

2012 CCPRC Annual Meeting
Session Summary A-2
October 24, 2012, 10:45-12:15 p.m.

Learning Together about the Provider Perspective on Child Care Subsidies

Description

The goal of this session was to review existing literature, summarize the information States need, and develop a list of needed research based on what we know and don't know about providers and their willingness to serve subsidized families and children. The session started with short presentations on: 1) what we know from research about how providers view child care subsidies and how policies influence their willingness to serve subsidized families and children; and 2) the questions States are dealing with that relate to how providers view subsidies. These presentations were followed by facilitated small group discussions during which participants grappled with: what we know with confidence, what we know with less confidence, what we don't know (gaps in research), and what policy-relevant questions do we need to address next?

Presenters

Gina Adams, Urban Institute
Liz Kelley, Maryland State Department of Education

Facilitators

Isabel Bradburn, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Toni Porter, Bank Street College of Education
Carol Pearson, National Center on Child Care Subsidy Innovation and Accountability (SIAC)
Sue Wilson, SIAC

Scribe

Paula Daneri, Child Trends

1. Documents in Session Folder

- “Learning Together About the Provider Perspective on Child Care Subsidies: An Overview of the Research;” Gina Adams and Monica Rohacek.

2. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Gina Adams
 - Gina offered a quick summary around child care providers in the subsidy system. Two major issues: what do we know about providers overall compared to the subset that serve subsidized children? And, what do we know about how policies and implementation of subsidies affect those providers; who's in and out and their characteristics.
 - What do we know about providers who serve subsidized families? The forthcoming national survey should provide much more information about these issues.

- Associations have been found between subsidies and regulated care and between subsidies and center-based care (although this varies across States). What is the pathway (families who want to use center-based care are willing to go through the hassle of getting it)?
 - What is the level of involvement of providers with subsidies and why (not just a yes-no question, how does this change over time, social desirability issues?).
 - When thinking about quality—what is the comparison group? And would we expect higher quality care based on current CCDF design? If not, how would we design it? Variations based on type of care, perhaps age, other effects (market demand, and Head Start/Pre-k policies).
 - Questions around subsidy policies and implementation practices:
 - Rates – how do we establish rates for care? What about complicated segments of market?
 - Reimbursement policies—absence days? How learn about terminations?
 - Payment approaches--what is a contract versus voucher (lack consistent definition)?
 - Costs incurred by providers for working with subsidies (agency issues, family issues).
 - Connections between child care system and other early childhood systems.
 - All these things also depend on regulated versus unregulated providers
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Liz Kelly**
 - Liz started by reinforcing Gina’s point that the provider perspective will vary based on who and where the provider is (including type of provider, area of the State and what they’ve experienced and heard).
 - Perceptions providers may have include:
 - State is slow to pay
 - It is hard to collect parent co-pays
 - Eligibility changes too often (and providers don’t get timely information from the parent)
 - Amount the State pays is not sufficient
 - Amount of paperwork is a hassle
 - Balance of access and quality: raises questions:
 - How does this impact whether providers are willing to accept children in their care?
 - Are market rates the best way to establish payment rates?
 - How does the State measure the fiscal impacts on policy options?
 - What are the costs of changing policies? Tradeoffs and implications for money spend on the program? Transparency?
 - How dependent are providers on subsidies (implications of waiting lists)?
 - How do QRIS policies impact providers’ participation?

3. Brief Summary of Discussion and Key Issues Raised

- *From presentations:*
 - What do we know about the pathways between subsidies and regulated care and subsidies and centers?

- Given CCDF design, do we have reason to expect CCDF to encourage quality? If not, how would we design it?
- *Small Groups*
 - *Group 1*
 - What is providers' understanding of subsidy program?
 - What happens in practice?
 - Trust between parent and providers?
 - Incentives and disincentives to participate?
 - Advocating for qualitative as well as quantitative research
 - *Group 2*
 - Want descriptive data on providers at large and in subsidy systems
 - Relationship between actual care and revenue
 - Fit between providers and families
 - *Group 3*
 - Impact of program size and infrastructure, what is willingness to have subsidized children? Are there tipping points?
 - Identifying common misconceptions about subsidy program
 - How does subsidy policy implementation affect providers' mental health?
 - *Group 4*
 - Getting good data about larger landscape
 - Issues about data quality, reliability and validity
 - What's the biggest driver of increase in access to quality? Is it the provider?
 - More information about provider perception and knowledge
 - Does afterschool care matter? Age span influence decisions?
 - Licensing? QRIS? Subsidy?
 - What are other potent drivers of subsidy uptake and quality uptake? Relative potency of providers versus parents versus state policies versus finances?