

# Informal Caregivers Research Project (INCARE)

## **Caregiver/Parent Interview Protocol**

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**INCARE CAREGIVER/PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

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**Introduction/Recruitment**

My name is [NAME], and I work for Mathematica Policy Research, which conducts studies in early childhood education. We were hired by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, which is interested in learning more about the experiences of people who care for young children outside of day care centers and family child care homes. We refer to these people as “informal caregivers.” We would like to interview you (individually or in a small group) for about one hour, and as a thank-you for your time, we will give you a Visa gift card for \$25. The information you provide can help community agencies and policymakers learn about the needs of informal caregivers, and may be used to help to develop services for informal caregivers in the future.

If you agree to be interviewed, we will keep your responses private. I would like to record the interview to help me fill in my notes later, but will not use your name in any reports for this study. As we move through the interview you can also decline to answer any particular question if you wish.

[DISTRIBUTE/REVIEW/SIGN CONSENT FORM] Before we get started, I need to review the study consent form with you. The consent form describes the study a bit more and your rights as a participant in a research study. Do you have any questions for me?

**A. Informal caregiver landscape and context****(15 min.)**

We are interested in learning more about you and the children you care for.

1. To begin, please tell me a little bit about yourself.
  - What is your name?
  - How old are you?
  - How would you describe your race/ethnicity?
  - Do you speak any other language(s)? If so, which ones?
  - Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?
  - [DETERMINE IF PARENT OR INFORMAL CAREGIVER] How many children do you care for other than your own? What are their ages?
2. Now, I would like to ask you some questions about your experience (as an informal caregiver/with informal caregivers).
  - How often do you (care for children other than your own/have an informal caregiver caring for your child(ren))? For how many hours at a time? (Do you/Does he/Does she) care for them on the same days/time each week, or does this change from week to week?
  - What is (your/the informal caregiver's) relationship to the children (you/he/she) cares for (such as family member, friend or neighbor)?
  - (INFORMAL CAREGIVER ONLY) Why do you provide care for them (for example, to earn money or to help a family member so he or she can work or go to school)?
  - (PARENT ONLY) Why do you use informal care for your child(ren) (for example, to work or go to school, age of child(ren), cost of licensed child care)?
  - How would you describe (your role as a caregiver/the caregiver's role) (for example, someone helping to raise the child, a babysitter, someone helping out the family, someone helping the child learn language and math skills, or any other type of role)?
  - (How long have you been caring for children other than your own?/How long has the informal caregiver been caring for your child(ren)?)
  - What is your highest level of education?
  - (INFORMAL CAREGIVER ONLY) Have you taken classes or training in caring for young children? If so, what kinds of classes or training?
  - (Have you ever thought about/Is the caregiver interested in) pursuing a career in early childhood education and/or becoming a licensed child care provider?
3. (Do you/Does the caregiver) receive any payment for (your/his/her) time caring for the children?
  - **IF YES:** (Do you receive money from families to care for their children/Do you pay the caregiver to care for your child(ren))? (Do you/Does the caregiver) receive payment through child care subsidies or vouchers that support parents who are working or in

school? (These are available through CalWORKs and California's Alternative Payment Program.)

- **IF YES:** How did you learn about these subsidies?
  - **IF NO:** Are you familiar with these subsidies? If so, how did you find out about them?
- (Do you/Does the caregiver) receive anything besides payment for (your/his/her) time, such as trading child care with the parents of the child(ren) (you/he/she) care(s) for?

## **B. Support systems**

**(10 min.)**

Next, I'd like to get a sense of who (you/parents and informal caregivers) go to for information on child care, starting with informal sources of support.

4. What relationships or friendships are there among informal caregivers (and parents) in your community? That is, are there existing groups of informal caregivers (and parents) in your community? Can you describe these relationships? Do they tend to form around specific groups of caregivers such as those caring for young children, or those from specific communities or cultural/ethnic groups? What is the nature of these relationships (for example, peer support groups or mentoring relationships)?
  - Do you take part in any of these groups? If so, how did you get connected to the group?
5. Are there places where informal caregivers and/or parents gather to share information about caring for young children and support one another?
  - Where do informal caregivers meet (such as a playground, community center, or library)? How often do these groups meet? How are they organized? How do caregivers find out about the groups?

## **C. Existing programs, resources, and technology**

**(15 min.)**

My next questions focus on more formal support systems and technology that can help informal caregivers as they care for children.

6. Are you aware of any programs in your community that offer support, education, and/or resources to informal caregivers? These may include, for example, play-and-learn sessions led by a trained staff person where (you/he/she) can take children to play with others, or continuing education on child development or health (which may happen at a school or other community location, or as part of home visits by a trained staff person).
  - **IF YES:** (Do you/Does the informal caregiver) take part in the program? Why or why not? How did (you/he/she) find out about it? (INFORMAL CAREGIVER ONLY) What do you like about it? Is technology like Facebook, websites, or text messaging part of these programs? If so, how is technology used?
7. What kinds of technology do you use to share information, such as Facebook or text messaging?
  - How do you communicate with other parents and/or informal caregivers?

- What would be the best way to get information to you about programs and supports for caregivers?
8. What, if any, additional resources or supports do you (need/think the informal caregiver needs) to help care for children?

**D. Trusted sources of influence**

**(15 min.)**

In this next section, we'd like to understand who has an effect on the care that parents and informal caregivers provide, and activities and strategies that caregivers may use to support child development.

9. To whom do you look for support or advice about caring for children? That is, who in your community offers support (for example, family members, doctors, play group leaders, friends, or neighbors)?
10. Do leaders of playgroups, doctors, neighbors, or [insert other influencer mentioned by respondent] provide information on any of the following?
- Ways to support children's learning? How is this information shared with caregivers?
  - Trips and activities for children, such as library story hour or trips to a local museum? How is this information shared with caregivers?
  - Including parents and family members in early learning experiences? How is this information shared with caregivers?
  - Health and safety for young children (for example, CPR training, information on environmental dangers)? How is this information shared with caregivers?
  - Opportunities for informal caregivers to become licensed child care providers? How is this information shared with caregivers?
11. (PARENTS ONLY) How did you decide to use informal care? How did you select a caregiver? Is it a fluid or fixed arrangement?

Is there anything else you'd like to add before we close?

Thanks very much for your time!