



All Our Kin

New Haven Program

Family Child Care

Assessment and Policy

Recommendations

JOHN WEISER | OPPORTUNITIES EXCHANGE • CARL SUSSMAN | SUSSMAN ASSOCIATES • DECEMBER 2013



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, All Our Kin contracted with John Weiser, Executive Director of Opportunities Exchange, and Carl Sussman, Principal of Sussman Associates, to conduct an assessment of All Our Kin's impact on the family child care providers it serves, and on the well-being of families and community. This report provides our findings and recommendations regarding family child care providers.

Our key finding is that All Our Kin has been able to help increase the number of family child care providers in New Haven, their income, and their quality.

Our interviews and surveys found positive changes in knowledge, perceptions and attitudes among providers:

- Providers reported increased knowledge of best practice in early care and education, classroom management techniques, and health and safety issues.
- Providers described how All Our Kin helped them to learn how to better manage their child care businesses, increase enrollment and set up their child care spaces.
- They also described changes in perceptions and attitudes: their development of a sense of themselves as early care and education professionals, and their willingness to invest time and money in professional development and improvements to their child care spaces.

These positive changes in knowledge, perceptions and attitudes provide insight into how All Our Kin has achieved the results below:

- From 2000 to 2011, the total number of family child care providers in New Haven climbed by two thirds, while the number in the state as a whole declined by a third.
- In a study conducted by the University of Connecticut, nearly 60% of the participants in All Our Kin's Tool Kit Licensing Program reported having earned at least \$5,000 more the first year after licensure. Over 45% reported having earned at least \$10,000 more in the second year.
- Over 50% of Tool Kit Licensing Program graduates went on to achieve either an Associate's Degree in early childhood education or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.



- All Our Kin's measurements of a sample of 30 of its program participants showed that 97% had marked improvements in quality as measured by the NAFCC Readiness Checklist over a one-year period.

At the same time, the evaluation also notes a public policy challenge: the supply of family child care providers continues to shrink across Connecticut, removing an important support for working families, particularly families that are low income and/or whose primary language is not English. All Our Kin's model could provide a useful public policy response. We recommend the following for consideration by public policy decision-makers:

- 1 *Replicate All Our Kin in additional communities.* Support for replication would include investments: in developing operations in new sites and recruiting new participants; in organization and systems development required to support growth; in continued refinement and improvement of the All Our Kin program model; and in a database to support performance management and evaluation.
- 2 *Document All Our Kin's model.* Much thought, time and energy has gone into developing the details of All Our Kin's program model. These details should be documented in a form that would facilitate future replication and enable the development of fidelity standards.
- 3 *Develop a longitudinal assessment of All Our Kin's impact.* Being able to fund a longitudinal assessment of its programs, conducted by an independent organization, would help to deepen the understanding of their impact and improve the reliability of their results. This, in turn, would help All Our Kin to improve its outcomes and encourage others to adopt its program model.

ASSIGNMENT AND METHODOLOGY

Our assignment was to assess All Our Kin’s services for providers, families and communities and to provide useful and actionable information to help the organization deepen its impact. The main issues that we focused on were:

- Providers — changes in their child care business (licensing, enrollment, income); changes in the quality of care (both observational measures of quality and provider perception of increases in knowledge, skills and attitudes) and the development of a professional identity (perceptions of being an early care and education provider, and willingness to invest in education and in physical capital).
- Families — improvements in the availability, quality and choices relative to child care services and the benefits parents experienced from having their child cared for by a provider supported by All Our Kin.
- Community — how All Our Kin’s work has improved the landscape for parents and providers in greater New Haven.

This report focuses on our findings regarding family child care providers.

METHODOLOGY

Our design was retrospective — a look backward at what All Our Kin has been able to accomplish over the past several years. For some elements of the study, we had both historical (baseline) data as well as current data; for other elements (primarily perceptions and willingness of providers to invest in their business and quality improvements) we had primarily current data without baseline information.

We started by reviewing All Our Kin’s administrative and program documents, and gathering quantitative information on participation in All Our Kin programs, changes in provider income, quality of services, and in the availability of family child care in New Haven.

We then worked with All Our Kin staff to develop a theory of change depicting All Our Kin’s understanding of how its programs enable the organization to achieve its mission. We used that theory of change to guide the design and development of our data collection.

We gathered qualitative and quantitative data on providers, families and community through a wide range of interview and survey formats:

- Individual interviews with providers, parents, funders, staff, and community experts (27 responses)
- Telephone survey of providers (31 responses)
- Focus groups with providers (one conducted in English and one in Spanish)
- Focus group with parents (one)
- Written questionnaire responses from providers and parents (11 responses)

To analyze the qualitative data, we coded each of the interview responses and focus group comments according to a typology based on the theory of change. We reviewed the coded responses to develop a set of qualitative findings. A qualitative finding consisted of a theme or statement that was repeated in three or more interviews, and that was not contradicted by other interviews. In reporting out the qualitative findings, we chose several quotes that best illustrated the findings and illuminated specific details in the findings. Each quote represents similar comments from multiple interview respondents and/or focus group participants.

After completing both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, we shared the findings with All Our Kin staff to validate the findings, and, based on their feedback, to refine the theory of change. After finalizing the theory of change, we completed the data collection and prepared this final report summarizing our findings and analysis.





ALL OUR KIN PROGRAMS

ALL OUR KIN BACKGROUND

All Our Kin, Inc. is a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains community child care providers in order to ensure that low-income children have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. All Our Kin trains and supports over 250 providers each year, who in turn serve nearly 1,500 children. It works with a diverse group of primarily low-income parents and providers from New Haven neighborhoods and surrounding towns, and has recently expanded into Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Northern Fairfield County. Ninety-eight percent of the providers are women who range in age from 18 to 70. Survey data from the 2012 annual conference show that 80% of participants have at least one degree or certification, and 50% are working on at least one type of degree or certification. Approximately 35% are African-American, 60% are Latina, and 5% are white or other ethnicities. Seventy-two percent of the children in their care qualify for Care4Kids subsidies, state funding only available to low-income working families and families on public assistance. All Our Kin providers also enable families to choose providers that are culturally compatible: 57% of children cared for by a provider who participated in the conference were of the same race or ethnicity as that provider, while 43% were of a different race or ethnicity.

THE KEY ROLE OF FAMILY CHILD CARE

Family child care is an important component of Connecticut's child care landscape. It is particularly important for low-income and non-English speaking families for a number of reasons:

- 1 Flexible hours** – family child care providers are more likely to offer care that goes beyond traditional hours than are child care centers. This is particularly true for night and weekend hours, which are very rarely offered by child care centers. As noted in “*Workplace Flexibility and Low Wage Employees*” by the Families and Work Institute, lower income families in particular often have jobs with less flexibility in their hours than higher wage workers. Finding a provider with this type of flexibility can be critical to getting and keeping a job.
- 2 Lower cost** – although every business is different, it is typically the case that family child care providers charge lower rates than centers in a similar area serving a similar clientele, especially for infants and toddlers. The Ms. Foundation notes in “*More to Do: The Road to Equality for Women in the United States*” that for low-income women and communities of color, in particular, lack of access to affordable, flexible, high-quality child care is the biggest impediment to economic security, productivity and advancement.

3 *Infant and toddler care* — because of the high cost of center-based infant and toddler care, the supply of such care is limited. Family child care provides a more affordable and accessible option for infant and toddler care.

4 *More convenient locations* — family child care providers are found in many neighborhoods, increasing the likelihood that one or more family child care providers will be conveniently located for families in these neighborhoods. This is especially important for families that rely on public transportation.

5 *Cultural compatibility* — family child care providers reflect the diversity of the communities where they are located. Therefore they offer parents a broader range of choices in languages, ethnicities, and religious affiliations than do centers.

Despite family child care's crucial role in supporting families, evidence (figure 3, page 14) shows that family child care is decreasing across Connecticut — declining by approximately 1/3 between 2000 and 2011. This creates a pressing problem for families and policy-makers.

ALL OUR KIN PROGRAM OFFERINGS

All Our Kin offers a wide array of programs which are aimed at helping individuals to obtain a state license for a family child care business, build business skills, and gain the knowledge and skills to deliver quality care that contributes to early childhood development. All Our Kin's Teaching and Learning Continuum seeks to support child care providers at every stage of their development, from caregivers to professional educators and business people. Its four primary program services are the Tool Kit Licensing Program, which supports and guides individuals through the licensing process; the New Teacher Mentor Project, which supplies programmatic coaching to new providers through regular home visits for three months; the Family Child Care Network, which is a staffed network that provides regular meetings with peers for professional development, mentorship, training, an annual conference and one-on-one consultations to address educational and business issues; and Early Head Start, through which providers receive intensive support to serve Head Start eligible children and meet Head Start's high federal standards of quality. All of these services are offered in English and Spanish. The details are as follows:





Tool Kit Licensing Program: The Tool Kit Licensing Program, a collaboration between All Our Kin and the Connecticut Children’s Museum, is built around four Tool Kit boxes. Each box in the Tool Kit is tied to a particular step in the process for obtaining a family child care license from Connecticut’s Department of Public Health. As participants complete each step in the process, they receive the next box. Tool Kit boxes include application materials, health and safety supplies, vouchers for first aid training, and curriculum materials such as educational toys and high-quality children’s books. Throughout the licensing process, All Our Kin also provides caregivers with mentorship, counseling, and support. For example, when the time comes for a home inspection by the Department of Public Health, an All Our Kin staff member visits the provider’s home and conducts a mock inspection to ensure that the space will meet the health and safety requirements established by the Department.

New Teacher Mentor Project: This program focuses on providers who have just received their licenses and who are fairly new to the field of early care and education. A skilled master teacher works intensively with these providers for 20–30 hours over 12 weeks while they care for children in their homes. The master teacher uses a curriculum, created by All Our Kin, that covers a range of basic educational topics, including an overview of how children grow and learn, curriculum design, choosing appropriate materials, and family engagement. She also offers coaching and support that is responsive to each participant’s individual challenges, strengths, and interests. For example, the mentor models interactions and activities and helps the provider arrange her space to best suit the developmental stages of children in her care. Providers also receive books and materials to enhance their knowledge, use in their programs, and share with families.

Family Child Care Network: Providers who join the Family Child Care Network are eligible to participate in a variety of services designed to improve the quality of care and education they provide, strengthen their businesses, enhance their professional development, and build professional and social networks with their colleagues. Services include:

■ **Monthly Network Meetings**

Monthly meetings, which include both workshops on topics in early care and education and opportunities to meet other providers, build professional and social networks, and reflect and share over dinner.

■ **Family Child Care Entrepreneurship Training**

Business development workshop series of ten sessions, offered twice a year in each of All Our Kin’s primary regions (Greater New Haven and Bridgeport). The series focuses on learning to create and maintain budgets, recordkeeping and taxes, and promoting and marketing family child care businesses. The goal is to help family child care providers see themselves as professionals and to improve the profitability of their family child care businesses.

■ **Professional Development Workshop Series**

Typically 6-8 weekly sessions that are focused on specific topics in early care and education. The purpose of these professional development workshops is to improve the quality of care providers deliver with the goal of improving child outcomes for low-income children. Special workshops and training series are typically offered between two and three times per year.

■ **Educational Consultant Visits**

Coaching and consultation from All Our Kin’s early childhood education master teachers, who visit family child care providers’ programs to lead model lessons, demonstrate new strategies, interact with the children, and reflect with providers on their work. Typically, visits range from 1–4 hours. Frequency of the visits depends on the wants and needs of the provider, but visits are typically biweekly or twice monthly. Each provider has a professional development plan, and the visits are structured around achieving the provider’s goals.

■ **Business Consultant Visits**

Coaching and consultation from All Our Kin’s family child care business strategists, who visit family child care provider’s homes to help them with their business practices.



- **Access to EarnBenefits** income enhancement services for providers and families of children in their family child care programs.
- **Annual Professional Development Conference**
Full-day conference that gives All Our Kin providers the chance to deepen their commitment to business success, professional development and providing high-quality care to children.
- **Professional Development Scholarships**
A modest number of scholarships for providers engaged in serious quality improvement efforts such as accreditation or a college degree.
- **Microloans**
Small loans to support investment in child care spaces. Loans range in amount from \$250 to \$5,114 with 24 outstanding now.

Early Head Start: All Our Kin is a delegate agency for United Way of Greater New Haven, one of the city's Early Head Start grantees. The Early Head Start services are targeted to families that are residents of New Haven and have incomes that are below, at, or slightly above the federal poverty levels and/or have a significant number of risk factors. Children and families who are homeless, in foster care, or receive TANF or SSI benefits are also eligible for services. Carefully selected family child care providers affiliated with All Our Kin deliver the Early Head Start program under All Our Kin's supervision and United Way's oversight.

FINDINGS

All Our Kin seeks to improve results for providers along two primary pathways. The first is improvements in *Career and Business Development*, which covers all aspects of running a child care business, including licensing, marketing, financial management, record-keeping and policies and handbooks. The second is improvements in *Program Quality*, which includes the range of knowledge, experience and skills development associated with high-quality early care and education.

QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE

Using qualitative methods — interviews, focus groups, and written surveys — we were able to develop a detailed understanding of how All Our Kin was able to help providers improve results. This section of the report describes our qualitative findings. We look first at *Career and Business Development*, and then at *Program Quality*. As noted above, each of our qualitative findings consists of a theme or statement that was repeated in three or more interviews, and that was not contradicted by other interviews. In reporting out the findings, we have chosen several quotes that best illustrate the findings and illuminate specific details.

CAREER AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Within the *Career and Business Development* pathway, All Our Kin staff and programs focused on three key change areas:

- Helping providers to **BECOME LICENSED**
- Working with providers to obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to **BUILD A CHILD CARE BUSINESS**
- Assisting licensees to **DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY** as early care and education providers rather than babysitters

BECOME LICENSED

All Our Kin's work in supporting the career and business development of providers often starts with the Tool Kit Licensing Program, through which All Our Kin provides materials, mentorship and support to help unlicensed caregivers meet health and safety standards and fulfill other state licensing requirements. The mentorship and support is provided to the caregivers by the All Our Kin Licensing Coordinator, who provides case management and support to the caregivers throughout the process, helping them to fill out forms, collect and submit the appropriate information, complete the required trainings,

and prepare their spaces to meet licensing standards. The Licensing Coordinator provides ongoing encouragement, which is important in helping the caregivers to stick with the licensing process, which can be long and frustrating. The Licensing Coordinator also communicates with the Department of Public Health (the licensing agency at the time of publication) as required on behalf of the caregivers.

Many caregivers highlighted All Our Kin's work helping them to identify and remove hazards that would be dangerous to children and a barrier to licensing, and to add resources that would be a plus in the licensing process:

"All Our Kin helped me really make my home ready for getting a license. They helped me to put the exit signs on the doors and to prepare an evacuation plan. They helped me to get child safe locks and organize my medicine cabinet; moving sharp knives up, toothpaste up, getting cleaning supplies up — I had to reorganize my whole kitchen and bathroom."

Many unlicensed caregivers (particularly those for whom English is not a first language) often avoid licensing, because they assume it will be too difficult or costly. All Our Kin's track record helped caregivers to see the process as "doable." Examples of comments from providers:

"I always dreamed of having my own day care center. But I thought it would be too difficult. All Our Kin really opened up the possibilities for me — they helped me to see that I could reach my dream."

"I was quite confused about licensing — I came to All Our Kin, and they taught me everything I needed to know to get a license."

"I came from a retail background. I was not caring for children before I came to All Our Kin — they taught me everything. They helped me get my home ready for licensing. For example, I learned that I had to have my yard fenced in."

BUILD A CHILD CARE BUSINESS

After a provider receives her license, All Our Kin encourages her to join the Family Child Care Network. The Network is intended to be both a place to learn and, equally importantly, a place to find and relate to peers who can provide support for one another. Family child care can be isolating — providers often work all day alone with children, and don't have regular contact with adult peers. The Network is designed to address this isolation and



encourage providers to stay in the field and grow as professionals. Network sessions include time to socialize among participants, and to build and strengthen the peer community. Sessions also include presentations to help providers strengthen their child care businesses and deepen their knowledge of early childhood development.

Enrollment

The time immediately after receiving a license can be very stressful for providers, since it can take many months to build enrollment and income. Many providers reported that All Our Kin staff was helpful in assisting them to attract families and enroll children in their initial start-up period. Examples of comments from providers:

"After I got my license, I was very stressed because there was a six month period after I opened when I didn't

have any children or income. I have three kids of my own. I quit my job to open a child care business — but for what? Did I make a mistake?

I called All Our Kin, and asked a staff person to come to my house, and pretend that she was a parent. What am I doing wrong? Am I dressed the wrong way? Am I saying the wrong things? She spent three hours with me. We kept role playing until I got it right.”

“When I got the license, I only had two children for six months. Tyree [a member of the All Our Kin staff] then helped me learn how to reach parents with marketing — how to advertise my program, how to make a flyer, where to put the flyer, everything.”

Setting Up Business Systems

All Our Kin encourages providers to approach their family child care as a business endeavor rather than an informal source of income. Family child care requires systems, reporting, and paperwork just like other small businesses. Keeping track of expenses accurately and choosing the appropriate method for allocating expenses between business and personal use can save a provider thousands of dollars when done properly. Providers need to bill parents and collect fees. They also need to track attendance carefully in order to be paid appropriately for their care by the state child care subsidy system, Care4Kids. Doing this improperly can lead to fines and penalties. All Our Kin’s business series and business consultants help the providers to put these systems in place. Providers noted All Our Kin’s help:

“I knew nothing about running a professional day care, and Tyree [a member of the All Our Kin staff] helped me with the basics — the forms I needed, like a form that parents would use to sign kids in and out, a log book for payments, the importance of having insurance, and who else I can talk to for advice.”

“The business consultant came out and helped me set up my books on Quicken. She also helped me to save money and to make it more convenient for my parents by using technology.”

“The business administration class is very useful. We are running a business — but it is hard for us to track income and expense. Are we really making a profit? We also don’t know what to do and not to do in reporting our expenses to the IRS. It is not about hiding things — it is about protecting us and helping us to do things in the right way.”

Physical Environments Tailored to Early Care and Education

Providers skilled in early care and education (ECE) know that the choice of materials and the space set-up can make a significant difference in how the children interact, the kinds of activities that occur, and the degree to which those activities promote self-mastery. Both the coaching of All Our Kin’s mentor teachers, and the loans and materials All Our Kin provides to equip the space, enable providers to create well-functioning spaces for ECE.

“I got a loan from All Our Kin to improve my basement space, which is where I have my child care business. I listed out everything that I needed: I needed a quiet space, and a reading space and a dramatic play space. I made a list of everything that I needed, and I got a price for it all. And then All Our Kin approved the loan. Now my basement looks just like a preschool. I am very proud of my space.”

“All Our Kin staff helped me set up my room and plan out what I wanted to do. I also created a new space, and All Our Kin helped me with that. It had been a dream of mine for years to do day care, but I didn’t want to do it in the main part of my house where I lived. AOK helped me to get the funds to add on a new room in the back of my house that is dedicated to my day care. At the end of the workday, I can close the door, and my work is done.”

DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

The development of a professional identity as an early care and education provider is important. All Our Kin helps to reinforce a provider’s entrepreneurial mindset, to nurture each provider’s interest in their own professional development, and to encourage continuous improvements in the quality of care and in parent satisfaction. Many



providers noted that All Our Kin helped them to be able to define themselves as professionals, and to communicate that identity to parents:

“When I started doing day care, All Our Kin helped me to be able to explain to parents that we are providing education. It is hard for some parents, because they feel that you are their babysitter. They don’t see you as an educator. You have to bring them along.”

“I was worried about coming into child care — that people would just see me as a babysitter and not as an educator. AOK gave you a class on how to speak about your business, how to give respect to parents and get back respect.”

“They teach you to be professionals, how to be business-like, how to speak to the parents, how to carry yourself.”

Many providers noted that All Our Kin’s network meetings and annual conference encouraged them to want to improve their professional practice.

“At the annual conference, one provider had the whole process in pictures of how they went through accreditation. I had thought that going through accreditation would be too long and difficult, but seeing it all in pictures, and learning that you could charge a little more, made me think ‘Wow — I might be able to do that.’”

“The annual conference is awesome. They have a lot of great resources. You learn so much that you can take back to your program.”

PROGRAM QUALITY

Helping providers to build knowledge and skills in child development and implement best practices in their program is one of the most important ways that All Our Kin helps providers to attain better outcomes for children and families. Many of the providers we interviewed noted that when they first started their child care business, they knew very little about ECE pedagogy — the art and science of helping young children to learn. While they understood that children develop abilities over time, they did not have a detailed understanding of the needs and abilities of specific ages and stages and the normal range of variability between individual children or of how to build a developmentally appropriate curriculum.



All Our Kin provides an array of programs that help providers at all levels of expertise to increase their knowledge of ECE pedagogy. These programs can be divided into three sets: those that are aimed at providers who are newly licensed, those that are aimed at providers who have some experience and are interested in improving their practice, and those that are aimed at providers who want to acquire professional credentials.

NEWLY LICENSED PROVIDERS

The New Teacher Mentor Project focuses on providers who have just received their license and have limited prior experience in early care and education. In this program, a skilled master teacher spends three months



working intensively with a provider. Providers noted how the master teacher assisted them with learning the foundations of ECE pedagogy:

“She helped me set up my circle time, and the different books that you can associate with a different toy and a different season — and how you can follow through to put together a lesson plan for the whole week.”

“She taught about ages and stages — what do children need at different ages? How do needs differ for different children?”

“The mentor teacher helped me with transitions — the kids would go crazy every time we had a transition. She helped me to set up a schedule and to signal the transitions ahead. Now the kids are excited about the transitions and start to put toys away.”

PROVIDERS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THEIR PRACTICE

The supports offered through All Our Kin’s Family Child Care Network are aimed at the broad range of providers interested in improving their practice. The supports include workshop-style learning opportunities that help providers develop an understanding of the pedagogy of early care and education, Child Development Associate training, and a “warm line” for help by telephone. Supports also include hands-on educational consultation that involves observation, reflection and modeling to address specific issues encountered by the provider in her own family child care

setting. As noted above, an internal assessment of providers who received hands-on educational consulting showed 97% of providers demonstrated higher quality, with gains most notable in supporting children’s cognitive development, math and science, and literacy skills.

One of the core elements of the pedagogy espoused by All Our Kin (and many other leading child care organizations) is the importance of learning through play, rather than didactic or other teacher-directed activities. The following dialogue, recorded in one of the focus group sessions, shows that providers working with All Our Kin are taught this pedagogy and strive to incorporate it in their practice.



Provider A – “All Our Kin has taught us that children learn a lot by playing. It’s not just about filling out worksheets to put on the refrigerator. I tell parents that your children are learning by playing. ‘Let me tell you what kinds of skills that your child is learning by playing with blocks. They are learning about organizational skills and about spatial skills.’”

Provider B – “I have to debate that. There is something special about drawings and worksheets — the kid’s first handprint, his first letter A.”

Provider A – “I know that some parents think that their children aren’t learning anything if they don’t bring home worksheets. But you have to explain to them how children learn through play.”

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALING

All Our Kin encourages and assists providers to obtain continuing professional education, and to earn professional credentials such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education. All Our Kin provides scholarships to support providers seeking to earn credentials, connects providers to resources regarding scholarships and college classes, and hosts CDA classes. Many providers commented that All Our Kin was instrumental in encouraging them to get a CDA and to take college courses.

“I had a diploma in preschool education in my own country. But the certificate from my home country wasn’t accepted here. Before I heard about All Our Kin, I tried to take the courses to prepare for the Pathways exams, but each required six or seven books, which cost \$100 each. I couldn’t borrow them anywhere. I couldn’t afford it, so I just stopped. Then I heard about All Our Kin, which covers all the costs, and I was ready!”

“I love educating kids. When All Our Kin had a CDA class, I wanted to take it even though I already was in school, because it was focused on child development. They let me take the CDA class, and it was a great resource for me. Then when I went on to continue my education, it really helped in my future classes that included child development. Even when I took my psych class on abnormal child development, I was able to breeze through it. I thank All Our Kin for giving me that resource because it helped me get an A!”

QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

This section of the report reviews quantitative evidence of the results of All Our Kin’s work. The quantitative evidence provides measurements that show how the kinds of changes noted above in *Career and Business Development* and in *Program Quality* have helped create changes in the earnings of child care providers, the quality of the care that is being provided, and the supply of family child care.

The first set of quantitative data comes from the study of the economic impact of the Tool Kit Licensing Program, conducted by the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut in 2011. This study found that:

- Nearly 60% of participants in the Tool Kit Licensing Program reported having earned at least \$5,000 more the first year after licensure. In the second year, over 45% reported having earned at least \$10,000 more.
- After completing the program, 55% of graduates were able to pay down debt; 42% had opened a savings account, and 31% had moved to a larger apartment or house. All of these results are considered important indicators of greater financial stability and asset building.
- Over 50% of Tool Kit Licensing Program graduates went on to achieve either an Associate’s Degree in early childhood education or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

Another important piece of quantitative evidence comes from pre- and post-assessments that All Our Kin conducted between 2006 and 2010 on the programs of thirty providers who received individualized early care and education consulting. All Our Kin used the National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation Readiness Checklist (NAFCC Checklist), designed to measure whether a provider is ready to apply for accreditation. Accreditation itself is a rigorous national measure of program quality, comparable to the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children for child care centers. Readiness is a useful measure of initial programmatic

¹ The Pathways exams are part of the Connecticut professional development system, and can enable child care providers to convert early childhood experience and non-credit training into academic credits.

quality. All Our Kin staff assessed providers at the start of the program, and then every six months over a one-year period (figure 1). The results:

- Ninety-seven percent of providers demonstrated higher quality.
- Average increase: 17 points (gains highest in first six months).
- Gains most notable in supporting children’s cognitive development, math and science, and literacy skills.

A second set of quantitative evidence on program quality and safety comes from the pre- and post-measurement conducted by staff for participants in the New Teacher Mentor Project (figure 2). Here, staff used three scales: the NAFCC Readiness Checklist, the Arnett Scale of Teacher Sensitivity, and a Health and Safety Scale based on the Connecticut licensing requirements. On average, providers showed significant gains on all the scales.

These two sets of quantitative evidence show the impact of All Our Kin’s programs in helping to improve *Program Quality* over time among the providers participating in its programs.

A study by Holt, Wexler and Farnam, LLC (figure 3) supplies a fourth important piece of quantitative evidence of the impact of All Our Kin’s licensing activities on the number of licensed family child care providers. As the following chart illustrates, the number of licensed family child care providers in Connecticut dropped significantly between 2000 and 2011, while the number in New Haven climbed sharply during the same period.

FIGURE 1: NAFCC SCORES OVER TIME

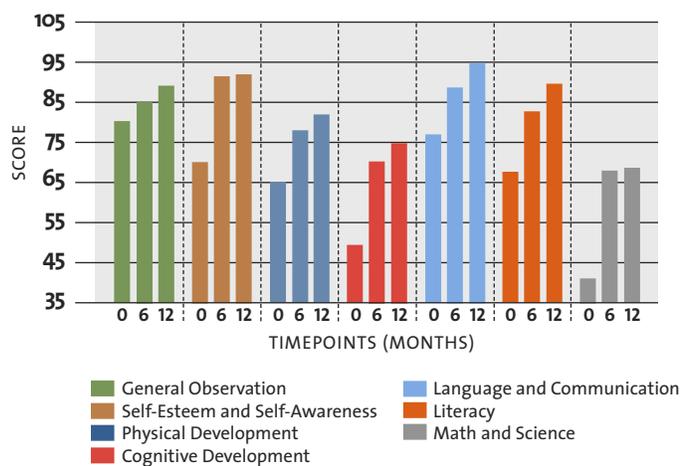


FIGURE 2: PROVIDER ASSESSMENT SCORES BEFORE AND AFTER NEW TEACHER MENTOR

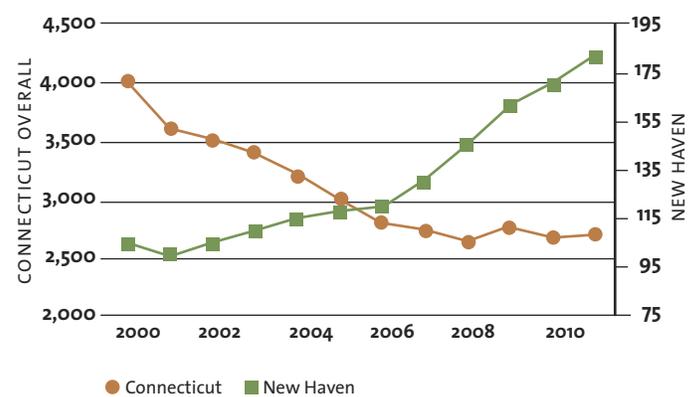
	Avg Score at Start	Avg Score at Completion	Percent Change
NAFCC	54.0	79.5	47.2
Arnett	67.8	83.5	23.2
Health and Safety	91.8	99.0	7.8

Most of the factors affecting the supply and demand for family child care were similar between New Haven and the rest of the state. This includes the economic conditions, state regulations, and programs that help subsidize the care of children from low-income families. Although there are some unique differences among municipalities relative to the local economy, the primary difference would appear to be All Our Kin’s licensing activities in New Haven. There were no comparable programs in other parts of the state. On this basis, it seems reasonable to assume that All Our Kin’s programs were a significant cause of the difference in the availability of family child care between New Haven and the rest of the state.

There is a particularly high concentration of providers in two New Haven neighborhoods, Fair Haven and The Hill, both of which have high levels of native Spanish speakers. Since parents often look for child care that is convenient to their home as well as linguistically and culturally compatible, All Our Kin has helped expand the options available to these parents.

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Source: United Way of Connecticut/Child Care Infoline



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted above, family child care is an important component of Connecticut’s multifaceted child care system. But evidence shows that family child care is decreasing across Connecticut — declining by approximately 1/3 between 2000 and 2011. This creates a pressing policy problem for the state. The reduction in family child care threatens the ability of low-income parents to find affordable and culturally compatible care for their children. The reduction also impacts the ability of employers to find and retain a stable workforce — parents with small children can’t enter and stay in the workforce if they can’t find appropriate and affordable child care. Given the unique characteristics of family child care, the loss of supply across the state should be treated as a public policy challenge that is ripe for action.

All Our Kin has a promising model for addressing this public policy challenge. It helps caregivers become licensed, provides new and existing licensed providers with supports to improve the quality of the care that they provide, and it is one of the key factors in the increase in the number of licensed family child care providers in New Haven. Given this, we recommend the following:

- 1 *Replicate All Our Kin in additional communities.* Given the evidence that All Our Kin’s activities provide the most logical explanation for the finding that family child care has expanded in New Haven while contracting statewide, the state should fund a replication project to test whether All Our Kin can reproduce more broadly the results it has achieved in New Haven. There are many communities across Connecticut that could benefit from All Our Kin’s programs, particularly those that have a high percentage of low-income families and/or families in which English is not the native language. Private philanthropy has been the main source of support for All Our Kin’s New Haven demonstration. Now that the model has been shown to be promising, an appropriate role for state government would be to support its replication. Support for replication would include investment in developing operations in new sites and recruiting new participants; in organization and systems development required to support growth; in continued refinement and improvement of the All Our Kin program model; and in a database to support performance management and evaluation.



- 2 *Document All Our Kin's model.* Much thought, time and energy has gone into developing the details of All Our Kin's program model. These details should be documented in a form that would facilitate future replication and enable the development of fidelity standards.
- 3 *Develop a longitudinal assessment of All Our Kin's impact.* All Our Kin has been committed to assessing its programs, and has gathered a considerable amount of data to be able to understand and improve the impact it creates. But the limitations of its budget have meant limitations in what data is collected and by whom (see below for more details). Being able to fund a longitudinal assessment of its programs, conducted by an independent organization, would help to deepen the understanding of All Our Kin's impact and improve the reliability of the results. This, in turn, would help All Our Kin to improve its outcomes, and encourage others to adopt its program model.

Adopting these recommendations would create the framework for increasing the supply of quality, affordable family child care in communities across Connecticut. This would help to address an important public policy concern, benefiting families, employers, and communities alike.

DATA LIMITATIONS

All Our Kin has been committed to assessing its programs. It has gathered a considerable amount of data to document the level of activity it supports and its likely impact, especially given its size. However, budgetary constraints limit the type of data it collects, the methodologies it employs, and the independence of its data collection and analysis. In this section, we note the primary limitations to the data forming the basis for this assessment and provide suggestions for how these limitations might be addressed going forward.

RETROSPECTIVE DATA

All of the qualitative data that Opportunities Exchange gathered for this assessment — focus groups, telephone interviews, and surveys — was retrospective. We asked interviewees and survey respondents about their interactions with All Our Kin in the past and present, and to tell us about the impact that All Our Kin had and is having. This is valuable and useful data, but its accuracy is limited by the reliability of individual memory. Going forward, it would be useful to have information from parents and providers that is longitudinal — gathered at

the beginning and the end of the intervention as well as at predetermined intervals. This would give more reliable results, and help All Our Kin to better manage its impact over time.

RATINGS CONDUCTED BY STAFF

The quality improvement rating to determine the program's impact on individual providers used nationally-recognized assessment tools and was conducted by members of All Our Kin staff. This is not unusual. There are many programs in which the teachers or trainers rate program participants on their progress. We interviewed the staff, and believe that they made a good-faith effort to conduct the rating process in as objective a way as possible. Nonetheless, having the members of the staff who worked with the family child care providers also rate the participants' progress always leaves open questions of objectivity and reliability. While we are comfortable with the finding that the intervention resulted in a relative improvement, and therefore included this finding as an integral part of our assessment, it would be very useful going forward to obtain funding for an independent assessment so that All Our Kin could be more assured of consistency and reliability concerning the extent of the improvement and of the program's impact. In addition, the development of a statewide quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) would be extremely important, because it would enable All Our Kin to have a robust third-party rating of the quality of the programs run by its providers, both over time and relative to other providers.

“SILOED” PROGRAM DATA

Like many nonprofit organizations of their size, All Our Kin currently tracks activity by program. This information exists in “silos” — the information that is gathered about each program is intended (in general) to be used to document activity level and relative progress. However, participants take advantage of multiple programs and each participant engages to a greater or lesser extent in each of these. One of the key questions is All Our Kin's overall impact on individual participants and the degree to which different program elements contribute to the desired outcomes. The next logical development step for All Our Kin is to invest in the development of a database and reporting system that will enable program data and participation to be shared and tracked across the whole organization. All Our Kin has begun the exploratory work to develop such a database and reporting system.

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