

Focus Group - Centers

Opening Remarks

Thanks to everyone for taking the time to come and talk with us today. We know that you are all really busy, and we appreciate your time. This focus group is being conducted for Quality Care for Children, and is part of an exploration of ways of supporting child care organizations to help providers meet new Georgia quality standards and increase financial sustainability. We have asked each of you to participate because we feel that you will be able to represent well the interests and experiences of child care centers that are similar to yours in size and staffing. We want to hear from everyone, so please both speak up – but also make space for others to talk. Everything that you say today will be confidential. We will report the themes and findings from the interviews back to Quality Care for Children, but we will not attribute remarks to particular individuals. Please feel free to be completely candid – the more honest you can be, the more helpful your remarks will be.

Are there any questions for us before we get started?

Questions

1. Please tell us your name, the size of your center, whether you are non-profit or for-profit; whether you are part of a larger 'umbrella' organization; and the age range of the children you serve.
2. Tell us about top three challenges your center is facing this year. What is the hardest, most challenging part of your job? [Probe for: financial stress, collecting fees, enrollment, finding and keeping good staff, meeting new standards]
 - a. Financial stress – collecting fees, reimbursement rate, getting payments rapidly enough, managing money, keeping fully enrolled?
 - b. Enrollment – losing 4 year olds to pre-K? Too many infants, not enough three year olds?
3. [Play Phil Acord video and hand out 2-pager on alliances.] Which of these services would be most useful to your center? Which wouldn't be particularly useful? Why? How do you get these tasks done now? Are there services you want that aren't on this list?
4. [Describe how an alliance works]
Can you see any specific ways in which an alliance could strengthen your center? Potential benefits could include:
 - Cost savings -- can you think of any specific ways in which an alliance could save you money?
 - Increased revenue -- could an Alliance structure help you tap additional funding streams and/or strengthen cash flow and fund management?
 - Enable you to meet quality standards -- via more support for teachers and/or access to comprehensive services?
 - Less stress -- because, as a director, you'd have more support?
5. Would you have any concerns about these services being performed by an organization that isn't part of your center? Would you have any concerns about these services being shared with other centers? Are there any advantages to having these services be outside your center or shared with other centers?

Closing remarks

Do you have any questions for us? Thanks again for your time. Remember, everything you said was confidential. We will report the themes and general findings to Quality Care for Children shortly.