

# Best Practices for CCR&Rs to Support Home-Based Child Care



This resource summarizes best practices derived from [CCAoA Best Practices and Quality Assurance](#) for Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs), experts on the topic and relevant national organization resources. The highlighted tips and strategies were shared by Child Care Aware of America's (CCAoA's) Family Child Care Promising CCR&R Practices Communities of Practice (CoP) participants. For more detailed reflection from CCAoA's CoP, review [Tips & Strategies for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies \(CCR&Rs\) on Staffed Family Child Care Networks \(SFCCNs\)](#).

## **Best Practices: What are they?**

*Best practices are often used to promote a range of individual activities, policies and programmatic approaches to achieve a desired result. They are described as the best way to do something.*

CCR&Rs are integral to supporting and sustaining the child care system, and by specifically focusing on the needs of HBCC can make an impact. Here's how

## Assess HBCC Provider Needs

The first step in developing a new program, initiative, practice or service, such as a Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN), is to assess HBCC providers' interest in the program. This data can be collected in several ways, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires or observations. These data collection methods are useful to collect explicit data and to gather insights from HBCC providers regarding the issues they face and the potential impact of the new program or initiative being considered. Here's how:

- **Determine** desired outcomes of the needs assessment process.
- **Invite** HBCC providers to help plan, implement and collaborate throughout the process.
- **Plan**
  - Set goals/objectives.
  - Review existing data.
  - Determine the target population.
  - Determine if resources are available to conduct a needs assessment (e.g., budget, people and time)



- **Select data collection method(s)** (interviews, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires). A table that outlines the pros and cons of these data collection formats can be found [here](#).
- **Conduct Needs Assessment**
  - Establish a timeline.
  - Determine the desired rate of response from the chosen data collection method.
  - Conduct the assessment.
- **Analyze the data collected**
  - Look for themes among the responses.
  - Aggregate data and explore differences in responses from different types of child care providers (e.g., licensed home-based providers, Family, Friends and Neighbor providers, licensed exempt providers).
  - Synthesize your data. Examine the connections and meaning from various sources of information.
- **Share the findings**



## Tips and Strategies shared by CoP Members

- Follow recommendations from best practices.
- Empower HBCC providers to engage in conversations with decision makers.
- Facilitate HBCC providers coming to the table with development, businesses, legislators, etc.
- Build relationships/trust with providers so they will be more open and willing to provide feedback honestly.
- Help HBCC providers to recognize and share their value (what they bring to the table) as a critical piece of the child care puzzle.
- Create equitable opportunities and access for HBCC providers to engage in conversations about their needs.
- Frame survey results for the greatest impact.
- Present survey results in a user-friendly way.
- Use innovative approaches to collecting and sharing needs assessment information.

## Dedicate CCR&R Staff for HBCC

Encouraging professionals to join the staff of CCR&Rs and to use their expertise and experience to support HBCC providers involves building a comprehensive approach to hiring, having transparency in wage and benefits, and offering opportunities for career advancement. It is also important to recruit and retain CCR&R staff who are culturally responsive and willing to engage diverse learners by building strategies to design and deliver services to all providers. Here's how:

- Hire program staff whose role is to purposely support HBCC.
  - CCR&Rs should try their best to make this an exclusive job, without other responsibilities in other areas. Understanding both the role and how to work within the role to support the culture of HBCC should be reviewed and revisited throughout the hiring/onboarding process.
- Have a job title that reflects the specific role the individual has in supporting HBCC.
- Develop a job description that outlines specific roles and responsibilities in supporting HBCC.
- Ensure staff have direct knowledge about HBCC and provide respect and understanding for providers who offer HBCC.
  - Hire staff with expertise in Early Care and Education (ECE), either from working in a HBCC or Center, with a background in business as a plus.
- To the extent possible, hire staff that reflect the cultural/ethnic/linguistic backgrounds of HBCC providers within the service area.
  - The intimate nature of a home requires an understanding of and respect for the individuals living there. This need for understanding and respect is critical when a business is operating from that same home.
- To the extent possible, have a strong benefit package (inclusive of health, mental health, ongoing PD/compensation, retirement, free or discounted child care and vacation leave/PTO).
- Ensure staff have the experience or training necessary for working with adults.
- Provide training to staff on the unique characteristics of HBCC and the common challenges they face (e.g., isolation, lack of peer-to-peer network, fulfilling multiple roles), development and care across the age span, adult learning styles, relationship-based and strengths-based approaches, and cultural responsiveness and sensitivity.



### Tips and Strategies shared by CoP Members

- Be intentional toward supporting the culture of HBCC, which requires an intimate understanding of and respect for the individuals living and working there.
- Access a centralized location for professional development (PD) and research, such as [CCAoA](#), for CCR&R teams to learn and grow together.
- It is important to understand and empathize with the people you are working with as it provides a sense of security and creates an openness among colleagues.

## Provide Services Tailored for HBCC

To ensure that direct services are provided equitably and efficiently there are several best practices that guide the work. For our purposes, these services are targeted toward home-based child care, specifically SFCCN services, but are applicable across all settings served by CCR&Rs. Here's how:

- Develop effective partnerships with HBCC providers using a strengths-based approach, demonstrating respect for HBCC providers' knowledge, time and unique role, inclusive of their cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.
- Ensure active involvement of HBCC providers by providing networking opportunities and social support.
- Develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of HBCC providers.
- Offer a variety of community engagement and communication approaches.
- Offer financial and material incentives.
- Center equity and adjust practices to meet the needs of HBCCs



### Tips and Strategies shared by CoP Members

- Design and offer PD that is relevant and meaningful to the work of HBCC professionals.
- Develop and meet trainer competencies for PD providers and link to state registries or state requirements for providing training.
- Show respect for the home environment and schedule of HBCC providers and their time constraints when providing Technical Assistance (TA).
- Offer self-care activities and opportunities for peer connections.
- Offer business practices training to newly recruited providers to get them off to a great start.
- Relationships and commitment are critical in establishment of partnerships and creating community collaborations.
- Identify providers that can help speak to economic and business partners



**DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE RESOURCE:**  
**Tips & Strategies for CCR&Rs on SFCCNs**