

A photograph showing a woman with dark hair and a green patterned scarf, wearing a floral apron, holding a small plant in a black nursery pot. She is looking down at the plant. Two young children, a boy in a blue t-shirt and a girl in a light blue t-shirt, are looking at the plant with interest. The boy is pointing at the plant. They are in a garden bed with white gravel and a brick border. A bag of 'Garden' soil is visible in the background.

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

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Table of Contents

3	Introductory Letter from All Our Kin
5	The Benefits of Family Child Care
6	The State of Family Child Care in the U.S.
8	The Framework: Creating the Conditions for Family Child Care to Thrive
9	Key Principles
10	A Vision for Family Child Care: The Conditions
11	Recommendations
11	Funding Family Child Care Programs
16	Supporting Quality in Family Child Care
24	Building Sustainable Family Child Care Businesses
28	Family Child Care Licensing
32	Housing, Zoning, and Family Child Care
38	Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems in Support of Family Child Care
42	Staffed Family Child Care Networks
44	Opportunities for Technical Assistance
45	APPENDIX A: All Our Kin Overview
45	The All Our Kin Model
45	All Our Kin's Outcomes and Impact
47	APPENDIX B: All Our Kin's Core Values
48	APPENDIX C: Sample Landlord FAQ
50	Citations



Introductory Letter *from* All Our Kin

Dear Reader,

When we began All Our Kin 20 years ago, we started with a vision: that all children receive the high-quality early learning experiences that prepare them to succeed in school and in life. Since then All Our Kin has trained, supported, and sustained the early childhood educators who reach the children and families from the most overburdened, under-resourced communities: home-based family child care providers.

We are at a moment of tremendous opportunity for family child care. As the research on early childhood brain development has grown—indicating that the brain is literally built between the ages of 0 and 3—there have been historic investments in early care and education at the local, state, and federal levels. Still, in many communities across the country, families are struggling to find safe, affordable child care that meets their needs, and are often forced to choose between their families' economic survival and their children's safe, healthy development.

In this climate, policymakers increasingly recognize that family child care must be a key component of their work to address gaps in child care access, quality, and affordability. Family child care providers are uniquely well-positioned to meet the needs of families that face the greatest barriers to accessing child care—including families with infants and toddlers—providing care that is geographically and financially accessible, offers flexibility for parents who work non-traditional hours, and puts children in a family-like environment that often shares the same language and culture as their home.

For two decades, All Our Kin has demonstrated what is possible when we invest in the power and potential of family child care. The data shows that our strength-based, relationships first model is proven to increase the supply, quality, and sustainability of family child care. And this data has gotten the attention of policymakers across the country. On a weekly basis, All Our Kin receives calls from stakeholders seeking to learn from our many years of experience working directly with family child care providers, asking:

- How do we engage family child care providers in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and professional development systems in a way that makes a meaningful impact on quality?
- How do we keep family child care businesses open in the face of closures across the country?
- How do we incentivize caregivers to become licensed?

In response, All Our Kin has designed this framework, offering concrete strategies—at the intersection of policy and practice—for creating the conditions necessary for family child care to thrive in states and localities across the county.

The recommendations in this publication are rooted in All Our Kin's years of experience in the field, as well as the experiences and expertise of our many partners in this work—most importantly, family child care providers themselves. We want policymakers of every kind at the local and state levels—from mayors, to housing authority directors, to state child care administrators, to legislators—to see themselves in this document, and understand how they can contribute to an environment in which family child care providers, and the children and families they serve, are valued and supported.

Ultimately, we aim to partner with states and communities to build a comprehensive child care system that works for all children and families, and that views family child care as a critical part of the solution. To that end, we hope these recommendations are only the beginning of an ongoing conversation about how All Our Kin can provide individualized consultation that thoughtfully examines, leverages, and responds to differing needs and contexts, all in service of creating robust family child care systems. And, we know that this is a work in progress! We plan to update and revise this publication on an ongoing basis as we learn from partners about the most effective strategies they are using in their communities. We invite you to send your examples and success stories to policy@allourkin.org for the opportunity to be included in this body of work.

We look forward to the work we can accomplish together as we pave the way for all family child care providers, children, and families to thrive.

In partnership,

Jessica Sager, *Co-Founder and CEO*

Janna Wagner, *Co-Founder and Chief Learning Officer*
and

The All Our Kin community, including the staff, board, family child care educators, community partners, advocates, friends, supporters, and other stakeholders who have made our work, and the learnings contained in this publication, possible

For more information about All Our Kin, including an overview of our model, outcomes, and impact, please see Appendix A.



The Benefits of Family Child Care

Family child care is a critical component of a child care system that meets the diverse needs of all families, and is uniquely well-positioned to meet the needs of families that face the greatest barriers to accessing child care. Families may choose family child care as their preferred child care arrangement for a variety of reasons, including:

Family-like environment.

Many families feel more comfortable placing their children—particularly infants and toddlers—in family child care programs because they believe that their children will thrive within a small group in a warm, familial, home setting. The intimate, family-like environment of family child care programs fosters the strong, nurturing relationships that are so important to a child's healthy growth and development.

Culture and language.

Families may be able to more easily identify a family child care option that aligns with their cultural and linguistic background than a center-based program. Because family child care providers live and work in the same communities as the families they serve, families may feel that their family child care provider better understands their needs and the needs of their children than a provider from a different community.

Geographic accessibility.

In locations (such as low-income and rural areas) where center-based care is less common or less accessible, family child care programs provide families with child care options in the neighborhoods where they live and work. This is especially important for families that lack access to reliable transportation.



Flexibility.

Unpredictable job schedules, evening, night, and weekend shifts, and on-call scheduling—particularly in industries like food, healthcare, retail, and hospitality—can make it nearly impossible for working parents to coordinate child care. Family child care providers often offer flexible scheduling options and are more likely to accommodate nontraditional child care needs by having extended hours, overnight hours and/or weekend hours.

Mixed-age groups.

Family child care providers can care for mixed-age groups, including infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, in addition to providing before-and-after school care and summer care for school-aged children. For families with multiple children, this can save time and money and provide peace of mind that their children are together in a safe and loving environment.

Affordability.

Child care is often prohibitively expensive for families, but the cost of family child care is typically less than that of center-based care. As such, family child care programs can serve as an affordable, high-quality option for children and families from under-resourced communities.

Economic drivers.

Family child care businesses support the workforce of today while preparing the workforce of tomorrow. Family child care generates significant economic returns as it allows parents to enter and remain in the workforce and providers to increase their own earnings as business owners.

The State of Family Child Care in the U.S.

Family child care, or paid child care that takes place in the home of a regulated or licensed provider, is one of the most prevalent child care arrangements in the U.S., particularly for infants and toddlers, children of color, and children from low-income families. According to the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), there are more than one million paid home-based child care providers across the country.ⁱ Of these one million paid providers, about 118,000 can be classified as licensed, exempt from licensure, or regulated—the terminology differs as states set varying standards and requirements for home-based care settings. As a group, these 118,000 paid providers are referred to as *listed* by the NSECE while the term *unlisted* is used to categorize the remaining 919,000 paid home-based providers.

Each state determines whether family child care is licensed, and whether family child care is a part of its approach to early childhood systems development and workforce development. Some localities take on additional regulatory roles and responsibilities, and some have ensured the availability of regulated care (and inclusion in a systems approach) in the absence of state regulation.

Out of nearly 11 million young children with working mothers, almost half spend more time in family child care than in any other child care setting.ⁱⁱ

- Over ninety percent (94.2%) of listed, home-based providers were caring for at least one child under three years of age, while 85.5% were caring for at least one preschooler (ages 3 through 5 years).ⁱⁱⁱ Almost two-thirds (63.2%) reported serving at least one school-age child.^{iv}

- Nationally, about one in four children (24%) receiving child care funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) are cared for in family child care.^v
- Family child care providers care for 27% of infants younger than age 1, and 24% of toddlers ages 1–3, in CCDF-supported child care.^{vi}
- Thirty-four percent of listed, paid home-based providers report offering some care during non-standard hours.^{vii}

Meeting the Needs of Children and Families

Family child care programs are, therefore, providing crucial early learning opportunities for the children that need those opportunities most, including infants and toddlers and children whose parents work nontraditional hours. High-quality family child care has been linked to improvements in children's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development.^{viii} Moreover, studies have shown that the opportunity for one-on-one relationships and the responsive and nurturing environment found in a family child care setting has the potential for positive outcomes for children.^{ix} Family child care can also provide critically important cultural and linguistic continuity for children from diverse backgrounds, and studies have shown that young children's social and emotional development is supported when there is cultural and linguistic continuity between their experiences at home and in child care.

Family child care providers also support working families in the communities in which they live. Seventy percent of low-income children in regular, non-parental care receive that care within three miles of their home.^x In rural communities, in cities, and in suburbs where price, location, and transportation barriers limit child care options, family child care (and other home-based child care arrangements like family, friend and neighbor care) fills a critical need for families. Without the high-quality,



affordable, and flexible child care that local family child care providers offer, many parents would not be able to afford or find the child care that allows them to remain in the workforce. Family child care providers often develop strong relationships with the families they serve and frequently act as an important source of information for parents.

The Family Child Care Workforce

Despite its crucial role in our child care system, the supply of regulated family child care is declining rapidly across the country. From 2011-2014, the number of licensed family child care homes decreased by 18 percent.^{xi} The number continued to drop from 2014-2017, declining by 21 percent.^{xii} As families struggle with the cost of child care, the industry is grappling with underinvestment, high operating costs, and low compensation. Mounting research and anecdotal evidence also point to retirement, age-related concerns, and health issues among the family child care workforce as contributing factors.^{xiii} The decline of regulated family child care programs disproportionately impacts low-income and working-class families who rely on the local, flexible care that home-based settings provide.

Like their colleagues in other early childhood education settings, family child care providers want to see the children in their care thrive and seek opportunities for education, career advancement, sustainability, and fair compensation. Sixty-one percent of listed, paid home-based providers have more than 10 years of experience in the field and 42% intend to continue for 10 or more years.^{xiv} Forty-seven percent say this work is a personal career or a calling.^{xv}

One third of listed providers have a degree in early childhood education (ECE) or an ECE-related major.^{xvi} Among listed, paid home-based providers who cared for at least one child under age three, 43% have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a state certification.^{xvii} Three quarters of listed providers have participated in a workshop in the previous 12 months and among those providers, one third of them reported participating in a series.^{xviii} Thirty percent are taking a college course and 34% are receiving coaching.^{xix}

Family child care providers have both the passion and potential to be successful educators and business owners who provide the highest quality care for children. When they are given adequate time, resources, and support to meet regulations and standards, family child care providers rise to the occasion. And when family child care providers thrive, so do the children and families they support.



The Framework: Creating *the Conditions for* Family Child Care to Thrive

We are at a pivotal moment for the future of family child care. Recent years have seen historic investments in early care and education at the local, state, and federal levels, and communities increasingly recognize that supporting and strengthening family child care is a key strategy to address critical gaps in child care access, quality, and affordability.

This publication presents a framework for how stakeholders can create the conditions for family child care to thrive in their communities, thereby increasing the supply, quality, and sustainability of child care options that meet the needs of all families. The framework is based on All Our Kin's two decades of experience in the field, as well as the lessons we've learned from family child care providers themselves and from our many partners across the country.

We seek to answer the questions

- What are the conditions that need to be present in every state and community for family child care, and the children and families it serves, to thrive?
- How do we create these conditions?
- Who has the power to create and/or influence these conditions?

by offering concrete recommendations and strategies—at the intersection of policy and practice—for state and local leaders who are eager to support family child care. We know that often,

it is not just about the “what,” but about the “how.” For example, it is not enough to offer state-funded professional learning opportunities to family child care providers; those opportunities need to be designed to work for providers’ real lives, and offer content that makes providers want to engage. Our strategies can be implemented by a wide range of stakeholders, from mayors and legislators to child care administrators to QRIS implementors to Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. It is our belief that many types of leaders can and should exercise their influence in support of family child care. In this publication, we focus on recommendations across six domains:

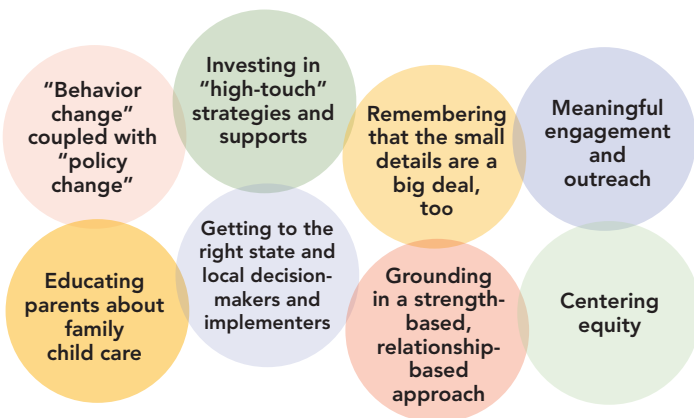
- Funding Family Child Care Programs
- Supporting Quality in Family Child Care
- Building Sustainable Family Child Care Businesses
- Family Child Care Licensing
- Housing, Zoning, and Family Child Care
- Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems in Support of Family Child Care

By working across these six domains, we can build a comprehensive early care and education system that values family child care as an important part of the infrastructure of our economy and of our communities.



Key Principles

The following key principles guide our framework for creating the conditions for family child care to thrive:



“Behavior change” coupled with “policy change.” We cannot achieve the transformative policy change we seek if we do not also change hearts and minds about the critical importance of investing in and including family child care as a key strategy for meeting the child care needs of all families. Likewise, it is not just about the “what”; it’s also about the “how.” A policy may be positive on paper, but may not achieve the desired outcomes in practice because it is not implemented in a way that centers the needs of family child care providers.

Investing in “high-touch” strategies and supports. To achieve transformative outcomes for children, families, and communities, licensing is not enough. We need to engage family child care providers in high-touch, sustainable ways through a continuum of supports and services that meets their needs as educators and as business owners at every stage of their careers.

Remembering that the small details are a big deal, too. In a profession that is so often overlooked and undervalued, small changes and gestures can have a big impact. It is not just about legislative and administrative policy change—it is also about a family child care provider receiving a letter from the state thanking her for the important role she plays in the lives of children and families and in her community.

Meaningful engagement and outreach. If we want to meaningfully engage family child care providers, we need to meet them where they are. That means being in the communities where they live, communicating in the languages they speak, and delivering services that are relevant, culturally competent, high-quality, and that work for providers’ real lives.

Educating parents about family child care. Strengthening family child care often involves combatting existing assumptions about the quality and professionalism of home-based child care; these assumptions are often exacerbated by inequitable investments that favor school-based and center-based child care settings. It is important for families to know that family child care can be a high-quality early care and education option for their children, and that in fact, family child care may be best positioned to meet their needs.



Getting to the right state and local decision-makers and implementers. There are many different leaders and policymakers, at the state and local levels, who have the power to help create the conditions for family child care to thrive. It is important that all of these decision-makers and implementers—from state legislators to the local Zoning Board—understand the value of family child care and work together to support it.

Grounding in a strength-based, relationship-based approach. Family child care providers often bring an incredible wealth of knowledge, experience, and passion to their work, going above and beyond to offer care that is flexible, responsive, and culturally competent in the neighborhoods where families need that care most. It is important that the unique backgrounds and perspectives of family child care providers are honored, and that relationships are grounded in respect for the difficult and important work that they do.

Centering equity. Investing in and including family child care in early childhood policy and practice is a matter of equity. Children learn where they are, and millions of young children—particularly infants and toddlers, children of color, children in rural areas, and children whose parents work nontraditional hours—are in family child care. These children, and their early childhood educators, need and deserve access to the same supports and services that are available in other child care settings.

In addition to these key principles, this publication is rooted in All Our Kin’s Core Values, which guide all of our work with family child care providers, children, families, communities, and partners. You can find All Our Kin’s Core Values in Appendix B.

A Vision *for* Family Child Care: The Conditions

Our vision is that family child care providers will be honored and supported in their difficult work of caring for and educating children and will have access to resources, training, educational opportunities, livable wages, and benefits; parents will have access to safe, loving, educational child care options in their communities; and children, regardless of where they live, their racial or ethnic background, or how much money their parents earn, will begin their lives with all the advantages, tools, and experiences that we, as a society, are capable of giving them.

All Our Kin believes that the following conditions must be present in every state and community to realize this vision of a robust child care landscape that truly meets the needs of children from birth to five, their families, and those who care for them:

Funding Family Child Care Programs

Families have financial support that allows them to access quality child care options that meet their needs. Family child care providers have stable, fair compensation that allows them to run high-quality, sustainable child care businesses.

Supporting Quality in Family Child Care

Family child care providers have access to the high-quality resources, training, and support they need to provide quality early care and education that lays children's foundation for success in school and in life.

Building Sustainable Family Child Care Businesses

Family child care providers are recognized and supported in their role as entrepreneurs and economic drivers, and receive the resources they need to sustain their businesses and their own families.

Family Child Care Licensing

Family child care providers are supported in meeting licensing regulations that recognize their role as early childhood professionals, make sense in home-based settings, and are the first step on a pathway of quality.

Housing, Zoning and Family Child Care

Family child care providers have access to safe, affordable housing where they can operate quality, sustainable home-based child care businesses.

Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems in Support of Family Child Care

Key multi-sector stakeholders partner with family child care providers to offer accessible supports, services, and information to children and families.

What follows are strategies and recommendations—at the intersection of policy and practice—for state and local leaders who are committed to realizing these conditions for family child care in their communities.



Recommendations

Funding Family Child Care Programs

Investing in high-quality, affordable, accessible child care for all children and families, starting at birth, is one of the most important investments that we, as a society, can make. According to research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman, comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five education results in high graduation and employment rates, better health outcomes, and lower crime rates, producing a 13% ROI.ⁱ And we cannot talk about funding quality early learning experiences starting in infancy without talking about funding family child care—40% of young children with working mothers spend more time in family child care than in any other setting, and this is particularly true for infants and toddlers.ⁱⁱ

Historically, local, state, and federal funding have been insufficient to fix the child care conundrum. Child care is unaffordable in all 50 states and D.C., and is one of the highest household expenses for families; meanwhile, child care providers—particularly family child care providers—are often not earning a living wage.ⁱⁱⁱ But, momentum is growing. Increased awareness of the importance of the first few years of a child’s life has led to increased public and private investment in early care and education. This means that there is an opportunity to ensure that when dollars are flowing to early childhood programs and services, family child care is being included in those investments.

Even with the additional funding in recent years, significantly more investment is needed. In a world of limited resources, state and local policymakers need to get creative, leveraging existing funding streams and bringing in new funding streams in order to build robust, sustainable family child care systems. Some of the recommendations below require substantial investments; others require small changes in practice that can make a big difference in child care access. As a whole, they can be combined to realize a comprehensive child care system where high-quality care, and a fairly-compensated workforce, exist across all child care settings—including family child care.

Condition: Families have financial support that allows them to access quality child care options that meet their needs. Family child care providers have stable, fair compensation that allows them to run high-quality, sustainable child care businesses.

There are several existing funding streams that can be leveraged by state, and sometimes local, policymakers to fund family child care programs. These funding streams, and our recommendations for each, are outlined below.

Child Care and Development Block Grant

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary source of federal child care assistance (child care subsidies/vouchers/certificates) for low-income working families. It is intended to improve access to child care for families while also improving the quality of care available by supporting health and safety training, professional learning opportunities, and other

quality improvement initiatives for child care providers. Each state sets its own eligibility criteria, application process, and subsidy reimbursement rates. In addition, each state decides how it will spend its CCDBG quality set-aside dollars.^{iv}

CCDBG is particularly important for family child care because it is one of the only funding streams that can be used by parents to pay for child care in home-based child care settings. In addition, it is one of just a few funding streams that support infant and toddler care—the backbone of family child care. And because family child care is particularly well-positioned to meet the needs of the children who face the greatest barriers to accessing care, many of the families that rely on family child care are eligible for child care assistance; in 2017, 21% of all children in the U.S. receiving subsidies were cared for in a family child care home.^v

That said, CCDBG has been chronically underfunded; historically, only one in every six children who qualify for the subsidy actually receive it.^{vi} Funding was particularly strained following the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization, which included many new provisions aimed at increasing the health and safety, quality, and stability of child care for families but did not include the funding necessary to implement these provisions.^{vii}

However, FY18 saw a historic increase of \$2.37 billion—a near doubling—in CCDBG funding, followed by a subsequent increase in FY19 and the potential for additional increases in the future.^{viii} With new federal dollars flowing to the states, and many states increasing their own investments in child care assistance, we are at a moment of opportunity to leverage CCDBG to better support infants and toddlers, low-income families, and family child care. Below are recommendations for how policymakers, including state legislators, CCDF administrators, and agency commissioners, can leverage CCDBG funds to better support family child care and the children and families it serves:

- **Increase child care subsidy rates for family child care providers** in several distinct ways:
 - **Increase base subsidy rates for all licensed family child care providers to reflect the true cost of providing high-quality care.** When setting subsidy payment rates, states should prioritize maximizing child care quality, access, and program sustainability. This means that program rates are tied to the true cost of providing quality care and meeting increasing quality standards, so that payment rates are competitive and family child care providers are not penalized financially for participating in the subsidy system. States can use a tool such as the National Center for Early Childhood Quality Assurance’s *Provider Cost of Quality Calculator* to determine the appropriate payment rates.^{ix}

EXAMPLE:

In recognition of the fact that the market rate is not a sufficient tool to determine the true cost of providing high-quality child care, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) in Washington, D.C. developed a new cost estimation model for child care centers and family child care homes, and used this as the basis for setting subsidy payments rates in the district. Per the 2014 reauthorization of CCDBG, the methodology used is available to the public and can be found in the 2016 OSSE report: *Modeling the Cost of Child Care in the District of Columbia*.^x

• **Implement tiered reimbursements rates for:**

- ▲ **Infant and toddler care.** Providing care for infants and toddlers is more expensive than that of older children due to the low child-provider ratios required, and thus should be compensated with higher subsidy rates.
- ▲ **Nontraditional hour care.** In a 24-hour economy, there is a critical need for child care in the early morning, late evening, overnight, and on weekends, especially among lower-income families who often work multiple jobs or work in industries—such as retail, health, and food—that commonly require nontraditional hours. Increasing the subsidy rate for nontraditional hours may lead more family child care programs to offer greater schedule flexibility for families.
- ▲ **Credentials and degrees.** Family child care providers are more likely to invest the time, money, and effort required to obtain an early childhood credential and/or degree if they know that doing so will be tied to higher compensation, as is the case in other professions.
- ▲ **National accreditation.** When family child care providers achieve accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care, they demonstrate that they have met nationally-recognized standards of quality in home-based child care, and should be compensated as such.
- ▲ **QRIS participation.** Higher subsidy reimbursement rates for high QRIS ratings can incentivize family child care providers to pursue greater levels of quality and reward them for their successes. *Note: Without careful implementation, QRIS can inadvertently perpetuate inequitable systems. While tiered reimbursement rates may incentivize participation in a QRIS, they can also have the effect of giving the highest-quality, highest-resourced programs even more resources, while leaving the under-resourced programs—often serving children who face the greatest barriers to accessing quality care—behind. It is essential that QRIS systems provide sufficient resources at every stage of the process, enabling programs at all levels to move up through the system. For more information about QRIS and family child care, see page 19.*

■ **Design the child care subsidy structure to maximize access, quality, and stability** of child care in the following ways:

- Reduce barriers to participation in the subsidy system. Often, family child care providers and families face difficulties participating in the subsidy system, even when they qualify. By addressing these barriers, states can increase provider and parent participation in and satisfaction with the subsidy:
 - ▲ **Subsidy paperwork.** Subsidy paperwork should be easy to complete, readily accessible online, and available in the languages that parents and providers speak and read.^{xi}
 - ▲ **Communication and flow of information.** It is important to establish clear, transparent lines of communication between providers, families, and the subsidy office. This means that subsidy office staff are readily available to provide assistance and information during the times that work best for providers and parents, including during naptime and after hours, and that bilingual staff are available (or interpretation services are provided). In addition, both families and providers should be notified about subsidy eligibility promptly and simultaneously.
 - ▲ **Payment practices.** Family child care providers need subsidy payments that are timely, accurate, and tied to enrollment (versus attendance) in order to run stable, sustainable child care businesses. To close the gap between when subsidy paperwork is submitted and when eligibility determinations are made, states can consider implementing presumptive eligibility so that families can enroll in child care immediately, and offer stopgap loans to providers so that they can be paid while paperwork is processed.
 - ▲ **Availability of trainings.** The 2014 CCDBG reauthorization included additional health and safety trainings and professional development requirements for child care providers who participate in the subsidy system. The trainings must be available and accessible in order for providers to maintain subsidy compliance and remain in the system. For more information about professional learning and family child care, see page 17.
- **Expand family eligibility income levels.** Affording child care is a concern for families across income levels and the cost of child care across the country frequently exceeds the affordability standards set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which defines affordable child care as consuming no more than 10% of a family's budget.^{xii} Setting family income eligibility at or above 200% of the federal poverty level will ensure that more families are able to secure the child care they need to enter or remain in the workforce or pursue continuing education.^{xiii}

Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships

Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally-funded program that provides free or low-cost child care and wraparound services to eligible families with infants and toddlers. Qualification criteria

include: a household income that is at or below the federal poverty guideline, families experiencing homelessness, and children who are in the foster system. Additionally, at least 10% must have a diagnosed disability. Children enrolled in EHS receive ongoing support for their health and wellbeing as well as their social, behavioral, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Child care providers also receive regular supportive visits from health and educational coaches, access to quality enhancement funds and materials for their child care environment, and professional development opportunities.^{xiv}

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) combine the strengths of local child care and Early Head Start programs. The Partnerships layer Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant funding with child care subsidy payments, parent copayments, and other funding to provide comprehensive services and high-quality early learning environments for low-income families with infants and toddlers in child care settings.

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) include a family child care option for service delivery. Partnering with family child care is a great way to reach vulnerable infants and toddlers and their families in settings that families choose and can afford, with Early Head Start opportunities right in their own neighborhoods. State and local policymakers can:

- **Encourage Head Start grantees to apply for additional funding to expand Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships in family child care.** Although EHS-CCPs can include family child care, they do so too rarely. As of spring 2017 only 1,000 family child care programs were engaged in an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership, accounting for approximately 4% of nationwide EHS-CCP grantees.^{xv} According to a 2018 study on family child care providers' perspectives on partnering with Early Head Start, family child care providers stated that the consistency of payments for child care afforded through partnership with EHS resulted in less financial strain and stress about whether families could afford to pay. They also shared that the consistency of the Early Head Start waitlist contributed to stabilizing their income, and that partnership with Early Head Start enabled them to hire a licensed substitute and/or assistant for their program, which increases the number of children for whom they can care while meeting ratio regulations. Partnering with Early Head Start also allows many providers access to pay at rates that are higher, and fairer, than those available through many state's child care subsidy programs.^{xvi}

- **Strengthen alignment between EHS-CCPs and CCDBG.** The 2014 CCDBG reauthorization affords states greater flexibility to align subsidy policies with EHS, layering the funding streams to create maximum impact for children and families. According to a brief from the National Early Childhood Qual-

ity Assurance Center, "Subsidy program requirements, such as family income thresholds, eligibility periods, copayments, work and education participation, and citizenship can be modified so that the children can benefit from Early Head Start (45 C.F.R., 2016)."^{xvii} The brief, entitled *State Strategies for Leveraging Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships to Build High-Quality Infant and Toddler Care*, provides several specific examples of EHS - CCP friendly CCDBG policies.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), authorized by the federal Child Nutrition Act since 1968, provides reimbursement for meals and snacks that follow a Meal Pattern developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Research indicates that the meals and snacks in CACFP-participating child care programs are of higher quality than those served in child care programs not in CACFP, and research indicates that child care programs in CACFP operate overall at a higher level of quality than those not in CACFP. Despite the modest reimbursement rates, CACFP participation is always financially beneficial to family child care programs.^{xviii} Therefore, state and local policymakers should:

"When I [joined Early Head Start] I wasn't making any money and had a hard time finding people who could pay. Knowing that the pay check comes in and you don't have to run after the parents, it takes that pressure off. When things come up that you need in your program, you're able to buy them."

-Early Head Start family child care provider

- **Invest in marketing and outreach about the benefits of CACFP participation.** Tom Copeland, a leading national expert in the business of family child care, outlines several common misunderstandings about CACFP that prevent some family child care providers from participating in the program, including concerns about increased taxes, losing food deductions, and the required paperwork.^{xix} States and communities can invest in marketing and outreach to family child care providers to help them better understand the logistics and benefits of CACFP participation.
- **Align licensing regulations and QRIS with CACFP.** Where possible, states can seek to align and streamline requirements for the different programs in which family child care providers might participate; this reduces confusion over occasionally conflicting regulations, and alleviates the administrative burden on providers. In the case of CACFP, states can align their licensing regulations with CACFP requirements.^{xx} In doing so, states can ensure that children in all licensed child care settings receive healthy, nutritious food, and encourage all providers to participate in the Food Program. Additionally, states can incorporate CACFP nutrition standards as a component of their QRIS, such that participation in CACFP helps providers move through the rating system.

Birth-to-Five Preschool Development Grants

Initially, federal Preschool Development Grants (PDG) were awarded to states for the purpose of expanding access to high-quality preschool programs for four-year-olds.^{xxi} The new PDG Birth through Five grants provide states with the opportunity to

Recommendations *continued*

design and implement an early care and education system that provides access to high quality care for all children and their families, starting at birth. Forty-six states were awarded PDG B-5 grants to conduct a community needs assessment and develop a strategic plan for meeting this goal; now, these states are in the process of applying for competitive federal funds to implement their strategic plans.^{xxii} In designing and implementing their PDG B-5 strategic plans, states can:

- **Prioritize family child care to meet infant/toddler child care needs.** The inclusion of infants and toddlers in the new PDG B-5 awards marks an important opportunity to prioritize family child care as a key component of states' mixed-delivery child care systems, as the majority of infants and toddlers in the U.S. receive care in home-based settings. States can consider all of the strategies and recommendations presented in this publication when building a child care system that includes and supports family child care in meaningful ways, thereby expanding the supply, quality, and affordability of infant and toddler care.

Additional Funding Opportunities

In addition to the federal funding streams above, state and local policymakers could consider additional funding opportunities for family child care:

- **Contract with staffed family child care networks.** By contracting with staffed family child care networks, states can address critical gaps in their child care system while investing in the stability and sustainability of family child care businesses. According to the federal Office of Child Care, the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization encourages states to use their subsidy dollars to invest in infant and toddler care, nontraditional hour care, and care in child care deserts.^{xxiii} Contracts can be targeted to the family child care programs that are meeting these needs. State and local policymakers can also invest in strengthening networks directly; see page 42 for more information.

EXAMPLE:

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) has several tools and resources for states and localities interested in contracting with staffed family child care networks. Their technical assistance manual, *Developing a Staffed Family Child Care Network*, walks policymakers through the rationale for investing in networks, the components of a network, and network implementation.^{xxiv} In addition, the ECQA Center has developed a cost estimation for family child care networks, which helps policymakers understand network operating costs: *Staffed Family Child Care Network Cost Estimation Tool (CET)*.^{xxv} You can contact QualityAssuranceCenter@icfi.com for more information about these resources and for related technical assistance opportunities.

- **Leverage state-funded preschool dollars.** Investments in universal preschool, without comparable investments in infant and toddler care, threaten to destabilize the family child care infrastructure that supports so many of our youngest children. As three- and four-year-olds move to state-funded preschool, family child care providers are left caring for children birth to age two—the least profitable age group in all child care settings, because of the high cost of providing infant and toddler care and because of ratio requirements that limit the numbers of infants and toddlers that can be cared for in a program. To alleviate the strain on family child care businesses, states and communities can consider using preschool dollars to fund child care slots for three- and four-year-olds in family child care programs that meet rigorous quality standards, as is the case with the rollout of 3K services (preschool for three-year-olds) in New York City.^{xxvi}

- **Generate state and local tax revenue.** State and local tax revenue dedicated to early childhood, while not a one-stop solution, can help alleviate the extreme gaps that states and communities face in funding high-quality, accessible child care.^{xxvii} States and localities can explore a variety of tax options, including:
 - Corporate and business taxes
 - Estate and inheritance taxes
 - Personal income taxes
 - Property taxes
 - Sales taxes
 - Sin taxes
 - Special district government taxes

A 2019 report from the BUILD Initiative, Center for American Progress, Children's Funding Project, Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, and University of Maryland College Park School of Public Health and Public Policy, entitled *Funding Our Future: Generating State and Local Tax Revenue for Quality Early Care and Education*, explores these tax options, explaining what the taxes are, how they work, where they are feasible, and how they might be leveraged to fund child care. The report also includes examples from states and communities across the country.

- **Provide stipends, loans, and grants to family child care providers.** When the combination of public investments and parent payments fails to sufficiently compensate family child care educators for the high cost of providing quality care, stipends, loans, and grants can act as a stopgap.

EXAMPLE:

To address high living costs and low wages, Mayor Breed of San Francisco established the Compensation and Retention Early Educator Stipend, through which eligible licensed family child care and center-based providers can receive up to a \$4,000 stipend annually. The stipend program is administered through the city's Office of Early Care and Education and plans to distribute almost \$24 million to 2,500 child care providers over the course of three years, beginning in 2019.^{xxviii}



Supporting Quality in Family Child Care

The first years of a child's life are crucial in developing the cognitive, language, and social-emotional skills they need to succeed in school and in life. High-quality child care can make a tremendous difference in these outcomes, especially for children at higher risk of not being ready for school, such as children from families with lower-income or educational levels. This makes the quality of family child care particularly critical, as it is a common—if not the most common—choice of care for children from the most overburdened, under-resourced communities.

While the quality of family child care varies, family child care providers are well-positioned to offer high-quality child care and can be a model for the early childhood field as a whole. Adult-child interactions are a centerpiece of quality child care, and research suggests that consistent and reliable caregiving supports early neurological development.ⁱ In addition to the small group size family child care offers, having the same family child care provider for several years, often from infancy to school, provides an opportunity for a deep relationship between the child and caregiver—and between the caregiver and the child's family.ⁱⁱ

Research has shown that a wide range of initiatives can improve quality in family child care, including training, professional development, consultation and coaching, home visits, and family child care networks.ⁱⁱⁱ In particular, studies have shown that using a “high-touch” approach to supporting providers at every stage of their professional development—including licensing, intensive coaching, workshops, and Child Development Associate



courses—significantly improves child outcomes.^{iv} These strategies are core components of the All Our Kin model, and a recent study found that children in All Our Kin-affiliated family child care performed better than a comparison group (and the national norm) in language, math, and vocabulary. Moreover, 40% of the children in All Our Kin programs were above the national norm on the DECA protective factors, meaning they demonstrate strong independence, an ability to manage their own behavior, and an ability to cultivate relationships with other children.^v

Supporting quality in family child care is about more than quality enhancement initiatives; it is also about ensuring that family child care providers are connected to a professional community of their peers and have stable, sufficient financing and strong business practices, all of which contribute to making quality possible and sustaining those quality programs once they are established so that they can serve children and families for years to come. For more information about funding family child care, see page 11. For more information about supporting family child care providers as businesspeople, see page 24.

In 2019, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation of the Administration for Children and Families, in collaboration with Child Trends, released a seminal publication entitled *A Conceptual Model for Quality in Home-Based Child Care*. The publication offers a vision for quality in home-based child care and outlines a model for getting there that is broken down into three key components: Foundations for Sustainability of Care, Lasting Relationships, and Opportunities for Learning and Development.^{vi} The Conceptual Model is complementary to the strategies presented below, and should be used in conjunction with these strategies to inform policy and practice when it comes to supporting quality in family child care.





Condition: Family child care providers have access to high-quality resources, training, and support, enabling them to provide quality early care and education that lays children’s foundation for success in school and in life.

STATE POLICYMAKERS

There are many state decision-makers who can play an important role in supporting quality in family child care, including state legislators, agency commissioners, Child Care and Development Fund Administrators, directors of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), and directors of professional development systems. The following are recommendations for these state policymakers, and include strategies for professional learning and QRIS, as well as overarching strategies for quality enhancement in family child care.

Regarding professional learning, state leaders can:

- **Include and invest in family child care equitably when designing professional learning opportunities.** When considering state-funded professional development, ensure that family child care is included equitably, meaning that family child care providers are given opportunities to attend high-quality trainings that are specifically tailored to home-based settings. When allocating quality set-aside dollars through CCDF, state policymakers should consider how those dollars can be used to support family child care. For more information about leveraging child care subsidy dollars to strengthen family child care, see page 11.
- **Gather feedback from providers about their needs.** Whenever possible, directors of professional development systems should gather data directly from providers about their needs, and use this data to inform workshops and trainings that will address those needs and to inform the broader networks of



support offered to family child care providers. Data can and should be gathered in a variety of ways to ensure a variety of perspectives by allowing providers to share their input in the way the works best for them; possible feedback mechanisms include online surveys, focus groups, provider forums, texting services, and calls. Accommodations should be made for family child care providers who speak languages other than English so that they can share their input as well.

- **Structure professional development offerings to work for family child care providers’ real lives.** In order to effectively engage family child care providers in professional development, we cannot rely on the same structures used to support center-based providers. We need to structure workshops for family child care providers to take into account and address potential barriers to participation. This means:
 - Trainings are held at night and on weekends when family child care providers are more likely to be able to attend without closing their programs.

Recommendations *continued*

- Trainings are offered in the communities where providers live so that providers who lack access to reliable transportation, or who do not want to travel far after a long workday, are able to attend; where in-person trainings may not be possible, such as in rural communities, virtual supports are offered.
 - Trainings are offered in the languages that providers speak and read.
 - Trainings are offered at low or no cost to reduce financial barriers to participation, and to recognize that family child care providers are not paid by an employer to attend required professional development.
 - Trainings are accompanied by food and are held in trusted, welcoming spaces in the community where providers feel comfortable and able to learn.
 - Trainings leverage, and are offered in partnership with, community resources and institutions such as libraries, museums, community gardens, and community colleges.
- **Offer content that is high-quality, engaging, and tailored to home-based child care settings.** Professional development for family child care providers should acknowledge the home environment, be culturally relevant, and be rooted in best practice in adult learning theory, meaning that it is interactive, fun, and designed for adults who have different learning styles.
 - **Ensure that trainers understand and reflect the family child care community.** Trainers should understand what quality looks like in home-based child care settings, have a deep respect for the work that family child care providers do, and reflect the family child care community being served in terms of race/ethnicity, language, culture, values, and experiences. When possible, provide opportunities for family child care providers themselves to design and lead workshops for their peers.
 - **Support family child care providers in their dual role as educators and entrepreneurs.** When family child care providers are not worried about the sustainability of their business, they are better able to focus on providing the highest quality care for children and families. Professional development offerings for family child care providers should include content on developing strong business practices as a strategy not only for running a sustainable and profitable business, but also for building strong relationships with families. For more information about supporting family child care businesses, see page 24.
 - **Create pathways for competency-based credentialing and continuing education.** Many family child care providers are eager to pursue credentialing and higher education, but they need sufficient time, resources, and support. State policymakers can invest in scholarships for family child care providers to pursue Child Development Associate programs, attend community college, and complete their bachelor's degrees. To make this approach most successful, policymakers can de-



velop, in partnership with family child care providers, competency-based credentialing that values providers' experience, expertise, and past education and training; additionally, policymakers can collaborate with institutions of higher education to ensure that degree programs are structured to work for providers' real lives and recognize a family child care provider's own program as a place of teaching and learning, when that is a component of degree completion. Community colleges can be important partners in this strategy, as they are often an entry point to higher education and often offer coursework that is more flexible and responsive than four-year institutions; Bellwether Education Partners' publication, *It Takes a Community: Leveraging Community College Capacity to Transform the Early Childhood Workforce*, includes strategies and models for how community colleges can best support the education needs of early childhood professionals.^{vii} To be most effective, competency-based credentials and degrees should be linked to higher compensation; for example, tiered reimbursement rates through the child care subsidy should take credentials and degrees into account.

EXAMPLE:

Central New Mexico Community College's (CNMCC) ECE program in Albuquerque, New Mexico is a prime example of how community colleges can meet the needs of the family child care workforce. For example, CNMCC offers student centered-scheduling, which means that courses are offered one night per week or on Saturdays to accommodate child care providers who work on weekdays. In addition, CNMCC offers its associate degree program entirely in Spanish, and Spanish speakers account for almost half of all students enrolled in the ECE program.

Regarding Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, state leaders can:

- **Develop standards that are equivalent, but not the same, for child care centers and family child care homes.** QRIS standards should recognize the strengths of family child care and the unique ways that quality manifests in home-based child care settings. It is important to emphasize that different does not mean less than; rather, there are programmatic differences between center-based and home-based child care that should be recognized and valued. In both cases, a QRIS should prioritize nurturing adult-child interactions, which are the hallmark of quality early care and education and are of particular note in family child care, where small, intimate settings foster strong, individualized relationships.^{viii}
- **Involve family child care providers and parents in the development of standards.** It is important to ensure that standards are developed in partnership with family child care providers and parents. The voices at the table should be representative of the diverse communities in a given state, and should include 1) providers at various stages of their professional development and 2) parents with varying child care needs. We see that parents' priorities often align with what family child care is especially well-positioned to offer, including cultural competency, intimacy, individualized attention,

and strong family engagement, to name a few; these components of quality care should be uplifted in a QRIS.

- **Streamline and align QRIS standards.** Streamlining requirements to build on existing systems reduces the administrative burden on providers and ensures that they can focus on what matters most: providing high-quality early care and education. One option is to align QRIS standards with research-based national accreditation from the National Association for Family Child Care, and to provide financial resources and support to providers as they pursue accreditation.^{ix}
- **Invest in relationship-based, strength-based QRIS implementation and support strategies.** One-on-one coaching that takes a holistic, strength-based approach to quality enhancement and is carried out by staff who have expertise in, and a deep respect for, family child care, child development and adult learning can have a transformative impact on moving providers through QRIS. Whenever possible, it is best practice to separate coaching and monitoring functions. Providing coaching distinct from monitoring facilitates trusting relationships between coaches and providers and creates a safe



space for providers to engage and learn. In addition, coaches should have a low caseload to facilitate the strong relationship-building that is so critical to the success of coaching. For more information about technical assistance from All Our Kin around coaching, see page 44.

- **Ensure that monitoring and rating is not a deterrent.** Family child care providers may be reluctant to participate in a QRIS if they will receive a rating as soon as they enter the system, for fear of publicizing a low rating. QRIS implementors can consider allowing providers to access coaching, resources, and support for a period of time prior to receiving their public rating.
- **Ensure inter-rater reliability.** It can be frustrating and confusing for family child care providers to interact with QRIS staff who offer varying interpretations of the quality standards. When this happens, trust can be broken and family child care providers may disengage from the system. QRIS administrators can implement training and supervision around inter-rater

Recommendations *continued*

reliability to ensure that all providers who engage with the system are being evaluated equitably, and that standards are being interpreted the same way across agency staff. In addition, QRIS raters who work with family child care providers should have expertise in and a deep respect for family child care, believing that is a valuable part of the early care and education system.

- **Eliminate barriers to participation in QRIS.** Family child care providers are often eager to engage in continuous quality improvement, but may be deterred by barriers to participation. State policymakers can reduce those barriers by ensuring that QRIS materials and supports are available in the languages that providers speak and read, that any reliance on technology is accompanied by support, and that funds are available to reduce participation costs for providers. If a QRIS is based on national accreditation, providing resources to cover the cost of accreditation, coupled with coaching to move providers through the accreditation process, has proven to be an effective strategy for increasing quality in family child care.
- **Incentivize family child care participation in QRIS.** There are a variety of ways that states can incentivize family child care participation in QRIS, including: tiered child care subsidy reimbursement rates that provide high levels of payment for providers who are rated highly through QRIS*, scholarships for providers to pursue credentialing and continuing education, and grants that support quality enhancement. In addition, we believe that if family child care providers know that they will be respected and supported by skilled coaches throughout the QRIS process, and that QRIS participation will lead to meaningful parent education and engagement about family child care as a quality option, then they will be more likely to participate.

**Note: Without careful implementation, QRIS can inadvertently perpetuate inequitable systems. While tiered reimbursement rates may incentivize participation in a QRIS, they can also have the effect of giving the highest-quality, highest-resourced programs even more resources, while leaving the under-resourced programs—often serving children who face the greatest barriers to accessing quality care—behind. It is essential that QRIS systems provide sufficient resources at every stage of the process, enabling programs at all levels to move up through the system.*

EXAMPLE:

The BUILD Initiative brief, *Engaging Family Child Care in QRIS*, provides a comprehensive set of strategies, along with concrete examples, for how states can effectively integrate family child care in their QRIS. One example provided is that of Illinois:

“Under its Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, Illinois developed a QRIS specific to center-based programs. This process included standards, an application and rating process, alternative pathways for programs addressing Head Start and accreditation, and a professional development system including support specialists, training, and a registry. After the launch of the center-based QRIS, Illinois stakeholders engaged in another planning process for FCC. Using the same basic structure and process from the center-based QRIS, FCC-specific stakeholders convened, along with child care system representatives, to develop the FCC versions of these QRIS components. FCC has a separate set of standards in the Illinois system that follow the organization and content areas of the center-based standards. Within the FCC standards it is clear to see how FCC programming is addressed and how the evidence for an FCC provider is specific to the tools and resources that exist for FCC.”

As overarching strategies to support continuous quality improvement, state leaders can:

- **Invest in staffed family child care networks.** Staffed family child care networks have paid staff members who provide services and resources to family child care providers. Networks offer providers opportunities to develop a continuing, long-term professional relationship with a network coordinator or a family child care specialist and a place to connect with other providers, creating social networks in an otherwise isolating profession. By investing in staffed family child care networks, state and local policymakers are investing in a proven strategy for enhancing the supply of quality care for infants and toddlers.^x For more information about staffed family child care networks, see page 42.
- **Invest in strength-based, relationship-based educational coaching.** Holistic, strength-based, relationship-based educational coaching is a hallmark of All Our Kin’s model and has been proven to have transformative impacts on family child care quality. Findings from a rigorous external evaluation conducted by leading researcher Toni Porter examining All Our Kin’s impact on program quality indicate statistically significant differences in quality between family child care providers participating in All Our Kin’s educational coaching program and





non-All Our Kin providers. In fact, All Our Kin providers scored more than 50% higher on research-based measures of quality than non-All Our Kin providers, and they scored even higher on areas that matter most to children’s development, including Interactions and Listening and Talking.^{xi} For more information about technical assistance opportunities related to All Our Kin’s educational coaching model, see page 44.

- **Build community among family child care providers.** Many family child care providers report feelings of fatigue, isolation, and job-related stress. Creating opportunities for providers to build relationships with a network of their peers enhances their social support system and may be related to the quality and sustainability of family child care.^{xii} Family child care networks, conferences and professional learning opportunities are some mechanisms for bringing family child care providers together and reducing the isolation of the profession.
- **Create leadership opportunities for family child care providers.** As a core component of a professional pathway for family child care providers, providers should be given opportunities to be leaders and mentors to each other as trainers and/or coaches in professional learning settings, through QRIS, or through peer mentorship programs. Creating these leadership opportunities allows providers to be recognized for their experience and expertise and to share that with others; as practitioners with lived family child care experience, they are especially well-positioned to be impactful mentors and trainers. This is also an important retention strategy, allowing family child care educators to remain in the field over time while having opportunities for career advancement.

LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

At the local level, there are many decision-makers who can play a role in supporting family child care quality. These leaders are at organizations ranging from Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to community colleges to local early childhood councils and workforce development initiatives.

Regarding supporting quality in family child care, local leaders can:

- **Include and invest in family child care equitably when allocating local professional development dollars, and involve family child care in these decisions.** Some communities have local early childhood councils or cradle-to-career initiatives that have funding that can be allocated for professional learning. By including family child care in these groups, and in funding decisions, local policymakers can demonstrate their commitment to investing in family child care as a strategy for supporting the community’s youngest children and their families. For example, if a group is implementing a new literacy initiative, it should create a plan to ensure that family child care providers receive the same books, support, and curriculum as their center and school-based peers.
- **Encourage family child care providers to participate in local education and training efforts.** By allowing and encouraging family child care providers to participate in local education and training offerings for Head Start, child care centers, and preschool programs at elementary schools, local leaders can begin to build relationships with the family child care community and meaningfully integrate home-based child care programs into the local early childhood landscape.

■ **Build community partnerships and leverage local resources.**

Communities are rich with community partners and resources that can collaborate with and support family child care and the children and families it serves. These include museums, libraries, schools, community farms, parks, healthcare providers, workforce development initiatives, universities, and more. For more information about engaging multisector stakeholders in support of family child care, see page 38.

EXAMPLE:

All Our Kin is embedded in local early childhood councils, coalitions, and cradle-to-careers initiatives in every community where we have a major presence. As a result, we have been able to bring a family child care perspective to the table when decisions are being made about how to allocate local early childhood funding and design local professional learning initiatives. By making the case that family child care should be valued and included as an important component of the local early childhood landscape, we have secured local investments in educational coaching, advocated for family child care to be included alongside center-based providers in locally-funded professional learning opportunities, and built strong partnerships with community resources such as museums, libraries, and community farms that have partnered with us to design workshops tailored to family child care. For example, All Our Kin has offered several workshop series for family child care providers in partnership with the Yale University Art Gallery, a free art museum that is local to our New Haven family child care network. Our partnership marks the first time that the Art Gallery co-designed educational programming specifically for family child care educators, offering workshop series such as “Reaching Young Children Through Art.”

In addition, many of the strategies that local policymakers can employ mirror those of state policymakers, but are applied at the local level. These strategies are listed below; for more information, see the “State Policymakers” section above:



- Structure professional development offerings to work for family child care providers’ real lives.
- Offer content that is high-quality, engaging, and tailored to home-based child care settings.
- Ensure that trainers understand and reflect the family child care community.
- Support family child care providers in their dual role as educators and entrepreneurs.
- Create pathways for competency-based credentialing and continuing education.
- Invest in staffed family child care networks.
- Invest in strength-based, relationship-based educational coaching.
- Build community among family child care providers.
- Create leadership opportunities for family child care providers.



Eric Carle
De la cabeza
a los pies

HarperCollins Publishers

Building Sustainable Family Child Care Businesses

Family child care providers are entrepreneurs and economic drivers, underpinning the economy of today, preparing the workforce of tomorrow, and building better lives for themselves and their own families—all while generating significant economic returns in the process. According to a 2019 report commissioned by the Committee for Economic Development, the child care industry, comprised of 75,000 child care centers and 599,000 family child care homes, results in a total economic impact of \$99.3 billion in the U.S. This economic impact is a combination of \$47.2 billion in child care revenue, and an additional \$52.1 billion in spillover industries.ⁱ At the state level, a study conducted by the University of Connecticut's Center for Economic Analysis found that each family child care provider licensed through All Our Kin's Tool Kit Licensing Program in Connecticut allows 4-5 parents to enter and remain in the workforce, and every dollar invested in these licensing supports for family child care providers generates \$15–\$20 for the regional economy.ⁱⁱ

Family child care providers are doing some of the most difficult and important work there is, educating and caring for our youngest children; as a matter of equity, they deserve to earn a living that allows them to thrive. Coupled with strong public investments, ensuring that family child care providers have the resources, tools, and training they need to succeed as businesspeople is one way to achieve this goal. Data indicates that family child care providers who participated in All Our Kin's one-on-one Business Coaching program in 2018 demonstrated an average income increase of \$16,172 to \$31,159—a 93% increase. Business supports help providers gain pride and professionalism, increase their earnings, and improve their quality of life.

When family child care providers feel valued for their professional contributions to early childhood education and are able to earn a fair wage for their labor, they are more likely to identify family child care as their chosen occupation and intend to remain in the field for longer periods of time, building sustainable businesses that serve children and families for years to come. Sustainable family child care businesses are critical for providing continuity of care and promoting a stable and consistent relationship between children and their adult caregiver, which research has shown to be important correlates of quality.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, family child care programs are closing at alarming rates across the country; the number of licensed family child care homes fell by 35% between 2011 and 2017.^{iv} Given this rapid decline, it is more essential now than ever to invest in the financial wellbeing of family child care providers and the sustainability of family child care businesses, allowing providers to continue providing the highest quality care for children at the time when that care matters most.

It is important to note that the business of family child care is inextricably linked to child care funding, and whether funding streams are 1) accessible to family child care providers, 2) accessible to families, and 3) funded at a level that accounts for the high cost of providing quality care. For strategies and recommendations related to funding family child care programs, see page 11.

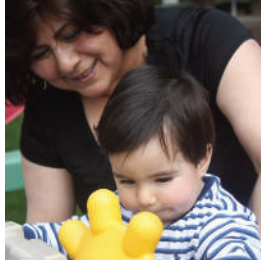
Condition: Family child care providers are recognized and supported in their role as entrepreneurs and economic drivers, and receive the resources they need to sustain their businesses and their own families.

STATE POLICYMAKERS

There are many state decision-makers who can support family child care providers in their dual role as early childhood educators and entrepreneurs, including state legislators, agency commissioners, and Child Care and Development Fund Administrators. The following are recommendations for these state policymakers.

Regarding supporting family child care providers as business owners and economic drivers, state leaders can:

- **Provide training on good business practices.** Often, family child care providers offer care because they are committed to the wellbeing of children and families—not because they planned to be businesspeople. Family child care-specific business training can build providers' capacity as entrepreneurs, helping them improve their finances, enroll new families, and enhance the sustainability of their programs. Training can include topics like marketing a family child care business, creating a budget, calculating Time-Space Percentage, tracking income and expenses, and drafting contracts for use with families. Like all training for family child care providers, business training should be based in adult learning theory and designed to work for providers' real lives; to learn more about the key characteristics of effective professional learning opportunities for family child care providers, see page 17.
- **Incentivize training on good business practices.** In addition to providing training on good business practices, states can implement mechanisms to incentivize and reward providers for completing these trainings. For example, states can measure strong business practices as a component of their QRIS using tools like the Business Administration Scale (BAS) for Family Child Care, and a high rating can be tied to higher child care subsidy payment rates.^v States can also ensure that family child care providers who participate in business trainings can use those hours to fulfill state and federal professional development requirements, such as the annual hours of professional development required for family child care providers to remain eligible for the child care subsidy.



EXAMPLE:

Below is a selection of business resources and trainings for family child care providers:

Tom Copeland: Tom Copeland is considered a national expert on the business of family child care and has been working with family child care providers since 1981. His website, *Tom Copeland's Taking Care of Business* (tomcopelandblog.com), offers a collection of resources for family child care providers, trainers, and tax preparers. In addition, Copeland regularly conducts webinars and presentations across the country on topics ranging from liability insurance to tax deductions to contracts.^{vi}

National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance: The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) provides free resources, training, and support to states and communities around quality enhancement across all early care and education settings, including family child care. The ECQA Center has developed an introductory workshops series on building strong child care business that includes the following topics:

- Budgets, projections, and planning
- Financial reports and internal controls
- Marketing for child care programs
- Staff recruitment and retention

The ECQA Center provides a Training-of-Trainers on their *Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Providers* se-

ries.^{vii} In addition, the ECQA Center brief, *State Policies that Support Business Practices of Child Care Providers*, includes policy examples and strategies from across the country, some of which include family child care.^{viii}

All Our Kin: All Our Kin's proprietary Family Child Care Business Series* focuses on the fundamentals of running a family child care business and is an interactive learning experience specifically designed to meet the unique needs of family child care educators. This series meets 3 hours per week for 10 weeks, providing a total of 30 hours of instruction. The Business Series is currently offered to providers in English and in Spanish. The structure of All Our Kin's Business Series is shown in the chart below.

After completing the Business Series, family child care providers are eligible to participate in All Our Kin's coaching program, through which providers are paired with a Business Coach who works with the provider one-on-one in her home to translate knowledge learned through the Business Series into practice and address areas of challenge and opportunity in the provider's business.

**All Our Kin offers training opportunities for agencies that want to deliver our proprietary Business Series to family child care providers in their states and communities. If you are interested in our Business Train-the-Trainer, see page 44 for more information.*

The All Our Kin Business Series

CLASS NO.	TOPIC	KEY QUESTION(S) PARTICIPANTS WILL EXPLORE
1	Introduction	What do I want to get out of this ten-week experience?
2	Marketing	What is unique about my business, and how do I communicate that to potential customers in order to successfully fill my program?
3	Policy Handbook	How do I create a successful partnership with families? Do my clients have written communication of everything I want them to know about me, my child care program, and my expectations of them?
4	Risk Management and Emergency Preparedness	Have I thought through the risks I face as a business owner? Do I have a written plan to mitigate risk and manage emergencies?
5	Contracts	Does my contract help me have a better relationship with my customers, ensure I have a steady stream of income, and protect my business?
6	Income and Expense Recordkeeping	What are my main streams of income and expenses? How can I get a complete picture of my monthly income and expenses?
7	Time-Space Percentage	What is the purpose of the Time-Space Percentage? How can I calculate my Time-Space Percentage?
8	Budgeting and Financial Management	How can I use a budget to improve my cash flow? What is my savings plan?
9	Taxes and Recordkeeping	What do I need to prepare to be ready for tax season?
10	Participant Presentations and Graduation	What have I learned during this course, and how will it affect my business practices moving forward?

Recommendations *continued*

- **Invest in benefits for family child care providers.** An important aspect of attracting and retaining the family child care workforce is making the profession an appealing option. That means that family child care providers have access to benefits packages that are comparable to other professions and include health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans.
- **Establish a Shared Services Alliance.** A Shared Services Alliance can strengthen family child care businesses by allowing multiple family child care providers to share staff, information, and resources, thereby realizing efficiencies and cost savings. For example, a Shared Services Alliance could include online financial management and enrollment tools, tax preparation services, bulk purchasing options, and a substitute pool, to name a few. Opportunities Exchange provides information, resources, and technical assistance related to designing and implementing a Shared Services Alliance.^{ix}
- **Provide access to financial resources.** Family child care providers often do not have significant savings or access to capital, but there are a variety of business-related reasons why they may need funds, including:
 - To pay for continuing education
 - To attend a conference
 - To hire an accountant
 - To purchase a computer
 - To complete program renovations
 - To bridge the gap while waiting for subsidy approval
 - To purchase educational materials
 - To pay background check fees

States can create family child care-specific funding opportunities including scholarships, loans, and grants to help address providers' financial needs. For more information about facilities funding, see page 35.

EXAMPLE:

All Our Kin offers a Zero-Interest Loan Program to the family child care providers in our network for projects that will improve the quality and/or profitability of family child care businesses. Examples of projects that have been funded include purchasing child-sized furniture, installing fencing in a backyard, and purchasing a computer to manage business information. Loans are typically no more than \$2,000 for first time applicants and \$5,000 for applicants who have successfully paid off a previous loan. Because the loans are zero-interest, the amount awarded is the same as the amount repaid. We work with family child care providers to create individualized repayment plans that work for them, allowing up to three years for full loan repayment. Our relationship-based approach has translated to a high repayment rate; our loan fund has not needed to be replenished since its establishment.

- **Invest in staffed family child care networks.** Staffed family child care networks provide training and support to family child care providers in their communities. Research has shown that in addition to increasing the supply and quality of family

child care in the communities they serve, staffed family child care networks that provide business training, like All Our Kin, have a positive effect on earnings, educational attainment, and financial sustainability.* For more information about staffed family child care networks, see page 42.

LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

At the local level, there are many decision-makers who can play a role in building sustainable family child care businesses, including mayors, county executives, city and county councils, chambers of commerce, economic development offices, "women in business" councils, and workforce boards, among other stakeholders. Many of the strategies that local policymakers can employ mirror those of state policymakers, but are applied at the local level.

Regarding supporting family child care providers as business owners and economic drivers, local leaders can:

- **Use sources of workforce support and economic development to invest in family child care businesses.** Recognizing that family child care providers are business owners and important economic drivers in a community, ensure they are eligible for and aware of local economic development opportunities, including access to funding for ongoing professional and educational development and zero or low-interest loans or grants for projects that will help improve the quality and/or profitability of their family child care businesses.
- **Include business training for family child care in local early childhood funding initiatives.** Some communities have local early childhood councils or cradle-to-career initiatives that have funding that can be allocated for professional learning. Dedicating some of these dollars to business training for family child care providers demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that a community's family child care businesses are strong and sustainable, serving children and families for years to come.
- **Remove local barriers to family child care businesses.** There are a variety of local barriers that can inhibit family child care providers' ability to start, maintain, or expand their child care businesses. These barriers include, but are not limited to, local business taxes, limitations on providers' ability to market their businesses (for example, prohibiting signs), and housing and zoning laws that place undue burdens on family child care homes. For more information about how housing and zoning policies can be designed to support, rather than inhibit, family child care, see page 35.

In addition, many of the strategies that local policymakers can employ mirror those of state policymakers, but are applied at the local level. These strategies are listed below; for more information, see the "State Policymakers" section above:

- **Provide training on good business practices.**
- **Establish a Shared Services Alliance.**
- **Provide access to financial resources.**
- **Invest in staffed family child care networks.**



Family Child Care Licensing

Licensure (or, in some states, registration) is an entry point into the profession of family child care and plays an important role on a pathway of continuous quality improvement.ⁱ In addition, licensing is often required in order for family child care providers to access resources and to participate in key services and programming, including QRIS, professional learning opportunities, and CACFP. As such, states should strive to reduce barriers to family child care licensure and encourage participation in the licensing system, thereby increasing the supply of quality child care for children and families.

Family child care licensing is about more than whether or not regulations exist. It is about the content of those regulations, the time and resources dedicated to partnering with family child care providers in meetings those regulations, and the way those regulations are enforced. Experience and research indicate that an equitable, strength-based, and accessible approach is tied to the success of family child care licensure. It is this approach that forms the foundation of All Our Kin's work, including our Tool Kit Licensing Program, through which we provide materials, mentorship and support to help unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor caregivers become licensed family child care providers. And while the number of licensed family child care programs is declining rapidly across the country, our approach has proven that the right supports can reverse this trend:

Between 2000 and 2011, Connecticut lost 34% of its licensed family child care programs. During that same period, the number of licensed family child care programs in New Haven increased by 74%, thanks to the work of All Our Kin.

EXAMPLE:

Through the Tool Kit Licensing Program, a collaboration with the Connecticut Children's Museum, All Our Kin provides materials, mentorship and support to unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor caregivers as they navigate the state licensing process. Prospective family child care providers are assigned to a Tool Kit Coordinator who acts like a caseworker, helping fill out paperwork, connecting the prospective providers to trainings and financial resources, conducting a pre-inspection, and communicating with the state about the status of clients' licensing applications. This process is guided by four "Tool Kits"—boxes of incentives that break the state licensing process down into digestible steps and include items like application materials, health and safety supplies, vouchers for first aid training, and curriculum materials such as educational toys and high-quality children's books. More information can be found at www.allourkin.org/tool-kit-licensing-program.

When done well, family child care licensure can be a powerful supply and quality-building tool, ensuring that the children and families that face the greatest barriers to accessing care—those with infants and toddlers, those who work nontraditional hours, and those that lack access to reliable transportation, to name a few—have access to state-regulated child care options in their

communities that meet important health and safety standards. According to the University of Connecticut's Center for Economic Analysis, every Connecticut family child care provider licensed with the support of All Our Kin allows 4-5 parents to enter and remain in the workforce knowing that their children are safe, loved, and learning.ⁱⁱ

Note: The focus of this publication is on strategies for the licensed home-based child care population. That said, we recognize that unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care will always be an important part of a comprehensive child care system that meets the needs of all families. In the future, we hope to have a companion guide that will focus on strategies for supporting health and safety in FFN settings.

Condition: Family child care providers are supported in meeting licensing regulations that recognize their role as early childhood professionals, make sense in home-based settings, and are the first step on a pathway of quality.

STATE POLICYMAKERS

The following are recommendations for state leaders that have the power to influence licensing standards, which may include legislators, agency commissioners, licensing directors, and CCDF administrators. They are broken down into three categories: 1) developing and revising licensing regulations, 2) implementing and enforcing regulations, and 3) encouraging and incentivizing participation in a licensed family child care system.

Regarding developing and revising family child care licensing regulations, state policymakers can:

- **Develop regulations that are clear, accessible, and make sense in home-based child care settings.** Family child care licensing regulations should be specific enough that they do not leave room for differing interpretations or misinterpretation, should be readily available online and in the languages that providers read and speak, and should make sense for the unique programmatic aspects of family child care homes, including consideration of mixed age groups and the fact that the provider is often the sole caregiver in the program.
- **Ensure that regulations specifically address care during nontraditional hours.** In today's labor market, more than half of all low-income children under the age of six are in households in which all primary caregivers work at least some nontraditional hours, and parents who work nontraditional hours disproportionately rely on home-based child care options to meet their child care needs.ⁱⁱⁱ However, there is often a lot of confusion for family child care providers surrounding licensing regulations for nontraditional hour care. In 2017, All Our Kin conducted a phone survey of our family child care network in Connecticut to better understand the supply of nontraditional hour care in the state. Of the family child care providers who responded, 46% indicated that they already offer nontraditional hour care; an additional 42% were interested in offering nontraditional hour care, but noted that confusion surrounding regulation of after-hours care—especially overnight care—posed a barrier to entering the market. By codifying regula-



tions and best practices for nontraditional hour care, and communicating this information to providers in the ways they best receive information, states can better support family child care providers in feeling confident about expanding their hours.^{iv}

- **Involve family child care providers and parents when developing and revising regulations.** The voices at the table should be representative of the diverse communities in a given state, and should include 1) providers at various stages of their professional development and 2) parents with varying child care needs.
- **Streamline and align regulations.** To avoid unnecessary confusion and frustration, and reduce the administrative burden on family child care providers, states should, to the greatest extent possible, streamline and align licensing regulations with regulations from other programs in which family child care providers might participate, such as the child care subsidy program, CACFP, and Head Start. Doing so ensures that family child care providers can operate under a clear set of rules and expectations, allowing them to focus on providing the highest quality care for children and families.

Regarding implementing and enforcing family child care licensing regulations, state policymakers can:

- **Shift from monitoring and compliance to continuous quality improvement.** In 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture released a joint statement calling for states to shift away from a compliance perspective and move towards a perspective of continuous quality improvement in early childhood education.^v New research has shown that investing in a holistic, strength-based, relationship-based approach to supporting quality in family child care can significantly reduce health and safety violations, even in the absence of punitive, compliance-based monitoring.^{vi} Supplementing monitoring with holistic support from staff members with expertise in, and a deep respect for, family child care creates a safe space for providers to engage and

learn, and may help build trust between family child care providers and state licensing systems.

EXAMPLE:

In 2017, researchers from the Yale Medical School and the Yale School of Nursing found that participation in All Our Kin’s staffed Family Child Care Network is associated with increased health and safety regulatory compliance in family child care programs. The research team analyzed state-level public data on all licensed family child care programs in Connecticut open at least one year to determine whether participation in a staffed family child care network is associated with increased health and safety compliance in family child care programs. This data included the quantity and types of health and safety violations in family child care homes during annual unannounced inspections as well as All Our Kin Network participation data. The data showed that family child care programs affiliated with the All Our Kin Network had significantly fewer violations overall, and fewer types of violations, than non-Network family child care programs that have been licensed for a similar length of time and are in areas with similar median income. These findings indicate that membership in a family child care network with a strength-based, holistic approach to supporting quality—versus a punitive, compliance-based approach—makes a significant difference in the health and safety of home-based child care programs. By investing in staffed family child care networks similar to All Our Kin, policymakers can make significant progress towards increasing the supply of safe, quality care.

For more information, see All Our Kin’s policy brief: A Strength-Based Approach: Increasing Health and Safety in Family Child Care.

- **Ensure inter-rater reliability.** It can be frustrating and confusing for family child care providers to interact with licensing inspectors who offer varying interpretations of the regulations. When this happens, trust can be broken and family child care providers may disengage from the regulated child care system. States can implement training and supervision around inter-rater reliability to ensure that all providers who engage with the system are being evaluated equitably, and that regulations are being interpreted the same way across licensing staff. In addition, licensing inspectors who work with family child care providers should have expertise in and a deep respect for family child care, believing that is a valuable part of the early care and education system.

Regarding encouraging and incentivizing participation in a licensed family child care system, state policymakers can:

- **Identify and eliminate barriers to licensure.** Many caregivers and prospective caregivers are eager to pursue licensure, but may be deterred by barriers to participation. These barriers include expensive background check fees, paperwork that is complicated, inaccessible, and unavailable in the

“Every time the licensing inspector comes to my home, she always finds a reason to cite me. But never once has she said, ‘Wow, you have such a beautiful program!’ or ‘I really like your dramatic play area’ or ‘I admire the way you handled that tough interaction.’ For once, I want her to walk into my program and show that she really values the work that I do.”

– A family child care provider who has been in business for more than 30 years

Recommendations *continued*

languages that providers read and speak, long wait times between when paperwork is submitted and when an application is approved, and housing stock that cannot meet family child care licensing requirements, with limited access to funding to remedy the situation. By addressing these barriers, states can create a smoother pathway to licensure for prospective family child care providers.

EXAMPLE:

The 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block grant included new federal background check rules, making background checks for child care providers more comprehensive and requiring that these comprehensive background checks be conducted at least every five years. These new requirements are important to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, but they also place a particular financial burden on family child care providers who need to pay for background checks not only for themselves, but for their adult household members as well. In Connecticut, where background check fees are \$88.25 per person as of January 2019, a family child care provider who lives with her spouse, her teenage son, and an elderly parent will pay \$353 in background checks fees. This financial burden may be insurmountable for some family child care providers, who are often not fairly compensated for their work and do not have significant, if any, savings on hand to pay for these fees.

In the spring of 2019, Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood, the state agency responsible for administering early childhood programs and services, announced that it would help ease this financial burden by covering background check fees for providers and household members through the end of the year. This has provided substantial relief to family child care providers as they seek to come into compliance with the new federal rules. States can consider creating funds to cover background check fees and other expenses related to the licensing process.

- **Host trainings on the rights and responsibilities of family child care providers.** When family child care providers are empowered with the right information and tools, they are more likely to succeed in the licensing system. States can develop guidebooks and trainings that outline the key components of the licensing regulations, provide real-life examples of how the regulations work in practice, and share information about providers' rights when interacting with licensing inspectors and parents.
- **Invest in and leverage staffed family child care networks.** In order to retain family child care providers after they are licensed, it is important that they have access to a comprehensive system of support and a professional community of their peers. Staffed family child care networks provide services and resources to family child care providers and often have deep, trusting relationships with caregivers and communities that can be leveraged to recruit and retain licensed family child care providers and to increase health and safety in family child care through targeted coaching training, and support. For more information about staffed family child care networks, see page 42.

LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

Family child care licensing decisions are typically made at the state level. However, there are several strategies that local policymakers can implement around encouraging and incentivizing participation in a licensed family child care system. In particular, local policymakers can provide financial resources for family child care providers in their communities to meet state licensing requirements, and can invest in organizations like staffed family child care networks that can help move providers through the licensing process and offer a system of support once providers obtain licensure. To learn more, please see the "State Policymakers" section above.

- **Offer regular opportunities for family child care representatives and licensing staff to convene.** It is important to build open, transparent lines of communication between licensing inspectors and family child care providers, fostering a spirit of collaboration that can make the licensing process run more smoothly on both ends. For example, states can offer to host annual meetings during which family child care providers and licensing inspectors share their pain points with the licensing system and work together towards solutions.



Soy un mono
y saludo con los brazos.
(Puedes hacerlo
tu tambien!)

¡Claro que si!



Housing, Zoning and Family Child Care

There are unique benefits inherent in the home-based nature of family child care businesses beyond the intimate, family-like settings:

- Family child care providers often take special care to invest in their homes and in their communities as it is essential to the success of their business, allowing them to attract families to their program and to meet state health and safety standards, where applicable.
- Family child care providers often act as the neighborhood watch, as they are home during the day and are dedicated to ensuring the safety of the children in their care.
- Family child care providers' businesses allow them to earn the wages necessary to be stable tenants or homeowners while providing a valuable service to the neighborhood and supporting children, families, and the economy.

These unique benefits should incentivize states and communities to protect and promote family child care by eliminating barriers to starting, maintaining, and expanding home-based child care businesses.

However, too often, restrictions imposed by zoning laws, landlords, and residential associations force child care providers to operate unregulated child care businesses or dissuade them from providing care altogether. Common housing and zoning barriers faced by family child care providers across the country include, but are not limited to:

- Zoning ordinances that require family child care providers to apply to local authorities for special permits or special exceptions, which are routinely denied
- Special permit and special exception applications that often force providers to pay fees, appear at hearings, and hire a lawyer
- Excessive parking requirements for family child care programs that are difficult or impossible to meet
- Landlords and public housing authorities that insist on leases that restrict child care businesses, or initially agree to allow the operation of a child care business and then change their mind (sometimes after a lease is signed, and even after the program has already started operating)
- Homeowner associations and condominium associations that use restrictive covenants to limit the use of property for family child care, even when the provider owns the residence
- Landlords that encourage child care providers to operate outside the bounds of state regulation to avoid, for example, lead testing
- Poor quality housing stock that cannot meet family child care licensing requirements, with limited access to funding to remedy the situation

Family child care providers often invest significant time and money before learning that they cannot operate a child care business in their residence, despite meeting all state licensing requirements. Every time a current or prospective family child care provider faces a housing or zoning related barrier to operating their child care business, a community's supply of high-quality, regulated child care is diminished. Luckily, there are steps that both state and local leaders can take to reduce these barriers and incentivize family child care businesses.

STORY FROM THE FIELD:

One All Our Kin provider in southern Connecticut, Camila Madera*, faced eviction proceedings when her landlord arbitrarily decided to stop allowing her to run a child care business in her rental apartment. Camila operated a licensed family child care in her apartment, and understood that she had her landlord's express permission to operate the child care business in the apartment before signing the lease. She moved to this particular town in order to open a family child care business and serve a Spanish-speaking community. Over the course of several years, Camila lived in three different apartments owned by the landlord, moving to a larger unit in order to expand her child care business, and with each move, she understood that she would be allowed to continue operating. Camila depended on the child care business as her sole source of income, and relied on the landlord's promises as she developed relationships with local clients and invested in her business, paying to construct a fenced outdoor play area in the yard of the apartment complex. The landlord ultimately sought to evict Camila from her apartment because of her family child care business, despite the years of implicitly approving the business, even though the lease contained no prohibition on operating an in-home child care, and there was no indication that the child care had adverse impacts on any neighbors. This story highlights the particular vulnerability of family child care providers who are tenants in rental housing, where not only their businesses but their stable home life, and the lives of the children and families who depend on their care, may be upended at the whim of their landlord.¹

**Name has been changed.*

Condition: Family child care providers have access to safe, affordable housing where they can operate quality, sustainable home-based child care businesses.

STATE POLICYMAKERS

Although many state leaders can be champions for housing and zoning laws that protect and promote family child care, the most notable policymakers who have power to implement these policies are state legislators and leadership at the state agency responsible for overseeing housing. The following are recommendations that these state policymakers could consider.



Regarding housing and zoning policies as they relate to family child care, state leaders can:

■ **Promote affordable housing and homeownership initiatives.** Many family child care providers across the country face a crisis when it comes to finding affordable housing that is safe, permits the operation of a family child care business, and is accessible to the families that need care. Likewise, many family child care providers, particularly in urban areas with a high percentage of rental housing, face barriers to homeownership, leaving them and their businesses vulnerable to the decisions of their landlord. State legislation and/or agency policies that promote affordable housing and homeownership—particularly if those policies specifically call out the benefits to family child care providers and the children, families, and communities they serve—can be an important mechanism for increasing the supply of regulated family child care in the areas where it is needed most while helping family child care providers themselves build sustainable businesses and generational wealth. For example, states can consider a program that would help family child care providers finance their homes or provide down payments on homes that would be wonderful spaces for children to learn and grow. These programs could be targeted to child care deserts, and areas where there is a significant need for infant/toddler care and nontraditional hour care. In addition, states can conduct targeted outreach to family child care providers to inform them about existing programs for which they may be eligible.

- **Ensure that landlords and residential associations do not ban family child care businesses.** Even when fully licensed by the state and approved by the municipality, child care providers' businesses often operate at the whim of others. Landlords, condominium associations, and homeowner associations hold undue power and influence over providers' ability to run child care businesses. Because providers offer child care from their homes, they frequently must appease landlords and residential associations—a burden other businesses do not face. State legislators can enact legislative solutions that offer relief to family child care providers by prohibiting landlords and residential associations from banning family child care businesses, while simultaneously addressing the concerns of landlords and residential associations by, for example, requiring family child care homes to have liability insurance and allowing landlords and associations to be named as additional insured parties.
- **Ensure that municipal or regional zoning regulations do not treat family child care businesses differently from residential dwellings, including through the use of special permitting processes.** There are many ways in which local zoning laws can impose barriers on family child care businesses. For example, they might ban family child care outright, require special permits for family child care homes (which are often cost prohibitive or require a number of supporting documents), impose excessive off-street parking

Recommendations *continued*

requirements, require that the family child care provider reside on the premises, or limit the hours of operation for a family child care business. State legislators can consider preempting these local zoning barriers—which can vary greatly across municipalities and regions, causing confusion for family child care providers—by enacting legislation that prohibits local zoning regulations from 1) prohibiting the operation of family child care businesses in residential zones, and 2) treating any family child care home differently than single or multifamily dwellings. In this way, family child care businesses that meet state licensing requirements are not deterred by local zoning regulations.



EXAMPLE:

California has led the nation in offering a clear legislative endorsement of in-home child care businesses since the 1990s, when the state faced a crisis as child care costs spiked and providers struggled to open businesses even with state approval. The legislature amended the family child care laws in 1996 to read: “[i]t is the intent of the Legislature that family day care homes for children should be situated in normal residential surroundings so as to give children the home environment which is conducive to healthy and safe development.” California Health and Safety Code Section 1597.40 goes on to state, “[t]he Legislature declares this policy to be of statewide concern [...] and to prohibit any restrictions” on residences that concern family and group child care.ⁱⁱ

In 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed the strongest housing and zoning protections for family child care businesses in the country into law. Senate Bill 234, the “Keeping Kids Close to Home Act,” will take effect on January 1, 2020, and significantly reduces housing and zoning barriers to starting, maintaining, and expanding family child care businesses.

According to the Child Care Law Center, which has worked on this issue for decades and championed the bill, “SB 234 makes clear that:

- A city or county government cannot require you to get a zoning permit or business license for your large or small family child care home. This applies whether or not you live in an incorporated or unincorporated area.
- All family child care homes are allowed in
 - Single-family homes
 - Apartments
 - Condominiums
 - Townhomes
 - Duplexes
 - All other multi-family buildings.

You cannot be stopped from opening or running a family child care home just because you live in one of these types of buildings.
- Landlords cannot refuse to rent to you or cannot evict you only because you have a family child care home (small or large).
- You can file a complaint with the California Department of Fair Employment & Housing. You can also sue whoever is violating your rights as a family child care home provider under the new law.ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Invest in and expand access to services, such as lead testing and abatement, that might act as barriers to family child care licensure.** Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in old residences present a significant health hazard to young children, and as such, can act as a barrier to family child care licensure. Lead abatement is expensive, often costing thousands of dollars for even a small residence. Yet, federal funding for lead abatement has declined significantly over the past decades, and many prospective family child care



providers find themselves without the necessary resources when they learn that there is lead on the property. In the absence of sufficient federal funds, state legislators can and should invest in and expand access to lead testing and abatement services, with a particular focus on areas where the age of the housing stock and a dearth in the supply of licensed child care align. Legislators could even consider a fund specifically for lead testing and abatement services in family child care homes.

- **Dedicate facilities funding for the purpose of renovations that will allow for the operation of safe, quality family child care programs.** The physical infrastructure of child care settings plays an important role in facilitating the healthy growth and development of young children. Yet, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General found that 96% of child care programs receiving child care subsidy dollars had one or more potentially hazardous conditions and noncompliance with state health and safety requirements.^{iv} States can and should invest in the infrastructure of family child care businesses and other early learning facilities in the same way as they do K–12 education facilities. For a comprehensive overview of the need for facilities funding, potential sources of funding, and models from states and communities across the country, see the Bipartisan Policy Center’s issue brief: *From the Ground Up: Improving Child Care and Early Learning Facilities*.^v

EXAMPLE:

The Bipartisan Policy Center’s issue brief, *From the Ground Up: Improving Child Care and Early Learning Facilities*, contains many examples of state and local models that policymakers can use to invest in early learning facilities. One example provided is that of Maryland:

“The Family Child Care Provider Grant Program, administered by Maryland’s Department of Education, Division of Early Learning, provides support to registered family child care providers by offsetting some of the costs of opening a child care program. This program reimburses up to \$500 in expenses that a provider may incur to achieve or maintain compliance with family child care regulations, including small household repairs in approved child care areas and expenses related to local water, sewer, fire, and health requirements. To be eligible, a provider’s annual income must not exceed 60 percent of Maryland’s current state median income for the applicant’s family size.”^{vi}

LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

At the local level, there are many decision makers who can play a role in strengthening housing and zoning policies as they relate to family child care, including city and county councils, local zoning boards, and public housing authorities.

Regarding housing and zoning policies as they relate to family child care, local leaders can:

- **Educate landlords and residential associations about family child care.** Often, it is a lack of information and understanding, rather than a firm stance against family child care, that results in an unwillingness on behalf of landlords and residential

Recommendations *continued*

associations to permit the operation of family child care businesses. Landlords and residential associations may have questions about what family child care is, how it is regulated, what type of liability insurance is available, and how family child care benefits the community. Answering these questions can be an important first step towards getting landlords and associations comfortable with family child care, and local government can play a role. For example, when a prospective landlord applies for a housing rental license, they can be given materials to review about family child care businesses. See Appendix C for a sample “Landlord FAQ” document about family child care. This document was created by All Our Kin and is Connecticut-specific, but could be adapted for use in states and localities across the country.

- **Promote family child care businesses in public housing.** Some public housing authorities prohibit the operation of family child care businesses in subsidized housing units, despite the fact they have a clear interest in promoting public housing residents’ participation in the workforce. When a public housing authority permits a resident to operate a family child care business, they are not only ensuring a stable income for that resident, but also creating an affordable, on-site

child care option for other public housing residents who can then pursue employment or educational opportunities knowing that their children are in safe hands. Therefore, as a matter of policy, public housing authorities should allow and encourage family child care in affordable housing units.

In addition, many of the strategies that local policymakers can consider mirror those of state policymakers, but are applied at the local level. These strategies are listed below; for more information, see the “State Policymakers” section above:

- **Promote affordable housing and homeownership initiatives.**
- **Prohibit landlords and residential associations from banning family child care businesses.**
- **Prohibit municipal or regional zoning regulations from treating family child care businesses differently from residential dwellings, including through the use of special permitting processes.**
- **Invest in and expand access to services, such as lead testing and abatement, that might act as barriers to family child care licensure.**
- **Dedicate facilities funding for the purpose of renovations that will allow for the operation of safe, quality family child care programs.**





Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems in Support of Family Child Care

Family child care providers build deep and reciprocal relationships with parents and families. Caring for children several hours a day, from the very earliest years, family child care providers are often seen as trusted advisors, and provide guidance on children's health and development, effective parenting strategies, community resources, and more.ⁱ

As a result of the fact that family child care providers spend substantial amounts of time with the children in their care, and build strong relationships with families, some parents report that they are more likely to trust the advice of their child care provider than their pediatrician.ⁱⁱ And because the most overburdened, under-resourced families are often in home-based child care settings, family child providers can be a pivotal connection between families and community resources, public benefits, and essential services.

Research suggests that connection to and engagement with community resources are correlates of quality in family child care, facilitating the usage of direct services like developmental screenings and enhancing social capital.^{iv} In order to create comprehensive systems of support that promote wellbeing and prosperity for all children and families, it is important to include family child care providers as full participants, providing resources, information, and avenues for collaborative partnerships. Together, multisector stakeholders can ensure that family child care providers are supported in their vital work and that the needs of families in the community are being met.

Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS–CCP) offer an effective model for bringing stakeholders across systems together in partnership with family child care providers, children, and families to provide key wraparound services. Children enrolled in EHS–CCP receive ongoing support for their health and wellbeing as well as their social, behavioral, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. In addition to high-quality, full-time child care services, families receive assistance in obtaining physical, mental, and oral health services for their children as well as housing, food, and income referrals. Family child care providers receive regular supportive visits from health and educational coaches, access to quality enhancement funds and materials for their child care environment, and professional development opportunities.^v You can learn more about EHS–CCP in the Bipartisan Policy Center's 2019 report *Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships: Spotlighting Early Successes Across America*.^{vi}

"She's like my main resource person, besides me going to the doctors and they telling me what she should be doing. I'm like, "You're not even with her every day." ... So I take what [my child care provider] says, I take that there to heart... I'm glad she's there and I'm glad I picked that daycare."

– A parent describing how she views her family child care provider versus her daughter's healthcare providerⁱⁱⁱ

Condition: Key multi-sector stakeholders partner with family child care providers to offer accessible supports, services, and information to children and families.

STATE AND LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

There are many state and local policymakers who can play a role in fostering connections between family child care and multisector stakeholders, including state legislators, leadership at state agencies, community services providers, mayors, boards of education, and leaders of healthcare systems, to name a few. The following are recommendations for this diverse group of leaders.

Regarding engaging stakeholders across systems in support of family child care, state and local leaders can:

- **Build robust connections between family child care providers and health care providers, mental health providers, and early intervention agencies.** As described above, parents often trust their child care provider more than their pediatrician, making family child care providers key actors in promoting children's physical and mental health. Strong relationships between family child care providers and health care providers, mental health providers, and early intervention agencies are crucial to ensure that family child care providers can connect children and families to information and resources such as health insurance, food assistance and nutrition programs, home visiting programs, and infant mental health support. In addition, family child care providers can benefit from many of these resources themselves, as they often report feelings of isolation, fatigue, and job-related stress that are so common in caregiving professions.^{vii}
- **Invest in nurse consultants.** Nurse consultants are a tremendous resource for both family child care providers and families, answering questions about children's health and development and playing an integral role in improving the safety of the children's physical environment. Additionally, nurse consultants are able to connect children and families to other agencies and resources, such as nutrition consultants and food assistance, mental health consultants, and disabilities consultants.^{viii}
- **Invest in mental health services and trainings that meet the needs of family child care providers.** Family child care providers often express the need for mental health supports for the children and families in their care and for themselves. A 2005 study conducted by Dr. Walter Gilliam of the Yale Child Study Center found that access to early childhood mental health consultation significantly reduced challenging behavior and increased social skills in young children, and helped parents find successful strategies for managing problem behaviors.^{ix} In addition, it also reduced the rate of turnover among early care and education providers.^x Pro-

moting providers' self-health and wellness has been shown to be related to quality and child outcomes, and is likely related to workforce retention; when child care providers are well, they are better able to be present and responsive to the needs of the children in their care.^{xi}

- **Connect family child care providers to developmental screening tools and early intervention services.** Family child care providers can use developmental screening tools and services as a parent engagement strategy, partnering with families to understand and support their child's development. According to a study conducted by the University of Connecticut's Center for Economic Analysis, "Sixty-three percent of [All Our Kin] family child care providers indicated that they have helped families make referrals to the *Birth to Three* program, a program that assists and strengthens the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities. Over 50 percent of providers indicated that they have given information regarding other types of community service resources. Many providers also share information and materials on child development with parents."^{xii}

EXAMPLE:

The Norwalk/Child Development Infoline (CDI) Early Childhood Initiative began in 2013 with the goal of establishing a city-wide system to ensure that Norwalk children enter kindergarten ready to learn by empowering families to understand and promote their child's development through the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The initiative is a state-local partnership comprised of a variety of multi-sector stakeholders, including the City of Norwalk, Norwalk Public Schools, Norwalk Hospital, Norwalk Public Library, All Our Kin, and Norwalk Community College, to name a few. All Our Kin brings the family child care perspective to the partnership, and has been piloting strategies to bring the ASQ into family child care programs as a parent engagement tool. Strategies thus far have included ASQ trainings, incorporating ASQ information in family enrollment packets, and piloting the Sparkler app.

The Initiative's Three Year Impact Report, published in 2016, details promising outcomes, including a significant increase in ASQ referrals and a majority of participating parents reporting that they have a better understanding of their child's development and the services available to them to support that development.^{xiii}

"One of my EHS families faced a challenging situation and I reached out to the Family Advocate, she took care of the situation. She helps me with a lot of things— attendance, a stable and safe family environment. They do a lot to make sure these kids...have what they need, and are connected to services in the community."

—An Early Head Start family child care provider describing the benefits of EHS-CCP

- **Build connections between family child care programs and the K-12 system.** A relationship between family child care providers and school systems can facilitate a smoother transition between child care and elementary school. Family child care providers can help to prepare both children and families for the transition to kindergarten, and kindergarten teachers can benefit from the knowledge and insights that family child care providers can share about incoming students. Additionally, many children that need full-day care participate in formal preschool or elementary school programming and family child care simultaneously, with family child care providers supplying crucial before and after school care, summer care and holiday care, and even overnight care. Providing transportation between family child care and schools is a critical strategy to reduce transportation burdens on working families and ensure that more children spend before and after school time in high-quality educational settings.

EXAMPLE:

When All Our Kin first expanded to Bridgeport, CT, the city school buses did not pick up and drop off children from family child care programs. This meant that although family child care providers could care for up to three before and after school children per state licensing regulations, very few working families in Bridgeport were able to access family child care for their school age children. By collaborating with the mayor's office, we were able to change the school bus policy to include family child care programs in the bus routes, drastically changing families' access to family child care as a before and after school option for their children.

- **Connect family child care providers to community partners and local resources.** Communities are rich with community partners and resources that can collaborate with and support family child care and the children and families it serves. These include museums, libraries, schools, community farms, parks, healthcare providers, workforce development initiatives, and colleges and universities, all of which can act as a source of information, training, and support for family child care. For example, museums can be field trip sites for family child care programs, and local community colleges can offer CDA classes that work for providers' schedules.

"I don't look at it like it's daycare. She's kin—All Our Kin. She's kin to me"

— A parent describing her family child care provider

EXAMPLE:

All Our Kin's organic Garden Project is a two-year enrichment opportunity designed to enhance family child care programs' outdoor curriculum, promote healthy eating, and encourage outdoor exercise for very young children. Garden Project providers work with All Our Kin staff to create vegetable gardens, using raised garden beds if they have sufficient outdoor space to do so, or container gardens if space is limited. Providers receive regular visits from an outdoor educator who helps them learn how to garden and use the outdoors as an educational tool. As a result, children gain valuable nature-based learning experiences, and fresh, organic fruits and vegetables are introduced into their diets.

The impact of the Garden Project on family child care programs, and the children and families they serve, is long lasting. Years after participation in the Garden Project, Gamila, a family child care educator in West Haven, continues to incorporate a strong garden curriculum in her program. Every year, she engages the families in her program, assigning them a garden plot and allowing them to choose the types of seeds they would like to plant. Parents and their children garden together, doing the watering and harvesting during drop-off and pick-up times. The importance of the garden extends beyond the experience for the children: the garden builds community, it facilitates a two-generation learning experience, and it provides an additional food source for families.

The Garden Project was born out of a partnership with Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, and Environmental Education Center in New Haven. All Our Kin contracted with Common Ground to begin building small gardens, and creating outdoor curricula, with family child care providers who had limited outdoor space. Common Ground continues to provide resources and training to family child care providers in All Our Kin's network; most notably, All Our Kin and Common Ground co-host the annual "Summer Farm and Garden Institute," a bilingual outdoor learning opportunity that is open to family child care providers and other members of the community.

Today, the Garden Project also supports providers in Bridgeport in partnership with Reservoir Community Farm, and in Stamford, with the support of Fairgate Farm. Recently, All Our Kin partnered with the Connecticut Department of Public Health to implement a pilot of the "Farm to Early Care and Education" section of Go NAPSACC, a self-driven goal-setting and improvement program that can be tailored to family child care settings and is focused on incorporating local food into early childhood programs. Family child care providers who participated in the pilot received a stipend from the Department of Public Health that can be used to help implement the action plans they created through the "Farm to Early Care and Education" pilot program—an exciting use of public dollars to support nature and nutrition-based education in family child care.

- **Ensure that employers are aware of, and connect their employees to, local child care options that meet their needs, including family child care programs.** Today, the majority of children under the age of six have all parents in the workforce. However, lack of access to quality, affordable, stable child care arrangements negatively impacts families and employers, resulting in an annual \$57 billion in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.^{xiv} As such, employers have a vested interest in ensuring that their employees are connected to child care options that meet their needs. For many families—especially families that work nontraditional hours, lack access to transportation, and speak languages other than English—that means family child care. States and communities can invest in systems, like QRIS, that identify a diverse range of quality child care options, and supplement those systems with marketing to employers and parents.

EXAMPLE:

All Our Kin's Provider Showcase (www.showcase.allourkin.org) connects employers and parents to high-quality family child care programs in their communities. Through the Provider Showcase program, family child care providers who have demonstrated that they meet nationally-recognized standards of quality through accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care are highlighted on a website that allows parents and employers to find easy-to-understand information, all in one place, about local family child care options. All Our Kin staff regularly meet with employers in the community to promote the Provider Showcase so that they can then pass this resource on to their parent employees.





Staffed Family Child Care Networks

Staffed family child care networks have paid staff members who provide services and resources to family child care providers. Networks offer providers opportunities to develop a continuing, long-term professional relationship with a network coordinator or a family child care specialist and a place to connect with other providers, creating social networks in an otherwise isolating profession. They can be run by a number of different entities, including community-based organizations, state or city-wide initiatives, CCR&Rs, social service and family support agencies, universities, Early Head Start and Head Start initiatives, and shared services alliances.¹ Staffed family child care networks can offer a variety of supports and services to family child care providers, including, but not limited to:

- Program visits
- Training and other professional learning opportunities
- Peer support
- Business support
- CACFP
- Financial support, including loans, grants, and scholarships
- Incentives, including health and safety equipment and educational materials¹

According to *Mapping the Family Child Care Network Landscape*, a 2019 report by leading family child care researchers Juliet Bromer and Toni Porter:



“Two studies have systematically examined networks’ effects on provider quality. The Family Child Care Network Impact Study (Bromer, Van Haitisma, Daley, & Modigliani, 2009), a quasi-experimental study of licensed FCC providers participating in 35 different networks in Chicago, found that providers who were affiliated with staffed networks that delivered a combination of on-going support services were more likely to offer higher quality care than unaffiliated providers. A more recent study, the 2014 evaluation of All Our Kin, a family child care network in Connecticut that offers a combination of intensive in-home consultation visits, training, and peer networking for FCC providers, also found that affiliated network providers offered higher quality care than a comparison group of unaffiliated providers (Porter & Reiman, 2016).

Qualitative studies find that networks help to ameliorate some of the barriers, such as isolation, that HBCC providers face, by connecting them to training opportunities and other providers (Buell, Pfister, & Gamel-McCormick, 2002; Hershfield, Moeller, Cohen & the Mills Consulting Group, 2005; Musick, 1996). Focus groups with providers in nine profes-



sional development networks in Washington State, for example, found that providers cited relationship-based support, networking opportunities with other providers, and respect for FCC as benefits of network participation (Lanigan, 2011).ⁱⁱⁱ

Based on All Our Kin's two decades of experience building and strengthening family child care networks, a robust network must include eight critical components in order to effectively and sustainably support family child care providers and the children and families they serve:

All Our Kin's Definition of a Robust Family Child Care Network

- 1| **Vision for serving FCC providers:** A vision for what the network wants to accomplish in partnership with FCC providers, as well as a logic model for how the network's activities align with that vision.
- 2| **Right staff:** Strong capacity of the network's director and a sufficient number of FCC provider coaches with knowledge of adult/child development and a deep respect for FCC and its role in the early care and education system.
- 3| **Right programming:** Professional development content and curriculum that includes both education and business training; is culturally and linguistically aligned with the network's needs; is evidence-based; and is designed to work for providers' real lives.
- 4| **Opt-in educational coaching:** Delivery of opt-in, one-on-one in-home coaching (at least monthly) over a 12-month cycle (and serving 25% of providers at a given time), using a strengths-based, relationship-based model for feedback.
- 5| **Community building / networking opportunities:** Curation of community-building / networking meetings at least once per month, which could include provider experience-sharing and/or professional development trainings.
- 6| **Supportive funding and policies:** Durable, sustainable multi-year funding to support all elements of the robust network.
- 7| **Commitment to equity:** Existence of necessary data systems to understand participation / outcomes by race and other demographics, and the right processes to adjust activities over time to ensure providers and families are being served equitably.
- 8| **FCC provider voice:** Network priorities, professional learning opportunities, resources, and program design are driven and shaped by input from FCC providers, and providers have opportunities to share their experience and expertise as peer mentors and trainers.

There are additional definitions of staffed family child care networks, including Juliet Bromer and Toni Porter's *Essential Elements of Staffed Family Child Care Networks*, as articulated in their 2017 publication *Staffed Family Child Care Networks: A Research-Informed Strategy for Supporting High-Quality Family Child Care*.^{iv}



Essential Elements of Staffed Family Child Care Networks

- 1| **Theory of change model.**
 - a. Articulated and realistic vision of how network services impact provider, child, family, and community outcomes.
- 2| **Service delivery strategies.**
 - a. Individual supports (visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warm lines) and group supports (training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).
 - b. Content of support services is relevant to and customized for family child care homes and providers.
- 3| **Staff-provider relationships.**
 - a. Staff-provider relationships are collaborative and foster mutual problem solving.
 - b. Staff recognize and respect provider cultures, values, and home environment.
 - c. Open communication and dialogue is used to engage providers.
 - d. Staff focus on enhancing the provider-child and provider-family relationship.
- 4| **Staff training and support.**
 - a. Staff receive specialized training in working with family child care providers and child development across the age range.
 - b. Staff have opportunities to engage in reflective supervision with supervisors as well as peer support with other network staff.

By investing in staffed family child care networks, state and local policymakers are investing in a research-based strategy for enhancing the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Networks can be leveraged to implement many of the recommendations outlined in this publication.

Opportunities *for* Technical Assistance

Through technical assistance, All Our Kin builds the capacity of agencies and organizations across the country to effectively increase the supply, quality, and sustainability of family child care. Our approach is one of partnership and collaboration: we value the relationships that technical assistance partners have with the family child care providers in their communities, and leverage the deep knowledge that partners have about the challenges and opportunities in their local early childhood landscape. All Our Kin offers several strands of technical assistance, as outlined below. If you are interested in technical assistance from All Our Kin, please review the following descriptions and reach out to the appropriate contact:

For policy advising, please contact policy@allourkin.org.

For general inquiries, please contact technicalassistance@allourkin.org.

Policy Advising

Across the country, policymakers are looking for ways to expand access to quality, affordable child care options in their communities—especially for the children and families that face the greatest barriers to accessing care, such as families with infants and toddlers and families working non-traditional hours. Family child care is uniquely well positioned to meet these needs. This publication contains strategies for policymakers who are eager to strengthen family child care in their communities, but it is only the first step. Through our Policy Advising initiative, we partner with state and local leaders who are ready to implement these strategies, offering individualized consultation and support to move the needle on family child care and ultimately, create a robust child care system that works for all children, families, and providers.

Business Train-the-Trainer

Family child care providers are both educators and businesspeople; knowledge of good business practices is essential to their ability to provide continuous care. All Our Kin's business series is a highly comprehensive, 30-hour course that covers a wide range of topics designed to build family child care educators' knowledge and practice as small business owners, including but not limited to: crafting contracts and policies for use with parents, using marketing strategies to increase enrollment and earnings, and crafting a program budget and tracking expenses. Our Train-the-Trainer institute includes several full days of training, ongoing coaching and support, and access to curriculum materials and a training guide for agency staff who want to teach the family child care business series to providers in their communities. All participants have access to a bank of resources including All Our Kin's tailored curriculum and coaching resources.



"I was extremely nervous thinking I may have gotten into something that I was not going to be able to adequately complete, but I would change nothing! I feel confident that I can do this thanks to the trainers!"

– Business Train-the-Trainer participant in Nebraska

Educational Coaching

Effective coaching and professional learning are essential to creating and maintaining high-quality early care and education. In this high-touch, hands-on engagement, skilled and experienced All Our Kin mentor teachers and educational leaders work closely with cohorts of staff and supervisors at agencies such as family child care networks, CCR&Rs, or Early Head Start-Child Care hubs, providing one-on-one and peer group training and support on strategies for strength-based coaching, professional learning, and relationship building with family child care educators. Participating staff and agencies gain access to All Our Kin's proprietary coaching materials, including a coaching and learning framework, a rubric for assessing coach performance, and many additional resources.

Network Development

In addition to these offerings, All Our Kin can support agencies and communities in developing and launching staffed family child care networks. Program offerings are highly individualized and range from stand-alone presentations by the All Our Kin team (either on-site or at one of All Our Kin's locations), to one-on-one consulting, to an in-depth, multi-stakeholder design process.



APPENDIX A:

All Our Kin Overview

The All Our Kin Model

All Our Kin is a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. Through All Our Kin's programs, child care professionals succeed as early childhood educators and as business owners, building better lives for themselves and their own families; working parents find stable, high-quality care for their children; and children gain an educational foundation that lays the groundwork for achievement in school and beyond.

Across the country, family child care providers play a crucial role as educators of our youngest children, our children of color, and our children in low-income communities. However, while they have tremendous potential to provide high-quality early learning experiences, they often lack access to the resources, training, and support necessary to build sustainable, high-quality child care businesses. In response, All Our Kin offers family child care providers a holistic, strength-based, data-driven continuum of programs and services that supports providers at every step of their careers.

Beginning with the Tool Kit Licensing Program, All Our Kin helps unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor caregivers meet health and safety standards, fulfill state licensing requirements, and become part of a professional community of child care providers. The result: more children spend their critical early years in safe, healthy settings. Licensing also proves transformative for providers: their earnings increase; they gain pride and professionalism; and—with the equipment and training they need to provide safe, educational care—they are able to serve more children more effectively.

Upon licensure, providers transition to All Our Kin's Family Child Care Network, which offers educational mentorship, professional development, advocacy and leadership opportunities, and a network of relationships with other family child care providers. The Network is a high-touch program built on best practices in early childhood coaching and consultation. Providers in the All Our Kin Network convene for monthly meetings, workshops and classes, and an annual professional development conference. A hallmark of the Network is the program visit, during which All Our Kin's educational coaches model interactions, demonstrate new strategies, and reflect with providers on their work. Providers in the Network also have access to a "warm line" they can call for advice, zero-interest loans and grants, financial management and education training, and marketing and referral opportunities. All services are bilingual English-Spanish.

All Our Kin began in New Haven, Connecticut in 1999 as a response to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 in order to support single mothers of very young children in securing employment and high-quality child care. As of the publishing of this report, All Our Kin has grown to reach over 875 family child care providers, who have

the capacity to educate and care for more than 5,000 children, in some of the most under-resourced neighborhoods in the Bronx and Connecticut.

As All Our Kin continues to expand its direct service model, the organization also seeks to leverage and build on communities' existing engagement with family child care providers by way of a technical assistance initiative*. All Our Kin's technical assistance initiative is underway in several cities and states, and will expand to serve additional communities in the coming years. At the same time, All Our Kin will open more direct service sites. Through this two-pronged approach of direct replication and technical assistance, All Our Kin will reach 3,300 family child care providers, who have the capacity to educate and care for 20,000 children, by the end of 2021.

**For more information about technical assistance opportunities through All Our Kin, please see page 44.*



All Our Kin's Outcomes and Impact

All Our Kin has a proven track record of success in raising the quality, supply, and sustainability of family child care. The organization's impact on communities is deep and multifaceted:

All Our Kin increases the quality of family child care. Findings from a rigorous external evaluation examining All Our Kin's impact on program quality indicate statistically significant differences in quality between All Our Kin and non-All Our Kin family child care providers. In fact, All Our Kin providers score more than 50% higher on research-based measures of quality than non-All Our Kin providers.ⁱ

All Our Kin increases the supply of licensed family child care in the community. Though Connecticut lost nearly 35% of its family child care programs from 2000-2011, the number of licensed family child care programs in New Haven increased by 74% during the same period, thanks to All Our Kin.

All Our Kin promotes health and safety in family child care programs. A recent assessment comparing rates of health and safety violations between All Our Kin and non-All Our Kin family child care providers, conducted in partnership with experts at Yale University's Schools of Nursing and Medicine, indicated: 1) All Our Kin providers had lower risk of violations overall and were significantly less likely to have health and safety violations in the areas of Child, Family, and Staff Documentation (43% vs. 54%), Emergency Preparedness (27% vs. 33%), and Indoor Safety (36% vs. 43%); and 2) cities served by All Our Kin perform better overall, even among family child care programs that do not engage with All Our Kin.ⁱⁱ

All Our Kin increases provider earnings and generates significant economic returns for communities. Recent data indicates that family child care providers who participated in All Our Kin's one-one-one Business Coaching Program demonstrated an average income increase of \$16,172 to \$31,159, a 93% increase. In a 2011 study by the University of Connecticut's Center for Economic Analysis, All Our Kin graduates reported earning 10.4% more, on average, than the average wage for industry counterparts in New Haven. Fifty-five percent had been able to pay down debt, 42% had opened a savings account, and 31% had moved to a larger apartment or house. Furthermore, each newly licensed provider made it possible for four to five parents to enter the workforce. The combination of the program's impact on parents and providers resulted, according to the study, in \$15-\$20 of macroeconomic benefits for every dollar invested.ⁱⁱⁱ



All Our Kin improves providers' quality of life. In a recent survey of All Our Kin providers conducted in partnership with the Omidyar Networks' Lean Data team, 81% of respondents reported that their quality of life has improved because of All Our Kin. Of these respondents, 17% mentioned, unprompted, that this is due to the emotional support All Our Kin provides. A number of studies indicate that early childhood educators' well-being has a direct influence on children's wellbeing. According to Child Trends, "Early childhood educators must be well to do well in their job. [...] And research emphasizes that children need consistent, sensitive, caring, and stable relationships with adults in order to thrive. Adults who are well, physically and mentally, are likely to have an easier time engaging in such relationships than adults who are struggling with chronic illness."^{iv}

Most important, through All Our Kin's work, children build the foundation for lifelong learning and future success. A copious body of research supports the link between high-quality early childhood education and positive educational and social outcomes for children. In fact, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "children who attend high-quality early childhood programs demonstrate better math and language skills, better cognition and social skills, better interpersonal relationships, and better behavioral self-regulation than do children in lower-quality care."^v Additionally, following the research on All Our Kin's impact on program quality, the organization conducted an evaluation of its impact on children's outcomes. The results indicate that children in All Our Kin providers' care significantly outperform their peers on math and language assessments and in social-emotional measures. All Our Kin children scored higher on math and language assessments and demonstrated better social-emotional development than both the national norm and their peers in non-All Our Kin programs.^{vi}



APPENDIX B:

All Our Kin's Core Values

In addition to the Key Principles, the policy framework presented in this publication is built on All Our Kin's Core Values, which have guided and informed our work in partnership with family child care providers, children, families, communities, and partners for two decades. All Our Kin encourages all those who work to support, strengthen, and uplift family child care to abide by these Core Values:

Maintain High Standards

Set the highest standards for yourself. Never compromise on excellence. Strive to be a model of best practice. Be ambitious. Hold yourself accountable for the quality of everything you produce.

Focus on Strengths

Value children, providers, and parents, and respect their unique perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. Start from a place of potential and positivity. Understand that an asset-based approach to change requires sensitivity, flexibility, respect and commitment. Work in partnership with providers and parents to improve outcomes for children.

Place Relationships First

Create authentic relationships based on recognition of each person's individuality and grounded in mutual respect. Approach others without prior judgment. Work cooperatively and collaboratively

with people at different educational levels. Be culturally and linguistically sensitive. Work hard at building community wherever you go, both inside and outside All Our Kin.

Commit to Transformative Outcomes for Children, Providers and Families

Believe in and commit to the bold goal of quality early care and learning experiences for all children and equity for all caregivers. Continually ask yourself whether your work is improving outcomes for children and caregivers.

Engage in Continuous Learning

Seize every opportunity to gain more knowledge and use it to inform your work. Reflect on your experiences and change your practice in response. Be open to feedback and constructive criticism. Be humble, honest, and admit mistakes. Understand that we don't yet know all the right answers, and keep trying new strategies. Use data to inform your work. Persist in the face of obstacles. Experiment, innovate, and explore.

Center Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

Work on behalf of equitable opportunities and outcomes for all children, families, and caregivers. Prioritize and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in every aspect of your work. Learn the history of racism and discrimination and understand its impact on your work today. Actively work to combat systemic racism and injustice internally and externally. Examine and challenge your own biases and roles in systems of power and privilege. Speak your truth and empower others to do the same.



APPENDIX C:

FAQs for Landlords: Family Child Care

The following content was compiled by All Our Kin and is specific to Connecticut. This is meant to be a resource for others who might want to develop something similar for landlords in their state.

What is family child care?

In Connecticut, family child care (FCC), also known as home-based child care, refers to the supervision of a group of no more than six full-time children (including the child care provider's own children) that takes place in the caregiver's home. This differs from center-based care, which takes place in a commercial space or school setting. FCC businesses are licensed and regulated by the state, and are a community asset, offering safe, affordable care for children and families.

to accessing care, such as families with infants and toddlers, families that work non-traditional hours, and families that lack access to transportation. Benefits of FCC include:

- Intimate, family-like settings
- Located in residential communities
- Non-traditional operating hours
- Care for mixed-age groups
- Language, culture, and values that reflect the communities served
- Providers earn the wages necessary to be stable tenants, take special care to maintain their residences, and invest in the community

What are the licensing requirements for family child care homes in Connecticut?

All child care providers must apply to and be licensed by Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Division of Licensing. The Office of Early Childhood is the state agency responsible for coordinating and implementing early childhood programs and services, including child care, and enforcing statutes and regulations in these facilities. A family child care business is required to renew its license every four years.

How often does the Office of Early Childhood conduct inspections of family child care homes in Connecticut?

The Office of Early Childhood is mandated by state law to inspect licensed child care facilities—including family child care businesses—once a year. These inspections are unannounced and are documented on an inspection report form. Family child care homes are required to make a copy of the latest inspection report available to parents.

What kind of background checks are required for family child care homes in Connecticut?

In order to operate a licensed family child care home, the child care provider and all household members 16 years of age or older are required to pass a federal and state background check. Such checks are also required of any additional employees (ie. assistants and substitutes). Background clearances must be renewed in the state of Connecticut every 5 years. In addition, family child care providers must obtain medical clearance from a

What are some of the benefits of family child care homes in Connecticut?

FCC is a win-win-win: home-based entrepreneurs start child care businesses that support their own families, provide a community service, and contribute to the broader economy; parents access safe, nurturing care for their children; and children receive the quality early learning experiences that lay the groundwork for success in school and beyond.

FCC serves as an alternative for parents whose needs may not be met by other child care options, allowing them to enter the workforce knowing that their children are safe, loved, and learning. In Connecticut, there is an acute lack of quality, affordable child care, especially for families that face the greatest barriers





physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse for themselves and every household member age 18 and older. For each household member under 18 years of age, the child care provider must submit documentation to the Office of Early Childhood verifying that the member is up-to-date with their physical examination and immunizations.

What do Connecticut housing and zoning laws say about family child care?

Connecticut state law seeks to increase access to child care by prohibiting local governments from banning family child care homes in residential areas. Section 8-2 of the Connecticut General Statutes outlines the zoning authority of municipalities, and prohibits the use of zoning to restrict the operation of family child care businesses in areas that are zoned for residential use. There are two other statutory provisions that protect family child care homes. The first is Section 8-3j which explicitly states that family child care homes cannot be treated any differently than single or multifamily dwellings. The second is Section 19a-87b which states that licensed family child care homes are not subject to any conditions on the operation of such home by local officials, other than those imposed by the Office of Early Childhood. This prevents family child care homes from having to obtain special exceptions or permits. The home must comply with all local codes and ordinances applicable to single and multifamily dwellings.

What are the insurance requirements for family child care in Connecticut?

The Department of Health and Human Services does not require liability insurance for family child care businesses in Connecticut or any other state in the United States. However, as small business owners, many providers recognize insurance as essential and opt for a plan that fits the needs of their program. Liability insurance can include protections for providers, their assistants, and landlords. There are comprehensive policies that protect and defend providers and landlords against a variety of claims. In fact, landlords can require liability insurance for family child care businesses in their lease agreements.

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APPENDIX A: All Our Kin Overview

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