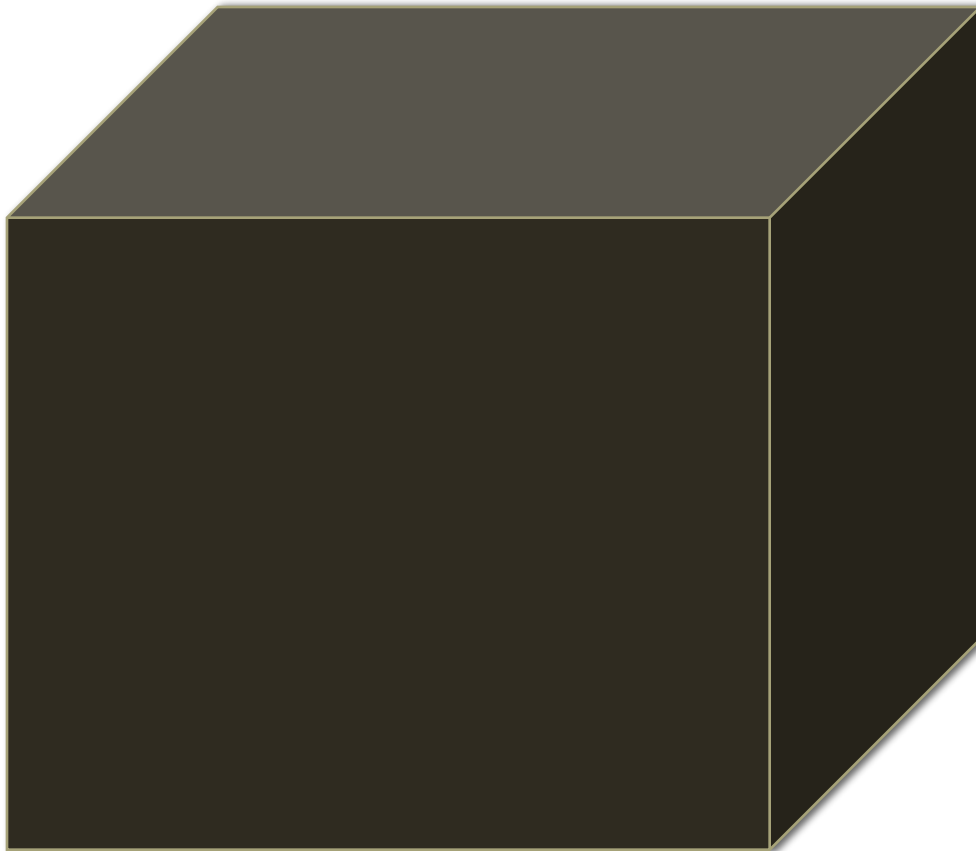


Childcare Subsidy Research Agenda: Provider Perspectives

Providers: What do we know?



We Know...

- Families using subsidy more likely to choose center-based or formal care arrangements
- On average, children using subsidies for childcare receive lower quality care

Tantalizing hints

- There is variation in the degree to which providers accept subsidies
- We have some preliminary suggestions about those decisions

Procedures and Policies Matter

- Factors that increase hassle, **stress** and economic instability decrease attractiveness of accepting subsidies
 - Not being paid for a child not attending
 - Lack of direct knowledge about families' status
 - Relative difficulty communicating directly with state or local administrators;
 - Frequent changes in clientele, DSS staff, or procedures – instability of the system
 - CCDF state payment practices that don't match provider practices



Cost/Benefit Ratio and Barriers

- What makes taking subsidy “worth it” to providers?
- Are there structural or other barriers that prevent willing providers from accepting or getting families to uptake subsidy dollars?
- How do decisions regarding accepting families using subsidy intersect with decisions about other ECE regulations or initiatives?

What We Need to Know

I. Develop a deeper understanding of (all) providers and the factors that affect their decision regarding subsidy

- Basic descriptive information regarding program or business characteristics, demographics, market and cultural contexts
- Factors that affect provider decision to engage with subsidy

Provider Characteristics

- Knowledge of subsidy (and other) policies
- Interpretation of those policies
- Expectations regarding and past experience with subsidy
 - subsidy program features
 - families using subsidy
- Motivation for providing childcare or ECE
- Degree to which business vs vocation vs family developmental phase

Program Characteristics

For example:

- Type of care
- Percent children eligible for subsidy
- Degree serve younger vs older (school-age) children
- For profit or NFP
- Administrative structure (who makes decisions?)

Larger Contextual Characteristics

ii. Develop an updated and deeper understanding of the policy, implementation, market and cultural contexts in which providers operate

- Child care market in which they operate
- Subsidy density of their area
- Local and state policies regarding subsidy (e.g., rates, stability of funding source, ease of reimbursement – implementation policies)
- Other ECE initiatives – licensing, QRIS, HS, state PK, etc.
- Rural vs urban/suburban
- Cultural attitudes toward poor families, public services

Methodological Considerations

- Clarify key constructs and terms
(e.g., contractual vs voucher)
- Assess and refine quality of data
(e.g., provider reporting on market rate surveys)
- Don't study subsidy decision-making in isolation of other ECE programs

Mixed and Multi-Method Designs

- Administrative data
- Interviews, surveys
- Ethnographic, “day in the life of” studies
- Comparisons by policy and cultural contexts
- Comparisons between type of subsidy provider (licensed, license-exempt, FFN; regulated family vs center ECE)
- Comparisons by motivation for providing care
- Ages of children in care (e.g., do providers think about or behave differently if they primarily serve younger vs school-age children)

“Lots and lots of qualitative
data!!”

CONTACT INFORMATION

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