

## **Selected State and Local Policies to Support Immigrant and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Early Care and Education Providers**

### *Language Access*

- ✓ **State or local agencies have language access plans for language minority communities in their area.** This may include dedicated resources for: recruiting and hiring multilingual staff; qualified translators and interpreters; partnerships with cultural mediators and/or community liaisons; competently translated materials that are easy to read at a low literacy level; non-written approaches to communication, including personal communication and the use of ethnic and minority language media including radio and television.
- ✓ **Immigrant providers have meaningful access to the licensing process.** Licensing agencies should translate information, regulations, applications, preparatory materials and classes, and examinations for licensing, as well as provide training and technical assistance in languages other than English to LEP providers working towards licensure.
- ✓ **Licensors receive cultural competency training.** Early care and education providers may use nontraditional practices and materials that represent the cultures of the families they serve. State and local licensors should be trained to recognize these practices and to understand how they meet licensing rules. State licensing regulations should include standards that require providers to develop practices that support children from different cultures.
- ✓ **Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) include bilingual staff.** CCR&Rs can disseminate information to immigrant providers on child development and training opportunities. They can also help create community-based professional development plans that incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate training on child development, health and safety, and the basic components of state licensing. CCR&Rs can also work with interested providers to develop plans for more formal training—including access to GED and English as a Second Language classes, as well as community colleges and two- and four-year universities—and opportunities to mentor and be mentored in the early childhood field.



*Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association in Oklahoma City hired its first Hispanic services coordinator in 2005. The coordinator position is funded through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. The coordinator is bilingual and bicultural, representing the Mexican majority immigrant population in that area. She works with local child care resource and referral agencies to develop language-access plans for serving Spanish speaking families. She also provides direct referrals for Spanish-speaking families, conveying information on the importance of early childhood development, quality child care, and the maintenance of home language. Since hiring the bilingual coordinator, the agency has experienced an approximately 60 percent increase in Spanish-speaking callers, particularly in Oklahoma City.*

- ✓ **Enrollment for federal and state programs is streamlined and supports language access.** Applications for all programs (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), child care subsidies, Head Start, Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP) should be combined or available at the same place; be available in multiple languages; and agencies should provide bilingual assistance with filling out paperwork. States can issue policy guidance to clarify immigrant eligibility and immigration consequences for public programs. CACFP should conduct outreach to recruit community-based providers that represent diverse communities.

### ***Training and Professional Development***

- ✓ **Higher education/training includes principles of cultural competence.** All providers need training in cultural competency and second language acquisition strategies for young children.
- ✓ **State or local child care agencies partner with community-based organization and institutions of higher education to offer culturally and linguistically appropriate trainings for providers in multiple languages.** Trainings should be conducted by competent, bilingual trainers. Training can be made more accessible by providing trainings in language minority communities and during non-traditional hours.

*The Choices for Children's STEP-UP (Supportive Teaching and Educational Programs for Understanding Preschoolers) program in San Jose, California connects family, friend, and neighbor caregivers to child development training and activities through participation in play groups, workshops, and support groups. A mobile lending library provides books and materials for caregivers to use with young children. The program serves Spanish-, English-, and Vietnamese-speaking caregivers and provides optional assistance to move toward licensing. The program's partner agencies include a local elementary school, a community college and university, and SIREN, a local immigrant-serving organization. Funding for STEP-UP is provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.*

*The Latinas Unidas Mejorando el Manana con Amor (LUMMA) program in Boulder, Colorado provides training for Latina child care providers. The program provides referrals for Spanish-speaking families; recruits, trains, and licenses family child care providers; supports professional development for Latina providers, including informal or license-exempt providers; provides health, vision, dental, and hearing screenings for children in LUMMA providers' care; and holds monthly provider support groups.*

- ✓ **Professional development ladders/lattices include community based training in multiple languages, awareness of home country training and financial supports including scholarships and incentives.** Some immigrant providers may need financial assistance to access higher education. Agencies can pay for the costs of translating foreign degrees/credits and articulation agreements can include recognition of home country training and recognize classes in non-English languages.

*Most of California's counties have implemented a version of the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) model to "help build and reward a skilled and stable child care workforce." Most counties provide stipends or benefits to child care center and family child care providers. Some counties conduct outreach to diverse populations by providing materials and personal outreach in other languages, using ethnic media outlets and community events, contacting ethnic family child care associations, and offering bonus stipends to attract participants who speak other languages.*

- ✓ **State and local agencies promote community-based networks of immigrant and language minority providers.** Networks can provide mutual support and assist with access to professional development, training, and technical assistance. They can help create linkages between all providers, including LEP providers, and can help providers link to existing child care and early education agencies for training and support.

*Centro Familia, in Montgomery County, Maryland, runs a continuum of comprehensive training, mentoring, and professional development programs for Spanish-speaking child care providers. Centro Familia provides training and technical assistance throughout the licensing process; offers a home-visiting program that ensures a quality learning environment, alignment with Maryland curriculum standards, and micro-enterprise development; and offers a series of intermediate and advanced training opportunities for providers to continue progressing through a career development ladder.*

- ✓ **Multiple strategies are used to conduct targeted outreach to LEP providers.** Successful outreach techniques use face-to-face contact and personal communications and find providers in the community through large employers, churches, social service agencies and frequenting neighborhood locations such as health clinics and supermarkets.



- ✓ **Training on early learning guidelines supports cultural diversity and representation.** Strong, culturally competent standards should be supportive of children and providers from all backgrounds and should address the needs of diverse children, through attention to second-language acquisition strategies and culturally appropriate curriculum. Early learning guidelines must be implemented with an awareness of the multiple and diverse ways in which children can

demonstrate competence in particular skills. Children from different cultures will approach learning and demonstrate competence in different ways, based on diverse childrearing practices and concepts of normative behavior.

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