



Promising Practices for High-Quality Home-Based Child Care Networks: Family, Friend, and Neighbor Providers' Recommendations

September 2024

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Acknowledgment:

This brief is funded with generous support from Home Grown and is part of its Building Comprehensive Networks Initiative.

Suggested citation:

Bromer, J., Porter, T., Zhang, S., & Molloy, P. (2024). *Promising practices for high-quality home-based child care networks: Family, friend, and neighbor providers' recommendations*. Home Grown and Erikson Institute.



Home Grown is a national collaborative of philanthropic leaders committed to improving the quality of and access to home-based child care. We use numerous strategies to better understand and support various forms of home-based child care, including regulated family child care, regulation-exempt care, and family, friend, and neighbor care. Learn more on our website.



Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. Founded in 1966, Erikson's mission is to optimize the healthy development of very young children and their families. In addition to a graduate school, Erikson institute offers a depth of academic programs, clinical and community services, policy and leadership initiatives, and development of original scholarship and research that shapes the field.

Introduction

Family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers are grandmothers, aunts, other close relatives, or parents who care for unrelated children of friends or neighbors in addition to their own. In many states, these providers are exempt from licensing regulations and operate outside of publicly funded payment systems. They may be paid informally by families or not paid at all to offer child care.

FFN providers represent the **largest non-parental child care sector in the United States**, far outnumbering licensed family child care providers or center-based child care settings. Yet little is known about the types of supports and resources that FFN providers value and the ways that home-based child care networks (“networks”) tailor support for this population of caregivers.

The recommendations presented here emerged from focus groups Erikson Institute conducted with FFN providers to learn how networks are responsive to the strengths and needs of the FFN sector. The recommendations can help inform FFN providers’ efforts to advocate for network supports that meet their needs. All quotations are from providers who participated in the focus groups.

To read the **full report on FFN provider experiences with networks** and the Benchmarks and Indicators for High-Quality Networks in **English** and **Spanish**, visit our website: <https://www.erikson.edu/research/building-home-based-child-care-networks-research-resources-for-the-field/>

Provider recommendations for networks serving FFN providers

- Collaborate with FFN providers to identify services and supports that are important and valuable to them
- Gather feedback from FFN providers, and partner with providers in co-creation, planning, and implementation of content and format of supports
- Broaden the network’s FFN outreach and recruitment to other communities

“I think that we need to reach out to more people. As a vision I think that there is a need in our community for this, so we need to reach out to more people.”

- Ensure that all materials and communications are available in providers’ preferred languages
- Consider logistics and scheduling that are responsive to provider needs when planning network activities; inform providers about events in advance, so they can make arrangements to attend
- Offer FFN providers access to utilities and rental assistance

“It would be for the house because with that, we would be able to do some repairs or changes that would benefit not only us, but also the children.”

- Offer access to retirement benefits
- Give grants for FFN providers to make home renovations and repairs
- Give grants to enable FFN providers to buy books, materials, and equipment (e.g., cribs and mattresses) for children in care

“I think [the network] should offer a little grant to do books if the child reads or some voucher for an app. ... Because [the network] being a big group organization ... they should be able to give a nice discount. All the providers [should] have access to this.”

- Provide information on community activities and events for children
- Offer FFN providers support with technology and software
- Honor FFN providers’ achievements with certificates for completed trainings

“I think that we have the most training hours. I would like to be acknowledged with a nice diploma to hang it up at the house.”