

## **Key Questions and Resources for Family Child Care and Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Mary Beth Salomone Testa, Consultant, Alliance for Early Success

*Last Updated: April 7, 2020*

The availability of licensed/regulated family child care (FCC) has been in rapid decline in recent years. The Alliance for Early Success is committed to the value of FCC and to working with partners to turn the declining availability around, and helping this important sector of the child care system to thrive through federal and state policy choices.

A strategy tailored to the needs and viability of FCC is crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic so that providers in this sector are ready and available for families when they do return to work. This brief provides key questions and related resources that can guide state leaders to make better decisions and policies for the FCC community.

### **Key questions and considerations for state advocates and policymakers about COVID-19 child care policies**

State policy and guidance for child care during the crisis must be clear, specific and generous – and inclusive of home-based child care options in the state:

- Does the state’s guidance for child care during the COVID-19 crisis address all settings, or just centers? What does it mean for home-based care if the guidance is only explicit about centers?
- Does the state’s guidance for family child care during the COVID-19 crisis include clear rules that recognize the home setting, different from a center or commercial space?
- Do the state’s enhanced payments in grants and subsidies pay equitably to family child care, and to support families that rely on family child care?
- Are the state’s grants and support for access to food and supplies usable by family child care programs?
- Does the state’s guidance empower family child care providers to choose their involvement (the choice to be open or closed), without risk of going without wages/income? If they are directed to close, are there payments through subsidy and other grants that would support programs that do not enroll families that pay with subsidy?
- Do the state’s guidance and supports include license-exempt home-based child care?

The following resources could help state leaders address the issues above.

#### *Recommendations for FCC-specific policies or strategies*

- [Supporting Home-based Child Care Providers During the Coronavirus Crisis](#), National Women’s Law Center, March 2020
- [State and Local Recommendations to Sustain and Support Family Child Care Providers](#), National Association for Family Child Care, March 2020

- [Illinois guidance](#) specific and clear about inclusion of licensed and license-exempt home-based child care
- [Child Care Aware of Washington and Child Care Resources recommendations](#) for state policy, inclusive of needs of home-based child care and the families that choose these providers

*Creating emergency grant programs that meet the needs of FCC and other home-based child care providers*

- [Home-Based Child Care Emergency Fund](#), Home Grown, March 2020

*General guidance for policies, benefits, and funding that may support FCC*

- Addressing the Policy Needs of Family Child Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic [webinar](#) March 2020, sponsored by All Our Kin, AFSCME, Alliance for Early Success, Child Care Aware of America, MBST Solutions, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association for Family Child Care, National Women's Law Center, SEIU, and ZERO TO THREE
- California Law Center [FAQ](#) on COVID-19 crisis

### **Key questions and considerations for state advocates and policymakers about using CCDBG funds**

In response to the pandemic, the Office of Child Care at the US Department of Health and Human Services [increased flexibility](#) in the use of CCDF funds, which may increase supports for FCC. In addition, through the [CARES Act](#), Congress has appropriated an additional \$3.5 billion for CCDF. In order to ensure FCC benefits from this action, advocates and policymakers should ask the following questions when the state receives the allocation:

- How will limited funding be prioritized and dispersed to reach family child care and the families enrolled in family child care? What are the equity implications of focusing on centers alone?
- How will funding be dispersed to reach rural communities?
- How can the new flexibilities of CCDF authorized in the CARES Act, in addition to the flexibilities that were already in the child care law, be leveraged support family child care?
- How can the new flexibilities of CCDF authorized in the CARES Act be leveraged to support programs not currently enrolling CCDF families, whether they are open or closed?
- What have been the barriers to family child care enrolling CCDF families? How can those barriers be relieved now temporarily or longer-term?
- What have been the barriers to FFN enrolling CCDF families? How can those barriers be relieved now?

The following resources could help state leaders address the issues above.

- [FY 2018 Preliminary Data Table 6 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children Served in All Types of Care](#), Office of Child Care, December 2019
- [National Resources about Family Child Care](#), Administration for Children and Families
- [Creating the Conditions for Family Child Care to Thrive: Strategies for Increasing the Supply, Quality and Sustainability of Family Child Care in States and Communities](#), All Our Kin, October 2019

- [Helping Family, Friend and Neighbor Care Providers Meet New Requirements under the CCDBG Reauthorization Law](#), National Women’s Law Center, October 2018
- [Staffed Family Child Care Networks Can Navigate a New World Order](#), Opportunities Exchange, March 2020

**Key questions and considerations for state advocates and policymakers about home-based, self-employed child care providers accessing enhanced Unemployment Insurance, business supports, housing and health supports**

Self-employed home-based child care providers are eligible for a variety of supports that are not administered by the usual child care agencies in states, involving partners that may be unfamiliar to child care providers. Some of these are very new and just getting implemented. Supports may be complex to access and understand.

- Who are the trusted messengers in the state who can communicate with home-based child care providers about their eligibility and the process for applying?
- How can child care experts, small business experts and unemployment insurance experts partner in the state to get accurate, reliable and clear information to family child care providers?
- How can the state and communities support undocumented providers?
- How is the current climate for immigrant families impacting access to these supports for home-based child care providers?
- How does the use of paid leave interconnect with the receipt of unemployment?
- How does the Child Care and Development Block Grant interconnect with the receipt of unemployment and other federal benefits?
- What CCDF dollars or state or private philanthropic dollars are available to ensure business TA reaches home-based child care providers rapidly?

The following resources could help state leaders address the issues above.

*State actions*

- [Executive Order](#) from Governor Newsome in California to allow local jurisdictions to halt evictions, foreclosures and utility shut offs, March 2020

*Unemployment benefits*

- [Alliance webinar](#) on unemployment benefits, April 2020
- [Q&A](#) on unemployment benefits from Alliance webinar, April 2020
- [Questions and Answers about Unemployment Benefits for Family Child Care Providers](#), Tom Copeland, April 2020

*General business support for child care providers*

- First Children’s Finance [Guide](#) for Minnesota, Iowa and Michigan during COVID-19 crisis
- [Opportunities Exchange](#)
- [Local Initiatives Support Corporation](#)

*Sources of small business TA*

- Find the [Small Business Development Centers](#) in your state
- Find the [Women's Business Development Centers](#) in your state
- Find the [Certified Development Financial Institutions](#) in your state