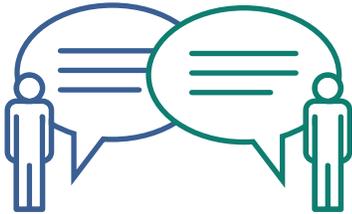


Family Engagement Consultants

Family Engagement Consultants (FECs) help build stronger connections between child care providers and families—with a focus on license-exempt providers. These providers fill an important gap in the child care system, often providing more services with fewer resources and serving families who, in some situations, are working hard to rise out of poverty. FECs provided training, networking opportunities, and referrals to community resources to strengthen the system of support for these vital providers.

Need

Historically, formal supports for license-exempt providers have been limited, but with Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Michigan committed resources to trainings that focus on building stronger connections between providers and families. FECs began their work creating training materials to teach the Strengthening Families™ protective factors framework to child care providers and parents, and presented this curriculum using Care Giving Conversations. These conversations work to strengthen providers' resilience to address situations unique to license-exempt care. For example:



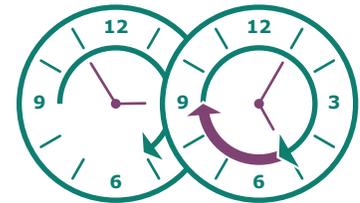
Navigating Relationships Between Parents and Providers:

Often license-exempt providers are caring for children from their own family or the children of friends and neighbors; this can lead to difficult social interactions when it comes to discipline or issues of promptness at dropoff or pickup. The Care Giving Conversations help providers have the resources to have these conversations.



Providing More Services, with Fewer Resources:

Providers often need to offer a wider variety of services. These activities require providers to transport children in their vehicles, make medical decisions on behalf of the parents, and establish or follow unique schedules and cultural norms. Additionally, license-exempt are frequently charging less than other licensed providers.



Providing Afterhours Care:

License-exempt providers often provide care outside of traditional business hours when most other child care options are unavailable. Without these caregivers, parents who work or attend classes at night or over the weekend would be left without options. These hours, however, can make providers feel like they are always on the clock.

Care Giving Conversation Learning Objectives

The FECs hosted a series of Care Giving Conversations in communities across the state. The standard training consisted of five modules, each two hours long, spread over five weeks. The modules were:

Social Connections:

How to recognize how positive social connections can help providers care for themselves and children in their lives.

Concrete Supports in Times of Need:

How to access the supports and services that address their family's needs and helps to minimize stress and recognize that asking for help is a strength.

Parental Resilience:

How to manage stress and function well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma. For example, learning how taking a break during stressful times strengthens parenting/caregiving skills.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:

How to have realistic expectations of children in different stages and ages (and identify concerns about a child's development at an early age).

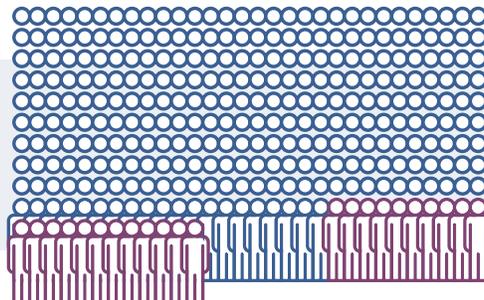
Social and Emotional Competence of Children:

How to help children learn to respond to the emotions they are feeling by observing people in their daily lives.

Services Provided



18 Counties



312 Participants
(290 Providers/22 Parents)



9 Consultants

What's Next?

FECs were supported by funding from the RTT-ELC grant. This funding concluded in December 2018, and there is hope that Care Giving Conversations will be added to the supports offered to license-exempt providers through a new health and safety project. Care Giving Conversations are the focus for continuation, rather than the one-on-one consultation, given that many people can be reached in a single Care Giving Conversation.