Tennessee Child Care Task Force

Task Force Meeting: August 18, 2022

Public Consulting Group LLC

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Solutions that Matter

Agenda

1. Peer State Interviews and Research
2. Current State, Vision, and Current and Planned Solutions, for:
3. Access
4. Affordability
5. Quality
6. Workforce
7. Governance

Peer State Interviews and Research

Update

Peer State Interview and Research Status

- **Pennsylvania** Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)
  - Prevailing topic: data governance
  - Interview completed – further investigating data governance from details provided
- **Louisiana** Department of Education
  - Prevailing topic: QRIS point-based system and coordinated enrollment success model
  - Interview scheduled
- **Georgia** Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)
  - Prevailing topic: single early childhood department and engagement with policymakers
  - Interview confirmed with Commissioner of DECAL – scheduling in process
- **Iowa** DHS Child Care Bureau
  - Prevailing topic: regulatory policy
  - Interview scheduled

Peer State Interview and Research Status

- **North Carolina** Division of Child Development and Early Education
  - Prevailing topic: data, policy, regulatory environment
  - Scheduling in process
- **Alabama** Department of Early Education
  - Prevailing topic: Universal Preschool
  - Scheduling in process
- **Oklahoma** DHS – Child Care Services
  - Prevailing topic: Universal Preschool and public-private partnerships
  - Scheduling in process

Access Current State, Current and Planned Solutions, and Vision

Access Current State and Vision
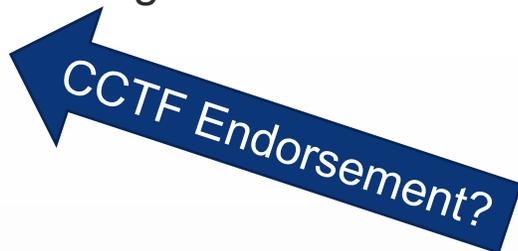
Access Current State

- Child care is hard to find.
  - Child care demand significantly outpaces supply. (Especially regarding Infant/Toddler Care)
- Tennessee families would benefit from improved and expanded tools that help find available child care.

Access Vision

- Every Tennessee family with young children, ages birth through age 12, can access quality child care with reasonable effort in a location and at a time that accommodates their schedules and unique needs.

Access Current and Planned Solutions

- Raised reimbursement rates by 20% effective Aug 1, 2022. This is in addition to a 10% raise in in Oct. 2021 and increases in 2019.

- Reimbursements based on child enrollment, not attendance (change made before COVID); reimbursements are paid out at the same rate, even if the provider charges less than the state rate.

- Reimbursement rate includes 15% differential for providers in child care deserts or distressed counties

- Establishment grants offer $1000/slot start-up supplies/equipment grant for new child care programs – program ongoing.

- Expansion grants for existing providers opening a new classroom/additional capacity - $1000/slot – program ongoing.

- Pre-licensure unit established to support/encourage new entrants to the child care market – also offers support on zoning/codes in establishing new programs and working with businesses who want to offer child care.

CCTF Endorsement?

Access Current and Planned Solutions

- ECD grants for facilities/capital improvement
  - This is the only funding that is not federal CCDBG; uses Community Development Block Grant managed by ECD
- Non-traditional hour care rate incentive (15% differential)
- Special needs rate incentive (15% differential) – also partner with CCR&R inclusion coaches (see Quality section)
- Partnerships with businesses (e.g. Tyson) in opening on-premises child care.
- Technology modernization effort:
  - Child care certificate program improvements for electronic T&A and more accurate payments for providers. Launched Feb 22 – still new, working out potential kinks.
  - E-Licensing system just launched statewide in June 22 – makes it easier for providers to do business with the state!
  - Eliminated need for licensed providers to pay an annual licensing fee. Now called a "continuous license" went into effect last summer. Only pay initial fee/pre-licensure phase.
- Making process for parent access and system navigation simpler
  - Streamlined/simplified online child care application Consumer Service Portal (One DHS)
  - An evolving database/child care finder tool

Affordability Current State, Current and Planned Solutions, and Vision

Affordability Current State and Vision

Affordability Current State

- When families can find child care, it is often unaffordable.
  - In 2021, the average annual price of center-based full time child care was more than $11,501.87 for infants and $9,742.50 for 4 year-olds.
  - Tennessee families would benefit from greater awareness of child care payment assistance resources.

Affordability Vision ◄ CCTF Pending

- TN "working/ALICE families" will not pay more than ALICE percentage of household stability income for child care, and shall receive government subsidy up to that percentage.

- TN will provide payment assistance for child care that ensures all families up to **X%** of State Median Income do not pay more than ALICE budget for child care.

- Right size: the government support, regulations, and resources to ensure business sustainability of all childcare programs (DOE, DHS, etc).

Affordability Current and Planned Solutions

- Reducing cost burden for eligible families
  - Smart Steps program makes payment assistance available for families earning up to 85% of state median income.
  - Eliminated parent co-pays Aug 1 through Dec 2022

- Addressing parent take-up rate for payment assistance
  - What is current marketing program? (Also, Is awareness the only issue driving take up rate or are there other factors?)
  - Still under the projected budget of available slots – 17,000 slots allocated; but 12,000 slots utilized.

Quality Current State, Current and Planned Solutions, and Vision

Quality Current State and Vision

Quality Current State

- Quality in child care is primarily dependent on teaching quality, though quality standards and monitoring systems are also essential.

  - A qualified child care workforce is essential. Tennessee child care providers, like providers across the nation, are struggling to adequately compensate and retain a qualified child care workforce.

  - Updates to TDHS' Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) will better capture measures of quality and effectiveness.

Quality Vision

- To realize the potential benefits of early learning, programs must be of high quality—meaning that they meet the needs of children and families and promote positive outcomes, and continuously works to refine and further the quality of the program.

CCTF Defined High Quality Practices

We, as the task force, believe the practices that indicate high quality are:

- a healthy, safe, and clean environment and appropriate materials for learning and play;

- classroom is appropriately outfitted with appropriate materials; items

- highly educated and quality staff;

- responsive caregiving (parent/family engagement);

- low child to teacher ratios; curriculum that advances appropriate development of a child into the next phase of their development and education;

- objective measurement of early childhood educational development; and,

- continuous quality improvement.

Quality Current and Planned Solutions

- 2021 Staff reorganization – feeds into TDHS relationship building with providers "licensing consultant" and affects the QRIS redesign.
- Family Child Care Network with TECTA partnership
- Licensing rules revamp in 2018 pushed TN at the time to #1 spot in the country for healthy weight regulations
- New QRIS Key Features:
  - Supervision Practices/Facilities/Equipment
  - Record Keeping
  - Healthy Weight and Disease Prevention
  - Organizational Structure
  - Health and Safety
  - Early Learning Activities and Routines
  - Responsive Caregiving
  - Behavior Support and Guidance
  - Family Engagement and Interactions

Quality Current and Planned Solutions

- Enhancement grants offer $1000 for supplies and improvements for existing providersFamily Child Care Network with TECTA partnership
- TECTA services:
    - Financial support for ECE degrees, training, credentials, etc.
    - Credentialling pathways
    - https://tecta.info/
- CCR&R services:
    - AIMHiTN
    - Family Engagement Quality Coaching
    - Health and Wellbeing Coaching
    - Infant/Toddler Coaching
    - Small Business Support
    - Tech Goes Home TN
    - Inclusion Coaching (emphasis on special needs – purchasing of adaptive equipment as well)
    - Family resources
    - Books from Birth and Imagination Library Partnership/Early Literacy and Language Coaches

Workforce Current State, Current and Planned Solutions, and Vision

Workforce Current State and Vision

Workforce Current State

- Low pay, demanding work, and alternative labor market opportunities have driven child-care workers out of the industry.

Workforce Vision

- Fully functional, skilled, and appropriately compensated pipeline of professionals in ECE.
- Staffing and credentials – every staff member has credentials, making this a profession.
- Understand their value and worth, and widely valued.

Workforce Current and Planned Solutions

- WAGE$ program bulleted here with TDHS investment amount and link to more info – one of two states that have this state wide.
  - Education-based salary supplement program for child care instructional staff
  - Since its inception two years ago, over 2,100 teachers have received wage supplements through the WAGE$ program totaling over $6.2 million and representing over 700 child care programs in Tennessee
- Current education and training options:
  - TN High Schools that provide ECE careers I & II coursework
  - TN Colleges of Applied Technology that award technical certificates in ECE
  - Community Colleges and Universities that award ECE degrees

TNPAL – Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning
  - Child care workforce registry
  - Collects and preserves completed trainings, credentials, education, awards, etc.

Governance Current State, Current and Planned Solutions, and Vision

Governance Current State and Vision

Governance Current State

- Differences between the TDOE and TDHS child care systems lead to inefficiencies.

- TDHS and TDOE have two separate sets of standards and monitoring systems, often causing confusion for parents and providers and resulting in duplication of effort
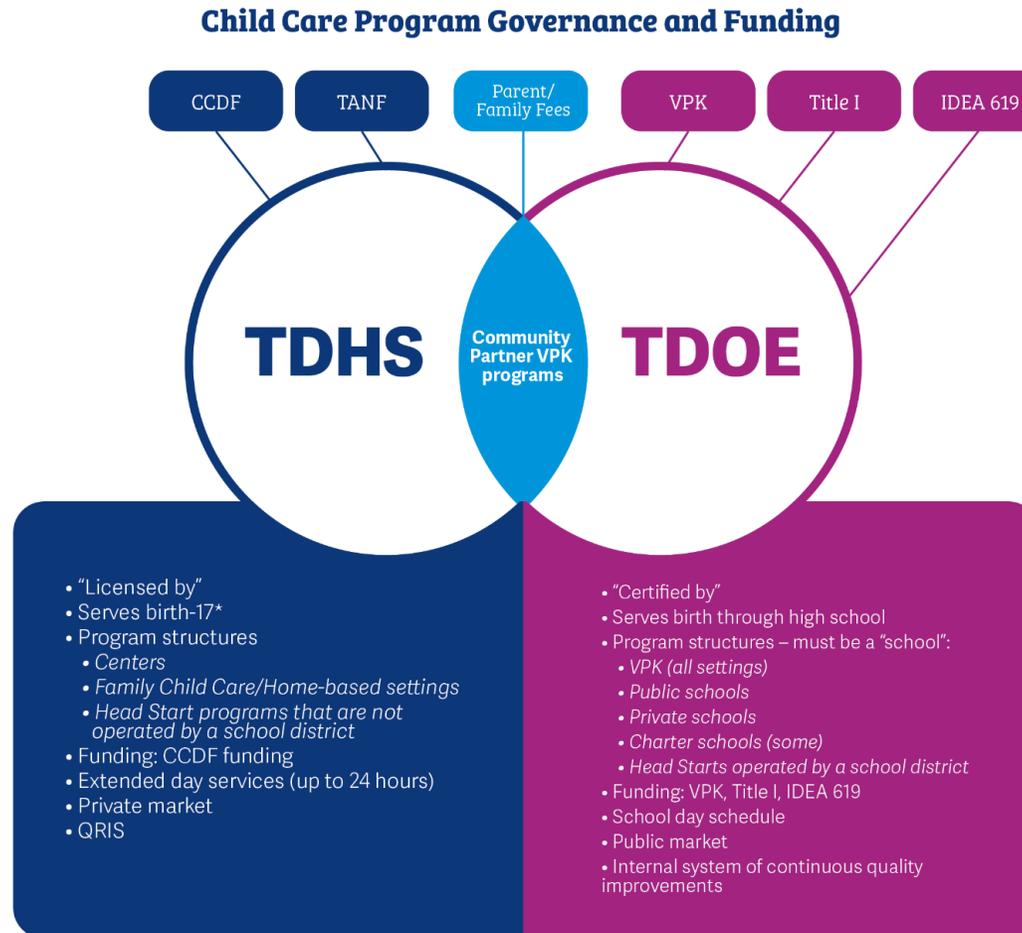
Governance Vision ← CCTF Pending

- Greater coordination and synchronization between TDHS and TDOE to minimize duplicative efforts, such as licensing/certification; QRIS/program monitoring.

Governance Current and Planned Solutions

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Further CCTF Deliberation Required

Child Care Program Governance and Funding

CCDF | TANF | Parent/ Family Fees | VPK | Title I | IDEA 619

TDHS

Community Partner VPK programs

TDOE

- "Licensed by"
- Serves birth-17*
- Program structures
  - *Centers*
  - *Family Child Care/Home-based settings*
  - *Head Start programs that are not operated by a school district*
- Funding: CCDF funding
- Extended day services (up to 24 hours)
- Private market
- QRIS

- "Certified by"
- Serves birth through high school
- Program structures – must be a "school":
  - *VPK (all settings)*
  - *Public schools*
  - *Private schools*
  - *Charter schools (some)*
  - *Head Starts operated by a school district*
- Funding: VPK, Title I, IDEA 619
- School day schedule
- Public market
- Internal system of continuous quality improvements

Solutions that Matter