

What are Families of Young Children in Connecticut Saying about Child Care & Early Education

Report on Survey/Interview Data Collected by 11 Community Organizations, July-August 2023



**A project sponsored by
the CT Early Childhood Funder Collaborative**

The Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative (CT ECFC) is a diverse coalition of members of the Connecticut philanthropic community committed to bringing the collective voice and resources of philanthropy to build and sustain a comprehensive and equitable early childhood system that works for all children, families, communities and the workforce in Connecticut. CT ECFC is a project of the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy (CCP) for which CCP serves as fiscal sponsor.

Participating Organizations:

- Alliance for Community Empowerment [Bridgeport]
- Bridgeport Prospers – United Way of Coastal & Western CT
- CERCLE [New Haven]
- Connecticut Partnership for Children, Inc. (CTPFC)
- Enfield KITE
- Manchester Early Childhood Collaborative
- Northeast Early Childhood Council (NECC)
- Norwalk ACTS
- Safe Futures [SE CT]
- United Way of Coastal & Western CT - Danbury
- Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS)

PARENT/FAMILY INPUT PROJECT – SUMMER 2023

Project Description and Process

Families with young children are at exciting but challenging times in their lives and need the support of their communities and early childhood support systems to help their children get a healthy and strong start in their lives.

Members of the CT Early Childhood Funder Collaborative (CT ECFC) have had a commitment to ensure that Connecticut families are able to share their hopes and challenges in raising their young children (birth to age 5) and to understand what kind of public and community supports contribute to the wellbeing of their children and families. More specifically, CT ECFC has long been interested in building an early childcare system that works for and is responsive to families' needs. Out of this ongoing interest and commitment, CT ECFC discussed how the Collaborative might contribute more parent voice to inform the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Childcare. As a result, the Collaborative developed a funding opportunity and a process to engage families to gather input through interview and surveys to gather direct quotes.

Eleven community organizations participated in this process, gathering input, most often through one-one-one interviews, from mid-July to mid-August. In total they submitted input from 890 families. We want to thank Sherri Killins Stewart, Ed.D., who CT ECFC engaged to support and facilitate the process.

The report is structured around the questions asked of participating family members:

1. *Do you use or plan to use child care?*
2. *(a) If not, why not? // (b) If yes, what is most important to you?*
3. *If you have used childcare, (a) what have you liked and not liked? (b) What do you wish were different?*
4. *What do you want your child to be able to know and do to be ready for school/Kindergarten?*
5. *Other comments*

The report provides direct quotes from participating families and grouped them by themes in response to each of the questions. *The intent is to let families speak for themselves.* Because we could not include all the quotes, the report also provides a summary of the themes we extrapolated from the responses.

As an overview, some of the key themes that emerged were:

- Families want **positive relationships and loving environments** for children and their caregivers, based on trust.
- Families are looking for early care and education programs to provide opportunities for children to **learn with creative, caring teachers** and provide diversity and multi-cultural learning.
- Families need programs that provide **flexibility, communication, convenient locations, and safety.**
- Programs need to be **accessible and affordable for parents.**
- Program practices need to address **approaches to discipline and socialization.**
- Programs and teachers need to be able to **address the unique needs of children and support families.**
- Programs need to provide **quality nutrition** that respects the culture and background of the children and families.

The report is being shared with the Blue Ribbon Panel and other stakeholders focused on improving in CT's early care & education system. Our hope is that the community groups will also have opportunities to share back in their communities and engage in further dialogue with families.

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What Parents & Families Members Shared

Summary of Themes /Recommendations

1. Do you use or plan to use Childcare and, if so, why?

Socialization/Child Development

- To grow with other children and explore the outside world.
- Okay. I want him to learn some things like know shapes and identify colors, count numbers, and know the alphabet. And also engaging activities. I want him to improve academically.
- Yes, with two kids under 5, I want to give them the best opportunities.

Able to Work

- Sure. Definitely. I've been using childcare ever since my kids were born because [I'm] somebody that normally goes out for work a lot. So I've been using childcare right from the day my kids were born, both from family and outside. And most especially, I do a lot of family childcare because those people will actually take care of the child more than you trying to pay someone from the outside. I'm not trying to criticize the fact of someone taking care of the child from the outside, but the main factor is to me, I feel that family childcare is the best so far because I entrust my kids with them and I can go to any extent I want to doing work. I can actually travel the time and I know my kids are safe.
- Yes, I use it and it is a privilege to be able to provide child care for my child. I would love for immigrant children could have the same opportunity in this country to receive assistance, (health insurance, free child care). It is a nice sensation to go to work knowing that your children are well taken care of. If I did not have Care4kids, I wouldn't be able to afford child care. I am really thankful for the amazing provider that takes such good care of my daughter. "

For Support

- Yes, he is a special kid, he is nonverbal. I want him to learn to talk and I think that is a safe place for my son"
- Yes, Home-Based because they speak my language

When Child is Older/Family is Ready

- Right now I am a stay at home mom. I plan to do preschool when my child is 3 for structure and socialization. (family of 3)
- Not at this time, maybe later. My wife is not working. Will look for program when she is two years old.
- Yes, I plan to enroll her into daycare just waiting for things to settle down in our lives and finding one that is a good fit for her needs.

1. Do you use or plan to use Childcare and, if so, why?

The vast majority of respondents currently use, plan to, or would like to use child care. Most focused on the importance of the child's learning, development, and socialization. Some families talked about the importance of supporting their children that have special needs.

Parents also shared about needing child care so they can work, run business, and study/go back to school.

Some families intend to use childcare but want to wait until the child is older.

Themes:

- Learning
- Child Development
- Socialization
- Help parent to work or get back to work
- Support parent to run a business
- Help Parent go to school
- Combination

PARENT/FAMILY INPUT PROJECT – SUMMER 2023

What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

2a. If not in care, why?

Cost/Eligibility for Subsidies

- I can't afford to send my baby to daycare. It is too expensive and I have other bills to pay. Also, I worry about their safety.
- Cost is not efficient for my family's household. Make too much to get assistance. Just over the threshold by \$14.00.
- Cost – Entire paycheck would go to pay for it.
- Frankly paying for childcare would be more than half my paycheck. Currently we use relatives.
- I quit my job because if I paid for childcare there would be no money left.
- Can't afford it so I work nights and my husband works days. I never sleep.
- I had to leave my job because I can't afford childcare for my twins.
- I have not used childcare. I cannot afford childcare for all three children. So, I stay home and when they are all school age I will go back to work. Childcare has advantages and disadvantages. I would love my children to be around other children. Learning social skills, learning to read, draw, write, and learning to talk and develop complete sentences.
- I would love to use a daycare for my twins as I have four children in total. However, with the costs and space issues it hasn't happened. Really challenging to get spots for twins and also too expensive for me to do.
- We need affordable or free program. My son is most of the time with adults
- Currently, I do not have childcare, but I tried to obtain services before and was not able to due to different circumstances of my schedule, I work the night shift and looking to switch to mornings, but can't until I find childcare, and they only offered me part-time. On family child care they wanted me to pay \$40 for each child and I have two, 1 year and 2 years. That was \$400 a week, which meant I ended up with no money left.
- I will not be using childcare due to the quality and cost available.

Choice & Safety

- I want to stay home because I know my baby will be safe
- Only family because of the price of daycare and the lack of trust I have in strangers
- No, I don't plan on using care. I do not feel safe with my kids being in the care of others, especially with two of my children being special needs. Transportation getting back and forth is also an issue.
- The reason why I don't necessarily like the idea of child care is because I want to be able to teach my child when he is young before going to school and be present in his life.
- I feel a parent should home school if your able because the knowledge you give them at an early age will always be there as they grow. A parent is very important for a child. I feel daycares aren't accountable.

2a. If not in care, why?

Families talked about not being able to access child care – largely because they are not able to afford it. Others mentioned difficulties with schedules.

However, some families opt out of childcare since they are concerned about safety, not feeling comfortable with strangers taking care of their children. Many prefer relying on family.

Others feel it is better to take care of the children themselves – that they are their child's best teacher.

Themes:

- Working from home • Not working
- Stay at home mom
- Safety Concerns • Too Young
- Control over learning • Home schooling
- Lack of trust
- Cost

If these were families that needed childcare but were not able to access or afford formal childcare, they shared some of the options they used:

- Family Friend and Neighbor
- Relative care (grandmother)
- Stay at Home Mom

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

2b. If yes, what is most important to you about the care of your child(ren)?

Safety

- It's hard to pinpoint just one thing that is most important however safety and enriching activities are super important to us.
- Smaller number of students per class, challenging environment for my child that encourages her growth, school safety and peers that will challenge her. Music, dance and other forms of art programs
- I need a place that offers: Safety, Mental, social development support and good nutrition.
- Secure buildings. Staff that truly love working with children. A preschool program with a definitive curriculum. Hours that work with parents' schedules.
- Safety. Low child to staff ratio. Camera access, face recognition which ties into background checks. Curriculum with a goal that relates to a strong educational partner. Socialization.
- For me as a parent, I often prioritize safety, trustworthiness and the nurturing environment when choosing my childcare outside home market as a value, an open communication with my caregiver's children, a stimulating program and a good balance between play time and learning activities with my kids. Additionally, look for childcare options that align with my values, provide healthy meals, and just stuffs like that that are important for my kids.
- The most crucial care about children is ensuring their safety, it's very essential to provide a positive and nurturing environment that promotes their well-being and helps them grow into healthy and happy individuals.
- Safety and good program: Physical safety, emotional safety, and social safety. Additionally, the safety of the building – being sure that others that do not belong can enter the school at any time. (related to school shootings). All of this ensures a “good” learning environment for my child.
- A conducive environment for an intellectual development and protection of my children from harm.
- My most important care for my children is ensuring their safety.
- Safety - secure/safe buildings, and kind, competent teachers and happiness- making sure my son is happy where he goes.
- Safety is the most important. I worry about my kids because of all the things you see on the news and online.

Summary of Themes

2b. If yes, what is most important to you ...

For those that use or plan to use childcare, families prioritized: safety, staffing/ relationships, and overall development of their child.

They want “**physical, emotional, and social**” safety to ensure a positive environment where their children can grow and learn, and that parents don't have to worry about their child.

Caring, competent staff was a dominant theme as families want their children to feel comfortable/safe so they will learn and develop. Families also mentioned low child to staff ratio for the same reasons.

For a child's development, families are looking for childcare that promotes learning (intellectual development), and where there is a curriculum

Themes

Relationship/ Environment

- Love of working with children • Self Care
- Child treatment • Caretaking • Loving • Trust

Curriculum

- Learning, • Teacher creativity, • Multi cultural

Structure

- Flexibility • Hours • Cost • Teacher Salary
- Location • Safety • Cleanliness
- Communication • Class Size and ratio

Practices

- Socialization • Staff Quality
- Approach to discipline • Nutrition
- Teacher knowledge of special care needs

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

Environment

- Provides a safe and structured environment for children to learn social skills, interact with peers, and develop emotionally.
- It is important to me that my children are happy and comfortable. That I can trust that I can leave them and they will be safe emotionally

Staff

- Teachers that they are friendly and are good with children and that the kids my child interacts with are also good kids too
- The temperament of the teachers and what my child is learning.
- The people's attitudes towards kids is also important.
- Making sure the care of the children are taking the values and feelings to be taken into account. I also would like for my children to always be safe.
- Properly certified and licensed childcare with experience and incorporates both new and standard practices of developmental learning.
- Someone who I can trust and is extremely patient with my kids. I also value consistency and keeping my kids on a routine.

Development

- The learnings, like they're teaching them how to read and write letters, alphabet, and identify colors and shapes. And I believe that will go a long way to help her as she's growing up.
- What's more important to me is for him to associate with other children (to) learn. He is my only son from now, so I don't want him to feel alone. I want him to go out, mingle with other kids, learn from them, and have this social life, be able to be bond with other people so that in future, if I get to have other children, he will know how to treat his brothers and sisters.
- What is most important to me about the care of my children is their development psychologically, because this will have a long-term effect on their lifestyle when they grow up
- Needs a place that will provide birth to three eval and speech therapy. Need to help with communication skills. Would like to be in HeadStart program but cannot because of affordability.
- It is important for me to know if they are on track, what they are learning, and their safety.

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

3a. If you have used childcare, what have you liked and/or disliked?

Cost

- The most important part of the child care is communication and cost. I am fortunate where I go is very reduced because of the military backing but not many are as fortunate, When I was looking for care outside of the military base, I was a little taken aback about how long the wait would be to get my child into care.
- I struggled for 4 years. I tried applying for affordable child day cares (Head Start) (Care4 Kids) but was not income eligible. I changed my work schedule for nighttime shifts and my husband and sister helped, but I was miserable and felt tired. I found a lady that watches kids at home, but I only used her for emergencies, or a few hours at the most, I was always concerned with the age gap of other kids that she takes care of. I paid for a few months of private child day care knowing that my dream of building a house had to be put aside for afford paying for my child's education.

Able to work

- I love the fact that I can go to job but still have my kid taken care of. The care givers are kind. I don't like the fact that they are very expensive.
- I liked that childcare helps me focus better with work.
- Childcare has helped me attend to my business.
- It helped my son a lot in learning and it helped me to start working.

Child Development

- The best decision [I] ever made for [my] children was putting them in childcare because of the exposure to other children. [I] would like to see childcare workers paid more for their work.
- The best thing that ever happened to me was when I learned about Birth to 3 advice. They helped me place my child with a home day care. My daughter has developed a lot. She has learned so many good things. I know she will learn much more as they go by. I want to thank the state for all the work and support they do for our families
- My child has special needs and the childcare facility was unwilling to respond appropriately with my child and his disabilities. My child was kicked out of the program due to discrimination and was being abused emotionally.

3a. ... what have you liked and/or disliked?

Families shared many aspects that they like about their current childcare and other support services. However, families also expressed frustration with the shortcomings of the current early care & education system, chief among them: affordability, access (location, hours, availability especially for infant-toddler spaces), staffing, and capacity to support children with special needs.

Themes

Structure:

- Flexible hours • Safety
- Communication to parents, family involvement
- Caretaking • Nutrition

Curriculum

- Socialization • Learning
- Learning Curriculum • Toileting

Child Wellbeing

- Attention to children • Child treatment
- Time with children • Child Happiness

Relationships

- Trust • Staff quality • Welcoming
- Passion of staff • Previous experience
- Relationship between staff and teachers

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

Location & Hours

- I liked that hours were convenient and he had a bilingual teach and a regular teacher so he was learning both languages. I didn't like the location - it was too far. I wished they were open all year round.
- I like the diversity in race, communication and close proximity to my house.

Staffing

- I remember with my first -she did good with the workers, but they had too many kids, more that they can handle. When I went to pick her up that's when they were changing diapers just because they knew the time I was coming. Makes me think if not well taken care of. it's not comfortable. Ratio staff/ child is important.
- Teachers leave and there are new ones all the time. Wish they understood her more personally

Nutrition

- Eating food that's is provided by the center was hard as my child didn't like it to start. I love their progression (learning).
- I would like for the care that I bring them to let us bring outside food that my children enjoy. The food that is provided is based on how the care provider wants to cook.
- I like everything except the food. I would like the food to be different, where he has more options for healthy food.
- I want my child to be able to eat a variety of healthy options of food

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

3b. If you have used childcare, what do you wish were different?

Cost & Availability

- I think most people don't make enough money to afford daycare.
- Make childcare affordable, especially for those people who would like to get a job so they have to secure care first.
- I use an unlicensed family childcare home for my young child, weekly I pay \$150.00. My other option was licensed Family childcare but they are overpriced. Family Child care charges around \$200-\$250 or more. We applied for Care4kids but, we did not qualify due to my family income when I only had a part-time job as a substitute assistant at Head Start. My child is on a waiting list for a pre-k spot
- I have not decided what to do next month when school is in session. I might end up working weekends or nights so my husband and daughter can help. Also, the more I work, the higher the chances are to lose my kid's insurance, yet I will be spending so much money on Childcare."
- My husband and I have talked about it. We could get a divorce and get free childcare. We could get on food stamps. We could get on everything, and we wouldn't be struggling. That is the sad part. It is awful to say but that is the sad part of reality."
- I do wish there were additional resources to financially help families with young children.
- I wish our state would help and aide with funding for affordable daycare. Parents aren't able to pay the high rates. Most parents are working extra hours just pay for daycare which is ridiculous. We need all daycares to be on a sliding scale.
- I hope to see more options offered in the town I live in as its small and I need care locally. Also, it is very expensive
- It is hard to find a daycare with open spots that is quality. Long waitlists for Care for Kids.
- It was luck based and we were fortunate. It shouldn't be this hard to get quality care.
- Child care for children under the age of 3 is hard to find. Any place that I can afford doesn't have space or has a long waitlist.
- We were lucky to have found a preschool when my oldest was 3, but there are not many affordable options available for children under 3 - if there had been, I would've been able to get back to work sooner. As a result of expensive daycares, we have been living paycheck to paycheck on only my husband's salary.
- I wish there was a reliable way to find childcare, it seems like you just have to know the right people and it's word of mouth. 211 was not that helpful.

Summary of Themes

3b. ... what do you wish were different?

The overwhelming themes about what families wished were different were around **cost and availability** of child care. Several families provided very specific data about what the high cost of care meant for them as well as the difficulties of finding care, especially for infants and toddlers. **Hours, location, and transportation** were also highlighted as barriers. Families also wished **staff** were more stable, higher quality, and more available to communicating with families.

Themes

Processes

- Information about benefit of childcare and how to apply
- Streamlined enrollment process
- Free child care

Structure

- Hours • Lack of nontraditional hours
- Taking the children to early
- Unprofessional

Staffing & Relationships

- Lack of staff • Staff ratio
- Information about special needs and early intervention; Not getting support needed for special needs child
- Sharing home Values

Safety

- Sleeping arrangements
- Child not physically active
- Materials
- No tablets • Lack of nutrition

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

Hours, Location, Transportation

- Daycares in this area open up way too late for people who work first shift.
- There are not enough options for people who work 2nd and 3rd shifts like a lot of healthcare workers
- The hours aren't convenient, not a lot of creativity, lottery system and the process of getting in was hard. commute is hard.
- It's not close to home, long commute
- Location. I do not like being called off work when they want to close. Longer time for care.
- It's hard depending on one person, have to follow her schedule. Like flexibility i.e., don't pay when [provider is] on vacation.
- What I wish is if the childcare center was closer to me or any of my relatives.
- There should be buses or vans to transport smaller children to daycare. That could help parents with their work commutes.

Staffing & Relationships

- More access, knowing your child's teacher better.
- I wish the class sizes were smaller (now large classes of 20+), that there wasn't such a huge turnover in teachers.
- I wish daycare workers were more kind and patient with young children. I have walked in to pick up my child and heard the workers yelling or snapping at children. I know it is the end of the day and you are tired, but these are babies.
- I don't like that some of the teachers/staff have attitudes and seem as if they do not want to be there.
- The teachers are impersonal and are hard to talk to which makes it hard to know how my son is doing.
- The center had some unqualified staffs, I never like that. I wish this was different.
- Better background checks are needed, better compensation for employees. Stricter staff cell phone policies (no personal cell in classrooms, too many pictures being taken without consent)
- I did not like that there are not diverse teaching staff.
- More centers with workers that speak my language (a parent identifying as Asian)
- I wish I could see more of what they are doing throughout the day.
- Better information about what is happening from the school.

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

4. What do you want your child to be able to know and do to be ready for school/Kindergarten?

- Letters, numbers, shapes, songs, sharing. Being able to have some independence without me. Write their names, colors.
- ABCs, 123s, Colors
- Respect, how to share
- How to socialize with other children
- I want my children to make friends, to have confidence, and to feel safe.
- Speaking up if someone hurts them or hurts their feelings.
- Emotional regulation and problem solving
- Wants the child to continue to be bilingual and not lose that in an all-English environment. Wants her child to be up to par with all the requirements for kindergarten.
- Speak and understand English, since that is not their first language.
- I don't [know] what they need to know. Whatever they need to be fine.

Summary of Themes

4. What do you want your child to be able to know and do to be ready for school/Kindergarten?

Skills & Knowledge: Families were specific about what they wanted their children to know to be ready for kindergarten. Mostly frequently they said - being able to identify letters, shapes, numbers, colors; and some - being able to read and write. Others want their children to learn English if it is not their first language, and also to continue to be bilingual.

Abilities: There was wide recognition of the importance of children being able to communicate clearly, feel confident, and develop strong social skills. Some families stressed the importance of values, and knowing right from wrong. Being “potty trained” was included in many comments.

Themes

Skills: • Writing • Reading • Spelling • Phonics
• Basics for Kindergarten • Multilingual

Abilities: • Communication • Learn at own pace
• Confidence • Social Skills • Listening
• Conflict resolution • Self-regulation
• Sit during reading • Follow Directions
• On grade level • Manners
• Feelings • Friendship • Toileting

Knowledge: • Animals • Knowing right from wrong
• Parents name and address
• Learn about the environment
• Counting • Numbers • Colors • Shapes
• Letter Recognition

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What Parents & Family Members Shared

Summary of Themes

5. Other Comments

- Everyone should have access to affordable pre-k education
- I just want more care to be available for those parents who are trying to make better lives for their children. This is a big set back when a parent can't obtain or afford care for their child or children.
- As society continues to grow, we should develop better childcare centers, pay better wages and listen to member of society about what they would like to see tomorrow's childcare center represent working families, around the clock care. Later hours for those needing more time because or mandatory overtime without notice. Thank you for listening to what I think childcare centers for other and myself should resemble.
- We need more accessibility for those with low income for equal quality education. Lottery tickets are too few for the increasing children. If we are thinking to have a better educated next generation, we need to start from 0, from pregnancy, more support for mothers. Stable families brings stable children, brings stable communities.
- “The main thing I believe most people will fix about childcare is the cost and accessibility. Childcare is simply not affordable for most people and it’s hard to find childcare with open availability, leaving no choice for some parents to choose between work or childcare.
Another thing I would fix is a lower child/teacher ratio. Having a smaller group, I believe will allow the teacher to respond to the individual needs of each child, therefore the teacher will know my child’s full potential while creating a strong relationship.”
- It should be more resources for new mothers, especially immigrants, we need to feel safe and feel value. We need more support after delivery, groups for each mom ethnic. There's a lot racism still! We as adults need to make changes, bring resources to educate those who doesn't understand and criticize to nurture and strength this next generation to be better.
- Please continue to engage w/ the community. We want to be seen and heard from about what matters to families.

5. Other Comments

Families clearly communicated how they would like to see the child care system changed, not only for themselves but also for other families. Cost and accessibility were the dominant themes, but also child-teacher ratios and resources for families.

Many families expressed their appreciation for being asked what was important to them.

Themes:

- Cost, affordability
- Accessibility
- Child-teacher ratios
- Resources for families, including new mothers and immigrants

PARENT/FAMILY INPUT PROJECT – SUMMER 2023
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Organizations that participated in this project met to discuss the primary themes that emerged in their engaging with families. After thoughtful review of our collaborative work, the community organizations made the following recommendations:

System Funding

- **Add a special tax that is dedicated to childcare.**
- **Increase Care4Kids eligibility and amount.** Families need access to Care4Kids before they have a job (have an approval window). They need child care to seek employment. Make it easier for families and providers to apply for and accept subsidies. Streamlining efficiencies
- **Increase the salaries of teachers and providers**
- **Partner with businesses:** they have lack of employees, due to families not being able to afford childcare/find childcare - create programs
- **Invest in workforce development with younger students/ HS**

Safety

- **Increase overall safety of children** through resources such as better professional development, possible considerations around staffing/floating staff on hand so admin is not in classrooms, better balance and educational incentives for staff so it is easier to recruit workers into the field, feedback surveys for families each year to help centers improve.
- Increase the number of hours and **training requirements** for family child care providers. **Elevate the quality of service** to maintain licensing and have state or federal funds available to subsidize cost.

Work with Communities

- **Look into the needs of local communities, rather than larger regions.** DCF regions are much too larger and diverse to lump together// Need to look at the local communities instead of lumping by region.
- **Fund teams of paid parent community advocates** to connect, engage and raise awareness about resources for EC caregivers and share developmental domains resources.

Involve Parents

- **Parent first mentality!! Let parent voice lead decisions about the industry**
- **Recommendations should be shared with parents** for input before implemented and adopted
- **Parents/caregiver surveys locally in each community to dive deeper** into specific needs or wants Need for improved quality of care. Licensing should require more PD and require higher standards. No timeframe for accreditation. More frequent visits, especially for newly licensed providers. And with these standards more funds should be made available.
- **Parent cafes** in each community
- Build an infrastructure for a **feedback loop over the next five years** to design, implement and monitor the actions. Broad participation

Support for Parents

- **Parent training in child development** and developmental milestones. Can this be incorporated into Sparkler? Include why this is so important.
- **Wrap around support**, like Head Start for more programs. Pediatricians should be screening for the need for wrap around support.
- **Increase awareness of benefits** families have access to (e.g. 211, Care, 4Kids)
- **Improved marketing and messaging around the importance of ECE**
- **Non-traditional care options/ OEC create a digital resource for Parents** to access when they look for care.