

Supports for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care Providers in Early Learning Challenge States

This resource was prepared for an Early Learning Challenge (ELC) State in response to a request for information about initiatives to improve the quality of child care and early education provided by family, friends, and neighbors in the 20 RTT-ELC States. This information will be helpful to other States as they consider how to continue to increase the quality of early learning for all children.

Family, Friends, and Neighbors child care is also known as informal care, relative care, kith and kin care, home-based care, legally unlicensed care, and license-exempt care. It is usually defined as any regular, non-parental child care arrangement other than a center or licensed or regulated family child care home. Unregulated child care providers include relatives, friends, neighbors, nannies, and other adults caring for children in their homes.

These child care providers can be paid or unpaid. The National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team describes these providers as “unlisted” because they do not appear on State lists as licensed, regulated, license-exempt, or registered home-based providers. As shown in the following table, according to their analysis, 6,400,000 children from birth through five years of age are cared for by unlisted providers.¹

Table 1: Counts of Home-based Providers and the Children They Serve

Type of Provider	Number of Providers	Number of Children Served [Age 0-5 Years]
Unlisted, Paid	919,000	2,340,000
Unlisted, Unpaid	2,730,000	4,060,000

Source: [Fact Sheet: Who is Providing Home-Based Early Care and Education? OPRE Report No. 2015-43](#). p.2.

Given the reality of the large number of young children in Family, Friend, and Neighbor care, States are examining how to improve the quality of this type of child care so all children are ready to succeed when they arrive in kindergarten.

To address this request, ELC TA reviewed *2016 Annual Performance Report (APR)* data from the Phase 2 and Phase 3 ELC States and the *2016 Final Performance Report (FPR)* data from the Phase 1 ELC States. These reports were submitted to the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services for review in the spring of 2017. Additional examples of initiatives to support Family, Friend, and Neighbor child care providers in both ELC and non-ELC States were found in 2015 report,

¹ National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2015). [Fact Sheet: Who is Providing Home-Based Early Care and Education? OPRE Report No. 2015-43](#).

[Supporting License-Exempt Family Child Care](#), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance.

The first section of this document describes efforts in nine ELC States (**Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington**) to support Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers. The second section describes selected efforts in additional States. Initiatives to support Family, Friends, and Neighbors providers includes assistance with transitioning from license-exempt care to licensed care, help with participating in their State's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), professional development, opportunities for learning in peer cohorts, technical assistance, peer mentoring, access to online resources, partnerships with libraries, financial incentives, and a creation of a task force to understand the issues.

This document does not include all activities to support Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers in the ELC States. Some States may have initiatives that they completed in previous years, and some States may not have planned to begin their initiatives until 2017 after the 2016 APRs were submitted. In addition, States may have other activities that they did not include in their APRs and FPRs because those initiatives were addressed outside of their ELC grant project plans.

Participation in CCDF and QRIS

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides funding to the States, the District of Columbia, and Territories to administer child care subsidy programs for low-income families. The *Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 2014* created uniform requirements for license-exempt providers if they receive payments through the Federal subsidy system. The new requirements include comprehensive background checks at least every five years; annual health, safety, and fire inspections; and requirements for pre-service and ongoing training. In 2015, it was estimated that 9 percent of children whose families used child care subsidies were in relative care that was legally operating without regulation, and 6 percent were served in non-relative care that was legally operating without regulation.²

In 2016, two ELC States, **Illinois** and **Michigan**, allowed Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers who had additional training to participate in their child care subsidy programs. Michigan also allows these providers to participate in their QRIS. **Pennsylvania** requires all providers who want to receive child care subsidy payments to become licensed (certified) and participate in their QRIS.

Illinois

In 2016, tiered reimbursement was available to license-exempt home providers who chose to complete supplemental training. In 2017, license-exempt providers who participate in the

² National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance. [Supporting License-Exempt Family Child Care](#). 2015.

State's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) were required to join the Gateways Registry, which tracks training and education online.

Michigan

In Michigan, unlicensed, subsidized providers who complete the Great Start to Quality Orientation, which includes seven hours of CPR, health and safety, and child development training, are at Level 1 of Great Start to Quality, Michigan's QRIS, and are eligible to receive child care subsidy payments. They are eligible for tiered reimbursement as Level 2 and Level 3 are achieved. Unlicensed, subsidized providers are not rated using the quality star rating system; however, based on their amount of professional development, they are rated at Level 1 through Level 3. Michigan initiated the following efforts to support these providers:

- **Cohort Support to Transition to Higher Levels of QRIS**

Michigan developed a cohort model to support unlicensed, subsidized providers to attain Level 2 in Great Start to Quality. The Early Childhood Investment Corporation [ECIC] provided technical assistance to the State's six Great Start to Quality Resource Centers to implement the cohort models locally. Each of the Resource Centers employed a Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC) for each designated county to implement the cohorts. In 2016, a total of 305 unlicensed, subsidized providers participated in the cohorts. At the end of 2016, 165 were participating across the nine cohorts. During 2016, 105 participants reached Level 2 in the Quality Development Continuum, and 9 reached Level 3.

- **Quality Improvement Specialists Target Participation in QRIS**

ECIC contracted with five Great Start to Quality Resource Centers to increase participation for family/group home providers in targeted communities. Seven Quality Improvement Specialists (QIS) served the seven Pathways to Potential counties and conducted outreach to family/group home providers to encourage their participation in Great Start to Quality and provide technical assistance, as needed.

Pennsylvania

As of November 2016, Pennsylvania requires non-related child care providers be certified (licensed) by the Department of Human Services and to participate in Keystone STARS, their QRIS, to receive child care subsidy payments.

- **Orientation Training Help Transition to Certification and Participation in QRIS**

Statewide, certification staff and Regional Key staff brought informational "What to Expect When Being Inspected" meetings to providers who were transitioning from license-exempt Friend/Neighbor child care to a licensed Family Child Care Home provider. Certification staff walked through child care licensing regulations, showed a family child care home inspection video, and answered questions. When signing up for this information session, providers

were encouraged to enroll in *Start-Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring* for ongoing individualized assistance.

- **Start-Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring in Rural Communities**

The *Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring* program targeted Friend/Neighbor providers pursuing child care licensing and enrollment in Keystone STARS. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning conducted recruitment efforts in 33 of Pennsylvania's highest risk rural counties. STAR Peer Mentors who were current directors or family owner-operators at of a program with a STAR 2, 3 or 4 rating assisted Friend/Neighbor providers in the process of understanding and complying with licensing regulations, zoning requirements, business practices, and STARS performance standards. As they progressed through peer mentoring, providers received milestone incentives such as stove guards, choke tubes, and fire-safe file boxes. Once they successfully completed the peer mentoring program, they received a tablet or basic laptop. More than 100 Friend/Neighbor providers enrolled in Start-Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring to pursue child care licensing and enrollment in Keystone STARS.

- **Philadelphia – Professional Development Course for Spanish Speaking Friends/Neighbors**

The Southeast Regional Key (SERK) recruited 12 Spanish-speaking Philadelphia Friend/Neighbor providers to participate in a linguistically and culturally responsive professional development course designed to prepare them to own and operate their own family child care home businesses. The course also assisted them with completing and submitting their applications for the City of Philadelphia Family Child Care License and their Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Family Child Care Home Certificate of Compliance.

Additional Initiatives Supporting Family, Friend, and Neighbor Providers in ELC States

Other ELC States have developed strategies to support Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers and address the health, safety, and development of the children in their care.

Collaboration with Local Libraries

In southeast **Colorado**, Growing Readers Together is a partnership between Family, Friend, and Neighbor caregivers and libraries that helps caregivers support the early literacy development of young children and libraries enrich their early literacy activities, training, collections, and services to the Friend, Friend, and Neighbor population.

Online Access to Resources

- [The Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines website](#) was designed to increase awareness of and engagement with the *Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines* among parents and Friend, Family, and Neighbor providers of children birth through 5 years old. Efforts included the creation of over 30 videos in English and Spanish

that highlight actions parents or caregivers can take to encourage age-appropriate learning and development.

- In 2016, **Illinois** launched [Town Square](#), an innovative online destination and learning community for family child care professionals. The site supports professional learning, connects family child care professionals with other providers, and enhances the knowledge and skills needed for success in meeting the standards of the new Family Child Care Credential and of ExceleRate Illinois, their QRIS. Town Square developed six learning modules and created four webinars that count toward the Family Child Care Credential. Town Square also launched *Learn, Share, Grow* (LSG), a series of short video clips that a family child care provider can quickly and easily watch on a particular topic.
- **Minnesota:** Child Care Aware® of Minnesota's website includes [information for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Providers](#) in four languages. The website also has information for community organizations about [supporting Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers](#).

Professional Development and Access to Resources

- **Minnesota** created a toolkit for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers that has resources on topics such as home safety, health, and school readiness that align with the requirements of the *Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 2014*. This [Early Childhood Resource Directory](#) (Username: ECStakeholderMN and Password: EarlyChildhoodMN) lists over 300 existing early childhood resources.
- **New Mexico** developed an 18-hour course for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers, called "Platicas" ("Conversations," in Spanish) to bring Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers together in small groups to learn about ways to support the development and learning of children in their care.
- In **Oregon**, Senate Bill 182 directed the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education to build upon successful professional development systems and opportunities, including culturally and linguistically relevant training and curricula, to offer support for the informal workforce providing Family, Friend, and Neighbor care.
- **Washington's** Department of Early Learning provided reimbursement to the provider union to offer training to license-exempt providers

Play Groups and Home Visiting

- **Illinois:** In the [Community Connections](#) program, children in home-based care attend center-based preschool four days a week. The fifth day, teachers visited home-based child care programs to share activities and deliver educational resources.
- **Michigan** used the [Supporting Care Providers through Personal Visits](#) curriculum from Parents as Teachers to reach Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers during home visits and play groups.

- **Minnesota:** The Family, Friend, and Neighbor Grant Program offered early literacy groups, play and learn groups, classroom-based training, and literacy activities. The program was [evaluated](#) for the State Legislature in 2010.
- **Washington:** The [Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Program](#) offered facilitated play groups for children and their caregivers.

Taskforce on Licensing

The **North Carolina** Task Force on Licensing surveyed Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers and part-day preschool programs not required to participate in North Carolina’s Star Rated License. The Division of Child Development and Early Education management used the [final report](#) to consider how to fund regular outreach to license-exempt programs across the State so that those interested in licensing may participate in the future.

Additional Efforts to Support Family, Friend, and Neighbor Providers

The **New York City** [Informal Family Child Care Project](#) provides a comprehensive array of professional development opportunities for family child care providers. Their [C.A.R.E. Program](#) provides one-on-one support in the provider’s home; free children’s books, materials, and equipment; access to a toy lending library; and a series of Saturday workshops on building relationships and supporting children’s growth and development.

For information about additional support for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers see the 2015 report, [Supporting License-Exempt Family Child Care](#), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance. It has information about the following initiatives in non-ELC States:

- The [Arizona Kith and Kin Project](#) included 14 weeks of training for support groups, centered on a curriculum that included topics to support learning and protect children’s health and safety.
- **Arizona:** The [Friend, Family & Neighbor Caregivers Outreach Project](#) provided resources, networking, and professional development opportunities to unregulated Friend, Family, and Neighbor providers.
- **Hawaii:** The [Tūtū and Me](#) program included play and learn centers, training sessions, and resource sharing to support grandparents as well as parents and other primary caregivers.
- **Nebraska** offered Quality Enhancement Payments to license-exempt providers who completed one or more of the specified professional development activities.
- **North Dakota:** Child Care Aware® of North Dakota offered the [Let’s Explore](#) mini-consultation program for license-exempt homes and in-home providers. License-exempt programs also had access to start-up grants (\$800–\$1200) if they wished to move toward licensing.

REFERENCES

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