



July } 2015

Newsletter



EARLY REGISTRATION IS IMPORTANT

In May, SELF worked with partners, sponsors, community and the SELF School Success Committee to create a one-day effort to increase the number of kindergarteners registered for school and increase awareness of this important activity. Ideally, students need to be registered by June 15 so that districts and schools know how many students they will have in the fall and to prepare with classrooms and teachers.

Administrative staff will be back in school buildings the first week of August. If your child or if you know of a child who is not registered yet, please plan to register the first week of August.

Children will need up-to-date immunizations to start school. Free clinics are being offered at various locations in Clark County.

CHILD CARE SLOTS ARE SHRINKING

It is widely known that quality child care is expensive and is out of reach for many working parents. What is not widely understood is the fact that the number of slots available are shrinking, making child care unavailable for many. Recently, The Oregonian published a story about the issue and impact on working parents. Currently, our neighbors to the south are experiencing a shortage of approximately 40% of available child care.

What's going on in our own state? Here's a fact sheet created by ChildCare Aware for America for Washington State with data from 2014.

- The high cost of child care can be a crippling burden for families with young children. Child care and early education is a labor-intensive industry which leads to high costs for families, despite the fact that child care workers are among the lowest paid professionals nationwide.

- Young children require individualized attention and thrive best in small groups with consistent caregivers and low adult-to-child ratios. Early learning programs, therefore, need significantly more staff than other settings for children, such as K-12 classrooms, which drive the costs for child care.
- Child care is one of the lowest paying professions nationally. The average income for a full-time child care professional in 2013 was \$21,490, a decrease of \$131 from 2012 when adjusted for inflation. The average wage for full-time child care workers was \$10.33 per hour in 2013 - below the federal poverty guidelines for a family of four and barely above the poverty guidelines for a family of three. Family child care home providers earn even less. Studies show most work long hours, have no benefits such as health care and retirement plans, and earn \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year. Since most funding for child care comes from family fees, and young parents are severely restricted by their incomes since they are early in their careers, programs have limited revenue to cover program costs.
- Many who graduate with early learning degrees end up in careers in the K-12 system because of salaries and benefits.

This is a trend happening across the nation. This is another piece of the birth to 5 scenario that calls for systemic changes so that our early learners receive the proper attention and opportunities during these critical learning years.

Thank YOU!