognition, and support which encourages them to continue in their essential work.

Continued training and education is also required by the Child Care Administration (CCA) as part of the initial license and re-licensing process as well as for the Maryland Child Care Credential criteria. The availability of high quality training enables providers to meet the CCA requirements as well as extend their skill and knowledge.

The MCC Training staff provide training on a wide variety of topics for child care professionals, conduct sessions at conferences, and lead training-of-trainer (Responsive Training Seminar and Advanced Responsive Training Seminar) sessions for a broad audience, including MCC staff and volunteers, Network child care resource center (CCRC) trainers and technical assistance staff, and professionals within the child care community. The Responsive Training Symposia/Training-of-Trainers program includes workshops on principles of adult learning; explorations of training techniques; and innovative ways to promote learning, encourage retention, and apply new ideas.

As eight-time recipients of funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant, MCC and the Maryland Child Care Resource Network serve as the clearinghouse for statewide training efforts. The funding enables MCC to develop training across the state that meets the needs of the child care community more comprehensively; encourages the development of locally based, quality training; occurs in geographic areas that have been previously under-served; extends the diversity of topics offered; and promotes new initiatives in developing career ladders for child care professionals. The Block Grant funds have also enabled MCC to become a site for computer access to ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) and the Head Start Electronic Bulletin Board.

The Training Department produces the Maryland Child Care Resource Network training calendar three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. The training calendar is a publication of the Training Clearinghouse at MCC and the Network, and funded by the CCA, and is mailed to all regulated child care professionals statewide. This calendar contains listings for all training offered across the state. The calendar is also available by visiting the MCC website (www.mdchildcare.org). Recently the calendar began an on-line process for trainers to submit entries for the calendar; it has been an unqualified success so far.

Along with the workshops scheduled as part of the training calendar, the Training staff lead a number of sessions for other organizations during the course of the year. Workshops are provided for various family

child care associations, child care center associations, licensing specialists, public school early childhood staff, parent organizations, and a wide range of conferences, child care programs, and other agencies. Because of time constraints, the Training staff can only schedule a limited number of these sessions each year with roughly half of them on a fee-for-service basis and the other half offered on a complimentary basis.

The Training staff is also responsible for developing and implementing the Brown Bag parent education program educational service offered by MCC to LOCATE corporate clients and other interested businesses within the community. These programs offer support and information to working parents on a wide variety of topics related to balancing work and family life.

The Training Department has produced three manuals: *Establishing Responsive Training Programs*; *ENABLE: The Day Care Resource Project for Children with Special Needs*; and *Guiding Young Children's Social and Emotional Development*. These manuals are currently available for sale through MCC, which is exploring ways to market them more widely to the general public, as well as expanding the focus of the trainings. Additionally, Training staff completed additions to the *ENABLE* curriculum, with six additional three-hour training sessions developed in the year 2000.

In May 1992, the Maryland Child Care Resource Network convened the first meeting of the Clearinghouse Training Advisory Committee (TAC). With the mandate to initiate the first steps in development of a comprehensive plan for training, education, and career development, the Clearinghouse Training Advisory Committee met monthly to explicate the scope of the existing training structure, to identify issues to be addressed, and to make recommendations for future planning. When a good degree of consensus had been reached, the Committee identified priorities for discussion in a long-range plan.

Once priorities were established, task forces were formed to draft position papers and make recommendations for addressing the issues. The Career Development and Articulation Task Force examined the existing structures of pre-service and in-service training, continuing education, and degree matriculation. It then made its recommendations for establishing structures and procedures that would enhance career development opportunities. The Core of Knowledge Task Force developed a training model that both delineates the components of a Core of Knowledge and incorporates a learning continuum from beginning to advanced levels.

The resulting document, *A New Beginning: A Blueprint for a Career Development and Training Plan for Maryland's Child Care Professionals*, is a comprehensive, statewide plan from the Training Clearinghouse Advisory Committee, established collaboratively by Maryland Committee for Children, Maryland Child Care Resource Network, and Maryland Department of Human Resources/Child Care and Development Block Grant. This document identifies issues, goals, and barriers related to high quality training. It delineates accessible educational pathways that incorporate the broad ranges of experience of child care professionals and lead to higher motivation and professional recognition.

MCC has truly used *A New Beginning* as a blueprint in working with the child care and the larger community to improve the quality of care and early education. Several initiatives, either developed by MCC or including MCC as a partner, that have been natural follow-ups, include the following:

- Supported Mentoring Instructional Learning Environment Program (SMILE) was funded by the Child Care Administration and completed its pilot program in the spring of 1999. This program was the first to implement the "Core of Knowledge" training for child care providers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County with specialized technical assistance and structured mentoring relationships. This program was also the first training program in the state to utilize the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), developed at the University of North Carolina, to determine if the program

was successful. ECERS is an objective scale that measures 32 different areas of the children's learning environment. ECERS assessments were done at the beginning of the program and the end of the program, and the differences in the scores were overwhelmingly positive and statistically significant at the 95% level.

- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) was funded as a pilot program in 1999 by the Baltimore Gas and Electric Foundation, and included as partners the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Head Start, and Villa Julie College. MCC partnered with MSDE to adapt the MMSR program, originally done with public school teachers at the kindergarten and first grade level, to the child care and early education community. MMSR works on four central concepts: observation, assessment, documentation, and utilization of larger community resources. The pilot program coordinated the training so that child care providers better understood the individual and developmental needs of children and could better adapt their programs to the children's needs. The pilot MMSR program provided nine all-day training modules to 50 participating child care providers, as well as on-site technical assistance. Using the ECERS for a pre-training and post-training assessment, the differences in the scores were positive, even for those programs dropping out of the pilot early, and were statistically significant at the 95% level.
- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) began expansion in the fall of 2001 through a grant from the Child Care Administration. Using the program developed as a pilot in 1999 through 2001, two training tracks are offered in the state: Track I for 200 child care providers to learn the observation, assessment, documentation, and utilization of resources that were so successful in the pilot program; and Track II, which will provide "training of trainers" for up to 45 qualified trainers in the state, so that MMSR can be utilized throughout the state for all child care providers. As of August 2002 Track II was completed, and MCC will assist those "successful graduates" in setting up MMSR Training across the state for a wider audience for the following contract year.
- Maryland Child Care Credential is an initiative that has its origins in *A New Beginning* and provides recognition and financial incentives for child care providers who go beyond the minimal licensing requirements in the areas of training, education, and experience. The incentives, which began in July 2001, are expected to help with the staffing turnover in the field and improve the quality of care and early education for children.
- Training assistance and technical assistance in the areas of assessments of child care settings were offered to child care providers in the state beginning in 2001. Initiated through the generosity of a grant from the Knott Family Foundation, training and technical assistance staff have been trained in administering and providing technical assistance in the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), as well as in applying the National Family Child Care Association's accreditation process and the Maryland State Department of Education's accreditation systems. Staff are now able to assist providers in becoming accredited, a recognized element of quality programs, and in providing support, training, and technical assistance to the 12 CCRCs in the Maryland Child Care Resource Network in assisting providers in these efforts.

The Clearinghouse, TAC, and MCC sponsor the annual Training of Trainers Conference. These conferences have featured nationally recognized speakers, including: Dr. David Lazear, an expert on the Howard Gardner theory of multiple intelligences and their application in training situations; Tom Antoine, who demonstrated techniques and strategies to use to make training more memorable; Dr. Joel Goodman, Director of The Humor Project, Inc., who spoke of the uses of humor in training; Judy Jablon, author and expert on observation and developing relationships to foster learning; and, in 2002, Lisa

Laskow Lahey, author and faculty member at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, who spoke extensively on her work “The Real Reason Why People Won’t Change.”

In addition to the Training of Trainers Conference, the Clearinghouse, TAC, and MCC also have offered additional training and technical assistance to child care providers and trainers of child care providers.

- Beginning in 2001, a series of roundtables on exploring ethics in the field of training and developing a code of ethics for Maryland’s trainers was initiated. The initial working draft is being used as part of the Maryland Child Care Credential effort.
- Trainer workshops were also started in 2001, with specialized sessions offered to interested trainers in making training more interactive and utilizing assessment to improve training. Topics have included making training more memorable, using the internet and the library to conduct research, and adult learning styles.
- Professional Development Summits were started in 1999, in an effort to continue the discussion started with *A New Beginning*. The annual summits address initiatives from other states and in-state efforts. Topics have included child care financing strategies, training and compensation efforts, and other areas that help child care providers and early educators improve the conditions for their staff and directly improve the quality of program offered to staff.

With the State of Maryland’s budget crisis, beginning in FY 2003 and fully settling in for FY 2004, there has been significant negative impact on the training component.

- Beginning in FY 2004 MCC’s training component for the Network will lose a total of three Training Coordinator Positions. This loss will significantly impact the services provided as part of MCC’s role as the State Coordinating Entity for the Maryland Child Care Resource Network (including development of new training modules for the network, reduction in the amount of training that will be offered directly to the community, significant reductions in MCC’s services to the community in the areas of environmental rating scales – ECERS, FDCERS, SACERS, ITERS – and in accreditation validation processes – MSDE Accreditation Observation and NAFFC Accreditation Observation, etc.). Training in FY 2004 will be done by one Training Coordinator and the Training Director.
- Beginning in FY 2004, MCC’s training component for the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) will lose all but one of its staff (loss includes one part time trainer, two full time technical assistance coordinators, one administrative assistance) due to the lack of renewal of the grant through the Child Care Administration. The MMSR Grant as funded by the Child Care Administration was able to provide 9 modules (56 clock hours) of MMSR Training to 185 child care providers, 9 modules (56 clock hours) of MMSR Training-of-Trainers to current and prospective trainers, 7 modules (42 clock hours) of domain training for over 200 child care providers and trainers (total of all 7 sessions), an MMSR Mini-Conference, countless hours of training and technical assistance, and three orientation sessions conducted for Head Start programs in conjunction with the Office for Children, Youth and Families. In all, through the MMSR Grant, 2,369 participants were served (aggregate count from all of the sessions). MMSR Training will continue in FY 2004 with one part-time Training Coordinator and the Training Director through grants from the Maryland State Department of Education. This training includes MMSR for College Credit (2 undergraduate college credits from Villa Julie College) and OUNCE Scale Training.
- Beginning in FY 2004, MCC’s training component for the After School Opportunities Fund will lose its one Training Coordinator position. Funded through the Child Care Administration, this grant allowed MCC to provide training and technical assistance services to staff and programs

eligible for and receiving funds from the After School Opportunity Fund. During the tenure of the grant, MCC was able to provide 34 training sessions for 535 individuals and programs. Other than through the reduced Network-based training, MCC will not be able to continue this specialized training for these specialized after-school programs.

Despite the significant loss of staff, and resulting reduction in services, the Training staff will continue to provide high quality training to the child care community (including child care providers, families, businesses, and the supporting community) though in reduced numbers.

TECHNIC: Child Care

The TECHNIC: Child Care staff of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network provides technical assistance services geared to supporting and expanding child care in Maryland. Services available to employers, potential and existing family child care providers and center operators, agencies, and organizations include a toll-free line for phone consultations, start-up materials, seminars, a reference library, technical handouts, and in-depth consultations. By offering a variety of information and resources, staff assist clients in developing the tools to start, expand, and maintain child care programs, especially in geographic areas and for populations most in need of additional child care services.

Over the past years, TECHNIC has been involved in several special initiatives and projects focusing on expansion and retention. The staff continues to work towards increasing the supply of child care in areas with an identified need for additional care, particularly for infants and school-age children. Informational workshops and materials designed to facilitate the incorporation of school-age children and infants into family child care homes and centers are offered. In the Fall of 2000, a new recruitment campaign, a follow up of the earlier *It's Homework It's Heartwork* campaign, was implemented across the state in an attempt to increase the number of individuals successfully securing a Family Child Care Home.

A major project accomplished in each of the last seven years is a complete set of 25 child care Demographics Reports. These reports assist lawmakers, policy developers, and the child care community in understanding the current setting of child care in the state and in making plans for future decisions affecting the child care community. These reports include one for each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions, as well as a statewide report. Demographics is a joint project of LOCATE: Child Care and TECHNIC: Child Care staff.

In addition to the initiatives discussed above, the department's efforts are mainly focused on the following areas: (1) assisting the expansion of the regional CCRCs to develop and implement their plans for the delivery of technical assistance services, including the provision of on-going training and support to TECHNIC staff; (2) providing technical assistance to prospective and current child care providers, employers, government officials, community organizations, and others interested in work/family issues; (3) developing a variety of new technical materials, manuals, and informational workshops, and training providers; (4) working with a computer programmer to refine and further develop an upgraded version of the TECHNIC database program; and (5) collaborating with other child care and related agencies and organizations on the local, state, and national levels.

Another achievement of the TECHNIC staff was the development of the *Employer Tool Kit*. This 15-part packet is intended to assist businesses in evaluating the work/family strategies they use with their employees. In addition to various strategies for dependent care, there are recommendations for conducting needs assessments, determining the cost-benefit and cost-analysis for the implementation of a variety of work/life strategies, and recommendations on how to get started. This packet is used by the CCRCs to make employers more aware of the options available to them. With the distribution of the *Employer Tool*

Kit in 1999, we have seen increased activity on the part of employers/organizations in looking at their work settings and how “family friendly” they are, then contacting the CCRCs for assistance in assessing the needs and developing appropriate plans to meet those needs.

With the expansion of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network in 1998 and 1999, Technical Assistance staff have spent considerable amounts of time training new CCRC staff in the Network model of providing technical assistance, as well as in providing technical assistance in the setting up and operating of those centers. In calendar year 2000, an ambitious evaluation of the Network began, which involves technical assistance staff in the assessment of the efficacy of Network provision of this core service.

With the State of Maryland’s budget crisis, beginning in FY 2003 and fully settling in for FY 2004, there has been a devastating negative impact on the technical assistance component. As a result discussions with the Child Care Administration and the regional CCRCs of the Network, a decision was made that with the one-third reduction in funding, one of the three basic services of the Network would need to be cut, and reluctantly that service would be Technical Assistance. As a result of this decision, MCC will no longer have the two Technical Assistance Coordinators to provide services and will suspend hands-on technical assistance functions. MCC will pursue other funding to reinstate this critically important service.

Development and Marketing

Maryland Committee for Children’s programs are supported by a variety of funding sources, including public contracts for service, private grants from foundations, fee income, membership dues, and individual and corporate philanthropy. Most of the organization’s private funding is generated by the activities of MCC’s Development and Marketing Department, with leadership from the Board of Directors. This revenue is raised through an annual giving campaign, active membership recruitment and retention, special events, and grant proposals.

The Development and Marketing Department also provides oversight and support for the organization’s public relations and marketing activities. In this capacity, Development and Marketing staff maintain relationships with press and media contacts, assist in the development and distribution of MCC brochures and reports, help departments develop program visibility, and strive to raise the profile throughout the state of both MCC and the Network.

The Development and Marketing Department coordinates the various elements of *Maryland Week of the Working Parent*, an annual, week-long series of programs and events held in late spring. *Week of the Working Parent* was established by MCC to underscore the invaluable contributions that parents make to Maryland’s workforce and economy. The week highlights the importance of the availability of quality child care, provides employers with practical approaches to work/family issues within their companies, gives working parents opportunities to share information and hear speakers discuss issues affecting them, and offers employers a way to express appreciation for their working-parent employees. Speakers at *Week of the Working Parent* events have included Bob Keeshan (“Captain Kangaroo”), Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, and Maurice Sendak.

Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) serves the specific and unique child care needs of Baltimore City. BCCCRC maintains a close, collaborative relationship with Baltimore City's wide range of child care stakeholders. BCCCRC strives to broaden its base of collaboration to achieve quality, full-day, full-week, year-round child care that is affordable and accessible to the children and families that need it.

BCCCRC continues to deliver child care counseling and referral services to parents/legal guardians and providers through LOCATE: Child Care; and the Training Department develops and conducts training for child care providers, parents, and others and oversees special projects directed at quality improvement.

BCCCRC's Head Start-Child Care Demonstration Project, in its tenth year, continues to use a Head Start-Child Care collaboration model to create full-day, full-week, year-round child care experiences for children eligible for Head Start. The project creates Head Start-Child Care collaboration classrooms in eight child care centers. For the fourth consecutive year, funds were available to support children in an enrichment experience throughout the summer and to provide economic support for the summer programs of our child care partners. FY '04 promises to be one of growth as the collaboration takes on three additional partners and ventures into a family child care collaboration. Accreditation of some child care partners' programs is an additional pursuit.

For Your Information (FYI): Child Care, with Head Start funding, responds to the needs of the unlicensed, informal child care community (families, friends, and neighbors). Prior to the existence of this program, informal providers received few, if any, services to help improve the quality of care they provide.

The Provider Resource Room continues to serve the community by assisting parents, teachers, child care providers, and others in creating developmentally appropriate materials that stimulate learning in young children. Visitors access materials that allow them to create print-rich environments. Available resources include a library of books and magazines, a copier, art-waxer, laminator, die cut machine, a computer and printer. Providers now have "a room of their own."

Specially funded, time-limited projects make it possible for BCCCRC to respond to a variety of unmet community needs. Examples include: (1) Special Needs and Behavior Guidance Program, in collaboration with the University of Maryland's Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics Division, provides training and on-site technical assistance to family and center providers to develop and enhance skills in caring for children with special needs and those exhibiting behavior problems. This grant also makes it possible for BCCCRC to hold a ground-breaking Emotional Wellness Conference, that reaches 300 child care providers and offers a variety of learning options focused on the social/emotional development and well-being of young children--a first for Baltimore City. (2) Family League of Baltimore City grant (Child Care Administration funded) allows BCCCRC to expand the Special Needs and Behavioral Guidance program to include follow-up technical assistance, mental health consultation, and support services to child care programs. (3) Judy Hoyer Initiative (the city has two Judy Centers) gives the resource center a significant role in developing linkages and partnerships between the child care community, schools, Head Start, Infant and Toddlers, the faith community, and other stakeholders in preparing children for school readiness. (4) Two Judy Hoyer Provider Enhancement grants make it possible for BCCCRC to facilitate the accreditation of child care programs. Through one project, 7 family child care providers and 3 child care centers are accredited; 7 family and 14 center providers are in process; through another Provider Enhancement grant, the Head Start-Child Care collaboration is working towards accreditation of two centers in the partnership. (5) BCCCRC is responsible for planning the Mayor's 15th Annual Child Care Conference, which attracts 1,000 participants primarily from Baltimore City and Baltimore County.