

*Staffed Family Child Care Networks:*

# A Compilation Of Resources Promoting Connection And Opportunity







## Background and Rationale

Child care is an essential foundation of every community – especially home-based child care. [Home-based child care \(HBCC\)](#) includes a range of providers, from licensed family child care providers operating small businesses in their homes to care provided by family, friends, and neighbors, all providing a vital service to their communities. Home-based child care providers fill a critical child care gap for families with low incomes, with infants/toddlers, working non-standard hours, and living in rural and immigrant communities. In the age of COVID-19 the demand for home-based child care increased and is higher now than ever. This document uses the term home-based child care to mean any child care offered in a home setting, including licensed family child care, and family, friends, or neighbor care.

Around 750,000 children receive care provided by the nearly 138,000 licensed family child care providers throughout the nation. A [survey](#) conducted by the National Survey on Early Care

and Education (NSECE) in 2012 found nearly 25% of listed paid home-based providers to be over the age of 55, making this group of providers more vulnerable to COVID-19 complications and possible death. A 2019 NSECE follow-up [survey](#) found a significant increase in the percentage of listed home-based providers who are 50-59 years old and also providers who are 60 or older. Unlisted unpaid home-based providers saw a significant increase in the percentage of providers 60 or older, compared to 2012.

### **STAFFED FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORKS**

are organizations that offer home-based child care (HBCC) providers a menu of quality improvement services and supports including technical assistance, training, and/or peer support delivered by a paid staff member.

— Bromer & Porter, 2017

The child care system has been devastated by the current public health crisis and the [challenges and critical issues](#) faced by FCCs have become exacerbated. Even before the pandemic 79% of states reported a decline in family child care (FCC) providers. Two possible reasons for this decline include that the aging child care workforce is retiring in greater numbers, and that there are few incentives for new child care providers to enter the field. Often family child care is left out of investments in early childhood and these providers do not benefit from equitable access to resources and professional learning opportunities.

Additional challenges include that family child care is:

- Underrepresented in national and state child care policy
- Often operating alone or with small staffs
- Often lacking support systems
- Operating on low wages

Though there is no simple solution to the challenges that all home-based child care face, support for these providers is critical for a healthy and effective child care system. Support for home-based child care providers may look different in different states and communities but they all offer a menu of services to home-based providers.

These services are often delivered through a network, hub, or system of support referred to as Family Child Care Networks (FCCN) or Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN). FCCN offer providers opportunities to develop a continuing long-term professional relationship with a network coordinator or family child care specialist and a place to connect with other providers. When overseen by a paid coordinator or specialist these FCCN are called Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN). Results from a [study](#) examining the relationship of network affiliations and quality caregiving among a sample of mostly Black and Hispanic licensed family child care providers found that providers who were affiliated with staffed networks that delivered a combination of ongoing support services were more likely to offer higher quality care than unaffiliated providers.



# The Staffed Family Child Care Network Resource Compilation

The SFCCN Resource Compilation, presented below, provides resources regarding the definitions, models of support, guidance, lessons learned, and policy implications surrounding Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN). These resources will provide interested early childhood organizations, including Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, other early childhood system leaders, as well as community partners, in the development and implementation of SFCCN. The resources presented here represent promising practices, current research, and informed consensus on the policies and tools needed to support Staffed Family Child Care Networks.

## Definitions:

**The definitions below reflect the multiple examples that currently exist to describe and detail what SFCCN are and how they can be used to support home-based child care providers.**

[\*Defining Staffed Family Child Care Networks.\*](#) (April 2020). *Opportunities Exchange.*

A SFCCN is an organization that offers home-based child care a menu of quality improvement services and supports including technical assistance, training and/or peer support delivered by a paid staff member. This infographic illustrates the leadership and services offered in various tiers of SFCCN.

[\*Staffed Family Child Care Networks: A Path Towards a Stronger, More Sustainable Child Care System.\*](#) (2020). *All Our Kin.*

This is an informational brief, defining and outlining SFCCN and the work they do.

Porter, T., & Bromer, J. (2020). [\*Delivering services to meet the needs of home-based child care providers: Findings from the director interviews sub-study of the National Study of Family Child Care Networks.\*](#)

Chicago, IL: Herr Research Center, Erikson Institute.

This report presents findings from qualitative interviews and seeks to clarify the definitions of “FCCN” and “SFCCN” and to understand how networks and other organizations that support home-based child care customize services to meet the needs of providers.



## Models and Frameworks:

**The models and frameworks below present a structure or system for developing strategies and creating conditions for home-based child care to grow and succeed.**

[\*Blasberg, A., Bromer, J., Nugent, C., Porter, T., Shivers, E.M., Tonyan, H., Tout, K., & Weber, B. \(2019\). A Conceptual Model for Quality in Home-Based Child Care.\*](#) OPRE Report #2019-37. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This brief provides a conceptual model for quality in home-based child care that can be used to inform state and local efforts in developing quality improvement initiatives that engage and sustain home-based child care participation.

[\*Creating the Conditions for Family Child Care to Thrive, Strategies for Increasing the Supply, Quality, and Sustainability of Family Child Care in States and Communities.\*](#) (2019). All Our Kin.

This publication by All Our Kin, recommends a framework, offering concrete strategies—at the intersection of policy and practice—for creating the conditions necessary for family child care to thrive in states and localities across the country.

## Articles and Blogs:

**The articles and blogs highlighted below provide recent information and resources and highlights new initiatives and data regarding SFCCN.**

[\*STAFFED FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORKS: Lessons from a National Community of Practice.\*](#) (Dec 2021). Opportunities Exchange.

This article offers a summary of lessons learned from a 7-team Community of Practice (CoP) in 2021. The CoP was convened by Opportunities Exchange and identifies best practices among SFCCNs.

[\*Building Child Care Infrastructure through Comprehensive Networks.\*](#) (Aug 2021). Home Grown.

This blog describes Home Grown recently launched our Building Comprehensive Networks initiative to provide resources and support to states, counties, cities, and tribes interested in building comprehensive networks as durable, publicly funded infrastructure.

[\*Stabilizing the Economic Well-Being of Family, Friend and Neighbor Providers.\*](#) (Oct 2021). Home Grown.

This blog highlights data that reveals the grim reality facing Family, Friends, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers in our country. It also offers recommendations to invest in and stabilize the economic well-being of FFN providers.

## Informational Briefs:

**The informational briefs highlighted below inform the reader of current issues and challenges that home-based providers face and the support programs that are available to assist them in addressing those challenges.**

Adams, G. & Dwyre, K. (2021). [\*Home-Based Child Care Networks and Federal Programs: Supporting Home-Based Child Care Provider Participations.\*](#)

This brief provides an overview of some common barriers home-based child care providers face across federal programs and services and explores the extent to which networks of home-based providers—such as SFCCN or informal networks—could help address these barriers if provided appropriate resources and supports.

[\*Comprehensive Services in Home-Based Child Care Networks: Meeting the Diverse Needs of Children and Families.\*](#) (2020). Home Grown.

This paper outlines several examples of comprehensive support programs in early learning approaches. Section three outlines how SFCCN can support the implementation of the comprehensive needs of families.

[\*Addressing the Decreasing Number of Family Child Care Providers in the United States, National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance.\*](#) (2020.) ACF, HHS.

This brief examines the reasons home-based providers close their doors and offers information that states, territories, or tribes can use to solve this problem.

## Reports:

**The reports highlighted below either present or summarize the findings of studies completed regarding the topic of SFCCN.**

Bromer, J., & Porter, T. (2019). [\*Mapping the family child care network landscape: Findings from the National Study of Family Child Care Networks.\*](#) Chicago, IL: Herr Research Center, Erikson Institute.

This report describes findings from a survey-based scan of the landscape of SFCCN across the U.S. and draws on examples from in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of network directors.

Bromer, J., Ragonese-Barnes, M., & Porter, T. (2020). [\*Inside family child care networks: Supporting quality and sustainability. Findings from The National Study of Family Child Care Networks, Case Studies.\*](#) Chicago, IL: Herr Research Center, Erikson Institute.

This report presents findings from in-depth case studies of two FCCN that serve regulated FCC educators – Little People FCCN and Downtown FCCN. The study sought to understand approaches to service delivery implementation, the experiences of educators who received network services and staff who delivered these services, and the relationship between network service delivery and both quality caregiving and business sustainability in affiliated FCC homes.



## Tools:

**The manual and instrument highlighted below are meant to assist leaders and stakeholders in planning for supports for home-based child care through SFCCN.**

[Developing a Staffed Family Child Care Network: A Technical Assistance Manual](#). National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center).

This technical assistance manual is written for leaders and stakeholders at the state, regional, and local levels who are planning to offer supports to the FCC provider community through SFCC Networks. It provides key considerations and questions necessary to effectively implement networks.

[Staffed Family Child Care Network Cost Estimation Tool](#). National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center).

The Family Child Care Network Cost Estimation Tool (CET) is designed to assist State, regional and local organizations in better understanding the costs associated with operating a SFCCN. The CET can be used to estimate the operating costs for states and communities for services offered by a staffed FCC network. This document is a user's guide that provides instructions for the CET. The calculator tool, which is a Microsoft Excel file, is available from the ECQA Center by emailing [QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info](mailto:QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info).

## Webinars:

**The online presentations highlighted below inform participants of the various benefits, opportunities, and outcomes of those offering supports for home-based child care through SFCCN.**

[Exploring the Shared Services Framework, How it Supports Family Child Care and Potential Roles for CCR&Rs](#). (Feb 2021). Child Care Aware® of America.

This webinar explores SFCCN, the Shared Services Framework, and the unique abilities of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to serve as Network Hubs. Presented by Child Care Aware® of America's Emergency Child Care & Technical Assistance Center and Opportunities Exchange, this webinar is part one of a two-part series.

[Exploring the Change Process: CCR&Rs as Staffed Family Child Care Network Hubs](#). (March 2021). Child Care Aware® of America.

This webinar presents a panel from CCR&Rs who serve as SFCCN Hubs. Learn about their initiatives, how they are funded, how their projects evolved and their outcomes. Hear about the lessons learned and the change efforts taken at the organizational, staff and partnership levels. This panel discussion is part two of a two-part webinar series presented by Child Care Aware® of America's Emergency Child Care & Technical Assistance Center in partnership with Opportunities Exchange.

### [\*Building Staffed Family Child Care Networks.\*](#) (2021). ACF, HHS.

This webinar was recorded on July 21, 2021, and was part of the series, Building Strong Systems of Support for Family Child Care: CCDF Administrator Conversations. This session focused on building SFCCN and shared strategies for beginning or expanding family child care networks. Key elements of family child care networks were shared by panelists, along with stories of success.

### [\*Staffed Family Child Care Networks: Improving Access, Quality, and Sustainability.\*](#) (2017). ACF, HHS.

This webinar introduces three resources that focus on building the supply of high-quality FCC through SFCC networks. Supporting the development of SFCC networks is a promising strategy that states, territories, and tribes can use to engage FCC providers and sustain provider participation in regulatory systems and quality improvement initiatives. Presenters discussed the role that SFCC networks can play in supporting providers, shared key considerations for developing a staffed network, and demonstrated use of a tool designed to estimate the cost of operating a SFCC network.

### [\*Home-Based Child Care Networks: Delivering Relationship-based Supports.\*](#) (2020.) BUILD Initiative.

This webinar investigates the impact and importance of relationship-based services to support high-quality home-based child care, and strategies for including these in a lasting infrastructure. Community examples and new research are shared.

### [\*Home-Based Child Care Networks: Supporting Family, Friends, and Neighbor Providers.\*](#) (2020). BUILD Initiative.

This webinar highlights how SFCCN can be supportive of the Family, Friends, and Neighbor providers and their unique needs. State examples are provided.

## Policy Briefs:

**The policy briefs highlighted below provide concise summaries of issues facing home-based child care, with policy options for addressing concerns, and a recommendation for using SFCCN as best practice for supporting FCC providers.**

### [\*POLICY DRIVES PRACTICE: Building the Roadmap for Staffed Family Child Care Networks.\*](#) (Feb 2021). Opportunities Exchange.

This brief presents how the early care and education (ECE) sector might be reinvented in light of the new COVID reality facing the field. It focuses on the role home-based child care can play and presents that SFCCN is a foundational strategy to ensure the ongoing supply of quality home-based care.

### [\*Bromer, J. & Porter, T. \(2017\). Staffed family child care networks: A research-informed strategy for supporting high-quality family child care.\*](#) Washington, DC: National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

This brief is designed to provide research-based evidence and best practices for supporting FCC providers and improving the availability and sustainability of FCC in States, Territories, and Tribes. CCDF administrators, community child care partners (such as child care resource and referral agencies, colleges, and universities), Early



Head Start–Child Care partnerships, child care associations, and policymakers may find this information useful as they make decisions about how to best support FCC providers.

[\*The Family Child Care Network Impact Study: Promising Strategies for Improving Family Child Care Quality.\*](#) (2009). Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy at Erikson Institute.

This study finds that affiliation with a SFCCN is associated with higher quality among licensed family child care providers. It also identifies network characteristics and services closely associated with higher quality care and some that are not associated at all. This brief reviews findings and offers recommendations for policy makers and networks seeking to ensure the highest quality care in family child care homes.

## Examples:

**The examples below reflect city, regional, or state examples of SFCCN services offered by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. They meet one or more of the definitions highlighted above and offer support for home-based providers in their communities.**

### Quality Care for Children - Georgia

[Quality care for children](#) is a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency in Georgia with a comprehensive approach that involves working directly with children, parents, and child care providers. Their programs include training for providers around quality and business supports, including the [Provider Resource Hub](#) and on-site consultation visits for providers, as well as child care food program sponsorship and child care management software.

### The Children's Council of San Francisco

[The Children's Council of San Francisco's Family Child Care Quality Network](#) (FCCQN) is housed in a larger CCR&R agency and is one of two networks in San Francisco, California that offers supports to providers in the City's QRIS. [BizNest at Children's Council](#) helps to launch and nurture thriving home-based child care programs and improve providers' skills as an educator and business owner.

### Child Care Aware® of New Hampshire

[Child Care Aware® of New Hampshire](#), a statewide CCR&R program, offers focused monthly Collaborative Network Meetings for Family Child Care Providers facilitated by a Family Child Care Support Specialist. These Meetings are group-driven to reflect the participant's needs and interests and to provide information around the focused topics aimed at supporting and promoting quality family child care programming. In addition, participants learn about Child Care Aware of NH program updates, essential local and State information from community partners along with other professional development opportunities.

Child Care Aware® of America develops Technical Assistance (TA) resources for Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies and other systems-level leaders. If you need additional help, we invite you to request personalized support from our technical assistance team by filling out [this form](#).