Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation Grants - Phase II/Cohort 1

**Title:** Georgia CCDF Evaluation Project Phase II  
**Organization:** Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning  
**Contact:** Bentley Ponder, Director of Research and Senior Policy Advisor, DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will expand and increase its research focusing on early education for the state’s infant and toddler population in Phase II of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant. The research aligns with goals embedded in the CCDBG Reauthorization of 2014, Georgia’s current Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, and the work conducted during Phase I.

The research will identify and address systemic barriers to high-quality infant and toddler care by addressing three general themes: classroom quality, the workforce, and access. The research encompasses five separate projects across the three themes:

1. developing and implementing new professional development and on-site technical assistance models that will be compared in a randomized control trial  
2. creating and implementing a landscape analysis regarding infant and toddler teacher credentials  
3. surveying teachers, focusing on barriers to achieving higher credentials  
4. analyzing administrative and external data to identify where additional high quality infant and toddler care is needed  
5. surveying providers and families to determine barriers to accessing high-quality infant and toddler care.

The results from this research will be used to inform Georgia’s CCDF policies relating to:

1. use of the infant and toddler set-aside  
2. consumer education and outreach  
3. improving infant and toddler classroom quality  
4. supporting the infant and toddler workforce  
5. targeting infant and toddler supports and resources in areas with the most need.

DECAL recognizes the value and need for high-quality infant toddler care in Georgia. As such, this multi-method project aims to improve the services offered to infants, toddlers, and their families, with the ultimate goal of raising the quality of infant and toddler classrooms and ensuring that all infants and toddlers, especially those with high needs, have access to high-quality services. The project will also help ensure that teachers working with infants and toddlers have access to professional development and credentialing opportunities that increase their own skill sets and help empower the infant and toddler workforce.

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This project will evaluate important statutory changes that resulted from the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 in the state of Illinois. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) will continue its existing partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to implement an evaluation of three of these changes to the Child Care and Development (CCDF) program:

1) extending the redetermination period for child care subsidy benefits
2) the health, safety and child development training of license-exempt providers
3) the new monitoring of those license-exempt providers.

We will analyze the impact on children, their families, and the workforce, specifically outcomes around parental employment, continuity of care, and child outcomes. In addition, we will assess the impact of training on both providers of license-exempt care and on the monitors of that care.

We anticipate that the results from these studies will have an impact not only on policymakers and administrators in Illinois, but also for the field more broadly. These decision-makers must make tough choices around funding, must implement new programmatic features, must ensure access to families, and must achieve positive outcomes for children and their parents. They must also build the workforce and improve the quality of subsidized child care. Evidence to inform this decision-making is essential.

This project takes advantage of a rare set of integrated datasets in Illinois. The existing data resources will be augmented with new sources of administrative data generated by the CCDF program changes. Beyond the three specified CCDBG implementation questions, additional lessons will be learned about the use of administrative data for building evidence.

The IDHS and Chapin Hall partnership builds on the resources and deliverables from the prior planning grant to conduct this child care evaluation research. The work that has been done to identify rigorous possible research designs, inventory data sources, review the literature and what other states have done and to elicit the priorities of policymakers increases the potential for a successful implementation of the evaluation.
In Massachusetts, over 55,000 children rely on subsidies on a monthly basis to access care that would otherwise be unaffordable to them. Despite the positive effects of child care on parental employment and child development, the program is challenged by high levels of instability in subsidy receipt and care arrangements, which can affect parental employment and healthy child development.

In response to the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 regulations, the lead Child Care Development Fund agency in Massachusetts, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), is implementing a 12-month authorization period for all subsidy recipient families, with innovative efforts to minimize mid-authorization reporting requirements for temporary changes in families’ work/education/training activities or income, as long as families’ incomes do not exceed 85% of the state’s median income. This new policy represents a fundamental change to reduce administrative burden and inflexibility to temporary changes in family’s employment (e.g., seasonal workers), to promote stability of subsidy receipt and care arrangements for children and families, and reduce enrollment instability for providers.

EEC and an established team of experienced evaluators will conduct a rigorous mixed-methods evaluation that includes a cutting-edge study to rapidly apply early quantitative and qualitative findings to design policy implementation improvements and then test these adaptations with a low-cost, scalable experiment. The timeline and flexibility of the evaluation provide the research team with a unique opportunity to be an integral part of not only the design and implementation of a new policy change, but also the initial planning process of the change and the updating and evaluating of the implementation process over time.

The mixed methods study is designed to:

1) understand whether the subsidy authorization policy changes designed by EEC are implemented as planned  
2) examine the impact of these policy changes on stability of subsidy receipt and care arrangements among families and stability of the enrollment of subsidized children among providers  
3) identify and test improvements to the policies through ongoing lessons learned during this evaluation.

The results of this evaluation will play a critical role in EEC’s future efforts to ensure that the goals of CCDBG and EEC are met. This proposed collaborative research will engage EEC in continuous quality improvement and strengthen EEC’s evaluation capacity. The mixed methods approach will provide empirical results and contextual information that can inform other states implementing the new CCDBG regulations. The

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study will contribute to a small but growing body of research that uses low-cost scalable experiments to test quality improvement in administrative processes.
Title: Evaluating CCDBG in Oregon: Impact of the 2014 Act on Children, Families, and the Quality of Home-Based Care in Oregon
Organization: Oregon State Department of Education
Contact: Thomas George, Research Specialist, Oregon Department of Education

The 2014 Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 has potentially large impacts on the children, families, and providers that participate in the child care subsidy system. The impacts are likely to be particularly salient for home-based providers and the children and families they serve due to increased requirements for some. Such is the case in Oregon where approximately seven in ten children in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program are in home-based care and over three in ten are in homes that were not inspected or monitored prior to implementation of the 2014 CCDBG Act. Since passage of the new law, the Oregon Legislature increased requirements and quality investments to ensure healthy, safe, and high-quality home-based options for children and families in the subsidy program. The state also implemented 12-month eligibility and 3-month job search policies aimed to increase continuity. Oregon also made a number of investments designed to increase the supply of home-based care and improve its quality. The policy changes and investments put in place to implement the CCDBG Act of 2014 make Oregon ideally situated for a study of the impact of the Act on children, families, and providers, especially home-based providers.

Increased understanding of home-based care within CCDF programs has policy implications for Oregon and the nation. Home-based care is a predominant form of care in the United States and is sometimes the best, or only, option for families. For example, families from traditionally underserved populations such as racial and/or linguistic minorities may find home-based care best able to provide cultural and/or linguistic congruency. Another example involves families with a child with special developmental needs who require or prefer care in a home. A third group includes families with employment constraints such as unpredictable schedules and nontraditional hours that typically make home-based care the only option. Oregon legislators and other policymakers are committed to ensuring that these targeted populations have access to healthy, safe, and high-quality home-based child care within the CCDF program.

Building on the work accomplished in Phase I, Oregon will launch rigorous research on the effect of core components of the new law: strengthened criminal background checks, increased training requirements, inspections and monitoring of nonrelative home-based providers, 12-month eligibility, and 3-month job search. The quasi-experimental research project, using a rich set of merged administrative data on subsidy program participants before and after implementation, will document changes in who is served as well as the quality and stability of the care provided. The testing of two Professional Development/ Support initiatives, using a randomized control trial design, will inform efforts in Oregon and the nation to improve the supply and quality of home-based early care and education.

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