RESEARCH FINDINGS

Provider themes

01 Workforce scarcity
The inability to recruit and retain qualified teachers is the #1 threat to early childhood

02 Measurement mismatch
We are too focused on the wrong performance indicators of the right goal - driving positive, equitable outcomes for children and families

03 Funding process = shame
The request for, and determination of funding, is an inauthentic process that can create barriers to access and prevent true family choice

04 Exclusive vs. inclusive
Access to information and support seems reserved for those who know how to navigate the system and have the "right" connections

05 Data scarcity
A lack of trust between stakeholders, especially in reporting and the data management, is a major cause of the duplicate processes
# Stage 1: Awareness (Pre-License)

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<td>How do we want providers to feel?</td>
<td>Inspired</td>
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<td>What does this look like in practice?</td>
<td>“Last fall I was visiting my sister who runs a preschool. I was so inspired by the way she was able to care for early learners and prepare them for kindergarten. I knew this was my calling.”</td>
<td>“It was easy to learn about different curriculums or teaching styles I could leverage through the informative website. I was even able to call someone to help me align my teaching method to the regulations.”</td>
<td>“It was exciting to collaborate with others when determining my program’s location and classroom layout. I really feel like the space will be conducive to me teaching and my children learning.”</td>
<td>“The new Department’s website made it easy to learn about financial support, making me feel at ease and enabling me to focus on teaching, instead of only budgeting.”</td>
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**MUST HAVES**
- Mobile-first design for information about standing up a center
- Simple, culturally-welcoming language
- Up-to-date provider search info (waitlist times, spots available, etc.)
- Clarity about resources, processes, and documents pertinent to undocumented families and staff interested in opening a center
- Natural language search / knowledge base—SEO strategy and content/program documentation reflects how parents and providers speak about ECE
- Built-in translation (outside of Google Translate / Yandex)

**NICE TO HAVES**
- Online chat or phone call with a human advocate
Stage 2: Establish

- Omni-channel awareness campaign that promotes ECE teaching as a “real” profession and the road to credentials
- Teacher and staff support network that holistically provides services to encourage physical, mental, and financial health of the front-line workers

**Micro-stages**

**How do we want providers to feel?**

- **Licensing**
  - Supported
  
  “Licensing has always been difficult. The State’s website made it easy to understand which regulations are most relevant to my classroom. I was also provided support through a navigator who helped support, educate, and motivate me throughout the process.”

- **Recruiting**
  - Enabled
  
  “Recruiting can be difficult at times. Luckily, the State’s website and navigators helped me craft job postings and guided me where to post the job offer. The state’s subsidy packages and offers made it easier to attract and interview qualified teachers.”

- **Credentialing**
  - Accomplished
  
  “I’m ready to start serving children! The credentialing process was straightforward, and I had a navigator to guide me through along the way. We have several great teachers on staff with a variety of experience and education levels that are passionate about serving kids.”

**What does this look like in practice?**

**How do we achieve this experience?**

- Streamlined licensing and rating process and timeline
- Quality rating system that measure child outcomes
- Aligned regulatory systems across related agencies (e.g. fire dept)
- Licensing concierge service to hold your hand when getting set up
- Status notifications
- Omni-channel awareness campaign that promotes ECE teaching as a “real” profession and the road to credentials
- Teacher and staff support network that holistically provides services to encourage physical, mental, and financial health of the front-line workers

**MUST HAVES**
Stage 3: Engage

What does this look like in practice?

- “I was thrilled to be able to consider students for admission based on their fit with my program vs. their level of funding determination. One of my goals is to have a diverse classroom and removing the burden of crunching numbers meant I could focus on the children.”
- “I’m empowered to start enrolling students in my program knowing that parents have clear timelines on their eligibility determination and that I’ll receive adequate funding to cover the total cost of care. I can maximize the number of students I can serve.”
- “It puts a smile on my face seeing excited parents and kids coming to school. I can’t wait to start teaching all the different children in my class.”

How do we achieve this experience?

- Proactive communication of regulatory changes
- Universal blend-n-braid model at State level
- Unconscious bias training
- Clarification of risk factor calculations that create inequitable advantages or disadvantages
- FAFSA-type structure (parent applies for financial aid and receives a tuition credit that can be applied at different providers/institutions)
**Stage 4: Activate**

**Micro-stages**

**How do we want providers to feel?**

**Day to Day**
- Aligned

“The State’s website not only has great communication tools to update parents throughout the year, it also provided a guide on how to effectively establish expectations and communication patterns with parents.”

**Payment**
- Supported

“Timely payments from the state make it easy for me to budget effectively for my program. Without payment tied to attendance, I have a predictable stream of funding coming in each week.”

**What does this look like in practice?**

**How do we achieve this experience?**

**MUST HAVES**
- Universal blend + braid model at the State level
- Separate payment from attendance and attach to enrollment
- Mimic FAFSA-type structure
- Full-time enrollment = full-time payment
- Standardize payment schedule for different payment streams (e.g., CCCAP, DPP, CPP) so payments arrive on same schedule
- Send payments weekly to providers via ACH transfers

**NICE TO HAVES**
- Tailor payment system process to rural areas with only 1 licensed provider (e.g., send allocated funding direct to provider)
- Concierge service for providers that provides dedicated support to navigate payment processes, questions, and troubleshooting
- 3rd party app to receive payment (e.g., Venmo)
Stage 5: Reassess / Reapply

**Micro-stages**

- Reminder
- Redetermination

**How do we want providers to feel?**

Clear

"Thankfully, tax season comes but once a year and so does redetermination. I work with my families' case workers to ensure there's an accurate depiction of their situation."

**What does this look like in practice?**

**MUST HAVES**

- 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