

National Alliance for Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care

The National Alliance for Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care (NAFFNCC) is a work group of diverse individuals and organizations consisting of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. NAFFNCC aims to influence the systems that affect family friend and neighbor care; enhance caregivers' access to services; and increase the field's awareness of the role that family, friend and neighbor child care plays in the child care system as a whole.

We hold that:

- Family, friend and neighbor care plays an essential role in the fabric of families and communities. Parents chose this type of care because they trust the caregivers; they believe that their children are safe; and they want someone who shares their culture. Caregivers want to help parents who need child care to work; they love their children and want to keep them within the family; and, in some cases, they need the income.
- Family, friend and neighbor child care is an integral part of the child care continuum, which extends from parents on the one end to child care centers on the other. It represents the most common type of child care for children under six whose parents are working, especially in entry-level jobs with non-traditional schedules. Infants and toddlers account for the highest proportion of children in these child care arrangements; school-age children, the second largest.
- Family, friend and neighbor child care represents a majority of subsidized child care arrangements in many states and localities.
- Like all types of child care, family, friend and neighbor care is a support for parental employment as well as a support for children's development. For some preschool children, it may be the only non-parental setting they experience before entering kindergarten.
- Policy makers who aim to achieve the dual goals of enhancing parents' participation in the workforce and preparing children for school should be intentional about including family, friend and neighbor caregivers in the child care system since it represents a significant proportion of child care for young children. For these

reasons, systemic efforts such as reimbursement rates, professional development systems, and quality improvement efforts must include family, friend and neighbor caregivers.

- Initiatives that aim to serve these caregivers should be based in the neighborhoods and communities where they live. Programs should build on the strengths of the personal relationships between caregivers and families and the flexibility of the caregiving arrangement. They should also reflect the diversity of these communities: their ethnicity; culture, language, and socio-economic status.
- Family, friend and neighbor caregivers are a heterogeneous group. For relative caregivers, programs should draw on family support approaches such as parent education. For caregivers who may be considering a career in child care, programs should use training approaches that mirror those designed for regulated home-based providers.
- Linking family, friend, and neighbor caregivers to other resources in the community provides benefits for both caregivers and children. Caregivers can benefit from training provided by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and other early childhood agencies. Children can benefit from coordination between family, friend, and neighbor care and pre-kindergarten program, libraries, Early Head Start, Head Start and public schools. Information about other resources such as health and social services as well as the subsidy system can improve caregivers' quality of life and, in turn, the care they provide to children.
- To meet the needs of children, families and communities, additional research is needed to better understand family, friend and neighbor child care as well as the effectiveness of different policies and approaches to support it.