

Building and Sustaining the Child Care and Early Education Workforce

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

One-on-One Home-Based Provider Interview

Terms used in this protocol are Colorado-specific and refer to home-based providers and assistants as follows:

Term	Refers to...
Family child care home	The home-based child care program or home-based child care business participating in the Family Child Home Care Compensation Pilot (also referred to as the Compensation Pilot).
Family child care home provider	The individual(s) who owns the family child care; provides direct care, supervision, and education to child(ren) in care at least 60% of the daily hours of operation of the family child care home; and is legally liable for the business.
Assistant/ Assistant family child care home provider	A person other than the provider whose primary day-to-day responsibilities include taking care of children in a family child care home.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Let's begin with brief introductions! Can you please share a little about yourself and [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME]? For example:

- What motivated you to open [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME]?
- How long have you worked as a family child care home provider?

Can you describe your daily responsibilities and activities at [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME]?

- Other than working directly with children and families, what other responsibilities and activities do you do in a typical day?

Have you employed any other staff at [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME] since July 2023? If so, how many staff members do you currently employ? If so, how frequently do they work/how many hours per week?

SECTION 1. EXPERIENCES AFTER PILOT STARTED

Can you share a little about how you initially thought and felt about the Family Child Home Care Compensation Pilot?

Now I'd like to talk more about what happened once you started to receive funding. I will refer to the pilot as the Compensation Pilot.

How have you used the additional funds provided by the Compensation Pilot? How have your staff members? Did you use funds to...

- Pay for health, dental, or vision benefits or HSA/FSA contributions
- Pay for time off
- Retirement
- Pay for professional development or training activities (including time away to complete these activities, even if other funds were used to pay for the training itself)
- Pay for other things?

[If not addressed above] Did the additional funds provided by the Compensation Pilot free up space in your budget to spend more on other things?

- For example, because you no longer needed to pay for benefits, were you then able to pay for more learning supplies?

How much time do you or your staff spend on Compensation Pilot related tasks such as applying for the program, submitting records, or other Pilot-related tasks?

- How much time did you or your staff spend during the application phase?
- Now that you are in the program, how much time do you or your staff spend in a typical month on Pilot-related tasks?

Have you experienced any other consequences of the Compensation Pilot?

SECTION 2. EXPERIENCES WITH BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Next, I would like to ask you some questions about how your child care program operates and how the Compensation Pilot has affected your operations.

Before the Compensation Pilot, what happened when you needed to take time away?

- Did you have someone who substituted for you?
- Did you have to close?
- Something else?
- Does it differ if you are sick, taking personal time off (like a vacation), or attending a training/professional development opportunity?
- About how often were you away from your program in a typical month? (# of days, probe on which reason(s))

After the Compensation Pilot, how has your approach to time away changed, if at all?

- Do you take different amounts of time away after the pilot?
- Do you have someone who substitutes for you?
- Do you have to close?
- Does it differ if you are sick, taking personnel time off (like a vacation), or attending a training/professional development opportunity?
- About how often are you away from your program in a typical month? (# of days, probe on which reason(s))

Please tell me about your approach to filling spots in your child care program.

- How do you find families to enroll in your care?
- How do you get the word out about your business?
- What is your absenteeism policy? What do you do when a child is absent a lot?
- When a child leaves your program, how long does it typically take you to fill their spot? How does this affect your program and revenue?
- Do you have any current openings in your program? Do you have a waiting list?

- Do you worry about having enough families enrolled?
- Has the Compensation Pilot changed your approach to filling openings? If yes, how so?

How would you describe your program's financial health and stability before the Compensation Pilot started? How easy or hard was it for you to pay for the expenses related to providing childcare.

- Did you ever worry you might close? If so, why?
- **[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS]** were you able to offer staff a fair compensation package including a "living wage" and reasonable benefits?

How would you describe your program's financial health and stability now, after engaging in the Compensation Pilot? How easy or hard is it for you to pay for the expenses related to providing childcare.

- Has it helped you free up resources?
- Has it necessitated changes to program policies? In what ways?
- **[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS]** are you now better equipped to offer staff a fair compensation package?
- If they responded Yes above to worrying about closing, has the Compensation Pilot changed that?

Has the Compensation Pilot affected your ability to pay for more support for operating your child care program? [IF YES:] How so?

- [PROBE ON ANY SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES MENTIONED ABOVE]
- Has it freed up funds to be spent on other uses?

Has the Compensation Pilot affected your investments in your business and professional development? [IF YES:] How so?

- Has it allowed you to make changes to your business with the goal of increasing your Colorado Shines rating?
- Has it allowed you to make investments in your professional development, such as a new credential?

What are the sources of revenue for your [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME]?

- For example...
 - The Colorado Child Care Assistance program (called CCCAP) or subsidy program?
 - Child and Adult Food Care Program (CAFCP)?
 - Private pay from families?
 - Early Head Start Child Care Partnership
 - Military Support Program
 - Other?
- Do they cover the costs of operating your program? Please explain why or why not.

- Are there any tax credits that you claim for your child care program? If yes, please tell me about them.
- Did you receive the Early Childhood Educator Tax Credit that started for tax year 2022? What about other credits? If so, please tell me about them.

Did you incur any expenses related to the Compensation Pilot, not including how you spent the new funds. For example, if you needed to spend money on an accountant to help organize your financial records.

- Did you need to spend any money on application-related expenses?
- Do you spend any money on Pilot-related expenses in a typical month?

SECTION 3. EXPERIENCES ON THE JOB

Next, I'd like to talk more about how you have experienced the Compensation Pilot.

How has the Compensation Pilot affected your job (if at all)? Has it affected...For example,

- Job-related stress?
- Your job satisfaction?
- Amount of time that you spend fulfilling different responsibilities or doing different activities? [PROBES, DEPENDING ON JOB RESPONSIBILITIES IDENTIFIED ABOVE BY RESPONDENT:] For example, caring for children, administrative paperwork.
- **[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS]** The amount of time you spend hiring new staff?
- **[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS]** The amount of time you spend onboarding/training new staff?
- **[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS]** The amount of time you spend resolving staffing challenges (e.g., staff absences, staff turnover)?

[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS] How has the Compensation Pilot affected your/ staff members' work schedules or benefits (if at all)?

- Were there changes that affected your ability to provide benefits for yourself through this job (e.g., paid time off, health insurance, or retirement)?
- Did it change your staffing configurations (e.g., new staff hired, changed staff hours, changed your hours)?

Has the Compensation Pilot affected your wellbeing at all? [If YES:] How?

- How has it affected your mental wellbeing?
- How has it affected your physical wellbeing?
- How has it affected your economic or financial wellbeing?

[IF EMPLOYS OTHERS] How do you think the Compensation Pilot affected the wellbeing of staff at [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME], if at all?

- How has it affected their mental well-being?
- How has it affected their physical well-being?
- How has it affected their economic or financial wellbeing?
- How has it affected their relationships with you?

SECTION 4. EXPERIENCES WITH PERSONAL FINANCES

Next, I would like to ask you some questions about how the Compensation Pilot may have affected your personal income and financial situation (if at all). I want to remind you that everything you tell me will be kept private.

How would you describe your personal financial situation before the Compensation Pilot started? For example:

- How often did you worry about being able to meet your monthly living expenses? Would you say you worry all the time, very frequently, occasionally, rarely, very rarely, or never?
- Were you able to pay for essentials/basics (food, rent, bills)?
- Did you have emergency funds set aside for something like a car repair that might cost \$400-\$500?

Next, we're interested in how your personal financial situation may have changed after [FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME NAME] started participating in the Compensation Pilot (if at all).

- How often do you worry about being able to meet your monthly living expenses? Would you say you worry all the time, very frequently, occasionally, rarely, very rarely, or never?
- Are you able to pay for essentials/basics (food, rent, bills)?
- Do you have emergency funds set aside for something like a car repair that might cost \$400-\$500?
- Some other way?

Before the Compensation Pilot, did you or a family member work a job specifically to receive benefits such as health insurance or paid time off?

- Since the start of the Compensation Pilot have there been changes in that job situation? For example, you/your family member been able to reduce hours or leave that job?

Since beginning the Compensation Pilot did you or anyone in your household change your health care insurance benefits? For example, did you switch from a health plan provided by the government or from a basic to more comprehensive plan?

- If yes, what did you previously have? What do you have now?
- Has your receipt of any health insurance assistance programs changed since the start of the Compensation Pilot?
- Do you worry about your savings for retirement? Does this affect your planning to stay in the field?

SECTION 5: BELIEFS, EXPECTATIONS, AND LOOKING AHEAD

BELIEFS & EXPECTATIONS

Was the Compensation Pilot what you had expected? How so?

- Was it more/less money than you expected?
- Was it more/less frequent than you expected?

Did anything surprise you (good or bad) about participating in the Compensation Pilot? For example:

- Did the Compensation Pilot create opportunities you didn't have before?
- Did participating in the Compensation Pilot make you ineligible for other benefits?

Has the Compensation Pilot affected how you think about what it means to be a provider? [IF YES:] How so? Why?

LOOKING AHEAD

Finally, we are curious to hear your thoughts about the future.

Given that this is a 2-year pilot, do you have any concerns about what will happen after the funding ends?

Do you have any suggestions for how Colorado could improve the Compensation Pilot if they were to extend it or offer it again in the future?

- Can you think of... Improvements that would support providers?
- Can you think of... Improvements that would support staff?
- Can you think of... Improvements that would better align this Pilot with other initiatives, policies, or funding streams?
- Can you think of... Other improvements?

If you had a magic wand to improve how the state is currently organizing the Compensation Pilot, what would that be?

WRAP-UP

Is there anything we didn't get to discuss that you think would be important for us to know about the Compensation Pilot?

Thank you for sharing your time and expertise with us today. On behalf of our whole team, we are grateful for your contribution to this study.