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Improving Access to Child Care and Early Education for Immigrant Families: A State Policy Checklist

State policies can promote access to high-quality child care and early education for immigrant families. This document provides a list of policies that states can implement to address immigrant access. Use this document to review the policies your state currently has in place and to plan for future policy changes and improvements.

Recommended Policies:	My State's Policies and Actions:
<p>State encourages and supports local coordination and collaboration between child care and early education programs and agencies and immigrant-serving organizations. This may include incentives for child care and early education programs to partner with immigrant serving organizations and funding for these partnerships.</p> <p>Examples of local collaboration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- mutual representation on governing boards,- joint training opportunities,- joint development of documents and materials for families, and- joint applications for creating and expanding programs to meet the needs of immigrant families.	
<p>State provides resources to immigrant serving organizations to increase their capacity to engage in and support child care and early education, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- direct services,- resource and referral,- information to constituent groups,- training and professional development.	

Recommended Policies:	My State's Policies and Actions:
<p>State dedicates resources, using contracts and other dedicated funding mechanisms, to expand access to high-quality child care and early education programs for immigrant families or to create new programs targeting immigrant families.</p>	
<p>State uses contracts or grants in the child care subsidy system to increase the supply of child care in immigrant neighborhoods or to improve the quality of care for children of immigrants.</p> <p><i>Ex. Wisconsin contracts with the United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. to provides quality child care to children in migrant families developing a comprehensive, bilingual/bicultural childhood program that includes transportation, health care, nutrition and age appropriate child development activities. UMOS also provides technical assistance to child care centers and licensed providers who are serving children of migrants to help meet their needs.</i></p>	
<p>State agencies have issued guidance to local programs on immigrant eligibility for public programs and on simplifying enrollment requirements that may deter immigrant or LEP families.</p>	
<p>State funds targeted child care and early education outreach to immigrant families.</p> <p>Outreach uses cultural mediators, bilingual and culturally competent staff and is conducted in appropriate formats and in the primary languages of immigrant communities.</p>	

Recommended Policies:	My State's Policies and Actions:
<p>State has a centralized and coordinated system to help all families access child care and early education programs in their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The system is easily accessible in immigrant neighborhoods and may include immigrant serving organizations as entry points. - Child care resource and referral agencies are able to help families identify linguistically and culturally competent child care in their neighborhoods. 	
<p>State funds cultural mediators to work with child care and early education programs, and other community agencies, to serve as a bridge to supportive services for families. Cultural mediators have the trust of the community they represent and are thoroughly knowledgeable about their cultural group.</p> <p>Cultural mediators may facilitate outreach and enrollment and work with families and programs to help translate child care and early education practices for immigrant families and provide relevant cultural information for program staff.</p>	
<p>State policies incorporate linguistic and cultural competency in all program and content standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - licensing and monitoring, - early learning guidelines, - pre-kindergarten standards, - quality rating and improvement systems and, - professional development systems. 	

Recommended Policies:	My State's Policies and Actions:
<p>Quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) incorporate standards to encourage the recruitment of bilingual and bicultural staff and the implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate practices, and provide financial supports to help program meets these goals.</p> <p>QRIS are appropriately translated and disseminated to Limited English Proficient (LEP) communities.</p>	
<p>State agencies have language access plans to ensure effective communication with LEP persons at all points of contact, along with plans to ensure cultural competency among staff at all levels. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hiring of bilingual staff, - translation of materials, and - meaningful cultural competency training for all staff. 	
<p>Immigrant and LEP providers have meaningful access to the child care licensing and subsidy systems. The state has reviewed all materials, regulations, and policies to ensure access and provides training and technical assistance to diverse providers to work toward licensure.</p>	
<p>State supports increasing the linguistic and cultural diversity of the workforce through the provision of scholarships, stipends, training and professional development opportunities, including partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education, targeted to providers in immigrant communities.</p>	
<p>State includes family, friend, and neighbor caregivers in immigrant communities in professional development and training initiatives and uses trusted messengers to improve outreach to informal caregivers.</p>	

Recommended Policies:	My State's Policies and Actions:
<p>Training, technical assistance and professional development is available in multiple languages and is tailored to diverse groups of providers.</p>	
<p>State agencies promote community-based networks of immigrant child care and early education providers to provide mutual support and assist with access to professional development, training and technical assistance.</p>	
<p>State has a mechanism for addressing the needs of immigrant families within Early Learning Councils and other coordinating bodies:</p> <p><i>See Illinois Early Learning Council Committee on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity,</i> http://www.illinois.gov/gov/elc/</p>	
<p>State has a mechanism for addressing immigrant integration to ensure access to programs and services.</p> <p><i>See Illinois Office of New Americans,</i> http://www.immigrants.illinois.gov, and New Jersey Governor's Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigrant Policy, http://www.njslom.org/press_release_08-06-07a.html</p>	

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