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Policy Research

Informal Caregivers Research Project (INCARE)

Key Informant Interview Protocol

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INCARE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction and consent

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. As you may know, we are conducting these interviews as part of the Informal Caregivers Research Project, on behalf of the Packard Foundation. The purpose of these interviews is to build an understanding of how informal child care is provided in California, including information on the characteristics of informal care providers in your community and existing support systems, programs, and resources. We're also interested in any insights you're able to provide about successes and challenges related to outreach, resource provision, and/or efforts to increase the quality of informal care. The information you provide may help other community agencies and policymakers learn from your work, and the Packard Foundation's further efforts to improve the quality of informal child care and prepare all children for success in school. Your participation is voluntary and refusal to take part will involve no penalty. You may stop the interview at any time. If you have any questions or would like more information about the study, please contact Cleo Jacobs Johnson at Mathematica Policy Research at 510-830-3715, or via email at cjacobs@mathematica-mpr.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the New England Institutional Review Board at 800-232-9570.

Please note that we will keep your responses confidential. We may use direct quotes from this conversation to illustrate a point, but you will not be identified by name in any reports. Loss of confidentiality is a potential risk of being in this study. As we move through the interview you can decline to answer any particular question. I would like to record the interview to help me fill in my notes later. No one outside of the research team will listen to the recording or read the notes. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

The interview will last approximately one hour. Do you have any questions before we begin?

A. Respondent background   (5 min.)

1. To begin, please state your name and title and tell me about your role in [fill in agency name]. In a sentence or two, could you tell me what are the primary responsibilities of your position?

    - How long have you been with this organization? How long in your current role? (*If less than one year*, What did you do prior to becoming [title]?)

B. Informal caregiver landscape and context   (15 min.)

In the next set of questions, I refer to "informal caregivers." By "informal caregiver," I mean a person who cares for someone else's children outside of a child care center or licensed family day care. This is often referred to as family, friend, and neighbor, or FFN, care. First, I'd like to learn more about informal caregivers in California/your county/your community and how your agency connects with them.

2. Have you conducted a formal or informal assessment of who informal caregivers are and how many there are in California/your county/your community?

    - **IF YES:** How do you identify informal caregivers? [If a needs assessment or survey is mentioned]: Would you be willing to share a copy of that document with us?

    - **IF NO:** Do you plan to do so in the future? Why or why not?

3. We are interested in understanding the characteristics of informal caregivers in California/your county/your community. How would you describe the typical informal caregiver in California/your county/your community (such as level of education and training, race/ethnicity, language(s) spoken)?

    - How frequently do the caregivers provide care?

    - How many children are cared for by the typical informal caregiver?

    - [Drawing on survey or needs assessment, if mentioned earlier]: What is caregivers' relationship to the children for whom they provide care? Are they mostly family members or friends/neighbors?

    - [Drawing on survey or needs assessment, if mentioned earlier]: How common is it for children in California/your county/your community to be in informal care arrangements? How would you describe the typical child who is in an informal care arrangement (such as children under 5, from cultural/ethnic groups, from low-income families)?

4. Does your agency have any formal policies, programs, or initiatives in place to foster connections with informal caregivers? How about parents who care for their own children at home?

    - **IF YES:** Please describe the policies or programs.

    - **IF NO:** Does your agency engage in any informal outreach efforts to reach informal caregivers? **If so,** could you please describe your outreach approach?

    - How do you share information about services, subsidies, and other benefits with informal caregivers?

- Does your agency have goals or strategies for reaching specific groups within the informal caregiver population? **If so,** how do you target activities?

5. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent are parents and caregivers in your county aware of the child care subsidies available through CalWORKs and/or California's Alternative Payment Program? Can you describe how parents and informal caregivers learn about child care subsidies that support parents who are working or in school?

C. Support systems   (5 min.)

Next, we'd like to get a sense of existing support systems and networks, starting with informal sources of support.

6. What networks exist for informal caregivers (such as peer support groups or mentoring relationships)?

- Can you describe these networks? For instance, do they target specific groups of caregivers (such as those caring for young children, those from specific communities or cultural/ethnic groups, etc.)?
- How do informal caregivers connect to these networks?

7. Are there places where informal caregivers and/or parents gather to share information and support one another?

- Where do informal caregivers meet (such as a playground, community center, or library)?

8. Does your agency foster connections between the formal and informal care sectors? **If so,** how?

- Are there liaisons to the informal caregiver community?
- Is there a process for formal or informal referrals to networks or other supports for these caregivers?
- Are you aware of any other agencies that foster connections between formal and informal caregivers? **If so,** what do they do?

D. Existing programs and resources   (10 min.)

My next questions focus on more formal support systems.

9. What models or programs exist in California/your county/your community for offering support, education, and resources to informal caregivers?

- Are there opportunities for caregivers to observe adult-child interactions in group settings involving trained staff; for example, in play-and-learn sessions?
- Are there opportunities for continuing education or training?
- Are there programs that involve home visiting?
- Are there programs that involve a combination of approaches?

-   Are there any models or programs aimed at improving child care quality?

10. To what extent is technology (for example, social networking, websites, text messaging, etc.) incorporated in these programs?

    -   What tools are available to informal caregivers?

    -   What other tools and technology would informal caregivers find helpful?

11. For the programs and services offered through your agency, what was the impetus for targeting informal caregivers in California/your county/your community?

12. What, if any, additional supports are needed?

E. Trusted sources of influence   (10 min.)

In this next section, we'd like to understand who influences the care that parents and informal caregivers provide, and activities and strategies that caregivers may use to support the development of the children in their care.

13. From your perspective, to whom do informal caregivers look for information or advice about caring for children? That is, who in the community/playgroups/neighborhood offers support (for example, doctors, play group facilitators, friends, or neighbors)?

14. To your knowledge, do leaders of playgroups, doctors, neighbors or [insert other influencer mentioned by respondent] provide information to caregivers on any of the following?

    -   Strategies to use in the child care home to support the intellectual and social-emotional development of the children in their care? How is this information shared or disseminated to caregivers?

    -   Trips and activities the caregiver could participate in with the children in his/her care (for example, play group, library story hour)? How is this information shared or disseminated to caregivers?

    -   Health and safety for young children (for example, CPR training, information on environmental hazards)? How is this information shared or disseminated to caregivers?

    -   Engaging parents and family members in early learning experiences? How is this information shared or disseminated to caregivers?

    -   How an informal caregiver can become a licensed child care provider? How is this information shared or disseminated to caregivers?

F. Successes and challenges   (15 min.)

15. What do you see as the primary goal of providing resources and support to informal caregivers?

16. What challenges do you face in matching the needs of informal caregivers to the resources that could potentially help them?

17. What strategies help you match the needs of informal caregivers to the resources that could potentially help them?

18. Have you experienced any success in influencing the quality of care provided by informal caregivers? **If so,** please provide an example.

19. Have you encountered challenges in your efforts to influence the quality of care provided by informal caregivers? **If so,** please provide an example.

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

Thanks very much for your time!