Substitute Pools

A Pathway for Finding and Keeping Great Staff

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Staffing Challenges in the ECE Sector

- High Staff Turnover
  - 30% annually
  - Highest turnover in assistant/aide positions

- Stand-alone centers or homes
  - Average size 60 children; small labor pool
  - Single director responsible for many conflicting tasks

- Staff-child ratios are regulated by law
  - Absences must be filled to stay within required ratios

Sub Pools: A Range of Approaches

**Planned Absences only**
- Out of classroom time for Professional Development
  - Paid planning time
  - Vacation/PTO

**Unplanned Absences**
- Sick time
- Family/Medical Emergencies
Sub Pools: A Range of Approaches

Management Option #1: Full management by Central Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Recruits individual to serve as substitutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Obtains all certifications – fingerprints, background checks, pre-service training requirements</td>
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<td>• Assigns/assist in assignment to sites</td>
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<td>• Pays the sub as part of the central agency payroll as either employee or contractor</td>
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<th>Member sites</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Coordinates with central agency to advise about openings</td>
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<td>• Pays for service typically as part of the membership fees for the network/agency</td>
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<td>• May be charged additional fee if sub is converted to permanent staff</td>
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Full Management by Central Agency

Profile

Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative

Substitute Pool
The Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative

About NECC

- Established by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund in 2014
- Provides robust shared services to 6 early learning schools in both Omaha and Lincoln, NE
- Shared services include HR, Finance, and Professional Development
  - e.g. Orientation and Onboarding, CDA Credential Course
- Approximately 425 staff and 850 children served
Substitute Pool

Key Elements

• NECC has a contract with each organization we support to provide the substitute service
• The substitute’s time is billed at 1.375 through a monthly invoice
• Substitutes can work a part or full day and cover duties ranging from release time, regular teaching duties, and/or maternity leave
• Substitutes may be hired by the early learning schools after six months of participation in the substitute pool

Substitute Pool

Key Elements

• Established at the end of 2017 with 2 substitutes in Omaha
• Approximately 18 substitutes now in both Omaha and Lincoln
• Substitutes are NECC employees that attend our comprehensive orientation and onboarding
• Substitute pool is coordinated by full-time recruiter who devotes approximately .25 FTE to this duty
Substitute Pool

Costs to Consider

- Substitutes are paid the regular hourly wage of a team member based on our system’s pay grid
- Member centers are billed 1.375 times the substitute’s hourly rate which is invoiced on a monthly basis
- If a substitute regularly works 30 hours or more, NECC offers benefits
- The member bears the responsibility for the cost of professional development for any substitute regularly assigned to one of their buildings

Recruiting Substitutes

- Substitutes are recruited utilizing the same process we use to recruit teaching staff (e.g., career fairs, job postings, LinkedIn, relationships with local universities)
- Staff that are voluntarily separating are offered substitute employment during exit interview
- Substitutes are recruited for key roles (e.g., site leadership, teacher, and paraprofessional)
Substitute Pool

Coordinating Substitutes

- Long-term substitutes are assigned to specific buildings minimizing daily coordination (e.g., maternity leave, difficult to fill positions)
- Unexpected needs for substitutes are managed on a day-to-day basis using phone and email by HR professional
- Personnel files are maintained by NECC and licensing specialist conducts audits of files at our office

Substitute Pool

Nebraska Lessons Learned

- Pipeline for new teachers, opportunity to closely observe before hire
- Provides a stop gap during periods of higher turnover, avoiding "hasty" hires
- Ensure a process is in place to do a "look back" and determine the necessity of providing benefits
- You will never feel "ready." The upside far outweighs the challenges. Don't be afraid to jump in!
- One of the most important contributions to stabilizing our workforce
Sub Pools: A Range of Approaches

**Management Option #2: Central Agency as Resource/Connector**

- Recruits individuals to serve as substitutes
- Obtains all certifications – fingerprints, background checks, pre-service training requirements
- Serves as a "connector" between sub pool and the sites
- Provides "sub pool list" to program administrators at each site
- In some cases, provides information about openings to the sub pool
- May establish a wage scale based on education, experience and position

- Individual sites are responsible for paying the substitute
- Sites are typically charged a fee per placement
- Sites are typically charged a fee if they hire the sub as permanent staff within certain time parameters

**Profile**

**ChildCareMatters**

**Staffing Services**
Concept

User Friendly
Affordable
Easy to Use

Shared Service Approach
Easy/shared approach to documentation
Pre-Service Training provided by Hub

Flexible
Member sites able to hire subs as permanent staff

Create a shared services substitute teacher pool utilizing text-messaging based software platform

Onboarding Services

- ChildCareMatters oversees:
  - Recruitment
  - Resume/Job Application
  - Background check/Fingerprinting
  - Educational Diploma or Certificate
  - Job Verification
  - Personal References
  - Health Form
  - Emergency Contact Form
  - Review of DHS Rules and Regulations
Pre-Service Training

ChildCareMatters provides:
- Training Modules
  - General Care and Communication
  - Supervision and Safety/Child Abuse
  - Program Operations
  - Professionalism
  - Health
- CPR/First Aid Training
- On-Site Orientation

ChildCareMatters Platform

The site director manages the process:
- Job posting process easy and intuitive
- Posting includes all details of the job
- Responses include details about the subs
- Job poster chooses the best fit for their needs
- No early morning coordinator needed
Members can access ChildcareMatters.com Substitute Service 24/7

ECE CENTER PROFILE PAGE

Need a substitute?

Click here!
Enter the details of your open position.

Tell us what the job is and when you need help.

Click on “Save” and your request will be posted!

Within moments, your job post will be sent to all available, qualified substitutes in the pool.

Our system will notify available substitutes automatically, using text messages or email.
Substitutes can review available open jobs from their phone, tablet or computer at any time.

When one or more substitutes apply for your open job, you will get notified by text or email. Then, you log in to see your choices.
For each open job you have posted, you can view information and hourly pay rate for every substitute that is interested.

Then, you can select the candidate that you prefer by clicking “Approve”.

Once you select and approve your substitute, they will be notified immediately by text or email.
Log into the system to view, edit or delete jobs. View every substitute that is currently scheduled to work.

### Pricing for Sub Pool Service

- Directors pre-purchase a bundle of “placements vouchers”
  - Each placement costs $13-18/day
  - Purchasing larger bundles lowers the unit cost (size of the bundles ranges from 5-52)
- Placements are made in 1-day increments; voucher payment for each day
- Cost of the placement is in addition to the cost of the sub; program pays the sub according to a salary scaled developed by ChildCareMatters
Cost of Sub Pool Service

- ChildcareMatters has yet not analyzed the unit cost for this service for Nashville
- Business outcomes dependent on fees charged by host realm
- Operates with significant underwriting from the Community Foundation
- Work managed by 3 different staff at the Community Foundation who each spend a portion of their time on this project

Replication Strategy

- ChildcareTennessee is willing to license the platform to other communities
  - Current Contract with South Carolina
  - Negotiating with Rhode Island
- Start up cost:
  - License for platform ($15-25,000 annually depending on the level of services)
  - Populating the platform with local data (Approx. $20,000 one time cost)
- Ongoing cost:
  - Recruiting Substitutes
  - Onboarding process
  - Interface with member sites
A Systems Approach

- Coordination with licensing agency to enable portable documentation:
  - Follows the substitute rather than site based
  - Collection of all documentation in secure portal
- Finding candidates through ECE higher education programs, ECE/nonprofit networks, CDA candidates
- Pre-service training for new subs meets all regulatory requirements
- Onsite orientation training
- Setting pay and payment process
- Administration to manage paperwork and placements

Central Agency as Resource/Connector

Profile
Greater Newark
Shared Service Alliance
Substitute Pool
Greater Newark Shared Service Alliance

- Network of 10 early care and education (ECE) local providers
- Seed funding: The Nicholson Foundation and The Turrell Fund
- Programs for Parents (community nonprofit) serves as the Hub Agency (facilitation and operational support)
- Based on focus group responses and recommendations from child care directors, first year projects achieved include:
  - Development of a substitute pool of teachers/teacher assistants to support participating ECEs
  - Identification of three key areas for cost savings
  - Development of a comprehensive and progressive professional development model for teachers, teacher assistants and administrative staff

GNSSA Substitute Pool

Approach

- Substitute Recruiter coordinates the work
- Recruits for the Alliance at Job Fairs, colleges/universities, online job sites
- Goal to recruit 10 substitute teachers per quarter
- Recruiter also assists with processing background checks and other paperwork necessary for substitutes to begin working
GNSSA Sub Pool

Approach

• Recruiter reviews applications and identifies candidates for center directors to interview collectively; member directors compile final list of “approved subs”

• Assists substitute candidates with initial application to obtain state substitute credential

• Several substitutes with 60 or more hours of college credits applied for the State Substitute Credential, the fee for which was paid by GNSSA grant funds.

GNSSA Sub Pool Accomplishments

• Successfully onboarded 40 substitutes

• Collaborated with Rutgers University, Montclair State University and New Jersey City University

• Implemented an online work schedule platform to simplify substitute-staffing requests:
  • https://www.zoomshift.com/
  • Directors post opening and sub pool is notified via text message

• Secured a 20% discount for member use of the platform

• GNSSA substitutes provided 177 hours of classroom coverage from January–June 2018.
Santa Fe Collaborative Teachers Institute

Background

In 2014, the Santa Fe Baby Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation convened early childhood programs in Santa Fe to learn more about the shared services approach to running Centers and programs.

As the group discussed the challenges of running successful programs, two interests emerged for this group of teachers:

• The need for advanced professional development
• A pool of shared substitute teachers
Santa Fe Collaborative Teachers Institute

- Substitute pool managed at Santa Fe Community College
- Members are those programs whose staff is engaged in deep pedagogical work through the Collaborative Teachers Institute
- Sub pool designed to provide coverage for teachers’ professional development; subs scheduled in advance to provide coverage for teachers to participate in PD
- Expectation that in the future, once the number of available subs is expanded, coverage will be extended for call-outs as well

Pre-Service Training

- Before placement in a center, subs spend at least 2 weeks with staff at the Santa Fe Community College
- SFCC provides a basic orientation on standards such as safety and licensing
- Subs then shadow/observe a Master Teacher in a SFCC Lab School classroom until they are deemed ready for classroom work
Santa Fe Collaborative Teachers Institute

Wages

• Wages are paid by Santa Fe Community College, and centers reimburse SFCC.

• All subs are paid the same wage, regardless of the center in which they are placed. Current wages are approximately $12/hour + $.33 fringe.

• At present all administrative costs are covered by a grant from the Santa Fe Community Foundation. Thus, SFCC does not currently charge any additional administrative cost to the participating centers.

System issue: State regulations

• State approved a “traveling personnel file,” (vs. requiring each individual participating center to hold files for each sub)

• Includes: sub’s legal identification documents, PD log, mandated trainings/background check documentation

• State requires an MOU b/t each participating center and SFCC
  • Delineates SFCC and Center responsibilities,
  • Assigns liability for the sub on the day of employment to the employing center
Lessons Learned

• State rules and regulations can make a shared sub service difficult

• Challenging these rules with a strong case can often succeed in receiving either waivers or rule changes that simplify the process:
  - Childcare Nashville designated as an agency that can oversee background checks/fingerprinting
  - Santa Fe was able to negotiate a “travelling personnel file”

Lessons Learned

• Sub pools often lead to hiring permanent employees

• Viewing the sub pool as a potential “internship” or eventual source for full-time employment can be beneficial in terms of training and providing a “trial period” of employment.

• This strategy requires policies such as the minimum required work period/finder’s fees before subs are available for full-time employment.
Lessons Learned

- Sourcing high quality candidates who “only” want to be subs can be difficult
- Shared orientation and training is key to ensuring that subs are able to transition seamlessly from one organization to another
- Comparable wages and working conditions across providers that share a sub pool is important to retaining subs who are comfortable working at multiple organizations.

Factors that can Derail Sub Pools

- Relying solely on grant funding with no plan for ongoing sustainability
- Directors unable or unwilling to pay for the service, for example:
  - ECEHire, a Philadelphia Shared Services initiative built a web-based platform to connect job-seekers with job openings
  - Services included: recruitment, pre-qualifying interviews, background checks/documentation requirements
  - ECEHire absorbed most of the cost, but tried to charge a $35 fee for candidates that were successfully placed; pushback from Directors over the fee ended the full service components
  - ECEHire now operates as a job-candidate posting site only
Discussion

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Ideas?

More Resources

Opportunities Exchange website:

https://opportunities-exchange.org

- Profiles of current Alliances
- Tools such as templates of management agreements
  - Articles and presentations
  - Videos and multi-media