



**EMBARGOED for release until
December 13, 2011 at 10:30am**

Contacts:
Patty Siegel, Executive Director
(415)-279-0234 cell
Carlise King, Research Director
(510)-932-3998 cell
Brenda Illescas, Research Assistant
Office: (415) 882-0234

Child Care Services for Working Families on the Decline Parents Continue to Struggle Accessing Quality Child Care

San Francisco, Calif.– Accessing affordable, quality child care has become even harder for working families as child care programs throughout California are closing their doors, according to the *2011 California Child Care Portfolio* released today online by the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network. The worsening economy coupled with state budget cuts is threatening the stability of child care programs. The result is a decline in the number of licensed child care facilities available in California.

The *2011 Portfolio* is the 8th in a biennial series of statewide and county-by-county reports documenting licensed child care supply and demand in California. The data was collected in 2010 from local child care resource and referral programs and prepared by the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, a statewide organization. The 61 locally-based, state-funded child care resource and referral programs (R&Rs) work to improve the quality, availability, and affordability of child care in local communities throughout the state.

Speaking at the Capitol press release on Tuesday, Assemblymember Holly Mitchell, chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services commented “I was troubled to learn from the data that family child care providers are going out of business statewide and appalled to learn of the dramatic losses in Los Angeles County. Loss of these small businesses makes daily life tougher on our families, communities and economy.”

Highlights from the *2011 Portfolio* report presented by Research Director, Carlise King include:

The availability of licensed child care is declining, which poses challenges for working parents. The supply of child care falls far short of demand. Licensed care in California is available for only 25% of children with parents in the labor force. Across the state, there has been a 7% decrease in the number of licensed center-based slots for school-age children and a 5% decrease in licensed home-based capacity. Overall, 28 counties (48%) experienced a decrease in center-based slots and 40 counties (69%) saw significant numbers of licensed family child care homes close. These trends paint a bleak picture for creating and sustaining jobs for working parents and the child care providers they depend on.

Parents need child care to keep their jobs, find work, and get additional training/education.

Seventy percent of parents requesting child care services from R&Rs cited employment as the primary reason they needed care. Fifteen percent of parents were in school or training, while 1 in 10 parents indicated they needed child care to search for employment. Overall, a majority of parents (86%) with young children needed full-time care and 11% requested care options that were available on evening, weekends, or overnight. In this weakened economy parents are working longer hours with complicated fluctuating schedules often during non-traditional hours. In order to find and maintain jobs in this economy reliable child care options are essential.

In August 2011, UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education issued a report, *Economic Impacts of Early Care and Education in California*. Commenting today on the release of the *Portfolio*, Laurel Lucia, Policy Analyst, remarked “Early care and education plays a special role in the California economy both as a source of direct and indirect jobs. At a time when California is urgently seeking economic development, parents need the infrastructure of a reliable, affordable child care system in order to participate productively in the workforce, just like they need highways and roads and public transportation.”

Increased poverty and lack of child care subsidies results in barriers to child care for low-income families. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, over 700,000 children ages birth to 5 years old in California live in poverty. Statewide the number of children living in poverty has increased 12% between 2008 and 2010. For a low-income family earning minimum-wage, the cost of housing and child care for one preschooler in a center-based program can exceed their annual income by as much as 28%. Growing poverty rates exacerbate the challenges of California’s under resourced state child care system which already has over 180,000 eligible children on waitlists to receive a child care subsidy. Further compounding these poverty rates is the anticipation of child care trigger cuts scheduled to go into effect January 1, 2012.

Reflecting on the challenges ahead, Patty Siegel Executive Director of the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network observed “Already this year child care programs lost a total of \$300 million, impacting almost 32,000 children. That loss, coupled with the sobering data from this report and the looming trigger cuts are a chilling end of year message for child care providers and the families they serve. Sadly, it’s these very services that lift low-income families out of poverty that are now most threatened.”

To access the full report and county-by-county data: www.rrnetwork.org.

The 31-year-old California Child Care Resource & Referral Network is a nonprofit association of 58 member agencies in counties across California. Resource and referral programs are a unique hub in the world of child care, connecting parents, providers, and policymakers in each community. R&Rs help parents find child care by providing referrals to licensed programs and by offering important information on how to recognize and choose quality care. R&Rs help child care providers by offering training in child development, safety, and business skills, and they help policymakers by gathering standardized data, identifying key areas of local need, and participating in policy discussions.