
Emerging Issues in Home-Based Child Care: What Do We Know About Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Settings?

October 29, 2009

Presentation at the 2009 CCPRC Annual Meeting

Diane Paulsell

MATHEMATICA
Policy Research, Inc.

Overview of the Presentation

- **Overview of home-based child care**
- **Characteristics of home-based caregivers**
- **Initiatives to support quality in home-based care**
- **Research on effectiveness of initiatives to improve home-based care**
- **Lessons from implementation research for recruiting, engaging, and sustaining participation of caregivers**

Overview of Home-Based Care

- **Highly prevalent form of care, especially for infants and toddlers**
- **Most care provided by relatives**
- **Evidence on quality is mixed; many caregivers are affectionate and responsive but provide relatively low levels of cognitive stimulation**
- **Quality of regulated family child care is consistently higher than family, friend, and neighbor care**

Characteristics of Home-Based Caregivers

- **Regulated family child care providers and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers who provide care in their own home**
- **Ages vary—most caregivers in mid-40s.**
- **Most caregivers have low incomes.**
- **Family, friend, and neighbor caregivers tend to share same race/ethnicity and home language as parents and children.**
- **Family child care providers are more likely to have a high school degree.**

Motivations and Challenges Faced by Home-Based Caregivers

- **Motivation for family, friend, and neighbor caregivers: help the family or keep child care within the family**
- **Motivation for family child care providers: stay home with own children and earn income**
- **Challenges of home-based caregivers:**
 - Isolation
 - Work-related stress and physical exhaustion
 - Conflicts with parents—childrearing styles, scheduling, payment, lack of respect for professional status

Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Care: Goals

- **Recent national scan identified 90 recent or ongoing initiatives in all 50 states**
- **Primary goals of initiatives:**
 - **Quality improvement (72)**
 - **Certificate program for college credit or CDA (4)**
 - **Support for licensing or registration (9)**
 - **Support for obtaining accreditation (5)**

Initiatives to Support Quality in Home-Based Care: Strategies

- **Primary service delivery strategies:**
 - 46 Workshops
 - 17 Home visiting
 - 10 Coaching and consultation
 - 6 Play and learn groups
 - 5 Materials and mailings
 - 4 Peer support
 - 2 Professional development through formal education
 - 2 Visits from mobile reading vans
 - 2 Grants to caregivers

- **Most initiatives supplement primary approaches with secondary strategies.**

Research on Quality Initiatives for Home-Based Child Care

- **The evidence base on effectiveness of quality initiatives is limited.**
 - Literature review identified 15 studies
 - Scan of the field identified 27 studies
- **Few studies examined child outcomes.**
- **Most studies used descriptive, correlational, or pre-post designs; a few were RCTs or QEDs.**
- **Samples were small and selected.**

Factors to Consider in Recruiting Home-Based Caregivers

- **Caregivers who participate in the regulatory or subsidy system:** use lists maintained by state regulatory and subsidy agencies and CCR&Rs.
- **Caregivers who do not participate in the regulatory or subsidy system:**
 - Work through trusted organizations and natural leaders in the community.
 - House initiatives within programs for families with young children—HS, EHS, PAT, other family support.
 - Conduct door-to-door recruiting drives.
 - Participate in community events and fairs.

Factors to Consider in Identifying Caregivers Interests

- **Caregivers are more likely to enroll in programs that address their interests/needs.**
- **Interests of family, friend, and neighbor caregivers:**
 - Information on health, safety, development, and activities to promote school readiness
 - Experiential learning opportunities
- **Interests of family child care providers:**
 - Opportunities to increase income and professional development
 - Services that lead to a credential or accreditation

Factors to Consider in Identifying Caregivers Needs (Cont.)

- **Interests common to all types of home-based caregivers:**
 - **Opportunities for social interaction to reduce isolation**
 - **Strategies for working with parents**

Encouraging Participation and Sustaining Engagement

- **Incentives to Encourage Participation:**
 - Informational incentives
 - Financial incentives
 - Social incentives
 - Public and professional recognition

- **Strategies for sustaining engagement:**
 - Tailor services to learning styles of target population
 - Incorporate opportunities for social support
 - Tailor services to caregivers' home language and culture

- **Caregivers need supports to access services: transportation, child care, flexible scheduling.**

Supporting Quality in Home-Based Care Project

- **Research funded by OPRE/ACF**
- **Anticipated Products:**
 - Literature review on home-based care
 - Compendium of initiatives
 - Practitioner's guide for designing initiatives
 - Design options for home-based care initiatives
- **For more information contact:**
 - Diane Paulsell, Mathematica Policy Research
 - Toni Porter, Bank Street College of Education
 - Ivelisse Martinez-Beck and T'Pring Westbrook, OPRE