

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

Project Team: Project leader: Dawn Taylor, State Child Care Administrator, PI/Project Manager: Thomas George, Research Specialist, Early Learning Division, Sidney Traen, Professional Development Specialist, Early Learning Division; Co-PIs on studies: Megan Pratt and Bridget Hatfield, Oregon State University; Co-I: Bobbie Weber, Oregon State University

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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) subsidy 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. Identify the effects of implementation of the 2014 CCDBG Act on participation in the Child Care and Development Fund program.
3. Identify the effects of Professional Development (PD)/supports related to the 2014 CCDBG Act on the quality of home based child care.

Research Questions.

1. To what extent are targeted children and families (e.g., minorities, 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 changes attributed to the Act?
3. Identify the effects of professional development (PD) support related to the 2014 CCDBG Act on the quality of home based child care?

Sample.

Expanding the analyses from the Phase I portion of this study, to answer research questions 1 & 2, pre- and post-implementation administrative data will be utilized using a merged data set on subsidy participants (parents, children, and providers) who were in the CCDF program between Oct 2014 and September 2019. Home-based providers who participate in either a PD/support intervention or a 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 was completed during the planning grant (Phase I). Now in Phase I. pre-post comparisons will include measures of subsidy continuity along with other characteristics of participants. We will compare population characteristics of parents, children, and providers who participated prior vs. after implementation. We will control for community and other characteristics in our comparison.

To answer research question 3, we will conduct two random control trials (RCTs) interventions with home-based child care providers. The first is a study to test an intervention that supports the listing process for regulated subsidy providers (typically friends and neighbors) using a stratified random sample of four CCR&R locations. The second is a study to test a PD intervention for Family Child Care Networks (FCCN) using a stratified random sample from FCCNs across Oregon.

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, Oregon State, Education Northwest); and practitioners (local CCR&Rs from the Portland metro area and Columbia Gorge).

For Phase II, Oregon continues to negotiate data sharing agreements with multiple State agencies. The State's data warehouse will merge data on CCDF participants upon the end of FFY 2019.

A Home-Based Child Care Breakthrough Group identified and created logic models for interventions designed to support home-based care (research question 3). 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 grant work is integrated into this broader effort. The first study on regulated subsidy providers started in March 2019. The second will start in project year 2 due to changes in the state's QRIS system.

Implications for policy/practice

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.

Specifically, findings will inform the following CCDF policies, and corresponding practices, 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. 12-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.

- 3-month job search. 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.

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 (Research Questions 1 & 2) 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 in terms of subsidy duration and caseload characteristics.

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:**Contact**

Thomas George, Research Specialist,
Oregon Early Learning Division
971-403-3408
thomas.george@state.or.us

Federal Project Officer:

Meryl Barofsky
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202-441-5541
meryl.barofsky@acf.hhs.gov

Project Specialist:

Alysia Blandon
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
202-205-8386
alysia.blandon@acf.hhs.gov