

# Family Friends and Neighbor (FFN) Child Care Providers: An Untapped Minnesota Asset

## PROBLEM

Public support for Friend, Family and Neighbor (FFN) childcare has decreased as public policies have increasingly focused on child care quality ratings and access to preschool early learning opportunities. By overlooking FFN providers, our early childhood system continues to perpetuate systemic inequalities in education, health and future success for children in FFN care, many of whom are children of color and/or from immigrant communities.

## SOLUTION

### Community-driven Solutions Exist

Since 2013, La Red Latina de Educación Temprana (La Red/ The Network) has worked to eliminate the systemic barriers FFN childcare providers face by providing quality culturally and linguistically appropriate trainings, educational opportunities and leadership development to their members. Trainings are adjusted to support providers in navigating and following the ECE system and regulations without losing their culture and teachings.

Childcare providers who come to La Red say they have learned to be more confident in the work they are doing, it has provided them with language, strategies and structure to provide quality of care to the children in their care, and to better understand the resources and rules for their care.

### FFN providers need support and resources to thrive including:

1. Access to trainers and resources in providers' home language and cultural context
2. Recognition that trained and experienced FFNs offer quality childcare
3. Understanding that FFN care is community-based and as such informal FFN structures need to be supported with broad participation by community members
4. A formal pathway for early childhood education licensing
5. Recognize and support community led FFN initiatives such as Bloomington/Richfield La Red Latina de Educación Temprana (La Red/ The Latino Childcare Provider Network) and support replication of this model

La Red members' **most** important policy change is a pathway to an early childhood license. Members believe a license would help convince prospective parents of the quality of their care as well as offer them protection.

A La Red Member explains, "...when a parent has an interview with me, and I explain about my trainings and the child care that I offer, they think it's very good and they are interested, but they always ask for a license and that has been a barrier for me".

## BACKGROUND

### Who Uses FFN Care Providers?

In Minnesota, nearly 40% of children age 2 and younger, 25% of children age 3 to 5, and 20 percent of children age 6 to 12 are estimated to be in FFN care as their only or primary child care arrangement. This amounts to about 240,000 children.

### FFN care is preferred by:

- Parents across all income, racial and cultural groups with infants, young children, and children with special needs
- Communities of color including immigrant, refugee and Native American families
- Low-income households
- Families working non-traditional days or hours

## In 2018:

# 190

Members attended La Red trainings. Members include parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, neighbors and center-based providers

# 12

Culturally and linguistically relevant trainings

# 40

Members of La Red attend training on average

# 300+

Minnesota children are cared for by La Red providers



**LA RED LATINA**  
DE EDUCACIÓN TEMPRANA  
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*"La Red is a great model because it was created by the community."*  
– Ruth, Founder and Leader, La Red

*"All of us together, we bring ideas, organize, and provide a healthier life for our children."*  
– Faviola, Co-Founder and Leader of La Red

*"Providing support to this community to create their own solutions to the problem of accessible quality childcare has resulted in a strong, effective network of highly qualified FFN childcare providers."*  
– Bloomington Public Health staff and Co-Founder

La Red is supported by the following partners

