

# CHILD CARE AND YOUTH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

The seeds for the Childcare and Youth Training & Technical Assistance Project (CYTTAP) were planted in 2010 in response to a lack of high-quality childcare for military families living off-installation. At that time, 98% of all on-installation childcare centers were nationally accredited, compared to only 10% of all childcare centers nationally.<sup>1 2</sup> The University of Nebraska Lincoln and Penn State University's Better Kid Care program, partnered together to develop and implement CYTTAP which was funded under an agreement between USDA-NIFA and the Department of Defense Office of Family Policy. The focus of CYTTAP is to increase the quantity and quality of early care and education for young children by providing research based professional development and technical assistance to professionals who care for young children in communities with a high concentration of off-installation military families. CYTTAP was introduced in late 2010 in the 13 states with the highest densities of off-installation military families, and has since expanded to 21 states.

## PROGRAMMING:

CYTTAP provides direct care providers and early childhood trainers in pilot states with a suite of high-quality and research based professional development training and resources for both facility-based and home-based settings. Examples of the face to face programming include Rock Solid Foundations, developed by the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and modified by UNL, which aims to address the social and emotional needs of young children. *I am Moving, I am Learning*, is offered as a train the trainer option in participating states, and focuses on childhood obesity prevention and education. These two programs are now offered face-to-face in 21 states and are currently being developed into online modules to be disseminated through the Better Kid Care (BKC) system. Visit <http://child.unl.edu/cyttap> to explore further the programming and resources available through CYTTAP. In addition to the face to face programming options for direct care providers, BKC program offers more than 200 online modules covering a range of child development and educational topics such as social emotional child development, caregiver resiliency, infant/toddler care and engagement and health and nutrition. For a complete listing of BKC online programming and resources visit: <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/cyttap/front-page>.

## PROCESS:

Perhaps even more important than the specific programming has been the development of a model for creating and sustaining effective change. CYTTAP project members work to identify and bring together key stakeholders - including appropriate military and Extension personnel, legislators, and childcare leaders - to identify opportunities for targeted professional training, to connect states who are in the early stages of capacity-building with those further along that can serve as mentors, and to create a forum for sharing successes and strategies. CYTTAP efforts have led to significant positive changes within states, such as new policies/legislation, changes in organizational practices, and the creation and growth of coalitions and networks (See Table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense, 2010, "Plans for the Department of Defense for the Support of Military Family Readiness", [www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/FY2009-Report-MilitaryFamilyReadinessPrograms.pdf](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/FY2009-Report-MilitaryFamilyReadinessPrograms.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, 2011, "Child Care in America – 2011 State Fact Sheets", [www.naccrra.org/sites/default/files/default\\_site\\_pages/2011/childcareinamericafacts\\_full\\_report-2011.pdf](http://www.naccrra.org/sites/default/files/default_site_pages/2011/childcareinamericafacts_full_report-2011.pdf)

## IMPACT:

CYTTAP was introduced in late 2010 in the 13 states with the highest densities of off-installation military families, and has since spread to 21 states. Post-program surveys show substantial increases in the percent of childcare providers increasing knowledge about physical activity for the children in their care (from 37% to 85%), and designing environments to promote children's social and emotional development (from 38% to 87%). Since CYTTAP began in 2010, more than 1,000 face-to-face and online training sessions and 42 train the trainer events have been held and over 31,000 training hours completed by participants in the 21 states. More than 26,000 individuals have attended these events including childcare providers that work in facility- or home-based settings, professionals that work for local educational and governmental agencies, and individuals considering starting their own family child care business. Coupled with online training, the impact has reached over 120,000 children.

And although CYTTAP was originally developed for our nation's military children and families, the training and systemic improvements are available to all childcare providers, lifting the standards in state after state. Examples of such systemic improvements include success in getting state and local approval to **accept online education as a quality training method**. (e.g. Approval of *Better Kid Care On Demand in 35 states*; for some states this was a major success) and Maximized train-the-trainer events by inviting Extension agents outside of the target areas and other agencies to **increase capacity for childcare provider training** statewide. Additional examples can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1. Spectrum of Prevention level definitions and CYTTAP and MCCLI successes identified at each level**

Spectrum of Prevention Level	Definition	CYTTAP and MCCLI Successes
Influencing Policy/ Legislation	Developing strategies to change laws and policies to influence outcomes. (Adaptation: Includes policy implementation activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Succeeded in getting state and local approval to accept online education as a quality training method. (e.g. Approval of <i>Better Kid Care OnDemand</i>; for some states this was a major success)</b></li> <li>• <b>Collaborated among agencies/groups with representation across the state looking at childcare policy issues. Some states worked towards adoption of regulations to improve childcare quality</b></li> <li>• State approval of trainings through state Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) <b>promoted sustainability of change</b></li> </ul>
Changing Organizational Practices	Adopting regulations and shaping norms within and across organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CYTTAP resources increased capacity and energy around childcare in Extension, and added additional programs serving military families to Extension.</b></li> <li>• <b>Extension in some states completed new procedures to deliver CYTTAP trainings, such as certifying trainers or going through approval of programs. Attendance numbers increase if participants know they can receive credits towards continuing education or licensing.</b></li> <li>• <b>Extension and CCR&amp;R changed the way they provide education by collaborating on local and state levels. Trainings were implemented in a “more aggressive way.”</b></li> </ul>
Fostering Coalitions/ Networks	Convening groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MCCL played a critical role in building coalitions/networks. MCCL must be a strong facilitator, connected, and informed about childcare in the state.</b></li> <li>• <b>CYTTAP came in as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to promote collaboration between Extension and CCR&amp;R where they previously competed or had little interest in working together. CYTTAP established a neutral presence and message in order to effectively convene groups.</b></li> <li>• <b>State training priorities were identified through discussions with multiple agencies.</b></li> <li>• <b>Professionals identified usefulness of networking with others across their state to reduce barriers to making change.</b></li> </ul>
Educating and offering resources to Trainers	Informing providers (e.g. trainers) who will transmit skills and knowledge to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maximized train-the-trainer events by inviting Extension agents outside of the target areas and other agencies to increase capacity for childcare provider training statewide.</b></li> <li>• <b>Incentives like training reimbursement, giveaways, and easy-to-use curricula can re-invigorate and increase the work of Extension trainers with childcare providers.</b></li> </ul>
Promoting Community Education	Reaching groups of people with information and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Establish regular communication via mailing lists or webinars to manage the increased energy and personnel involved with childcare provider training (specifically applies to states where CYTTAP re- invigorated childcare in state Extension).</b></li> </ul>
Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills	<b>Enhancing an individual’s capacity.</b> <b>Target:</b> Child Care Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Offered new trainings programs and online options for providers to learn and improve the quality of their care.</b></li> <li>• <b>Targeted military communities for the trainings for frontline workers.</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased the awareness of Extension in communities by informing childcare providers about Extension’s other offerings.</b></li> </ul>

*Note.* For the purposes of this evaluation, the green level refers to trainers and the purple level refers to direct child care providers. The green- level is originally called “Educating Providers,” but has been adapted to maintain consistent terminology with this project.