

Child Care Policy Researchers Consortium Day

Title: Panel on Unionization

Moderator: Bobbie Weber, Oregon State University
Mark Anderson, Child Care Program Manager, Oregon
Alice Womack, Child Care Administrator, Kansas
Beverly Wellons, Child Care Administrator, New Jersey

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Mark Anderson, Child Care Program Manager, Oregon:

- AFSCME – on board with working within the system
 - o In favor of strengthening requirements
- SEIU represents exempt providers who receive a subsidy
 - o Concerns about this union
 - Come from a very classic approach to unions which is what they were used to
 - Struggle to deal with difference in philosophy, in particular, the focus on parental access instead of on providers.
 - Went to a third party approach because of too many disagreements
 - State felt that unregulated providers should be paid less than regulated providers, wanted to work based on market rate
 - Used Bobbie Weber as an expert witness to talk about why it's important to retain market rate structure
 - o Researchers need to inform not only state administrators, but also third parties (i.e. Governor, legislature, unions)
- National women's law center report ranked Oregon very low in terms of co-pay, income limit and maximum rates. Both state and unions used this effectively to get legislative approval for significant improvements in the child care subsidy.ly
 - o SEIU initially argued that exempt providers should be paid more than licensed providers.
- What are ways to preserve the emphasis on the parent and maintain the market rate structure

Alice Womack

- AFSCME got majority to sign petition
- Kansas did NOT have a good experience with this union
- Unique benefit system in Kansas where parents get paid a benefit and parents pay the providers
- Unions not happy about this because parents would then pay union benefits
- AFSCME – interested in health and safety conditions
 - o Want less regulations on health and safety
- State administrator has a list of research questions
 - o What will impact be on private market if there are huge rate increases?
 - o What will impact be on quality and school readiness?

- Does rate increase drive quality and impact outcomes for children
- Assumption by the union is that if rates increase, then there may be more continuity in care for children? Is this going to happen?
- How does rate increase affect a quality rating system?
- How will this impact parent choice if union dues are being deducted?
 - Would parents' benefit be reduced?
- How we unions be funded? Who loses money if this passes in legislature?
- How will this impact licensing?

Beverly Wellons

- Began negotiating as Child Care Workers Union – communications workers of America and AFSCME
- Both groups seem to be negotiating for employees even though child care workers are not state employees, which leads to an interesting relationship
- Discussing contract and anticipate having it finalized in the coming weeks.
- Many demands from unions
 - Impact that union negotiations would have on families that are receiving subsidies – whether any deductions in subsidies would be assessed by providers
- Market rate is high, and subsidy rate is not consistent with market rate
 - In 2006, paying between the 30th and 40th percentile
 - Governors concern is to serve more families versus pay higher rates
- Concern about impact on increase in market rate on families who do not receive subsidies
- Large number of providers who have religious convictions who do not want to participate in union
 - State wanted an opt out clause for these providers, but there will not be a quick and easy way for providers to do this
- Unions wanted state to freeze registration because it will drive parents in the system to union members homes
- Seeking to represent providers geographically
 - Population density is much greater in northern area
 - Raises challenges in dues deduction
- Requesting 15% rate per year
- Do provide COLAs that range from 1% - 1.5%
- Worry about impact on licensed child care providers
- Union has asked to assume 30 minutes of pre-service training which means family child care regulations may need to change to increase time of training
- Looking for health benefits, and 30 million dollar subsidy investment targeted to infants and toddlers
- Union wanted state to revise regulations to increase maximum number of children in family child care homes
 - Would put provider in area of mandatory licensing
- Child welfare reform issues – wanted unionization process to be included so that union members could receive higher rates if they become foster parents
- Requested that \$500 be paid to every provider annually to advertise their services

- NJ has an attendance adjustment system in place with no way to do a payroll deduction
- Dues collection and payment are going to be the biggest issue

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

- Unions are promising that they will accomplish a lot but there might not be research to support that they can keep the promises
- Could have done a better job making research available to unions because research has credibility with unions
- Ivelisse – any analyses done in Oregon of how rates are going to impact low-income families?
 - o Bobby Weber – Strain O’Brian did a study and results will be available soon
 - Major rate increases had relative small impact on prices for entire market
 - FFN will be paid more than what families would have paid
 - 12% difference in what licensed providers and exempt providers are paid
- Gina Adams – Could provide market rate studies to help them think about what types of components need to be included; What are elements that market rate studies need to have in them?
- Think about this as a natural experiment to see how states with similar systems evolve with organized child care providers
- Think about longitudinal data collection to see what happens with both providers and families
- As child care providers become state employees, what are priorities for assessing and evaluating them
 - o Alice Womack – do not plan to consider them state employees
 - o Mark Anderson – relationship is more like social service agency and clients
- What role did providers play in negotiations? What ways can we study use of union funds? What are providers thinking about the impact that this may have on them and families for whom they care?
 - o Providers attended a meeting, listened to a talk, and signed in
 - o Providers were not informed about deductions
 - o Many complaints from providers about unprofessional union tactics
- Not successful in unionizing in Rhode Island. Need to inform policy makers of impact on larger system. Unions do not understand the complexity of the system. Providers were pawns.

KEY POINTS

Bobbie Weber

- Seeing a transformation in the child care system
- What happens to center-based care in this system when family child care providers are unionized
- Most people did not see this transformation coming
- Subsidy policy and regulatory policies in the past have been done with a variety of stakeholders; This is not true when collective bargaining system adopted
 - o State mediators will now make these decisions
- As changes are happening are there data that should be collected, processes to understand and document