

A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF
SAN FRANCISCO CHILD CARE
SUBSTITUTE COVERAGE NEEDS

SUBMITTED BY:
FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES OF THE BAY AREA

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We have thoroughly enjoyed working together on this project and sincerely hope our efforts will contribute to the development of a successful substitute program for this wonderful community.

Pat

Pat Chambers, Ph.D.
Associate Agency Director

Noa

Noa Mohlabane, M.A.
Consultant

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

A. The Project

The Early Care and Education (ECE) system in San Francisco is challenged by a shortage of qualified and consistent substitutes to allow release time for early childhood personnel to engage in professional development. In addition there is a lack of funds to pay for such substitute coverage.

To address this tremendous need for substitute coverage, three San Francisco public agencies stepped forward to provide funding for a citywide planning process, with the intention of funding a substitute program in the San Francisco. These three agencies are:

- First 5 – San Francisco (First Five)
- Department of Children, Youth & their Families (DCYF)
- San Francisco Human Service Agency (HSA)

In Spring 2007 they released a Joint Competitive Solicitation for proposals **to conduct a six-month planning process to assess the needs for a citywide substitute pool and release time program for Family Child Care (FCC) providers and center-based programs, and to develop a plan for implementation of such a program.**

B. Family Support Services of the Bay Area

In June 2007, Family Support Services of the Bay Area (FSSBA) was chosen to conduct the planning process. FSSBA is a private, non-profit agency serving San Francisco and East Bay children and families since 1990. **Our agency mission is to support children, youth, families and communities by providing services that make them stronger.**

FSSBA has four core programs: Respite/Child Care, Family Preservation, Kinship and Mentoring. In San Francisco, we provide family preservation services for families where there has been child abuse or neglect. We also provide respite/child care services to at-risk families, low-income families, relative caregivers, foster parents, homeless shelters, HSA playrooms and various other community sites.

C. Goals

The main goals of the planning process were to:

- Research past and present substitute programs that have been tried locally, nationally or internationally;
- Assess the substitute needs of current San Francisco ECE providers (both FCC and centers);
- Gather ideas and suggestions for implementing a substitute pool program;
- Make recommendations for implementation of a San Francisco substitute program.

D. Planning Groups

The project was led by FSSBA's Associate Agency Director, Pat Chambers, a licensed psychologist with over 25 years experience in developing, operating and evaluating social service programs and by FSSBA's San Francisco Respite Program Director, N. Bruce Williams, a seasoned manager and community organizer who has worked more than 20 years assessing, developing and directing community programs.

After seeking and interviewing potential consultants, FSSBA contracted with Noa Mohlabane and her consulting partners, Pam Dunn and Marcia Craddock to:

- Research substitute programs
- Interview key stakeholders
- Develop program options
- Conduct needs assessments
- Facilitate focus groups
- Analyze data
- Draft the report on the planning process.

Ms. Mohlabane has substantial experience in organizational development and program evaluation of ECE programs. With over 35 years of experience in the ECE field, as a mother, substitute, teacher, director, college instructor, and consultant.

The **Core Sub Pool Group** consisted of Pat Chambers, Bruce Williams, Noa Mohlabane and a representative from each of the funding agencies:

- Ingrid Mezquita, First 5
- Greg Rojas (Mardi Ludich), DCYF
- Elise Crane, HSA

The Core Group was responsible for all decision-making during the planning process.

A **Sub Pool Advisory Group** was convened to ensure that the input of key child care/ECE stakeholders was included in the design of the planning process. In addition to the five Sub Pool Core Group members, the members of the Sub Pool Advisory Group included:

- Alicia Daniel, Family Child Care Association of San Francisco
- Amanda Montague, San Francisco Child Care Providers' Association
- Farris Page, Children's Council of San Francisco
- Natalie Brutto, Child Care Planning Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Sharon Donovan, City College of San Francisco, Professional Development Project
- David Fleishman, Wu Yee Children's Services

The Sub Pool Advisory Group met on three occasions to:

- Review and advise on substitute programs to research and generate questions to be asked of the programs
- Review and advise on the needs assessment survey tool
- Assist in the development of the outreach list and venues for the focus groups
- Assist in the development of focus group questions
- Observe a presentation by Frontline Technologies of their web-based scheduling program
- Provide input on different substitute program models

E. Methodology

The following methods were used to assess the two main areas of research:

- Review of past and present models (locally, nationally, internationally)
- Assessing the substitute needs of current ECE providers

1. Researching Past and Present Models

A broad review of substitute programs implemented in California, the United States or internationally was conducted to identify best practices. The consultants conducted an Internet search and contacted individuals and programs suggested by the Sub Pool Advisory Group, as well as other relevant sources. Of the 58 individuals and programs contacted, 33 responded either with a written survey or an interview,

or both. Information was gathered to determine what models have been tried, what worked or didn't work, what contributed to success or failure, and what models are geared to a community similar to San Francisco.

2. Assessing Providers' Substitute Needs

At the time of this planning process, there were over 950 licensed ECE programs in San Francisco. Approximately 650 of these were licensed FCCs and 300 were Child Care Centers. We designed a multi-pronged approach to assess providers' needs, concerns, and recommendations for substitute coverage. These methods included:

A) Needs Assessment Survey

- More than 1000 surveys, including self-addressed, stamped return envelopes, were mailed to all licensed centers and FCCs. Multiple mailing lists provided by Advisory Group members were utilized. (Appendix A: Cover Letter; Appendix B: Survey.)
- Announcements were distributed in various existing child care/ECE newsletters and mailings.
- The survey was available in three languages: English, Spanish and Chinese. Appropriate language versions were sent to target mailing lists.
- Providers had the option of handwriting their responses or taking the survey online (via the web-based program Zoomerang).
- As an incentive for responding, participants were entered into a raffle for a \$125, \$75 or \$50 gift card to the store of their choice. Early respondents and online respondents were given bonus entries to the raffle.

Targeted Focus Groups

- In order to reach a diverse sample of the San Francisco ECE community, nine focus groups were conducted, targeting the following groups:
 - Neighborhood Family Child Care Association groups
 - Visitation Valley Family Child Care Providers (with Cantonese interpreter)
 - Bay View / Hunter's Point Family Child Care Providers
 - Western Addition Family Child Care Providers
 - Citywide Hispanic Family Child Care Providers (with Spanish interpreter)
 - Citywide Asian Family Child Care Providers (with Cantonese interpreter)
 - SF Child Care Providers' Association (both centers and FCCs)
 - CPAC meeting with representatives from centers, FCCs, public agencies and community members
 - Center-based groups (two focus groups were conducted)
- Food, child care and \$25 grocery gift cards were used as incentives.
- At each of the focus groups, participants heard about four substitute program models (described below) and were asked:
 - To list benefits, challenges and solutions to each model
 - Which model they preferred
 - What training and orientation requirements they would expect for substitutes
 - Their opinion of different recruiting ideas
 - What would prevent them from using the program
 - What should be expected of providers/centers to use the sub program
 - What fees (e.g., initiation, hourly) they would be willing to pay and how much
 - Any other considerations

PART TWO: PAST AND PRESENT PROGRAMS

A. Summary of Substitute Programs in San Francisco

Our goal was to look at substitute programs that presently exist or have operated in the past in order to learn from their experience and access best practices. Ms. Mohlabane interviewed people who were involved in past and present substitute programs in San Francisco.

1. Self-Call Substitute List

In the early and mid-1990s there was a substitute program consisting of a self-call list in operation in San Francisco and San Mateo for at least four years. It served both Family Child Care Providers and Centers. In retrospect, interviewees reflected that the major problems with this program were that it was self-call rather than dispatched, that the good substitutes were hired away by programs, and the remaining substitutes were often unavailable or unreachable (i.e., before cell phones). There was also difficulty in recruiting substitutes who were qualified as teachers.

2. Substitute Registries

In 1999 there was a pilot project in California to have “Substitute Registries” with a waiver that allowed all licensing affiliation information to be housed within the Registry and checked there by Licensing, rather than associating each substitute with each site where they worked. The substitute registries pilot projects ended. The licensing waivers are no longer in place and each substitute now has to be associated with each site prior to working with the children.

There was a more recent call for grant applications to run substitute pool registries again, and several Bay Area programs began the process but did not follow through. Bananas, an ECE Resource and Referral Agency in the East Bay had a self-call substitute list for over 20 years that ended when licensing enforced the records association requirement.

In a recent meeting with Community Care Licensing (CCL), we discussed the following protocol that they approved:

- Each substitute would complete a CCL transfer form for each site where s/he may provide services
- The form must be signed by the center director or the FCC provider of each site
- The form and a copy of a photo ID must be faxed to CCL before the substitute provides any services at the site.
- The substitutes would also have to have copies of their documents with them while working
- A copy of the forms must be kept at the site for its records

3. For-Profit Program

Thirty percent (30%) of the Centers who responded to the needs survey reported using a temporary agency for obtaining substitutes. Childcare Careers, a for-profit organization, has been in operation for more than 15 years. Ms. Mohlabane attempted to interview the director and founder of Childcare Careers regarding her experience and knowledge of the history of substitute programs in San Francisco. The director was unwilling to share information that she considered proprietary. She expressed interest in presenting to the funders how her service could be of benefit. The following information is taken from the Childcare Careers website or from conversations with users of the service.

Founded in 1989, Childcare Careers is a source for temporary, permanent, temp-to-perm, part-time and full-time employees. The company pre-screens ECE professionals, provides them with a video-based orientation training, and sends them to the sites with all the documentation required by Licensing to cover the planned and unplanned vacancies. Temporary placements are available for any length of time, from hours to weeks-at-a-time. Fees range from \$22.20 -\$35.25 per hour based on the number of hours to be worked, the position (Teachers Aide – Lead Teacher), the number of ECE units and amount of experience the substitute has. Childcare Careers provides both temporary and permanent child care providers. A fee (ranging from \$1000.00-\$1500.00 based on teacher level) is charged to hire a provider on a permanent basis.

4. Voucher Reimbursement

There has been some professional development money in the form of a voucher program funded by DCYF to cover release time for centers and FCCs. The vouchers were used to reimburse for substitutes when child care providers attended meetings or planned professional development. This program has been underutilized by FCCs. It appears that the main roadblocks were finding substitutes that the providers felt they could trust with their children in their homes. Providers also mentioned that the time that it sometimes took to get the reimbursements was prohibitive for programs running on a very tight budget.

B. Summary of Substitute Programs outside San Francisco

Our research included looking at programs in other parts of the United States and beyond, to see what models have been used, and what has worked or has not. The following section gives a sample of some of the different kinds of programs we discovered, including some of the details as to how these programs have been structured.

1. Nashville SEES (Nashville Supports Early Education Staff)

Nashville SEES (Appendix H) is a non-profit organization that has been operating since 2003 and was set up specifically to run this substitute program. SEES recruits, screens, hires and trains employees to serve Centers, Family Child Care Providers and Group Homes. The program mostly serves Centers. For Family Child Care they primarily serve large group homes where there is another adult present. If it is a small Family Child Care, they will only send a substitute if another adult is home, in case of emergency.

SEES hires substitutes as full time employees, paid hourly with a guaranteed 35 hours per week. They tend not to hire part-time people because the costs of recruiting, screening and training them are still the same. They try to have at least 12 substitutes on staff at any one time but would keep more if they could get them.

Sites are charged \$13.75 per hour with a 25% discount for staff training days. The actual cost is closer to \$22 per hour including the costs of recruitment, screening, training, liability insurance, etc., but the program is able to use grant funds to cover these administrative costs. Substitutes are paid approximately \$10.50 per hour. Health benefits, paid time off and holiday benefits, excess transportation and mileage reimbursements are available for full-time employees.

Their original goal was to provide coverage only for training and professional development, but they have found most of the need is for staff absences and unfilled positions.

SEES used to have a high penalty (\$5,000) to hire someone off the substitute pool, which programs honored even though there was no enforcement. More recently the program has acknowledged the tremendous need for filling open positions in Centers and has decided to build in the option for programs to hire SEES' substitutes into permanent child care positions. This also has allowed them to recruit a higher level of substitute, because it is seen as a stepping-stone into a permanent position with the added

benefit of training and being able to check out the work environment prior to full employment. For the Centers it is also highly beneficial, saving on recruitment, screening, and training time and costs, while having the opportunity to see how someone works out in the classroom before making a permanent commitment.

They started with an initiation fee of \$1,500.00 for this service but they found that most programs did not have this in their budgets; now they build the cost for recruiting, screening, and training into their hourly rate. If a program is looking for a substitute to eventually fill a permanent position the agreement stipulates that the substitute works a six-week trial period before they are eligible to be hired. During this time the Center pays an extra \$1.00 per hour for this substitute.

Most of the substitutes view the job as a temporary position. The SEES program targets people who want full time jobs in child care. The recruitment information stresses that training is offered. Many of the people they hire have recently graduated from college and have minimal experience. They target people with a four-year degree in ECE; a four-year degree in another field plus experience working with children; or an Associates degree in ECE. They have started using a pre-employment assessment tool through Scheig Associates before interviewing and feel it has been extremely accurate and strongly recommend it.

The program provides five hours of orientation training in their office. This training covers new child care provider orientation, professionalism and career options, licensing rules, child development concepts, child abuse prevention and reporting, behavior management and developmentally appropriate discipline, understand staffing ratios, health and safety.

After this training, new substitutes “shadow” a teacher in a classroom for a half-day each with infants, toddlers, three-year olds and four-year olds. Once they start working, the program sends a mentor to observe them for about an hour and then meet with them to train for one hour per week for four weeks. This mentoring is a new part of the program and gives them a better picture of their staff. This is a training process, not supervision or evaluation. After 30 days, the mentor decides if the person needs further mentoring. Included are monthly meetings to evaluate the performance of substitutes. The substitutes sign an agreement to work with SEES at least one month before being eligible for a permanent position.

The program has worked out an arrangement with “Licensing” that all the substitute records and clearances are centralized at the program, rather than with each site where they are substituting; licensing comes out to review the records at the centralized SEES office.

There are a few requirements for sites using the program. There is a quality assessment called STARS. There are clear grounds for termination, (e.g. breaking licensing rules, being out of ratio, not having emergency information available). The initial enrollment fee is now \$75. There is site visit at beginning to fill out forms, take a picture of the facility (to help the substitute find it easily) and get a description of the program, including things such as dress code and discipline policy.

SEES tries to do as much scheduling as possible in advance. There are always more requests than they can fill. For planned substitutes they request calls by Friday for the following week. They save at least two slots for unplanned substitutes and the rest go for planned. The substitutes can check their schedules on line. The dispatcher works from home, with many evening calls, handling issues as they come up. For unplanned substitutes, sites have to make a call as early as 5:30 a.m. The dispatcher begins works at 6:30 a.m. to respond to calls. Substitutes are called by 7:30 a.m. to go out. Scheduling is done through a website. Centers call to request a substitute, but can go on-line to check the status of their request. Substitutes can log in to see their schedule and get descriptive information for the centers they are

serving. They had the website custom built and are working on having billing added to it. Recently SEES signed up with Frontline Placement Technology to improve SEES website capacity.

SEES has served more than 16,000 children, filling more than 1400 requests for 38 facilities. They have released 115 teachers for training and professional development.

Challenges faced by the SEES program:

- Losing degreed teachers to public schools
- Not much longevity due to low pay
- Getting funders to understand the need and value of substitutes as a public investment
- Small applicant pool
- 100% turnover in first 6 mo
- At least half the usage is to fill open positions because centers can't fill them
- Because of the above, they are having trouble serving multiple centers
- Centers feel they could just as easily pay the \$10 -\$12 an hour to a substitute directly instead of going through the agency
- Liability is high because of 'off site' work
- Getting substitutes to be flexible about work assignments
- Family Child Care Providers have the liability of having someone work by himself or herself, so SEES doesn't allow a substitute to be in a FCC by themselves with the children. They require another adult, possibly a provider's family member to be with the substitute).

2. Oregon AEYC (Association for the Education of the Young Child)

Oregon AEYC (Appendix I) is a referral/placement substitute program. The program was very generous and shared their entire structure and all of their forms with us. The most relevant ones can be viewed in the attachment section and revised for use.

Oregon AEYC began with pilot project planning in 2004. They held planning meetings and surveyed 372 child care providers for estimated program usage. Almost three-fourths of the respondents stated that they would use the program: 41% said they would use it less than one day per month; 19% said they would use it 1-2 days per month; and 12% said they would use it 3 or more days per month. This allowed the program to estimate the need for staffing. They started the program designed to serve 15-20 providers for planned leave only, however 23 child care providers signed up for the pilot program.

An Oregon Commission on Children and Families report concluded at the end of the six month pilot project: *"The substitute pool, while valued by those who did participate, was not used by a large number of providers, and recruiting and maintaining substitutes proved difficult."* While this program is still in existence, the substitute pool currently only have two substitutes due to challenges in continued recruitment.

Oregon AEYC is **not** an employer of the substitutes and sites are required to carry liability insurance and pay the substitutes directly. It is the provider's discretion to put the substitute on their payroll or to contract the substitute as an independent contractor.

Oregon AEYC recruits and places substitutes and handles verification of the background checks and provision of an orientation and training. Substitutes are required to be enrolled in the Oregon Criminal History Registry and are required to participate in the following training: food handler's permit, recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect, First Aid/CPR, and a Substitute Orientation to Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes.

The plan pays substitutes an hourly fee based on a two-tier system: \$8.00 per hour for Family Child Care Providers (to make it more affordable to them) and \$10.00 per hour for Center substitutes. There is a 25% subsidy for certain kinds of care: if the provider currently serves infants/toddlers, non-English-speaking or special needs children, or if the provider attends a training that focuses on these children.

Requests for substitutes are limited to pre-arranged days for doctor appointments, personal/respite time, trainings, workshops, conferences, class time, planning time or extra staff.

Sites must make requests 48 hours in advance and substitutes are contacted at least 24 hours in advance of any substitute position. Substitutes are not paid for orientation time. Substitutes are paid for a minimum of three hours of pay, even if they work for a shorter period. In practice, the pay rate has become \$10.00 per hour unless the individual provider or center pays a higher rate.

Substitutes were recruited through information in CCR&R newsletters, presentations at community college classes, emailing information to college instructors, mailing postcards to all providers on the CCR&R database and the Oregon AEYC member mailing list and CraigsList.

Successful applicants came from all of the above sources. There were hundreds of contacts for information but only about 40 completed applications and of those only 10 became substitutes. Reasons for not continuing include:

- Opened own child care
- Hired by program they substituted in
- Available hours did not work for programs needing substitutes
- Wanted to be an independent contractor
- Other family commitments
- Needed full-time work

Lessons learned by AEYC about substitutes:

- Recruit through every available source.
- Use free advertising.
- Word of mouth is very effective (e.g., provider networks).
- Expect much more interest than final applicants, possibly use a pre-screening phone interview.
- Clarify that the substitute will be working in a center or child care home, not opening their child care to additional children needing substitute care.
- Provide substitutes with clear expectations of the amount of time they can expect to work.
- Expect turnover in the substitute pool and continually recruit.

Lessons learned about substitute pool users:

- Attendance at meetings was not necessary for compliance with procedures, although it helped with the comfort level for some providers.
- Excellent customer service is most important
- Establish clear expectations of substitute pool users as to reporting and making formal requests for substitutes.
- Provide information from a business consultant regarding taxes and responsibilities as an employer either at a meeting or through a newsletter. Providers needed more support in this area and contacting the consultant directly or taking another class was just one more step for family care providers.
- Family Child Care providers, especially, need more time to interview and orient their substitutes as they were replacing the FCC providers in their home. **Set up a procedure where they can call and request an interview with the substitute in order to decide if this would be an appropriate placement.**

3. Web-based Technology (Aesop - Frontline Placement Technologies)

Web-based scheduling programs for substitute pools have been used by school districts for a long time. For example, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has operated a combination model for 30 years that includes a phone and web-based system. These systems are set up to handle a large volume of substitute dispatching, often on short notice. While they are still dependent on being able to recruit and retain a solid pool of substitutes, they can much more effectively match requests with qualified available substitutes.

Child care programs internationally use web-based systems. For example, both Sweden and Australia have web-based substitute programs in municipalities that cover child care as well as school districts. While we were not able to locate an effective web-based system designed specifically for child care already in place in this country, we did contact Frontline Placement Technologies to learn about their Aesop system. This company serves over 1,200 school districts nationwide and has been providing this service since 1999. They are working with child care programs in Australia, and are interested in modifying their system to meet the specific needs of a child care substitute pool here. They presented a live sample of the Aesop program to the Sub Pool Advisory Group in November.

The Aesop system provides 24 hours a day, seven days a week access to automated phone and online portals. Users can submit orders, track status, review which employees will be working at their sites and run various reports. Substitutes can update their availability information and check for substitute job postings via access on the web or their telephone.

The system uses features like skill matching and preference lists to match the appropriate employees to the open shifts, and then posts the shifts online for those substitutes to login and accept. The system can also automatically call them to fill the shift. Additionally, substitutes may call into the system to shop for available shifts and accept them pro-actively. Child care programs are able to post openings via the web or telephone.

The Aesop system is hosted in world-class data centers located in three regions of the country in case of power outages, ensuring maximum up time through redundant power supplies (including seven-day backup generators) and communications systems. All system components are monitored 24/7, and immediate on-site response is available 24/7. Aesop was the first web-based system of its kind, and has proven to be reliable since 1999.

When Ms. Mohlabane called to interview a user of this system, this is what she had to say:

“I did a lot of research before selecting Frontline. Most people who start with this have stayed with it. We have 13,000 children and 600 teachers with a sub pool of 150 people all entered into the system. We are at the beginning of our second year. It took time to enter all the data. We cannot match skills as well as I would like, even though we can put in a preferred list. It is very user friendly. I was computer illiterate and learned easily. We send out 60-100 subs per day. One person can handle this with 8 hours per day. It cost less than \$20,00 for start up. There were no surprises. There are not a lot of glitches. We were pleasantly surprised. Customer service is awesome with a live chat. I have called in and they were very helpful. They came on site to help train.”

4. Proposed Substitute Teacher Referral Service for Fresno County (MA Thesis by Marcy Davidson, 2007)

Marcy Davidson was very generous in sharing information gathered as part of her Master’s thesis from Pacific Oaks College with the hope that whatever programs are developed we can learn from each other. Ms. Davidson intends to develop a substitute referral service in the Fresno area and to focus on ECE students to start the service. Below are a few of her more significant study results that might be informative to this planning process.

Child Care Provider Survey Responses: Out of 60 centers/preschools surveyed, 86% of respondents said they would use a substitute program, with 62% willing to pay \$40 per month for service. For lead teacher substitutes, 50% requested that the substitute have 12 or more ECE units; 35% wanted an Associate degree or higher, and 15% requested a BA or higher. For associate and assistant teacher substitutes, 88% expected a minimum of 12 ECE units, and 10% expected an Associate degree. They also indicated that while education and experience were important, equally important were the qualities of maturity, trustworthiness and ability to jump right in, work well with others and manage a group of children, including circle time. Responses from Centers indicated that curriculum and lesson planning were not important.

Potential Substitute Survey Responses: Ms. Davidson distributed surveys to five college ECE classes seeking people interested in becoming substitutes. She received 136 survey responses, with 59% responding that they were interested in substituting. Of those who wanted to work as substitutes, 86% wanted full time, 61% wanted advance notice, and 39% were available for last minute assignments. They expected an hourly wage of \$10.00 (31%); \$12.00 (37%) or \$15.00 (23%).

Recommendations for Implementation:

- The name should be catchy. (Ms. Davidson picked “ST*RS”.)
- Advertise through colleges for students with 12 ECE units, and through Associations, mentor programs, the Local Planning Council, First Five, and newspapers to recruit underemployed or retired ECE teachers and parents.
- Consult with a Labor Law Attorney and review the distinction between the classification of employees and independent contractors, before deciding which is appropriate for your program. (Ms. Davidson plans on starting with independent contractors.)

Ms. Davidson’s proposed program would have initial start-up funding, as well as some ongoing sustaining grants, \$1-\$2 hourly fees for service provided, and monthly fees from users (\$40.00-\$70.00) based on the program size. In addition, substitutes would be paid on a sliding scale based on their qualifications plus \$1 to \$2 per hour for the substitute program.

5. Early Childhood Care and Education Partnership (Illinois)

Marcy Davidson (#4 above) did a review of the literature and looked at what options were available. One of the programs she looked at was a “Substitute Bank” run by Early Childhood Care and Education Partnership (ECCEP) in 2003 in central Illinois. This program partnered with a nanny service and proved to be a successful service with a 90% success rate for filling requests.

6. “Development of a Workable System to Assist Child Care Centers in Acquiring Substitute Staff on a Consistent Basis” by Donna Shaw, 1994, Practicum Paper for Nova University.

This paper reviewed the problems created by a lack of substitutes and researched model substitute programs. In conclusion of the research, she designed and documented the implementation of a substitute program to hire five substitutes to be shared by five centers in a geographic area with an agreement to pay one set rate to prevent competition and with shared responsibilities for administering the program.

7. Smart Start North Carolina Partnership for Children (2002)

The “Smart Start” counties in North Carolina implemented a variety of substitute programs, including:

- Having a non-profit sponsoring agency that hires the substitutes as employees
- Hiring a substitute/floater for each center “on loan”
- Granting each center/home a certain amount of money to hire a floater
- Reimbursing for programs that already have qualified substitutes
- Developing a substitute pool program

After reviewing these programs, their conclusion was that the larger the program or partnership, the more likely it is to succeed. It is also important to the success of the program to have a sponsoring agency responsible for the program and the hiring of substitutes. They also concluded that the substitute pools are the least effective and the most costly over the long term and suggested paying for sites to have floaters.

8. For-Profit Programs

In addition to the local Child care Careers program, there are other for-profit programs operating with various operations. A San Diego program had the following information listed on their website:

User programs sign up with no obligation, sign-up fee or monthly service charges. Paperwork is completed ahead of time so when they need services, someone can be sent immediately. This program recruits students and other qualified substitute teachers and schedules them around their classes and prior commitments. They offer flexible hours and assign jobs close to home or school. Hourly payments are \$9.00 for Aides (no child development units required) and \$10.75 for teachers (12 child development units required). They interview and prescreen the substitutes and verify their transcripts and ECE coursework. They ensure fingerprinting, health screening, and obtain criminal clearances from the Department of Justice, FBI and Child Abuse Index. They also check their employment records.

C. Survey Results on Past and Present Substitute Programs

In order to assess the variety and effectiveness of substitute programs, we contacted and sent surveys to 39 organizations and centers with substitute programs locally and across the United States. (See Appendix A2.) We received survey responses from 16 substitute programs (e.g., SFUSD, HUGS, Bananas, Head Start, UC – Berkeley) representing a variety of models, past and present. We also followed up with more in depth interviews with some of these programs. We wanted to better understand what practices are in place and to learn from those who have already experienced either success or difficulties in order to offer best practices for implementing a substitute program. The following table represents the models described by the respondents.

Substitute Program Model	N=16	Number	Percentage
Reimbursement Vouchers		0	0%
Substitute List (self call)		10	62%
Web Based Substitute List		1	6%
Dispatched Sub Pool		7	44%
Other, please describe			
▪ Teacher training site		3	19%
▪ Unclear about question			

We received much information about programs that provide a “self-call” substitute list or a dispatched substitute pool. Several of the organizations we spoke to employ more than one model in their practice. Twelve of these 16 programs are still in operation, providing services primarily to Child Care Centers. Less than half of our sample (6) has provided services to Family Child Care Providers. Most of the programs have been, or were, in operation four years or more, some having operated over 20 years.

Perceived Success of Program Models: When asked how well they felt the substitute program worked, only two respondents indicated that it went very well. Nine felt that the program was adequate, and four didn’t feel it had gone well.

Success of Programs	Very Well	Adequate	Not so Well	Failed
Dispatched Sub Pool	1	4	1	0
Sub List	1	5	3	0
Web Based Sub List	0	0	0	0

Hiring Requirements for Sub Programs: There was very little difference between types of programs in terms of the requirements they have for potential substitutes to be part of their substitute program. Almost every program required LiveScan and TB tests. In addition to the requirements listed in the following table, additional comments included the following requirements: 6 ECE units, 12-plus ECE units, permit & drivers license for teachers, food handler's card, experience in child care.

Hiring Requirements	#	%
LiveScan / Criminal record check / Child abuse clearance	15	94%
TB test	14	88%
Physical exam	11	69%
CPR/ First Aid	7	44%
Must verify drivers license	5	31%
Must drive own car	4	25%
Must verify car insurance	3	19%
Must verify good driving record	2	12%
Other, please describe (e.g., "must be a student in our program.")	9	56%

Recruitment Strategies: We also asked the respondents who they target to staff their substitute pool. The breakdown of their responses is available in the table below. The most common sources for recruitment of substitutes were students and recent graduates, followed by retirees and bilingual immigrants.

Recruitment Strategies	#	%
Students	12	80%
Recent graduates	12	80%
Retirees	6	40%
Bilingual immigrants	6	40%
Seniors	4	27%
Monolingual immigrants	2	13%
Full time employees	6	40%
Part time employees	9	60%
Hourly just for hours worked	8	53%
Other targeted populations (please describe)	2	13%

Training and Evaluation: Ten of the sixteen respondents (67%) offered some level of training for substitutes, and most of the programs (81%) provide periodic evaluations about performance and quality of care. There was very little difference between the two major models, the Dispatched Substitute Pool and Substitute List in terms of training and evaluation.

Difficulties: We also asked programs to identify what issues were difficult or “a problem”. We specifically asked about a number of issues that had come up in our interviews and asked whether these had been a problem for their programs and whether that problem was resolved. The number one difficulty identified by the sites was **recruitment**, with 62% of the sample stating it was a major problem and another 31% categorizing it as a minor problem. None of the participants felt that this has been resolved. The group saw finances as the next largest problem. Minor problems indicated by 50% or more of the group included: selection, retention, qualifications and complaints made by the hiring sites.

Quality of Training and Evaluation	Not a Problem	Problem Resolved	Minor Problem	Major Problem
Recruitment	6%	0%	31%	62%
Finances	20%	7%	33%	40%
Sub assignment/dispatching	20%	20%	33%	27%
Qualifications	19%	6%	50%	25%
Retention	12%	12%	56%	19%
Selection	29%	0%	57%	14%
Subs hired by sites	29%	14%	43%	14%
Licensing requirements	47%	13%	27%	13%
Complaints by subs re: sites	50%	8%	33%	8%
Languages	31%	25%	44%	0%
Training	60%	20%	20%	0%
Complaints by sites	36%	14%	50%	0%

Pay Rates and Fees: There was a huge disparity in hourly rates (from \$8.75 - \$23.00) between the different programs. The higher end of the scale represents programs within larger or unionized systems such as school districts, Head Start and the University of California.

Fees Paid	Entry Level	Experienced
Up to \$9.50	3	2
\$9.50-\$11.99	3	5
\$12.00-\$14.00	2	2
Over \$14.00	1	4

Benefits: Of the 16 programs represented here, only three provided paid benefits to the substitutes. At closer inspection, we find that two of the agencies that provided additional benefits were those that used the Dispatch Sub Pool strategy, and the other was an agency with a self-call Substitute List. The benefits provided are listed in the table below. Two of the three programs that provide any paid benefits cover the costs of First Aid/CPR training, fingerprinting, mileage and vacation time. One program reimbursed the costs of TB testing; another program reimbursed health insurance. In addition to the benefits that we

specifically asked about, respondents also included lesser-known benefits such as conference or lecture opportunities, reduced prices for meals in dining halls, and other discounts.

Benefits	#	%
First Aid/CPR	2	40%
Fingerprinting	2	40%
Mileage/auto expense reimbursement	2	40%
Vacation/sick/PTO	2	40%
TB testing	1	20%
Health insurance	1	20%
Retirement	0	0%

Fees to Sites: There are several models as to how fees are covered or not covered by the sites themselves. Eight of our sample stated that they do not charge any fee to the user. Others have the users pay the substitutes directly based on an approved rate. Some programs have the users pay the cost of the substitute plus a small administrative percentage.

Only one of the programs asked the sites to pay a contract initiation fee. One program stated that they charge a cancellation fee without adequate notice.

It is also interesting to note, only one site indicated that the service fees they receive actually cover the cost of the program. Those who volunteered this information indicated that the fees are primarily to cover the direct costs of the teacher/substitute and that the agencies rely primarily on grant or school district funding to cover administrative costs such as office costs and management/administrative personnel.

PART THREE: SAN FRANCISCO NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

A. Description of Respondents

We received 251 responses to our Needs Assessment Survey (Appendix B). Responses were received from the following groups:

- 136 from Family Child Care Providers (63 English, 17 Spanish, 56 Chinese)
- 108 from centers (105 in English, 1 in Spanish, 2 in Chinese)
- 14 from educators / policy advisors and others.¹

We looked at what providers and centers are currently doing when they need a substitute for planned or unplanned leave. We asked how satisfied they are with various aspects of their current situation, including availability, quality, cost, language and more. We wanted to identify the biggest substitute challenges and what program design aspects would best support them with these identified challenges. We also asked whether they would use a substitute program, and if so, what model they would be most likely to use.

For analysis we looked specifically at the similarities and differences between the needs of Family Child Care Providers and Center-based Care. For many questions, there were significant differences in the responses between Centers and Family Child Care Providers.

The Center responses were analyzed in three ways:

- Single site (n=52)
- Multiple-sites (n=56)
- All centers (excluding City College, SFUSD, and multiple-site Head Start programs) (n=72)

This latter group was analyzed separately since the implementation phase of the substitute pool program will probably not include these groups because of union or pay issues or because they already have their own substitute system in place. Nonetheless, as noted in the charts below, there was not a strong difference in the responses of these three Center groups.

Not everyone responded to every question. This was particularly true of the Center responses, where teachers did not feel they could answer questions in the same way that Site Supervisors or Center Directors could. A number of the questions with participants' responses are described below.

B. Questions and Responses

Question: What is your program's current situation for substitute coverage?

We asked respondents to indicate on the survey what process they have in place when they are in need of a substitute. The survey was set up in a way to allow respondents to indicate not only which of the identified systems they use (in-house workers, call list, or the use of an agency) but provided an opportunity to indicate whether they feel they have enough substitutes.

¹ Notation: Throughout the survey where there are variances in numbers and totals because some respondents marked that they worked both for center and for family child care, and some respondents did not answer every question. Particularly in the center responses, a number of the teachers felt they did not have the required information to answer some of the questions.

Current Substitute Plan	Family Child Care n=136	Single Site Centers n=52	Multiple-site Centers n=56	Selected Centers* n=72
We have in-house substitutes/floaters on staff	31%	48%	36%	51%
We have a list of people that we call to find an available substitute	8%	48%	38%	48%
We call a substitute pool dispatcher / substitute agency	1%	33%	27%	24%
We do not have access to enough substitutes	15%	30%	32%	32%
We have no substitutes	49%	2%	9%	4%
Other: this included shifting staff around	10%	6%	7%	3%

* Does not include City College, SFUSD, and multiple site HeadStart

Centers' Responses: The most commonly used model for substitute coverage for Centers was to hire in-house substitutes/floaters or to develop a list of potential substitutes themselves that can be called when needed. Both of these options were in use by approximately half the respondents. Only 24% employ the services of a pool dispatcher or agency and only 4% felt they have no access to substitutes when needed.

Family Child Care Providers' Responses: It is significant to note that the resources that may be available to Centers are not available to the smaller, independently owned Family Child Care Providers. Almost half of the respondents feel they have no access to substitutes! Of Family Child Care Providers, 31% indicated that they fill in from the workforce currently employed - which sometimes means family members. Only 8% have used a list to find potential substitutes, and only 1% of the group use a dispatcher.

Question: How satisfied are you with your current substitute worker situation?

Centers' Responses: When asked to indicate their satisfaction with the substitute methodology they are currently using, the largest percentage of our sample (over 50%) indicated that they were “not satisfied” with the substitute coverage for planned absences (such as meetings or trainings) or for unexpected absences (such as emergencies or illness). When we looked further, what we see is that the six (6) respondents who were Very Satisfied all use a combination of an in-house floater and a substitute list. There was no significant difference in the three ways we sorted the Centers except that the programs with multiple sites had an even lower level of satisfaction.

Center Satisfaction with Current Models	Single site n=52	Multiple-site n=56
Very Satisfied	9%	5%
Satisfied	37%	38%
Not Satisfied	54%	57%

Family Child Care Providers' Responses: It is important to note that almost half of this group reported a lack of access to substitutes (see previous table). What we see (below) is the satisfaction of those providers who have found access to a pool of substitutes, either on-staff or through the use of a list. For most responses there was no difference among the different language groups. But in looking at the questions on satisfaction, the responses we received on the English survey varied somewhat from the responses completed in Spanish and even more from those in Chinese. Consequently, in the following table we provide the information broken down by language of survey as well as the overall total.

Satisfaction with Current Sub Plan for Planned Leave: Family Child Care				
	English n=63	Spanish n=17	Chinese n=56	Combined n=136
Very Satisfied	11%	12%	16%	13%
Satisfied	30%	41%	54%	41%
Not Satisfied	33%	41%	5%	23%
No Answer	26%	6%	25%	23%

Of the English-speaking respondents, 41% felt either satisfied or very satisfied. Of the Spanish-speaking respondents, 53% were satisfied, while 70% of the Chinese-speaking respondents, indicated satisfaction. It is possible that either there may be a different standard of what is satisfactory or there is a stronger network of support within the family or community when a substitute is needed for the Spanish and Chinese-speaking respondents.

Satisfaction with Current Sub Plan for Unplanned Leave: Family Child Care				
	English n=63	Spanish n=17	Chinese n=56	Combined n=136
Very Satisfied	11%	6%	13%	11%
Satisfied	27%	35%	52%	38%
Not Satisfied	33%	53%	11%	26%
No Answer	29%	6%	24%	24%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

For unplanned leave, English-speaking respondents 38% felt either satisfied or very satisfied. Of the Spanish-speaking respondents, 41% expressed satisfaction, while 65% of the Chinese-speaking respondents indicated satisfaction. Significantly, 53% of the Spanish-speaking providers expressed dissatisfaction with their current substitute situation for unplanned leave, quite a bit higher than the overall level of dissatisfaction for the other two groups.

Question: If you are currently using substitutes, how would you rate the following aspects?

Centers' Responses: The following table shows the experience of Center respondents. The table is sorted with those factors that are working best first, and those that are causing the most dissatisfaction at the bottom. This allows us to get a clear picture of what issues to address and where improvement could be made when creating a substitute program that will serve this community more effectively.

Center Satisfaction With Current Sub Plan	# of responses	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
	n=	%	%	%
Their licensing qualifications (e.g., CPR, TB, Clearances)	62	19%	69%	11%
The quality of care they provide	64	14%	62%	23%
The languages they can speak	63	11%	65%	24%
Their experience level	64	12%	61%	27%
Their availability:	64	8%	62%	30%
The cost	62	10%	60%	31%
How easy it is to reach the substitute	60	10%	55%	35%
The training they receive	64	11%	52%	38%
Availability of the same substitute(s)	56	5%	55%	39%
Services of the existing substitute agency	38	8%	50%	42%
Sub's ability to resolve child/family problems	60	5%	42%	53%

Based on these results, we see that the five most troublesome issues for Center respondents are:

- The substitute's ability to resolve child and/or family problems
- The services of the substitute agency (Note: only 38 of the Centers responded to this question suggesting that the remaining programs are not using these services.)
- Availability of the same substitute
- The training that substitutes receive
- How easy it is to reach the substitute

Family Child Care Providers' Responses: There was a significantly greater level of satisfaction in each category among the Family Child Care Providers (see table below). The issues most needing to be addressed for them were:

- Availability of the same substitute(s)
- How easy it is to reach the substitute
- The cost
- The substitute's ability to resolve child/family problems

Family Child Care Providers' Satisfaction	# of responses	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
	n=	%	%	%
The quality of care they provide	80	19%	71%	10%
Their licensing qualifications: (CPR, TB, Clearances...)	80	35%	54%	11%
Their availability	81	22%	65%	12%
Their experience level	80	28%	60%	13%
The training they receive	82	18%	65%	15%
The languages they can speak	76	22%	62%	16%
Sub's ability to resolve child/family problems	78	18%	65%	17%
Services of the Substitute Agency	60	15%	67%	18%
The cost	80	14%	65%	21%
How easy it is to reach the substitute	74	16%	58%	26%
Availability of the same substitute(s)	67	13%	55%	31%

Question: What minimal level of experience would have to be in place for you to use the sub program?

When asked about the level of experience they need from the substitutes, we received the following responses.

Type of child care experience desired n=208	#	%
At least six months experience	82	39%
At least one year experience	70	34%
Experience in professional setting	94	45%
Informal experience	19	9%

Question: What type of child development permit do you require?

There are some programs that have funding requirements as well as licensing requirements. For example, Title V programs require Child Development Permits of their providers. Others have the education and training expectations regardless of official requirements.

Type of permit required n=208	#	%
Assistant	67	32%
Associate Teacher	50	24%
Teacher	38	18%

Question: What are your minimum training/class requirements?

When asked about the minimum training and education requirements (including ECE units) they expect from the substitutes, we received the following responses.

Minimum training/classes required (optional) n=208	Required	Optional
Workshops/classes about working with children	64%	19%
15 hours of CPR/First Aid/Illness Prevention	72%	18%
6 ECE units	50%	24%
12 ECE units	26%	43%
24 ECE units	14%	48%
Infant/toddler care classes	39%	35%
Supervision units	8%	54%
Child Development Permit	17%	47%

Question: What are your minimum orientation requirements?

When asked specifically about what orientation training should include, we received the following responses, as well as the “other” answers listed below.

Minimum orientation required (optional) n=208	Required	Optional
Site procedures	42%	28%
Emergency procedures	73%	12%
Working with parents	41%	33%
Child abuse / reporting	50%	19%
Children with special needs	23%	45%
Working with infants/toddlers	58%	23%

Respondents had the opportunity to fill in another narrative answer and here, as in the focus groups, many expressed other essential qualities not necessarily related to experience and education:

- (Chinese) Health & Legality Trainings
- (Chinese) Morality and Ethics checks
- Must love children and be kindhearted towards them
- Must speak many languages
- Good, hardworking attitude and not just "a body".
- Desire for training and professional development

- Communication, reliable, follow models
- Early intervention on-site training
- Ability to demonstrate interest and be helpful
- Disaster preparedness: what to do in an emergency (site, etc)
- Montessori knowledge
- Experience working in a cooperative setting
- Knowledge of school environment/pedagogy/community

Question: What are your language needs?

The greatest language requirement was for English, followed by Cantonese. Many respondents preferred substitutes who could speak Spanish. In addition to the languages we listed in our survey, respondents expressed needs for substitutes who spoke: Mandarin (9), Tagalog (3), Japanese (1), Filipino (1), Korean (1), French (1), German (1), Hebrew (1) and Italian (1).

Language required (preferred)	n=208	Required	Preferred
English		74%	17%
Spanish		13%	30%
Cantonese		29%	22%
Vietnamese		2%	18%
Russian		3%	18%
Other		5%	8%

Question: If there were a substitute program, would you use it?

We asked child care providers whether they would use a substitute program, and if so, what model they would most likely use. Participants in the survey indicated their willingness to use any of the three models (described in Part IV below) we presented to them:

- Substitute Pool with Scheduler Based in Non Profit Organization
- Self-call Substitute List
- Voucher/Reimbursement System

When Centers and Family Child Care were combined, there was a significant interest and willingness to use all of the models presented - for both planned and unplanned leave. The reimbursement vouchers received the highest response of interest. The self-call substitute list was the second choice, while the substitute pool with a dispatcher received the least interest.

Likely Use of Sub Program: Planned Leave	n=208	Yes	No	Maybe
Pool where you call a dispatcher/sub agency		48%	9%	25%
Substitute list where you call your own substitutes		56%	8%	21%
Reimbursement vouchers for your own substitutes		60%	5%	20%

Likely Use of Sub Program: Unplanned Leave n=208	Yes	No	Maybe
Pool where you call a dispatcher/sub agency	48%	8%	26%
Substitute list where you call your own substitutes	61%	8%	17%
Reimbursement vouchers for your own substitutes	62%	5%	16%

Question: How much of your budget do you set aside each year for substitute coverage?

Providers were asked if their program had an annual budget set aside for substitutes. Only some of the respondents were willing to share their financial information. Many Center teachers did not have this information.

Annual Budget for Substitute	
No budget set aside	11
Less than \$1,000	16
Between \$1,000 and \$3,000	24
More than \$3,000	9

Question: What is the minimum and maximum you currently pay per hour for a substitute?

Respondents were asked what their current minimum and maximum pay per hour is for substitutes. The responses varied widely from minimum wage to up to \$40.00 per hour.

Family Child Care Substitute	\$7.00-9.50	\$9.51-\$12.00	Over \$12.00
Minimum	31	40	8
Maximum	18	37	25
Other: wages plus (n=1), minimum wage (n=1)			

Assistant Teacher Substitute	Up to \$9.50	\$9.51-\$12.00	Over \$12.00
Minimum	5	5	5
Maximum	2	6	8
Other: minimum wage (n=1)			

Teacher Substitute	\$9.50-11.99	\$12.00-14.00	Over \$14.00
Minimum	7	3	5
Maximum	2	6	8
Other: starting salary of teacher sub (n=1); minimum wage (n=1)			

Question: How many substitutes would you need to cover for a typical training?

Respondents were asked to estimate how many substitutes would be required to cover for a typical training: It appears that not everyone understood this question, as can be seen by two Family Child Care Providers responding that they would need 20 substitutes.

	Family Child Care Sub	Teacher's Asst Sub	Teacher Sub
1	83	25	26
2	16	9	10
3-5	6	16	18
6-7	0	4	4
10-15	2	4	2
20	2	1	1

Question: How many hours per month would you need substitutes?

Respondents were also asked to estimate how many hours per month they would need substitutes (# of hours/month) to cover for staff to attend meetings and trainings:

Hours Needed Per Month	Family Child Care Sub	Teacher's Asst Sub	Teacher Sub
1-8 hours	41	25	23
9-16 hours	25	19	17
17-24 hours	15	7	5
25-32 hours	7	0	6
33-40 hours	5	3	4
41-48 hours	1	1	2
80 hours or more	6	4	1

PART FOUR: FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Ninety people participated in nine focus groups conducted in October and November 2007, including:

- five groups of FCCs
- two groups of Center teachers/directors
- two mixed groups (mostly center-based participants)

There were 43 FCCs (including Cantonese-speaking and Spanish-speaking providers), 43 Center-based participants, and four policy advisors/educators.

A. Satisfaction With Focus Group Process

The overall satisfaction with all aspects of the focus groups themselves was very high. Ninety-nine percent (99%) rated the usefulness of the process, clarity of the questions, opportunity to talk, and facilitation, as either excellent or good. Ninety-three percent (93%) rated the length of time available as excellent or good. (Those who commented on their dissatisfaction with the length of time indicated that the time was too short). There were fewer respondents regarding the translation, because only three groups required translation. All of the respondents felt the translation was excellent. The results are summarized in the chart below. (Appendix G: Evaluation Form.)

Ratings of Focus Groups	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
The process was useful	70%	29%	1%	0%
Questions were clear	69%	29%	2%	0%
Questions were relevant	73%	26%	1%	0%
Length of group	53%	40%	6%	1%
Opportunity to talk	72%	27%	1%	0%
Facilitators	83%	16%	1%	0%
Translators	100%	0%	0%	0%

B. Focus Group Questions

At each focus group, we asked the participants to consider the four substitute model options presented (see below) and to identify the benefits and challenges of each model, as well as possible solutions. The models were based on our research of past and existing program models locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In addition, we asked participants to answer a number of questions. (Appendix E: Introduction; Appendix F: Focus Group Questions.)

- Whether they would use a substitute program?
- Which model they would be most likely to use?
- What was a reasonable amount to pay for the services?
- What training, orientation, and qualification requirements are needed?
- What should be expected of participating programs?
- Any other considerations?

C. The Models

1. The Substitute Voucher/Reimbursement Program

The voucher model is designed for programs who are already working with a familiar floater or substitute and just need the funding support to allow their staff to take more planned leave, especially to attend trainings, classes and meetings. In this model, programs hire their own substitute, and get reimbursed with payment vouchers up to a certain amount.

Advantages: Many of the larger Centers with either many children or multiple sites and a few of the Family Child Care Providers that already utilize floaters or regular substitutes or “Childcare Careers” indicated that reimbursement of the costs would be helpful. It was considered to be the simplest; the staff and children are already familiar with the substitute and a stronger relationship could be established with the substitute through regular usage. For FCCs who have someone they already use, this is attractive because it handles the major substitute issue of having to trust someone with the children, the parents, and their homes. (This is especially true if that person is substituting for the provider and is going to be left alone). Administrative, union, liability and employment issues could be minimized by using a voucher program that is handled by the child care providers. This model may provide a more effective usage of funds since it eliminates many of the administrative costs of other substitute models.

Disadvantages / Challenges: The largest issue with the voucher program is its dependence on the programs already having substitutes available. Programs that hire substitutes/floaters often promote these substitutes into permanent staff positions when openings occur, leaving recruitment of new substitutes as an ongoing, major issue. Several of the FCC focus group participants seemed very excited about the possibility of several providers in a neighborhood sharing substitutes, thereby giving them steadier work and retaining them longer. It was suggested that the provider who brought the substitute into the pool should have first priority to that substitute if there was a shortage.

A major concern mentioned by some participants was that the delay in reimbursement could be lengthy and therefore prohibitive, especially for smaller programs running on a tight budget. This might be handled either by devising a system with quick reimbursement or giving participating programs a small advance to be refilled as they utilize the substitutes.

There were also concerns about the quality and legitimate usage of substitutes, if programs were hiring their own people. Suggestions for handling these issues included requiring substitutes to meet certain qualifications and to establish guidelines for legitimate usage that could be tracked by an organization/program that would approve reimbursement. A few of the larger programs felt that if there was a lot of paperwork to fill out or verification documentation, it might not be worth the time.

Another issue was how to handle the different pay rates of different sites. One suggestion was to pay rates standardized with “Wages Plus” rates based on the level of the position being filled. Programs that want to pay their substitutes more would have to make up the difference themselves.

2. Substitute Referral List

In this model a referral list is published that identifies each substitutes’ availability, qualifications and experience. Providers would review the list and call their preferred substitutes.

Advantages: This option was attractive to quite a few FCCS in the focus groups, although it was very unpopular with Center-based staff. The Family Child Care Providers liked having direct communication with the substitutes, hearing their voices, and interviewing them personally on the phone prior to having them come to the providers' homes. They also liked the idea of being able to look through the list, rather

than relying on a scheduler to just send someone to them. They also mentioned being able to give the list to the parents in advance to view. Other benefits identified were that it would be easier to administer with substitutes working as independent contractors and that if a program found someone they liked they could use them repeatedly.

Disadvantages / Challenges: This model has been used before and many of those who used it said it was cumbersome and ineffective. They stated that the list was often outdated and that they often had to make many calls. Many talked about the good substitutes getting hired off the substitute list and the remaining ones being of questionable quality. Possible solutions for this included: 1) relying heavily on ongoing, targeted recruitment with the explicit intention that the substitute pool can be used as a stepping-stone into permanent positions, or 2) establishing a six-month contract with a sizable financial penalty for moving a substitute into permanent employment with a particular site.

Additional challenges identified included that from previous experience, most substitutes were unwilling to be left alone to work with children at an FCCare site. This system would generate much paperwork, including licensing “association” requests and records. It would require spending much time and many phone calls trying to find someone. A suggestion was to have the list divided by neighborhood. There was also concern about establishing and maintaining quality control with this model.

3. Substitute Pool with Scheduler Based in Non-Profit Organization

This model is based on substitutes who are screened and employed by a non-profit organization that employs a scheduler. Child care providers call in with their requests and the scheduler identifies and dispatches the most appropriate substitute to do the shift.

Advantages: This model addresses the needs of programs that do not have enough substitutes or floaters to cover their needs. The major benefits identified for this model were that it was easy and timesaving for the child care provider and provided access to a pool of substitutes. By having an organization run the program there could be a broader recruitment for the pool, with a special interest in getting more highly motivated, qualified and trained people, especially with various language skills. Administratively, this model would be easier for the child care providers since the organization would be handling all the human resources tasks, as well as the scheduling. It offers better quality control as sites could give immediate feedback about a substitute to the organization. Participants liked the idea that they could call the scheduler at any time, even in the middle of the night and the situation would be handled. There were suggestions to have a scheduler on-call 24 hours per day, seven days a week, especially for programs that are open nights, weekends and holidays.

There would also be benefits to the substitutes, including potentially better pay, employee benefits, and consistent employment, which could serve as an incentive to retention. The option to work in a variety of programs could also be beneficial experience for the substitutes, especially college students who might need flexible schedules and want experience in a variety of programs prior to taking a permanent job. This kind of program might support greater quality control with consistent evaluations of child care sites and substitutes.

Disadvantages / Challenges: The major concerns related to this model were: trust, whether there would be enough substitutes to fill the needs, and the quality of the substitutes. In particular, all the Family Child Care Providers were extremely concerned whether they could trust the substitute, especially to be left alone in their home with their children and families. Suggestions for handling the trust issue included having the FCCs involved in interviewing the substitute and having substitutes bonded. Almost everyone agreed that a thorough orientation at the site (varying from a few hours to a week) should be required prior to the substitute being left alone with the children. There was also a suggestion for re-

instituting a college class, specifically on being a substitute, where many of the training issues could be covered and where potential substitute pool employees could be identified.

The issue of consistency - wanting to know who will be sent out to work and having someone that the children, parents and staff are familiar with - was the next most commonly raised issue. Suggestions included doing trainings and orientations specific to the sites to be served, having substitutes serve a limited number of sites and having substitutes work alongside regular staff prior to assignments or when there is down time. The desire was also shared for providers to be able to identify and prioritize their favorite substitutes.

A small number of respondents expressed concern that some substitutes might not be willing or prepared to work in certain neighborhoods. The importance of on-site orientations and trainings addressing issues of race, culture and class was stressed. Other concerns were that this type of program would be significantly more expensive and administratively cumbersome.

4. The Web-Based Model

This model would provide a web-based listing of available substitutes and the opportunity to schedule either online or via the telephone. Substitutes screened by an organization and meeting certain requirements, would have their information (e.g., qualifications, availability, language capacity) posted on a website. This information could be updated regularly by the automated system and by the substitute program staff. Information regarding availability could also be updated by the substitutes, thereby helping users avoid contacting substitutes who are actually not available or not qualified. This web-based technology has been used for years by school districts in dispatching their substitutes. Child care providers would have access to this information. Sites needing a substitute could go on-line or call in to post their need. The off-site computer would sort for the matches and provide a short list of substitutes who meet the qualifications and availability requirements of the child care provider. The system could either make the calls (via phone technology) to the potential substitutes for the providers, or show the list for the provider to make their own contact either by Internet or the phone.

Advantages: Substitutes could be proactive and search the substitute job postings listed and accept shifts they are interested in. Once a substitute has accepted a position they would automatically show up as unavailable for that shift. This technology would allow for detailed information to be filled in and viewed by child care providers and substitutes resulting in more appropriate matches and child care providers being able to identify either preferred or undesirable substitutes.

At first glance, it appears that this model is dependent on child care providers having access and comfort with using a computer and the Internet, which initially caused much hesitancy on the part of many FCCs who do not have these. However, because this system also can be accessed via phone, it proved to be one of the more popular choices. This option was only popular with FCCs once they understood the phone option and the potential for direct contact with the substitutes **and** if it was combined with the voucher option.

There were many benefits listed for this model including the capacity to screen the list for exactly the substitutes that would meet the needs of the provider, thereby saving much time and energy. Participants were pleased that the information was updated instantly, so they would only see information that was currently correct. Some really liked that they could use the computer and put in their request. Many Family Child Care Providers appreciated that there would still be the option to speak to a live person and use the phone. This option might also make it easier to implement, track and access evaluations of both substitutes and child care sites and see what kind of training is most needed.

Respondents liked that information would be available, as well as having substitute preference and substitute exclusion. Some Centers really liked the capacity of the web program to produce reports of usage by site and by substitute. There was also mention that this might be a good way to encourage more providers to learn to use the computer.

Disadvantages / Challenges: First among the challenges identified was that many people do not have access to a computer and the Internet or do not feel comfortable using it. There was also concern about language barriers. Both of these issues may be addressed by having the phone capacity and multiple language capacity built into the system. Providers really wanted the option of a live person to avoid the frustration of having to go through the procedure of pushing multiple buttons, which might be confusing or frustrating and impersonal. There was also concern about what the response time would be with the automated system. An additional concern was how the system would handle several providers putting in a request for the same substitute if the substitute had not accepted a request yet. There was a suggestion to have an alert notice on the computer if any other sites had already requested a substitute. As with the other models, there was concern about quality control of substitutes. It was suggested to have an online survey as a way to have instant feedback about substitutes and child care provider sites, although there was some concern that people might not like this feature, unless there were clear confidentiality boundaries. A large number of participants acknowledged that a web-based system would relieve some of the labor on the part of the scheduler, however there was a concern about the costliness of setting up and maintaining such a complex program.

D. Model Preferences

Focus group participants were asked to vote first for which of the four models that worked best for planned leave and then to vote again for which of the first four models worked best for unplanned leave. Finally, since numerous participants wanted a flexible, multi-option approach, they were allowed to vote again for both planned and unplanned, considering the *combination* of a web-based and voucher model.

Planned leave: The #1 model choice for planned leave for Centers (51%) and FCC (44%) was a **combination of the voucher and the use of the web list** (with a strong emphasis on using the phone component).

Unplanned leave: The #1 model choice for Centers (33%) was the **non-profit pool with scheduler**.
The #1 model choice for FCC (44%) was a **combination of the voucher and the use of the web list**.

When asked to choose just a single option, FCCs rated the self-call substitute list the highest for planned; Centers' top single pick for planned leave was the web-based list. Both FCCs and Centers' single top choice for unplanned was the non-profit pool with a scheduler.

Centers	Best for Planned	Best for Unplanned
Voucher/reimbursement	8 (19%)	NA
Non-profit pool/scheduler	7 (16%)	14 (33%)
Substitute list	1 (2%)	2 (5%)
Web-based list	16 (37%)	12 (28%)
Combination of web/voucher	22 (51%)	13 (30%)

Family Child Care	Best for Planned	Best for Unplanned
Voucher/reimbursement	6 (14%)	NA
Non-profit pool/scheduler	4 (9%)	13 (30%)
Substitute list	9 (21%)	4 (9%)
Web-based list	5 (12%)	5 (12%)
Combination of web/voucher	19 (44%)	19 (44%)

E. Training and Other Requirements

Before beginning the discussion on training at the focus groups, we explained that all substitutes would have to meet the basic licensing standards requirements (e.g., fingerprinting/criminal and child abuse clearance, TB testing, and if they are left alone with children, 15 hours of CPR/First Aid, and illness prevention). In terms of education and experience, licensing also requires that substitutes meet the same qualifications as the people they are replacing (e.g., if substituting for a teacher, the substitute would have to have 12 semester units of early childhood education (ECE) units and six months of child care experience). Some programs, due to funding, may have higher requirements (e.g., Title V programs would require an Associate's degree or 24 ECE units). Given this as the basic framework, the following comments (in order of frequency) were raised by the focus group participants.

By far the most frequent desire was the need for some kind of on-site orientation for the substitute prior to being left with the children. This was most critical to FCCS who might have to leave the substitute alone in their home with their children. The recommendations for length of this orientation varied with the level of responsibility the substitute was expected to handle. A one or two hour orientation might be sufficient for many of the Centers for substitutes working as an aide alongside a regular teacher in a classroom; these substitutes would not be allowed to communicate with parents, to take children to the restroom by themselves or fill out any paperwork. FCCs were on the other end of this spectrum, especially if the substitute was going to be left alone in the home with the children. In this case some wanted up to a full week of on-site orientation for the substitute. There was also a request that substitutes become familiar with the location of the child care; some providers have had the experience where the substitute saw the location and would not work there.

In addition to this orientation, there was also quite a range of responses regarding the educational / training component. Again, Centers seemed to have the lowest expectations, with several feeling that licensing requirements were too high and prevented parents from becoming substitutes unless they had the ECE units. The most common requests were for substitutes to have 6-12 ECE units, followed by requests for 12-24 ECE units.

Focus group participants were unanimously excited about the thought of a college unit class designed specifically for substitutes. The participants thought the following training topics would be important:

- Working with children with special needs including asthma, ADHD, developmental delays, sickle cell anemia, autism and behavioral issues.
- Professionalism in child care especially regarding confidentiality and ethics.
- Communication with parents (especially for FCC substitutes).
- Understanding and comfort in working with cultural and class diversity.
- Infant/toddler care.
- Working with children who are dealing with trauma, abuse or neglect.
- Emergency procedures and playground safety.
- Learning about the different neighborhoods of San Francisco

- Various teaching philosophies (e.g., Montessori).
- Understanding the specifics of Family Child Care and Center-based care.

In regard to the last item, there was a suggestion to set up panels of FCC and Centers staff as part of the training so that substitutes could understand the distinctions between baby-sitting and child care and also become more familiar with various types of child care. This could also provide an opportunity for providers and substitutes to meet face-to-face.

Many participants talked about love and patience for children as being most important, as well as physical health and the ability to keep up with children and bend/sit at their level. Being bilingual or able to communicate with the children, parents and other teachers were seen as very important.

Although quite a few participants seemed resigned or had frequently experienced substitutes who were simply "a warm body" in the room, they desired someone who could read a story to the children, lead an activity, manage a circle time, understand child psychology, help children resolve conflicts and learn the children's names.

There was a very wide range of responses when asked about experience needed by substitutes. Many stated that the factors in the previous paragraph were of the most importance. There was recognition that having experience in providing group care to children is very valuable; responses ranged from 6-36 months of group child care experiences as being important. But some acknowledged that an enthusiastic ECE student or a recent graduate could also be wonderful.

Further suggestions included having the Substitute Program pay for the fingerprinting/Live Scan/Trustline and training.

F. Recruitment and Retention

There was clear recognition by the focus group participants that effective, ongoing recruitment is a key factor to the success of any substitute program. A recurrent theme was the importance of a good screening process, including finding substitutes with good common sense and a genuine desire to work with children, no matter what their other qualifications. They highlighted the importance of using instincts when hiring and not just judging by what shows up on paper.

The group also recognized that it would be very desirable to hire good substitutes as permanent employees, especially since qualified child care employees are hard to find. Although this would be a tremendous benefit to the child care field as a whole, it would pose an ongoing challenge for the substitute program. There was also a desire expressed to find good substitutes who would be willing to remain as substitutes for a long period of time, so that there would be consistency for the children, families and child care programs. Having incentives for people to remain as substitutes or deterrents to prevent people from being hired off the substitute pool were suggested as important factors to build into the program.

The following ideas were discussed as potential recruitment target groups:

1. Students

Students currently enrolled in ECE classes - or recently graduated - were seen as very attractive substitute candidates because of their education and motivation. There were many ideas as to where and how to find these people, including the mentor program at City College, ECE departments, related

departments (e.g., child psychology at City College), San Francisco State University (including the Jump Start Program), University of San Francisco and New College.

In an interview with Sharon Donovan of San Francisco City College regarding the critical link between the educational institutions and building a steady recruitment source for the substitute pool, she mentioned that in the past, City College has offered a one unit, 16-hour course ("Substitute Teaching in ECE Programs" CDEV 41M) specifically for substitutes. Reinstating this unit-bearing course at SF City College was the most popular idea with focus group participants for identifying and recruiting substitutes. This course could be reinstated and possibly expanded to a three-unit class. Students in this class could be directly recruited for the substitute pool.

When discussing reinstating this class, we received the following information from Ms. Donovan. The format of this class can be any number between two and five sessions (e.g., two daylong Saturday training or five shorter sessions, or a full day followed by two or three evenings, spread over a couple of months.) There is no money in the City College budget for this class, so grant funding would need to be (CCSF General Fund). Costs would be approximately \$2,000 for instruction and \$20 per student for fees.

In addition, the Professional Development Program (PDP) run by Sharon Donovan works with students who need experience; these students might be able to be paid as lab aides during internships. The PDP inherited a website (sfchildnet.org) that has a job board on it that gets a lot of hits and could be increased. The career advisor on staff updates the job board.

There are 10 mentor sites already available and 10 more to come (two current mentors are FCCs). There are also the work-study programs for students to work 15 hours per week. These are partially subsidized positions that might be worth developing relationships with all the colleges offering child development and early care and education courses in San Francisco: City College, SFSU, USF, and New College.

Students needing part-time flexible schedules seemed ideal candidates. Interns were also discussed, not as substitutes, but as a feeder into the substitute program. The ROP (Regional Occupational Program) Early Care and Education Program which begins offering child development classes in high school and continues into the community college with paid internships, and the Mayor's Office of Youth Development were discussed and received mixed reviews. Some people had had great experiences with young people who were enthusiastic and seemed to have a natural talent for working with children, while others had negative experiences with young people who had used poor judgment in their programs.

2. Newly licensed Family Child Care Providers

Another option suggested was to recruit new FCCs who do not have children yet. On the other hand some of the FCCs did not like this idea at all, fearing that these substitutes might take some of their clients away. Substitutes might also be recruited through CalWORKs and other job training programs focusing on child development.

3. Former Family Child Care Providers, retired Preschool and Elementary School Teachers

Former providers and teachers who might be interested in working just a few hours per week were viewed as a viable and overlooked option for good, qualified substitutes who might stay as substitutes. Again there were some mixed responses. Some saw the potential for excellent, experienced, skilled substitutes, while others were concerned about having a substitute who was burned out. Possible outreach options for this population include the Family Child Care Associations, CAEYC (California Association for the Education of the Young Child), the teachers unions and associations. Another option included employment or training programs for older adults interested in child development. There was some concern about whether they would have enough energy; some participants wanted the age to be limited to under 60 or 65 years.

4. Under-employed / under-enrolled child care workers

Another very popular option was recruiting underemployed child care workers on a part-time basis. Quite a few FCCs seemed interested in this option for themselves when they are under-enrolled and do not have children full time. Having the substitute pool as a place to refer people working in partial year programs or when budget cuts or under-enrollment would ordinarily cause lay-offs was seen as a viable option. Many Family Child Care Providers really liked the idea of sharing substitutes who could work for several providers in a neighborhood who trust each other and have a cooperative relationship. Outreach options here might be the Associations, the SFUSD Child Development Programs, and Head Start. Another option is "license-exempt" providers who have already been "TrustLined" and are looking to increase their training and employment options. Having letters go out through Community Care Licensing was suggested as an option to be explored. Outreach through Wu Yee Children's Services and the Children's Council was also suggested.

5. Experienced providers who do not speak fluent English

Experienced child caregivers and teachers from other countries whose primary language may not be English and are trying to establish themselves in this country were seen as another viable option, especially with bilingual or monolingual child care programs. On the positive side, some indicated they had been in this situation themselves; others have had excellent experience working with individuals in this situation. Concerns that were expressed included the importance of being able to communicate effectively and to have a good understanding of the job details. Also there were some concerns about teacher qualifications varying from country to country, and some not being as strict as here, raising the question of the level of screening. The question of whether they would have to be legal residents and show documentation was raised.

6. Parents

Several participants raised the option of parents of children who were just starting school, or parents of children who had just left home for college, especially if they had educational degrees as a potentially untapped pool. It would be interesting to develop outreach methods to reach this population. On the other end of this spectrum were newly pregnant parents who might want to gain experience caring for children.

7. Employees of "temp" agencies

Lastly was the suggestion for a non-profit substitute program to partner with a temporary employment agency.

G. Reasons Given for Not Using the Program

Some participants stated that they would not use the program because they already have substitutes or they "make do" in other ways. Some Center-based participants said they provide coverage by moving staff around. Some FCCs handle it either by pre-arranging to send their children to other providers who are not filled to capacity, or by closing.

The main reasons stated for preventing use of the program were: if substitutes were not available, if it was prohibitively expensive, and distrust. The trust issue was particularly important for FCCs. Some FCCs thought that substitutes would not be willing to work alone in their home to care for children. Others felt that substitutes would be too selective and not want to work in their neighborhood. Some expressed previous experience that the substitutes were sub-quality. A couple participants indicated that they would be prevented from using the program by certain potential program criteria (e.g., if eligibility was restricted to Preschool for All sites).

H. User Responsibilities

Most participants stated that the child care sites should provide an orientation and, ideally, an orientation handbook including a job description for the substitute. They should also provide all the emergency supplies, contacts, forms, plans, the daily routine, activities, schedule, meals, location of bathrooms, storage, guidelines, rules and philosophy, particularly related to discipline. When asked what the length of the orientation should be, most responded one or two days; the next most common response was a half-day orientation; a few Center-based participants felt a one-three hour orientation would be sufficient. FCCs were clear that in order to leave someone alone in their home with their children, they would need a longer orientation, while Center programs, where the substitute would be working alongside other staff, felt a shorter one would be adequate, because they would have very few responsibilities. Programs felt users should provide on-site supervision/mentoring.

The next most frequently mentioned responsibility was to provide feedback and evaluations to the substitute program. The next suggestion was sharing information with the parents about the substitute, and, ideally, introducing them. Being nice to the substitute, and providing an environment that complied with licensing regulations were mentioned as seemingly obvious, but important to state.

Another responsibility of the site is to put in a request with Community Care Licensing to have the substitute's clearances and record associated with the site prior to having contact with the children.

I. Fees

Not everyone responded to the following questions. Center teachers felt that money issues were not within their scope of knowledge.

Would use:	FCCP		Centers
If initiation fee of \$10.00-15.00	42 (98%)	\$1.00 x Number on license	27 (63%)
If reduced fee for planned coverage	26 (60%)		32 (74%)
If hourly fee for planned coverage	17 (40%)		25 (58%)

J. Suggested Salaries

We asked everyone to indicate on the evaluation forms what would be a reasonable amount to pay the substitutes. Many Center teachers felt that they could not answer the question because they do not deal with fiscal matters. There were numerous suggestions to use the Wages Plus pay scale. On the top end of the scale were the unionized programs where the scales were significantly higher. Some of the FCCS felt an hourly rate would work out to be prohibitive, especially if it was for several days. They spoke of setting a daily fee at a lower rate or not using a substitute (by either closing their program or having their children go to another provider who was not fully enrolled).

Family Child Care Sub	\$7.00-9.50	9.51-12.00	Over \$12.00
CC responses	3	7	3
FCC responses	31	14	3

Assistant Teach Sub	Up to \$9.50	9.51-12.00	Over \$12.00
CC responses	0	14	10
FCC responses	6	17	4

Teacher Sub	\$9.50-11.99	\$12.00-14.00	Over \$14.00
CC responses	0	6	18
FCC responses	8	4	3

K. Miscellaneous Questions & Comments

Participants asked what would be considered legitimate usage of the program.

- Can it be used to cover for classes, doing homework, transportation time?
- Can it be used for doctors' appointments, respite, vacations or holidays?
- Will it be available on weekends or at night?
- Will it be limited to Preschool For All programs?
- Will there be limits on the length or frequency of usage?

Other questions included:

- How would the hourly cost of the program compare to what the substitutes would be paid?
- Who is the employer of record? What is the worker's status? What about workers' compensation? Liability issues?
- Can providers hire the substitutes if they like them? Will there be a finder fee?
- Would there be a probationary period for substitutes?
- What languages will the substitutes speak?
- How many substitutes will be available?
- Could the provider be notified in advance of who is coming?
- How long would the response time be, once the request is submitted?
- Can they be bonded?
- Can providers interview the substitutes themselves?
- If the substitute comes to a site for an advance orientation, who would pay?

General Concerns:

- The need for licensing affiliation and carrying required documentation with them.
- Substitutes' willingness to work with diverse programs and low-income populations.
- Substitutes should know the neighborhoods where they are being assigned
- Confidentiality: concern for substitutes spreading information between centers.
- Confidentiality: regarding performance of substitutes. Some felt if evaluations or ratings of substitutes were visible on the web, it might discourage substitutes from signing up.
- Parents really want to know with whom their children are going to be left.
- Concern with pay discrepancies between child care providers.

- Union shops will have to hire union staff.
- Substitutes may not want to be, or should not be, left alone with children.
- Favored substitutes may become overloaded.

Suggestions:

- Look at how other substitute programs operate.
- Look at how other temporary employment agencies operate.
- Program should be free to FCCs; Centers have back up funding!
- Flexibility is key. We need choices in our options (e.g., voucher, sub list **and** web system)
- Have a fee for training and recruitment.
- Link fee reduction to feedback.
- Link pay to qualifications and language capacity.
- Link pay to number of ECE units.
- To compensate for irregular hours, pay more than regular teachers.
- For FCCs, an hourly rate would be too expensive, so set up a daily rate.
- Provide substitutes with neckbands with plastic casing to carry necessary documentation and to identify the wearer as a substitute.
- Have diversity training as a regular part of routine orientation and training.

Comments:

- A substitute program is so needed – even if we only get to use it infrequently
- Program will be swamped with providers wanting service once the word gets out
- Need to pay well so that good substitutes will want to stay
- Providers will be hesitant to share their substitutes or laid-off staff for fear of losing them to another program.
- There were mixed reviews on using temporary services. Some like it, some don't. Some think it's too expensive.

Over and over again participants expressed gratitude for the development of a substitute program because it is so needed.

PART FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

We were able to gather a tremendous wealth of information in our research process. Not surprisingly, we found that the needs of San Francisco ECE providers are numerous and diverse, including concerns about substitutes' level of training, availability, cost, child care experience, language issues, trust, and permanency. In certain circumstances, Centers' needs are different than the needs of Family Child Care Providers who provide services from their homes. Based on the information gathered and FSSBA's program experience, we offer the following recommendations.

Recommendation #1: Develop a multi-modal program to provide flexibility and choice. The program should include: a voucher/reimbursement component, a self-call substitute list and a pool of employees that can be dispatched by a scheduling agency.

After reviewing many different programs, analyzing data from hundreds of surveys and having conversations with ninety focus groups participants and numerous key informants, it is clear that no one model of substitute coverage will address the diverse needs of the child care community. In fact, the preferences of the providers are not even clear. For example, in responding to the model they preferred for planned leave, both Center and Family Child Care survey respondents ranked their preferred models as:

- #1. Voucher/reimbursement
- #2. Self-call substitute list
- #3. Non-profit scheduler with dispatcher

But in the focus groups, FCCs' first preference was the self-call substitute list, while Centers preferred a web-based system. Yet, when offered the *combination* of a voucher and web-based system, the combination was the number one choice for both groups.

To meet the needs of the greatest number of providers, we recommend that any substitute program for the city of San Francisco should include a voucher component, a self-call substitute list and a pool of salaried providers who can be dispatched by an organization.

Vouchers: The program should include a voucher component for those providers who already have substitutes. This allows for providers to cover the cost of leave time using floaters and substitutes they already consistently depend on, or to hire the substitutes they value and with whom they and the families have an ongoing relationship. Research in other parts of the country also identified as advantageous, those systems that utilize voucher programs or simply provide grant funds to be used for programs that have their own substitutes. In addition, the voucher program allows a greater portion of the funds to go for provision of substitute hours, rather than other program costs. This model also addresses the challenges of widely variant pay scales and union issues, because vouchers based on a set scale, could be used to subsidize the providers own substitute employees who have met all of their hiring requirements. One other recommendation is that all efforts should be made to minimize the turn-around time for reimbursement for vouchers.

Self-call substitute list: The voucher model alone would not be effective, as many programs do not have substitute child care workers identified or available. For example, almost half of the Family Child Care Providers who responded to our survey do not have substitutes available to them and consequently, expressed much interest in having someone develop a substitute list that they could access. Because substitutes work in the homes of FCCs, the providers want to pre-interview and orient the substitutes and introduce them to the parents. Therefore, many preferred the self-call substitute list so they could have personal contact with the substitutes before having them work.

On the other hand, Centers usually have substitutes work alongside regular staff, and the substitutes are not asked to assume the full responsibilities of the teachers they are replacing, therefore trust is not as big an issue as it is with FCCs. Many Centers have regular floaters they use, but limited funds to pay for them, or they have staffing to move people around for coverage. However, when they do not have enough staff available to meet licensing ratios, the time and effort in looking for a substitute is a significant issue. Therefore, the web-based substitute list or the dispatched substitute list was more attractive to them. Some of these programs are currently using the services of a for-profit substitute agency and seemed eager for a lower cost alternative.

Web-based system: While very few child care substitute programs have used the web-based model, it has been used successfully for years by school districts that are very dependent on an efficient substitute system. Just as cell phone technology was important in increasing accessibility to available substitutes, using a web-based system may be the next technology to optimize the effectiveness of any large-scale child care substitute system.

The web-based system can provide up-to-the-moment data and efficient sorting based on individualized criteria. It can serve as a more effective “substitute list” than the old paper version that was updated and sent out once a month, and serve as a powerful tool for provider and substitute initiated searches. A web-based system can also serve as an effective tool for dispatching a pool of substitute employees; it can be used as an automated dispatcher or to assist the staff dispatcher. A good database with report generating capacities may be effective for provider reimbursement requests and issuing the reimbursements.

In order for the web system to work effectively for child care, the following elements should be included:

- A user-friendly phone option for non-computer users.
- Child care specific template pages (e.g., listing ECE units, courses taken, experience, personal statement, CPR/First Aid, TB test and clearances).
- Phone access in Spanish and Cantonese, and preferably web also.

Substitute pool: The program should include a substitute pool of carefully screened, trained, high-quality available providers. Since many providers do not have substitutes and do not have the time or resources to recruit and screen quality providers, the development of a substitute pool of providers is necessary. While the hiring of full-time and part-time employees with benefits is expensive, the likelihood of hiring and retaining quality substitutes is increased substantially. Hiring staff ensures that all substitutes have been screened, have the basic requirements, (e.g., First Aid/CPR, child abuse identification and reporting, fingerprinting), ECE units and receive ongoing in-service training. It also allows for greater reliability and availability of staff, while ensuring that substitutes can have site-specific orientations before shifts.

Recommendation #2: Choose a subset of the San Francisco child care provider community to receive services from a pilot substitute program.

Due to the vast array of community needs and the limited funding available, as well as challenges in recruiting and maintaining a substitute pool large enough to meet all of the community’s needs, we recommend that the substitute program start with a small, targeted group or groups of providers. The program simply cannot be all things to all providers. The choice of the pilot group to be served should be based on the funds available and the goals of the funding agencies. For example, if the largest source of funding comes from First Five who has prioritized the professional growth of child care providers and the Preschool for All sites, this may be a logical subset to target (although this group may already have more access to resources than some of the other programs such as the many FCCs who have no substitutes and very limited funds). Due to funding and logistical factors, it is likely the substitute coverage will have to be limited to planned professional leave.

Recommendation #3: Do not forget the needs of Family Child Care Providers.

The substitute needs of FCCs are unique and complicated due to the nature of the FCC business. Substitutes are not only working with the Family Child Care Provider's children, they are doing it in the context of the provider's own home. This in itself requires a higher level of trust. In addition to this, if it is a small group FCC, the provider often works alone, therefore a substitute would also be left alone with the children, again, requiring a much higher level of trust and orientation. The key to providing effective services that FCCs will use, is developing trust and familiarity. This needs to be taken into account both in the hiring and substitute selection or assignment process, and in developing a thorough orientation process prior to leaving the substitute with the children.

Recommendation #4: Address the need for consistency and familiarity between substitutes and programs.

A big determinant of the quality of the substitute program, and the willingness of providers to use it, is consistency. Both FCCs and Centers wanted to work with the same substitutes over time so that familiarity and rapport would develop among the substitutes, the children, the parents and the staff. A multi-modal program allows for providers to find and use their preferred substitutes.

A substitute program should consider having each substitute serve only a small cluster of programs. These can be divided by neighborhood, language or type of program, such as programs with specific training requirements like Montessori or Head Start. Another key factor is to have an onsite orientation for substitutes alongside regular staff prior to being left with the children. Everyone liked the idea of having the substitutes in the pool work alongside the child care provider, pro bono, when they are not on assignment. The participants agreed that this would enrich the orientation and in-service training process.

Recommendation #5: Allocate ample resources for screening, orienting and paying substitutes.

A major concern from the providers is the quality of the substitutes they use. All survey respondents and focus group participants noted the importance of good screening of substitutes, adequate orientation to sites, excellent training and child care experience. Most wanted substitutes who have at least six months experience in a professional group child care situation and meet a number of key qualities.

The substitute program should consider using an on-line pre-employment assessment tool, (e.g., the Scheig Associates tool used by Nashville SEES), for applicants to complete as the first step in their application process. They reported that it has tremendously improved their hiring and retention rates (although they are not sure if it is linguistically appropriate for non-English speakers).

Many Family Child Care Providers want to do their own screening of substitutes. Therefore the program should build in an option for the providers to call substitutes rather than just automatically dispatching substitutes to them. Their concerns had to do with trusting the substitute and the substitute's language capacity. Centers, who generally have substitutes working alongside their regular staff, wanted the screening to include basic licensing requirements and sometimes-higher funding requirements (e.g., more units for teacher substitutes). They wanted the interviews to screen common sense, enjoying children, being able to lead a circle time or group activity, and handling conflict between children.

The San Francisco child care community continues to make strides in improving wages and educational incentives for child care providers. The substitute program should coordinate with these efforts by paying competitive wages to substitutes. This will assist in recruitment and retention, as well as encouraging professionalism in the field.

Recommendation #6: Consider a partnership or collaborative to provide the services.

For many reasons, the development of a multi-modal start-up program is time-consuming and expensive, particularly if substitutes need to be hired as employees. But an adequately funded program, albeit expensive, has a greater likelihood of success.

After obtaining legal advice, it is our belief that a substitute program that recruits, screens, trains and pays substitutes, exposes itself to various types of liabilities (e.g., taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment). It may be more cost-effective to utilize the services of an experienced agency that has these costs already built into its budget and can spread them due to economies of scale than it is to start a new program. It may not be true that a non-profit organization can provide these services most cheaply. It might also make sense to have a substitute list handled by the ECE Resource and Referral agencies.

Recommendation #7: Acknowledge and celebrate that many substitutes will be hired into permanent child care positions and allocate ample resources to recruitment of substitutes.

Recruiting was probably the number one issue that determined the success of any of the surveyed substitute programs. Substitute turnover is extremely high, therefore having an effective way to constantly recruit is absolutely essential. There are two categories of substitutes; 1) those who look at this position as temporary or a stepping-stone into a permanent full time position, and 2) those who would be willing to be in this position ongoing because they want a part-time position with flexible hours.

A strategy for the first category is to develop a strong relationship with all the ECE training programs in the region and various ECE vocational training programs, including those for recent immigrants who are establishing themselves in this country. Some substitute programs have advertised in their outreach that they provide training and consequently substitute positions can be a stepping-stone to permanent positions. They state that substituting offers the opportunity to experience a variety of programs until they find the one that best suits them. It also offers the opportunity to become familiar with the children, families and staff of programs, thereby increasing the likelihood of being hired there.

In addition to a substitute class (see Recommendation #8 below), developing relationships with the training and subsidized employment programs is a good outreach strategy for this first category. Some possible sources include:

- Mentoring programs
- Work-study
- Regional Occupational Program (ROP)
- Professional Development Program
- Pathways program
- ESL Occupational Training programs

A strategy to find those in the second category is to develop targeted outreach to the underemployed or retired ECE community who might be interested in part-time, but permanent work. This might mean just a couple of days per week or a few hours per day. The key factor is to accommodate their scheduled availability. Groups to target include:

- Family Child Care Associations
- Teacher Unions
- Credentialing Programs
- Community Care Licensing
- The National and the California Association for the Education of the Young Child
- School District Child Development Programs with seasonal layoffs or programs with part year
- ECE Training programs for seniors

Many FCCs suggested bringing their own substitutes into the pool to be shared with other providers in their neighborhood, as long as they have first priority when they need the person's services.

Parents in transition are another possible resource for substitutes. The program should conduct outreach to parents of kindergarteners, first graders and parents whose children have left for college - especially those parents with degrees and experience with children.

Recommendation #8: Allocate resources to reinstate the substitute class at San Francisco City College to increase recruitment of substitutes.

We recommend that the program allocate funds to help reinstate the City College Substitute class and to directly recruit students enrolled in this class. Further conversations with Kathy White, the director of ECE programs at City College, regarding tapping into the students or the graduates of other ECE training programs through various institutions, would also be helpful in identifying other streams of recruits.

Recommendation #9: Have clear user requirements.

The value of a subsidized substitute program for child care providers is tremendous. In order for the substitute program to reach those providers who will best utilize the program, user requirements for providers to use the program must be established and very clearly spelled out, including:

- What substitutes may be used for
- What substitutes may not do
- Legitimate use of the voucher system
- How to make requests
- Consequences for repeated cancellations
- Site orientation requirements
- Compliance with licensing submission of transfer request and other requirements

Recommendation #10: Have clear expectations of the substitutes who will provide the services.

As a way of attracting and retaining the right pool of substitutes, it is important that substitutes understand, prior to hiring, what they might expect in terms of hours and places they will work. The requirements for substitutes are varied and include:

- Meeting and keeping up with all licensing requirements
- Consistent availability and reliability based on individually stated schedule.
- Feedback consistency, especially when issues and challenges occur while working at a site.
- Getting and turning in signed timesheets.
- Accountability for communicating cancellations within required timelines
- Ability to work at various sites
- Comfort in working in ethnically-diverse and in all neighborhoods of the city

Recommendation #11: Address multiple language needs.

Family Child Care Providers, in particular often have specific language requirements, where they are serving children of families who primarily speak the same language as the providers. Sometimes these are monolingual programs in Chinese or Spanish. Providing extra monetary benefits for bilingual substitutes, and recruiting and training substitutes who speak those languages, including those with limited English, may be an effective way to meet some of these language needs. Another idea is to have substitutes serve programs in language clusters (See Recommendation #4 above).

SUMMARY

We are pleased we were able to gather a significant amount of information about child care substitute programs in general and about the San Francisco child care situation in a matter of a few months. Programs across the country were very generous in sharing their successes and challenges, and many local “historians” helped us as well. We believe there are many lessons to learn from these stories, but are also aware of the dearth of programming and research on child care substitute coverage. San Francisco has an opportunity to be a leader in providing excellent, innovative substitute coverage to the child care community.

The greatest lessons from the surveys and focus groups are the tremendous diversity of needs throughout the community and the many complications in providing a substitute program. What works for one provider does not necessarily work for another. For a system to be responsive, it must provide options and choices. While a substitute program can’t satisfy the needs of all child care providers, we offer recommendations that acknowledge the diversity of needs and still present realistic models to pilot.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to delve into this area of research and planning. We hope you find our analysis and recommendations to be thorough and helpful.

Last, and most importantly, the providers of child care are true everyday heroes. We applaud the sacrifices and commitment they make for the children of our community. We hope this report leads to a program that will reward them and the children.