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CCDBG State Plan Reported Activities to Support Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Immigrant Communities

By Danielle Ewen, Aaron Nelson, and Hannah Matthews

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Children born to immigrant parents are a large and rapidly growing segment of the nation's child population. There are more than 5 million young children of immigrants in the United States, comprising approximately 22 percent of all children under the age of six. Nearly all of these children (93 percent) are U.S. citizens.¹ Children born to immigrant parents often face multiple risk factors that would make their participation in quality early education programs particularly beneficial; yet, these children are less likely to participate in such programs.² The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) conducted research to identify the barriers that are preventing children of immigrants from participating in quality child care and early education programs. CLASP found that immigrant families are often unaware of child care and early education programs and services in their communities; that many child care and early education programs are unavailable or inaccessible to immigrant families; and that many child care and early education programs are not responsive to the diverse needs of children of immigrants.³ To help states address these major barriers of awareness, accessibility and responsiveness, CLASP offers the following broad recommendations for policymakers and other actors:

- Promote coordination and collaboration between the child care and early education and the immigrant- and refugee-serving communities;
- Design child care and early education programs and policies that intentionally address the needs of immigrant families with young children;
- Strengthen child care and early education systems to improve and expand access to high-quality services for young children in immigrant families; and
- Build the linguistic and cultural competency of state and local agencies and child care and early education programs.⁴

State policies can assist or deter immigrant families from accessing high-quality early care and education programs. In this paper, we explore state reported activities that support the above recommendations for eliminating barriers to access for immigrant families and that help to ensure that programs are more responsive to the diverse needs of immigrant families.

Methodology

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the largest source of federal child care funding to states. States are required to submit a biennial plan reporting on their activities through CCDBG, including information on child care subsidy policies for families with children up to age 13 and descriptions of quality improvement initiatives funded through the block grant. Information for this paper was gathered by reviewing CCDBG state plans for federal fiscal year 2006-2007 from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.⁵ Plans were reviewed for references to initiatives that would support immigrant families and/or providers, Limited English Proficient families (LEP) and/or providers, English Language Learner (ELL) children, or linguistic and cultural diversity. Information presented in this paper is not meant to be representative of all state initiatives to support these groups, but is designed to give a sense of the types of activities reported in the CCDBG plans. We recognize that additional states may be doing some of the activities described in this paper through CCDBG or other funding sources, but may not have explicitly mentioned these activities within their state plan for FFY 2006-2007. It is important to note that the state plans represent activities the state intended to carry out at the beginning of the grant period; not all initiatives may have been implemented during the period of the plans.

State Reported Activities

Promote coordination and collaboration between the child care and early education and the immigrant-and refugee-serving communities.

In some states, CCDBG funds are being used to foster coordination and establish collaborative relationships between state agencies and immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations and communities. While few states explicitly report these kinds of activities, plans from a handful of states suggest that this policy goal has been pursued in the following ways:

- Two states—**Delaware** and **Utah**—involved immigrant- and refugee-serving communities in the development of early learning guidelines.
 - **Delaware** included minority-language community groups in its statewide advisory and local focus groups that informed the development of their early learning guidelines.
 - **Utah** assembled an early learning guidelines’ development team that represented diverse cultural groups. The team included Centro de la Familia, a nonprofit organization that works to meet the needs of the Latino population in the state.

- **Washington** reports that its public comment process for the CCDBG plan included submitting the draft document to a Culturally Specific Child Care Task Force.

- The **District of Columbia** reports that Vietnamese and Spanish interpretation services were provided at the district-wide public hearing to allow the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services as described in the state plan.

Design child care and early education programs and policies that intentionally address the needs of immigrant families with young children.

Many states have used CCDBG funds to develop and implement child care and early education policies and programs that address the needs of LEP families with young children, as well as policies that support immigrant families and providers. Approaches to this policy goal reported in the CCDBG state plans include the following:

- Fourteen states—**Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin**—report allowing parents to count English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as an eligible work activity when applying for child care assistance.
- Eight states—**California, District of Columbia, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Texas**—report that they have funded consumer education initiatives to improve access to child care for language minority families. Three of these states—**Illinois, North Carolina, and Rhode Island**—have conducted outreach to specifically inform families about their state child care assistance program.
 - In **Illinois**, state administrators worked with child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to distribute brochures about child care assistance to Spanish-speaking providers through mailings, community events and organizations, and through local government offices.
 - The **Minnesota** Department of Human Services contracts with the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network and local CCR&Rs to translate and disseminate brochures about choosing quality child care and other consumer education materials to a wide variety of audiences.
 - In **North Carolina**, information about the subsidy program and eligibility requirements is presented, upon request, to groups that work directly with families. Information has been shared with some immigrant-serving organizations including the Refugee Advisory Council, which included representatives from Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Family Services, and the North Carolina Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.
 - **Texas** has a 211 information line that includes information about accessing child care assistance in 90 languages.

- Six states—**Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma** and **Rhode Island**—report translating child care assistance applications and other pertinent documents or materials to increase access to the child care assistance program for LEP families.
 - The **Massachusetts** Office of Child Care Services translates licensing regulations, forms, orientation packets, educational brochures, and policies into parents’ and providers’ first languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, Cantonese, Khmer, and Vietnamese.
 - **Michigan, North Carolina, and Oklahoma** have made their applications available in Spanish.
 - **New York**’s application is available in six languages—Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and English.
 - **Oklahoma** and **Rhode Island** created publications in Spanish to inform families about applying for child care assistance.

- Six states—**Connecticut, District of Columbia, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, and Oklahoma**—report that they have provided bi- or multilingual services to help LEP families interact with the state child care program or obtain information about available child care.
 - **Connecticut** provides bilingual staff, where possible, to travel and meet with families to determine eligibility for the child care assistance program.
 - The **District of Columbia** Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) has bilingual staff who can communicate with French-, Vietnamese-, Amharic-, and Spanish-speaking customers. OECD staff use language line services to communicate with customers who speak additional languages.⁶
 - **Minnesota** provides statewide bilingual child care resource and referral services in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.
 - **Oklahoma** has funded a telephone translation service that state employees can access during child care assistance interviews to communicate with applicants in any language. Additionally, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services funds a staff member at the Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association who is available to assist Spanish-speaking parents and child care providers.

- Three states—**Massachusetts, New York, and Washington**—report that they have policies in place to make their child care licensing regulations more accessible to providers from language minority or immigrant communities.
 - In **Massachusetts**, licensing regulations are available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Khmer, and Portuguese.
 - Staff from the **Washington** agency administering child care and early learning regularly attend child care provider meetings. The focus of all meetings has been to address concerns and answer questions regarding child care licensing policy and practice; several of the meetings have been held in Spanish.

- Three states—**Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York**—report translating forms for providers participating in the child care subsidy system.
 - **Michigan** has translated the provider Certificate/Notice of Authorization into Spanish.
 - **New York** has translated into Spanish the enrollment form for legally-exempt family and in-home child care providers, the enrollment form for legally-exempt group child care providers, instructions for administration of medication, and employment of a minor forms.
- **Wyoming** reports that it has made changes to its child care licensing rules to better support the needs of bilingual and culturally diverse children by requiring that each individual working directly with children in a licensed child care facility complete training that addresses bilingualism, cultural values, race, and ethnicity every two years.
- In the **District of Columbia**, OECD requires all grantees serving LEP families to assist in the review and field-testing of all translated materials to ensure that they are linguistically and culturally appropriate for the intended audiences. Some grantees may also be required to help translate brief documents, such as flyers, in a short turnaround time to provide timely information to target communities.

Strengthen child care and early education systems to improve and expand access to high-quality services for young children in immigrant families.

Several states report policies designed to improve and expand access to high-quality services for young children in immigrant families, migrant families, and LEP families.

- As a condition of participation in the child care subsidy program, **Indiana** reports that it requires all providers to sign an assurance that the provider has a plan in place to communicate with all families that do not speak English. In addition, the state requires that organizations working as intake agents for the subsidy program be able to accommodate culturally diverse populations, including families with language barriers.
- The **District of Columbia** reports that it has authorized the Spanish Education Development Center and The Calvary Bilingual Learning Center, two non-profit organizations, to determine child care assistance eligibility for their constituencies.
- Three states—**Oregon, Virginia, and Wisconsin**—report that they use CCDBG funds to provide contracts with community-based agencies to ensure that children of migrant farm workers have access to affordable child care or Head Start services.

- The **District of Columbia** has launched “The Out-of-School Time Initiative” that funds competitive grants to increase the number of out-of-school time programs for children in immigrant communities with a specific focus on Asian, African, Central and South American, and Caribbean communities. One of the programs funded by this initiative is the Safe Place for Learning, an afterschool program operated by the Vietnamese-American Community Service Center that provides tutoring, including ESL classes, and mentoring services to school-age children from LEP Asian and African immigrant communities.
- Two states—**California** and **Minnesota**—report that they have developed or are developing child outcome measures that evaluate the progress of ELL children enrolled in child care and early education programs.
 - **California**’s “Desired Result Development Profile” system is being redesigned to measure both the English and Spanish language acquisition of ELL children.
 - **Minnesota** reports that its Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) can be used to address issues of cultural and linguistic inclusion in both curriculum development and child outcome assessments. The goal is for the ECIP to lead to authentic, curriculum-embedded performance assessment practices that are fair to all cultures, language groups, and developmental levels.
- Two states—**New York** and **Texas**—report that they conducted their child care market rate surveys in more than one language.
 - **New York** conducted its telephone survey in English and Spanish and had resources available to help providers with additional languages.
 - **Texas** conducted most interviews in English but sent information about the market rate survey in both Spanish and English to providers, and translated its interview guide into Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Forty-one states have developed early learning guidelines for preschool-age children, and an additional 10 states are in the process of developing them.⁷ Seventeen states have developed or are developing guidelines for children birth to age 3.⁸ Most states included some attention to ELLs and/or cultural and linguistic diversity issues in the development and/or implementation of their guidelines
 - **Arizona, California, Delaware, Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia,** and **Wisconsin** report that their early learning guidelines were developed with the needs of ELLs in mind or with attention to cultural and linguistic diversity.
 - **Arizona**’s and **South Dakota**’s guidelines contain specific information or strategies addressing their use with ELLs.
 - **Georgia** specifies that early learning experiences must support the diverse culture, home language, and individual ability of each child.

- **South Carolina** recognizes the growing diversity of its preschool population and that ELL children deserve opportunities to build language and literacy skills in both English and in their native language. South Carolina’s plan states that teachers must continue to learn about bilingual speakers, the effects of their culture upon communication patterns, and materials and activities that are appealing to them and will motivate language and literacy skills.
 - **Wisconsin**’s early learning guidelines include principles that recognize that children’s development reflects the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of their families and communities and describes a responsive learning environment as one that demonstrates respect for children’s home languages and cultural or ethnic backgrounds.
 - **Colorado, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania** have early learning guideline training initiatives that address cultural and linguistic diversity among children or tailor trainings to the needs of language minority providers.
 - **Colorado** developed training modules for providers and parents on its early learning guidelines that address community, cultural, linguistic, and individual variations in the range of child care settings.
 - **Pennsylvania** conducted presentations about its early learning guidelines for various community groups throughout the state; presentations were also made by representatives of those communities.
 - **Colorado, Delaware, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin** have translated, or are in the process of translating, their early learning guidelines for parents and providers into Spanish, and in some cases other languages.
 - **Missouri**’s early learning guidelines are in the process of being translated into Spanish and Bosnian.
 - **Wisconsin**’s early learning standards were produced in English, Spanish, and Hmong.
- Several states reported on activities or initiatives intended to inform or assist language minority or immigrant families in accessing additional comprehensive and supportive services beyond basic child care.
 - **Florida** distributes a resource booklet for parents about the importance of the early years through hospitals and birthing centers. It is available in English and Spanish.
 - **Maryland** conducts an annual Earned Income Credit (EIC) Awareness Campaign through a partnership of more than 30 non-profit organizations, business, and state and local public agencies. Its purpose is to educate and encourage eligible families to apply for both the Federal and Maryland EIC. All printed materials are available in both English and Spanish. The state encourages families to access the EIC but does not include the money as countable income for the purposes of eligibility for child care subsidies.

- In coordination with the Governor’s Commission on Domestic Violence, **Massachusetts** reports that it has developed *Understanding Domestic Violence and the Restraining Order Process in the Massachusetts Court System* and uses domestic violence experts and child-witness-to-violence experts to conduct trainings for the child care community. This is the first domestic violence training in the nation specifically designed for the child care community and it is provided in both English and Spanish.
- **Minnesota** is using its Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Maternal and Child Health Bureau to ensure that all Minnesota children, birth to age 5, are screened early and regularly for health, social-emotional, mental health, and developmental risks and are subsequently linked with culturally appropriate community services and supports. The activities under the grant are designed to build a statewide system and to promote the use of screening tools based on state and national guidelines, including culturally and linguistically appropriate instruments.
- The Hispanic Directors Association of **New Jersey** (HDANJ) is funded to implement the Special Needs Educational Outreach Program. HDANJ educates Latino families about developmental delays and how to access services through community resources available to support children with special needs.

Build the linguistic and cultural competency of state and local agencies and child care and early education programs.

Several states report policies designed to improve and expand the linguistic and cultural competency of state and local child care and early education agencies and programs to better meet the needs of language minority and immigrant families and providers.

- Seven states—**District of Columbia, Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia**—report that they have translated educational or promotional materials intended to help LEP families make informed decisions about choosing quality child care.
 - In **Massachusetts**, the CCR&Rs have launched a public awareness, training and education campaign to assist families looking for care. Most materials are available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Khmer, and Portuguese.
 - **North Carolina**’s Division of Child Development Web site is available in Spanish.
 - **Virginia** has translated into Spanish a state brochure on child care choices, *A Parents Guide to Selecting and Monitoring Child Care*.

- Fifteen states—**Arizona, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Rhode Island**—report that they have funded training and/or technical assistance to address the professional development needs of LEP and immigrant child care providers. Available trainings range from the creation of educational and support materials in multiple languages to professional development training and coursework.
 - The **District of Columbia** helps Spanish-speaking individuals become licensed child care providers through technical assistance grants.
 - **Massachusetts** has promoted a brochure printed in English and Spanish called “Back to Sleep.” The brochure offers technical assistance to family child care programs, child care centers, and parents to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
 - **Minnesota** has collaborated with the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center’s Cultural Resource Center to provide training, resources, and technical assistance to families and providers, particularly those from communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities. The state has also implemented a new training system that will be evaluated on 16 indicators, including increased collaboration with organizations serving culturally diverse communities.
 - **New Jersey** has launched the “Approved Home Initiative” which is focused on providing on-site training and technical assistance, including promoting early literacy and supplying books and safety equipment, to family child care providers whose first language is not English as well as providers caring for infants.
 - In **Oregon**, CCDBG funds were used to revise the state-developed child care provider training curriculum. Curriculums are offered statewide in English and Spanish; Russian and Vietnamese will be available pending funding.

- Three states—**District of Columbia, Nebraska, and New York**—report that they have created opportunities to help Spanish-speaking child care providers increase access to training.
 - In **Nebraska**, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children has worked with Metropolitan Community College and the Juan Diego Center in Omaha to offer college coursework in early childhood education in Spanish. Currently four courses are taught in Spanish, using Spanish textbooks. Work is underway to add classes.
 - In **New York**, the application and informational booklet for scholarships to help providers increase their level of education and training was translated into Spanish.

- Two states—**Arkansas and California**—report that they have funded training and/or technical assistance to better equip child care and early education providers working with young ELLs.

- In **Arkansas**, two seven-hour training modules on “Cultural Diversity” and “Second Language Development and Assessment in Early Childhood” are being presented statewide and additional training models are being developed. The Welcome the Children project trains community teams in local areas as trainers, to ensure future sustainability over time.
- **California** has published a training manual and companion video titled *Assessing and Fostering a First and a Second Language in Early Childhood*, to assist providers caring for ELLs. California expects to train 750 trainers in statewide train-the-trainers sessions.
- The **California** Commission of Teacher Credentialing has developed a Child Development Master Teacher Credential, which allows master teachers to specialize in bilingual and bicultural development.
- The **District of Columbia** reports that the Office of Early Childhood Development is aggressively recruiting bilingual personnel to expand its Spanish language capacity, and to increase its ability to serve customers who speak Chinese, Vietnamese, and Amharic.

Conclusion

State reported activities that may support improved access to high-quality child care and early education for immigrant families are many and varied. The most common strategies reported were: including culturally appropriate practices in early learning standards; funding trainings and/or technical assistance for LEP and immigrant child care providers; and considering ESL classes as an eligible parental work activity when applying for child care assistance. With the exception of incorporating culturally appropriate practices in early learning guidelines, no single strategy to address the early care and education needs of immigrant families was reported in more than a third of the states. Only six states—**California, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, and Wisconsin**—report using five or more different strategies.

State reported activities varied in their degree of specificity in addressing the needs of immigrant and/or language minority communities, and in many states the details of these activities were often vague. For states seeking to be more intentional in the design of their child care subsidy policies to explicitly meet the needs of immigrant and LEP families and providers, CLASP recommends the following activities:

- Count ESL classes as an eligible work activity for parents seeking child care assistance;
- Provide materials on child care services to language minority communities, including information about eligibility for child care subsidies;
- Ensure that child care subsidy intake procedures and materials are linguistically appropriate, culturally sensitive, and accessible for those living in immigrant communities;

- Use contracts and grants to expand access to high quality child care programs for children in immigrant families, and support partnerships with immigrant serving organizations to provide information and direct services;
- Expand and improve training opportunities to address the needs of diverse provider groups;
- Include culturally and linguistically appropriate practices in quality rating and improvement systems;
- Promote community-based networks of immigrant and language minority providers to provide mutual support and assist with access to professional development, training, and technical assistance;
- Translate state licensing materials and ensure that licensors have received meaningful cultural competency training;
- Include culturally appropriate practices in licensing standards; and
- Reach out to providers in immigrant communities to help improve access to materials and information about the licensing and child care subsidy system.⁹

A number of states report that they have engaged, or plan to engage, in some of these activities. Adopting a comprehensive approach, including many of the above policy recommendations, could support states' efforts to design high-quality child care and early education programs that meet the needs of all families.

¹ Randy Capps, Michael Fix, Jason Ost, Jane Reardon-Anderson, and Jeffrey S. Passel, *The Health and Well-Being of Young Children of Immigrants*, Urban Institute, 2005, <http://www.urban.org/publications/310584.html>.

² Donald J. Hernandez, Nancy A. Denton, and Suzanne E. Macartney, "Early Childhood Education Programs: Accounting for Low Enrollment in Newcomer and Native Families," *The Next Generation: Immigrant Youth and Families in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Mary Waters and Richard Alba, forthcoming; Donald Hernandez, "Demographic Change and the Life Circumstances of Immigrant Families," *The Future of Children*, 14 No. 2 (2004): 17-47. http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/hernandez.pdf; Randy Capps, et al., *The Health and Well-Being of Young Children of Immigrants*; Peter Brandon, *The Child Care Arrangements of Preschool Children in Immigrant Families in the United States*, Foundation for Child Development, 2002, http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/ChildCareArrangementsOfImmigrantFamilies.pdf.

³ Hannah Matthews and Deeana Jang, *The Challenges of Change: Learning from the Child Care and Early Education Experiences of Immigrant Families*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007, http://www.clasp.org/publications/challenges_change.htm.

⁴ For a discussion of specific policy recommendations under these broad recommendations, see Chapter 7 in Hannah Matthews and Deeana Jang, *The Challenges of Change*, http://clasp.org/publications/challenges_change_ch7.pdf.

⁵ In our analysis, we treat the District of Columbia as a state.

⁶ In April 2004, the Council of the District of Columbia enacted "The Language Access Act of 2004" to ensure equal access to government services for all residents. Agencies are required to have bilingual language capability, either through bilingual employees or language line services to serve individuals who do not speak English. All printed materials are required to be translated into five languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Amharic, <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20040422115331.pdf>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Care and Development Fund: Report of State and Territory Plans, FY 2006-FY 2007*, 2006, <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/stateplan2006-07/index.html>.

⁸ National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative, “Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines 2007,” 2007, <http://www.nccic.org/itcc/PDFdocs/itelg.pdf>.

⁹ See also Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews, *Selected State and Local Policies to Support Immigrant and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Early Care and Education Providers*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007, http://www.clasp.org/publications/policies_support_lep_providers07.pdf and Hannah Matthews, *Improving Access to Child Care and Early Education for Immigrant Families: A State Policy Checklist*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007, http://www.clasp.org/publications/state_policy_checklist07.pdf.