

HISTORY

Creation

Childcare Resources is the outgrowth of a child care task force convened in January 1984 by United Way of Central Alabama and comprised of 21 members of the community at large.

The charge given to the task force by United Way was to study child care needs in Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties and to make a report with recommendations to United Way's Board in June 1984.

In its five-month study, the task force found:

1. Child care was not affordable for many working families in the three counties.
2. Many types of care were unavailable, and when care was available it was often inaccessible (i.e., care for children with disabilities, sick child care, infant care, school-age child care).
3. The child care available was of poor quality.
4. Parents didn't know what options were available to them or how to shop for care.
5. There was no central body through which available federal, state and local dollars could flow to address identified needs.

In June, the task force recommended to United Way's Board that an agency be formed that would provide:

1. child care information and counseling to all parents,
2. assistance to employers in developing, providing and managing child care assistance and benefits,
3. training and technical assistance to child care providers,
4. financial assistance with choice of care for families in need, and
5. a forum for local governments, foundations and United Way to identify and meet needs in underserved areas.

United Way accepted the task force's recommendations, and Childcare Resources was incorporated in July 1984.

Implementation

From 1984 to 1986, the agency phased in the three programs — child care resource and referral, child care provider training, and child care financial assistance. From 1984-1992, the agency's staff grew from 4 to 10 and the budget grew from \$84,000 to \$500,000. The agency added Blount County to its service area in 1988.

Growth

From January 1992 through November 31, 2004, Childcare Resources administered two contracts for the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). One contract was for managing child care subsidies for eligible families living in Blount, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties. The other contract was for Quality Activities (e.g., training child care providers). While the agency retained the DHR Quality Contract for fiscal year 2005, the DHR Child Care Subsidy contract was awarded to another provider whose proposal included a budget that underbid our agency substantially. Childcare Resources' budget decreased from \$25 million (of which \$21.3 million was direct child care subsidies) to \$2.23 million, and the staff was reduced from 62 to 29.

The agency began delivering Parents as Teachers, a nationally renowned parent education program, in several area child care centers in 1993.

In 2005, Childcare Resources board, staff, and community partners met and developed a five-year strategic plan. On November 18, 2005, the plan was adopted by the Board of Directors. Our Vision and Mission have both changed to emphasize the agency's focus on improving the quality of child care in our region.

Present

In 2007, founding Executive Director Margie Curry retired after 23 years of service. After a nationwide search, Joan Wright was named the new executive director, effective November 16, 2007. Joan came to Childcare Resources from United Way of Central Alabama's Success By 6 early education and reading readiness initiative, where she served as director.

As of January 2008, the agency has a staff of 22 and continues to hold the DHR Quality Contract.

Funding

Childcare Resources is funded by United Way of Central Alabama, Alabama Department of Human Resources and numerous foundations, businesses and individuals. The agency holds two fundraisers annually — the Children's Advocate Award Luncheon and the Fairy Tale Ball. The Children's Advocate Award Luncheon, held in March, honors individuals and organizations with an extraordinary commitment to children. The Fairy Tale Ball, hosted by the agency's Junior Board and held in August, is a black-tie-optional gala for children and adults that features an award for outstanding child care providers.

VISION

Quality child care will be available and affordable to all families who need it.

MISSION

To make quality care and education of children happen by providing information, education and assistance to families, providers of child care, and the community.