



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

How SWFI grantees are providing child care for participants

This brief describes SWFI grantees’ innovative approaches to providing child care, as of November 2017. Grantees are providing child care for SWFI participants enrolled in education and training through grant funds, leveraged resources, or a combination of both. Also, as part of system development activities, grantees are implementing sustainable partnerships to better integrate the workforce and child care systems. We hope it is helpful to learn about how other grantees are meeting participants’ child care needs. If you want any additional information about a grantee’s approach, please feel free to contact the grantee directly, or through your TA coach.

Please note, the intent of this brief is to share examples of different child care strategies SWFI grantees are implementing. Any questions regarding allowable use of grant funds or changes to your project’s strategies should be directed to your Federal Project Officer (FPO).

Grantee	Child care strategy
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., MA	Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)’s SWFI-contracted training partners first assess parents for child care needs. Once a SWFI participant is signed up for training, the SWFI child care coordinator works with parents to find child care that meets their needs. The child care coordinator checks if the participant is eligible for a state Department of Transitional Assistance child care voucher, and if so, will help the participant apply. If the participant is not eligible for a voucher, SWFI will cover the cost of child care while participants are in education/training. In this case, once the participant and child care coordinator identify suitable child care options, the coordinator will call the provider to explain SWFI and how payments work. Child care placement takes up a large portion of staff time, especially for parents with school-aged children whose schedules change in the summer and during school breaks. Staff works with participants to plan for child care needs months in advance, providing information about local afterschool programs and summer camps. So far, all participants have secured child care that fits their training schedule and is close to their home or training center.
Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board, dba CareerSource, FL	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board, dba CareerSource (CareerSource) of North Central Florida is the local workforce board for Alachua and Bradford counties and is also responsible for administering Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). So far, all SWFI participants are TANF recipients and receive child care subsidies through TANF. In Florida, TANF recipients are prioritized for subsidies, receiving 50 hours of child care a week, and transitional child care once they gain employment. Once participants qualify for TANF, they are referred to local child care resource & referral agencies and CareerSource partners to help families find child care providers that accept subsidies. CareerSource is in the process of developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with these child care resource and referral agencies to also provide SWFI-funded child care for participants who do not qualify for child care subsidies through TANF.

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City of Long Beach, Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network, CA	City of Long Beach Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network (Pacific Gateway) is directly funding child care for participants by operating a single-payer child care registry. The grantee is recruiting child care providers to join the registry, with a focus on recruiting family child care home providers who often provide care with more flexible hours. To be on the registry, providers have to pass a quality assessment based on an observation of the care setting and have liability insurance that meets the city's requirements. Pacific Gateway currently has two providers in the process of joining the registry, which has been delayed due to city agency requirements. Pacific Gateway is also exploring ways to leverage other child care programs, including after-school care. Pacific Gateway allocates \$2,500 for child care for each participant while they are in education/training. The SWFI case manager works with participants to help them budget this amount to best meet their child care needs.
City of Phoenix, AZ	City of Phoenix is addressing challenges in providing child care related to regulations and liability as a city agency. They have explored many options for providing child care, including requesting to put child care under emergency services to exempt parents from having to go through a complex procurement process or only using selected vendors. In the interim, they have been serving participants who already have child care available.
Community College of Aurora, CO	Community College of Aurora requires SWFI participants to apply for child care subsidies through the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in order to qualify for SWFI child care assistance. A child care navigator helps SWFI participants assess their child care needs, navigate the CCAP application process, and locate quality child care. Most SWFI participants are also eligible for CCAP, but if they are not eligible, Community College of Aurora will cover their child care costs. Many SWFI participants are not accessing child care assistance because they prefer to keep their child with a trusted friend or family member who is not licensed. This means that Community College of Aurora has used fewer child care funds than it planned to so far. There is a lack of after-hours, weekend, and drop in child care in the area; this is a barrier for SWFI participants.
Memphis Bioworks Foundation, TN	Memphis Bioworks Foundation has a structure in place for child care, but no one has requested child care yet as they prefer to keep their children with friends and family. Memphis Bioworks Foundation is only providing child care during "gaps," unplanned circumstances or events when participants' regular providers or resources are not available, and staff believes that most parents already have sufficient child care in place. If a participant requests child care, the participant can identify a provider, or can work with a partner agency, the Department of Human Services, or Head Start to locate a provider. The provider must be a Department of Human Services approved provider. Memphis Bioworks Foundation will pay a maximum of \$900 directly to the provider while the participant is actively enrolled in training and maintains at least a "C" grade in graded courses.
Moore Community House, MS	Moore Community House received funds through the state TANF agency's block grant to pay for child care for all SWFI participants for up to 12 months. Moore Community House, which comes from both the workforce and child care perspectives, has an experienced child care navigator who has visited all the licensed child care centers in the service area. She works with participants to identify their child care needs and find the right fit for each family. Moore Community House engages providers in a formal MOU and then receives a monthly bill from providers and issues payment directly to providers. Because the TANF block grant funds are fairly flexible, Moore is able to provide care through training, job search, and the first few months of employment. For their new evening classes, Moore Community House has tapped staff from its Early Head Start program to provide child care in-house.

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OAI, Inc., IL	OAI, Inc. is working with Illinois Action for Children and other partners to navigate the child care landscape. OAI first established partnerships and negotiated rates with various licensed childcare providers throughout the region. Illinois Action for Children provides direct payments for child care placements through the state child care assistance program, and OAI assists participants with their co-pay to Illinois Action for Children. As of fall 2017, child care assistance has been received for approximately 100 children of SWFI participants.
OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida, FL	OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida's (OIC's) programmatic approach includes having case managers work with participants to establish a child care plan. OIC will fund child care directly for participants who have child care needs as long as they attend an approved child care provider, which includes many providers associated with the local child care resource and referral agency. Many of the initial participants do not require child care, but OIC expects that future participants will need care. Child care will be funded for the time that participants are in training plus two hours of travel time. OIC is also partnering with an after-hours child care provider as they expect participants will need care while taking classes in the evening or online.
Rochester Rehabilitation Center, NY	Rochester Rehabilitation Center employs a child care navigator through the Child Care Council (a local child care resource and referral agency) who works with participants once they are enrolled in SWFI to find affordable and safe child care. The navigator educates parents about quality care and state licensing regulations. The navigator helps participants search for licensed providers in good standing, and may accompany participants on facility tours to offer support and guidance. Once parents have selected a provider, the child care navigator helps to set up the contract. This contract uses SWFI funds to cover the hours that participants are in education/training at the county rate for child care.
The Workplace, CT	The WorkPlace uses a Child Care Concierge as a liaison with local child care providers and partners. In the eligibility phase, participants complete a childcare referral form, so that the Child Care Concierge has a head start on determining participant needs. After the participant is formally accepted, the Child Care Concierge works with them to develop a child care plan to find out their unique concerns, barriers, and needs, to enable success. She then provides participants with applications for subsidized programs in the area that fit their needs. SWFI participants can use licensed providers that are authorized through Connecticut's state voucher program, Care 4 Kids. If a participant is not receiving vouchers, needs additional hours of care not paid for by the voucher, or if the hours of nontraditional care needed mean that the participant will exceed their voucher amount, the WorkPlace will pay the participant's remaining cost. Funding caps per participant are adjusted based on the number and ages of children, the length of training, and how many hours of non-traditional nature are needed. The WorkPlace also has a partnership with an organization that helps providers get licensed.
Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke Valley, Inc., VA	Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke Valley, Inc. (TAP Roanoke) is very integrated with the Early Head Start/Head Start system, with about half their participants utilizing these programs. For other participants, TAP Roanoke will provide funding to fully meet participants' child care needs. TAP Roanoke, which comes from both the workforce and child care perspectives, provides financial assistance so participants can access child care at licensed centers and family day homes, as well as unlicensed care; providers bill TAP Roanoke for care directly every two weeks. TAP Roanoke incentivizes licensed care, but also uses unlicensed care as many areas of the state have a severe lack of licensed providers. TAP Roanoke's Two Generation Coordinators coach participants on accessing safe and reliable informal care. The Coordinators also work with participants to come up with "Plan B" for when child care arrangements are disrupted. TAP Roanoke uses onsite child care for orientations.

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Vermont Technical College, VT	Vermont Technical College's child care navigator works with participants who have a child care need to help them find affordable and safe child care. The navigator is stationed in the state child development division, so she works closely with the child care licensing and child care financial assistance programs for the state. She has access to some internal functions of the referral and financial assistance programs. Participants can access state child care financial assistance for participating in education/training. Participants are using child care financial assistance to access registered homes, licensed child care, approved relative care, and Head Start. Vermont Tech is also working with other state agencies to increase quality throughout the state.