

## A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

# Increasing Health and Safety in Family Child Care

In 2017, researchers from Yale University and All Our Kin, a nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care providers, 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. These findings indicate that investing in a strength-based, holistic approach to supporting quality through staffed family child care networks is an effective way to increase access to safe, healthy child care options for children and families.



### Introduction

The majority of a child's brain development happens in the first three years of life, and access to safe, nurturing learning environments during these crucial early years lays the foundation for a child's success in school and beyond. Parents who have access to high-quality child care are more likely to enter and remain in the workforce. Yet, in Connecticut and across the country, there is not enough high-quality child care to serve all children and families who need it, particularly for infants and toddlers.

Family child care (FCC)—home-based, paid child care by a regulated provider—is one of the most common child care arrangements nationwide, particularly for infants and toddlers and children from overburdened, under-resourced families. FCC providers care for small groups of children, offering care that is often more accessible and affordable than center-based child care.

Though FCC providers play a key role as early childhood educators and economic drivers in communities across the country, they are systematically overlooked and undervalued in policy, program, and practice, resulting in a lack of access to resources, training, and support. In response, some providers join family child care networks to learn best practices in early childhood education, health and safety, and small business ownership, as well as to engage with a community of their peers.

### About the Study

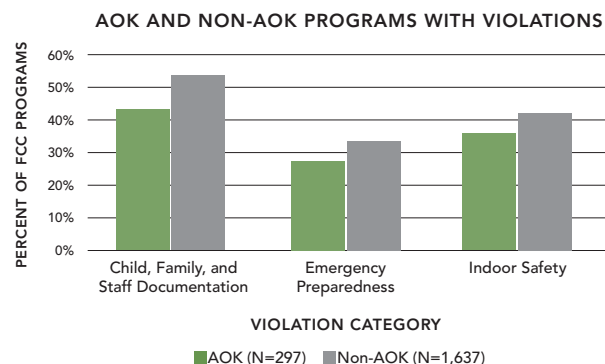
The research team analyzed state-level public data on all licensed FCC programs in Connecticut open at least 1 year to determine whether participation in a staffed FCC network is associated with increased health and safety compliance in family child care programs. This data included the quantity and types of health and safety violations in FCC homes during annual unannounced inspections as well as All Our Kin Network participation data.

### Results and Implications

The data showed that FCC programs affiliated with the All Our Kin Network had significantly fewer violations overall, and fewer types of violations, than non-Network FCC programs that have been licensed for a similar length of time and are in areas with similar median income.

#### Key Findings and Implications:

- **The presence of robust FCC networks increases the likelihood of safe, high-quality FCC environments for young children.** Cities served by All Our Kin perform better overall on state regulatory compliance. Even among FCC programs that do not work with All Our Kin, programs in the cities that All Our Kin serves had better compliance than those in other cities. Compliance not only supports children's health and safety, but also indicates a baseline of quality for children's early learning and development.
- **Continuous support of FCC providers throughout their professional journeys lowers their risk for health and safety violations.** FCC providers who received licensing assistance from, or were engaged with All Our Kin longer or more deeply, had lower risk of violations for all categories than FCC programs with similar median income, even though they had been licensed fewer years than non-Network supported FCC providers.
- **A strength-based, holistic approach for engaging FCC providers successfully lowers the likelihood of safety violations** All Our Kin Network FCC programs, compared to non-Network FCC programs, were significantly less likely to have health and safety violations in the areas of Child, Family, and Staff Documentation, Emergency Preparedness, and Indoor Safety.



**A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:**

Increasing Health and Safety in Family Child Care, *continued*

**Conclusion**

These findings indicate that membership in an FCC 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. The message is clear: when FCC providers are supported in enhancing their program quality, children and families gain the foundation they need to thrive. By investing in staffed FCC networks similar to All Our Kin, policymakers and stakeholders can make significant progress towards a comprehensive child care system that meets the needs of all families.

**About All Our Kin**

All Our Kin's strength-based, data-driven model is proven to increase the supply, quality, and sustainability of FCC. All Our Kin supports FCC providers in gaining licensure – an important first step in creating safe, healthy learning environments for young children – and continues to support providers as educators and as business owners throughout their careers.

All Our Kin's FCC Network currently supports more than 600 FCC professionals with the capacity to serve over 3,600 children. The Network allows licensed FCC providers to engage in educational mentorship, professional development, and leadership opportunities while building relationships with a community of their peers. Through the Network, providers can also gain access to one-on-one training in child development, teaching strategies, and small business growth, development, and management.



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