

Network Director Perspectives on Engaging FCC Providers: Findings from the National Study of Family Child Care Networks

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Presentation Summary:

- This presentation focuses on findings from in-depth phone interviews with a sample of 46 directors from the 156 staffed family child care networks which participated in the National Study of Family Child Care Networks survey.
- The qualitative research, which was intended to extend survey findings about network characteristics, service delivery, and engagement of providers yielded network director perceptions about factors that may be contributing to FCC decline and the challenge of recruiting new providers.
- Preliminary analysis suggest that these factors can be grouped in two categories: personal characteristics and systems characteristics.

Methods: Network Director Interviews

- **Selection criteria:**
 - Organizational characteristics
 - Types of services offered
 - Willingness to distribute surveys to providers and staff
- **Interview Questions**
 - Broad topics:
 - Recruitment and engagement
 - Program services
 - Staffing and data collection
 - Perceptions of network challenges, successes and needs
- **Sample: 46 of 66 respondents**
 - Types of Organizations: n=46
 - Other: 61%; Head Start and Early Head Start:22%; CCRRs: 17%
 - Types of Providers Served: n=45
 - Regulated FCC only: 56%; Both FFC and FFN: 36%; FFN only: 8%

Findings:

- **“Leavers:”**
 - **Personal Characteristics:**
 - **Aging out:** *“I think probably more than half of the reason is people aging out. The people who originally went into family child care are just getting older. It’s not attracting a young workforce. I think some of it is financial. There’s a lot of other fields where folks can make a significantly higher salary. Also, the long hours.”*
 - **Motivation:** *“Our other providers had been staying between 30 and 35 years. The new providers leave much more easily. They enter because often their own child is in need of care. If the child ages out, they leave the business.”*

- **Income/business demands:** *“No customers, no money, and they just end up closing their doors.”*
 - **Isolation:** *“Isolation is the largest mitigating factor for providers who burn out or who leave because they don’t feel like they’re successful.”*
 - **System Characteristics:**
 - **Paperwork:** *“They are so overwhelmed with all these trainings. All these classes. All these different types of QRIS, Subsidy. All these different entities are asking them to do things, and they're getting really confused as to who’s asking what, and who needs what paperwork where.”*
 - **Requirements:** *“The system is changing. Everything. The system, in general, and the plethora of hoops that people have to jump through in order to care for young children in their house. They talk a lot about that and how it's almost dissuading them to continue.”*
 - **Technology:** *“This is most of the family child care system. Either you’re dealing with some people that are limited, many cases they’re older women. They’re not technically savvy in a lot of cases.”*
 - **Expectations:** *“We’ve got a system where we’ve got all of these family child care providers who didn’t enter the industry thinking of themselves as professionals or thinking about doing—nor passionate about early childhood education. They just wanted to stay home with their own kid, in most cases, and take their neighbor’s kid in just to help with keeping a roof over their heads. Then suddenly we’re now saying we want you to use a standardized curriculum, and could you do assessments, and could you do screenings, and could you do this, and could you do that, then they’re inundated, they are really, really overtaxed. That was never really on their idea list or plate initially. It’s just a lot to bite off. “*
 - **Low reimbursement:** *“The reimbursement rate is really one of the lowest in the nation, so it’s an extraordinary amount of things—It’s turning childcare into CLEs for an attorney, or CMEs for somebody in healthcare. The ability to do all these sorts of things to get this low reimbursement rate, and then the transactional parts of it are so complicated, and so hard, it is really breaking the back, and, frankly, driving a lot of people who have a heart, and have the desire to take care of kids. I think you’re moving to more underground childcare providers.”*
- **“Newbies”**
 - **Motivation:** *“Oftentimes, we’ve had people that will call and say, ‘I’m looking at moving to your area. I’m contemplating opening a home-based day care. Do you think there’s need?’ The first word is gonna be yes. There are some people that think, ‘Okay, then, I can hang out at home and just watch these kids,’ and there’s a lot more to it than that.”*
 - **Source:** *“10 to 15 percent of licensed exempt providers are interested in licensing.”*
 - **Barriers:** *“How do you recognize a person who’s capable of being a quality child care provider, but has the requisite entrepreneurial risk-taking, or background, or skills that they can take the next step?”*

Implications/Questions:

- How do we create systems that are easier to navigate, reduce barriers, and provide meaningful incentives to engage and retain HBCC providers?
- What consequences does the decline in FCC supply have for families?