Provider Practices that Support Families: Findings from a Review of the Literature on Home-based Child Care

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Supporting Quality in Home-based Child Care

- Two-year project funded by OPRE
- Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and Bank Street College of Education
- Goals:
  - Review the literature and gather information about strategies that have the greatest potential for improving the quality of care provided by home-based child care providers—including regulated family child care providers and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers—who serve children from low-income families
  - Refine or develop one or more specific initiatives that can be implemented and rigorously evaluated.
A Review of the Literature on Home-Based Child Care: Implications for Future Directions

- Patterns of use
- Characteristics of home-based caregivers
- Quality
- Initiatives
- Related literature on family support and home visiting
- Research on the family context
Findings

Literature indicates:

- Some differences in motivation; some overlaps

- Common challenges:
  - conflicts with families (depending on motivation: lack of professional respect; differences in child rearing styles)
  - work-related stress (depending on type of care: long hours, little pay; physical exhaustion and second job)

- Common interest in services:
  - communication w/ parents
Findings

Literature indicates:

- **Child care initiatives**
  - content does not often include parent-caregiver communication.
  - Of the evaluations of child care initiatives for home-based caregivers we examined, none looked at outcomes for parents or parent-caregiver communication as an outcome.

- **Family support literature**
  - Small but statistically significant effects in five parent domains (parenting knowledge, behavior, family functioning, adult mental health/health risks, and family economic self-sufficiency).

- **Home visiting literature**
  - modest benefits for parents (parenting knowledge and attitudes, stress, social support and mental health, and economic self-sufficiency and education).
Findings

- **Other literature:**
  - Three city study:
    - Parents’ satisfaction with care
    - Accessibility
    - Flexibility and
  - Communication between the parent and the provider
    Another study of rural low-income working mothers found similar results: flexibility of the care—during nontraditional hours, unpredictable work schedules, and when children were ill—was regarded as one of the most positive aspects of the child care arrangement.

- **Doting on Kids and Tutu and Me:**
  - other responsibilities assumed by caregivers: meals, prescriptions, paying bills, etc.
References


Discussion Questions

- What are the implications for parent choice?
- What are the implications for parent outcomes?
- What are the implications for child outcomes?
- What are the implications for policy and research?