Emerging Issues in Home-Based Child Care: What Do We Know About Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Settings?

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Diane Paulsell
Overview of the Presentation

- Overview of home-based child care
- Characteristics of home-based caregivers
- Initiatives to support quality in home-based care
- Research on effectiveness of initiatives to improve home-based care
- Lessons from implementation research for recruiting, engaging, and sustaining participation of caregivers
Overview of Home-Based Care

- Highly prevalent form of care, especially for infants and toddlers
- Most care provided by relatives
- Evidence on quality is mixed; many caregivers are affectionate and responsive but provide relatively low levels of cognitive stimulation
- Quality of regulated family child care is consistently higher than family, friend, and neighbor care
Characteristics of Home-Based Caregivers

- Regulated family child care providers and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers who provide care in their own home
- Ages vary—most caregivers in mid-40s.
- Most caregivers have low incomes.
- Family, friend, and neighbor caregivers tend to share same race/ethnicity and home language as parents and children.
- Family child care providers are more likely to have a high school degree.
Motivations and Challenges Faced by Home-Based Caregivers

- Motivation for family, friend, and neighbor caregivers: help the family or keep child care within the family

- Motivation for family child care providers: stay home with own children and earn income

- Challenges of home-based caregivers:
  - Isolation
  - Work-related stress and physical exhaustion
  - Conflicts with parents—childrearing styles, scheduling, payment, lack of respect for professional status
Recent national scan identified 90 recent or ongoing initiatives in all 50 states

Primary goals of initiatives:
- Quality improvement (72)
- Certificate program for college credit or CDA (4)
- Support for licensing or registration (9)
- Support for obtaining accreditation (5)
Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Care: Strategies

- Primary service delivery strategies:
  - 46 Workshops
  - 17 Home visiting
  - 10 Coaching and consultation
  - 6 Play and learn groups
  - 5 Materials and mailings
  - 4 Peer support
  - 2 Professional development through formal education
  - 2 Visits from mobile reading vans
  - 2 Grants to caregivers

- Most initiatives supplement primary approaches with secondary strategies.
The evidence base on effectiveness of quality initiatives is limited.
- Literature review identified 15 studies
- Scan of the field identified 27 studies

Few studies examined child outcomes.

Most studies used descriptive, correlational, or pre-post designs; a few were RCTs or QEDs.

Samples were small and selected.
Factors to Consider in Recruiting Home-Based Caregivers

- Caregivers who participate in the regulatory or subsidy system: use lists maintained by state regulatory and subsidy agencies and CCR&Rs.

- Caregivers who do not participate in the regulatory or subsidy system:
  - Work through trusted organizations and natural leaders in the community.
  - House initiatives within programs for families with young children—HS, EHS, PAT, other family support.
  - Conduct door-to-door recruiting drives.
  - Participate in community events and fairs.
Factors to Consider in Identifying Caregivers Interests

- Caregivers are more likely to enroll in programs that address their interests/needs.

- Interests of family, friend, and neighbor caregivers:
  - Information on health, safety, development, and activities to promote school readiness
  - Experiential learning opportunities

- Interests of family child care providers:
  - Opportunities to increase income and professional development
  - Services that lead to a credential or accreditation
Factors to Consider in Identifying Caregivers Needs (Cont.)

- Interests common to all types of home-based caregivers:
  - Opportunities for social interaction to reduce isolation
  - Strategies for working with parents
Encouraging Participation and Sustaining Engagement

▪ Incentives to Encourage Participation:
  – Informational incentives
  – Financial incentives
  – Social incentives
  – Public and professional recognition

▪ Strategies for sustaining engagement:
  – Tailor services to learning styles of target population
  – Incorporate opportunities for social support
  – Tailor services to caregivers’ home language and culture

▪ Caregivers need supports to access services: transportation, child care, flexible scheduling.
Supporting Quality in Home-Based Care Project

- Research funded by OPRE/ACF

- Anticipated Products:
  - Literature review on home-based care
  - Compendium of initiatives
  - Practitioner’s guide for designing initiatives
  - Design options for home-based care initiatives

- For more information contact:
  - Diane Paulsell, Mathematica Policy Research
  - Toni Porter, Bank Street College of Education
  - Ivelisse Martinez-Beck and T’Pring Westbrook, OPRE