

## **Existing Child Care Programs**

**Southwest Human Resource Agency is the agency for the Child Care Certificate Program established by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. We have managed the program for 17 years, as of April 1, 2007. Southwest HRA Child Care Services has provided child care assistance for thousands of families in the eight (8) counties of the Southwest Tennessee catchment area.**

**As of January 1, 2000, Southwest HRA entered into a joint venture with Delta Human Resource Agency to provide child care services in Fayette, Lauderdale and Tipton counties.**

**We served 2104 families from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006, including 4026 children for these families.**

**Southwest HRA was the sponsoring organization for the Registered Family Day Home program through December 1, 2001. At that time, the Department of Human Services Day Care Licensing became the regulatory agency for the program. As of September 30, 2004 the Registered Family Day Home program was phased out, eliminating as many as 91 providers in the Southwest Tennessee area.**

**In the past few years, we have noticed a decrease in the number of licensed providers in our area. The lack of quality child care is still a concern in the rural counties of West Tennessee. Southwest HRA Child Care Services and Head Start sits on the Advisory Committee of the Kiwanis Child Care Resource Center for regulated providers. One of the goals of the Resource Center is to define the needs of the provider and assist them in improving their homes and centers. DHS implemented the Star-Quality Bonus program in the fall of 2001. The Resource Center's staff is responsible for inspecting and grading the providers to help determine the number of stars providers are eligible to receive. Currently, we have almost sixty-nine (69) providers with 1-3 stars. This includes one (1) head start center with Full-Day, Full-year programs.**

**The state's financial crisis is currently putting our low-income, non-welfare parents in jeopardy. One of the suggested budget reductions is the elimination of the Child Care Development Block Grant. This has eliminated assistance to parents who are working and/or in school and not receiving public assistance. There is a three and a half year waiting list, with little to no hope of ever receiving this assistance. As of July 1, 2004 we were instructed to no longer take applications for the waiting list. Those on the list will remain on it until further decisions are made concerning the funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant. The parents who are still receiving this assistance may be without it if the state's budget crisis is not resolved.**

**Also, on July 1, 2004, a new funding stream, At-Risk, was added. Child care assistance for Transitional Families First participants could be extended for an additional 12 months under this new program. We have served 118 families with a total of 236 children during 2006 under this program. These families would not have had child care assistance once their 18 months of Transitional Families First eligibility had ended.**

**Another funding source called Child-Only started as of January 1, 2005. We will be assisting caregivers who have custody of grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc. The caregivers do not qualify for Families First assistance but the children do and we will provide child care for these caregivers in order for them to remain employed and/or in school. They must meet the same eligibility guidelines as the Transitional Families First participants.**

**As of January 1, 2006, the Department of Human Services implemented a Teen Parent Child Care Assistance Program. The state of Tennessee saw a need to assist teen parents with child care in order to complete their high school diploma or GED. The program has been slow to start in our area. We are only serving three families with one child each. We have had many inquiries into the program but have not seen a lot of follow-through on the teen parents part.**