
A CATALOG
OF STRATEGIES
TO SUPPORT FAMILY,
FRIEND, AND
NEIGHBOR CARE

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This catalog provides some examples of the innovative work being done by organizations across the country to improve the quality of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care and to connect FFN providers to resources and supports. These models demonstrate the diverse ways in which organizations can reach out to these providers, benefitting the children and families that rely on this care and the providers themselves.

ARIZONA

Association for Supportive Child Care

Contact: *Susan Jacobs, Executive Director*

The Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC), which provides a variety of services to support child care providers and help families access high-quality child care, has a Kith and Kin Project that works with FFN providers. The Arizona Kith and Kin Project was developed in 1999 after hearing from families about a lack of affordable licensed programs in their communities and recognizing that many families rely on FFN care.

The project offers resources and training to approximately 1,600 providers statewide, about 80 percent of whom are immigrants. To accommodate this population, 90 percent of the trainings are held in Spanish and the remaining 10 percent are in English, French, Arabic, or other languages spoken by refugee populations. The providers primarily care for children birth to five, particularly infants and toddlers. The providers generally are not serving families receiving child care assistance.

The organization operates 110 Kith and Kin training-support groups throughout the year. Each group consists of six to 20 providers and meets once a week for at least two hours for 14 weeks. Most meetings are held during the daytime, but some occur in the evenings or on weekends. The 14-week program addresses topics including guidance and discipline, daily schedule planning, nutrition, child passenger safety, pediatric first aid, CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) certification, home safety, parent/caregiver relationships (including business practices), language and literacy (including a Reading Is Fundamental book event and distribution), and brain development. The project also included a home visit component for two years, but it was discontinued because providers preferred the group setting.

On-site child care as well as refreshments are available during the meetings. The organization aims to hold the meetings in providers' neighborhoods, but transportation is provided when necessary. Providers who participate receive puzzles, books, and other materials. Providers also receive car seats, cribs, outlets, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers. In addition, ASCC will cover the costs of any supplies and materials a provider needs to become regulated, although most providers participating in the Arizona Kith and Kin Project do not choose to become regulated. (The state exempts providers caring for four or fewer children from regulation.) ASCC also assists providers in completing paperwork and addressing administrative issues in order to enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

ASCC collaborates with approximately 60 community organizations such as Head Start programs, resource centers, faith-based organizations, schools, and other non-profits to identify and recruit providers and deliver project services.

The project is currently staffed by 41 full-time employees, including 14 program specialists who serve as facilitators at the training-support groups, a program coordinator, three assistant coordinators, 18 on-site child care providers, and an administrative assistant. The project also has a number of part-time employees, including community co-facilitators and on-site child care assistants. The specialists are primarily female and bilingual, and have a four-year degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related area or an associate's degree with eight years of related work experience. All program specialists speak both English and Spanish. Program staff receive training prior to working with the program participants as well as ongoing in-service training.



The Arizona Kith and Kin Project is funded by the Valley of the Sun United Way and First Things First, a voter-approved initiative that aims to support the development, health, and early education of children birth through age five in the state.

United Way of Pinal County

Contact: Liz Santiago, Program Director

The United Way of Pinal County's Family, Friend and Neighbors Caregivers Outreach Project helps license-exempt providers access trainings and materials. Since 2009, the project has been funded by First Things First.

The project serves providers throughout Pinal County and in the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

Many of the FFN providers are grandmothers and young mothers who are taking care of other children. These providers usually care for one to four children (and therefore are not required by the state to be regulated), and the children cared for are ages five and younger. Some of the providers speak Spanish, so the project has a Spanish-speaking staff member available to assist them.

The project consists of two-hour trainings held one evening a week. Each week this training is in a different community, so local providers can attend the training closest to them. The organization also offers a four-hour mini-conference one Saturday each quarter for all providers participating in the project. The location of these conferences rotates through communities.

Trainings are held in community locations such as a library, a parks and recreation facility, and a charter school building. Providers who do not have their own car to get to the trainings can use the program's private Facebook page to arrange a carpool with other providers. Staff try to make trainings interactive. Each session focuses on a different topic, such as safety, health, child development, or early literacy. They are working to incorporate training on caring for children with disabilities. Providers used to receive door prizes for participating in the trainings, but now providers instead leave the trainings with materials related to the topic of that training—for example, if the training was on open-ended art for preschoolers, providers may leave with paint, paper, an easel, and collage materials. Refreshments are offered at the trainings, and child care is provided for participants with five days advance notice.

Staff visit providers' homes to conduct needs assessments and determine which materials they could most use to improve the safety and quality of the home environment. Up to 73 providers receive \$2,000 a year in materials and supplies such as shelving, chairs, tables, mats, art supplies, and books. In addition, although most of the providers participating in the project do not become licensed, the program has funding to assist with licensing costs for those providers that choose to do so.

The project has two full-time staff members and a program director who work with providers. All of the staff have degrees as well as prior experience in early education.

The organization recruits providers to participate in the project through newspaper advertisements, word of mouth, and relevant events. In addition, social media, including a Facebook page and a private Facebook group for FFN providers, is used for recruiting, networking, and maintaining communication among the group.

CALIFORNIA

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Contact: Linda Asato, Executive Director

A number of the organizations and agencies providing child care resource and referral services in California offer supports to FFN providers. The following summaries demonstrate some of the strategies being used to work with these providers.

Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County, Inc.

The organization offers various resources and supports for FFN providers. It provides trainings that are open to the public and all types of caregivers that address child growth and development, health and safety, and the business aspects of child care;



providers are also offered resources and referrals related to these topics. The organization provides technical assistance and on-site support as well to help providers with the licensing process, the child care assistance program, setting rates, challenging child behavior, and strategies for working for family and/or friends. In addition, there is a toy and resource lending library available for FFN providers. The organization also operates CACFP in San Luis Obispo and neighboring counties, providing on-site support and assistance for FFN caregivers who are certified by Trustline (a database of caregivers who have passed criminal background checks) and serve children receiving child care assistance to help the providers offer nutritious meals.

Contact: *Shana Paulson*

Children's Council of San Francisco

Approximately half (or about 1,600) of the children served by the child care assistance program administered by the Children's Council of San Francisco are cared for by license-exempt providers. (The state exempts providers that care for the children of only one family from regulation.) The organization's subsidy provider coordinators have an orientation meeting with 40 to 60 potential new license-exempt providers each month to help familiarize providers with the child care assistance program. During these meetings, providers learn about eligibility requirements for them and for parents, how to complete attendance sheets, when payments are issued, and who to contact with questions. Providers receive information about the steps to becoming licensed and resources to help them achieve that goal. The organization offers many programs to support newly licensed and existing providers, including free child development classes, playgroups, business supports, training in CPR and first aid and health and safety, and access to provider networks and professional development opportunities. License-exempt providers receive information about Parent Voices, a parent-led grassroots organization that aims to make high-quality, affordable child care accessible to all families. In addition, providers are given information on the Children's Council's in-house lending library, from which providers can borrow a variety of toys, books, games, and educational resources. The organization is also working to develop grant-funded support systems for license-exempt providers that would offer individualized consultation, coaching, and resources to these providers.

Contact: *Phillip Warner*

Community Child Care Council (4 Cs) of Santa Clara County

The organization offers activities and support services for FFN providers. Staff make site visits to FFN providers serving children who receive child care assistance. During the visits, providers receive technical assistance on completing attendance sheets, becoming licensed, and applying for reimbursements for health and safety training. Providers also receive educational materials and resources on topics related to child development and early literacy, including discipline, nutrition, and curriculum activities. In addition, the organization operates the CalWORKs Exempt Child Care Provider Pilot Project, which is designed to offer support and guidance to FFN providers serving families who participate in the state's child care assistance program for TANF recipients.

Contact: *Colette Kudumu*

Wu Yee Children's Services (San Francisco County)

The Joy Lok Family Resource Center, which is operated by Wu Yee Children's Services, has activities for both parents and caregivers of young children (primarily birth to eight years old). The center offers parenting classes to help build stronger bonds and healthy relationships between parents and children, parent support groups to foster peer-to-peer support, educational workshops on health and nutrition, and family events that are open to parents as well as relative caregivers. The center's activities and programs are free of charge to parents and providers.

Contact: *Lena Yu*

Tulare County Office of Education

The program hosts provider trainings five to six times per year on a variety of topics for relative caregivers, licensed providers, and providers registered with California's Trustline.

Contact: *Jessica Watkins*



Crystal Stairs, Inc. (Los Angeles)

Contact: Rosa Velasco, Coordinator

Crystal Stairs, which provides child care resources and referrals and manages a child care assistance program, operates a program to help FFN providers become regulated as well as other projects to enhance the quality of these providers.

Crystal Stairs hosts a welcome event for providers serving families receiving child care assistance; approximately half of the providers who attend the event are FFN providers. The organization also offers trainings on the weekend and in the evening that are open to all types of providers, including FFN providers. These trainings offer information on child development, learning activities, health, safety, nutrition, and physical activity as well as operating a child care business.

Providers receive a library card once they attend three trainings. Providers that have a high level of engagement are invited to a celebration at the end of the year where they receive a bag of materials to use in caring for children.

The providers the organization works with serve infants, toddlers, and school-age children. Some of the providers speak Spanish. Crystal Stairs recruits providers to participate in its programs from the state's list of providers serving families receiving child care assistance at the beginning of each year. The organization identifies zip codes where there is a higher need for providers but a limited supply of them.

Crystal Stairs is primarily funded by the California Department of Education. It also receives a small amount of funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) quality set-aside, which is used to support a resource library for providers.

YMCA of Silicon Valley

Contact: Mary Hoshiko Haughey, Vice President of Operations for Youth Development and Social Responsibility

The YMCA of Silicon Valley has been working with FFN providers for three years to improve the quality of their care.

The providers the organization works with care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Most of the providers have low incomes. The providers have diverse backgrounds, and many are immigrants from countries including Mexico, China, Vietnam, and Iran. To accommodate these providers, the organization offers bilingual programs and incorporates the community's cultures into each training session.

The organization offers providers the opportunity to participate in the YMCA's Early Learning Readiness program, which is locally known as Nana Y Yo and modeled on Tutu and Me, an evidence-based program developed in Hawaii. Providers meet twice a week for 36 weeks for two-and-a-half hour sessions. Meetings are held in churches, apartment buildings, schools, and community centers, usually within walking distance of the providers' homes. Approximately 20 to 25 providers and the children in their care attend each session. Sessions open with circle time and a message for the providers. The providers then have an hour and 45 minutes to interact with children at 13 interest centers. The sessions end with a closing circle. The sessions are run by facilitators, who receive two days of pre-service training and monthly in-service training and have the freedom to determine curriculum, location, and recruitment methods based on the communities they serve.

The sessions aim to give providers ideas that they can replicate at home. They also offer an opportunity for the providers, who are often isolated, to develop relationships with one another, which can lead to sharing and interactions, such as clothing exchanges and play dates, outside of the program.

The YMCA recruits providers to participate in the program by visiting laundromats, places of worship, libraries, neighborhoods, and apartment buildings. Providers in the program also help to spread the word.

The program was seed-funded by United Way as well as a national grant that covers some of the coordinator's costs. The Heising-Simons foundation is funding the program to provide an emphasis on mathematical development in the curriculum and to support providers in including more math in their interactions with children. In addition, the program receives community gifts, conducts an annual giving campaign, and holds a book drive to raise funds.



COLORADO

Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition

Contact: *Richard Garcia, Executive Director*

The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition (CSPC), which focuses on giving Latino families the tools they need to help their children succeed in school, supports FFN providers through the Providers Advancing School Outcomes (PASO) program. PASO, which started in 2011, works with FFN providers in communities where little regulated care is available. It aims to establish high-quality FFN care that can help boost the school achievement of Latino children.

The majority of the providers participating in PASO are immigrants and most speak Spanish. The providers serve children from birth to kindergarten age. Most of the providers do not receive child care subsidies for the families they serve. Many of the providers care for children at night, in the early morning, on the weekend, and/or during variable shifts because the children's parents often have nonstandard work schedules. Some children sleep over at their providers' homes, and some are dropped off at the provider's at 4 or 5 in the morning.

Under the PASO program, providers participate in 120 hours of training; sessions are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:15 pm to 8 pm and providers are required to attend one session a week. The curriculum for the training was designed by CSPC to align with functionality and competency areas used for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The curriculum covers social, emotional, and literacy education and CPR as well as other safety training. Trainings are held in accessible locations, usually in elementary schools and/or community centers that are within walking distance from the providers' homes. Child care and food is available for providers attending the trainings. Trainers, who are referred to as "Tias" (aunties), are typically from the community. They must have at least an associate's degree in early childhood education.

PASO conducts home visits following the training sessions. The visits can last up to three hours and occur at least twice a month or as often as once a week. These visits include coaching and mentoring for providers to help them apply the skills they learn in training. Home visitors also help children access developmental screening and health services.

Providers participating in the PASO program receive educational materials each week; over the course of the program, a provider receives \$1,000 worth of materials.

PASO assists FFN providers in applying for the CDA and in demonstrating their qualifications to receive the credential. PASO also encourages FFN providers to become regulated, although most choose not to do so. (The state exempts providers that care for the children of only one family from regulation.)

The program recruits providers to participate in PASO at locations in the community such as schools, libraries, churches, recreation centers, and grocery stores. Some PASO staff also go door to door to inform providers about the program.

CSPC receives funding from the Mile High United Way, Piton Foundation, Daniel's Fund, Wells County United Way, Knight Foundation, and some school districts. The organization is working to obtain state funding as well.

United Way of Weld County

Contacts: *Janneth Attebery, Program Coordinator, and Sheri Hannah-Ruh, Department Director*

The United Way of Weld County offers trainings to FFN providers to help them improve the quality of their care. The organization works with a cohort of 28 providers, and has a long waiting list of additional providers who are not able to participate due to limited funding. This initiative is modeled on the Colorado Springs Parent Coalition's work with FFN providers.

Most of the providers participating in United Way of Weld County's training program are immigrants from Latin America, and most speak only Spanish. They generally do not receive payment to serve families receiving child care assistance.



The training program consists of 30 sessions held on Saturdays from 8 am to 2 pm over the course of 12 months. The program is based on the CDA credential and addresses child development, health and safety, CPR, first aid, nutrition, and child abuse. In offering the training, the United Way of Weld County collaborates with other local organizations such as the Red Cross (for first aid and CPR), the Department of Human Services, the Health Department, second-hand smoke and tobacco prevention organizations, and Lutheran Family Services (which offers parenting classes on anger management and resource management). The training is conducted in Spanish. After the training, many providers request additional services and are given resources for further learning and professional development.

In addition to the trainings, home visits lasting one to one and a half hours, depending on a provider's needs, occur twice a month. The organization also holds five events each year where it encourages providers to bring the families they serve to support parent engagement. There is an additional training for parents called Las Padres, Las Madres that takes place over 10 weeks on weeknights from 6 pm to 8 pm.

The United Way of Weld County recruits providers to participate in its activities by going out to churches, grocery stores, Mexican/Latin American stores, factories with high populations of Spanish-speaking workers, and schools. In addition, staff give presentations around the community. Providers who have completed the training also refer other providers.

The United Way of Weld County training program was initially funded the Colorado Springs Parent Coalition and the United Way. The second and third year of the program was funded by the Tony Grampas Youth Services (TGYS) program, which provides funding to community-based organizations that serve children, youth, and their families with the aim of reducing youth crime and violence and preventing child abuse and neglect and which is supported with state tobacco settlement funds.

CONNECTICUT

All Our Kin

Contact: Jessica Sager, Co-Founder and Executive Director

All Our Kin offers training, support, and resources to family child care providers and FFN providers in greater New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, and Norwalk, Connecticut. Its programs focus on increasing professionalism, improving child care program quality, and promoting sustainable business practices among providers.

All Our Kin works with over 400 child care providers who have the capacity to serve 2,400 children. The majority of the providers the organization works with are immigrants who speak Spanish as their primary language; to accommodate their needs, all workshops and materials are offered in Spanish and English. Approximately 75 percent of the providers serve families that receive child care assistance, and 98 percent of the providers are women.

Through its Tool Kit Licensing Program, All Our Kin helps unlicensed FFN providers meet health and safety standards and fulfill state licensing requirements. (The state requires all home-based child care providers except relatives to be licensed.) The Tool Kit program, a collaboration with the Connecticut Children's Museum, results in approximately 50 new providers receiving their licenses each year. Participating providers receive support from a full-time licensing coordinator who helps them submit licensing materials and prepare for their state inspection. In addition, they receive four Tool Kit boxes with professional resources, health and safety materials, and toys, books, and curriculum materials for their programs.

Upon licensure, providers graduate to All Our Kin's Family Child Care Network, which offers providers educational mentorship, professional development, advocacy and leadership opportunities, and opportunities to connect with other family child care providers. Providers within the network convene for monthly meetings, workshops and classes, and an annual professional development conference. In addition, All Our Kin's educational consultants visit family child care programs to lead model lessons, demonstrate new strategies, and reflect with providers on their work. Providers within the network also have access to a "warm line" they can call for advice at any time, zero-interest loans and grants, financial management and education training, and marketing and referral opportunities.



All Our Kin is primarily funded through private philanthropy from foundations and individuals. The organization receives some state funding, including quality enhancement dollars available as part of Connecticut's School Readiness initiative, and has received federal workforce development dollars in the past. In addition, in partnership with the United Way of Greater New Haven, All Our Kin operates a federally funded Early Head Start-Family Child Care Partnership program.

Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 2001

Contact: Helene Figueroa, Director of the Family Child Care Team

Connecticut enacted legislation in 2012 authorizing collective bargaining for family child care and FFN providers serving families who receive child care assistance. CSEA/SEIU Local 2001 was chosen by the providers to represent them as a union. The first contract was ratified in 2013 and became operational in May 2014. The contract focuses on improving the quality of care its members provide and the quality of life for its members.

In the contract, home-based child care providers won professional development funding for business courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, CDA courses and credentialing, and other educational opportunities that will improve the quality of care for low-income children.

CSEA/SEIU, together with the state child care agency, offers a three-and-a-half hour orientation session that is mandatory for all subsidized providers. The session is offered in English, Spanish, and other languages. Providers are paid \$75 to attend. Participants also receive a fire extinguisher, smoke detector, first aid kit, puzzle, and other useful materials delivered to their homes. The orientation includes one hour on child development, 15 to 20 minutes on health and safety, 15 to 20 minutes on how to get a license, 15 to 20 minutes on the state's child care assistance program (Connecticut Care 4 Kids), and one hour on the benefits of the union contract that was negotiated, including professional development.

Approximately 900 of the 4,000 home-based child care providers who accept the Connecticut Care 4 Kids subsidy are licensed. CSEA/SEIU encourages providers to become regulated so that they can receive higher payment rates through the child care assistance program. The contract provides for additional monetary incentives to become licensed, such as reimbursement of the licensing application fee and a \$500 bonus once the provider has been licensed for a full year. Benefits of the contract are implemented and paid for through the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and the non-profit entity that serves as the Care 4 Kids administrator.

Connecticut Family Resource Centers

Connecticut funds a network of Family Resource Centers (FRCs), a number of which provide support for FFN caregivers.

Tolland Family Resource Center

The Tolland FRC offers monthly training sessions for all providers. Each training addresses a different theme, and some offer hands-on-opportunities to put the lessons into practice. The FRC also sets up playgroups for providers and the children in their care. In addition, Tolland FRC often offers dinner or a snack to participants during the trainings and playgroups. Several of the providers participating in these activities serve families receiving child care assistance. Staff encourage providers to become regulated. The FRC uses email, word of mouth, invitation letters, and newspaper advertising to recruit providers to participate.

Contact: Laurel Leibowitz

Barnum School Family Resource Center

The Barnum School FRC offers a 10-week training for home-based child care providers seeking to become licensed and gain knowledge in early childhood care as well as a support network. Through the trainings, providers receive educational materials as well as Red Cross certifications in CPR and first aid. Lunch is offered during the trainings. Once providers are licensed, they receive resources for nutrition and snacks, furniture and materials, and ongoing professional development. Providers are recruited through flyers, schools, and word of mouth.

Contact: Carmen Rodriguez



Hockanum Family Resource Center

The FRC at Hockanum School offers playgroups, monthly workshops, and home visits to parents and providers. It also provides guest storyteller visits to home-based providers that include reading a story, doing a craft, and singing some songs. Providers are encouraged to become regulated. Recruitment is done through flyers, newsletters, and word of mouth. The Hockanum FRC is one of three family resource centers in East Hartford (the other two are at Mayberry School and Silver Lane School).

Contact: *Laura Bengtson*

Cesar Batalla Family Resource Center

The Cesar Batalla FRC provides an eight-week training series for FFN providers that offers information and ideas for activities they can do with the children in their care. Topics include child development, early literacy, discipline, nutrition, safety, and first aid and CPR. Providers are encouraged to become regulated and licensing information is included in the training curriculum. The training series is offered annually and is followed up with support sessions for those who have completed the training. Providers also receive educational materials. Providers are recruited to participate in the trainings through word of mouth in the community and schools. Some of the providers who participate serve families receiving child care assistance.

Contact: *Agnes Dubow*

Plymouth Family Resource Center

The Plymouth FRC sponsors playgroups once a week for FFN caregivers. Home visits are available as well, where screening tools, activities, and referrals are supplied when needed. Staff encourage providers to become regulated. Providers are recruited through word of mouth, local newspapers, and personal invitations.

Contact: *Lori Borysewicz*

Torrington Family Resource Center/Education Connection

The Torrington FRC offers home visits, early childhood consultation, monthly workshops, resource and referral services, and playgroups. Incentives for providers include raffles, books, and early childhood educational materials. The FRC works with about 15 to 20 providers, approximately half of whom serve families receiving child care assistance. Most of the providers participating in their activities are regulated, and the FRC received a grant from All Our Kin to encourage unregulated providers to become regulated. Providers are recruited through email, flyers, personal phone calls, and mailings.

Contact: *Michelle Anderson*

Family Resource Center at Charter Oak Academy

The Charter Oak Academy FRC invites home-based child care providers to participate in all of the programs offered to parents of children birth through age four. These programs include personal visits using the Parent as Teachers Curriculum, Ages and Stages screenings of the children in their care, and workshops. Depending on funding, incentives for participation include dinner and door prizes. Providers are encouraged to become regulated. Providers are recruited to participate in the programs through word of mouth, mailings for special workshops, Facebook, email, and phone calls.

Contact: *Deborah Zipkin*

Stratford Parents' Place

Stratford Parents' Place provides resources and support to home-based child care providers through the Family, Friends and Neighbors Project, which is funded by a grant from the United Way of Coastal County. Providers are encouraged to borrow one or more of the 26 Ready to Go Learning Bags filled with books and activities to nurture the development of children ages one to five. The project also includes monthly Play, Read and Learn sessions, which offer literacy activities. In addition, the project involves home visits to assist providers with curriculum development. Providers are encouraged to become regulated and parent educators who work with the providers supply them with the necessary information and resources. Providers are recruited to participate in the project through direct phone calls, school mailings, information on the board of education website, press releases twice a year, and postings at public places. In addition, monthly newsletters are mailed to approximately 60 providers.

Contact: *Paula Nizzardo*



Fox Run School Family Resource Center

The FRC invites FFN providers to weekly playgroups as well as professional development workshops offered to licensed providers. The FRC also organizes field trips. In addition, the FRC will occasionally mail informational materials to providers. Giveaways and raffles are offered to encourage providers to participate in the activities. Some of the participating providers serve families receiving child care assistance. Many of the providers the FRC works with are grandparents who are providing care for their grandchildren on a short-term basis and are not interested in becoming regulated, but providers who are considering becoming regulated are encouraged to work with All Our Kin. Providers are recruited to participate in the FRC's activities through flyers in local libraries and laundromats and word of mouth.

Contact: *Lynn Sadlon*

West Haven Family Resource Center

West Haven FRC offers FFN providers weekly Learn and Play groups. These groups allow staff time to speak individually with providers about child development and other issues relevant to providers. Staff model appropriate strategies to use with children, with a focus on early literacy. West Haven FRC also assists with developmental screenings; providers that complete Ages and Stages screenings on the children in their care are offered six free passes to a local children's museum. In addition, the FRC holds professional development workshops. Providers that attend monthly workshops are entered into a free drawing for a raffle at the end of the session, in addition to a certificate of completion. Providers are recruited to participate in the FRC's programs through other providers, word of mouth, and a website connected with the school district.

Contact: *Jean Vitale*

ILLINOIS

Illinois Action for Children

Contact: *Tom Browning, Director, Childhood Nutrition and Wellness*

Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) has several programs targeting FFN providers, including a nutrition program, a literacy program, and a home visiting program. These programs are funded by CACFP, CCDBG, Share Our Strength, and some small local grants; one initiative (Healthy Kids Now) receives grants from local hospitals. IAFC also has a program that coordinates FFN care with the state preschool program as well as a program that supports FFN providers in the North Lawndale community. Some of the providers IAFC serves do not speak English; the organization has bilingual staff that work with them and offers trainings in Spanish when needed.

Healthy Food Program

Illinois Action for Children is a CACFP sponsor, and in this role it serves 250 FFN providers in Cook County. IAFC has eight staff who administer the CACFP program and conduct monitoring, including four nutrition advocates who make three visits to providers a year, which are required as a part of CACFP to monitor their compliance. IAFC's outreach portion of CACFP is Healthy Kids Now. Program staff offer a public presentation and training on nutrition, physical activity, and CACFP once a month for six months out of the year to increase enrollment and participation in CACFP. These trainings are offered at public libraries in various locations in the county.

Wee Read

IAFC offers a literacy program, Wee Read, twice a year for FFN providers on Saturdays in the fall and spring. These training sessions seek to give providers the tools and resources they need to promote literacy among the children in their care. At the end of each Wee Read program session, providers receive a book and a chance to receive an even larger library prize. Home visits related to children's literacy are also conducted throughout the year for FFN providers upon request.

Welcome Visits

Three child care resource facilitators who staff the Wee Read program conduct welcome visits for FFN providers at the providers' homes. The purpose of the visits is to engage FFN providers and let them know about the various programs and



services IAFC provides, such as early childhood mental health specialists. The resource facilitators also listen to providers' questions. Each visit lasts from one to one and a half hours. During the visits, providers receive two books, smoke alarms, and plug protectors. Facilitators conduct about 200 to 220 visits per year.

Fun on Wheels

Fun on Wheels is a recreation van that goes out to FFN providers' homes to offer training and a play and learn area for children. Fun on Wheels is designed to offer providers examples of activities that they can do with children in their homes, even with limited space, to promote learning. This program completes about 100 appointments per year. IAFC has one staff person dedicated to this program.

Community Connections Preschool for All Program

For the past eight years, Community Connections has transported three- and four-year-old children cared for by home-based providers to and from center-based preschool programs. Children attend preschool four days a week for two and a half hours a day. Providers are able to visit the preschool programs to observe classroom activities. On the fifth day of the week when children do not attend preschool, the prekindergarten teachers travel to the providers' homes for a one-hour session involving both the child and provider. Providers also receive resources such as reading materials and supporting curriculum materials.

During home visits, the prekindergarten teachers show providers how to have extended conversations with children, as well as provide ideas for math and literacy lessons. Each teacher can work with a maximum of 22 providers. Their caseloads depend on the number of children the providers have in their homes. Providers are free to contact their teachers throughout the week with questions about activities, behavior management strategies, and teaching strategies. Providers can maintain this relationship with their teacher even after their child moves to kindergarten. This program currently works with 86 providers, including 29 FFN providers. Most of the providers serve children who receive child care assistance. Providers are not encouraged to become regulated, but are offered advice and are referred to resources for becoming regulated if they express interest. (The state exempts providers caring for three or fewer children or children from only one family from regulation.)

Teachers and providers already in the program assist in recruiting new providers to participate. The program is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education through the state's Preschool Block Grant.

Contact: *Carlos Patton*

Community Connections North Lawndale

In 2012, Illinois Action for Children developed a program to support FFN providers and parents caring for children from birth to age five by expanding their networks of relationships. This version of IAFC's Community Connections program is funded by the Steans Family Foundation as part of a larger school readiness strategy in Chicago's very-low-income North Lawndale community. The program supports FFN providers and parents by helping them to develop larger peer support networks; increase their knowledge and use of community resources; set direction and achieve results for themselves, their families, and their community; learn and use additional parenting practices; and enroll their children in formal learning programs.

Parents and providers attend weekly school-based sessions—approximately two hours in length including lunch—focusing on goals for themselves, their children, and their community. Sessions are held at the local elementary school where their children will be most likely to attend. Participants have opportunities to meet other caregivers, connect with resources in the community, build leadership and advocacy skills, brainstorm and collaborate, and gain knowledge. The curriculum was based on the Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) Family Focused Organizing Training and the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) Spirit of Excellence Parent Empowerment Project, among other sources. The program partners with JumpStart through DePaul University to provide enriched child care during the sessions. Field trips are provided for children and caregivers as well.

Parents and providers are also invited to attend a weekly Play and Learn series with their children. Adults engage in collaborative play with the children in their care, and the children receive developmental screenings. In addition, caregivers receive help in enrolling the children in early learning programs such as part-day preschool or library story hours. (The state allows home-based providers to continue to receive full-day reimbursement from the child care assistance program if the



children attend preschool for part of the day.) The project is not aimed at getting FFN providers regulated, but it connects them to the appropriate resources if they are interested in doing so.

North Lawndale was one of 11 communities in Illinois chosen to be an Early Childhood Innovation Zone through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant awarded to the state by the federal government. Innovation Zones were selected by the state based on the level of concentrated need; presence of providers with a demonstrated interest in quality improvement; a history of collaboration among early education providers; and strong local support for early learning. The Innovation Zone initiative helps the state pilot-test strategies to increase the participation of children with high needs in high-quality early learning and development programs. The most effective strategies will be recommended for statewide or larger-scale adoption.

Contact: *Aminah Wyatt-Jones*

MICHIGAN

First Steps (Kent County)

Contacts: *Judy Freeman, Project Director of Early Learning Communities, and Rich Liberatore, Interim Executive Director*

First Steps, a public-private partnership that aims to strengthen and coordinate early childhood services in Kent County, Michigan, works with FFN providers in four targeted schools located in urban neighborhoods with the highest density of children receiving child care assistance (Martin Luther King Jr., Leadership Academy, Harrison Park, Burton, and Coit Elementary in Grand Rapids Public Schools). First Steps started working on FFN care after the community convened to develop an early childhood plan and realized that many children in poverty were cared for by FFN providers and that these providers needed support.

First Steps offers 90-minute Play and Learn sessions twice a month. The sessions, which are held in local schools, churches, and public libraries, focus on literacy-enriched activities with expectations for children and adults. The curriculum is aligned with Child/Home Early Language and Literacy Observation (CHELLO). Experienced coaches—typically former teachers and principals well known in the community—read a story and model teaching strategies for providers. Providers who cannot read are shown how to tell a story using pictures in a book. A literacy calendar features a book each month along with related activities. Providers receive the book and an activity bag with supporting materials. Pre- and post-assessments are conducted for the children. When children need special support, teachers connect families to services, most often screening and assessments. Families with four-year-olds are also referred to Head Start and the state prekindergarten program.

When the FFN project first began, they offered home visits to providers, using the Parent as Teachers FFN curriculum, but these had to be cut back due to lack of funding. Home visits are now limited to children identified as having the greatest needs. During these visits, teachers are able to observe and work with providers on how they can use everyday objects in learning activities.

First Steps works with providers serving children up to age five whose families receive child care assistance. The providers speak a range of languages, so for Spanish-speaking providers, they have a Spanish-speaking teacher, and for providers who speak other languages, they encourage the providers to bring a family member to help with translation. The majority of the providers are caring for a family member and are not interested in becoming regulated, but First Steps encourages those that are interested to become regulated. (The state requires providers to be regulated if they are caring for one or more unrelated children.)

First Steps recruits providers to participate in its activities using a list of families in the neighborhood who receive child care assistance and by then locating the FFN providers who serve them. First Steps also uses word of mouth, billboards, and visits to schools to connect with providers. In the beginning of the project, the organization paid community leaders to go door to door to recruit providers. School principals have assisted with outreach as well.

First Steps is funded by the Stranahan Foundation and PNC Bank as well as other private funders.



Early Childhood Investment Corporation

Contact: *Marijata Daniel-Echols, Chief Executive Officer*

The Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) receives funding through Michigan's Early Learning Challenge Grant to work with FFN providers. The state targeted efforts at FFN providers as part of its grant due to the high proportion of children receiving child care assistance who are cared for by FFN providers. The organization is working with six cohorts of FFN providers over a two-year period, focusing on peer support and peer learning.

ECIC provides training and professional development opportunities to help FFN providers meet the requirements to serve families receiving child care assistance, to enable them to qualify for higher reimbursement through the child care assistance program, and to improve their quality. Michigan requires FFN providers to receive orientation training—seven hours of training that covers topics including CPR, first aid, health and safety, nutrition, and child development—to qualify to serve children receiving child care assistance; once providers complete this training, they are at tier one. Providers who complete 10 additional hours of approved training—on topics including child development, behavior management and discipline, learning activities, interactions and relationships, health and safety, nutrition, caring for children with special needs, accessing community resources, communication skills, and business basics—are considered tier two providers and are eligible for increased payment rates through the child care assistance program. Providers must complete 10 additional hours of training each year to maintain the tier two rating and continue to receive the higher payment rate. ECIC assists providers in moving through these tier levels.

MISSOURI

Local Investment Commission (Kansas City)

Contacts: *Gayle A. Hobbs, President, and Brent Schondelmeyer, Deputy Director-Community Engagement*

The Local Investment Commission (LINC) is a non-profit organization that works with state and local government, businesses, and community and civic leaders to improve the lives of children and families in the Kansas City region. The organization offers training and resource and referral services to support FFN providers. Among the providers LINC works with are immigrants, including a significant Somali population. Most of the providers are retired or related to the children they care for. While most providers the organization works with do not express an interest in becoming regulated (Missouri exempts providers caring for four or fewer children not related to them from regulation), they are interested in receiving other supports, including trainings and other assistance.

LINC regularly holds large trainings for registered and license-exempt providers; typically, 70 to 100 providers participate. The trainings cover topics such as child development, cognition, motor skills, behavior problems, child abuse and neglect, and infant first aid and CPR. Trainings are conducted by other entities, including the Family Conservancy, which provides a variety of child and family services, and the Francis Institute for Child and Youth Development, both located in the Kansas City region. Providers are supported regardless of their skill or literacy level. Training participants receive door prizes related to health and safety, such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, as well as a hard copy of the lessons used at the trainings and books and materials related to the trainings.

LINC encourages providers to expand their services to weekends and nights to assist parents with nontraditional work schedules. For providers who care for children during nighttime hours, LINC offers training on bathing and clothing children.

LINC also supports providers by helping them with paperwork for the child care assistance program. The organization sponsors support groups for grandparents providing care for their grandchildren as well. In addition, the organization offers some home visits to providers.

LINC identifies providers to participate in its activities using information about providers serving families receiving child care assistance.

LINC is supported by Educare, a state-funded initiative that provides resources, technical assistance, and training opportunities, at free or reduced costs, to child care providers with an emphasis on family home providers.



NEW YORK

Child Care Council (Rochester)

Contact: *Linda Lane, Director of Legally Exempt Services*

The Child Care Council is the state's largest FFN care referral agency outside of New York City, serving Monroe, Livingston, and Wayne counties. Its training and education programs are geared toward helping both license-exempt and licensed providers offer high-quality care, by supporting them with training and education, licensing information, and community programs.

The Child Care Council works with providers caring for children up to age 12. Many of the providers are recent immigrants, and there is a bilingual staff member who offers trainings twice a year as well as interpretation services available at other training sessions.

The training program serves an average of 125 providers per year, including about 50 providers each year who consistently participate in trainings. The initial training course consists of four consecutive Monday night sessions, each lasting about two and a half hours. When providers return for multiple trainings over an extended period of time, the agency approaches them about options for becoming licensed or registered. (New York State requires providers to be regulated if they care for more than two children that have no relation to them, or for more than eight related and non-related children.) The agency provides scholarships to cover the additional training required for registration, which includes an online orientation, first aid and CPR, and health and safety instruction. In 2015, approximately 25 providers took advantage of some part of this program. The organization also offers classes on how to conduct business as a license-exempt provider, ways to serve healthy food, and prevention and identification of child abuse and maltreatment.

The organization makes on-site visits to providers to check for outlet plugs, fire extinguishers, or other items that are required for registration, and provides any items that are missing. Registered providers can access up to \$400 in equipment.

The organization helps connect providers with additional supports and resources such as CACFP and the Healthy Homes Project, which aims to reduce home environmental health hazards.

The organization's activities are funded through the CCDBG quality set-aside and through a state contract to serve as the agency responsible for enrolling license-exempt providers in the child care assistance program.

Family Enrichment Network of Greater Binghamton

Contact: *Jennifer Perney, Child Care Resource and Referral Director*

The Family Enrichment Network, which offers a range of services for children and families, is the agency responsible for enrolling license-exempt child care providers in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties that serve families receiving child care assistance; providers must complete the enrollment process to be eligible for subsidy reimbursement. The organization also receives funds from the New York State Department of Health and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to serve as the regional sponsoring agency for family child care providers participating in CACFP.

The organization conducts inspections of license-exempt providers. (The state requires 20 percent of enrolled license-exempt providers that are not participating in CACFP to be inspected.) During inspections, providers are given essential equipment, such as smoke detectors, as well as other items, such as a monthly calendar of simple inexpensive activities providers can do with the children in their care and educational materials. From May 2012 to May 2013, the organization received a grant to expand inspections for enrolled license-exempt providers. With the grant, the number of homes inspected by the organization increased from 20 to 193.

In its role as a CACFP sponsor, the Family Enrichment Network reimburses eligible registered, licensed, and enrolled license-exempt family child care providers for nutritious meals and snacks served to children in their care. It also offers ongoing training to participating providers on topics such as child nutrition, food safety, menu planning, and physical activities. A CACFP representative from the Family Enrichment Network visits each provider at least three times a year. The organization offers other trainings to license-exempt providers as well.



Many of the FFN providers served by the organization are grandparents caring for their grandchildren and are not interested in being regulated, but the staff encourages the providers they work with to become regulated.

United Federation of Teachers: Providers Chapter (New York City)

Contact: Jeremy Hoffman, Director of Child Care Policy

The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) won the right to represent family child care providers and FFN providers who serve families receiving child care assistance in New York City. Of the 20,000 providers UFT represents, two-thirds are license exempt. UFT offers FFN providers training and grants to promote higher-quality care and professional development, and encourages FFN providers to become regulated.

UFT helps FFN providers qualify for the enhanced reimbursement rate that the state offers through the child care assistance program to those providers that receive 10 hours of training. Trainings are conducted on weekends and cover a curriculum that addresses health, safety, and other issues. Optional classes on first aid, CPR, and the use of automated external defibrillators are also available. The trainings are conducted by licensed or registered child care providers, who are trained by kindergarten or prekindergarten teachers. A mentor helps the trainers and conducts home visits.

In addition, UFT receives funding from the state to provide quality grants to licensed and regulated providers as well as license-exempt providers that have worked as providers for at least one year and have met certain professional development requirements. Providers can use the grants to purchase program materials, books, and educational toys.

New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, Administration for Children's Services (ACS)/City University of New York (CUNY) Informal Family Child Care Project

Contact: Angelica Velasquez, Project Coordinator

This project, which is funded by New York City, focuses almost exclusively on unregulated providers caring for children receiving child care assistance. The project works with six to eight community entities. The providers participating in the project are diverse and include those with Haitian, Chinese, Russian, West African, and South Asian backgrounds; some of the providers are immigrants and some do not speak English. Many of the participating providers serve school-age children, who often are cared for by FFN providers because of the lack of more formal after-school programs. There are also a number of these FFN providers who serve infants, since regulated center-based programs often do not serve children this young. The project currently reaches approximately 10,000 to 15,000 providers who serve children receiving child care assistance.

The project offers a 15-hour health and safety training course at no cost to the providers. The training is offered in both English and Spanish. Approximately 40 to 50 providers attend each training.

Staff also hold monthly sessions open to all providers on Saturday mornings at centrally accessible locations in Manhattan. The content of the trainings varies and is determined based on the results of a survey given to providers about which topics interest them. Past trainings focused on self-care for providers, child brain development, and children's emotional and social development. Additional trainings are held in the Bronx and Brooklyn every other Wednesday night. These trainings are smaller than those in Manhattan and often focus on community building.

The Informal Family Child Care Project works with the Business Outreach Center, a small micro-lending business organization, on its Child Care Business Development project, which offers training to 15 to 20 providers at a time. Some of the providers are unregulated and some are making the transition to being regulated. The project includes four hour-long sessions on legal issues, business development, health and safety, and nutrition; the Informal Family Child Care Project provides the early learning portion of the training.

The Informal Family Child Care Project involves other partners as well. The Hunts Point Alliance of Children in South Bronx works on engaging informal and licensed providers. The Children's Museum of Manhattan offers play-based training, with a Spanish translator, for providers. These trainings are held twice a year in the spring and fall, on Saturdays with adults and the following Monday with children in their care. Those who participate in the trainings receive a full year of membership to the museum.



The project offers a number of benefits and incentives for providers' participation. It helped create a system to approve applications of licensed and unregulated providers for higher payment rates through the child care assistance program for caring for children with special needs. The project is also helping providers qualify for the child care assistance rate enhancement offered by the state to FFN providers that receive 10 hours of training. In addition, the project offers training participants food, children's books, learning materials, and the chance to participate in raffle drawings. Two celebratory events are held each year, during the back-to-school season and in the spring.

Staff are mostly part-time early childhood specialists and trainers. They have backgrounds as teachers, directors, administrators of early childhood programs, school-based staff, school psychologists, and guidance counselors.

The project identifies potential participants using a list of providers received on a monthly basis from the city. Project staff reach out to the providers through direct mail, phone calls, text messages, and quarterly newsletters to let them know about upcoming events and trainings.

Home Based Childcare Services

Contact: *Diana Perez, Director of Childcare Services*

Home Based Childcare Services, which has 85 employees, runs several different programs to assist license-exempt providers. It is the screening and enrollment agency for New York City families who receive child care assistance and use license-exempt care and for the license-exempt providers who serve them; the agency screens approximately 35,000 to 40,000 providers each year. It also serves as a CACFP sponsor for license-exempt providers. In addition, the organization offers a training program for license-exempt providers. Most of the providers participating in these programs are relatives of the children in their care; some of the providers are immigrants and some are Spanish speakers.

Trainings are offered on weekdays, weeknights, and Saturdays and are conducted by early childhood educators. The trainings provide an introduction to CACFP, education on health and nutrition, and information on regulation. There are also specific training programs available, such as the Eat Well Play Hard project, which provides training on a nutrition and physical activity curriculum designed for preschool children in home-based settings and includes parent extenders. (It is usually a 12-week program, but the model is undergoing changes, so an abbreviated version is currently being used.) The training program is funded exclusively by foundations, including national and New York City-specific funders.

Home Based Childcare Services' trainers conduct inspections of providers' homes, to help meet the state requirement that 20 percent of license-exempt providers who receive subsidies but do not participate in CACFP be inspected. In addition, the organization offers home visits during which trainers, as part of Eat Well Play Hard and/or CACFP, teach both providers and children about healthy eating, as well as provide technical assistance to help providers develop their skills. The trainers present opportunities and solutions to providers and build relationships with them.

Home Based Childcare Services encourages providers to become regulated. Approximately 10 percent of the 470 to 500 license-exempt providers that go through the organization's training program go on to become licensed. Home Based Childcare has been gradually trying to bring regulated and license-exempt providers together in the same workshops.

Voice/CSEA

Contact: *Denise Dowell, Director of Early Learning and Care Programs*

Voice/CSEA represents FFN and family child care providers who serve families receiving child care assistance outside of New York City. The organization provides training to help FFN providers qualify for the enhanced rate that New York offers to providers that have completed 10 hours of training.

Prior to the creation of the CSEA training program, data showed that of the 17,000 subsidized FFN providers outside of New York City, fewer than 300 were receiving the enhanced rate and very few of the providers were even aware the enhanced rate was available. Providers also had difficulty accessing training due factors such as the cost (\$40 to \$60) and language barriers for immigrant providers.



When negotiating its program contract with the state, Voice/CSEA decided to use state funds received for professional development to support training for license-exempt providers. The union worked with the State University of New York and the New York State Office of Child Care and Family Support to create a curriculum and asked regulated family child care providers to conduct the training. The training began in upstate New York, Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, and on Long Island. The training consists of four sessions that are held every Saturday for three and a half hours. To receive the enhanced rate, providers must attend at least three sessions. An additional two-and-a-half hour financial literacy course is offered, which includes information about tax deductions that providers can take advantage of as well as benefits available to providers through CACFP.

Voice/CSEA has tried to make the trainings accessible by holding them in locations reachable by public transportation. Voice/CSEA has also worked to make the trainings and other supports accessible to Spanish-speaking providers by offering the trainings in Spanish and having bilingual staff to field calls from providers who have payment and other issues.

Voice/CSEA was negotiating a second contract that would include quality grants for license-exempt caregivers; these grants would support training in more topic areas, such as working with children who have special needs. The union also requested grant money to assist license-exempt providers who meet certain conditions in getting registered.

The union identifies potential participants for its trainings using a list of providers serving families who receive child care assistance provided daily by the New York State Office of Family and Child Services. The union then contacts providers by phone and through postcards as well as by visiting providers' homes.

OREGON

SEIU Local 503

Contact: Sarah Lanius, Organizer

In 2006, an executive order authorized the creation of a bargaining unit of FFN providers represented by SEIU Local 503. The union has reached a series of contract agreements with the state that have offered a number of benefits to providers, including in the areas of compensation, working conditions, and professional development opportunities. In the most recent contract, agreed to in July 2015, the union won two reimbursement rate increases in all areas and age groups effective January 1, 2016 and January 1, 2017; a guarantee that the union and state will negotiate rates again in 2017; assurances that providers will receive renewal paperwork in a more timely fashion; and a pathway for providers to save for retirement through legislative action.

The providers represented by SEIU Local 503 care for children up to age 13. The providers include immigrants who speak Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese.

The union holds a mandatory orientation for FFN providers with introductory information about the union, the child care assistance program (including information about reimbursement rates, parent copayments, and paperwork required to receive reimbursement), and child development topics. Providers receive a stipend for attending orientation of \$24 for a two-hour class, or \$36 for a three-hour class that is available for providers who do not speak English.

The union also pays providers to attend trainings that qualify them to receive a higher (enhanced) reimbursement rate through the child care assistance program. FFN providers in Oregon are eligible to receive the enhanced rate if they receive at least two hours of training on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect, complete at least eight hours of additional training related to child care every two years, attain certification in CPR and first aid, and have a Food Handler's permit.

A joint committee with representation from unions and the state is working to improve professional development opportunities for providers. The committee plans to create a play and learn group, develop online classes, conduct workshops for providers, and find ways to engage with families.

SEIU Local 503 has used email, a website, and a newsletter to recruit providers and inform them about upcoming trainings, and planned to start reaching out to providers by phone as well.



VERMONT

Vermont Birth to Five

Contact: *Becky Gonyea, Director*

Vermont Birth to Five (VB5) was formed in July 2015 to combine two programs of the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children—Vermont Birth to Three (VB3) and the Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative. The Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, a non-profit organization, aims to ensure that every Vermont child has access to high-quality, affordable early care and education, and the new entity will work toward achieving this goal.

VB3, which was established in 2011, sought to address gaps and augment existing services to directly support registered home-based child care providers, with a specific focus on infant and toddler care. The organization's quality improvement initiatives have included professional development, mentoring, and creating sustainable business practices. The emphasis on home-based providers reflects the fact that the rural state has a large number of this type of provider—including 850 regulated family child care providers and 600 license-exempt providers. Over the past three years, VB3 initiatives have expanded to include center-based programs and children birth to age five.

Most of the FFN providers that the organization works with serve children receiving child care assistance. The providers serve children at a wide range of ages. A small number of the providers are non-English speakers. Many of the providers do not intend to become regulated, but the organization assists those providers who do want to do so. (The state exempts providers caring for the children of one or two families from regulation.)

The organization conducted an initial survey of FFN providers to determine what would be most beneficial to them, and found that FFN providers most wanted to be connected to resources and other providers. As a result, the organization developed a resource guide with information for providers about the locations of play groups as well as milestones that providers could look for children to achieve. In addition, the organization created an e-newsletter that offered tips for providers on how to engage children; this was discontinued in 2015.

The current focus on FFN providers is through grants to community-based playgroups and the Vermont Center for the Book to support the Vermont Early Literacy Initiative, an effort to help libraries reach parents and caregivers of young children. Funding is used for outreach to encourage FFN providers' participation as well as food for participants during the activities, transportation to bring them to and from the activities, and "make-and-take" bags for providers.

Vermont Birth to Five also offers mentoring and technical assistance to registered child care providers and FFN providers who would like to become registered. Child care mentors are current or former child care providers with strong leadership skills and a deep understanding of early childhood best practices and regulations. The mentor and mentee work together to identify specific goals, such as applying for STARS (the state's quality rating and improvement system), improving business operations, and curriculum development.

The organization's FFN activities are supported by private foundations, including the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, the A.D. Henderson Foundation, and the Turrell Fund.

WASHINGTON

Child Care Resources

Contacts: *Lisa Conley, Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Project Lead, and Paula Steinke, Manager, Community Engagement*

Child Care Resources (CCR) has developed several programs to support FFN providers and parents of young children. The organization serves providers from culturally diverse backgrounds through partnerships with community-based organizations whose staff have similar backgrounds to the families they serve. It provides materials and resources in multiple languages,



including English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Amharic, Arabic, Somali, and Tigrinya. The organization receives funding for its FFN programs and activities from the state's Department of Early Learning, King County Veterans and Human Services Levy, Thrive WA, United Way, school districts, and other public and private funders.

In addition to programs providing direct services to parents and providers, CCR represents FFN perspectives and issues in Early Learning Regional Coalitions, Collective Impact initiatives, and a variety of local, regional, and state advisory groups related to early learning and system building.

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn

Child Care Resources coordinates a statewide network of over 40 family support organizations, schools, and libraries that provide Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups for FFN providers and parents. Kaleidoscope Play and Learn has been designated a promising practice by the Evidence Based Practice Institute at the University of Washington, which was created by the Washington State legislature to improve mental health treatment and access for children. During Kaleidoscope group sessions, participants experience how children learn through play, develop positive social networks, and receive information and resources about child development and school readiness, with an emphasis on supporting young children's learning through everyday interactions and activities. Parents and providers learn through direct instruction, modeling, guest speakers, and observing their child interact with other children and adults. They also receive information about community resources.

The Kaleidoscope Play and Learn network includes approximately 110 groups that meet for at least 90 minutes each week. The groups' facilitators receive a two-day training and materials including the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Planning Handbook and Tool Kit and the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Caregiver Learning Handbook and Lesson Guides. Facilitators and their supervisors participate in Child Care Resources' quarterly continuing education webinars and receive ongoing one-on-one technical assistance as requested. Partner organizations conduct an annual point-in-time caregiver feedback survey; analysis and reporting is supported by CCR. Host organizations commit to engage in a quality assurance process to ensure program fidelity.

In 2014, these Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups reached over 3,300 FFN providers and parents and 3,400 children in their care. Approximately half of the caregivers who participate are people of color, half speak a language other than English at home, and many are low-income. About one-quarter of the participants identify themselves as FFN providers. The children of the participating caregivers are ages birth to five, with most children ages two and three.

Early Learning Conversations with Communities

Early Learning Conversations is a peer education model in which natural leaders (such as parents and grandparents) receive training and support to facilitate learning conversations within their personal networks about healthy child development and school readiness. The Conversations curriculum consists of 20 topics related to healthy child development and school readiness in a format combining dialogue and hands-on activities. Parent/caregiver leaders receive 12 hours of training on Conversations content, the Protective Factors framework, the early learning system, adult learning, and facilitating dialogue. The training itself is offered with an empowerment focus, supporting participant dialogue, input on session agendas, and exploration of cultural perspectives on parenting and child development. After receiving training, parent/caregiver leaders commit to hosting Conversations on at least eight topics during the following six months. Parent leaders receive ongoing support from CCR staff, including a monetary stipend. CCR receives assistance from community organizations in identifying parent leaders, and has trained 29 parent/caregiver leaders to date from diverse cultural groups, with new cohorts in development.

Brothers and Sisters Program

The Brothers and Sisters Program (BSP) was designed to serve the many youth who care for their younger siblings and cousins before and after school, often into evening hours. This situation is particularly common among recent immigrant and refugee families, who typically do not have extended family or friends available to provide care. Developed with input from high school youth, BSP offers 32 hours of interactive sessions on child development, CPR and first aid, early childhood careers, and youth leadership. The program can be offered in middle or high schools as an after-school program, or by community organizations such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Campfire.

