# RAND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## RAND CDP Staffing Study
## Case Study Interview Protocol

The protocols listed below are designed for semi-structured interviews. They will be used by the interviewer to guide the discussion with the individual in a given role. The interviewer will not necessarily read each question verbatim or ask each question in the exact order shown. Transition language between questions may be modified based on the discussion to that point in the interview.

## Contents

**AGENCY DISCLOSURE NOTICE**

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## Installation Commander (or designee) (30 minutes)

1. How long have you been in this role at [LOCATION]?

2. What special or unique child development program needs does [LOCATION] have, if any?
    a. Prompt: This could include needs related to the geographic location, to the type of personnel based at [LOCATION], or to the children in the program.

3. How well does [LOCATION] meet the local demand for child care, and why do you think that?

4. More generally, what worries you most about the child development program at [LOCATION]?

5. What aspects of [LOCATION]'s child development programs work well? What are you most proud of, and why?

6. We have several questions related to staffing. I'd like to ask one overarching one to start: in your opinion, is the staffing at [LOCATION] for the child development program sufficient in terms of quantity and quality? Why or why not?
   Probe as needed for CDC, SAC, and FCC[1].
7. In your opinion, how well does the process used to assess CDP manpower requirements work?
   a. Prompt: We're interested in whether you think the process, including any staffing models that are part of it, yields reasonable staffing estimates as well as whether you think the process is as efficient as it can be. If not, why not?

8. From your perspective, how well do the current processes for recruiting, hiring, and completing background checks for new CDP staff work?
   a. Prompt: We're interested in whether you think these processes are as efficient and effective as they can be, and if not, why not?

   b. Probe: How sufficient are the resources to support these processes, including but not limited to HR and medical?

9. How would you characterize CDP staff turnover here at [LOCATION]?
   a. Prompt: For example, are there certain kinds of CDP personnel who are more likely to leave - or to stay? Has turnover gotten worse or better over time at [LOCATION]?

10. From your perspective, how well do the current approaches for rewarding, supporting, and retaining CDP staff work? We're interested in strategies used [SERVICE]-wide and any specific to [LOCATION].
    a. Prompt: We're interested in whether you think these approaches are as efficient and effective as they can be, and if not, why not?

11. What [other] CDP staffing issues here at [LOCATION] would you like to share with me, if any?
12. What initiatives have been undertaken or are in the works to address staffing challenges at [LOCATION], if any?

13. What [other] suggestions for addressing CDP staffing challenges would you like to share, if any?

14. Thank you for your time. As we embark on our data collection at [LOCATION], what CDP-related topics or issues do you recommend we look into in particular?

## HR Subject Matter Experts (APF and NAF) (30 minutes)
1. Please tell us about your main responsibilities in your current role(s), how they relate to CDP programs, and how long you have held this position here at [LOCATION].

2. We're interested in learning more about the hiring process for CDP personnel, from the initial steps of developing a position description and posting a job announcement to the later ones such as background checks, drug tests, health screening, and onboarding. To start, where do you think the hiring process bottlenecks are for CDP personnel at [LOCATION]?
   a. Prompt: We're interested in which steps, such as posting a job announcement, developing the cert list, issuing a Tentative Job Offer, or completing various personnel vetting activities (e.g., medical screening and drug testing) seem especially problematic in your view.
3. To what extent are non-competitive hiring options such as Schedule A and direct hire authority used to hire CDP personnel at [LOCATION]?

   a. Probe: How could the use of non-competitive options be expanded or otherwise improved, if at all?

4. Roughly what share of applicants are eligible for veterans' preference? Military spouse preference?

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[1] Here and elsewhere references to FCC will be updated to CDH for Navy-based interviews.

    a. Probe: How does hiring personnel using these preferences affect the speed or other aspects of the hiring process?

5. Do you believe that [LOCATION] has sufficient resources to carry out the hiring-related processes we just discussed? Why or why not?

    a. Probe: If not, which aspects of the process lack resources and why do you say that?

    b. Probe if needed: How sufficient are [LOCATION] HR and medical resources?

6. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent does the time required to hire affect the ability of CDP programs at [LOCATION] to meet child/youth program demands?

7. What [other] kinds of hiring challenges for CDP personnel have you observed here at [LOCATION]?

8. How would you characterize CDP personnel turnover here at [LOCATION]?
    a. Prompt: For example, are there certain types of CDP personnel who are more likely to leave - or to stay?
    b. Probe: Has turnover gotten worse or better over time at [LOCATION]?
    c. Probe: How have these changed in recent years, if at all?
    d. Probe: Which are of greatest concern, and why do you think that?

10. To the best of your knowledge, why do CDP personnel leave their jobs here at [LOCATION]? We're interested in formal efforts to understand this as well as any informal observation you'd care to share.

11. What [other] CDP staffing issues here at [LOCATION] would you like to share with me, if any?

12. What [other] suggestions for addressing CDP staffing challenges would you like to share, if any?

13. Thank you for your time. As we embark on our data collection at [LOCATION], what CDP-related topics or issues do you recommend we look into in particular?

## CDP Installation Lead / Program Manager (1 hour)
**Background**

1. Confirm job title. How long have you been in this role at [LOCATION]?
    a. Probe: In what other roles and/or locations have you worked in as a CDP employee?

**Installation and CDP Characteristics**

2. [Based on response to Q1]: How does this location compare to other [military locations mentioned in Q1]?

3. What special or unique child development program needs does [LOCATION] have, if any?
    a. Prompt: This could include needs related to the geographic location, to the type of personnel based at [LOCATION], or to the children in the program.

4. If all of the centers at [LOCATION] had their staffing authorizations 100 percent filled, would all of your centers' staffing needs be met? Why or why not?
    a. Probe: What kinds of personnel would you want more of in your center(s), and why?

5. [If FCC program in operation;] We'd also like to learn more about the FCC program at [LOCATION]. How many FCC providers currently help to support [LOCATION's] child care needs, and roughly how many children are cared for by FCC providers?
    a. Probe: Are there any FCC providers at [LOCATION] that are located off the installation? If so, how many, and how many children are cared for by those FCC providers?
    b. Probe: How many providers are currently in the process of becoming certified?

6. How, if at all, has the Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood, or fee assistance program, helped to meet the demand for child care at [LOCATION]?

7. Taking all these programs into consideration, how sufficient is the availability of child care resources to support families at [LOCATION] and why do you think that?

8. What would you change about the size or mix of child care options available to families at [LOCATION] to better meet their child care needs?
   a. Prompt: For example, would you recommend more CDCs to be opened or to recruit more FCC providers?

## CDC/SAC Workforce

9. Now we would like to learn more about your current CDC and SAC workforce and any challenges you face in managing that workforce. Overall, what do you see as the most pressing staffing concerns for your center?
   a. Probe: For what kinds of staff are those concerns an issue?

10. In addition to those concerns, we've also learned about challenges related to recruiting, retention, compensation, duty hours, training requirements, professional development opportunities, inspection requirements, working conditions, and issues working with children who have behavioral challenges. Which of those, if any, stand out to you as affecting your workforce? I can repeat that list for you if that would be helpful.
    a. Probe: For what kinds of staff are those concerns an issue?

11. What [other] kinds of hiring challenges for CDP personnel have you observed here at [LOCATION]?
    a. Probe: To what extent do insufficient resources, such as limited HR or medical capacity, pose a challenge?

12. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent does the time required to hire affect the ability of CDP programs at [LOCATION] to meet child/youth program demands?

13. Military spouses are often a sizeable portion of CDC and SAC workforces. To what extent does your center / do your center(s) employ military spouses?

14. What benefits and/or challenges are associated with having military spouses a sizeable portion of the workforce at [LOCATION]? Why do you say that?

15. How would you characterize CDP personnel turnover here at [LOCATION]?
    e. Prompt: For example, are there certain types of CDP personnel who are more likely to leave - or to stay?
    f. Probe: Has turnover gotten worse or better over time at [LOCATION]?
    g. Probe: How have these changed in recent years, if at all?
    h. Probe: Which are of greatest concern, and why do you think that?

16. To the best of your knowledge, why do CDC and SAC personnel leave their jobs here at [LOCATION]? We're interested in formal efforts to understand this as well as any informal observation you'd care to share.
    a. Probe: What have you learned from exit surveys about reasons for leaving, if [LOCATION] has conducted any?

## FCC Program [if FCC providers are present at that location]

17. Now we would like to learn more about the FCC program at your location. What types of personnel are assigned to support the FCC program (e.g., Director, monitors, trainers)?

18. Earlier you mentioned [#NUMBER#] FCC providers are currently caring for children. How has that number changed in recent years?

19. How sufficient are efforts at [LOCATION] to recruit FCC providers and why do you think that?

20. What else could [SERVICE] do to cultivate the FCC provider pipeline?

21. In your professional opinion, why do people opt to become FCC providers? We're especially interested why they may choose that career option instead of working at a CDC or SAC.

22. What makes it challenging to support and retain FCC providers at [LOCATION]?

    a. Probe if applicable: How do these challenges differ for on-installation and off-installation FCC providers?

23. What could [SERVICE] do to better support current FCC providers?

    a. Probe if applicable: How would these supports differ for on-installation and off-installation FCC providers?

24. What [other] changes to the FCC program would you like to see?

**FCC Program [if FCC providers are not present at that location]**

25. Confirm that [INSTALLATION] does not have any FCC providers. To what extent would having FCC homes at [INSTALLATION] help to meet unmet child care needs? Why do you think that?

26. What barriers, if any, do providers face in becoming FCC providers at [INSTALLATION]?

    a. Probe on whether the barriers are internal or external to CYP]

27. What challenges, if any, do you think [INSTALLATION] would encounter in supporting an FCC program?

    a. Probe if needed: How sufficient is staffing at [INSTALLATION] to support an FCC program?

28. How can [SERVICE] support [INSTALLATION] with implementing and maintaining an FCC program?

**Recommendations and Wrap Up**

29. You talked about a lot of different concerns today across different parts of the child development program. What initiatives have been undertaken or are in the works to address those issues, if any?

    a. Probe: How successful have the ones in place been? How do you know?

30. In addition to the ideas for improvement we already discussed, what else would you recommend that Child and Youth Program leadership for your installation and the [SERVICE] more generally address or avoid in terms of child development program staffing challenges?

31. Thank you for your time. As we embark on our data collection at [LOCATION], what topics or issues do you recommend we look into in particular?

32. Is there anything else you would like to share about child development program staffing at [LOCATION] or your own professional experiences in the child development program?

## Center Director (1 hour)
**Background**

1. Confirm job title. How long have you been in this role at [LOCATION]?
    a. Probe: In what other roles and/or locations have you worked in as a CDP employee?

2.  At a high level, please tell us about the training and development you received to prepare you to serve as a center director.

## Installation/ CDP/ [CDC or SAC] Characteristics

3.  [Based on response to Q1]: How does this location compare to other [military locations mentioned in Q1]?

4.  What special or unique child development program needs does [LOCATION] have, if any?
    a.  Prompt: This could include needs related to the geographic location, to the type of personnel based at [LOCATION], or to the children in the program.

5.  We'd also like to learn more about your center.
    a.  Is your center fully staffed to meet its hours of operation? If not, please tell us about your most critical vacancies and how they affect your center's ability to provide child care.

6.  If your CDP program had all its staffing authorizations filled, would all of your center's staffing needs be met? Why or why not?
    a.  Probe: What kinds of personnel would you want more of in your center(s), and why?

## CDC/SAC Workforce

7.  Now we would like to learn more about your current workforce and any challenges you face in managing that workforce. Overall, what do you see as the most pressing staffing concerns for your center?
    a.  Probe: For what kinds of staff are those concerns an issue?

8.  In addition to those concerns, we've also learned about challenges related to recruiting, retention, compensation, duty hours, training requirements, professional development opportunities, inspection requirements, working conditions, and issues working with children who have behavioral challenges. Which of those, if any, stand out to you as affecting your workforce? I can repeat that list for you if that would be helpful.
    a.  Probe: For what kinds of staff are those concerns an issue?

9.  Military spouses are often a sizeable portion of CDC and SAC workforces. To what extent does your center / do your center(s) employ military spouses?

    a.  What benefits and/or challenges are associated with military spouses as a sizeable portion of the workforce? Why do you say that?

## Personal Job Views

10. Earlier we discussed the training and development you received to prepare you for your role as a center director. What opportunities do you have to continue your professional development? We're especially interested in leader development activities available to you.

11. What barriers or challenges make it difficult for you to participate in training and development, if any?

12. What would you change about the [SERVICE's] approach to training and development for you and other center directors?

13. Thinking more generally, how well supported do you feel by the [SERVICE] and by [LOCATION] leadership to carry out your responsibilities as center director, and why do you think that?

14. What could [SERVICE] do to better support you and other center directors?

## Recommendations and Wrap Up

15. You talked about a lot of different concerns today. What initiatives have been undertaken or are in the works to address those issues, if any?

      a.   Probe: How successful have the ones in place been? How do you know?

16. In addition to the ideas for improvement we already discussed, what else would you recommend that Child and Youth program leadership for your installation and the [SERVICE] more generally address or avoid in terms of child development program staffing challenges, for the [CDCs/SACs] in particular?

17. Thank you for your time. Is there anything else you would like to share about [CDC\SAC] staffing or your own professional experiences in the child development program?

## Direct Care / Professional Support / Other Support Staff (20 minutes)

1. Confirm job title. How long have you been in this role at [LOCATION]?
   a. Probe: In what other roles and/or locations have you worked in as a CDP employee?
   b. Probe: Have you worked in child care outside the military?

2. [Based on response to Q1]: How does this location compare to other [military locations mentioned in Q1]

3. (Based on response to Q1:] If you have worked in a child care setting outside the military, how does your current work environment/experience compare to that?

4. How satisfied are you with your position at [LOCATION], and why do you feel that way?
   a. Probe: We've also heard that [LIST] affect some personnel's satisfaction with their work in the military child care program. Which of those, if any, have influenced your opinion either positively or negatively?

5. Since you started working in the military child care program, have you seen any changes that make it a more attractive place to work? If yes, please tell me about them?

6. What changes would you like to see in the military child care program that would make it a more attractive place to work?

7. What would you tell someone who is applying for [respondent's role]  in the military child care program?

8. How likely are you to be working in this position a year from now, and why do you think that?

   a. Probe: What is affecting your decision to leave or stay, if we didn't cover it already?

9. Thanks for your time today. Is there anything else you'd like to share before we wrap up?

## On-base FCC provider (45 minutes)

1. How long have you been an FCC provider at [LOCATION]?

   a. Probe: In what other roles and/or locations have you worked as a child care professional in the military or otherwise?

   b. Probe: How many children are under your care as part of this program, and what are their age ranges?

2. [Based on response to Q1]: How does this location compare to other [military locations mentioned in Q1]

3. [Based on response to Q1:} How does working as an FCC provider for the military child care program compare to your experience working in other child care settings?

4. What led you to obtain a DoD certification to operate as an FCC provider?
   a. Probe: Why did you decide to become an FCC provider instead of working at a CDC or SAC?
   b. [Optional probe if time]: How did you find out about the opportunity to operate as an FCC provider? [Probe for whether participants were actively recruited, used a job search tool, leveraged personal connections, etc.]

      c.   Probe: In your opinion, how well do the processes for recruiting, screening, and completing background checks for FCC providers work at [LOCATION]?

      d.   [Optional probe if time]: What could be improved about these processes?

5.  Do you think the compensation that you receive for your work as an FCC provider at [LOCATION] is fair, and why do you feel that way? By compensation, we mean the subsidies and incentives that you receive for your work as a FCC provider, including but not limited to direct financial support, training, and a lending library.

      a.   Prompt: Do you think the subsidies and incentives that you receive from the military child care program are fair, and why do you feel that way?.

      b.   Probe: If no, what would make the [pay, subsidies, or incentives] fairer? By how much would it need to increase?

6.  How sufficient is the training and development available to you and other FCC providers at [LOCATION]?

      a.   [Optional probe if time]: What additional types of trainings would be most helpful to you?

7.  How do the working conditions at [LOCATION] affect your satisfaction as an FCC provider at [LOCATION]?

      a.   Prompt: By working conditions, we mean factors such as your work hours or schedule, ability to take breaks, inspections and the work required to meet [SERVICE] standards, the physical space you have to care for children, or the quality of your on-post housing, if applicable?

8.  What types of support or guidance, if any, do you receive from leaders in the [SERVICE] child development program, such as your FCC Office or CDP Coordinator / Flight Chief to successfully operate your FCC home?

      a.   Probe: How satisfied are you with the supports you receive from the [SERVICE] child development program?

9.  To what extent do you have opportunities to collaborate with other FCC providers or child care professionals?

10.  Overall, how satisfied are you with being an FCC provider at [LOCATION], and why do you feel that way?

11.  Since you are an FCC provider supporting the military child care program, have you seen any changes that make it more attractive to operate an FCC home? If yes, please tell me about them.

12.  What, if anything, should the [SERVICE] do differently to better support you as an FCC provider at [LOCATION]?

13.  What changes would you like to see in the FCC Program or the military child development program more generally that would make it more attractive to be an FCC provider?

14.  What would you tell someone who is interested in operating an FCC business to support the installation military child care program?

15.  How likely are you to be working as an FCC provider a year from now, and why do you think that?

      a.   Probe: What is affecting your decision to leave or stay, if we didn't cover it already?

16.  Thanks for your time today. Is there anything else you'd like to share before we wrap up?

## Community-based organization (e.g., Child Care Aware) (30-45 minutes)

1.  Confirm job title. How long have you been in this role at [ORGANIZATION]?

2.  Please briefly describe your organization's role in supporting the military's efforts to provide child care to its families.

3. In your professional opinion, to what extent do you think the military child care fee assistance program is an effective way to expand the supply of child care providers for military families?
    a. Probe: Does the military child care fee assistance program expand supply overall in the community, or do providers substitute military families/children for nonmilitary families/children?

3. How satisfied do you think community-based child care providers (e.g., licensed centers, home providers) are with the military's fee assistance program, and why?
4. In your opinion, how well do the processes for enrolling community-based child care providers for the military fee assistance program work?
5. What typically leads community-based child care providers to participate in the MCCYN/MCCYN plus programs?
6.  How do community-based child care providers find out about the opportunity to participate in the MCCYN/MCCYN+ ? [Probe for whether participants were actively recruited, used a job search tool, leveraged personal connections, etc.]

7. What do you think about the payments that community-based child care providers receive for participating in the military fee assistance program? Are the payments that providers receive fair?
    a. Probe: If no, what would make the rates fairer? By how much would they need to increase?
8. We've also heard that low compensation, long hours, training requirements, professional development opportunities, working conditions, and working with children who have behavioral challenges affect some child care professionals' satisfaction with their work.  In your expert opinion, to what extent are there similar issues for the workforce in community-based licensed centers and FCC providers you work with?
    a. Probe: What factors do you think are responsible for these workforce-related issues in the context of community-based providers?

9. How well does the military fee assistance program retain community-based child care providers?

10. What do you think affects community-based child care providers' decisions to leave or stay in the fee assistance program, if we didn't cover it already?

11. Since you started working with the military's fee assistance program, have you seen any changes that make it a more attractive program for community-based child care providers? If yes, please tell me about them.
    a. [Probe if time]: To what extent has the introduction of the Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood-Plus program affected the supply of child care providers participating in the fee assistance program?

12. What changes would you like to see that would make the military fee assistance program more attractive to community-based child care providers?

13. What would you tell someone who is considering enrolling as a child care provider in the military fee assistance program?

14. Thanks for your time today. Is there anything else you'd like to share before we wrap up?