

# Licensed Child Care Providers

## Issue in Focus: Child Care in Alabama

As VOICES for Alabama's Children continues to collect and report data on child care in Alabama, the trend toward fewer licensed/inspected centers decreases while the number of programs claiming exemption from licensure – and therefore regular inspection grows.

Alarming, between 2000 and 2011 the total number of licensed /inspected child care programs in the state decreased by nearly 50 percent (Figure 1.), while the number of Alabama's young children in need of care outside of the home actually increased during that same time period. Between the years of 2000 and 2011, the state has also witnessed an upsurge, more than 35 percent, in the number of operating centers claiming exemption from licensure (Figure 1.). This is a troubling circumstance, considering the fact that exempt centers are not required to be inspected by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), the agency responsible for child care licensing in Alabama. Those which are licensed and approved by the Department undergo extensive inspection for a wide array of health and safety issues.

Having found numerous health and safety hazards in child care exempt from DHR inspection, the Mobile County Health Department worked with the local community to pass a county ordinance that allows the Health Department to inspect all child care centers, whether licensed by DHR or not, and to close them down if they do not comply with health and safety regulations. Mobile County is the only area of the state where all child care centers are inspected.

Given the growth in the number of children under the age of five in Alabama, the increase of employed mothers with young children and the erosion in the number of licensed child care programs available to serve this demographic,<sup>1</sup> it begs a very important question - "Where are the children?" In making every effort to get Alabama's children off to a good and healthy start, we must also consider the quality of care young children are receiving in whatever setting they are placed.

<sup>1</sup> Alabama Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division, as reported in VOICES for Alabama's Children, *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*, 2000-2011 editions.

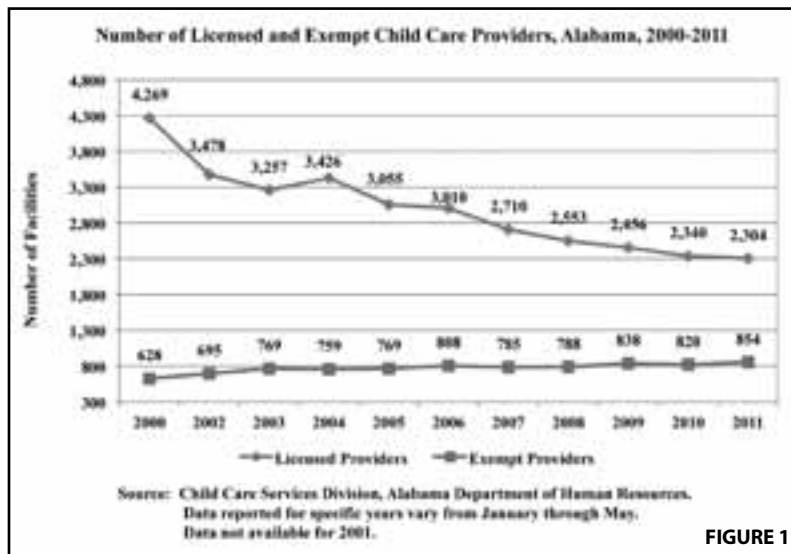


FIGURE 1

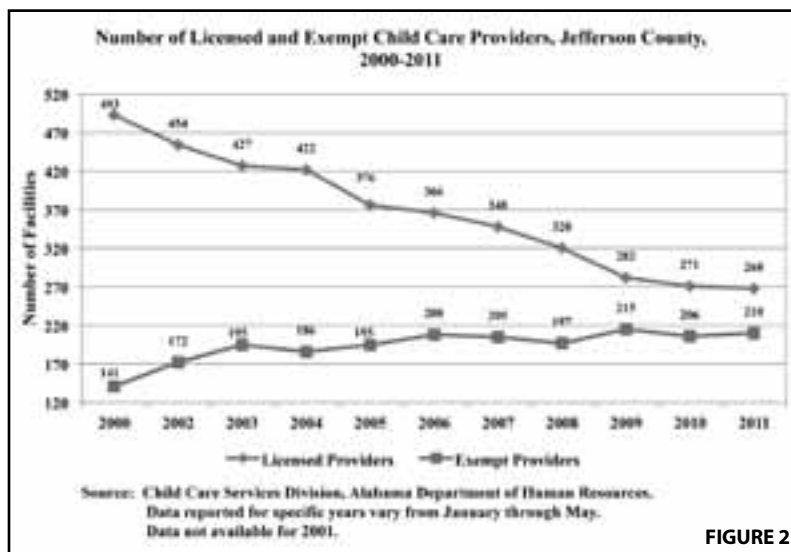
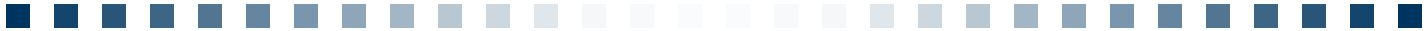


FIGURE 2

	Family Child Care Homes	Group Child Care Homes	Child Care Centers	Total Licensed Providers	Exempt Centers
Autauga	8	1	11	20	6
Baldwin	45	17	29	91	37
Barbour	12	3	7	22	3
Bibb	7	1	2	10	5
Blount	2	6	8	16	4
Bullock	0	0	3	3	2
Butler	14	2	5	21	0
Calhoun	25	8	21	54	26
Chambers	4	9	11	24	3
Cherokee	5	0	9	14	1
Chilton	1	2	8	11	6
Choctaw	2	3	3	8	0
Clarke	6	3	12	21	1
Clay	3	2	5	10	0
Cleburne	4	1	5	10	1
Coffee	7	6	15	28	2
Colbert	9	2	9	20	11
Conecuh	3	6	4	13	0

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	Family Child Care Homes	Group Child Care Homes	Child Care Centers	Total Licensed Providers	Exempt Centers
Coosa	2	2	3	7	0
Covington	3	7	12	22	3
Crenshaw	12	1	4	17	2
Cullman	10	4	19	33	9
Dale	13	11	10	34	6
Dallas	10	4	13	27	10
Dekalb	4	8	16	28	6
Elmore	23	4	22	49	8
Escambia	7	6	9	22	8
Etowah	2	8	27	37	16
Fayette	3	1	2	6	3
Franklin	5	8	4	17	1
Geneva	5	5	12	22	1
Greene	2	1	2	5	0
Hale	4	3	4	11	2
Henry	3	3	7	13	2
Houston	12	1	34	47	27
Jackson	6	7	11	24	10
Jefferson	87	33	148	268	210
Lamar	6	7	2	15	2
Lauderdale	4	2	12	18	8
Lawrence	3	7	6	16	1
Lee	43	7	38	88	10
Limestone	10	3	9	22	7
Lowndes	1	0	3	4	0
Macon	9	0	8	17	2
Madison	51	17	75	143	68
Marengo	3	4	8	15	1
Marion	11	9	4	24	3
Marshall	6	9	20	35	13
Mobile	78	13	80	171	97
Monroe	5	4	7	16	3
Montgomery	120	1	90	211	67
Morgan	14	11	29	54	13
Perry	0	2	4	6	1
Pickens	3	1	4	8	5
Pike	11	7	6	24	10
Randolph	7	2	7	16	3
Russell	1	1	13	15	7
St. Clair	2	4	9	15	13
Shelby	17	18	44	79	20
Sumter	2	4	8	14	1
Talledega	9	6	24	39	15
Tallapoosa	13	15	10	38	7
Tuscaloosa	37	4	36	77	35
Walker	2	7	6	15	9
Washington	3	3	3	9	0
Wilcox	1	0	1	2	1
Winston	2	6	5	13	0
Alabama	844	363	1,097	2,304	854

Data reported as of June, 2011.