



Child Care Alliance Focus Group Findings

Acre Family Day Care, Lowell, MA
Infant Toddler Family Day Care, Fairfax, VA
All our Kin, New Haven, CT
FSW KidzPlate, Bridgeport, CT
Child Welfare League of America Research

Affiliated providers: 8 Acre, 6 ITFDC, 13 CWLA
Non-affiliated providers: 4 MA, 5 VA, 25 CT, 12 CWLA
Parents: 2 Acre, 5 ITFDC, 12 CWLA



Overview

Goal: To better understand what makes an alliance attractive to providers

Focus Group Summaries:

- Characteristics of affiliated providers
- Benefits and Challenges for affiliated providers
- Benefits affiliation with the agency gives providers
- Benefits affiliation with the agency gives parents
- Characteristics of non-affiliated providers



Characteristics of Affiliated Providers

- Educated and/or seeking more education
- Less able to navigate the system due to barriers such as non-native English speaker and lack of familiarity with the culture
- Sees child care as a profession and career
- Finds child care rewarding and at the same time a huge responsibility
- Likes the support of the sponsoring organization and the other providers
- Needs assistance with business aspects including financial management, filling out paperwork etc.



Benefits and Challenges for Affiliated Providers

- Biggest benefit to being a child care provider:
 - Stay at home with own kids
 - Being able to support my family financially
 - Able to use my education
 - Being able to help kids learn and grow

- Biggest challenge to being a child care provider:
 - Being seen as a professional
 - Different views on child rearing from parents
 - It is hard to have kids of different temperaments;
Behavior problems
 - Long hours



Benefits Affiliation with the Agency Gives Providers:

- Business and Income Related
 - Collect fees and pay providers
 - The Alliance refers kids to keep providers at the enrollment level wanted.
 - Back up child care from other providers in the Alliance

- Workforce Development
 - Free training that helps providers be better professionals
 - Mentors for new providers
 - Access to training and knowledge through alliance and community college



Benefits Affiliation with the Agency Gives Providers (cont.):


○ Provider Support

- Support from staff and other providers available all the time
- Peace of mind for providers with parents and others coming to the house
- Provider meetings
- Supportive services for providers and children in their care
- Agency services help providers meet additional needs of parents (quality and safety assurance, access to support services, ESL and quality training)



Benefits Affiliation with the Agency Gives Parents

- Quality of Care
 - Very interested in assuring high quality care
 - Agency home visits assure a safe and loving environments for kids
 - Place where kids can learn and practice social skills
- Program
 - Providers available with same language/culture/nationality
 - Allows sibling to stay together in a family environment
 - Provide specific service referrals: transportation, accepting subsidy, social services



Benefits Affiliation with the Agency Gives Parents (continued)

- Business and Income Related
 - Back up providers are important if provider is sick or on vacation
 - Collecting fees reduces tension with money in relationship with the provider
- Workforce Development
 - Encourages low turnover
 - Providers encouraged to get professional development and enrichment training, including English as a Second Language and training through the community college
- Social Network
 - Provides an extended family for parents



Characteristics of Non-Affiliated Providers

- Non-Affiliated Providers grouped naturally into two types:
- Likely to Highly Value Alliance Services
 - Less able to navigate the system due to barriers such as non-native English speaker and lack of familiarity with the culture
 - Difficulties getting the desired referrals/children and back-up care
 - Uncomfortable collecting fees from parents
 - Less inclined or able to obtain additional or continuing education except as required
 - Feels unvalued as a provider
 - Feels isolated; overwhelmed and burdened by child care work
 - Paperwork is a big additional task
 - Child care is a job



Characteristics of Non-Affiliated Providers

- Unlikely to Highly Value Alliance Services
 - Entrepreneurial
 - Educated and/or seeking more education
 - Able to navigate “the system”: licensing; paperwork etc
 - Sees child care as a profession and career
 - Finds child care rewarding and at the same time a huge responsibility
 - Likes to work alone
 - Able to seek out support; training; networks as needed
 - Has good community support and contacts for referrals, back up etc.
 - Able to fit paperwork in during the workday



How to Attract Non-affiliated Providers to a Start-up Alliance?

- Build trust
- Provide services aimed at supporting “Likely” non-agency providers
 - Business supports (financial and marketing)
 - New provider supports
 - Provider networking and agency support
 - Support with curriculum and quality issues
 - Provide access to training such as ESL and ECE training
 - Use the alliance as a way to help meet the needs of parents