

## **Plenary 1: Complexities of Nontraditional Hour Care: Closing Knowledge Gaps to Better Serve Families and Providers**

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | *Constitution CDE*

### **1. Descriptive Information**

There is growing recognition of the need for increased child care options for families who work or are in school during nontraditional hours. This is not a fringe group: over half of all children have parents who work some hours outside of daytime hours and the number is even higher if irregular, part-time, or fluctuating hours are included. These families face child care challenges as most center-based programs are only open during standard daytime, weekday hours and provide limited programming to accommodate fluctuating care needs. The majority of care during nontraditional hours is provided therefore by home-based providers, especially informal family, friend, and neighbor caregivers. Caring for children who need care during evening and weekend hours, overnight, or early morning may require different activities than care for children during daytime hours only. For example, providers may have dinner, bathing, and bedtime responsibilities, and there may be less focus on cognitive, school-readiness curricula. Providers may be reluctant to extend care to these families due to (perceived or real) concerns about insufficient demand, increased cost or licensing requirements, or because they are disinterested in working during nontraditional hours. This panel will consider the complexities of providing high-quality child care options to families needing nontraditional hour care with attention to how research from parent and provider perspectives can inform policy responses. Four presenters will share findings from studies of providers and parents, and a home-based child care provider and researcher will comment and facilitate discussion.

#### **Facilitator**

**Julia Henly**, University of Chicago

#### **Presenters**

**Julia Henly**, University of Chicago  
| *What We Know and Don't Know Regarding the Complexities of Nontraditional Hour Care*

**Abby Lane**, University of Texas at Austin | *Child Care Preferences and Choices for Parents Working Nonstandard Schedules*

**David Alexander**, Illinois Action for Children | *What Administrative Data on FFN Care Tell Us about Training and Monitoring Providers*

**Erica Greenberg**, Urban Institute and **Elizabeth Gronginsky**, District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education | *Experiences of Licensed Providers with Extending Care During Nontraditional Hours: The Case of Washington, DC*

#### **Discussants**

**Yolanda Deane**, Kreative Kids, Daycare, LLC., and  
**Chrishana Lloyd**, Child Trends.

#### **Scribe**

**Katie Caldwell**, ICF

### **1. Documents Available on Website**

- Complexities of Nontraditional Hour Care: Closing Knowledge Gaps to Better Serve Families and Providers
- Study of Nontraditional-Hour Child Care in the District of Columbia
- What Administrative Data Suggest about Supporting Quality in FFN Child Care
- Searching for Care at Nontraditional Times: Low-Income Mothers' Decision-Making Processes and Perspectives on Center-Based Care

## 2. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Julia Henly**
  - Setting the stage:
    - Need is great for nontraditional hour care
    - Many parents have nonstandard work schedules
    - Variable, fluctuating and unpredictable work hours make finding child care difficult
  - A limited supply of nontraditional hour care exists
    - Particularly in centers; but also in FFN child care
    - Disproportionate use of FFN care for many reasons
  - Subsidies primarily fund centers
    - In 2017, 75% of children receiving subsidies are in centers (up from 57% in 2006)
  - Why is there a gap of nontraditional hour care in the formal sector of center-based child care?
    - Insufficient and unreliable demand (may or may not be true)
    - Prohibitive costs (130% more expensive suggested by one study)
    - Insufficient provider interest, readiness, capacity/resources
  - All stakeholders should work together to identify strategies to increase access to high quality affordable care during nontraditional hours. What is needed currently in the field?
    - Better information about needs/wants
    - More nuanced definitions of quality
    - Investment across all child care sectors
  - Policy levers available through CCDBG
    - Financial incentives to providers
    - Contracts and capacity grants
    - Training and TA
    - Consumer education
    - Greater flexibility in eligibility rules
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Erica Greenburg, Elizabeth Gronginsky,**
  - Study of nontraditional hour care in DC
  - Child Care Study Act 2017 passed by DC Council, required the study to determine the number of child development facilities with nontraditional hours in the District that is sufficient to meet the needs of District families.
  - The Act defined nontraditional hours as any hours outside 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, or on a 24-hour basis.
  - Study completed by Urban Institute
  - Methods and data sources:
    - Child development facility licensing records
    - Survey of providers licensed for nontraditional hour care
    - Semi structured interviews with providers who were not licensed for nontraditional hour care
  - Data:
    - Public use national survey data on parent work hours
    - Child care referral ticket records
    - Key informant interviews
  - Who provides care:
    - Relatively small sample of providers: Out of the total of 444 full time licensed child care facilities in the District, 60% operated only during traditional hours. 40% of the facilities provided care beyond 7-6pm
    - Of the 40% that provided nontraditional hour care: 71% are centers, 22% are homes and 7% are expanded homes
  - Most nontraditional hour facilities open between 6-7:30 am
  - Most nontraditional hour facilities close between 6-7 pm; very few open 8pm or later

- Reasons for providing nontraditional hour care:
  - To meet parental demand
  - Attract more families to their program
  - Partner with and employers
  - Meet scheduling needs
- Maximum potential demand:
  - Looked at parents work and commuting hours. Found that 19,000 children 12 or younger needing nontraditional hour care and 64% of these children are subsidy eligible
- Potential demand is highest on the weekend and 6-7 am, sustained demand exists into the evening
- All age groups need nontraditional hour care but school age children have a greater potential need for nontraditional hour care
- Biggest demand for care exists in Wards 7 and 8 which are lower income communities with the lowest number of slots available
- Stakeholders observe high demand for nontraditional hour care, but parental preferences vary
  - Questions of safety drive many parental decisions
- Challenges with providing NTH care:
  - Insufficient subsidy rates
  - Staffing issues
  
- **Summary of Presentation #3: David Alexander**
  - Illinois Action for Children is the resource and referral agency for Cook County, Illinois that includes Chicago and its suburbs.
  - Cook county parents who receive a subsidy and work schedules 6am- 6pm mostly use center based care. However, with a nontraditional work schedule mostly use FFN care.
  - Children in FFN care in Cook County, numbers have declined from 50K in 2006 to 12K in 2018. Some decreases appear to coincide with efforts to improve FFN care with additional regulations and training requirements.
  - At least 11 hours of training is required for licensed subsidized FFN providers.
  - FFN providers have a fragile attachment to the Illinois subsidy program in Cook County.
  - Next: what do we know about FFN providers in the subsidy program that can inform supports for these providers?
    - Huge diversity in providers
  - Older providers were more responsive to the trainings recently rolled out
  - Some providers only enter the subsidy system for a short period of time, others stay longer term
    - Is it worth getting these providers on a licensing track?
  - Characteristics associated with likelihood that FFN provider will stay in subsidy program longer than 1 year:
    - Serves working parent
    - Multiple children in care
    - Care for children full time
    - Age 40 or older
  - What is inferred from data:
    - Trade-off between regulation and retention of providers
    - Data suggest which types of FFN providers will participate as a subsidy provider for the long term but currently we cannot predict which individuals will
    - One size support does not fit all, have to engage providers to understand motives and interests and then tailor support
    - Train staff to engage FFN providers to learn circumstances and interests

- **Summary of Presentation #4: Abby Lane**
  - What factors are important in child care decisions among low-income mothers working nonstandard hours who have children less than 5 years old?
  - Sample: low income mothers of young children who worked nontraditional hours outside nonstandard times
    - 20 mothers in Austin, Texas
    - Average age was 29-30 years old, average household 3-4 people
    - 55% married/cohabitating, 45% single
    - Industries included personal care, service occupations, retail sales, some more than one job
    - Every mom worked at least some weekend hours and often irregular hours
    - Most mother used combinations of care
  - Decision making factors:
    - Social factors- care settings provided learning, personality match and trust, availability of relatives
    - Economic – household income, access to public programs, mothers work schedule
    - Structural- cost, hours, availability
  - Nontraditional Hour Care
    - Some mothers felt that an opportunities in working nontraditional hours was the ability to tag team care and choose that type of work because of this
    - Challenges: balance of work and child care, matching work schedule to availability, employer-based practices (short notice of schedules)
  - Irregular schedules leads to more challenges finding and maintaining care
  - Likelihood of use of Center Based Care:
    - Necessity
    - Family support system (children were more comfortable and schedules more consistent)
    - Time of day/day of week
    - Potential benefits
    - Barriers to access:
      - Cost
      - Availability
  - Findings:
    - Nonstandard work schedules add important challenges to the child-care decision making process
    - Center based care was very appealing to mothers, especially on the weekends
- **Discussant: Chrishana Lloyd, Yolanda Deane**
  - Chrishana Lloyd
    - Wide variation of the hours within the definition of nonstandard care
    - One in 5 mothers of young children work in low wage jobs
      - Often work in the service industry
      - Unpredictable work hours
    - Finding care is hard
      - 8% of center based providers provide some care during evenings, overnight and/or weekends
      - 34% of listed home-based child care providers offer care
    - Home Based Child Care is an important part of the early childhood education and care delivery system, particular for families needing care during nontraditional hours
      - About half of all child care is provided in home-based settings
      - Numbers are higher for infants and toddlers, families of color who are lower-income
      - Availability
        - Nontraditional care hours are being provided in home-based child care

- Yolanda Deane
  - 5 star rated home based child care provider New Jersey
  - Restructured her program to offer emergency and back up care (hour of operations used to be 7:30 to 6pm)
  - Ms. Deane noted that she had to ask herself “Who is nurturing the nurturer” and create a schedule that worked for both the parents and for herself to recharge after being a caregiver all day.
  - It would be helpful to have the resource and referral agency have a set of providers who rotate working on the weekend on a regular schedule to avoid burn out, an “on call” status
  - Practice:
    - Providing care during nontraditional hours is mentally and physically taxing, expensive and often not profitable
    - Qualified workers are hard to find and retain
- Opportunities for Innovation:
  - Provide mentoring and TA to help encourage more providers to offer care for non-traditional hour care
  - Offer higher child care payment
  - Incentivize providers as a way to shore up availability for parenting receiving child care assistance
- Need to better understand:
  - Ways to bolster/strengthen support to the subsidy system

### **3. Summary of Key Issues Raised**

- Nontraditional hour care is a needed resource that is lacking for many families, particularly low-income families who struggle with other issues such as irregular work schedules.
- There is a lack of consensus or a standard definition of what nontraditional hour care means and the field would benefit from a standard definition.
- The majority of nontraditional hour care is provided by family, friends and neighbors for many reasons including cost, schedule consistency for the children, and perceived safety by parents.
- Opportunities to innovate in this area are to incentivize providers on a policy level to offer additional care hours (higher payments) and offer more mentoring and technical assistance.