

# Stronger Together: Strengthening Home-based Child Care in Illinois with Cooperative Networks

Using the cooperative model to secure a more sustainable, equitable future for home-based child care.



**Family Child Care Providers (FCCPs)** are licensed small business owners who care for children in their own homes, either alone or with an assistant. FCCPs in Illinois are 99.3% women, 90% working-parents, and twice as likely to identify as African American.

## **FCCPs have played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic:**

- ➔ Nationally, FCCPs have been more likely to stay open or reopen than child care centers.
- ➔ Families feel safer with the smaller group size and home-like environment that FCCPs provide.
- ➔ FCCPs are more likely to provide flexible scheduling with the evening and weekend care that many essential workers need.
- ➔ Unlike babysitters, FCCPs are professionally trained, licensed, and meet state and federal health and safety requirements.

## **But these vulnerable, micro-businesses cannot navigate concurrent social, economic, and health crises on their own.**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, over 50 percent of U.S. child care capacity may be lost without intervention. FCCPs have struggled to access existing relief programs. These critical businesses will be particularly vulnerable to closure without comprehensive support. Providers need a host of services including:

- ➔ Administrative support in managing their business, including participating in emergency grant, loan, and other public programs,
- ➔ Reliable distribution of supplies like PPE, disinfectant, and thermometers,
- ➔ Information that is clear, linguistically responsive, and specific to their sector,
- ➔ Respectful and culturally competent quality and compliance supports.

## **Networks can help.**

Federal, state, or local governments are not equipped to directly provide these necessary services. Through a combination of public contracts, philanthropy, and member fees, groups of FCCPs have formed networks to centralize purchasing, information sharing, and support from skilled administrators and quality specialists. Staffed networks around the country have made promising strides increasing provider retention, business stability, and quality of care. Research shows that cultural competency, shared goals, and provider leadership and representation are necessary components of high functioning networks.

## Infrastructure to build a new kind of child care system

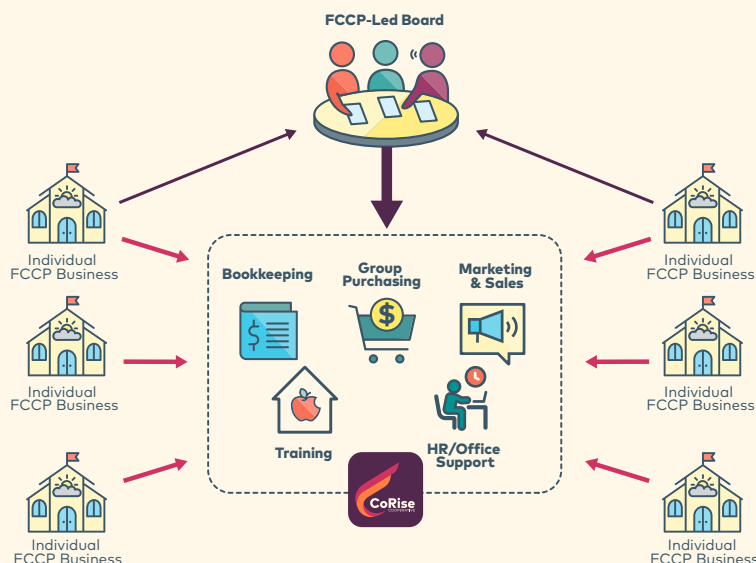
Fostering cooperatives in child care can accelerate the formation of equitable, effective networks. Used for generations, cooperatives provide a blueprint for similar businesses to collaborate with trust, transparency, and shared purpose.

**A cooperative network of family child care providers would include many benefits:**

**Led by a board of FCCPs, the network would offer services that are informed by and responsive to the changing needs of FCCPs.**

**Network finances would be fully transparent to provider-members and contracting partners.**

**Guided by FCCP leadership, administrative costs will be kept low, funneling resources toward frontline workers.**



### Interested in starting or supporting a cooperative network?

The ICA Group and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) are working with FCCPs across the state to form CoRise Illinois—a flexible, transparent, and empowering provider network that will administer a range of local and virtual services. We are seeking partners, funders, and advocates to help us expand CoRise Illinois and replicate the model in other states and communities.



The ICA Group is a leading expert on worker ownership and the oldest national organization dedicated to the development of worker cooperatives. [icagroup.org](https://icagroup.org)



SEIU-HCII has advocated for family child providers since 1996 and represents more than 35,000 FCCPs and child care center workers across the Midwest. [seiuhcilin.org](https://seiuhcilin.org)

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**CoRise.coop**

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