



Family Child Care Landscape Memorandum

Prepared for
Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning

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To inform the development of the Family Child Care (FCC) pilot of the Seattle Preschool Program, this memo summarizes information about how FCC providers are currently offering preschool, both nationally and in Seattle. This memo includes three main sections:

1. A literature review describing how quality preschool can be offered through FCC providers;
2. A summary of data about how FCC providers are included in state preschool initiatives; and
3. Key themes from interviews with FCC providers and FCC experts in Seattle.

This memo is intended to support the work of the FCC Pilot Advisory Committee, which is convening in November 2015 to guide the development of the FCC Pilot.



Introduction

In September 2013, Seattle’s City Council approved Resolution 31478, which formalized “the City Council’s goal of making voluntary, high-quality preschool available and affordable to all of Seattle’s Children” (City of Seattle, Resolution 31478, 2013, para. 1). In November 2014, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1B, which authorized a \$58 million property tax levy to fund the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP). SPP is a four-year pilot program that subsidizes preschool on a sliding scale, sets more stringent academic standards for preschool, and increases compensation for preschool teachers (Beekman, 2014).

The Family Child Care Pilot was included in the SPP Action Plan, published in 2015. The goal of the pilot is “to assess whether, and how, partnerships with Family Child Care (FCC) providers can be implemented to achieve the same quality standards attained by center- and school-based providers, in a cost-effective manner” (City of Seattle, 2015, p. 7). The project calls for research on FCC preschool models currently in existence and calls for the creation of an Advisory Committee to inform the pilot design.

I. Literature Review

Despite the popularity of FCC across the U.S., only 17 states permit FCC to participate in their state preschool programs, and “states vary in what they require as part of their pre-kindergarten program” (Schumacher et al. 2007, p. 16). In addition, FCC providers may choose not to participate in state preschool programs, even if they *are* allowed to participate. It is possible to successfully include FCC in a state preschool program, but first a state has to figure out an appropriate model for including FCC. After a brief introduction to FCC, this memo moves into a discussion of two models for how FCC can be included in state or city preschool programs: satellite providers and provider networks. The review pays specific attention to cities and states with well-developed and successful preschool initiatives. Ultimately, this review offers various options to consider as Seattle works to integrate FCC into SPP.

This section provides an introduction to FCC; explains what FCC typically looks like and why it can be an attractive option for care; describes the difference between FCC and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care; describes how FCC typically operates; and describes two alternative models of FCC: satellite providers and networks of providers.

Introduction to Family Child Care

FCC homes offer education and care for children *unrelated* to the child care provider. Care is offered within a residential setting – either the child care provider’s own home or a home-like setting. The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC, 2015), a nonprofit representing FCC across the nation and offering national accreditation for FCC, asserts that “warm, loving, and home-like settings are natural learning environments for children during early childhood.” FCC is an appealing type of preschool for families seeking smaller-scale, less formal child care. FCC providers tend to have more operational flexibility and less regulation than center-based providers. Compared to children in centers, children in FCC may have a more flexible curriculum and more time for free play. Most FCC providers



allow children of different ages to play together, allowing sibling pairs to stay together during the day (Wallace, 2015). States require FCC providers caring for children unrelated to them to be licensed, but “differ widely on [FCC] licensing arrangements” (Education Writers Association, 2009, p. 1).

Licensed FCC providers are usually categorized as either small FCC homes, typically serving up to six children, or large FCC homes, typically serving between seven and 12 children (National Association for Regulatory Administration & National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, 2006; Morrissey & Banghart, 2007; Child Care Aware of America, 2015). Though these ranges – one to six children in small FCC homes and seven to 12 children in large FCC homes – are typical, they are not official categories or limits. Usually, states categorize an FCC home as large when the home requires two child care providers instead of just one. In small FCC homes, there is typically one provider to supervise children. In large FCC homes, there is typically one provider and one assistant (Child Care Aware of America, 2015). Different states have different rules for child-to-adult ratios in FCC homes, so there are different points at which two providers are required and an FCC home is categorized as “large.”

FCC providers are typically assessed through the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale Revised Edition (FCCERS-R). Morrissey & Banghart (2007, p. 3) write that,

[w]hile there is no universally recognized definition [of FCC], FCC is typically characterized as nonparental, paid care that generally takes place in the provider’s home and is regulated by the state (i.e. the provider is subject to state licensing or regulation that governs aspects of care such as the maximum number of children care, hours permitted, health and safety measures, minimum indoor and outdoor space).

In 2014, there were 3,803 FCC providers in the state of Washington and 160,000 FCC providers across the U.S. Two percent of the FCC providers in Washington were nationally accredited. In the same year, there were 1,763 centers in Washington and 110,000 centers in the U.S., with 10 percent of the centers in Washington state holding national accreditation. In 2014, the average yearly cost of full-time care in a center was \$12,733 for infants and \$9,588 for four-year-olds. The average yearly cost of full-time care in an FCC home was slightly less expensive, at \$9,466 for infants and \$7,801 for four-year-olds (Child Care Aware of America and Washington, 2015).

Benefits and Challenges of Family Child Care

Compared to other types of providers, FCCs tend to boast smaller child-to-caregiver ratios. This is considered favorable, as it allows for more interactions between caregivers and children (Dowsett et al., 2008). Smaller child-to-adult ratios are widely seen as beneficial to caregiving (Child Care Aware of Washington, 2007; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1996; Kreader et al., 2005). Smaller class sizes can increase the effectiveness of a child’s education while simultaneously creating health and safety benefits (Barnett et al., 2004). Compared to children enrolled in other child care programs, children in FCC homes have been shown to have more frequent language interactions with adults, which may boost their vocabularies and linguistic skills (Dowsett et al., 2008).

Since FCC homes are smaller-scale child care entities than centers or public schools, they allow an ideal environment for families to select care based on shared values with the provider. For example, parents might select an FCC home because of its emphasis on religion, bilingual learning, self-directed learning,



or peer interactions across age groups. Parents may also choose an FCC home because they speak the same language as the provider or because they feel a sense of shared culture with the provider.

The small size and close-knit nature of FCC homes means that parents may become more familiar with their children's caregivers and/or teachers, making parent-teacher communication more consistent. This consistency can be critical in the first five years of a child's life, as rapid development is happening and personal characteristics and/or needs are being realized (e.g. special needs, learning needs, learning styles). Parents may also choose the smaller setting of an FCC provider because of the "ample individual attention and warmth" they believe their child will receive from the caregiver (Education Writers Association, 2009).

In addition to the quality benefits described above, FCC homes can also face challenges related to their size and funding. Economic issues are one of the most commonly reported challenges among FCC providers. FCC owners are typically self-employed and operate as a small business. They act as independent contractors for the state if and when they enroll children who qualify for subsidized care. Unfortunately, state subsidies often do not cover the cost of care per child (i.e., the amount that a family would pay for care in the absence of subsidies). An FCC provider may need to operate at close to full capacity or full capacity before the provider can earn a reasonable salary. This is true "because home providers are small for-profit businesses and the net revenue represents a provider's salary" (Administration for Children & Families, 2014, p. 5). Put differently, FCC, more so than other types of child care programs, relies heavily on "enrollment efficiency" for financial stability (p. 6). Providers often quit the FCC profession because of low wages and inadequate benefits (NIEER, 2007). To combat some of the economic challenges single providers face, a number of states have allowed for FCC workers to unionize. Unionized providers may see "increases in subsidy reimbursement rates as well as access to more training opportunities," ultimately leading to "a more enriching environment for the children who attend the programs" (NIEER, 2007).

Work stressors can also create issues for FCC programs. Gerstenblatt et al. (2013) report that FCC providers "contend with a number of work stressors related to the dual roles of operating a small business and providing child care in their home." FCC providers must work to cultivate professional identities and to establish themselves as legitimate child care providers, not just babysitters.

Finally, FCC programs may struggle to employ high-quality staff and to offer high-quality programming and/or curricula. Dowsett et al. (2008) compared child care centers with FCC homes and found that FCC homes had caregivers with lower levels of education and less training in early childhood. Compared to the children in centers, the researchers found that children in FCC homes received less cognitive stimulation, had more negative interactions with adults, and watched more television during the course of care.

Family Child Care versus Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care

Morrissey & Banghart (2007) are careful to draw a distinction between FCC and FFN – Family, Friend, and Neighbor care. In FFN care, a home-based provider offers child care for "one or two related or unrelated children" (Morrissey & Banghart, 2007, p. 3). Though there are no formal stipulations for how



many children can attend FFN care, FFN care tends to have smaller child-to-adult ratios than other types of care (Child Care Aware of Washington, 2007, p. 2). Whereas centers have an average ratio of 6.5 children to each adult, FFN care has an average ratio of 1.5 children to each adult (p. 2). The average ratio for FCC falls somewhere in the middle of the center average and the FFN care average, at 3.5 children to each adult. In contrast to FCC providers, FFN providers are not licensed and therefore are not regulated by the state. In Washington, regulations state that a provider must be licensed if “care is provided in the individual's home and outside the child's home on a regular and ongoing basis for one or more children not related to the licensee” (WAC 170-296A-1025).

How Does a Typical Family Child Care Program Operate?

A typical FCC is a stand-alone provider operating a licensed program. To gain licensure, a program must meet state standards for safe, healthy child care environments, which differ from state to state.

Because stand-alone providers are the only providers of their kind (i.e. they are not chains or branches of any larger program), they often do not have sufficient funds to advertise or create websites. Like centers, FCC providers can be found through child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies such as Child Care Aware. Many FCC providers are also found through list-and-forum websites like Care.com, Angie’s List, and Craigslist. Most commonly, families find stand-alone providers through recommendations (e.g. references from friends, parent forums, word of mouth) and through proximity (e.g. provider in the same neighborhood as a family looking for care).

In Washington, Family Home Child Care (FHCC) professionals can be licensed to care for up to 12 children and to care for children up to 12 years old. (The number and the ages of children a program can serve depend on that program’s specific license.) Providers gain licensure through the Washington Department of Early Learning (DEL). Chapter 43.215 RCW gives DEL the “responsibility and authority to set and enforce licensing requirements and standards for licensed child care agencies in Washington state” (Washington State Department of Early Learning, 2013, section 1.3). The Department of Early Learning (2013, section 1.34-1.36) advises that providers seeking licensure should do the following:

- attend a DEL orientation session;
- complete required training and orientation (i.e. meet health and safety training requirements; meet education requirements; take the required Child Care Basics course; and consider additional options, like provider scholarships, professional development, business courses, etc.);
- complete a licensing application, with background checks;
- advertise FHCC plans and inform Child Care Aware of plans to open a program;
- complete home preparation, business preparation, and recordkeeping preparation; and
- work with a licensor to prepare the facility, train employees, and enroll children.

Programs that operate under Native American tribal jurisdiction or through the military are not required to be licensed in the state of Washington. However, such programs can choose to become certified. Certified programs can offer child care subsidies to lower-income families. Certification can also demonstrate that a program meets the standards for state licensure, even if the program does not hold an official license (Washington State Department of Early Learning, 2013, section 1.11).



In Seattle, FCC is an integral part of the child care landscape. FCC makes up a significant portion of the child care sector in the city, with approximately 23 percent of all children in licensed child care in FCC settings, with the remaining 77 percent in child care centers (BERK Consulting, 2014). As noted above, because FCC may offer child care to the full age range of children, including preschool children, families with multiple children can often use one provider for all of their child care needs, or can keep their children continuously enrolled with the same provider. The opportunity for families to select a provider who shares their cultural norms and values is likely also an important factor in Seattle. According to the 2010 Census, people of color make up 34 percent of Seattle’s population (Seattle Department of Planning and Development, 2010). FCC providers and the children and families they serve are generally more representative of communities of color and those whose primary language is not English.

There are different ways that FCC providers might deliver preschool services. A provider might enroll children of different ages. This could include some preschool-age children, along with younger and older children. Alternatively, a provider might “specialize” in preschool-age children, only enrolling four-year-olds. A provider’s ability to tailor a program to preschoolers will depend somewhat on the number of preschoolers in the mix of children enrolled. However, as noted earlier, one of the benefits of FCC for parents is that children are served in a mixed-age environment. If a provider chooses to serve preschoolers exclusively, then parents would not be able to enroll their younger and older children in one site, and children would not be able to remain enrolled in the same program for multiple years prior to kindergarten. Depending on program requirements and subsidy rates, providers might also find it financially unsustainable to serve just one age group, given that providers can usually charge higher rates for younger children. Therefore, providers may be unlikely to enroll preschoolers exclusively, unless there is a financial incentive to do so (such as an initiative like the Denver Preschool Program, or the San Francisco Preschool for All program).

The descriptions above give an overview of how FCC typically looks and operates in the U.S. and in Washington specifically. In addition to stand-alone providers, there are two other models of FCC partnerships that operate across the U.S. These models can help address some of the economic, professional, and staffing challenges FCC providers sometimes encounter, especially as providers participate in, and work to advance in, Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) or other quality rating initiatives. The sections below discuss these two models and provide examples of each model.

Network Model

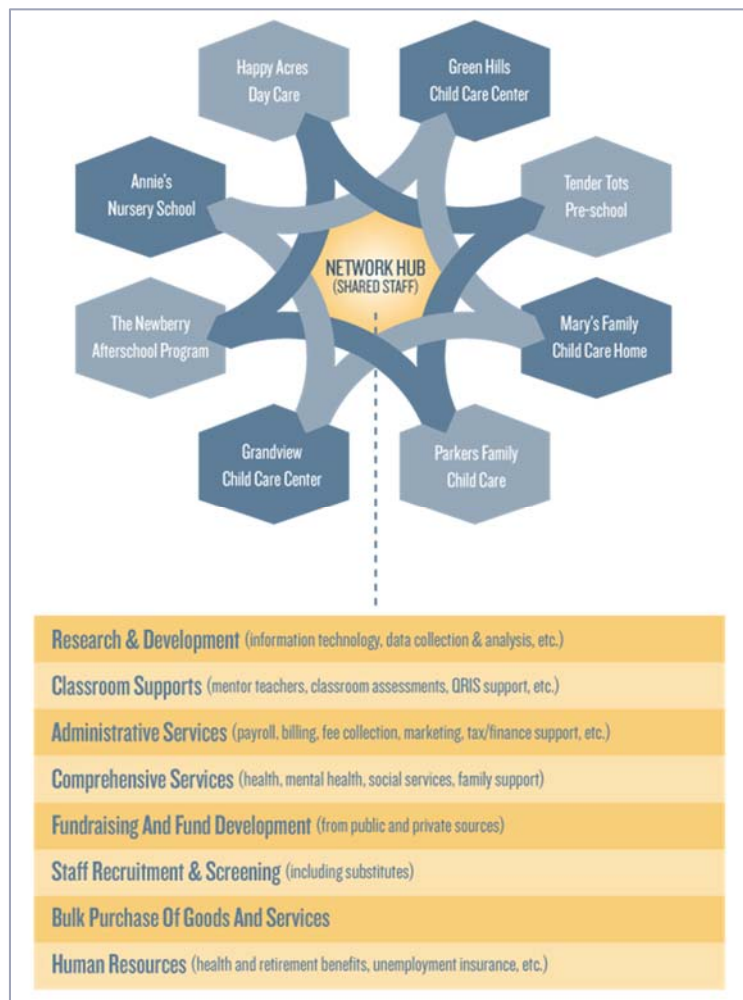
In the network model, a group of providers (centers, homes, or a mix of both) forms a collaborative network that may share costs, services, and/or staff members. In many state preschool programs, “local providers or groups have come together and created opportunities for family child care providers to participate as networked groups, rather than having to navigate the state application process alone” (Schumacher et al., 2007, p. 15).

Before they can be successfully implemented, networks typically require help from sponsors (i.e. public and private funders) and/or from early childhood education stakeholders. A Shared Services Alliance (SSA) is one type of network of providers. SSAs are a relatively new approach to providing



comprehensive ECE. They are “community-based partnership[s] comprised of small business (whether nonprofit or for-profit) within an industry” (Opportunities Exchange, 2015). SSAs allow child care providers to share costs and time, program and administrative staff, and professional services. For example, within an SSA, an FCC and a center could share services like payroll, professional development, and/or access to nursing staff. Child care providers that join SSAs often do so as a means of strengthening their businesses and improving the quality and affordability of their services. When they are part of an alliance, individual providers can “deliver services more efficiently, and with greater attention to quality” (Opportunities Exchange, 2015). Figure 1 below provides an illustration of a network hub, highlighting the types of services the network can provide.

FIGURE 1: NETWORK MODEL



Source: Opportunities Exchange, 2015

SSAs can take two forms – traditional SSAs (also called “Intensive SSAs”) and Web-Based Shared Services. Multiple states throughout the U.S. have traditional SSAs, including Washington.¹ Web-Based

¹ Sound Child Care Solutions (SCCS) in Seattle is an alliance, or consortium, of seven independently operated centers. Two SCCS centers are offering SPP in SPP’s first year of operation. Because SCCS is an alliance of centers



Shared Services are sometimes easier to implement, as they allow providers to tap into a network of virtual resources rather than actually sharing operations. The ECE “Knowledge Hub” is an online network of services currently used in more than 20 states, including Oregon, California, Colorado, New Jersey, Georgia, and Tennessee (Opportunities Exchange, 2015).

In Oregon, the state encouraged the development of Early Learning Hubs, “coordinating bod[ies] that [pull] together resources focused on children and families in [the hub’s] defined service area” (Oregon’s Early Learning Division, 2015). These hubs can bring together multiple “sectors that touch early childhood education” and give them “a common place to focus their efforts, resources, and strategies” (Oregon’s Early Learning Division, 2015). As of July 2014, Oregon legislators had approved the existence of up to 16 Early Learning Hubs across the state. Together, the hubs are intended to reach, and provide services for, all the children in the state. In Alabama, the state Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division included plans to establish a Family Child Care Hub in its recent, successful application for an Early Head Start-Child Care partnership grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (State of Alabama Office of the Governor, 2015). In Arkansas, FCC providers are encouraged to participate in the state preschool program as part of an FCC network, with a certified teacher moving between FCC providers to help with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The benefits of networks of providers are that providers can share costs, services, and/or staff members, which can improve both quality and efficiency. For example, an FCC provider is unlikely to have funds to hire a nurse, but could contribute to the expenses for a nurse to cover a network of providers. In this way, the provider has access to the service, but is not responsible for the full cost of that service. Specifically, when providing preschool services, networks can allow FCC providers to access certified teachers or highly qualified caregivers who can cover the more stringent curriculum often required of preschool programs. Web-based services are potentially an extremely useful tool for providers trying to easily find new resources, like family handbook templates; or to purchase goods and services, like discounted food items. Such services could be extremely useful for providers in rural or more isolated areas, where child care information and services are not as readily available as they would be in urban or suburban environments.

Despite these positives, networks do have their challenges. Networks often require help from sponsors, especially in the initial setup phase. Sponsorship helps to provide capital and to provide support as collaborative relationships develop among network members. (A sponsor might, for example, provide office space for network staff.) Provider buy-in is also critical to success. Once a network *is* running, it needs buy-in from providers and programs so that it can become a successful, collaborative service.

As of May 2015, at least 17 states have some type of SSA for child care providers, some of which include FCC providers. Below are two examples of networks that include FCC providers, along with details on Maryland’s approach to networks as part of its universal prekindergarten business plan.

that does not include any FCC homes, it is not discussed further in this section. However, if an FCC SSA were desired in Seattle, then this type of alliance could be explored further.



Infant Toddler Family Day Care, Inc.: Fairfax, VA

Infant Toddler Family Day Care is an example of a traditional SSA umbrella organization. It is a nonprofit organization of FCC homes, serving a total of around 340 children from Arlington to Prince William County in about 125 sites. Providers participating in the Infant Toddler Family Day Care SSA get access to

a wide range of supports and services, including: marketing, training (start-up and on-going), monthly support visits, billing and collection of child care fees, paid holidays, liability insurance, field trips, group activities, a professional network, emergency consultation, and technical assistance. Parents also have access to support groups, parenting education, and stable care (substitute care is available if a provider is ill). (Opportunities Exchange, 2015)

In addition to parent fees and subsidies, the program also receives funding from Fairfax County and through small private grants.

All Our Kin: New Haven, CT

All Our Kin is a network of FCC providers in Connecticut. All Our Kin offers professional development to help train and support FCC providers so that they can offer higher-quality programming. All Our Kin's Family Child Care Network

offers a wide range of professional development opportunities and services at no cost to all family child care providers who are committed to learning and growing as early childhood professionals. ... The All Our Kin Network, a diverse and engaged learning community, offers providers a space to convene, learn together, and socialize. Providers form friendships, share experiences, strategize about challenging situations, and meet regularly to learn and grow together. (All Our Kin, 2015)

All Our Kin supplies space for providers to network to improve their programs and to troubleshoot any problems they may be having. It gives single proprietors positive social and professional support. All Our Kin also offers assistance and professional development through consultation and coaching; workshops and classes; conferences; advocacy opportunities; "warm line" phone support; scholarships, loans, and grants; bilingual services; and benefits in the form of materials and supplies (All Our Kin, 2015). All Our Kin is a non-profit organization and funding comes from local and national foundations and donors.

Maryland Universal Prekindergarten Business Plan

Maryland's Universal Prekindergarten Business Plan (2009, p. 42) describes a proposal by the Maryland State Family Child Care Association to use networks as a means to bring FCC into the state's Preschool for All program:

Networks of 15-20 family child care providers and 1-3 child care centers that are in close proximity to each other will be created and overseen by a non-profit agency, which will provide oversight, training, technical assistance, substitute pools, and evaluations. ... The network will act as a support system for providers enabling them to share children within their network in order to meet standards (i.e., one provider can take all the preschoolers for 2 ½ hours to implement the prekindergarten curriculum, while a neighboring provider takes all the infants, toddlers, and three-year-olds).

In this system, participating providers will offer traditional preschool, Head Start, and Early Head Start. Providers would use approved curricula and caregivers would be required to have at least a Child Development Associate degree (Maryland's Universal Prekindergarten Business Plan, 2009, p. 42).



Satellite Model

In a satellite model, an FCC provider partners with, or is connected with, another non-FCC provider, such as a center or a Head Start program, and operates as a satellite to that larger program. Some of these models, like the Community Connections program in Chicago, have the specific goal of getting more children from low-income families enrolled in state-funded preschool programs. In the Community Connections program (described in more detail in a text box further in this section), children in FCC are bussed to centers certain days of the week, and teachers from centers visit home-based providers certain days of the week. Both the center providers and the home providers get coaching from a project coordinator. These actions are meant to increase the overall quality of instruction and care that children receive, while allowing families to choose the type of care that best suits their needs.

Through sharing resources, partnerships can help smaller child care sites achieve higher standards, such as developing a more robust curriculum, increasing children’s exposure to caregivers with higher credentials, and increasing caregiver’s access to training and professional development. The increased reach of the smaller provider can result in a broader menu of services for children and families. These services may include things like support for English Language Learner or special needs children. By partnering with a large center or Head Start program, providers subject themselves to stricter regulations and possibly a heavier focus on compliance. However, the benefits can be worth the possible challenges.

Del Grosso et al. (2014, p. iii) reviewed 78 studies of satellite-type partnerships, including partnerships between Early Head Start grantees and child care providers; partnerships between Head Start grantees and child care providers; partnerships between public school districts and child care providers and Head Start agencies; partnerships between early intervention service providers and informal caregivers (e.g. FFN caregivers); and other partnerships. The researchers found “limited rigorous evidence ... about the elements that are critical for the successful implementation of ECE partnerships” (p. iii). Still, the researchers offer some suggestions: Programs that had created partnerships often

established agreements, drew on multiple funding streams, built relationships and maintained ongoing communication, supported quality improvement and staff development, and provided comprehensive services. (p. iii)

Programs with solid leadership, oversight staff, and strong, common goals tended to have easier partnerships. Problems with partnerships often happened when programs had poor collaboration, different standards, low funding, and/or other discrepancies (Del Grosso et al., 2014).

Partnerships between FCC homes and Head Start programs offer an example of satellite provider models. Head Start recognized FCC “as a viable option for delivering [Head Start] services” in the mid-1990s, and created an FCC-specific set of standards – the Head Start Program Performance Standards– in 2008 (3SI & NIEER, 2015, p. 52). As of 2014, the state of Washington’s Department of Early Learning (DEL) allows FCC providers in the Early Achievers (EA) program to apply for state-funded preschool slots.

Schilder & Leavel (2015) used secondary analysis – survey data and observation data – to compare data from child care programs partnering with Head Start and child care programs not partnering with Head



Start. They found that programs partnering with Head Start had “higher observed global quality in all six subscales of the ECERS-R,” and “performed higher on seven out of ten subscales” of the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO), with the most notable higher performances in language and literacy (p. 109). The researchers’ findings provide evidence of the benefits of partnerships between Head Start programs and other types of child care programs.

In 2015, President Obama’s Early Education plan gave the satellite model a major boost. The congressional Omnibus Act put \$500 million towards an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CC) initiative, to “support states and communities in expanding high-quality early learning” (Schilder & Leavel, 2015, p. 109). The U.S. Administration for Children & Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), distributed the \$500 million through grants that “allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families” (Administration for Children & Families, 2015a, para. 1). Through these partnerships, private child care providers, including FCC providers, can “tap into extensive new early learning resources, in exchange for meeting stringent Head Start standards” (Samuels, 2015, para. 1).

Programs that benefit from EHS-CC Partnership Grants are required to meet all of the Head Start standards within 18 months of receiving an EHS-CC grant. The standards outline strict rules related to for example, teacher credentials and qualifications; child-to-caregiver ratios; levels of familial and/or parental involvement; and hand-washing. Typically, state requirements for licensed child care centers or FCC homes are less stringent than the Head Start standards (Samuels, 2015). So, while encouraging FCC providers to partner with another provider can provide access to additional services, requiring small centers and FCC providers to align themselves with these higher standards could create organizational stress. The focus on compliance with standards could take the focus away from things like teacher effectiveness and child outcomes—the “regulatory burden” could be too great (Samuels, 2015, para. 15). In a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece, one researcher wrote that

Teacher quality – and pay – should be defined by effectiveness in the classroom, not credentials. College doesn’t provide the essential skills needed to teach young children. Those skills are best learned through specialized training combined with on-the-job practice under the supervision of an expert teacher. (Stevens, 2014, para. 11)

Following are two examples of the satellite model in practice.

Lee County School District: Fort Myers, FL

The Lee County School District in Fort Myers, Florida is home to 76,000 students. Many of the children in Lee County’s Early Head Start (EHS) program have teenage parents. Those parents often rely on child care from EHS so that they can then find the time to pursue their own education and career paths. In 2015, the Lee County School district received a federal EHC-CC Partnership grant with a projected annual funding amount of \$900,000 (Administration of Children & Families, 2015b). *EdWeek* reported that the grant has paved the way for partnerships between EHS, centers, and FCC providers: It has allowed the district to partner with nine community day-care centers—five child-care centers and four family-day-care homes” (Samuels, 2015, para. 8). The Southwest Florida Early Learning Coalition and the Lee County School District collaborated to identify the nine programs. These programs will effectively become satellite providers of the school district and will have their services upgraded to meet Head Start standards (Atteberry, 2015).



Community Connections: Chicago, IL

Community Connections provides a model for linking home-based child care settings with state preschool, in this case the Illinois Preschool for All program. The model is “a promising program model for connecting low-income at-risk children in home-based child care (both regulated and unregulated) with state funded, classroom-based preschool programs” (Illinois Action for Children, 2015, p. 1). Children enrolled in home-based care are transported to a child care center four days a week for either morning or afternoon sessions, to participate in Preschool for All. On the fifth day, teachers from the center-based preschools visit the home-based providers to share activities, educational resources, and to discuss the children. Project coordinators give assistance to both home providers and center-based providers. The goal is to get more low-income children - whose parents often choose FCC providers for their care - involved in state-funded preschool, without them having to leave the FCC completely. The center-based care is funded through Preschool for All, and FCC providers do not lose any child care subsidy funding for the time that the child is at the center-site rather than at the FCC home

How do these models affect quality?

Each of these FCC models can provide quality preschool. However, the supports to provide that quality vary by model, and by state. Single provider FCC homes can provide quality programming and are included in nearly all state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). Of the 39 QRIS in operation around the country, 35 include FCC-specific indicators (BUILD, 2015). As such, FCC providers can participate in the QRIS and can benefit from the quality improvement supports that are a key part of these systems. An example at the city level is the Denver Preschool Program (DPP). FCC providers have been eligible to participate in DPP since its inception, and in 2015 make up about 7 percent of all providers participating in DPP, and about 10 percent of all community (non-public school) providers. While Colorado has had a QRIS for many years, until recently it was voluntary program. All programs participating in DPP however, are required to participate in DPP’s QRIS and through their participation FCC providers have had access to the same supports as a center, which includes free coaching, financial support for materials, financial support for an environmental rating, and access to professional development.

The satellite model described above can help FCC providers reach the higher levels of many QRIS by providing access to teachers with higher levels of qualifications. For example, if a QRIS requires the lead teacher to have a four-year degree, this can be a large barrier for a FCC provider who does not already have that degree. However, by partnering with a Head Start provider or public preschool provider (as described in the examples earlier in this memo), an FCC provider might be able to meet these qualification requirements of a QRIS without having to complete a degree themselves, depending on the structure of the partnership and flexibility within the QRIS.

Similarly, in the network model, FCC providers can access a larger system that can support them with time consuming tasks like financial management, organizing parent engagement activities, or creating web-based communications. With many QRIS including indicators related to Family Engagement and Program/Business Administration, these network supports can have a positive impact on the quality rating of an FCC provider.



Considerations for Seattle

Through a network model, FCC providers can access a broader array of services than they might be able to as a stand-alone provider. Through a satellite model, FCCs can benefit from additional qualified staff, professional development opportunities, and other program supports. Through these models, the key benefits of home-based care can be preserved, but with the enhanced benefits that come from the scale and size of being part of a multi-site ECE organization (network model) or being closely connected with a large center or public school system (satellite model). The table below provides a summary of the two models.

Model	Key Characteristics	Examples
Network Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Group of providers form an alliance to share costs, services (e.g. professional development, fiscal management, or HR administration), and/or staff.– Alliance can be of just FCCs/FCC providers or can include different provider types.– Web-based alliances can offer access to virtual resources, serving networks across larger geographic areas.	Infant-Toddler Family Day Care, VA All Our Kin, CT Early Learning Hubs, OR
Satellite Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Partnership between FCC and child care center or public school site.– Children might attend FCC and center/public school at different times, providing access to an alternative learning environments, and exposure to different caregivers.– FCC providers have access to additional resources, such as curriculum support and professional development.	Community Connections, IL Lee County School District, FL Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees



II. Family Child Care Providers and State-funded Preschool

To further inform the development of the FCC Pilot, data from the most recent National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Preschool Yearbook for the 2013-14 school year was reviewed. In 17 states, FCC providers are permitted to provide state-funded preschool, either by direct contract with the state agency or via subcontract with another eligible preschool provider, such as a school district, college, or center. NIEER annual reports include the number of children enrolled in public versus nonpublic settings for most states; very few states report the number of children in preschool in FCC settings. To extend the information and solicit advice for Seattle, a query was posted in July 2015 on the listserv of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). These individuals are very likely to be managing their state’s preschool program. The chart below summarizes the results.

Summary of data from NIEER Yearbook and NAECS/SDE query

State ²	FCC can be funded DIRECTLY	FCC can be funded via SUBCONTRACT	Responses from members of NAECS/SDE to query in re: requirements for FCC in State-funded Preschool & advice (July 2015)	Number of children in FCC Preschool
Alaska		x		
<i>Arizona</i> ³	x			347 children (NIEER, 2013-14, p. 172)
Arkansas	x	x		
<i>Florida</i>		x		
Illinois	x	x	<p><i>Requirements</i> FCC homes follow the majority of requirements, but because teachers rotate to different homes, they do not always meet the 2.5 hours per day requirement.</p> <p>The licensed teacher with an early childhood education endorsement visits family child care homes on a regular basis to provide preschool services. The licensed teachers develops an assessment profile of each child, works with family child care providers to develop and implement curriculum plans that address children’s individual needs</p>	About 100 children, <1/10%

² Source for data in the first 3 columns: NIEER Preschool Yearbook (2013-14 school year, pages 209-210)

³ States in ***italic*** are those reporting to NIEER that more children enrolled in PreK are in nonpublic settings than in public settings, which might indicate more opportunity for FCC providers to participate.



State ²	FCC can be funded DIRECTLY	FCC can be funded via SUBCONTRACT	Responses from members of NAECS/SDE to query in re: requirements for FCC in State-funded Preschool & advice (July 2015)	Number of children in FCC Preschool
			<p>and works with children individually and in groups. Programs may provide group learning experiences by periodically bringing children to an appropriate central location, such as a child care center, park district field house, or other community space.</p> <p>Currently two Regional Offices of Education (ROE) use FCC providers to provide preschool. Between those two ROEs, there are 24 FCC providers. Here is a brief description from one of the Regional Offices of Education who use FCC providers to provide preschool.</p> <p>“This last year we had one full-time teacher who went into 8 different homes and then a .50 FTE who went into 4 homes in the morning and taught a center-based Preschool for All classroom in the afternoon. The homes do not receive a full 2.5 hours of licensed teaching every day. The teachers have a rotating schedule and provide 1.25 hours of instruction. The full-time teacher visits two homes in the morning and two homes in the afternoon. She gets into all 8 homes through a rotating schedule. Although the children do not receive a full 2.5 hours of instruction we have observed a number of benefits from this model, from improvement of the home environment to an increase of knowledge for the home provider.”</p> <p><i>Advice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the local school district or regional office to collaborate with FCC providers to ensure preschool services are accessible to children in their care, in a way that works best for the local community. • Work with existing child care home networks that are supported by child care centers or connected to other agencies. 	
Kentucky		x		
Maine		x	<p><i>Requirements</i></p> <p>FCC must be at a Level IV (top level) on Maine’s QRIS, Quality for ME, which requires NAFCC accreditation, and be a Maine DOE certified</p>	None currently (previously had one who retired)



State ²	FCC can be funded DIRECTLY	FCC can be funded via SUBCONTRACT	Responses from members of NAECS/SDE to query in re: requirements for FCC in State-funded Preschool & advice (July 2015)	Number of children in FCC Preschool
			<p>teacher (081-Birth-5 in Maine).</p> <p><i>Advice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set high standards but support high quality with NAFCC accreditation support, mini-grants, scholarship, etc. • Set up regular PD with school preschool teachers and other providers-ongoing workshops, communities of practice, etc. • To see more FCC providers connecting with preschool in Maine would be good; but there do not seem to be providers with the certified BA/BS level degrees, even if they have been through NAFCC accreditation. 	
Massachusetts	x	x		
Minnesota		x		
Missouri	x	x	<p><i>Requirements</i></p> <p>In Missouri FCC providers must meet the same requirements as other applicants, as it is a competitive grant process. Our grant requires early childhood education certification, early childhood special education certification or a four year child development degree. Most of the licensed family child care providers do not have the level of education. Further, the licensed family child care providers typically do not serve only preschool age children. Infant, toddler and school age care are in high demand for our licensed family child care providers.</p>	
New Mexico	x	x		
New York		x		
Oregon		x		
Pennsylvania		x	<p><i>Requirements</i></p> <p>PreK Counts includes child care (centers or homes) at Keystone STARS 3 or 4 (top 2 levels of QRIS)</p>	



State ²	FCC can be funded DIRECTLY	FCC can be funded via SUBCONTRACT	Responses from members of NAECS/SDE to query in re: requirements for FCC in State-funded Preschool & advice (July 2015)	Number of children in FCC Preschool
Vermont	x	x	<p><i>Requirements</i></p> <p>VT has a provision permitting FCC providers to enroll children in the state-funded universal pre-K program for all 3s and 4s. The legislation allowed FCC providers who were not qualified teachers (without BA/no teacher-license) to participate provided they received supervision and training from a licensed educator:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The operator of each registered home shall either be a teacher who is licensed and endorsed in early childhood education or early childhood special education, or shall employ or contract for the services of at least one teacher who is licensed and endorsed in either early childhood education or early childhood special education, or in the alternative, shall receive regular, hands-on active training and supervision from a teacher who is licensed and endorsed in either early childhood education or early childhood special education. Under this last arrangement, the regular, active training and supervision shall occur at least three hours per week, and during each of the 35 weeks per year in which ADM-counted children are enrolled. The registered home shall maintain appropriate written documentation of the supervision on location.”</p> <p>See http://education.vermont.gov/documents/2600.pdf for more information about program requirements.</p>	
Washington		x	/	
Wisconsin		x	<p><i>Requirements</i></p> <p>Wisconsin 4K does allow school districts to contract with family child care providers for the 4 year old kindergarten programs that use community approaches. However it does not happen very often. When districts do these community approach models, the program has to have a licensed teacher and they must meet all standards for 4 year old kindergarten.</p> <p><i>Advice</i></p>	State does not keep data on the numbers of children enrolled by setting



State ²	FCC can be funded DIRECTLY	FCC can be funded via SUBCONTRACT	Responses from members of NAECS/SDE to query in re: requirements for FCC in State-funded Preschool & advice (July 2015)	Number of children in FCC Preschool
			Some of our school districts partner generally with family child care by involving them in school district professional development and inviting them to participate in field trips.	
Total: 17 states	7 states	16 states		

How FCC Providers are Delivering Preschool

Although 17 states allow FCC within their state preschool programs, very few FCC providers are delivering state-funded preschool. When FCC providers *do* participate in state preschool programs, they usually do so in one of two ways: The first is for the provider to meet the preschool program requirements (hours per year, curriculum, etc.), but not the teacher certification requirement. In this scenario, the provider engages a certified teacher to deliver on-site program support and some hours of teaching in the FCC home, in order to meet the teacher certification requirement. The second, less common way for FCC providers to participate in state preschool programs is for the provider themselves to be a certified teacher and thus able to meet all the requirements of the state’s preschool program for curriculum, assessment, hours of service and the requirement for a certified early childhood teacher.

The comments and advice of state early childhood specialists are revealing. Maintaining high standards for preschool is desirable (and presumably necessary to achieve desired results for children); however, these standards leave most FCC providers out of state preschool programs since few FCC providers have the degrees and teacher certification required for inclusion. FCC providers can sometimes opt to get a licensed teacher to regularly supervise their program, but even in this scenario, the amount of time when children are being taught by the certified teacher is far less than in a scenario where the FCC provider is the qualified teacher. This is especially true when a ‘traveling’ certified teacher has a large caseload of programs and children, decreasing the amount of time that certified teacher can spend at any one FCC program.

One way to better include FCC providers in state preschool would be to support those FCC providers who have degrees but lack teacher certification. This is challenging, though, because most FCC providers would need certification to serve children with a broad range of ages. FCC homes are not serving only preschool-age children. In fact, they are much more likely to also enroll children under age three and school-age children than they are to serve preschool-age children exclusively. In general, creating relationships between schools and all other providers of early education, including FCC providers, is likely to yield positive benefits. Opportunities to create relationships between schools and other child care providers might include hosting joint professional development sessions and/or opening up field trips to multiple child care programs.



III. Key Themes from Seattle FCC Interviews

To further inform the review of the landscape, interviews were conducted with a number of Seattle FCC providers and other individuals knowledgeable about FCC in Seattle.⁴ The following is a summary of the key themes of the interviews. The statements are drawn directly from the interview transcripts with minimal editing for clarity.

The Quality of FCC in Seattle

- One Seattle FCC home is currently nationally accredited (by the National Association for Family Child Care) and another won a national award for FCC providers (one of 7 winners from 50 state entrants).
- Family child care homes in Seattle are involved in Early Achievers. Currently 16 are rated programs of excellence (Early Achievers Levels 3, 4 or 5)
- Many FCC homes are long-time, valued neighborhood resources, always full via word of mouth from satisfied families.
- Many offer multi-lingual learning environments (e.g., Vietnamese-English-Sign Language, Somali-English).
- Some FCC providers are mentors to immigrant or refugee women who want to start FCC businesses.
- Child care, including FCC, is evolving so that everyone is a teacher. Right now most FCC providers do not have all the formal education to be teachers but when we do, everyone will be early educators. Early childhood is a genuine area of education now.
- FCC is not better than centers; it's a different path to quality.

The Nature of FCC in Seattle

- The best word to describe FCC in Seattle is diversity – quality, language, race, culture, child rearing practices, locations.
- Children come as babies and stay until Kindergarten (in one case 80% of children came to the FCC home as babies and stayed until K).
- Most FCC homes serve multiple age groups from infants through school-age children; a few focus more on 2-4 year olds offering an informal in-home preschool program; and a few serve only on infants and toddlers.
- Many FCC providers began their businesses when they had young children themselves, or their own children had babies and wanted 'mom' to take care of the grandchildren.
- FCC homes can have siblings (and sometimes cousins, too) together. It's good for the younger and older children to be together, learn from each other.

⁴ Interviews were conducted by phone between September 14-29, 2015. Most interviews were about an hour in length and all were transcribed immediately. Anne Mitchell conducted all interviews and wrote this summary. The statements are drawn directly from the interview transcripts with minimal editing for clarity.



- Families like FCC because it's in a home, it's small and familiar and a good match for family language and culture.
- FCC has many benefits for families: all the kids are in one place, family-like setting, familiar, there's not a new teacher/classroom every year.
- Some FCC providers especially like the sole proprietor nature of the FCC business.
- FCC is a very consuming, high energy business. Providers work 10-12 hours a day and then at least 3-5 more hours a week on FCC business-related tasks.
- While there appear to be no chapters of the Washington State FCC Association in Seattle⁵, FCC providers in the city have created several local associations (Somali FCCA, e.g.).
- Some FCC providers in Seattle are members of SEIU 925 Early Learning Division.

Opinions about the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) and its FCC Pilot

- This SPP-FCC Pilot-- it's a cool adventure the City is embarking on!
- SPP is open to all types of providers, and that's good.
- Think it's a good start, we want the Seattle community to know that FCC provides quality learning curriculum for all children. No matter the family income, background, or language, they can get the same quality in an FCC as a center.
- We have great support from CC Resources and from the City; we can build off the great support we already have to do SPP-FCC.
- City will need to adapt the SPP requirements to match FCC, e.g., some FCC homes will need extra help, especially those who don't speak English.
- There doesn't have to be just one way to do preschool in FCC.

Engaging FCC Homes in the SPP FCC Pilot

- FCC providers can do this! The ones who will succeed at SPP are the ones who are willing and love to learn. Find them and support them and it will work.
- The message to providers is: Be a pioneer, make this work, be a leader.
- Start with the ones in the High/Scope training; it's a natural fit to start with them.
- The group of FCC homes that has contracted with City for years – these are the FCC providers probably most ready to do SPP.
- SPP is something some FCC providers will want to do. If you provide them the tools, the education, the mentors, they can do it. First they need to know about it, otherwise they won't know or want to be involved.
- Reaching providers takes a human connection, in a training session, in an association meeting, a neighborhood gathering. If you only communicate by email, it will not work. It will take a multi-pronged approach – direct mail, word of mouth, small group gatherings, etc. The union ought to be involved.
- Creating a SPP Pathway for FCC is probably a good idea. We can create the right pathway to help FCC succeed, if they want to do this (SPP).

⁵ King County has 2 chapters: Southwest King County FCCA and East King County FCCA.