

Financing

Financing—Cost Analysis

- What's the true demand for child care services? What level of investment is needed to meet some or all of that demand?
- How does subsidized child care (increased demand and associated provider standards) affect the market pricing of child care?
- What percent of children live below the poverty line in this state?
- How is price related to quality?
- What are the costs of incremental steps to improve quality and access?
- How much would it cost to provide high quality care for all children?

Financing—Policy/Political

- How can the high-quality public school-based, state funded, half-day programs be changed to full day/full year programs so that the needs of working parents can truly be met?
- At what age is one “entitled” to a public-supported education? Five now; how about four? Three? Younger?
- Do public opinion polls report that the majority of voters are willing to support the early care and education system at the same level as K–12 and university?
- What's the impact of Pre-K programs on the child care market (including supply, quality of care, cost, and workforce)?
- What are the tradeoffs between jumping on the Pre-K bandwagon vs. improving the child care system?
- What level of government is responsible for funding the early care and education system? Local-like schools via property tax? Federal or state level tax?
- With limited resources in states (especially now); is there one best way to invest our quality dollars?
- What are the options for funding the early care and education system? (e.g. via subsidies or paying teachers—like public schools)

Cost-Benefit

- We have a limited budget in dollars. Where can we get the most bang for the buck in improving child care quality?
- How does state investment, including training, regulation, enforcement, and subsidies, in child care quality pay off in reduced expenditures for special education and grade retention?
- How does one determine the cost-benefit of early care and education of varying levels?
- Cost/benefits of different quality initiatives. (policymakers)

Decisionmaking With Limited Dollars

- Who should be given priority for limited child care subsidy dollars?
- How can subsidy policy support stable, quality child care and at the same time control costs (spending) in the program?
- One of the primary questions from our state administrator is how to make decisions about serving fewer programs/children well versus serving many

children but with minimum impact. What data could help in this decision-making process?

- What is the impact of cost containment measures (such as lower eligibility criteria, etc.) on providers, parents who use child care subsidies and children?
- What is the “best” way to set maximum reimbursement rates and avoid overpayment?

Cost (a): \$ Cost Description

- How much would we need to increase provider compensation to be at the true cost of care?
- What is the cost of providing child care?
- What is the cost of high-quality child care with comprehensive services? How does the cost vary by locality? How does the cost vary by type of provider?
- What is the true cost of care versus the price of care for each age group?
- What is the full cost of child care?

Cost (b): Decisionmaking With Limited \$\$

- Who should be given priority for limited child care subsidy dollars?
- What is the impact of a quality “star” rating system on child care costs?
- What is the impact of cost containment measures (such as lowering eligibility criteria, etc.) on providers, parents who use child care subsidies, and children?
- How can subsidy policy support stable, quality child care and at the same time control costs (spending) in the program?
- One of the primary questions from our state administrator is how to make decisions about serving fewer programs/children well, versus serving many children, but with minimum impact. What data could help in this decisionmaking process?
- What is the “best” way to set maximum reimbursement rates to ensure access and avoid “overpayment?”
- What would be the most effective means for government to help finance child care?

Systems

Stakeholders' Education

- How can state child care policymakers collaborative with human resources staff in the business community to increase financial support for the same customers—parents and children?
- List of child care stakeholders in state—by counties
- How do we best educate the general public about the benefits of early care and education so that they are moved to action resulting in + \$?

Supports

- They need briefings on the data and information on what the implications of the data are.

Linking of Systems

- How can funding streams be merged to facilitate the inclusion of children with special needs in child care settings?
- How do we better link child care, Head Start, and state Pre-K programs to assure better quality, better databases, more efficiency, etc. (governance)?

State Policy Interaction and Decisionmaking

- How should limited funds be allocated among communities with differing needs?
- How does child care policy interact with TANF and other policies? Negative or positive?
- How can we balance serving more children against higher quality?
- What are all of the supports low-income working families need to maintain economic self-sufficiency and support their children's early development?

Policy and Organizational Structure

- How is the decentralization of child care policy playing out in street-level bureaucracies?
- Has privatization encouraged creativity and innovation within child care?

Data

- Identifying and linking administrative data sets that contain information related to child care programs/services.
- Where are the data and what can we do to merge data into a single system so that we can better describe the landscape for children?
- How can we build an infrastructure and sustain it to support ongoing analyses of data?

Data Systems

- States should address on a continuing basis the accuracy and frequency of data collected.
- Can you compare data by county?
- Rapid (and regular) turnaround of key data elements.
- How are child care data reported? To whom? (one time)
- Who keeps/maintains the data on:
 - o subsidy
 - o capacity of child care
 - o licensed facilities
 - o Pre-K enrollment
 - o Head Start (one time)
- For planning, is data collected on the whole population as well as the service population?

Policy Decisionmaking

Child Care and Economic Development

- What's the difference between "child care" and "early education"? (one time)
- Will there ever be common language/terminology in our field?

- Where is child care headed in terms of policy relevance? (periodic)
- Support required is expertise interpretation of research data and the impact and relationship of these results to children in any early care environment.
- Is it better to target our scarce resources or provide universal services, like subsidies and quality improvement initiatives, to all children?
- What is the tie in/link between child care and economic development/healthy economy in my state? Can you prove a link? (one time)

Coherent, Comprehensive Systems

- Are there adequate systems in place for transporting children between arrangements?
- Pre-K: What are the state policies that inhabit/enhance building partnerships between Pre-K, child care and Head Start?
- How can existing programs (child care, Head Start, Pre-K, etc.) be part of a coherent systems?
- Routinely: Do the departments talk to each other and the ECE field?
 - o Education
 - o Head Start
 - o Labor
 - o Health
 - o Commerce
 - o Housing

Collaboration – Comprehensive Systems

- States should periodically collaborate with other child care providers regarding methodology and research studies on the child care populations.
- What are the costs to the state when public schools and the child care sector do not communicate/collaborate?
- How does the child care and early education system align ~ allow for a seamless transition for children and families?
- When states move toward public/universal Pre-K programs, how can infant toddler slots be kept “safe” (not converted to preschool slots)?
- Implementation of GSGS throughout the whole child care system.
- Which early care and education funding streams are supporting which populations of children? (periodic)
- About networks/associations through which information can be shared, for organization.

Integration of Child Care With Early Childhood/K-12

- How could school and child care be better integrated?
- How are after school programs/activities being used by parents to meet the child care needs of their families?
- Are there ways that early childhood programs can be linked with other appropriate institutions to enhance quality (building on success of Head Start/EHS partnerships for example)?

- What are the range of subsidized child care and early childhood education programs available in a state, and how do these programs interact?