

Hello Allies,

If you weren't on Friday's National Issues>State Action call, you missed an information-packed presentation on child welfare. **The Child Welfare Landscape and Child Care Policies for Families Involved in Your State's Child Welfare System** was co-hosted by the [Partnership for America's Children](#) and the [State Policy and Advocacy Reform Center \(SPARC\)](#). On the call, we were fortunate to be joined by a great line-up of national and state child care and child welfare experts who summarized the current trends in child welfare policy; highlighted the importance of child care for birth and foster parents, parenting youth in care and kinship providers; provided an overview of the provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant that can be used to provide child care services for dependent children involved in child welfare systems; and highlighted innovative child care/child welfare partnerships in Florida. The call also featured an important Congressional update by Danielle Ewen of Education Counsel.

Missed it? You can [watch the recording of the call here](#), or [download the slides here](#).

A quick (well, maybe not so quick) summary:

We heard from Deb Stein with the [Partnership for America's Children](#), which now convenes the [State Policy and Advocacy Reform Center \(SPARC\)](#). Deb provided background information about SPARC and explained the impetus for the call regarding the need for child welfare advocates to understand and advocate for important child care policies and funding that prioritize child care for children involved in state child welfare systems.

We heard from Hope Cooper with [True North Group, LLC](#), and Cathy Palm, the Founder of the [Center for Children's Justice](#) in Pennsylvania. Hope and Cathy provided an overview of the child welfare policy landscape. Key takeaways included:

- a. Primary goals of child welfare are to (1) prevent child abuse and neglect; (2) identify & investigate maltreatment; (3) provide in-home services that strengthen and support families; (4) provide foster care and out-of-home services; and (5) promote reunification, adoption and guardianship
- b. Significant percentage of children involved in child welfare cases involve children age 0-6 with the majority of childhood fatalities occurring in infants under the age of 1.
- c. There has been a shift in child welfare from investing resources in foster care and out-of-home placements to investing in prevention services, such as housing, mental health, parent support and crisis services that keep families safely together. This shift was codified in the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), enacted in 2018 to allow Title IV-E funding of the Social Security Act to be devoted to prevention services for children and families in danger of entering child welfare systems.
- d. At each stage of the child welfare continuum, stark racial disparities exist for African American, Hispanic and Native American children and families. Drivers of disparities include poverty, lack of economic supports, including housing, food assistance, employment and health care. Implicit bias in the child welfare system subjects families of color to greater scrutiny.
- e. The lack of affordable, quality child care has huge implications for children and families entering care, including the ability of parents to work without leaving children in unsafe care; the ability of parents to seek and complete substance abuse treatment options; ability

of young mothers to remain in high school and complete education; respite care for grandparents taking care of children.

- f. COVID-19 pandemic places greater strain on families who bear the brunt of the economic fallout, and the child welfare system.
- g. Child maltreatment causes lifelong impacts for children and families and costs society an estimated \$428 billion in 2015-similar to the cost of public health problems such as type 2 diabetes.
- h. Key resources providing child welfare information include:

Racial Disproportionality and Disparities: [Report by the Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

Major Federal Legislation: [Report by the Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

Child Maltreatment Report: [Annual Report by HHS](#)

Survey of Child Welfare Policy by infants and toddlers: [Resources by Zero to Three](#)

Child Welfare Financing Study: [Child Trends Reports on child welfare](#)

Resources on Toxic Stress: [Center on the Developing Child](#)

Christine Johnson Staub with the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) provided an overview of child care resources available to children and families involved in child protective services and foster care. Key takeaways:

- a. CCDBG provides child care services to children at risk;
- b. Under CCDBG states define protective services to include children in foster care, homeless children and other at-risk children
- c. When defining protective services, child care agencies can but are not required to collaborate with child welfare agency
- d. States impacted by COVID-19 pandemic can establish temporary categories related to families in need
- e. CARES Act funding can be used to target children in protective services and child welfare systems
- f. TANF Funding can be used for child care
- g. CCDBG pandemic funding provides emergency access to care with no spending targets re: quality; no state match; can be used for programs not in subsidy program
- h. Considerations for Collaboration between child care and child welfare include the fact that there is not enough funding in the system; states face significant budgetary constraints; consider current use of funds to not produce new gaps

- i. Resources: [Putting it Together: A Guide to Financing Comprehensive Services in Child Care and Early Education](#)

Kristen Lang, founder and former leader of the [High Quality Early Education for Dependent Youth \(HQUEEDY Collaborative\)](#) in Florida provided a unique state perspective of a five-year collaboration between early childhood care and learning providers, judges, child protective services, housing officials, WIC and other human services to provide children and youth in child welfare with critical early childhood supports.

Key takeaways were:

- a. HQUEEDY was formed to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education for children in care and encourage providers serving dependent children to increase the quality of their care
- b. Collaborative members included Office of Attorney General, Florida's kinship care program; Early Childhood Council, legal services agency, among others
- c. Initiative included incorporating questions regarding child care in judicial review reports
- d. Created quality tiers for child care providers providing child care and early education to dependent children
- e. Deep collaboration and relationship building between stakeholders was key
- f. Additional questions can be directed to Kristen.c.lang@gmail.com
- g. Resources: High Quality Early Education for Dependent Youth (HQUEEDY)

[Quality Child Care Handout for Caregivers and Parents](#)

[Quality Child Care Handout for Case Managers](#)

[Quality Early Education \(Video\)](#)

[Understanding Your Early Education Options for 0-5 Year Old Children in Care](#)

[Quality Child Care & Early Education Review](#)

Danielle Ewen of Education Counsel once again gave us a federal update on Congressional action:

- a. The House passed the HEROES Act, which included \$7 B in funding for CCDBG, an increase in FMAP for Medicaid, a short-term increase to Child Tax Credit/Earned Income Tax Credit, and \$100M as an emergency fund for home visiting.
- b. Senate leadership has indicated that it will wait to act. This provides us with a window of opportunity to engage with members of Congress regarding the need for \$50B in child care
- c. Encouraged advocates to reach out to delegation and urge them to increase funding for child care and support other important provision for children and families
- d. Hope Cooper provided a brief update regarding [SPARC's advocacy letter to Congress](#) urging them to enact key child welfare provisions.

OUR NEXT CALL: The next **National Issues>State Action** call will be on Juneteenth (June 19, 2020), when we'll explore key principles and actions state and national advocates can take to integrate racial equity into policies to address structural racism.

Don't get the invitations to the calls? You can [add yourself to the list here](#), and be sure to add alliance@earlysuccess.org to your contact list, so the invitations can avoid your junk filters.

See you on Juneteenth,

Stinson

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Alliance for Early Success

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