

PROJECT BRIEF

Evaluating CCDBG in Oregon: Impact of the 2014 Act on Children, Families, and the Quality of Home-Based Care in Oregon: Phase I
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Project Description.

The 2014 Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act has potentially large impacts on the children, families, and providers that participate in the subsidy system. The impacts are likely to be particularly salient for home-based providers and the children and families they serve due to increased requirements for some. Such is the case in Oregon where approximately six in ten children in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program are in home-based care and almost four in ten are in homes that have not been inspected or monitored and whose level of quality is unknown.

Primary Objectives:

1. Build State capacity to assess the impact of the 2014 CCDBG Act.
2. Build capacity to identify effects of implementation of the Act on participation in the CCDF program.
3. Build capacity to identify the effects of Professional Development/Support on the quality of home-based child care.

Research Questions.

1. To what extent are targeted children and families (e.g., minorities and children with special needs) served by the subsidy program after implementation of the changes put in place by Oregon in response to passage of the 2014 Act?
2. What factors explain home-based providers' response to the Act (e.g., stop serving children in the subsidy program, meet the new requirements, and become a fully regulated home-based provider)?

3. Which professional development (PD) and support initiatives for home-based child care have an evidence base and fit Oregon's policy goals?

Sample.

During the planning grant we are piloting a proposed analysis of the pre-implementation administrative data using a merged data set on subsidy participants (parents, children, and providers) who were in the CCDF program between Oct 2014 and September 2016. If the Phase II (Implementation grant) ~~grant~~ is successful, we will include those who participated in CCDF between Oct 2018 and September 2020 in a post-implementation sample. Home-based providers who participate in either the PD/support intervention or control group will be included in the sample to answer research question 3.

Methods.

To answer research questions 1 and 2, we are planning a quasi-experimental pre-post study design. The pre-implementation study will be done during the planning grant. If the Phase II ~~implementation~~ grant is successful, pre-post comparisons will include measures of continuity along with other characteristics of participants and participant behavior. We will compare characteristics of the populations of parents, children, and providers who participated prior to implementation with those of the same populations after implementation. We will control for community and other characteristics that could also affect any discovered differences. To answer research question 3 we will conduct random control trials (RCTs) of two interventions with home-based child care providers if the implementation grant (Phase II) is successful.

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Progress Update.

Oregon has strengthened its Research Partnership and engaged numerous organizations and individuals in planning the CCDBG reauthorization evaluation. Organizations involved in the partnership include: State agencies (Early Learning Division, Department of Human Services, Oregon Health Authority); four research organizations (Portland State, Western Oregon, ~~and~~ Oregon State, Education Northwest); and practitioners (local CCR&Rs from the Portland metro area and Columbia Gorge). During Phase I, Oregon has negotiated data sharing agreements with multiple State agencies. The State's data warehouse is merging data on CCDF participants. A home-based child care breakthrough group identified and created logic models for interventions that research has indicated will improve the quality of home-based care. Two of these were identified for implementation if the Phase II grant is successful. The Oregon Early Learning Division uses breakthrough groups to engage stakeholders in development of creative strategies to address important policy issues. This breakthrough group focuses on strategies to support quality improvement in home-based child care. The focus is broader than the work of this grant but grant work is integrated into this broader effort.

Implications for policy/practice

Findings will inform the following CCDF policies that are part of the Reauthorization:

- Increased training requirement for home-based providers.
- On-site inspections and monitoring for home-based providers who were previously unregulated.
- 12-month eligibility and 3-month job search. Twelve-month eligibility is expected to increase continuity and stability, but given the high incidence of job loss for the subsidy population, a second policy is important. The 3-month job search requirement means that parents can retain their subsidy for up to three months of unemployment while they search for another position.

Findings will help shape both policy and practice related to the CCDF program. Findings from the RCT study will also have implications for efforts to improve quality in home-based child care. Findings will benefit policy-makers and practitioners.

Implications for research

The Evaluating CCDBG in Oregon grant involves extensive merging of data relevant to assessing program impact. Lessons learned about data sharing and data merging will benefit other research efforts. Findings from the administrative data study will add to the literature on subsidy impacts. Given the substantive changes associated with the 2014 Reauthorization, the pre-post findings will increase understanding of policy impacts. Further, findings from the RCT study will add to the emerging research on improving quality of home-based child care. In turn, this research will inform the growing literature on supports that are tailored to best support home-based care.

For more information:

This research project is in its early stages so no publications are available.

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