slalom

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Parent themes

01

Attendance inflexibility

Funding status is tied to attendance. however, program hours don't match the reality of many families' work schedules or transportation challenges. As a result, families often can't meet attendance expectations which can affect eligibility.

04

Information feels exclusive

Awareness of, and access to, information and support seems to be reserved for white, English-speaking families who know how to navigate the system and mold themselves to fit its requirements.

02

Lengthy determination process

The application and enrollment experience for CCCAP and Head Start can be time-consuming, confusing, and redundant which prevents families from planning, budgeting, and securing employment when schedules seem uncertain.

05

Fear of repercussions

Word-of-mouth within some communities causes families to fear perceived consequences of seeking financial assistance (e.g. loss of custody, immigration issues, etc.).

03

Funding process can feel shameful

Determination and redetermination of funding is an invasive experience that can cause a sense of shame, conflict within the home, and is often enough of a barrier in and of itself to prevent families for seeking the support for which they qualify.

06

Limited care options

Quality ratings often don't factor into families' limited choices about where to place their children. It's more so about where is there an opening, is it safe, does it accept the right type of financial assistance, and/or is it close enough to the home or on the way to work

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The Journey of Finding and Securing Care

We sought to understand how parents find and secure childcare or preschool for their children today, and how we could create a better experience in the future.

Journey of Findin	g
/ Securing Car	e

Grow Awareness

Identify any ECE needs

Evaluate ECE options

- Research ECE options
- Key Journey Steps
- available to my family
 Identify budget needs—will I pay out of pocket or seek financial assistance?

Apply & Enroll

- If seeking financial assistance, complete eligibility application
- Identify funding options available
- Receive authorization for funding
- Begin enrollment process with selected provider

Activate Care

- Seek regular, reliable care and education option for child(s)
- Pay provider or receive funding assistance that pays provider

Reapply

- Reapply for the new school year
- Engage in redetermination process if using financial assistance

We then brainstormed with parents to understand how they want to *feel* and *what they want* their experience to be along each step of this journey

FUTURE STATE EXPERIENCE SIGION

Stage 1: Grow Awareness

Micro-stages

Need identified

Research

Evaluation

Budgeting

How do we want parents to feel?

Guided

Understood

Emboldened

What does this look like in practice?

How do we achieve

this experience?

"I'm relieved with how easy it was to begin my search for early childhood education. I was able to search and learn which programs met my needs as a parent and provided high quality education for my little ones." "I was excited to find a program that was close to home that offers flexible hours and the employees gave me confidence that this was the right fit during my visit." "During my search and visits, I learned about all the different tools and financial assistance I could leverage to help me easily budget and figure out what care I can afford."

MUST HAVES

- Simple, culturally-friendly language
- Up-to-date provider search info (waitlist times, spots available, etc.)
- Clarity about resources, processes, and documents pertinent to undocumented families
- Natural language search / knowledge base—SEO strategy and content/program documentation reflects how parents speak about FCF
- Built-in translation (outside of Google Translate / Yandex)

NICE TO HAVES

Online chat with a human advocate

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Stage 2: Apply & Enroll

Application

Micro-stages How do we want parents to feel?

Guided

Reassured

Encouraged

Empowered

Informed

Authorization

Excited

Enrollment

What does this look like in practice?

"Applying for financial assistance was so easy! The website made it clear what I needed to apply, where I was in the process, how long my application would take to process."

"I had confidence that my application was submitted because I received a confirmation email with a tracking ID - so I knew my application was being processed."

"I was contacted by a pleasant support team member to fill out additional details in the application and was reminded about financial assistance and other resources I could leverage when during my childcare experience." "It felt really nice to know how long my eligibility was going to take to process and when I'd receive a decision by. This allowed me to work with providers to identify a start date for care."

"ECE is expensive! I like how the site and people I talked to encouraged me to apply for ECE financial assistance to see what I qualify for, even if I didn't think I would receive any funding support. It was easy to fill out one application to figure out if I qualify. When I had a question I was able to reach a person to discuss the process."

"Wow! I'm relieved that I was able to find ECE that our needs. My little one and I are both looking forward to the first day of school."

How do we achieve this experience?

MUST HAVES

- One application for all resources related to ECE subsidies
- Simple, culturally-welcoming language
- Progress trackers for both application completion and determination process
- Humans to help parents navigate ECE financial assistance
- Visualization of process and timeline with eligibility calculator
- Non-invasive minimum required fields that don't cause domestic strife or threatening situations (i.e., child support enforcement)
- Standardized documentation requirements across programs

NICE TO HAVES

- Error handling
- SMS / email notification of determination status and/or missing documentation
- Natural language search knowledge base
- 311 type hotline

FUTURE STATE EXPERIENCE SIGION

Stage 3: Activate Care

Micro-stages

Day to Day

Payment

How do we want parents to feel?

Connected

Protected

What does this look like in practice?

"I bet my parents would have loved to have this level of communication and information back when they were dropping me off for school! I have a website I can go to for information as well as the ability to communicate with my child's teacher and school throughout the school year. It helps me understand how my child is doing and helps me be a better parent once they're home."

"I didn't even know that switching jobs could affect my provider or my financial assistance. Luckily, someone form the program supported me and helped me adjust my coverage so that I could continue paying what I can afford."

MUST HAVES

- Parent reviews / surveying of web experience
- Simple, culturally-friendly language
- Mobile-first design
- ClassDojo-type solution for parent/provider collaboration
- Built-in translation outside of Google Translate
- Clarity about resources, processes, and documents pertinent to undocumented families and staff

NICE TO HAVES

 Allow families to check in for ECE (attendance) on your phone based on your GPS location or through ATS

How do we achieve this experience?

FUTURE STATE EXPERIENCE SIGIOM

Stage 4: Reapply

Micro-stages

Reminder

Reapply

How do we want parents to feel?

Protected

What does this look like in practice?

"I received an email to update my information for redetermination of my eligibility. I chose to apply for eligibility after tax season so I had all the necessary documents ready to go to start the process. My redetermination began at the same time the following year, when I was prepared again.

MUST HAVES

How do we achieve this experience?

- Streamline the process for reapplying for the following school year
- Consider communicating opportunity to align CPP and CCCAP eligibility determination to tax season timeline when parents have income and employment documentation readily available and prepared
- SMS / email notifications 2 months prior to key redetermination dates and tasks to get parents adequate time to prepare
- Provide parents with easy-to-follow documents and explanations that illustrate implications of additional income and job changes on eligibility