**SWFI Learning Community**

**Expanding Availability of Quality Care Action Team**

**April 19, 2018**

1. **Any lessons or takeaways from your efforts with the Family and Friends Network investments you have made over the years. Why providers aren't choosing to move to formal/licensing? Barriers? Myths?**

**CDHS OEC Micro-loan and Micro-grant Programs**

The OEC secured funding to offer micro-loans and micro-grants to friend, family and neighbor (FFN) child care providers to encourage licensing and increased caregiving capacity, specifically in child care deserts, was not fully spent. The funds were reverted (2018 session) after three years of best efforts to launch the programs. Lessons learned or takeaways include:

1. The budgets did not include administrative support or sufficient funding to service the micro-loans. The latter precluded the OEC from securing a vendor to service the loans. The OEC partnered with the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) to administer the grants.
2. A contributing factor to opening a licensed child care facility is initial funding, however the micro-grant program did not provide enough funding to offset other challenges of opening and operating a new business.
3. Participation was minimal. As a result, the micro-grants were opened up to currently licensed providers to improve their quality rating. Even with this change, the OEC was unable to fully expend the funds.

**Contributing Factors/Barriers to Child Care Licensing**

The OEC does not have definitive data regarding these factors. Anecdotally, the following factors contribute to providers' choices to remain unlicensed:

* Cost of becoming licensed
* Too many rules or regulations
* Awareness of the availability or need to become licensed
* Citizenship
* Language Barriers
* Monitoring: Prior to new federal rules, Colorado had 69 qualified exempt providers that accepted CCCAP. Following the new rules that required home safety checks, this number dropped to 12. The checks were provided at no cost to the provider, and any new or required training is available to qualified exempt providers for free. Without the safety check, these providers are unable to accept CCCAP. We are not sure why the number dropped, but suspect that the check is an 'invasion of privacy' may be one contributing factor.

**FFN Learning Community**

In 2012-13, there was a Colorado FFN Learning Community that met and issued a report, *School Readiness for All: The contribution of family, friend, and neighbor care in Colorado, March 2013*

link: <https://www.coloradokids.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/FFN-Final.pdf>

They identified the following themes and lessons:

FFN providers do not see the care they provide as a “job,” but rather as a privilege and a responsibility to the parents, children and to the community. In each conversation, caregivers’ passion for “their” children was palpable.

* Providers in communities across the state reported an interest in accessing resources and support as well as information about how to do so.
* FFN caregiver relationships are almost uniformly initiated at the personal request of the parent(s). These are not “babysitters” advertising their services, but rather trusted partners whom parents seek out via organic networks to care for their children.
* The motivations and characteristics of people who provide informal care and of people who provide care in formal, licensed settings are far more similar than they are different. People who go into this field in any capacity are generally not doing it for the money, but rather because they genuinely love children and are committed to their healthy development.

More publications:

https://nwlc.org/resources/strategies-for-supporting-family-friend-and-neighbor-care-providers/

**2. Marketing/educational materials, FAQ, debunking myths, other materials for how to get licensed as a child care provider.**

Information is available online at

[www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com](http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com)

[www.coloradoshines.com](http://www.coloradoshines.com)

Early Childhood Councils can also support providers wishing to become licensed. If the department receives a complaint of unlicensed, illegal care, and we confirm that the care is illegal, we issue a cease and desist notice. This notice includes information on how to contact CDHS/ OEC to learn more about licensing or to become a licensed provider.