Strategies for Supporting Quality in Kith and Kin Child Care: Findings from the Early Head Start Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot Evaluation

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Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot

- 23 Early Head Start programs
- 10 to 50 enrollment slots per site
- Services available to caregivers of Early Head Start children
- Primary services: home visits, materials and equipment, group events
Pilot Site Locations
Research Questions

- What are the characteristics of enrolled families?
- What are the characteristics of kith and kin caregivers in the pilot?
- What program models are sites developing?
- How is the pilot being implemented and what services are provided?
- What community partnerships have sites formed?
- What is the quality of care provided?
Data Sources and Methods

- 2 rounds of site visits
  - Staff interviews
  - Parent and caregiver focus groups
  - Case reviews

- Program recordkeeping system

- In-home observations
  - CCAT-R
  - Arnett
  - Caregiver interview
The pilot served high-need families.

- All families were enrolled in Early Head Start
- One-fifth of parents were teens
- Majority of families lived in rural areas
- Families had few child care options
- 16% of children had a disability or delay
Most caregivers were relatives; nearly half were grandparents.

- A few sites served fathers, foster parents, or family child care providers
- 13% spoke a primary language other than English
- Mean age was 41; 8% were over 60
- One-third had not completed high school
- Many had social service/health care needs
Most child care arrangements were stable and fairly intensive.

- Average duration of arrangements was 17 months by the end of the evaluation.
- More than half of children in care more than 20 hours per week; 40 percent in care more than 30 hours per week.
- Nearly 30% of caregivers received compensation; 16% received a child care subsidy.
Caregiver Enrollment

- 526 caregivers enrolled over 2 year period
- Caregivers enrolled for 9 months, on average
- Most caregivers left the pilot because of change in eligibility:
  - Family no longer in Early Head Start
  - Caregiver no longer providing child care
On average, caregivers received nine home visits, about one per month.

Home visits involved:

- Child-caregiver activity
- Discussion of child development topic
- Discussion of caregiver and family service needs
- Completion of home visit record
- Home safety check
Two-thirds of caregivers received materials/equipment.
Nearly one third of caregivers participated in at least one group event.

Group events included:

- Caregiver trainings
- Caregiver support groups
- Playgroups for families
- Field trips and other special events
Improving parent-caregiver relationships became an important focus.

- Discussed ways to improve family communication
- Shared written information about home visit with parent
- Conducted joint visits with parent and caregiver
- Held family group events for caregivers, parents, and children
In-Home Quality Observations

- Child Care Assessment Tool for Relatives (CCAT-R)
  - Time sampling of child-caregiver interactions
  - Materials checklist
  - Health and safety checklist

- Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale

- Caregiver interview
Health and Safety of Caregiving Environments

- Enough light: 96%
- Clean indoor space: 90%
- Children unrestrained: 88%
- No protruding nails: 79%
- Smoke detectors: 66%
- Electrical cords seured: 40%
- Safety caps on sockets: 30%
- Dangerous substances locked: 23%
Availability of Developmentally-Appropriate Materials

Percent of Caregivers

- Soft toys: 99%
- Books: 96%
- Pretend play items: 88%
- Push/pull toys: 88%
- Musical/talking toys: 85%
- Riding toys: 83%
- Color, size, shape toys: 77%
- Fine motor toys: 60%
- Puzzles: 57%
Percentage of Observation Periods in which Caregiver Speaks to Child

- Any Talk: 69%
- Responds to Child: 29%
- Directs Child Action: 23%
- Names or Labels: 15%
- Repeats or Builds: 10%
- Other Talk: 47%
Percentage of Observation Periods with Child-Caregiver Activities

- Promotes Concept Learning: 41%
- Experiments with Object: 34%
- Shows How To Do Something: 33%
- Interacts with Books: 15%
- Tells Stories, Sings, Rhymes: 12%
- Does Own Activities that Exclude Child: 17%

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Percentage of Observation Periods in which Child Attended to People or Objects

- Safe Materials or Objects: 84%
- Caregiver: 75%
- Other Children: 19%
- Other Adults: 14%
- Television or Video: 8%
- Dangerous Objects: 0.4%
Percentage of Observation Periods with Incidents of Nurturing Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent of Observation Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Nurturing Behavior</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds, Pats, or Touches Child</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisses or Hugs Child</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforts Child if Upset</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Percentage of Observation Periods with Incidents of Harsh Behavior

- Any Harsh Behavior: 5
- Restrains Child: 0.7
- Handles Child Roughly: 0.7
- Criticizes, Shames, Teases Child: 0.5
- Ignores Child: 4
Implementation Lessons

- Housing kith and kin initiatives within programs for families with young children facilitates recruitment.

- Programs should seek staff who are:
  - knowledgeable about child development
  - able to build rapport with caregivers

- Programs can realistically complete 2 home visits a month.

- Services should be individualized to the needs of the caregiver and child.
Implementation Lessons (cont.)

- Building trust with caregivers is an essential precursor to suggesting change in caregiving practices.
- Early attention to home safety is important.
- Group events should be tailored to the needs and interests of caregivers; incentives encourage participation.
- Caregivers responded positively to books, toys, and equipment provided by the program.