

Informal Child Care Providers and Criminal Background Checks: Administrative Data and the Legislative Process, A Case Study

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Introduction

Maryland has both

- a strong child care advocacy presence in the State legislature and
- a long standing commitment to research that has built a body of knowledge and a capability for ad hoc data retrieval

that have evolved in separate domains.

Criminal Background Checks for Informal Providers

Maryland courts have traditionally found that such checks are not needed for informal (FFN) care.

Legislation failed in 2012.

Importance of “the grandmother” and affordability issues among legislators . . .

Informal Providers by Type

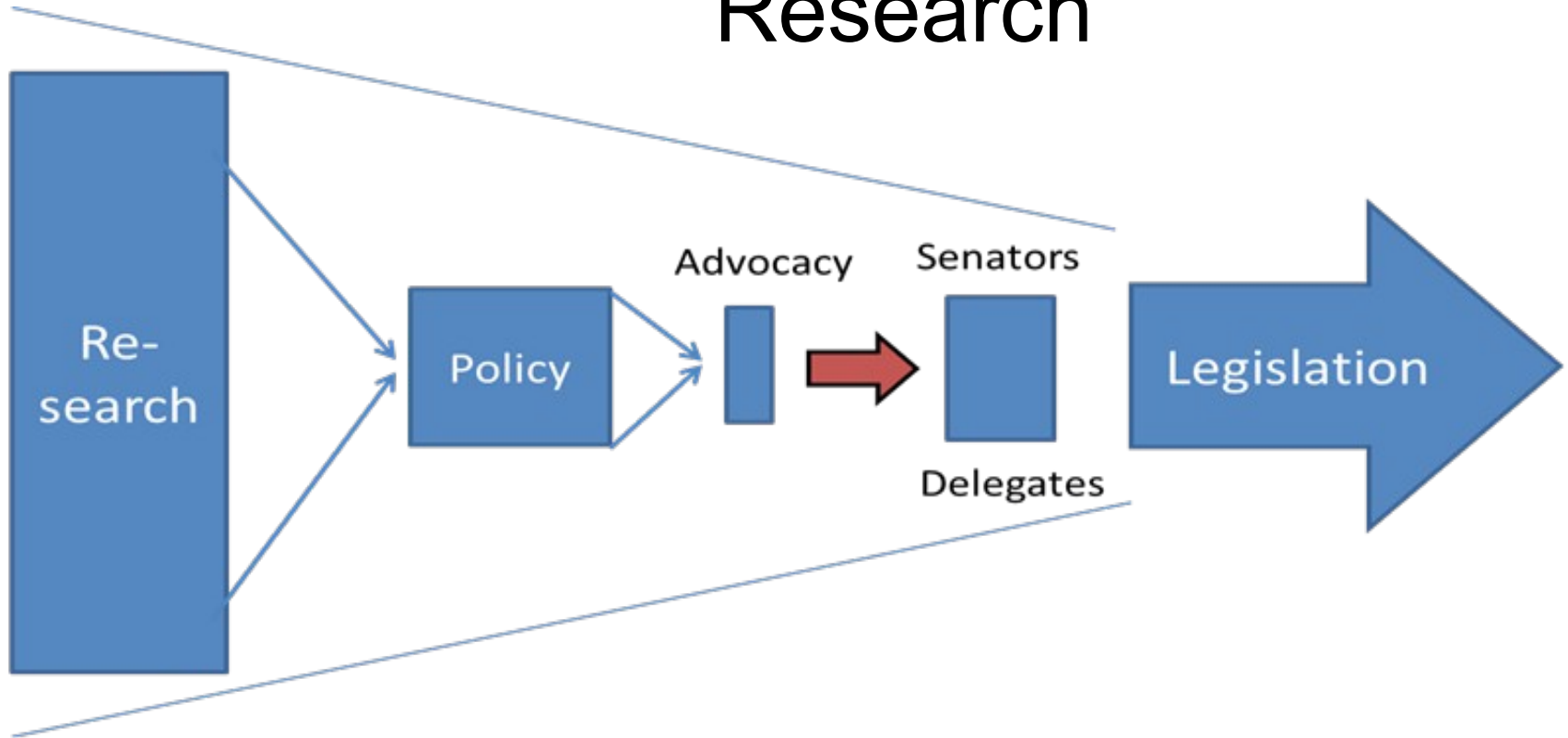
Status	Frequency
Relatives- total	84%
Grandparent	46%
Aunt	18%
Cousin	8%
Non-Relatives- total	16%

Informal Providers by Relative Status and Age

Status	Average Age	Max/Min Age
Grandparent	56	33/82
Aunt	38	18/76
Cousin	31	18/58

Deeper Patterns: Informals' Care Hours by Geographic Areas

Advocacy Needs Concentrated Research



The “Walk Sheet”



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When the State pays for child care with taxpayers’ money, the State has a right to know that the children will not be in a home with adults who committed violent crimes, drug crimes or crimes against children.

Who are the informal subsidy providers the State of Maryland pays to care for children? Their number usually fluctuates between 4,000 and 5,000, although during the recent Child Care Subsidy Program enrollment freeze, the number fell to 1,000.

- Roughly half (51%) are the children’s grandmothers.
- Other relative providers (34%) are the children’s aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings.
- The remaining 15% are non-relatives.

for protection
→
for equity
→

Why should relative providers receiving subsidies undergo criminal background checks? *
Sadly, the vast majority of children who suffer maltreatment do so at the hands of related adults. Most often, those related adults are the child’s parents, but in many cases they are not. Criminal background checks can help alert us to significant risks. Children in publicly funded informal care deserve the same safeguards as children in publicly funded licensed care.

** per US Dept. of H. H. S.*

How many of the residents of the relative providers’ homes are not related to the children?



Walk Sheet (cont'd)

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How many of the residents of the relative providers' homes are not related to the children?

The State does not collect any data with which to answer this question. Other residents could be related to the provider and the child, but they could also be friends, significant others, or boarders. We don't know.

What is the cost of a criminal background check?

The background check entails a one-time cost of \$54.50. The cost will apply to the informal provider. In cases where care takes place in the informal provider's home (approx. 60% of the total), an additional \$54.50 will apply to any other adult residing there.

What is an average monthly subsidy payment to an informal provider in Maryland?

- Lowest: Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Somerset, Wicomico \$290.32
- Mid-range: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Prince George's \$397.25
- Highest: Howard, Montgomery \$530.84

Calculations are based on the average number of children in an informal provider's care (2.5) multiplied by the reimbursement rate in those counties for the average period of care per month.

Please

SUPPORT SB 413/HB 443 Criminal History Record Checks – Informal Child Care Providers

Information on informal child care providers in the Child Care Subsidy Program and reimbursement rates provided by the MSDE Office of Child Care and RESI of Towson University. Child maltreatment information comes from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' "Child Maltreatment 2011."



Post-Script

Communication challenges call for

- Some face to face with management, research and advocacy in advance of the legislative session.
- Some more direct communication between research and advocacy during the session.