



## Worksheet on Meeting the Child Care Needs of Participants in Education and Training

There are a number of different strategies for meeting the child care needs of families engaged in education and training (Adams, Derrick-Mills, and Heller, 2016).<sup>1</sup> This worksheet will help you consider important questions in identifying the most appropriate strategies for addressing the individual child care needs of participants served through your Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) project, as well as addressing SWFI goals to develop or improve systems navigation services that will result in sustainable system changes in your community or region during and after the SWFI grant. You may have already considered many of these issues, but we hope this worksheet helps you to fully assess child care needs and the resources available in your community to help meet these needs so individuals can successfully enroll and fully participate in education and job training. Please note, any policy questions related to the use of SWFI grant funds to support participants in the SWFI program should be referred to your Federal Project Officer (FPO).

- Section **A** asks questions to help you consider the pre-SWFI program child care arrangements of individuals and how these may change when they become participants by entering the program and enrolling in training. This can help you assess whether child care is a barrier to program participation and the level of support that individuals may need to participate.
- Section **B** asks you to detail the child care needs of your current SWFI participants.
- Section **C** asks you to consider the needs of individuals once they complete training and education, because child care will be necessary to ensure graduates can maintain employment. Although SWFI funds may only be used for participants in education and training activities provided through the grant, you may want to consider other sources of funding to support individuals after they have been placed into employment.
- Finally, Section **D** asks about potential resources to help you address the needs identified in the previous sections.

We suggest working with SWFI participants, partner organizations, and stakeholders within your own organizations (like frontline staff and staff who specialize in child care) to expand your understanding of child care needs among SWFI participants, for individuals before or after participation in the SWFI program, and other individuals in your community with child care needs. While completing this worksheet, it is important to prioritize what participants in your SWFI program want for their child's care situation.

Assessing how participants arrange care to support their participation in the SWFI grant, as well as the child care needs of individuals before and after their participation in the SWFI program will help you identify any child care barriers to participation in training and employment. After identifying

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<sup>1</sup> This worksheet was based on work conducted as part of Urban Institute's Bridging the Gap Initiative supported by the Ford Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.



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child care needs in Sections A, B, and C of this worksheet, Section D will help you identify child care resources to meet those needs. Please answer each question in as much detail as is useful for you to fully identify needs and existing resources. If questions or concerns arise in completing this worksheet, please contact your TA Coach. Please note, any policy questions related to the use of SWFI grant funds to support participants in the SWFI program should be referred to your FPO.

After you have fully assessed needs and resources, you can work with your TA Coach on how best to leverage existing resources to meet needs, and, if necessary, how to address resource gaps, in order to develop and sustain an integrated child care/workforce development system. The answers to these needs and resources questions can guide your program design on multiple levels.

First, they can guide decisions about how to structure the child care assistance you provide to participants while they are enrolled in the SWFI program. For example, if child care needs are highly stable and similar for participants, this could suggest making a long-term investment in or linking to a program solely for SWFI participants. Alternatively, setting up a contractual agreement for a certain number of slots may be preferable. Or, it may be that needs are more uncertain, in which case it may be better to use grant resources to access a smaller number of slots or to provide vouchers.

Second, the answers to these questions can guide decisions about how to structure the training offered, including using creative program design approaches for training or education that could ease child care barriers (i.e. cohort models, block scheduling, predictability of classes and work).

Third, if this worksheet exercise suggests that existing resources are inadequate to meet the needs of your participants during program participation, or for individuals before or after participation in the SWFI program, you may consider developing strategies to increase the supply of child care and build a sustainable integrated child care/workforce development system. Your coach will work with you to consider different design options to support your SWFI program.



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## A. Assessing Child Care Needs When Individuals Enroll in SWFI

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**1. Question:** How do your case managers, intake specialists, or child care navigators assess an individual's child care needs when determining eligibility in the SWFI program? *Consider: What kinds of questions do they ask individuals and for what purpose?*

**Answer:**

**2. Question:** What is the typical employment status of an individual being considered for the SWFI program? *Consider: Are most individuals already working and will they continue to work in addition to training through the SWFI program? Is this training their main activity before they move into the job market?*

**Answer:**

**3. Question:** What are the typical pre-program child care arrangements of individuals being considered for the SWFI program?

**Answer:**

**4. Question:** How is participation in SWFI likely to change or affect individuals' child care needs? *Consider: How do intake or orientation activities affect existing child care arrangements? How do the training options available through your program affect existing child care arrangements?*

**Answer:**

**5. Question:** Approximately how many of the individuals being considered for SWFI need help accessing child care in order to participate in your training and education program? *Consider the percentage of individuals and raw number who will have child care demands that could limit participation if not addressed.*

**Answer:**

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## B. Participants' Child Care Needs During their Participation in Training and Education

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**1. Question:** When do participants need child care overall? *Consider: What are the days of the week and hours of child care that participants are likely to need for the full set of activities they are engaged in (including their education and training activity as well as any employment)?*

**Answer:**

**2. Question:** In what location(s) do participants need child care? *Consider: Where do most participants live? Where are their training opportunities located? Do participants prefer child care*



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that is closer to home, or closer to training or work?

**Answer:**

**3. Question:** What ages are the children who typically need care? Consider: Do SWFI participants need care for infants/toddlers, elementary school aged children, and/or middle school aged children? Do participants typically have multiple children of different ages who need care?

**Answer:**

**4. Question:** What kind of care do participants want for their children for the hours they need care? Consider: Do participants prefer family, friend and neighbor care, family child care homes, or center-based care?

**Answer:**

**5. Question:** For how long will participants need child care for this new schedule and situation? Consider: Will participants' new child care needs be sufficiently long-term that it will make sense for them to enroll their child(ren) in a new program, or is it so short-term (i.e. one evening a week for 6 weeks) that a drop-in child care program, or helping participants get funds to pay a babysitter, may be a good strategy instead?

**Answer:**

## C. Sustainability Planning: After the Program – Child Care System Development

**1. Question:** How will the child care needs of individuals who completed the training program and are no longer SWFI participants change after training is completed? Consider: What child care will graduates need to enter and maintain employment?

**Answer:**

**2. Question:** Are your existing child care supports sustainable for individuals after they complete your SWFI program and are no longer SWFI participants? Consider which supports are sustainable given that SWFI funds can only be used to pay for child care while the participant is engaged in education and training activities provided through the grant.

**Answer:**



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## D. Community and Program Resources

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**1. Question:** What community resources are available to help meet child care needs? *Consider: Who are the experts in the community that might help you identify the programs and resources that are available? These could include child care resource and referral agencies, local early childhood education provider associations, child care assistance agencies, licensing agencies, and so forth.*

**Answer:**

**2. Question:** What publicly funded programs and resources in your community provide direct child care services that meet the needs of your participants, or the needs of individuals after they have completed the SWFI program? *Consider: Are your participants eligible for Head Start, Early Head Start, public state prekindergarten, or other local publicly funded child care/early education providers? Are there local programs with slots available?*

**Answer:**

**3. Question:** How can child care subsidies (such as CCDF and TANF) help you meet participants' child care needs, or the needs of individuals after they complete the SWFI program? *Consider: Would subsidies pay for the kinds of care and hours that your families need? How easy or difficult is it for families to apply?*

**Answer:**

**4. Question:** Are SWFI participants eligible for and likely to receive child care subsidies? What about once individuals complete the SWFI program? *Consider: What are your state/local eligibility requirements for CCDF or TANF? Are SWFI participants eligible for subsidy through CCDF or TANF based on their income and their training activity? Are they likely to receive subsidies or are there waitlists?*

**Answer:**

**5. Question:** What private and not-for-profit entities in your community provide direct child care that meets the needs of your participants, or the needs of individuals after they complete the SWFI program? *Consider: Are there local programs with slots available? What is the average market rate for child care in your area?*

**Answer:**

**6. Question:** What local public, private and not-for-profit organizations provide after-hours care?

**Answer:**

**7. Question:** What local babysitter, caregiver cooperatives, or lists are available? *Consider: If you*

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This contract has been funded, either wholly or in part, by the Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration under contract Number GS-10F-0050L/1630DC-17-F-00002. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of the same by the U.S. Government.



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*fund such care, what are the implications for liability in your state?*

**Answer:**

**8. Question:** If children are school-aged, what afterschool care options are available?

**Answer:**

**9. Question:** To what extent do the hours for which SWFI participants need child care match the hours of care that the child care programs in the community provide? *Consider: Is it possible for a participant to find a single provider that can meet these needs, or will participants need to have different arrangements (for example) during the work day than in the evening/weekend?*

**Answer:**

**10. Question:** If you need to fund unlicensed care due to participant preferences or availability, what are the state and local requirements regarding placing children in unlicensed care? *Consider the implications for liability in your state. You may want to contact your local child care subsidy agency to determine how they addressed this.*

**Answer:**