

**Session: Using Findings from Child Care Research
Partnerships to Inform New CCDBG Goals and Practices**

**Illinois-New York Child Care Research Partnership:
Phase 2, Policy Stakeholder Interviews**

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Phase 2 of CCRP Study

- Phase 1 explored subsidy instability from the perspective of subsidy program participants
- In Phase 2 we gain perspective of subsidy program administrators and caseworkers and child care providers
- Focus on subsidy instability and intersection between subsidy program and quality initiatives in partnering states

Phase 2 Study Components

1. Key stakeholder interviews, including subsidy administrators and staff, CCR&Rs staff, and quality improvement program leaders
2. Local supply and demand analysis; mapping changes in quality , supply, and characteristics of subsidized care
3. Linking Phase 1 survey data to Phase 2 provider data
4. Qualitative study of subsidized providers of different care types

Study Sites

- New York
 - Nassau County
 - Westchester County
- Illinois
 - Service Delivery Area 6 (Cook County)
 - Service Delivery Area 14 (7 counties in southwestern Illinois)

IL & NY CCDF Program Parameters

	Illinois	New York
Level of administration	State program, contracted with non-profits for admin	County program, administered through local DSS
Eligibility period	6 months	12 months, w/ 6-month income verification in Nassau; 6 months for TANF
Income eligibility	185% FPL	200% FPL
Parent co-pay	Based on income and family size, up to 9% income	Based on income and family size, can be up to 20% income
Maximum child age	12	12
Employment requirement	No minimum hours	20 hours minimum (eligible for full-time subsidy when working 30+ hours per week)

Select Quality Improvement Initiatives in Study Sites

Illinois	New York
<p>ExceleRate QRIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTT ELC Grant funded• Four circles of quality (Licensed, Bronze, Silver, Gold)• One-on-one TA• Tiered reimbursement/bonuses	<p>QUALITYstarsNY QRIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2010 RTT K-12 grant provided initial funds• 5-star system• Customized TA• Scholarships, QI funds
<p>Gateways to Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional development system	<p>Aspire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online workforce registry
<p>Innovation Zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTT ELC Grant funded• 8 high needs communities• Aims to increase K readiness	

Research Questions

1. From the perspective of key stakeholders involved in CCDF and child care quality improvement efforts, **what factors facilitate or impede low-income families' access to subsidized, high-quality, and stable care?**
2. From the perspective of key stakeholders, **what are the key challenges to improving the quality of subsidized child care?**

Key Themes from Interviews with Stakeholders

Analysis Teams

NY: Heather Sandstrom, Erica Greenberg, & Lina Breslav

IL: Julia Henly, Juliet Bromer, Carolyn Barnes, & Brooke Fisher

Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability

IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability from a Stakeholder Perspective

- System Resource Constraints
 - Insufficient office locations and opening hours
 - Delayed processing due to large caseloads and constrained staff time
 - Outdated IT infrastructure; Dysfunctional data processing systems (CCMS in IL; CCTA in NY)
 - Payment delays to providers

IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access and Stability from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

- Program Eligibility and Application Requirements
 - Long and complicated form
 - Income thresholds out of sync with child care costs
 - Employment verification, especially for informal work, cash-pay, and self-employment

IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

- Subsidy Staff-related Issues
 - Some variation in knowledge of rules/policy changes across staff
 - Caseworker/staff burden
- Family-related Issues
 - Lack of knowledge/ Misinformation
 - Ineligibility (unemployment; online education)
 - Failure to comply with recertification; Failure to report changes in work and child care
 - Language and literacy barriers

IL/NY: Barriers to Subsidy Access from a Stakeholder Perspective (cont.)

- Provider-related Issues
 - Provider knowledge/misinformation
 - Background checks, licensing/monitoring
 - Payment delays; reimbursement levels
- Cross-system challenges
 - Not a seamless link between TANF and CC

Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability

IL/NY: Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability

- Family-friendly program characteristics and eligibility, especially around access to program and income and employment
 - Open communication (Multiple ways to apply and recertify; no “wrong-door”)
 - Reminder notices sent about redetermination and pending cancellation
 - Grace periods
 - Staff can support in application/recertification process; staff have some discretion/flexibility around timelines

IL/NY: Strategies to improve subsidy access and stability

- Improved Coordination between CCR&R's, Providers, and Subsidy Offices
 - Relationships key
 - between providers and subsidy office staff; and between front line staff, directors, and state
 - Prioritization of workload, given constraints
- But overwhelming recognition that without adequate funding and system improvements, difficult to improve access and stability barriers

Barriers to **Quality** of Subsidized Care

IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

- System Resource Constraints
 - No stable funding source to expand and sustain efforts statewide
 - Not sufficient number of trainings offered
 - Focus is too heavily on child care center system
- Institutional Barriers to Integration Across Systems
 - Lack of information sharing and collaboration across agencies

IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

- Family-related challenges
 - Child care supply insufficient / deserts
 - Lack of parental knowledge about quality
 - Parental work hours prohibit access to quality centers
 - Concerns about parent trust of providers and quality system

IL/NY: Barriers to Quality of Subsidized Care from Policy Stakeholder Perspective

- Barriers to provider participation
 - Provider resource constraints -- Low reimbursement rates and limited bonuses for participation
 - Provider staff issues: Investments in professional development → turnover for higher salary (e.g., public preK)
 - Lack of knowledge about quality efforts and misinformation
 - Insufficient trainings

Strategies to Improve Access to Quality

IL/NY: Strategies to Improve Quality

- At system level
 - Building better relationships between child care resource and referral services and subsidy office staff
 - Increased resources; stability of resources; more reliable payments, etc.
 - Improved opportunities for collaboration , e.g., Head Start- Child Care Partnership; community connections

IL/NY: Strategies to Improve Quality

- For Parents
 - Consumer education
 - Increase supply in underserved areas and for families with nonstandard hours
 - Parent-to-parent networking (parent ambassadors)
- For Providers
 - Professional learning communities
 - Consultations; Trainings
 - Increased reimbursement rates and bonuses
 - Improvements in subsidy system → facilitate engagement in quality efforts

Challenges & Opportunities for Improving Subsidy Access, Stability, & Quality with CCDBG Reauthorization & QRIS/Quality Initiatives

- These efforts do reflect opportunities for states to develop policies that better fit the needs of families and providers.
- Success of state efforts to improve quality and stability of care will reflect opportunities, resources, and constraints of their particular context → not just the policies
- Improvements may require additional resources, especially during a time of fiscal challenges

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