



Recruiting Child Care Providers; Lessons from Two Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grantees

The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

In March 2015, the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded 275 Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership and EHS expansion grants. In the years since 2015, Congress has approved additional funding which has resulted in additional partnerships and expansion grants. As of December 2017, the EHS-CC Partnership and Expansion Grants had preliminarily reported partnerships with 1,600+ child care centers and 1,070+ family child care homes. In 2018, Congress approved additional funding (\$115 million) for new partnership and expansion grants.

The EHS-CC Partnership grants support partnerships between EHS programs and local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from families with low incomes. The partnerships support working families by providing expanded access to full-day, full-year child care and comprehensive services to children and families.

A key goal of the Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships is to increase the supply of high-quality early learning environments for infants and toddlers and improve the capacity of communities to offer high quality care.

Soon after receiving the grant award, grantee staff started to recruit child care partners to participate in the EHS-CC Partnership. Recruitment involved several strategies. Grantees found interested child care partners through requests for proposals; open invitations to orientation sessions (via mailings, newspaper advertisements, or fliers); and recommendations from local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and planning councils.

Directors from two EHS-CC Partnership grantees, the United Way of Greater New Haven in Connecticut and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency in Oregon, described their partner recruiting efforts and the ways they communicated the benefits of EHS-CC Partnerships to potential partners. The executive director of All Our Kin, an organization who trains and supports child care providers, shared her observations. All Our Kin also

helped recruit child care partners for the United Way of Greater New Haven. Staff from these three organizations offered four reflections on effective recruiting practices.

- 1. Leverage previously established partnerships to extend the invitation to partner to as many child care providers as possible**

The United Way of Greater New Haven relied on its local Early Childhood Council to recruit partners for their EHS-CC Partnership. The council served as a community hub for child care providers and other caregivers, policymakers, and business leaders to coordinate, collaborate, and align resources to improve the lives of young children. Grantee staff discussed and distributed information about the EHS-CC Partnerships to council members.

- 2. Encourage and enable child care providers to ask questions about EHS-CC Partnerships**

To provide a venue in which providers could ask questions about the EHS-CC Partnerships, staff from





the United Way of Greater New Haven organized public meetings. The grantee director noted, “We held a forum for interested agencies and individuals to learn more about the grant opportunity.” These question-and-answer sessions, which occurred before the providers submitted their applications, served two purposes. First, they allowed interested providers to learn more about what was involved in EHS-CC Partnerships. Second, they allowed the grantee to note the number of providers that expressed interest. This became an important way for the grantee to internally gauge the success of its recruitment efforts.

3. Highlight the benefits of the EHS-CC Partnerships to providers

Successful partnerships require hard work from grantees and child care partners. The staff at United Way of Greater New Haven understood that family child care providers are busy individuals who want the best for the children and families they serve. Grantee staff also knew that many of the providers were eager to grow and learn to improve their child care programs. When recruiting partners, the executive director of All Our Kin emphasized the training opportunities that EHS-CC Partnership programs provide. The information about and opportunities for observation, individualization, assessment, and curriculum planning were attractive to providers. The executive director also highlighted professional recognition as an incentive

when recruiting child care partners: “Far too often, we overlook our family child care providers. We don’t treat them as professionals. The EHS- CC partnership is a wonderful way for our providers to demonstrate the high levels of quality that they are able to meet and master in their program. That’s something many of our providers have been very excited about.” Finally, she emphasized the many resources and comprehensive services that support families and children through EHS-CC Partnerships. By communicating the perceived benefits of the EHS-CC Partnerships to potential providers, grantee staff could explain the work and mission of the partnerships in a way that appealed to the providers.

“Providers continue to seek resources for the children and families in their care. They want to be able to offer a nurse consultant for a child who has a special and challenging health need, or a mental health consultant for a family who is struggling with different kinds of issues, or a family advocate who can help a family facing homelessness to navigate those struggles. Our providers are really eager to provide these services to the families and children that they serve. For all those reasons, many of our providers find Early Head Start very attractive.”

Executive director of All Our Kin, and recruiter of child care partners





4. Develop a strategic, multiple-pronged process to select family child care providers

The EHS-CC Partnership manager at the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency provided an example of the provider selection process it used when the number of interested child care partners exceeded what the EHS-CC Partnership program could support. After holding an open forum for potential partners, grantee staff asked each potential partner to fill out and send back a self-assessment. The grantee formed a panel of representatives from different local partners, including representatives from the local Child Care Resource and Referral as well as their local Child and Adult Care Food Program, who reviewed the family child care providers' self-assessments and provided recommendations based on the results. In addition, they reviewed the results of assessments, the family child care providers' level of education, their licensing status, and the number of

available child slots. It was important, for instance, that the family child care providers had the capacity to retain their current children and enroll new children. In addition, the panel wanted to select a diverse group of family child care providers. In the end, staff noted that they successfully recruited diverse child care providers that sought both to enhance their learning environments and partner with grantee staff.

"We wanted providers on a big continuum ranging from a provider without his or her GED to a provider working on their master's degree. We didn't want to just select the 'superstars.'"

EHS-CC Partnership manager, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency

Implementation Stories. This brief is one in a series that highlights the ways in which specific grantees implement EHS-CC Partnerships. By highlighting the work of partnership programs through the voices of grantees, child care partners, T/TA staff, and families, the briefs aim to share stories of implementation with others in the field.

For more information, please contact:

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency at (503) 581-1152 or http://mwvcaa.org/CAHS/CAHS_home.html.
United Way of Greater New Haven at 203-772-2010 or https://uwgnh.org/education_programs/early-head-start/.

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