



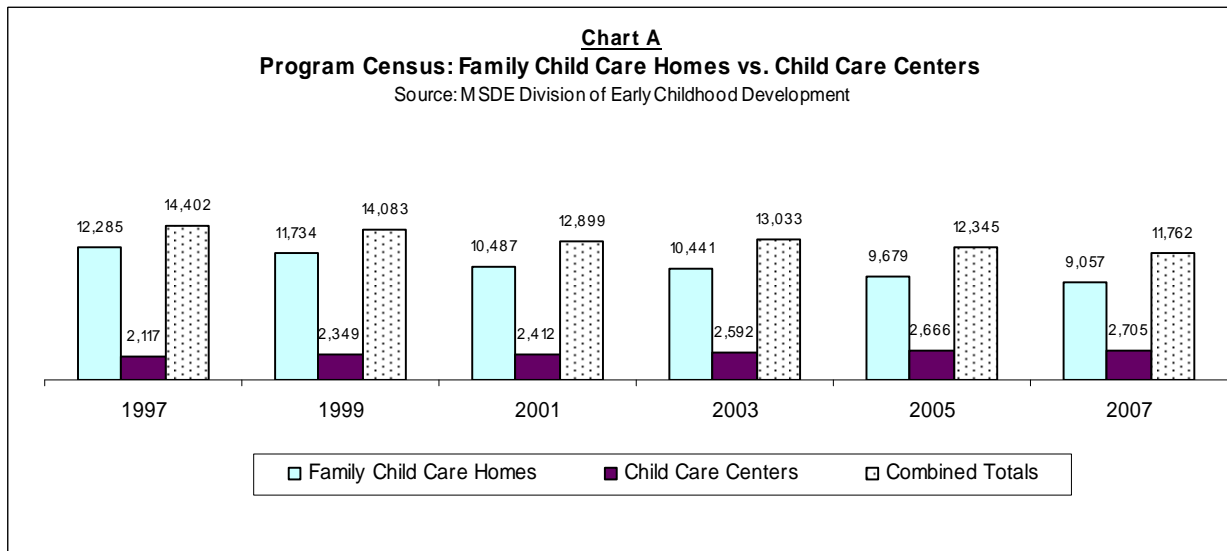
Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood Development

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

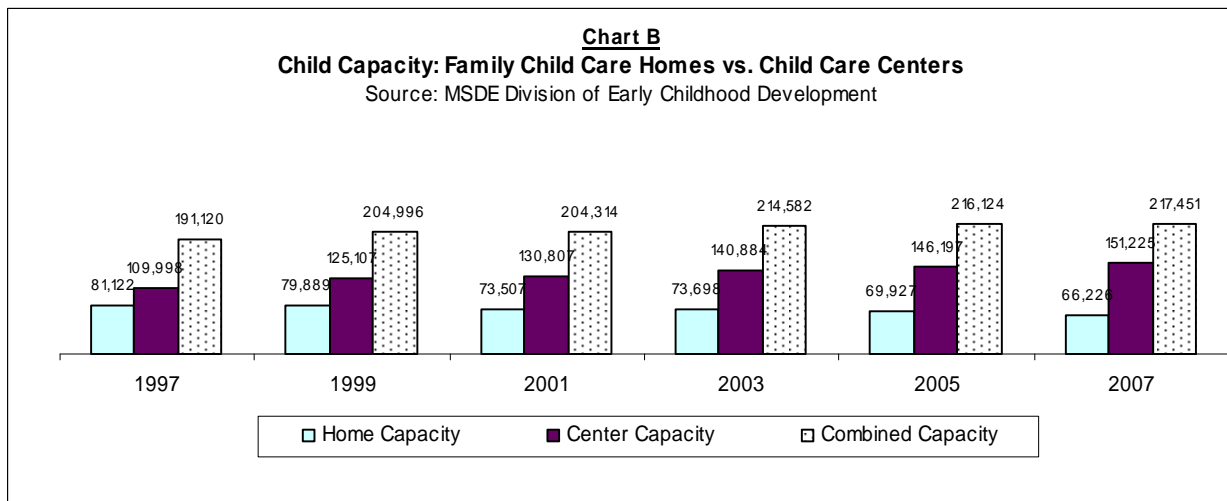
Fact Sheet 07-03 (December 2007)

**Family Child Care Homes vs. Child Care Centers:
Program Census and Child Capacity**

Over the 10-year period 1997 – 2007, the number of child care centers in Maryland grew from 2,117 to 2,705, an increase of 27.8%. During the same period, the number of family child care homes dropped from 12,285 to 9,057, a decrease of 26.3%. These changes are presented in Chart A below.



During the 10-year period, the total child capacity of child centers increased from 109,998 to 151,225, an increase of 37.5%. During the same period, the estimated total child capacity of family child care homes dropped from 81,122 to 66,226, a decrease of 18.3%. These changes are displayed in Chart B below.



During most years in the 10-year period, the decline in the number of family child care homes was relatively greater than the loss of child capacity resulting from that decline. This suggests that the homes that closed typically had lower than average capacities. A lower capacity means less potential revenue, so it is likely that a significant proportion of home closures were due to economic factors. Conversely, the growth in child care center capacity was proportionally greater in most years than the increase in the number of child care centers. This suggests that centers opening during the period were planned for larger than average capacities, possibly in order to accommodate children previously enrolled in family child care homes that closed.

Chart C below compares rates of change in program census and child capacity in family child care homes from 1997 through 2007.

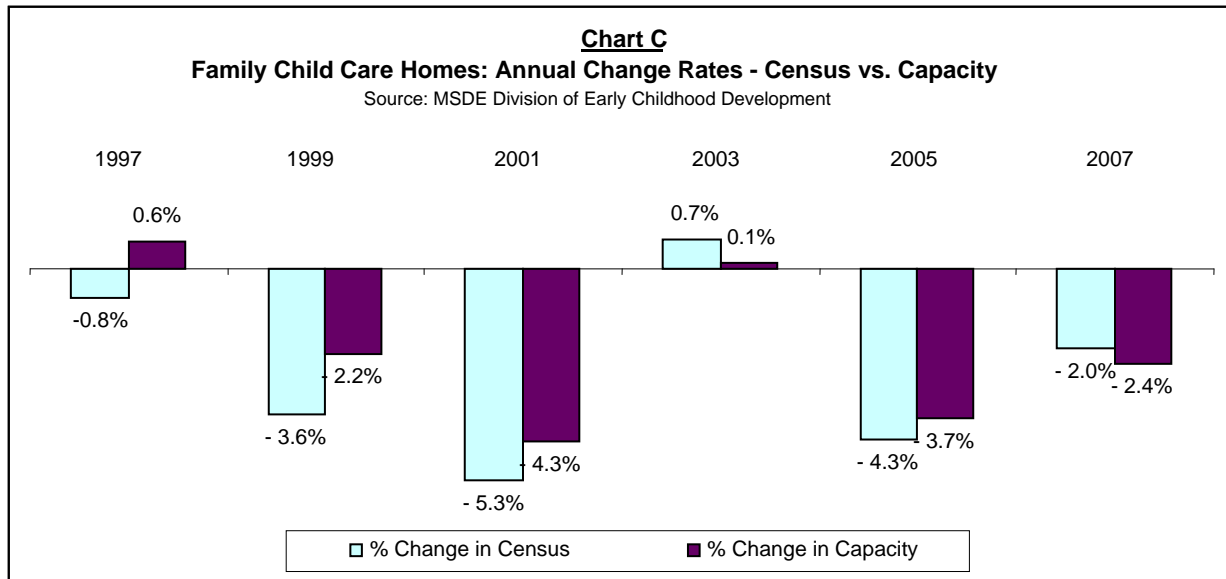
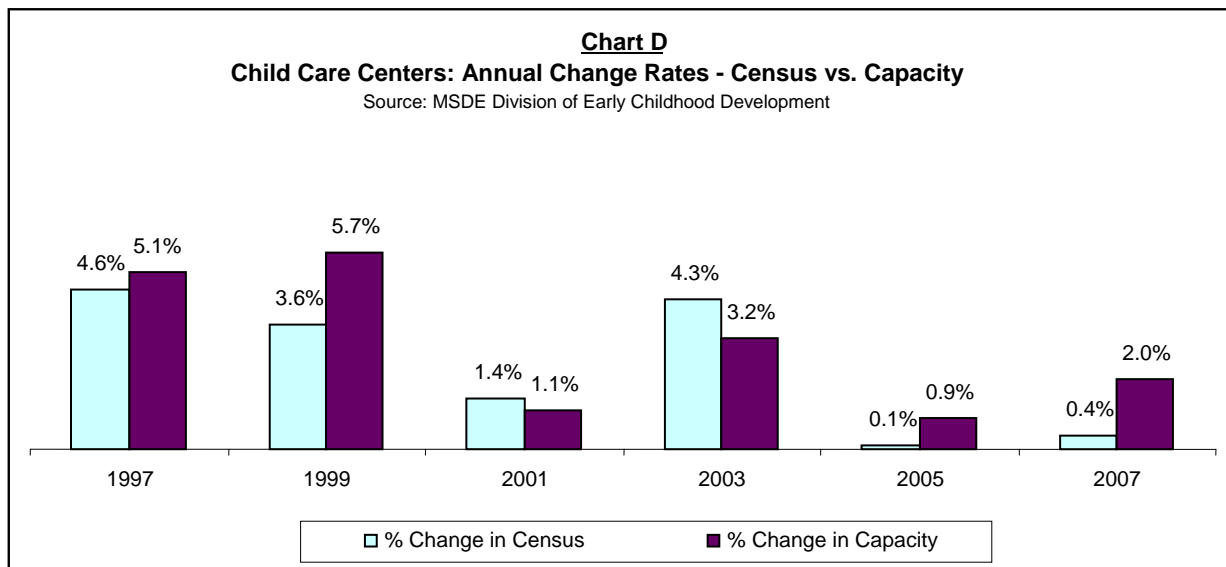


Chart D below compares rates of change in program census and child capacity in child care centers from 1997 through 2007.



The steady growth in child care centers and corresponding decline in family child care homes during the period shows a trend toward greater use of center-based care and less use of home-based care. It is not clear whether this trend results mainly from parents actively choosing center care over home care, or from parents having to use center care more often simply because there are fewer homes in operation. However, a small decline over the past several years in average enrollment rates across all family child care homes, coupled with a slight increase in enrollment rates across all child care centers, suggests that parents are increasingly choosing center care over home care.