

# CFCCN Participation in the Peer Learning Project

## **Project: *Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement in Family Child Care***

*Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement in Family Child Care* was a national effort to learn best practices in supporting FCC in engaging in continuous, ongoing quality improvement. In 2016, Rosie Kennedy, CFCCN board member, put together a California "Peer Learning Group" team to participate in the project. Our California team included family child care providers, professors and providers who are also professors. Several board members of *California Family Child Care Network* were on our team. (See team list, page 2.) This project was being offered through the *National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance* (NCECQA) directed by Nancy vonBargen. The NCECQA is under the federal *Office of the Administration for Children and Families*. NCECQA wants project participants to relay what they learned in order to ensure that their team and their state use best practices when attempting to support quality improvement related to family child care.

Our team read articles, studied the results of research, and participated in webinars. Our team leaders networked with other state teams at a national meeting in Chicago on October 18-19, 2016. Several presentations were offered by Juliet Bromer, Ph.D., a research scientist at the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy at Erikson Institute in Chicago. At the in-person meeting, Pilar Torres of Fathom, Inc. presented "Developing Quality Family, Friend and Neighbor and Family Child Care in English Language Learner Communities."

We found that members of the early childhood education field recognize the unique and essential contributions of family child care, and they believe that supporting FCCH quality improvement is extremely important. Most children receive care in home based child care (includes licensed-exempt), in particular our youngest children, those from low-income families and those most at-risk.

We learned about the best ways to help family child care providers improve their programs. Dr. Bromer emphasized the important connection between quality child care and quality provider support. Research showed us that providers are best supported by quality improvement efforts where providers have strong relationships with the staff and the lead staff has post graduate education including information about FCCH and infant-toddlers. Providers must participate in decision-making, topics should be explored in-depth, and staff should use staff self-assessment tools to evaluate their support programs. We learned about the benefits of using logic models to guide our work. Pilar Torres explained that it is especially important to support quality improvement efforts of Hispanic providers because our national child population (birth to 5 years) shall soon be primarily Hispanic.

We recognized that quality improvement efforts can have some unintended negative consequences. At the in-person meeting, Nancy and Rosie shared that the additional workload and requirements from quality improvement programs can be stressful and may inadvertently negatively impact providers' capacity to give their best to the children and families they serve. We need to do all that we can do to incorporate the potential benefits while limiting the potential disadvantages. Some studies are suggesting ways to streamline quality improvement efforts, such as rating only those standards that are most indicative of quality.

**CFCCN Participation in Project: *Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement in Family Child Care (cont.)***

**Team Goals:**

1. Effectively advocate for *California Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)* assessment practices that will actually measure positive child outcomes and will not inadvertently discourage quality practices by encouraging providers/teachers to narrow curriculum to testable skills.
2. Relay information to California family child care providers related to quality and California's QRIS (for example: provide web links to resources, e-mail articles, post information on our website, etc. - including resources shared by the Peer Learning Group).
3. Encourage California QRIS contractors to implement programs that will take advantage of the potential benefits of family child care (for example: mixed age groups, continuity of care, etc.).
4. Share information with QRIS agencies that will help them to implement programs that do not inadvertently make it more difficult for family child care providers to offer quality care (for example: too much paperwork, too many stressful ratings, meetings that take the provider away from her site, etc.).
5. Gather information from California providers participating in QRIS that can be summarized and relayed to policymakers, so that they can have the feedback they need to improve California's QRIS for family child care.

**Processes we would put into place to ensure that we influence the broader state system:**

1. Collect, chart and share information about QRIS laws, regulations, and policies (national, state and local levels) that affect California QRIS implementation.
2. Gather and summarize information about provider's personal QRIS experiences while maintaining confidentiality.
3. Make recommendations to QRIS agencies and policymakers based on research-based findings (including those presented by the Peer Learning Group) and information obtained from ongoing information sharing and input gathering from family child care providers.

**CA Peer Learning Team B:**

Rosie Kennedy	Former FCC provider/ FCCASF Director/ FCCACN Policy Chair/Family Child Care Association of San Francisco/Family Child Care Alameda County Network /CFCCN secretary
Nancy Wyatt	FCC provider/FCCERS Rater/FCC Quality Consultant/Public Policy Chair of CFCCN
Anastacia (Pam) Reeder	FCC provider/president of SFCCA/ Adjunct Professor for San Joaquin Delta Community College/Stanslaus Family Child Care Association
Patricia Sullivan	FCC provider/ECE Professor at City College of San Francisco
Katy Kenshur	FCC provider/president of SDCFCCA/NAFCC member/UC Davis Extension Instructor/past president of the San Diego County Family Child Care Association/CFCCN president elect
Toni Robertson	Program Manager for Contra County Child Care Council/CFCCN interim president
Holli Tonyan	Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at California State University/ currently conducting FCCH research