

PROJECT BRIEF

Increasing Access to High Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers
Project Team: Maribel S.D. Loste, M.Ed. CNMI CCDF Administrator and Principal Investigator; Roselle Teregeyo, Co-Investigator; Richard M. Santos, Administrative Data Specialist; Maria Jennifer Tordecilla, PhD Candidate, Research Partner, Malati Solutions; Jasmin Jones, PhD, QRIS Partner
Grant or Contract Number: Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants 90YE0192
Period of Funding: September 30, 2016 to March 31, 2018

Project Description

The primary objective or focus of CNMI CCDF's Phase I proposal is how to increase access to high quality care for infants and toddlers as CCDF implements the requirements of the CCDBG Act of 2014. Because of CNMI's CCDF lack of experience and expertise in research and evaluation, the project approach included participation from researcher partnerships to help create a data system, full participation in the research consortium, peer learning opportunities, partnerships with state agencies, and flexibility in improving and, incorporating lessons learned through the process.

Research Questions

Two research questions frame the proposed aims of this project:

- 1) How does an increase in investment in quality improvement (from an increase infant and toddler care set aside) increase access to high quality care?
- 2) How can state systems better support CCDF's efforts to increase access to high quality infant and toddler care?

Sample

For the purpose of this study:

- 1) A parent survey form will be developed in order to determine if and how parents and families are impacted by the high quality efforts of their children's providers;
- 2) Conducts the parent survey to determine impact of high quality efforts;
- 3) Reports results of parent survey.

Methods

The research and evaluation process is new territory for the CNMI CCDF and many of its partner agencies.

The bulk of the time, resources, and activities to be undertaken in

this grant period will focus mostly on learning about research and the research process; how the organization might conduct a valid study of the effectiveness of its policies; how CCDF can develop a research and evaluation plan with the resources it currently has; and how it can coordinate the efforts of its different partner agencies towards the goal of developing a research and evaluation plan.

At the same time, the focus of CCDF's research and evaluation process will be on determining the effectiveness of increasing infant and toddler set-aside on access to high quality infant and toddler care.

At the heart of this 18-month process will be to learn *how* CNMI CCDF can move forward to learn *if* the policy actually increases access to quality care, *what* can be done to maximize the investment and increase its impact, and *how* the organization and its partners can leverage this opportunity to learn more about the research process. With this clarification and a limited knowledge of conducting research and what that might entail, CCDF revised the timeline and budget (in the succeeding sections) to more clearly reflect the specific activities in which the CCDF will engage during the 18-month grant period:

- 1) Work with its partner agencies to learn about the research and evaluation process, including developing a research plan that will aim to study the effectiveness of the increased infant and toddler set-aside in increasing access to high quality infant and toddler care.

- 2) Partner with the QRIS contractor in leveraging its full participation in the research and evaluation planning process – including collecting and analyzing data with a researcher oriented lens.
- 3) Work with all partner agencies to align data gathering efforts to facilitate the research process, as will be determined by what data will need to be collected in the research plan.
- 4) Contract with a researcher(s) to facilitate and guide the process of learning about research and developing a valid plan for studying CCDF's research question(s).
- 5) Reach out to parents to get their initial feedback on the QRIS – results may or may not impact the research plan to be developed.

Progress Update

To date, the CNMI CCDF's most significant accomplishment has been the development of a research plan to explore the relationship of its increased infant/ toddler set-aside (as invested in professional development) with the quality of care in CCDF child care centers in the CNMI.

Implications for policy/practice

It is expected that the proposed research activities will inform CCDF's planning of professional development activities that are relevant and appropriate to the needs and nature of the care providers, including responsiveness to their cultural context. Furthermore, CCDF aims to use information gleaned from this research to improve the provision of high quality care

that addresses all the development needs and facilitates optimal growth of infants and toddlers. Such activities are expected to increase the efficiency and effective use of CCDF resources.

Implications for research

CCDF aims to contribute to the existing literature on the relationship of professional development and quality care, as it relates to the context of caregivers in the CNMI.

Contact

Maribel S.D. Loste, M.Ed.
ccdf.maribelloste@gmail.com
(670) 664-2573

Federal Project Officer:

Meryl Barofsky
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202- 441-5541
meryl.barofsky@acf.hhs.gov

Project Specialist:

Alysia Bandon
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202-205-8386
alysia.bandon@acf.hhs.gov