



Improving the quality of family, friend and neighbor care

Fundamental facts from the
2004 Minnesota child care survey



This fact sheet refers to family, friend and neighbor caregivers as FFN and refers to FFN serving children through payments from the Child Care Assistance Program as CCAP FFN. This fact sheet also includes findings summarized from an observational study of FFN and CCAP FFN and a focus group study of immigrant and refugee FFN.

FFN want to provide high-quality care.

- 81 percent of FFN caregivers are eager (43 percent) or open (38 percent) for support from child development specialists and interaction with other FFN to improve the quality of their caregiving.
- 19 percent can be considered to be independent or uninterested in support and interaction.
- Eager FFN tend to be paid, nonrelatives averaging 24 hours per week of care.
- Open FFN tend to be a mix of unpaid relatives and nonrelatives averaging 17 hours per week.
- Independent FFN tend to be unpaid relatives averaging 12 hours per week. No more than 5 percent would very likely attend a workshop or learning opportunity.

FFN caregivers are motivated to improve the quality of their caregiving because they want to promote the development of the children in their care.

FFN want more information about school readiness and child safety.

- FFN would find information about how to help children learn and do well in school (58 percent) and child safety (53 percent) “very helpful.”
- Two-thirds or more of CCAP FFN would find this information very helpful, along with information on how to help children with speech problems and learning disabilities.
- Over half of FFN caregivers say that when a problem comes up while taking care of a child, they get ideas or information from the child’s parent or guardian (55 percent), followed by family members (24 percent) or through their own experience or resources (15 percent), books or handouts (12 percent) and from friends or neighbors (10 percent).
- Immigrant and refugee FFN say they do not have adequate information, especially on nutrition, health and safety, and they would like to meet with other FFN providers to learn from one another.

FFN, especially CCAP FFN, want access to resources in the formal system.

- 66 percent of CCAP FFN would find it “very helpful” to have access to a government subsidized food program, higher than FFN generally (30 percent).

continued

- 72 percent of CCAP FFN and 38 percent of FFN would find it “very helpful” to have access to “small grants to pay for books, educational toys and games and other materials needed to teach children the skills they need for school.”
- 55 percent of CCAP FFN and 31 percent of FFN would find it “very helpful” to have access to an organization or program to get safety equipment or supplies.
- Recent immigrants and refugee caregivers would like toys, books and food.

CCAP FFN have greater interest in licensure than do FFN overall.

- 52 percent of CCAP FFN say they are “very interested” (31 percent) or “somewhat interested” (21 percent) in getting licensed as a child care provider, compared with 18 percent of FFN overall.
- Interest in licensure is higher among FFN in the Metro area and among nonrelatives.
- Recent immigrant and refugee caregivers have little interest in becoming licensed due to personal life situations (language; age; living in apartment complexes, trailer homes or homes in unhealthy conditions or lack of social security numbers).

Target FFN outreach that builds on natural connections.

- Recognize the diversity of FFN goals and motivations.
- Differentiate the F (family) from the FN (friend and neighbor) in outreach efforts.
- Frame FFN outreach around school readiness.
- Use relationships and personal methods rather than fliers and posters.

- Work with unconventional channels and culture-specific organizations and places, as well as natural networks and places where families visit and congregate such as grocery stores, parks and community centers.

Offer FFN localized, neighborhood-based learning opportunities.

- FFN are more likely to attend child care learning opportunities if they are held at a neighborhood school, a local library, a church or place of worship or a community or cultural center.
- Offer incentives to participate such as books, games, art supplies and safety supplies.
- Pay attention to language, culture, literacy and time of day. More than a quarter of FFN interested in attending learning opportunities say conflicts with work schedules are a possible barrier to participation.

Improve FFN quality of care by increasing intentionality of the care.

The observational study of FFN caregivers found that they could use resources and support to:

- Be more purposeful and planful in the care without rigidly structuring the learning environment.
- Take advantage of natural learning opportunities to teach language, math and social skills and to talk about feelings.
- Consistently foster cooperative playing, sharing, turn-taking and self-regulation.
- Increase the number of age-appropriate books, art materials and opportunities to use pre-math skills in everyday activities.
- Engage children in more reading, math, music, art and dance.
- Set limits on television use.
- Focus on consistent hand washing by children and adults.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Download fact sheets and full research reports—*Child Care Use in Minnesota and Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers*—at www.wilderresearch.org. 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and conducted by Wilder Research, Richard Chase study director.

Additional reports available through the Minnesota Department of Human Services: Tout, K., and Zaslow, M. (Child Trends). (2006). *Observations of Family, Friend and Neighbor Care in Minnesota: A Report of the Minnesota Child Care Policy Research Partnership* funded with the support of a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Bureau (Project Number 90YE0010) and Vang, C. (Chia Consulting). (2006). *Family, Friends and Neighbor Child Care Providers in Recent Immigrant and Refugee Communities*. Download full reports at www.dhs.state.mn.us.

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