



Supporting Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care: Policy Considerations for Los Angeles County

What is Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care?

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care refers to care provided by individuals—primarily women of color—who typically have a prior relationship with the children in their care. FFN caregivers include grandmothers, aunties, family members, friends, and neighbors who care for young children. While many FFN caregivers may not view themselves as child care providers, **FFN care is in fact the most common type of nonparental child care in the United States.**ⁱⁱ



In Los Angeles County, it is estimated that **76% of children with working parents are cared for by FFN caregivers.**ⁱ

FFN care is often the preferred choice for families, as they offer trusted child care that is affordable, flexible, and culturally and linguistically affirming. Most families who rely on FFN care areⁱⁱⁱ:

- Black, Latine, and/or immigrant families
- Parents who work non-traditional hours
- Families with infants and toddlers
- Families with children with disabilities

The Challenge

Despite playing an essential role in the well-being of children, families, and communities across the state, FFN caregivers are widely undercompensated and under-resourced.

FFN caregivers often:

- Are paid below the minimum wage, or not paid at all, for the care they provide
- Pay out-of-pocket for caregiving necessities, such as food and learning materials^{iv}
- Face administrative, cultural, and practical obstacles to accessing resources within a system designed for licensed child care

79% of FFN caregivers in L.A. County have an annual income of \$35,000 or less

82% of FFN caregivers in L.A. County report that the greatest cost associated with their work is purchasing food for the children in their care

Source: Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, 2023



The Thriving Providers Project

The Thriving Providers Project (TPP), an initiative of [Home Grown](#), works with regional partners to provide direct cash transfers¹ to home-based child care providers to demonstrate how systems and policies that stabilize the economic well-being of these caregivers improves the availability of care for families and has positive impacts on child outcomes.

In Los Angeles County, the program provides 50 FFN caregivers with \$954 a month for 18 months. Participants are also offered optional child health and safety trainings provided by local implementation partner, Visión y Compromiso.



About the Caregivers Participating in TPP in Los Angeles County

- 84% primarily speak Spanish at home
- 96% are women
- 84% report less than \$3,000/month in income prior to the direct cash transfers

“Now that I receive the [cash] transfer, I don't have to decide between working or taking care of [the] children. Before, it was stressful because I didn't have financial solvency, and that made me feel bad.”

– TPP L.A. County FFN Caregiver

What We Are Learning from Preliminary TPP Data in Los Angeles County²

- L.A. Thriving Providers Project caregivers report they experience more material hardship than a national sample, but direct cash transfers have reduced reports of major financial problems
- The biggest drivers of material hardship appear to be housing, food and utilities, and being un- or undercompensated for their caregiving work
- Most caregivers agree or strongly agree that payments help them to continue working as a child care provider
- Over 70% of TPP caregivers are participating in optional training opportunities with Visión y Compromiso

¹ Direct cash transfers are payments given directly to individuals or households, usually by governments or organizations, with no requirement on how the money must be spent. They're used to provide immediate financial support, reduce poverty, or help people cope with economic shocks.

² Findings are preliminary and only representative of participants that opted into evaluation surveys. A mid-point report with more information will be available in early summer. Please [subscribe here](#) to receive updates.

"The [TPP] program has helped me a lot because it has given me more time and financial peace of mind, allowing me to spend more quality time with [the] children."

– TPP L.A. County FFN Caregiver



Recommendations

Strategic investment in and alignment with the strengths of FFN care can improve well-being for caregivers, children, and families. The following recommendations support FFN caregivers in their essential role:

- 1. Engage decision-makers on the critical role of FFN care and advocate for equitable system supports for FFN caregivers.**
 - Recognize FFN caregivers as a core part of the early care and education (ECE) system, and elevate FFN care in ECE policy and budget decisions
 - Increase the visibility of FFN caregiving across workforce, economic security, and family well-being discussions
- 2. Increase FFN caregivers' access to healthy food for themselves and the children in their care.**
 - Support FFN-friendly reforms to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at the federal level
 - Support CACFP sponsor agencies in L.A. County and California to serve FFN caregivers
 - Increase connections between FFN caregivers and local and state food access programs
- 3. Expand access to culturally and linguistically affirming quality improvement opportunities and supports for FFN caregivers through trusted community-based organizations.**
 - Seek partnerships with organizations run by and for Black, Indigenous, Latine, and immigrant communities
 - Prioritize supports that blend training, community-building, and resource navigation



Visión y Compromiso

First 5 LA mission:

We advocate for children and their families, amplify community voice and partner for collective impact so that every child in Los Angeles County reaches their full developmental potential throughout the critical years of prenatal to age 5.

To learn more:

First 5 LA: [First5LA.org](https://first5la.org)

Thriving Providers Project: ThrivingProviders.org

Visión y Compromiso: VisionYCompromiso.org

- i Los Angeles County. (2023). Early Care and Education Access Brief: 2023 Los Angeles County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment. https://childcare.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/ECE-Booklet_5_21_25.pdf
- ii Administration for Children and Families. (2025). Quality in Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care: Summary of Findings from the Home-Based Child Care Practices and Experiences Study. Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation.
- iii Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles. Home Based Child Care Landscape: Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care in Los Angeles County. July 2023. <https://ccala.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/33016-HBCC-Landscape-Project-Brief-FINAL.pdf>
- iv Powell, A., Adejumo, T., Austin, L.J.E., & Copeman Petig, A. (2023). Parent Preferences in Family, Friend, Neighbor, and Nanny Care. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Parent Preferences in Family, Friend, Neighbor, and Nanny Care