

Provider Practices that Support Parents and Families: Implications for Policy, Concepts of Quality, and Research

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Extended Care: Provider Support Roles Across Provider Types

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Study of Work-Child Care Fit Provider Sub-Study*

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- In-depth interview study with 29 Chicago-area child care providers including family, friend and neighbor (FFN); licensed family child care (LFCC) and center teachers.
- Research questions:
 - To what extent does the provider role expand beyond the care of children to the care of families and the broader community?
 - How do providers help parents manage the daily and economic demands of work and family beyond their direct care of children?

*This study was directed by Julia R. Henly, Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. Some of the data presented here is from dissertation research conducted as part of this study by Juliet Bromer and some of the data presented here is from the broader Study of Work-Child Care Fit Provider Sub-Study.

Findings: Childrearing and Parenting Support

- **Material goods/ things for children** (diapers, toys, books, food)
- **Family support services and referrals** (parenting classes, child health and medical services)
- **Childrearing advice** (discipline, medical issues/ home remedies, behavioral issues, academics and school readiness, children's activities, general development and parenting)

Findings: Logistical and Economic Support

Logistical Support

- Flexible hours
- Transportation of children/ parents (work, school, appointments)
- Alternate care, sick care
- Grocery shopping, cooking, other errands

Economic Support

- Waive subsidy co-payments
- Set child care fees at below-market rates
- Free care
- Monetary assistance in other areas (transportation/ lunch money, small loans)

Findings: Personal and Neighborhood Support

Personal Support: Mothering Mothers

- Material assistance to mothers (food, clothing, shelter)
- Resource sharing (employment, housing, education)
- Personal advice (work-family, relationships, health)
- Religious support (spiritual guidance)

Neighborhood Support: Community Mothering

- Child-related: Monitor child safety, discipline neighborhood children, offer “safe house” on block, bring neighbors together
- Adult-focused: Monitor crime, help elderly/sick neighbors

Findings: Differences Across Provider Types

FFN providers

- Offered most logistical, economic, and personal supports
- Reported burden from support activities
- Help mothers become economically self-sufficient
- View support as family obligation

LFCC providers

- Limited logistical and economic support: waive co-payments; sliding scale fees; flexible hours
- Mostly personal advice
- Ambivalent about roles as business women vs. nurturers to families

Center teachers

- Limited work-family support: No flexible fees but did help negotiate subsidies
- Informal support despite formal support programs: monetary, personal advice
- Constrained by center policies and schedules

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