

2009 CCPRC Annual Meeting  
Breakout A-3  
Thursday, October 29, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## **Emerging Issues in Home-Based Care**

### **Description**

Home-based child care—child care provided by regulated family child care providers and family, friend and neighbor caregivers who are legally exempt from regulation—is a common type of child care for many children, especially for infants and toddlers, children of color, and children from families with low incomes. Regulated family child care is part of several early childhood education systems—Early Head Start, state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, and QRIS.

This cross-cutting session highlighted the developing body of knowledge on home-based care, with findings from multiple projects that have been synthesized in current reviews of the literature. It explored and discussed the implications of what we are learning from multiple perspectives including those of providers, parents, and children.

### **Moderator**

T’Pring Westbrook, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

### **Presenters**

Amy Susman-Stillman, University of Minnesota  
Toni Porter, Bank Street College of Education  
Diane Paulsell, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

### **Scribe:**

Shannon Moodie, Child Trends

### **1. Documents in Session Folder**

- “Emerging Issues in Home-Based Child Care: What Do We Know About Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Settings?” Diane Paulsell.
- “Emerging Issues in Home-Based Child Care: Support for Families in Home-Based Child Care: What Are We Learning?” Toni Porter.
- “What are We Learning about Strategies to Provide Education and Support to Family, Friend and Neighbor Providers? Lessons Learned from New Program Implementation,” Amy Susman-Stillman and Karen Stout.

### **2. Summary of Presentations**

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Diane Paulsell**
  - Characteristics of home-based care:
    - Low-income families.
    - Predominantly provided by relatives.

- Variation in levels of quality--minimal to good for Family, Friend & Neighbor (FFN) care on the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) and the Family Child Care Rating Scale (FCCRS).
    - Credentials of caregivers vary widely.
  - Motivations and challenges for home-based care providers:
    - Motivation: Varies widely.
    - Challenges: Sense of isolation, work-related stress, and low pay.
  - Primary goal of quality improvement initiatives is to increase quality of home-based care by:
    - Conducting well-designed rigorous studies for FFN.
    - Recruiting providers for quality improvement initiatives outside the regulated, subsidy system.
    - Providing incentives to providers to participate through social, emotional, financial, and public recognition.
    - Sustaining participation and tying it to increased Quality Rating and Improvement (QRIS) ratings, subsidy payment, etc.
    - Taking caregiver needs and wants into consideration and paying attention to issues of transportation, child care for providers, and flexible scheduling.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Toni Porter**
  - Types of support home-based caregivers provide:
    - Expectations for families (parent outcomes).
    - Research findings about support for families include child-rearing support, parenting support, logistical, and economic support.
    - Research findings:
      - Few initiatives address caregiver/parent communication; none evaluate parent outcomes.
      - Need more descriptive data on caregiver support for families. What do parents want from caregivers?
      - Research is needed on how staff is prepared for relationship-building between providers and parents.
      - Need analytical data on effects of initiatives that aim to help caregivers support families.
      - Need for data about relationship between improving support for families and child outcomes.
    - The knowledge base for thinking about how home-based care affects parents comes from:
      - Qualitative studies about caregivers' support for families.
      - Literature review of home-based child care.
      - Scan of initiatives aimed at supporting home-based child care.
  - Presentation of Logic Model (still warrants consideration):
    - Research project is hypothesizing that initiatives can affect caregiver characteristics, caregiver-parent communication, parent characteristics, and the home-based care environment.
    - What are parents' expectations about their relationship with their child care provider?

- Possible parent outcomes: Knowledge of child development, satisfaction with care arrangements, improved relationship with caregiver, ability to balance work and family, reduced stress, reduced work absenteeism, and improved psychological well-being.
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Amy Susman-Stillman**
  - Strategies to provide education and support for FFN providers (University of Minnesota).
  - Minnesota's FFN Grant Program is specifically for education and support, focusing on school readiness.
    - Six programs are funded.
    - There are collaborations with both urban and rural community organizations.
    - Projects use multiple strategies and are widely diverse, using community liaisons, circulating backpacks, play and learn, and home visiting.
    - The target populations are also diverse, which leads to challenges. From an evaluation standpoint, this means we are looking across very different programs.
  - Presentation of Logic Model:
    - Are children participating in activities that promote development and learning?
    - Are children participating in activities that use community resources?
    - Increasing capacity to serve FFN populations?
  - Evaluation Questions:
    - Characteristics of FFN caregivers participating?
    - To what extent do FFN caregivers participate in programs?
  - Implementation issues: Difficult to collect baseline data (descriptive data were collected).
  - Themes of implementation:
    - Raising awareness (who are FFN caregivers? What does FFN care look like?).
    - Building trust and community between providers and providers, and providers with programs.
      - Trust is especially important for immigrant populations.
    - Connecting and collaborating:
      - Need for solid communication and strong infrastructure.
      - Important to clarify roles.
    - Responding to context for program planning:
      - Responsiveness to diversity.
      - Needs assessments, use of curriculum, consistency, and change in program implementation.
    - Teaching and training grounded in experience:
      - Diverse skills and backgrounds required.
      - Many participants from different backgrounds.
      - Evaluation didn't find many individuals that had all of the competencies and skills they may have needed.
        - Match of staff experience and skills.
        - Match of cultural competencies and experiences.
  - Evaluation challenges: Recruitment and sampling.
  - Measurement issues.

- Implications for offering support and education to FFN providers:
  - Clarity on definition, etc.
  - Minnesota will use stimulus funds to continue programs.

### **3. Summary of Discussion with Presenters and Participants**

- Questions about research on how home visiting has affected other children in the care of FFN providers who are also receiving home-based intervention:
  - Little evidence.
  - Early Head Start pilot.
  - New curriculum (PAT).
  - Issues of dosage.
  - Home visiting can provide one way to reduce isolation, but it could be supplemented with ways caregivers can get together.
- Motivation for FFN to participate in professional development:
  - How do you characterize the initiative to attract those who participate?
  - Look at FFN providers who receive subsidies versus those who do not. The ones who received subsidies cared for more children who were not their own, and for longer hours.
  - Hard to find FFN providers in general; hard to find those who will participate in programs and might be amenable to participating.
- Packages of services: Some of the most effective networks offer a larger menu of primary and secondary services:
  - Continuum of services for those that are interested—different types and levels of intensity.
  - Key is to recognize diversity of caregivers; it's important to understand target population and tailor services to that population.
  - Important also to think about long-term outcomes. What do you want the initiative to accomplish?
  - Expectations for programs need to be realistic (e.g., is school readiness too broad or difficult?).
  - So much emphasis is placed on child outcomes that initiatives feel they have to prove they are having an impact on child outcomes, rather than just having a viable goal.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture has been a force in bringing family child care into a licensing system by providing technical assistance about nutrition.
- Scale back what we expect or want from FFN. We are asking a lot and providers are often not interested.

### **4. Key Themes and Issues**

- Characteristics/definitions of home-based care.
- Issues around designing and evaluating quality improvement initiatives for home-based care.
- Need for rigorous research, particularly about how home-based care affects parents and parent outcomes.
- Need for more data on implementation and evaluation:
  - Address the needs of the specific caregivers.
  - Documentation important.

- Measures that look at validity and can be used with different populations.
- Importance of the provider-caregiver interaction.