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Illinois Action for Children

Strengthening Family, Friend & Neighbor Child Care



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Strengths of FFN Care

- Often preferred by parents
- Convenient locations
- Flexible hours to match work schedules
- Suitable environment for sleeping
- Small number of children/ easy management
- High level of trust & communication
- Language & culture may match parents'
- Siblings cared for together
- Supports neighborhood and family economy



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Weaknesses

- Generally not effective in preparing at-risk 3 – 5 year olds for school
- Difficult and expensive for agencies to deliver training & information – intensive door to door outreach is required
- Difficult for providers to network with each other



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Opportunities

- Combine multiple single-focus initiatives to form a network of services & providers
- Reach FFN providers & children through Preschool for All
- Conduct research to get us beyond stereotypes & suggest new ways to connect families with providers of all kinds.



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Concerns

- State prekindergarten/ Universal PreK funding will be directed to less needy children in centers before reaching more needy, more isolated children in FFN care



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FFN Outreach / Program Improvement Activities

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Program	Funding Source / Type
Outreach (Promote programs listed here)	R&R
Resource & Referral Trainings	R&R
Conferences	R&R, sponsors
Nurse consultants	City, county, R&R
Mental health consultants	Foundation, R&R
Visiting w/ books (License exempt quality enhancement & Quality Counts vans)	Foundations, R&R, ELOA
Book lending (Raising a Reader [®] visits + library connections)	Foundations, ELOA
Child Care Healthy Food	State (USDA funds)
Quality Counts mini-grants	R&R
Professional development reimbursement	R&R

Accessing State PreK Funds

Community Connections

- Community asset model
- Links care & education across settings
- 3-5 year old children are taken to a part-day State PreK classroom 4 days/week
- 5th day – teachers visit FFN home w/ books & activities
- Funded by State PreK @ \$3,000 per child
- FFN providers receive full day child care assistance payments



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Community Connections

(cont.)

Illinois Action for Children staff:

- Identify target neighborhoods
- Find child care center to host classroom
- Apply for state Preschool for All funding
- Provide training & TA to child care center
- Provide training and resources to child care providers
- Partner with community groups to connect with home based child care providers – both FFN and licensed homes.
- Organize fun events – community festivals, museum visits, etc for families and providers



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Community Connections

(cont.)

Child care center staff:

- Enroll children
- Operate classroom-based program
- Visit each home twice monthly



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Community Connections

(cont.)

Benefits for FFN care:

- Children remain in FFN care, but also get a classroom experience
- State PreK funding helps support FFN care
- FFN care quality improves for 3-5 year old children
- FFN care quality improves for children birth to 3
- Parent satisfaction increases
- Provider sense of competence increases



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Conduct Research

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Working with NCCP to help shape Community Connections model & guide replication

- Implementation

- Did we fully implement our model?
- Obstacles & needed changes
- Are we ready to examine results?

- Results

- Did State PreK reach FFN children? Did children attend?
- Did FFN care improve? How?
- Are parents and providers satisfied?
- What are the key elements that would guide replication?



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Seizing Opportunities

- Combine multiple single-focus initiatives to form a network of services & providers
- Reach FFN providers & children through state Preschool for All funding
- Conduct research to get us beyond stereotypes & suggest new ways to connect



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