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Child Care Expansion Initiative: Ripple Effect Mapping

October 2013 | Executive Summary



Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) sessions were conducted for the evaluation of the Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project (CYTTAP) and in collaboration with the Military Child Care Liaison Initiative (MCCLI). The combined Child Care Expansion Initiative works to improve the quality and quantity of child care in states with high densities of off-installation military families through state systems building and provides professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals and child care providers.

METHOD | From September 2012 to February 2013, REM sessions were held in nine states, utilizing a group interview technique that involves appreciative inquiry and mind-mapping to obtain a deep, contextual understanding of the child care systems, synergies between agencies and key players, and intended and ripple effects of the Child Care Expansion initiative in the states.

PARTICIPANTS | Each REM session had between nine and fourteen participants, who were key early childhood partners, stakeholders, and land grant University representatives in each state. They represented a variety of local, state, military, national, and federal organizations.

FINDINGS | A cross-state analysis of all nine REM sessions identified many themes, including:

- ***Military representation:*** Most states were partnering with key military representatives and organizations with shared interest in providing quality child care.
- ***Historical context for childcare:*** All states reported a great diversity in the history of child care work, systems, policy, and legislative support. Additionally, in nearly all cases, partners could name the persons or groups who are the torch bearers, or the seminal early childhood leaders, in their state.
- ***Partnerships:*** Interviewees reported critical aspects of partnership building including collaborative systems, working together regularly, and bringing together individuals with greater and lesser institutional power. Two critical aspects of building partnerships are shared in the full REM report.
- ***Policies and priorities:*** Some interviewees reported that the quality of child care can be improved when their states pass legislation and enact funding streams to back the legislation. Other states shared strategies to overcome challenges related to state priorities.
- ***MCCLI and CYTTAP:*** Interviewees highlighted the role of the Military Child Care Liaisons as leaders in their states in facilitating group processes and momentum around child care. The CYTTAP train the trainer and child care provider trainings were mentioned, as well as the incorporation of *Better Kid Care On Demand* into states for online professional development opportunities.
- ***Improving systems:*** The evaluation team synthesized data from the nine REM sessions and developed a list of strategies and suggestions for states in the early, mid-level and mature stages of systems change.
- More themes and descriptions are provided in full REM report.

RECOMMENDATIONS | Sensitivity to state contexts was key to creating change in state child care systems. There is no right or wrong approach, however several best practices were identified and suggestions for future strategies were recommended. These include identifying and bringing in the right Military Child Care Liaisons and State Extension contacts who understand and are well connected in the state; conducting environmental scans; connecting states with system building experience (mature stages of implementation) with those state who are in the early stages of capacity building for mentoring; and creating a forum for sharing successes and strategies.

CONTACT INFORMATION | If you have questions or comments about this evaluation report or method, you may contact Kit Alviz (612-625-8271 or oralviz002@umn.edu). If you have questions or comments about the Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project (CYTTAP), you may contact Tonia Durden (402-472-6578 or tdurden2@unl.edu) or Claudia Mincemoyer (814-863-5879 or cxm324@psu.edu).

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