

# Family and Subsidy

## Family Choice

- What are dynamics of family demand for child care considering: family dynamics, preferences, employment patterns? How does demand impact supply? How does supply impact demand (preferences and utilization)?
- How can we help parents do a better job in selecting quality care for their children?
- What criteria do families use when choosing child care?
- How do choices parents make relate to their true preferences—if there's a difference—what's policy response to address barriers to preference?
- Does receipt of subsidies resolve the issues of affordability and accessibility?
- What is the relationship between copay policy and total cost of care selected (copay and subsidy)?
  - o Fixed copay for family
  - o Percentage of cost
  - o Percentage of income
  - o Fixed subsidy
- Does the copay policy affect the type of care selected, i.e.
  - o Child's home
  - o Group home
  - o Family home
  - o Centers
  - o Licensed/unlicensed
- How does parents' employment (type, hours, flexibility) interact with child care usage and subsidy usage?
- What are the child care preferences of subgroups of families?
- What factors drive parental choice for child care?

## Patterns of Child Care Use

- What are the forms of child care used by families?
- Of families using child care in the state, how many use center-based care vs. home-based or informal care?
- How many children are in (1) child care (subsidized and non)? (2) Head Start and (3) Pre-kindergarten in each state/local community?

## Special Needs

- How many children have special needs?
- What is the quality of care for children with disabilities?
- What is the degree to which IDEA early intervention/preschool special education mesh with child care systems to address both child well being and parents' need to work?
- How many children with foster care or child welfare histories are enrolled in child care/early education programs?
- How many children in the homelessness system are involved in child care/early education?

- What percentage of children in child care have special needs?

### **Specialized Care**

- What organizational/structural processes facilitate or obstruct receipt of child care subsidies?
- What are the employment patterns of parents using the subsidy system?
- What is the make-up of the families who are using the subsidy system?
- What is the impact of the subsidy system on parents and providers? What are the strengths and weaknesses? How can the subsidy system be improved?

### **Policy and Organizational Structure**

- How is the decentralization of child care policy playing out in street-level bureaucracies?
- Has privatization encouraged creativity and innovation within child care?

### **Distribution of Programs**

- What school-age programs are available?
- Does the geographic location of child care facilities correspond with need?
- What does the supply of child care look like in your state or community in terms of:
  - o Size
  - o Types—formal and informal
  - o Age groups
  - o Quality
  - o Geographic distribution
- What types of child care are available in the state?
- How are different forms of care distributed within counties? Across counties (urban, suburban, rural)?

### **Spending**

- How much is spent annually on childhood care and education?
- (Legislator/state) How will any new funding for child care affect my district? (one time, updated)

### **Supply and Demand**

- How many children are waiting for child care services?
- What does full-time child care for an infant cost per week? What about cost for a 4-year-old?
- What about cost for school-age care in an after-school program? (annual)
- Where are all the kids? Kinds of care and kinds of families; regarding parent employment.
- Regarding services: Do you know as much about the demand side (families) as the supply?
- What is the demand for child care and early education services in the state?
- What is the match between care needed and care available?
- What are the child care arrangements for population? (real numbers)

- Up-to-date (annual) market rate, surveys, and reimbursement rates that match these?
- Are services located where they are needed?
- How does demand for child care and early education services vary by geographic location (urban vs. rural area; different region in the state) and what accounts for those variations (economic, demographic, sociocultural factors)?
- How many slots for infant toddler, preschool (3-5), and school age care does the state have? How stable are those numbers and how stable are the actual slots?
- Where are the young children enrolled/served now? (periodic)
- Location of child care centers relative to residential locations? (periodic: 2-3 years)
- How many programs are in the state? Licensed, legally exempt, centers, FCC: all types.
- What is the accessibility of early care and education in different areas of the state for particular populations, e.g., infant/toddler care?

### **Subsidy: Demand/Supply**

- What strategies do providers use to adjust to freezes or cuts in child care subsidies?
- What percentage of slots can be purchased at the current maximum subsidy rate?
- The characteristics of subsidized child care (exactly who, in terms of type of provider, is providing subsidized child care).
- Up-to-date (annual) market rate, survey and reimbursement rates that match these.
- Annual-minimum (monthly: best) information about numbers of children on waiting lists at state/county level for TANF and CCDF child care.
- What are the characteristics of children and families using the subsidy systems?
- Who does the subsidy serve?
- How do subsidies affect employment outcomes?
- What factors influence which eligible families receive or are on waiting lists for subsidies? How does this relate to parent choice for different types of care?
- What is the best utilization of TANF child care funds in territories?

### **Parent Choice**

- Cultural values and preferences in order to provide choice.
- What do parents want for childcare?
- How do most families with the need for care go about the search? (What sources do they use? What percent find a satisfactory arrangement? How long do they stay?) (periodic)
- Lessons learned; what other states have successfully accomplished in using research effectively (emulate).
- What information do parents want/need to make an informed choice of child care provider?
- Do parents prefer care near home or near work?
- What factors influence which eligible families receive or are on waiting lists for subsidies? How does this relate to parent choice for different types of care?
- What are parents' needs and preferences around child care and early education?

- How do parents make decisions around child care and early education, what informs those decisions, and what factors influence those decisions (parents', child's, and family's characteristics; characteristics of the social/economic environment and the child care and early education market)?
- Special studies: analyze the child care choices and challenges among them.

### **Family Characteristics and How They Affect Choice**

- How does the demand for child care and early education vary by parents' and family characteristics (e.g., SES, race/ethnicity, education, employment, age, family composition, access to social supports)?
- What strategies do families use to adjust to freezes or reductions in child care subsidies?
- Income ranges for families who use center-based care vs. family/friend/neighbor care.
- What factors shape parents' needs and preferences related to child care and early education (e.g., individual factors: education, income, age, race/ethnic composition, size, structure, etc.)?
- How affordable is child care for low-income families?
- Who uses our child care services (residents/nonresidents)?
- Policymakers need to understand the diversity among the childcare populations in order to make informed decisions.
- How does demand for child care and early education services vary by geographic location (urban vs. rural, different regions of the state), and what accounts for those variations (economic, demographic, and sociocultural factors)?

### **Parent Employment**

- How much are child care arrangements disrupted when parents have inconsistent work schedules, and what is the effect on children?
- How can we effectively meet the child care needs of parents working in the service industry with 24/7 schedules?
- How does quality child care improve parent productivity in the workplace?
- Hours worked, hours of care needed (nights, weekend, etc.)?
- Work schedules and child care schedules (particularly "nontraditional" work schedules). (periodic [5 years]?)

### **Parent Employment/Nontraditional Hours**

- What is the real impact of child care industry on economic development (direct and indirect)?
- What effect do subsidy policies have on promoting successful parent employment?
- How does child care interfere with mothers' paid work?
- What "times" do parents need child care? At night, day, weekends, etc.?
- What do parents' work schedules look like?
- Which type of child care setting is best to support parents who are working nonstandard hours?

- What do parents need for unconventional care (e.g., evening and night hours, special needs children? Half-day transitions)?
- What are parents' work schedules?

### **Rates and Regulation**

- Do subsidy reimbursement rates affect the child care market?
- What is the real cost of delivering high-quality child care services? How does this compare to the market rate?
- Is the regulation process adequate?
- What are the range of licensing requirements and facilities/services meeting them?

### **Parent Choices**

- Do parents know how to access child care subsidies?
- Where do parents get information on child care?
- Do parents have information about child care options?
- What choices do parents really have?
- What kinds of child care services do parents want?
- How can states help parents select quality programs?
- How do child care provider choices of assisted families vary (if they do) from choices of nonassisted families? What are critical factors/variables?
- How much choice should parents have in choosing providers in a subsidized setting?
- What is important to families in choosing care providers? Does this change and why? What affects family choice?
- What are parents' preferences (e.g., type of child care)?

### **Subsidy Policies**

- Waiting list versus the lowering number of families by income limits?
- Amount state spends on child care, relative to entire state budget?
- What efforts are made to ensure continuous care for children in and out of subsidy system?

### *Local/State/Federal*

- Do policy choices have predicted/desired effects on child care supply, quality (capacity), and access for all families/assisted families?
- Are the state child care DF subsidies sufficient to obtain quality child care?
- Amount state spends on: (1) quality child care, (2) child care research, (3) child care resource and referral?
- What is the nature of the informal system?
- What is happening to children in (CCDF) nonassisted families who cannot afford market rates for regulated care? Are they getting other help? What are their choices?
- What is the impact on families when they cannot get subsidies for child care?

### *Impacts of Subsidy Policies*

- Who will be affected by changes in subsidy rules – which families and which providers? (models over time)
- How can we make it easier for families to determine eligibility and access subsidies?
- How are subsidy policies actually implemented?
- What policies could support the “working poor” in accessing child care?
- What happens when families’ income nears the income eligibility cutoffs – do families decline raises to stay eligible, change to cheaper care?
- What are the demographic characteristics of families receiving subsidies?
- How many families would take up subsidies, if universally available?

### **Parent Affordability**

- What is the real cost of care for families receiving subsidies (copays, fees, differentials, etc.).
- Is it better to use limited child care funds to support training (TANF) or employment?
- What can parents afford to pay?
- How can we make child care affordable for all income groups?
- What is a reasonable copayment for low-income families?

### **Descriptive Data About Families That Need Child Care and Those Who Deliver Child Care Services**

#### *Building Data Capacity*

- How do we continue the work of building the state data capacity infrastructure with limited funding for such in state budgets?
- How do we get states to collect data in the same way?

#### *Supply*

- Where are the child care centers located? Are they near/accessible to public transportation? Are they distributed evenly across different types of neighborhoods (by poverty/race)?
- FFN care: Information needed on FFN care such as:
  - o Who are they serving?
  - o Where are they (location)?
  - o Ages of children served?
  - o How to reach them in order to distribute information about subsidies, training resources, ELGs?
- Do child care providers have flexible hours of operation to meet the scheduling needs of clients?
- What is the supply of child care?
- How many informal caregivers are there in each state?

### *Demand*

- What is the need for child care?
- Are all children who need child care being served? (finding placements)?
- Trends in parental employment: What are the trends in parental employment in the state for families by differing family structure, income, and child age including work hours and schedules?
- Where are the children? (i.e., what ECE settings are they in?)
- Routine collection: How many children are in each ECE program in the state?
- Patterns of care use: What is the diversity breakdown of families using child care and which types of care including by income, by race/ethnicity, by location/neighborhood, by child age, and by family structure? How does this demographic breakdown map on the patterns of care use for subsidies? Where are and what are the size of the gaps?
- What are the needs of families with infants in:
  - o Child care
  - o Health services
  - o Homes and food
- How many children in care have domestic violence and/or child abuse in their lives?
- What are the demographic characteristics\* of the families receiving child care services versus those awaiting services? (\*race, language, age, marital status, education level, special needs)

### *Supply/Demand Intersection*

- Is child care meeting the needs of changing neighborhoods with new income structures, racial composition, work characteristics?
- What are the gaps in services available and services needed?

### *Description of Child Care/Early Education Workforce*

- Do we have qualified staff to meet the demand for child care?
- What do we know about the ECE work force?
- Who is the child care workforce? What numbers, roles, programs, or systems are included?
- What are the characteristics of the child care workforce?
- What is the educational level/training of child care staff?

### **Data**

- Identifying and linking administrative data sets that contain information related to child care programs/services.
- Where are the data and what can we do to merge data into a single system so that we can better describe the landscape for children?
- How can we build an infrastructure and sustain it to support ongoing analyses of data?

### **Parents: How Do They Choose?**

- Parental perceptions of quality: What is the quality of care by types as perceived by parents and measured by standard metrics?
- How do family/exempt care subsidies affect extended families' resources and decisionmaking?
- Parental selection of care: What is the process? There is some great new work looking at how groups of people use different types of care, how it varies by child age, etc. (e.g., using survival analyses). But we need to know more about how the decisions are made by parents. This also translates into reasons for subsidy (?), etc. – more of the “whys” behind choice. Can't get from admin., but initial ethnographers, focus groups could be a start.
- Routinely: Do families request care during the hours between 5 p.m. and 6 a.m.? On weekends?
- How do parents budget child care costs over time (infant→ preschool→ school age)? i.e., what happens when subsidized care is only for preschool?
- Do tax incentives affect parental choice of care?
- If parents have better information, will they demand and choose better quality settings?
- Why do parents choose licensed versus unlicensed providers?

### **Employer/Employment-Related Issues**

- What causes workers to miss delays of work?
- Routinely: What can employers do about ECE in their companies? Their cities? The state?

### **Reimbursement and Quality Incentives for Providers**

- What relationship should reimbursement rates have to the cost of providing child care?
- Do providers change their quality in response to tiered reimbursements?
- Do differential reimbursement rate systems promote quality improvement or only reward those currently of high quality?
- Do financial incentives affect quality of care?

### **Employer/Employment**

- How are employers addressing the child care needs of their workforce?

### **Family – Descriptive**

- Where do parents who receive child care subsidies work?
- How does employment stability affect child care stability?

### **Family Supports**

- How do programs such as child care subsidies, TANF, housing, etc. interaction to create barriers and opportunities for families?



## **Subsidy Data**

### *Child Care Market*

- How do you define a child care market?
- What factors can be measured in studying provider rates, when no private market exists (e.g., large urban area)?
- Where should new child care facilities be located?

### *Subsidy Take-Up Outcomes*

- To what extent does the subsidy program “drive” child care in certain areas?
- How does lack of child care subsidy impact parents choice of child care arrangement?
- How does provision of child care subsidies affect the child care market in terms of supply, quality and price?
- What is the relationship between subsidy take-up and employment outcomes (duration, loss, return to TANF, etc.)
- What problems are there with our current child care system?
- How do we best ask parents about their child care needs/preferences/wants?
- Why are take-up rates for child care subsidies so low?
- What are the determinants of participation in the child care subsidy program?

## **Dollar Costs**

- What would be the most effective means for government to help finance child care?
- How could school and child care be better integrated?
- Who should be given priority for child care subsidy policies?
- What are the child care needs of rural populations?
- What is the best way to set maximum reimbursement rates to ensure access and avoid overpayment?
- What is the role of transportation in balancing work and child care?
- What is the best way to respond to questions from administrators: How does our state compare to other states?
- How do we best ask parents about their child care needs/preferences/wants?
- What is the staff turnover rate in child care sites?
- How are short-term needs of families being met?

## **Child Care Needs**

- How are “short-term” child care needs being met by families (i.e., a family with an ill child where the parent spends long periods of time at a hospital leaving remaining children in need of care)?
- What are the child care needs of rural populations?
- What is the range of child care options available to parents working evenings, weekends, and floating schedules, and how may these options be affected by public policy?
- What is the number of infants/toddlers that need care?
- How many children are cared for in different types of child care settings?

- How to measure child care “capacity”—not just licensed capacity—but how many children of each age group are in care.

### **Employers/Employment**

- How does employment stability affect child care stability?

### **Parent/Families**

#### *Outcomes*

- What is the role of child care programs in helping/supporting the parent-child relationship?
- In what ways can child care programs positively influence fathers’ positive parenting?
- What kinds of strategies should programs use to increase the level of fathers’ participation in their child’s program?
- In what ways does child care affect family functioning?
- What is the relationship between child care quality and parental well-being?

### **Family Supports**

- What is the role of transportation in balancing work and child care?
- How do programs such as child care subsidies, TANF, housing, etc. interact to create barriers and opportunities for families?
- Use of additional program/services by child care families.
- How are employers addressing the child care needs of their workforce?

### **Subsidy Take-Up Outcomes**

- To what extent does the subsidy program “drive” child care in certain areas?
- How does the provision of child care subsidies affect the child care market in terms of supply, quality, and price?
- How does the lack of child care subsidy impact parents’ choice of child care arrangement?
- What is the relationship between subsidy take-up and employment outcomes (duration, loss, return to TANF).

### **Subsidy Takeup**

- What are effective strategies for informing low-income parents about subsidy options?
- What factors determine whether families learn about subsidized child care programs, and which of multiple public programs they access?
- What are some deterrents of participation in the subsidy program:
  - o From parents’ perspective?
  - o From providers’ perspective?
- Who takes up/does not take up child care subsidies when eligible to do so?
- How many children are eligible for child care subsidies but are not receiving them (take-up rate)?
- Why are take-up rates (for child care subsidies) so low?

### **Parent/Families – Descriptives**

- Where do parents who receive child care subsidies work?
- Gathering and tracking of characteristics of child care families

### **Parent/Families – Decisionmaking**

- What information do parents need to know about child care facilities to make informed decisions about where to send their children?
- How do child care subsidies (or changes in subsidies) affect parents' decision about care?
- What is the impact of a “star” rating system on the child care market? (availability)
- What can be done to increase parents' ability to select better quality child care?
- What factors influence parents' choice of care?
- What factors are most important to parents in selecting among available types of subsidized child care and early childhood education programs, and how can parents best be assisted in making informed choices?

### **Parent/Families – Needs/Preferences**

- What is the range of child care options available to parents working nontraditional hours?
- How do parent preferences compare with best practices for good child outcomes?
- Where do parents perceive there to be gaps in child care services?  
What care arrangements do parents prefer?
- How do we best ask parents about their child care needs/preferences/wants?
- What hours of the day do parents need care?