



Staffing Services: A Summary of Alliance Experience

This memo describes six early care and education staffing initiatives. Each effort is (or was formerly) operated as a shared service focused on recruiting/training/ placing staff, either as substitutes or permanent employees. Unfortunately, several of these examples are no longer in operation; sustaining the service over time proved to be a challenge. Others have found a pathway to sustainability. A brief description of each effort is included below, followed by a discussion of lessons learned.

Summary of Successful Substitute Services

The Smart Start Early Education Substitute Teacher Program, operated by United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia

The Georgia Alliance for Quality Child Care (GAQCC) partners with the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta to offer substitutes to members of their shared service Alliance. The United Way initiative, which has been in operation in the Atlanta area for several years, recruits applicants, enrolls them in a five-day training program, and then offers them the opportunity to work as substitutes in early childhood programs. GAQCC is in the process of identifying a cohort of trained substitutes who are willing to serve Alliance members.

The United Way initiative conducts training, in English and Spanish, at least monthly in various locations throughout the Metropolitan area. Applications for the substitute program may be submitted on-line or by mail and fax. Two supportive character reference checks are required, and these references are checked prior to accepting an individual into the program. Participating substitutes receive a: a resource notebook, a certificate for 18 state-approved hours of training credit, a certificate for CPR and first aid training and job referrals. Participants must commit to work a minimum of 4 days a month as a substitute teacher.

Centers seeking substitutes are permitted access to an on-line database of graduates and their contact and work related information. Centers may also request a paper graduate list (with names and contact information) via email, mail or fax. The hourly salary rate is determined by each child care program, based on the substitute's education and work experience.

The substitute program is fully supported by funds from a local Atlanta Foundation. Participation in the program is entirely free; trainees do not pay a fee nor do center seeking substitutes. As of 2007, more than 1,200 substitute teachers have graduated from the program.

For more information, go to <http://www.ecegasubs.org>

*Child Care Services Association Americorp T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Corp
Chapel Hill, North Carolina*

The Child Care Services Association (CCSA) sponsors a temporary staffing service that recruits and trains Americorp volunteers, who are then placed in a select group of child care centers to provide release time for T.E.A.C.H recipients who are going back to school or to serve as classroom support for centers that participate in T.E.A.C.H.

Corp members are placed in centers with higher star-ratings, based on the number of staff that are participating in T.E.A.C.H. and attending college classes. Centers that have a large number of staff participating in T.E.A.C.H. receive a full-time Corp member (4 days per week); centers with fewer staff participating receive a half-time Corp member (2 days per week). No Corp member works in a center all five days; the 5th day is reserved for professional development or other community-wide support work. Corp members are engaged in a range of activities including working with parents on literacy or helping to organize painting/maintenance crews for centers.

The number of Corp members varies each year, and is based on the number of volunteers who are interested in working on early childhood issues in NC. In 2010, CCSC had approximately 15 Americorps Volunteers. Corp members receive a stipend plus health insurance. If they are parents, they may also receive complementary child care.

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In addition to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Corp, (CCSA) formerly operated a substitute service for early care and education staff, but was unable to sustain the initiative. Originally started with grant funding, CCSA found that they could not operate the service with membership fees alone. The cost of management – as well as the cost of paying the subs and providing them with decent wages and benefits – was beyond what could be covered via membership fees. With third party funding the service worked well. “We have the model and we know how to make it work,” said Sue Russell, “but it needs an on-going, third party funder.”

Teaching Temps, Inc., (Independent Staffing Service in Minneapolis, Minnesota)
Teaching Temps is an independent staffing service whose primary customer is charter and independent schools, although they also serve some early childhood programs in the Minneapolis/St Paul area. Teaching Temps recruits qualified staff, conducts an assessment to determine if they are an appropriate fit, and then matches them with schools in need of substitutes. All charter school teachers must be licensed; early childhood staff must meet state requirements for an aide, assistant teacher or lead teacher. Participating schools and early childhood programs pay a fee to secure the temporary staff person. The price varies by the type of teacher and their qualifications. For more information contact: Client Service Director, csd@teachingtemps.com, 763-797-9000

Kidango (Multi-site, non-profit ECE Corporation in Freemont, CA)

Kidango operates child development programs at 51 center-based sites as well as a network of family child care homes that collectively serve 2,500 children. Most administrative services have been centralized, including securing substitutes. This service, called KIT (Kidango Internal Temporary Service) is an in-house, centralized substitute recruitment/training/placement/screening service for all Kidango centers. The service is used when staff are sick or on vacation, or when the center has a permanent staff position that hasn't been filled yet. Kidango estimates that they save about \$800,000 a year by operating an in-house temporary staffing service rather than working with external temp agencies. Kidango is currently exploring the feasibility of offering access to KIT to other centers as a shared service

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Summary of Staffing Services That Are No Longer In Operation

Centers That Care, Action for Children, Columbus Ohio

Centers that Care was a membership-based initiative, sponsored by a resource and referral agency (Action for Children) in Columbus Ohio, to recruit and screen individuals interested in employment in early care and education. Participating centers received access to a password-protected website where they could download resumes and assessments of pre-screened applicants. In 2006, twenty-five centers -- proprietary and non-profit, single and multi-site, inner city and suburban -- participated in the effort. However, Centers that Care has since ceased operations due to budget cuts.

A six-month pilot project to develop and evaluate the approach was funded by United Way. The on-going operating cost of the service was to be covered by membership fees from participating centers. Full and part-time early childhood programs were invited to join Centers that Care for a \$600 annual membership fee which entitled them to unlimited access to the data base of resumes and assessments. Additionally, centers could also purchase any of the following services:

- Complete Applicant Processing Services (\$500 per candidate) including 3 reference checks, verification of education credentials, documentation for INF form, signed non conviction statements, BCI or FBI background check and medical statement
- Background Check only - \$20 for Ohio BCI; \$50 for federal BCI

Centers that Care also created tools and resources designed to assist organizations seeking to replicate the initiative in other cities or states.

An evaluation of the Centers that Care pilot project found the service to be effective (the quality of applicant increased) and efficient (child care centers' time commitment was reduced.) Staff hired through Centers that Care had significantly more early care and education course work than previous applicants and were often new entrants to the field (i.e. they were not seeking early care and education employment at the time of

recruitment.) These staff also tended to have a higher retention rates than the community norm.

Unfortunately, Action for Children was unable to sustain the initiative solely on membership fees. A consistent revenue stream was needed to support the service, but membership waxed and waned. Quite a few centers used the service successfully, found stable staff, and then did not renew their membership. When push came to shove, and budgets were squeezed by limited funds, ECE directors eliminated fees for Centers that Care. Without a strong, consistent cohort of members the service could not survive over time.

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Child Care Staffing Solutions (CCSS) Rochester, NY

Child Care Staffing Solutions was a comprehensive staffing program for child care centers operated by the Child Care Council, Inc in Rochester NY between 2002 and 2007. CCSS recruited individuals interested in working in child care; conducted interviews to determine if they were a “good fit” for the industry; trained selected recruits (in a 15 hour curriculum that included state-mandated training and was held in over a one-week time period); conducted all necessary screening (child abuse and criminal background check) and health tests (TB, etc.); checked references; and hired successful applicants as employees of Child Care Staffing Solutions, Inc. These staff were placed in member child care centers as:

- Flexible staff - (substitutes or temporary staff)
- Temp-to-Hire staff – hired as temporary staff with the ultimate goal of a full time placement if they are a “good fit” for the center. (Temp to perms were required to stay on the Child Care Staffing Solutions, Inc. payroll for a continuous 10 weeks before being hired by the center.)
- Direct Placement staff – hired as a regular employee.

CCSS was originally a project of the Child Care Council of Rochester, but then spun off as it's own 501©3. It operated much like a temporary employment agency; participants were hired by Child Care Staffing Solutions as per diem employees.

An employee Portfolio was completed for each temporary staff person that included: a picture, social security number, date of birth, child abuse registry clearance status and training information. Staff took this file to each center in which they worked, and it served as their portable employee file (in accordance with state regulations that required an employee file at every site where child care staff are employed.)

Centers paid an hourly fee for flexible and temp-to-hire staff. Centers that directly hired temp-to-hire staff prior to the 10 week trial period paid a \$1,000 direct payment. Centers that used CCSS to recruit permanent employees were charged a minimum of \$800 or 5% of the employee's first year's salary.

CCSS also operated a hotline for member child care centers to call when they needed staff. The hotline was available from 6 am to 10 pm Monday – Friday and from 6-10 pm on Sunday evenings.

For the first few years of operation CCSS received grant funds from the local community foundation to underwrite operations. The intention was that the service would ultimately be self-supporting, but that goal proved to be difficult. Prior to implementing a fee-based service, CCSS staff reviewed costs and surveyed centers. The service was priced based on the number of staff members in a center, ranging from about \$500 a year for a small center up to \$2,500 for a very large center. Although centers expressed interest when surveyed, once prices were published CCSS received commitments from only 3 centers - a number much too low to float the project financially. As a result the Child Care Council decided to terminate the service. They have retained the corporate name in the hope of a business climate change but do not feel that reliance on grant funding is a viable option over the long haul.

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Conclusion: Lessons Learned

Although the early care and education industry continuously needs substitutes, it appears that maintaining a substitute service without third party funding is extremely difficult. And finding a funder that is willing to underwrite the cost of substitutes, year in and year out, is also a challenge. Sustainable efforts appear to build on one of three approaches:

- Americorp Volunteers – CSSA, in North Carolina, has successfully partnered with the federal Americorp program to establish a Corp of young teachers who are willing and able to serve as substitutes in early childhood programs. This model has proven to be sustainable and could be replicated elsewhere.
- Collaboration with a Large, Multi-Site ECE Program – Kidango, a non-profit child development program with 51 sites, has a successful in-house substitute service that could be extended to others. Because Kidango already has economies of scale, they are in a position to make this service available to other centers at more affordable rates.
- Collaboration with Other ECE Sectors – Teaching Temps is able to offer substitutes to early childhood programs because their core business is charter and independent schools – who are able to pay higher fees and ensure a stable and steady customer base. One caveat: while the service is sustainable, the prices charged by Teaching Temps are higher than many early childhood programs feel they can afford. Thus, the core business for this service is Charter and Independent schools, not private sector early childhood centers.