



HUMAN SERVICES POLICY CENTER

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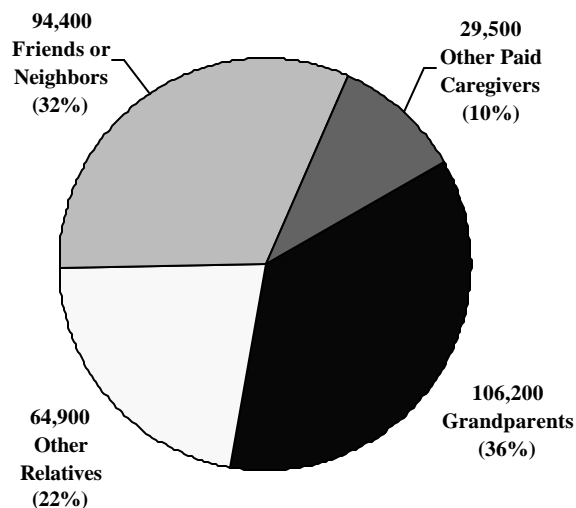
Forging a Brighter Future for Children and Families

Summer 2003

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers in Washington State*

About 295,000 family, friends, and neighbors (FFNs) provide child care in Washington State. Six percent of these providers are licensed.

**Numbers and Relationships of Washington FFN
Caregivers to Children in Their Care**



How much care do family, friends, and neighbors provide?

- ❖ FFN caregivers average 18 hours a week of care.
- ❖ One in four FFN caregivers (91,000) provides care more than 30 hours per week, the equivalent of a full-time job.

How are they compensated?

- ❖ Forty percent of FFN caregivers report being paid for the care they provide.
- ❖ Those who are paid receive amounts similar to what parents pay for center care and family child care (FCC), ranging from about \$2.60 to \$5.00 per hour depending on the age of the child.

What kind of training do they have?

- ❖ Sixty-one percent of FFN caregivers have none of the specific training in child care, child development, or parenting skills that are known to affect children's cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes.
- ❖ Twenty-three percent of FFN caregivers have participated in each of the following: parenting training, courses in early childhood education, courses in child development, and workshops related to these topics. Of this minority, most have participated in three or four types of training and education.

What challenges do FFN caregivers in Washington face and what kinds of support do they want?

- ❖ Fifty-eight percent of FFN caregivers report at least one problem in providing care, and two-thirds say they would like some training or support.
- ❖ Almost one in five FFN caregivers care for a child with special physical, emotional, behavioral, or developmental needs. These caregivers expressed the greatest desire for support.
- ❖ FFN caregivers prefer that information and supports be built around specific problems and provided in a community-based context of peer support, rather than in formal classes. Thirty percent are willing to attend meetings and programs with other caregivers.

What policy innovations will most effectively support FFN caregivers?

- ❖ The almost 300,000 FFN caregivers in Washington represent a wide range of backgrounds, and they experience a variety of problems and needs for support. A flexible menu of voluntary training and support options is most likely to meet their diverse needs.
- ❖ Training and support options could include newsletters, booklets and tip sheets, caregiver meetings, prepared kits for activities and home safety, vans and other mobile resources, and consultations regarding individual children. Existing materials and methods could be adapted for this purpose.

*With support from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Care and Early Learning, we took a multi-faceted approach to learning about the informal child care arrangements known as "family, friend, and neighbor" (FFN) care. Our approach included: (1) a survey of almost 300 individuals who care for other people's children on a regular basis but do not work in child care centers; (2) a focus group with FFN caregivers; (3) interviews with early care and education policy makers and professionals; (4) a survey of almost 1,200 households with children age 0-12; and (5) a forum of child

care experts, caregivers, agency staff, advocates, parents, and others engaged in developing policy for early care and education.

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