

## Lesson 6: Recommendations

(See Handout 7)

### ***Option A: Small Group General Discussion***

#### **Objectives**

- Acknowledge importance of clarifying organizational roles in arranging child care
- Identify at least two strategies for addressing child care needs that participants are willing to explore

#### **Set Up (5 minutes)**

Divide participants into small groups of 5-7 people who work in similar environments. Ask group to elect a group note taker and someone who will report back on group findings.

#### **Activity (20 minutes)**

Ask group to discuss strategies their communities can implement to improve child care access among refugees. Allow the group at least 10 minutes to discuss. Reconvene the larger group and have each group share strategies. List strategies on easel paper.

#### **Debriefing (2 minutes)**

Distribute handout listing strategies employed by other states and best practices to consider. Sample handout is attached.

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### ***Option B: Case Examples***

#### **Objectives**

- Acknowledge that refugee families possess both limitations and strengths in responding to child care needs
- Identify possible strategies for addressing child care needs

#### **Set Up (5 minutes)**

Divide the large group into small groups of 5-7 people. When possible, divide the participants into groups that share similar service environments (size of city, resource network in community, etc.).

#### **Activity (25 minutes)**

##### **15 minutes:**

Distribute a scenario to each group. Instruct the group to respond to the following questions:

- What barriers is the family facing in accessing child care?
- What strengths does the family have to respond?
- What are some possible strategies to use?

Allow the group at least 10 minutes to work together. Ideally, scenarios will consist of actual case examples of refugees who were able to successfully respond to child care issues. If these are not available, the facilitator should include a range of different scenarios. Several possibilities are listed below.

- Single mom with large family: You are working with Adar. She recently resettled from

Somalia. She is a mother with three young children (ages 2, 4, and 5). She does not have any family living in the community and is afraid to let others watch her children. She did not finish high school in Somalia and is worried that she cannot learn English quickly enough.

- Family with older teenagers and older children: You are working with Terrance. He recently came from Liberia with his 2 nephews. They are ages 7 and 11. He has a few friends in the area that he has met through church. Terrance is completing his job placement program and is about to start looking for a job.
- Family with extended relatives in area: You are working with Anna. She resettled from the Ukraine about 6 months ago. She has four children (ages 8, 10, 13, and 15). She has some extended family living in the area. Many of them are older relatives. She was just offered a job working in a hotel. She will most often be working the second shift, which is from 3:00 to 11:00 PM.
- Client with a professional job: Sara resettled from Ethiopia about one year ago. She was a lawyer in her home country. She has been hired as a legal secretary and is working towards getting certification as a paralegal. She has 2 children in the U.S. with her, ages 2 and 4.

**10 minutes:**

Reconvene the large group and have each small group report back about their responses.

**Debriefing (2 minutes)**

Distribute the handout listing strategies employed by other states and best practices to consider. Sample handout is attached.

## Handout 7: Recommendations

### Strategies for Improving Access to Child Care

- ✓ Partner with employers who offer flexible spending accounts.
  - These plans allow employees to deduct the costs of childcare (as much as \$5,000 a year per household) from pretax income. NOTE: Once funds are designated, they must be used to pay for child care and the provider must be licensed and registered. Unused funds are forfeited.
- ✓ Provide refugees with information about the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.
  - Workers are eligible for a child care credit of 20 to 35% (depending on income) on qualifying expenses. In 2005, for one qualifying child, the credit was from \$600 to \$1,050. For two or more qualifying children, the credit was from \$1,200 to \$2,100. Visit the [IRS Web site](#) for more information. NOTE: You are ineligible for the child care credit if you enroll in a flexible spending plan.
- ✓ Assist refugees in organizing a babysitting co-op.
  - Connect parents who will take turns watching each other's children. Advertise this co-op in your office, at local MAA's, grocery stores, community newspapers, etc. NOTE: Depending on how many children each parent will be watching at one time, licensing issues might apply.
- ✓ Support refugees in reducing transportation costs and schedule constraints.
  - Connect parents who can car pool or take turns accompanying children on public transportation. Advocate with schools so that school buses will drop children off at child care programs in addition to their homes.
- ✓ Help refugees apply for state child care subsidies: Build this step into case management and allow time for the process. Refer to your local Child Care Resource and Referral contact, but be aware that staff there may not have experience in working with refugees. Your client may need help with filling out paperwork, transportation to appointments, finding an approved provider, etc. Refugees may also need "permission" to apply for subsidies to pay family members.
- ✓ Help refugees become licensed child care providers.
  - Your local Child Care Resource and Referral contact can help you to get started. There are grants available in some states to help with start-up costs. There is also a special food reimbursement program for family child care providers through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administered through various state and local agencies in each state. Review Hein, M., Allen, R., & Else, R. (1999) [Home-Based Child Care: Assessing the Self-Sufficiency Potential \(With special reference to refugees\)](#). Refugee Welfare and Immigration Reform Project of the Institute for Social and Economic Development.
- ✓ Build strong relationships with child care providers located within the neighborhoods where refugees live.

- ✓ Negotiate with child care drop-off centers to donate slots for refugee clients.
- ✓ Seek discretionary funds from ORR and/or private grants to underwrite onsite child care.
- ✓ Reach out to community groups who can help provide short-term child care for refugee clients. For example, contact Girl Scout troops who are getting certified as babysitters. Contact local colleges and universities who may have students needing course credit (education students, cultural psychology students).
- ✓ Partner with Child Care Resource and Referral contacts to strengthen Kith and Kin networks. Goals could include increasing the quality of care and connecting informal refugee child care providers with supports. Review [“In Our Own Backyards: Local and State Strategies to Improve the Quality of Family Child Care,”](#) (2205) The Institute for Women’s Policy Research.