Session: Using Findings from Child Care Research Partnerships to Inform New CCDBG Goals and Practices

Illinois-New York Child Care Research Partnership: Phase 2, Policy Stakeholder Interviews
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CCPRC Meeting
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Phase 2 of CCRP Study

- Phase 1 explored subsidy instability from the perspective of subsidy program participants

- In Phase 2 we gain perspective of subsidy program administrators and caseworkers and child care providers

- Focus on subsidy instability and intersection between subsidy program and quality initiatives in partnering states
Phase 2 Study Components

1. Key stakeholder interviews, including subsidy administrators and staff, CCR&Rs staff, and quality improvement program leaders
2. Local supply and demand analysis; mapping changes in quality, supply, and characteristics of subsidized care
3. Linking Phase 1 survey data to Phase 2 provider data
4. Qualitative study of subsidized providers of different care types
Study Sites

• New York
  • Nassau County
  • Westchester County

• Illinois
  • Service Delivery Area 6 (Cook County)
  • Service Delivery Area 14 (7 counties in southwestern Illinois)
# IL & NY CCDF Program Parameters

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<tr>
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<th>Illinois</th>
<th>New York</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of administration</strong></td>
<td>State program, contracted with non-profits for admin</td>
<td>County program, administered through local DSS</td>
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<td><strong>Eligibility period</strong></td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>12 months, w/ 6-month income verification in Nassau; 6 months for TANF</td>
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<td><strong>Income eligibility</strong></td>
<td>185% FPL</td>
<td>200% FPL</td>
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<td><strong>Parent co-pay</strong></td>
<td>Based on income and family size, up to 9% income</td>
<td>Based on income and family size, can be up to 20% income</td>
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<td><strong>Maximum child age</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employment requirement</strong></td>
<td>No minimum hours</td>
<td>20 hours minimum (eligible for full-time subsidy when working 30+ hours per week)</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<td><strong>ExceleRate QRIS</strong></td>
<td><strong>QUALITYstarsNY QRIS</strong></td>
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<td>• RTT ELC Grant funded</td>
<td>• 2010 RTT K-12 grant provided initial funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Four circles of quality (Licensed, Bronze, Silver, Gold)</td>
<td>• 5-star system</td>
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<td>• One-on-one TA</td>
<td>• Customized TA</td>
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<td>• Tiered reimbursement/bonuses</td>
<td>• Scholarships, QI funds</td>
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<td><strong>Gateways to Opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aspire</strong></td>
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<td>• Professional development system</td>
<td>• Online workforce registry</td>
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<td><strong>Innovation Zones</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• RTT ELC Grant funded</td>
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<td>• 8 high needs communities</td>
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<td>• Aims to increase K readiness</td>
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Research Questions

1. From the perspective of key stakeholders involved in CCDF and child care quality improvement efforts, what factors facilitate or impede low-income families’ access to subsidized, high-quality, and stable care?

2. From the perspective of key stakeholders, what are the key challenges to improving the quality of subsidized child care?
Key Themes from Interviews with Stakeholders

Analysis Teams

NY: Heather Sandstrom, Erica Greenberg, & Lina Breslav
IL: Julia Henly, Juliet Bromer, Carolyn Barnes, & Brooke Fisher
Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability
IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability from a Stakeholder Perspective

• System Resource Constraints
  • Insufficient office locations and opening hours
  • Delayed processing due to large caseloads and constrained staff time
  • Outdated IT infrastructure; Dysfunctional data processing systems (CCMS in IL; CCTA in NY)
  • Payment delays to providers
IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

- Program Eligibility and Application Requirements
  - Long and complicated form
  - Income thresholds out of sync with child care costs
  - Employment verification, especially for informal work, cash-pay, and self-employment
IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

• Subsidy Staff-related Issues
  • Some variation in knowledge of rules/policy changes across staff
  • Caseworker/staff burden

• Family-related Issues
  • Lack of knowledge/ Misinformation
  • Ineligibility (unemployment; online education)
  • Failure to comply with recertification; Failure to report changes in work and child care
  • Language and literacy barriers
IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

- Provider-related Issues
  - Provider knowledge/misinformation
  - Background checks, licensing/monitoring
  - Payment delays; reimbursement levels

- Cross-system challenges
  - Not a seamless link between TANF and CC
Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability
IL/NY: Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability

• Family-friendly program characteristics and eligibility, especially around access to program and income and employment
  • Open communication (Multiple ways to apply and recertify; no “wrong-door”)
  • Reminder notices sent about redetermination and pending cancellation
  • Grace periods
  • Staff can support in application/recertification process; staff have some discretion/flexibility around timelines
IL/NY: Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability

- Improved Coordination between CCR&R’s, Providers, and Subsidy Offices
  - Relationships key
    - between providers and subsidy office staff; and between front line staff, directors, and state

- Prioritization of workload, given constraints

→ But overwhelming recognition that without adequate funding and system improvements, difficult to improve access and stability barriers
Barriers to **Quality** of Subsidized Care
IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

• System Resource Constraints
  • No stable funding source to expand and sustain efforts statewide
  • Not sufficient number of trainings offered
  • Focus is too heavily on child care center system

• Institutional Barriers to Integration Across Systems
  • Lack of information sharing and collaboration across agencies
IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

• Family-related challenges
  • Child care supply insufficient / deserts
  • Lack of parental knowledge about quality
  • Parental work hours prohibit access to quality centers
  • Concerns about parent trust of providers and quality system
IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

• Barriers to provider participation
  • Provider resource constraints -- Low reimbursement rates and limited bonuses for participation
  • Provider staff issues: Investments in professional development → turnover for higher salary (e.g., public preK)
  • Lack of knowledge about quality efforts and misinformation
  • Insufficient trainings
Strategies to Improve Access to Quality
IL/NY: Strategies to Improve Quality

• At system level
  • Building better relationships between child care resource and referral services and subsidy office staff
  • Increased resources; stability of resources; more reliable payments, etc.
  • Improved opportunities for collaboration, e.g., Head Start- Child Care Partnership; community connections
IL/NY: Strategies to Improve Quality

- For Parents
  - Consumer education
  - Increase supply in underserved areas and for families with nonstandard hours
  - Parent-to-parent networking (parent ambassadors)

- For Providers
  - Professional learning communities
  - Consultations; Trainings
  - Increased reimbursement rates and bonuses
  - Improvements in subsidy system → facilitate engagement in quality efforts
Challenges & Opportunities for Improving Subsidy Access, Stability, & Quality with CCDBG Reauthorization & QRIS/Quality Initiatives

- These efforts do reflect opportunities for states to develop policies that better fit the needs of families and providers.

- Success of state efforts to improve quality and stability of care will reflect opportunities, resources, and constraints of their particular context → not just the policies

- Improvements may require additional resources, especially during a time of fiscal challenges
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