

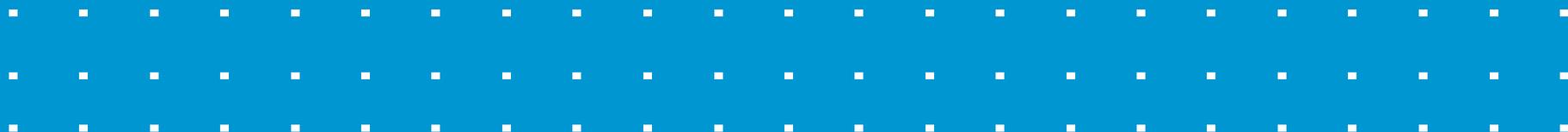


Bridging the Gap: An Overview and Discussion

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Overview of Presentation

Part I: An Overview of the Bridging the Gap Project and Findings

Part II: Looking at State CCDF Policy in More Depth -- Small Group Discussions

Part III: Wrap-Up



About Bridging the Gap

- Goal to elevate and address the child care needs of low-income parents needing education and training
- Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation
- Cross-disciplinary team
 - Gina Adams, child care
 - Shayne Spaulding, workforce development
 - Heather Hahn, TANF



About Bridging the Gap (continued)

- Broad data gathering through interviews and data analysis
- Publications* to date focusing on understanding key elements:
 - Each “system” and how they intersect
 - The “need” for assistance
 - Role of, and strategies for key federal program (CCDF, WIOA, and TANF)
 - Strategies employed by local programs
 - A focus on workforce development boards
 - Role of partnerships
- Supporting a dialogue and elevating the issue

**all publications at <https://www.urban.org/bridging-gap>*

Findings about the Need

No national estimate of “need”— yet data provide insights

- Of 23 million low-income parents, 60% have a high school credential or less
- One in six US adults has basic or lower levels of literacy; almost a third possess basic or lower levels of numeracy
- 1 in 10 low-income parents are enrolled in education and training
 - ½ of these parents work, and 1/2 of those who work full-time go to school full-time
 - 60% single, 69% have child younger than 6, 42% have child younger than 3
- Low-income parents *not* in education and training and not working have even lower levels of education
 - 2/3 have a high school credential or less

Challenges: Parent Level

- Complexity of arranging child care for education and training activities (often coupled with work) – challenge of non-traditional and unstable schedules
- Limited information about child care options
- Financial constraints and limited access to child care subsidies or low-cost/free care options
- Limited supply of good quality care overall, and for particular populations

Challenges: System-level

Meeting these needs involves multiple devolved “systems”

- Workforce development “system”
 - Includes WIOA, post-secondary (2 and 4 year), and others
- Child care/early education “system” and market
 - Includes CCDF, prekindergarten, Head Start, state and local funding initiatives and larger market of formal and informal providers
- TANF

These “systems” have shared goals and serve overlapping populations

Challenges: System-level

Yet each system:

- Has inadequate funding
- Has low priority for low-income parents who seek education and training (except TANF)
- Has policies/incentives that create barriers to serving these families
- Operates separately
- Is complex – i.e. is devolved, operates at different levels and kinds of governance both within the “system” and across “systems”

Opportunities and Challenges within Key Policy Systems: Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)...

- Relevant opportunities under reauthorization of CCDF -- focus on:
 - family friendly policies
 - continuity of care
 - cross-system linkages/partnerships
 - consumer education
 - strengthening the supply to meet the needs of special populations – non-traditional hour particularly important

...Opportunities and Challenges within Key Policy Systems: Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

- Eligibility rules
 - Most states allow families in education and training to be eligible
 - Many states establish one or more additional eligibility requirements (limited number or type of degrees, limit to activities likely to lead to employment, require to also work, limit length of time allowed, require min. hours in activity, performance requirements, preapproved vendors)
- Authorization
 - Do not have information on current policies
 - Strategies to consider: align parameters with common E&T patterns, simplify categories, remove link between authorized hours and schedule

Opportunities and Challenges within Key Policy Systems: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

- Opportunities under passage of WIOA – focus on:
 - parents with barriers to employment
 - young parents
 - career pathway models
 - individualized assessment and career plan development,
 - special initiatives
 - opportunities for partnering with child care

Remaining Challenges for Both CCDF and WIOA

- States are overwhelmed with demands of new legislation
- Both systems still underfunded and face competing priorities
 - New funding from recent spending bill helpful, but states have many competing priorities for the funds
- Both systems still have disincentives to serve this population
- Continued challenges with the inadequacy of child care market

Additional Opportunities and Challenges within Key Policy Areas: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

- TANF families need high quality workforce development and child care assistance
- Rules/realities create challenges for TANF families to access workforce development and child care services that meet their needs
- Reauthorized WIOA and CCDF both provide risks and opportunities
- Possible reauthorization

Local Strategies to Meet the Needs of Families

Step 1: Assess needs and identify partners

Step 2: Design education and training services to facilitate access to child care

Step 3: Assess participants' child care needs as part of planning and provide on-going support

Step 4: Help parents understand and find child care options in their community

Step 5: Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care

Step 6: Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care

New Reports: Study of Five Local Workforce Development Boards Active in Supporting Child Care

- Focal LWDB's were proactive strong partners for child care, understanding importance of child care on multiple levels – potential to be real allies
- Yet funding challenges on both sides limited their ability to meet child care needs of parent clients
 - TANF families only ones consistently able to access child care subsidies, others often on waiting lists;
 - Also rely on other partners, occasionally use WIOA funds but limited
- Also recognize limitations of larger child care market

Quotes from Local Workforce Board Administrators

North Central Washington: Child care support was necessary “indefinitely and always.” The labor market, they said, “does not pay enough money for a single parent of one or two children...to make a go of it. ...If you really want to make work pay, you have to have subsidized child care.”

Northern Indiana: the “number one goal is make sure it’s...a good-quality, safe environment for the child” and “not just finding anyone to watch children, it’s making sure that [children’s]...developmental needs should be met.”

Larimer County: “We have got to change our language around child care. When people hear ‘child care,’ I think they equate it to daycare, babysitting, or other types of activities that aren’t seen as critical or important. ...We have to...give it the importance that it warrants.”

Quotes from Local Workforce Board Administrators

Central Texas: It helps parents to know their child “is coming home learning things and is bright and smart—it makes me a better worker. So, it makes a difference for me to be able to do my job.”

Broward County: Wished “there was a greater realization that when you provide child care for a family, you are enabling someone to fill the needs of the employers.”

When...we bring [child care centers] to various events where employers are, what you get is “Aww” and “Isn’t that cute,” and they are very nice and they are going to sing a song...and everyone gets this warm, fuzzy feeling, kind of like when you look at puppies. You know? Nobody thinks of it as “Wow! We are getting these kids soft skills and to be able to learn the skills that they are going to need to be an important addition to my employee base.” ...I would change the entire perspective we have in this country about quality child care and how it enables the workforce.

Remaining Gaps and Opportunities for Action

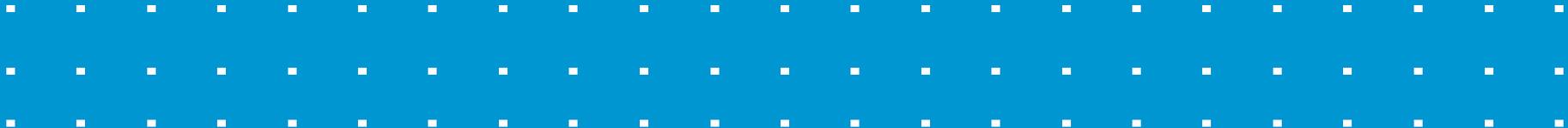
- Understand the need – explore experiences of families and practitioners; map assets and gaps
- Identify and address policy barriers (both policy and implementation) in full range of related policy domains
- Assess what works and for whom (i.e. exploring promising strategies, impact and cost, implementation experiences, lessons learned)
- Expand initiatives and implement new efforts
- Support dialogue, partnerships, and efforts to “bridge the gap”



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Part II: Small Group Discussions



Purpose of Small Group Discussion

- Urban currently undertaking assessment of state-level policies to support state efforts to meet the needs of these families
- Reviewed CCDF database, but need input from state administrators
- Two big questions:
 1. What policies do you think or know could make a difference?
 2. What research or information do you need to help you better meet the needs of these families?

Target Categories for Discussion

Discuss **promising strategies** for, and/or identify **questions** you have about:

- **Eligibility** (i.e. initial eligibility criteria and conditions for families in these activities, documentation, verification and oversight processes)
- **Authorization** (i.e. policies around authorizing hours in care, minimizing breaks in service and supporting continuity of care)
- **Partnerships** with workforce development or post-secondary entities to facilitate access and retention of child care subsidies for their parent customers
- **Targeted funding or special initiatives** for child care assistance for parents in education and training

Bridging the Gap Resource List ...

<https://www.urban.org/bridging-gap>

1) Exploring and documenting challenges

- Overview of the child care and workforce development systems, their intersection, and implications for policy (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015; [full report](#) and [policy brief](#))
- Analysis of low-income parents and their participation in education and training efforts ([Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014](#))
- Analysis of low-income student parents who are employed ([Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan 2016](#))

2) Supporting the development of effective *policies*

- Overview of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state eligibility policies and services for families in education and training ([Adams et al. 2014](#) full report; [Adams et al. 2014](#) policy brief)
- Examination of the implications of the reauthorized CCDF for parents seeking education and training ([Adams and Heller 2015](#))
- Overview of the implications of new provisions in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for families needing child care to participate ([Spaulding 2015](#))

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2) Supporting the development of effective *policies* (continued)

- Overview of challenges and opportunities around supporting the child care and workforce development needs of TANF families ([Hahn et al. 2016](#))
- Report on findings from a survey of local Workforce Development Boards to explore the approaches to meeting the needs of families and related policy barriers ([Spaulding and Gebrekristos 2018](#))
- A fact sheet presenting highlights from a report on findings from a survey of local Workforce Development Boards to explore the approaches to meeting the needs of families and related policy barriers ([Spaulding 2018](#))
- Report on findings from interviews with five local Workforce Development Boards to explore their approaches to meeting the child care needs of families and related challenges ([Adams and Gebrekristos 2018](#))

...Bridging the Gap Resource List

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3) Supporting the development of effective *practices*

- Presentation of four collaborations between workforce/postsecondary organizations and child care support organizations ([Derrick-Mills, Adams, and Heller 2016](#))
- Overview of programmatic strategies that can support low-income parents seeking education and training (Adams, Derrick-Mills, and Heller 2016; [full report](#) and [policy brief](#))

4) Supporting collaboration and access to resources

- Online discussion among practitioners working to bridge the gap between child care and education and training ([Derrick-Mills et al. 2016](#))
- Summary of conference proceedings from “Bridging the Gap: A Strategic Dialogue.” April 29, 2016 ([Spaulding 2016](#))



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