

## **I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

Using a combination of state and federal funds, North Carolina provides subsidized child care services to a large number of eligible families. This chapter provides a general profile of child care services and the Subsidized Child Care (SCC) Program.

## **II. WHY SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE SERVICES ARE IMPORTANT**

In North Carolina, two-thirds of mothers with children under age six are in the workforce. The need for affordable child care is an economic necessity for this state. In addition, nearly 20% of North Carolina's children under age five (5) live in poverty. Many of these families are coping with multiple risk factors that reduce the chances of long-term healthy development of children and that can have long lasting negative consequences on a child's ability to learn. Studies that followed children from their preschool years to adulthood have found that receiving a high-quality early childhood education significantly improved the scholastic success and educational attainments of children of low income families. The provision of subsidized child care services means that families with poverty level incomes can afford child care services which offer a quality early childhood education and therefore, will increase the chances for children to be healthy and succeed socially and academically.

Welfare reform also increased the likelihood that more children will need child care at an early age. For many working families, the provision of subsidized child care services provides the additional financial support they need and therefore, serves as a welfare prevention service. Additional support regarding the importance of subsidized child care services is provided by research that has shown working parents were more likely to be successful in their job training programs or in their jobs when their children were in child care arrangements that were safe, high quality and dependable.

In addition, the provision of subsidized child care services is critical for many families who are experiencing a crisis or need the intervention offered through child protective services. Parents who are coping with an illness or a problem that interferes with their ability to be an effective parent often need the support offered for their children in a child care arrangement. The provision of child care services in these instances offers stability and educational opportunities for the children and serves as a means of keeping families together in times of crisis.

Refer to the [Division of Child Development's](#) (DCD) website for more information.