

**The Massachusetts Child Care Study: Child Care Subsidies, Child Care Needs & Utilization, and Choice of Care Among Low-Income Working Families**

**Nancy L. Marshall, Wendy Wagner Robeson, Joanne Roberts and Julie Dennehy**  
**Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College**

*10/1/07-9/30/11*

**Project Description**

The Massachusetts Child Care Study: Child Care Subsidies, Child Care needs and Utilization, and Choice of Care Among Low-Income Working Families examined the child care needs of low-income working families, and the impact of child care subsidies.

**Research questions.** The research questions we addressed were: [1] What types of care do families receiving subsidies choose? [2] What is the quality of the care in programs serving low-income families? [3] How well does the child care accessed by low income families meet their needs and impact families' well-being.

**Methods.** We collected survey data from 67 licensed centers, 50 licensed FCCs, 15 public school prek classrooms, and 6 Head Start programs in two urban communities. We also collected survey data from 508 families whose children were enrolled in these programs, and from 158 families on the subsidy waitlist. In addition, 57 cases studies were done with families from all categories.

**Progress Update.** We found that the Massachusetts subsidy system provided more affordable child care, supported families' full-time employment, and improved families' choices for, and access to, quality care. However, waitlist families, and other low-income families, are at a disadvantage in employment, choice and quality of care.

**For more information:**

Marshall, NL, Robeson, WW, Frye, A & Tracy, A. (in preparation). Welfare Reform, Subsidized Child Care, and Family and Child Well-being.

Marshall, NL, Robeson, WW & Dennehy, J. (in preparation). Child Care for Massachusetts Low-Income Families.

Dennehy, J. & Marshall, NL. (in preparation). Policy Brief: Analysis of the Massachusetts Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Block Grant Plan in Comparison to Other State Plans.

**Contact**

Nancy L. Marshall  
Associate Director & Senior Research Scientist,  
Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College  
nmarshall@wellesley.edu 781-283-2551  
106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02481