



TESTIMONY OF DR. LYNETTE M. FRAGA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CHILD CARE AWARE® OF AMERICA
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT
REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 6, 2016

Chairman Meadows, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Good morning and thank you. I am Dr. Lynette Fraga and I serve as the Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America. I am here today to provide information and answer your questions about the transition of the Army Fee Assistance Program from the General Services Administration (GSA) back to Child Care Aware® of America. This charge and responsibility is not only squarely within the nonprofit mission of Child Care Aware® of America, it is also very personal. My father is a retired sergeant major who proudly served in the Army for nearly 30 years, I was the spouse of a former Army active duty soldier and Reservist, and I worked, among other professional roles, with Army Child and Youth Services, as a director of a child development center. These personal and professional experiences have afforded me a unique firsthand insight into the very real needs and challenges of Army families and I am committed to effectively delivering the services to them that they so fully deserve.

Child Care Aware® of America, formerly known as the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), is the nation's leading voice for child care with a mission to advance a child care system that effectively serves all children and families. We aim to accomplish this vision in multiple ways, with one key imperative: to provide excellent personalized customer service to assist families looking for quality child care.

Since 2004, Child Care Aware® of America has operated the Navy, Marine, and Air Force Fee Assistance Programs, as well as the Exceptional Family Member Fee Assistance (EFMP) program for the Navy and Air Force since 2008 and 2011 respectively, and we are proud to continue to serve in this capacity. Through this work, we currently serve nearly 4,000 Navy, Air Force and Marine families; process payments in five days or less, process completed application packages in ten days or less, and distribute approximately \$3,000,000 in monthly subsidy payments. As you can appreciate, through this experience we have been able to refine our processes, achieve economies of scale, and increase our efficiency. Most importantly, we build meaningful relationships with both families and child care providers.



Between 2004 and 2014, Child Care Aware® of America operated the Army Fee Assistance Program – providing child care subsidies to Army families who could not take advantage of child care centers on-post, ensuring quality providers were available, and assisting families in identifying providers that best meet their needs.

In September 2014, the Army Fee Assistance Program was transitioned from Child Care Aware® of America to the GSA.

After the Oversight hearing held on September 10, 2015, Child Care Aware® of America began discussions in earnest with the Army regarding transition of the program back to Child Care Aware® of America. These discussions included a discovery period, so all involved parties could effectively plan for an informed, deliberate, and orderly transition of all programmatic activities. In examining the details of the transition plan, you will find an aggressive strategy to execute all aspects of the program using a phased approach. This approach will allow us to ensure we uphold our commitment to high quality services for military families, communicate with both families and providers effectively, and ensure this transition is as smooth and seamless as possible.

Since initial discussions with Army, Child Care Aware® of America has been developing the required infrastructure to ensure programmatic success to include (1) a family-centered approach; (2) exceptionally trained and experienced staff; and, (3) robust workflow and data management systems and protocols.

Family-Centered Approach

High quality customer service is the cornerstone of Child Care Aware® of America and critical for the families and providers that participate in the programs that we administer. This includes the use of our very successful family-centered case management approach in working with families and providers. Our training ensures Child Care Coordinators (Family Case Managers) and Provider Liaison Specialists (Provider Case Managers) are able to build working relationships to help service the families, are familiar with the special circumstances facing Army families, and are able to resolve customer service challenges and/or recommend the best solution within program guidelines.

Highly Trained and Experienced Staff

Child Care Aware® of America staff understand the complexity and importance of the Army Fee Assistance Program to families. We have assembled a high-performing team that includes staff who formerly worked on the Army Fee Assistance Program prior to its transition to GSA and leadership with many years of fee assistance and military expertise. These individuals are highly qualified and committed to excellence in program redesign and implementation. Additionally, Child Care Aware® of America has implemented an in-depth training and mentoring program



for new staff spanning customer service and Fee Assistance Program policy to state-by-state child care licensing and accreditation standards and supports. The expectation is that our staff are not only experts on the Army Fee Assistance Program, but also in the field of child care resources, armed with information to effectively meet Army family needs for child care. Each staff entrusted to work on the Army Fee Assistance Program undergoes a minimum of 80 hours of training to include handling personal identify information data, quality customer service, Army Fee Assistance Program guidelines, military culture, and unique stressors on military children, just to name a few examples.

The executive management staff overseeing the program is a former Marine Corps Colonel, and the program manager has been leading fee assistance and related efforts for several years with our organization. In fact, over 90% of the leadership team that will be working on the Army contract have experience with military fee assistance.

Workflow and Data Management Systems and Protocols

We have put into place systems and supports to ensure an effective transfer of parents and providers from GSA to Child Care Aware® of America. Of paramount importance - we are working diligently to ensure we have the proper levels of data protection. Ultimately we want to be confident that service member information and their family members' information is not at risk. Our members deserve to be able to trust that their private information *remains* private and secure.

Child Care Aware® of America is continuing to take many steps to ensure all documents containing Personal Identity Information (PII) data are kept strictly confidential and limited to the staff that work directly on the project. This includes keeping documents in a secure, web-based system with permissions only granted to high level managers, and only giving access to employees who have undergone a full comprehensive background check. Child Care Aware® of America's fee assistance platform is undergoing software updates and workflow testing to ensure that it will be ready to handle the volume of family and provider data that will be received, as well as confirm that all business rules are functioning correctly.

Communication

In order to facilitate consistent and effective communication throughout the transition, Child Care Aware® of America, the Army, and GSA have developed a multilayered communication plan and schedule. This communication plan includes over 28 communications to parents and providers during the transition period and in multiple formats to include a dedicated website and webinars with chat functions, email and phone outreach, and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, digital newsletters, press releases, and other forms of electronic communications.



Transition Plan Implementation and Timeline

Looking forward, we are pleased to say, under the terms of our contract with the Army, that Child Care Aware® of America will accept all new family and provider applications beginning February 22, 2016.

For current cases, transition will occur in several phases by state groupings. As Child Care Aware® of America assumes processing of applications by phase, GSA will relinquish administration of the program. We are confident that the full transition will be complete and Child Care Aware® of America will be fully operating the program by 28 October 2016.

We are excited to continue our tradition of excellence in operating the Army Fee Assistance Program. Throughout our tenure operating the program, Child Care Aware® of America received praise from parents as reflected in testimonials we have received over the years. I'd like to share the story of one of those families that speaks to the quality of our work:

"I wanted to take a minute to tell you about [your] child care coordinator, [he] is an outstanding employee and has exceptional customer service. He went over and beyond for our family to ensure our paperwork was approved before the registration dates for my son's school and is always very knowledgeable and understanding. You are lucky to have someone like him on your staff."

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today. We appreciate the sacrifices that military families make for our country and Child Care Aware® of America is proud to do our small part to support them in their mission critical work. I am immensely proud and appreciative of the military service members in my own family, and you have my personal commitment that we will do whatever it takes to ensure our military families have access to quality and affordable child care. Child Care Aware® of America has always been committed to serving Army families and stands prepared to meet their needs – now and in the future. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynette M. Fraga".

Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Child Care Aware® of America

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Witness Disclosure Requirement – “Truth in Testimony”
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name: Dr. Lynette Fraga

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2012. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

N/A

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

N/A

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2012, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Please see attached document.

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:

Lynette M. Fraga

Date:

1/4/16

Funding Source	Prime or Sub	PRIME CONTRACT NO.	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE	Contract Amount FY2013	Contract Amount FY2014	Contract Amount FY2015	Contract Amount FY2016
DHHS	Prime	90LH0002-01-00	HHS National Child Care Consumer Ed Referral Hotline & Website	Cooperative Agreement	9/30/2012-09/29/2017	\$ 995,513.00	\$ 995,513.00	\$ 996,000.00	\$ 996,000.00
DHHS	Sub to Zero to Three	90HT2001-01-00	Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships (EHS CCP)	Cooperative Agreement	9/30/2014-09/29/2019	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 562,406.00	\$ 548,007.00
DHHS	Sub to Zero to Three	90HC0012-01-00	National Center on Early Childhood Teaching and Learning	Cooperative Agreement	09/30/2015-09/30/2020	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 961,975.00
DHHS	Sub to Boston Children's Hospital	90HC0014-01-00	National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement	Cooperative Agreement	11/01/2015-01/31/2016	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 105,054.00
DHHS (1)	Sub to American Academy of Pediatrics		National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness	Cooperative Agreement	09/30/2015-09/30/2020	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 99,998.00
DOD-Navy (2)	Prime	HDQMWE-08-C-0028	Navy/Air Force Fee Assistance	Firm-Fixed Price	04/29/2009-04/30/2013	\$ 9,530,502.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
DOD-Navy	Prime	HDQMWR-C-13-0023	Navy/Air Force Fee Assistance	Firm-Fixed Price	09/01/2014-09/30/2018	\$ -	\$ 12,499,274.00	\$ 36,152,314.00	\$ 39,234,460.00
DOD-Navy	Prime	HDQMWR-13-C-0007	Navy/Office of the Secretary of Defense- Military Child Care Liaison	Firm-Fixed Price	01/29/2013- 01/30/2016	\$ -	\$ 1,590,318.73	\$ 660,120.43	\$ 202,843.36
DOD-USMC (3)	Prime	M67854-09-2-0535	Navy Exceptional Family Member Program Tru USMC	Cooperative Agreement	06/29/2009-09/30/2014	\$ 10,900,000.00	\$ 9,400,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
DOD-Air Force	Prime	F41999-11-D-0018	Air Force Exceptional Family Member Program	Fixed Fee Amount	4/1/2011-05/31/2021	\$ 1,539,148.00	\$ 2,093,243.00	\$ 2,755,839.00	\$ 4,461,711.00
DOD-USMC (4)	Prime	M67854-11-2-0550	USMC Fee Assistance	Cooperative Agreement	07/25/2011-7/24/2016	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
DOD-ARMY	Prime	NAFBA1-15-C-0013	Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood	Firm-Fixed Price	3/26/2012-9/30/2015	\$ 1,539,148.00	\$ 2,093,243.00	\$ 2,755,839.00	\$ -
DOD-ARMY	Prime	NAFBA1-12-C-0070	Army Fee Assistance	Firm-Fixed Price	9/27/2012-9/30/2014	\$ 42,863,848.02	\$ 39,721,418.00	\$ 2,755,839.00	\$ -
DHHS	Prime	90RGG0117-02-00	Refugee Services	Cooperative Agreement	9/30/2012-9/29/2014	\$ 98,658.00	\$ 98,658.00	\$ -	\$ -

Legend:

- DHHS - Department of Health and Human Services
- DOD - Department of Defense

Notes:

- Awaiting Prime Contract Number from American Academy of Pediatrics
- HDQMWE-08-C-0028 was renewed under HDQMWR-C-13-0023 in FY 2014.
- M67854-09-2-0535 was moved under HDQMWR-C-13-0023
- M67854-11-2-0555 is incrementally funded as drawdowns are made against the \$6,000,000. It will be replenished as required.

As Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) **Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D.**, is a passionate practitioner, advocate and leader in the field of child care and early learning, working to advance the accessibility of quality child care experiences for all children. Child Care Aware® of America is a national nonprofit whose mission is to ensure that every child has access to high quality child care and early learning experiences. Under her leadership CCAoA has launched a number of major programmatic and policy initiatives at the national and state levels.

Dr. Fraga has over 20 years of experience as an educator, program director and executive leader working on behalf of children and families. Since her selection in 2012 as the executive director at CCAoA, Dr. Fraga has sought to position Child Care Aware® of America as the nation's leading voice on child care in policy, practice and research. As an authority on child development Dr. Fraga serves in an advisory capacity on a number of national panels including the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Early Childhood (COEC), the Institute of Medicine Early Care and Education Collaborative, Healthy Kids Healthy Futures Steering Committee and the ARCH Lifespan Respite TA Center Advisory Committee. In addition she serves on the Executive Committee of the Children's Leadership Council (CLC), a coalition of 55 leading national organizations working together to improve the health, education and well-being of children and youth.

Fraga began her career as a teacher in an infant and toddler classroom and subsequently worked in the military child care system as a Center Director, Training and Curriculum Specialist and School-Age Coordinator. She has since held positions at the local, state and national level within the nonprofit, corporate and higher education sectors. Prior to CCAoA, Fraga served as Vice President of Early Care and Special Populations for Care.com where she led development of public-private partnerships to support the corporation's services for children with special needs and a lifespan of care options for military-connected families. During her eleven years at ZERO TO THREE (ZTT), a national nonprofit working to promote the healthy development of babies and toddlers, Fraga was the Chief Program Officer, and led the development of and oversaw all programmatic activities. An expert on the social and emotional needs of infants and toddlers, she spearheaded Military Family Projects as its Director, and held several leadership roles within the Early Head Start National Resource Center at ZTT.

Fraga holds a doctoral degree in Family Studies from Kansas State University, a master's degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, and a bachelor's degree in Special Education from the University of Arizona.

LYNETTE M. FRAGA, PH.D.

Highly Accomplished, Strategic and Mission-Driven Senior Executive

Extensive experience envisioning, developing and directing diverse programs supporting children and families. Demonstrated ability to create constructive relationships with Boards of Directors, government agencies, foundations and funders while building productive partnerships with related organizations to enhance services for vulnerable communities. Skilled in motivating, mentoring and managing teams of high-functioning professionals committed to cultures of collaboration, creativity and accountability.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Child Care Aware of America

Washington, DC 2012-Present

Executive Director

Serve as the visionary and strategic leader of the organization. With the Board and staff, carry out the mission of promoting policies and partnerships that ensure access to quality child care and early learning services and provide leadership and support to the nationwide network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Provides leadership and general management of the organization. Serves as the key spokesperson and manages relationships with key stakeholders.

CARE.COM

Waltham, MA/Washington DC 2011-2012

VP Special Populations and Nonprofit Relationships

Responsible for the development and execution of company approach to care services for individuals and families with special needs to include intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. Additionally responsible for addressing care services for special populations to include military families and veterans. Work closely with the nonprofit and public sector to develop and execute innovative strategies for addressing the diverse care needs of individuals across the lifespan.

ZERO TO THREE, NATIONAL CENTER FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND FAMILIES

Washington DC 1999- 2011

Chief Program Officer

Ensured all programs were of the highest quality; met goals, deadlines and deliverables while reflecting the vision and mission of the organization. Major funders for 16 major programs range from government agencies (e.g. Office of Head Start, Office of Child Care, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Education) to private foundations and major individual donors. Worked closely with the Board of Directors and Executive Director in governance and organizational strategic planning. Directed all programmatic development efforts; responsibilities include project conceptualization, oversight of proposal writing and funder relations.

Director, Military Family Projects

Identified unmet separation, loss and trauma needs of infants and toddlers and designed innovative professional training, parent resources and community response initiatives. Cultivated key relationships with the four Service Branches and advanced policies supporting military families with very young children.

Senior Program Associate

Implemented *Pathways to Prevention*, a “best-practices” consultation initiative reaching hundreds of Early Head Start (EHS) programs and their community partners to promote positive social and emotional outcomes for infants and toddlers. Organized and staffed a national task force to integrate infant mental health consultation into EHS. Conducted research with EHS adolescent parents, culminating in a dissertation: “Adolescent Understanding of the Social and Emotional Development of Very Young Children”.

Senior Early Childhood Associate

Developed and implemented strategies to improve the quality and availability of infant and toddler training and content for Office of Head Start Regional Offices. Increased federal staff capacity to support over 600 programs. Co-developed an infant/toddler graduate certificate program at the University of Missouri. Authored first *Early Head Start Tool Kit* providing information and strategies to improve community partnership and implement quality programming for infants and toddlers.

CHILDREN’S DEFENSE FUND

Consultant

Washington, D.C., 1998-1999

Authored *One Church... Ten Families Training Guide* for an innovative partnership between African American judges and local faith communities to support children in the juvenile justice system. Authored the *Latino Freedom Schools Curriculum* supporting the first freedom schools programs in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Facilitated trainings for the Black Community Crusade for Children.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Research Associate & Graduate Teaching Assistant

Manhattan, Kansas, 1996-1999

Utilized environmental assessment tools in support of quality standards research. Taught *Family Studies Practicum Supervision, Infant and Preschool Child Lab, Administering Early Childhood Education Programs, and Working with Parents*. Special Project: Structured and facilitated an after-school kindergarten program for a local public school.

US ARMY CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

**Child Development Center Director
& School-Age Services Administrator**

Schweinfurt, Germany 1994-1996

Directed an accredited and highly recognized child development program for U.S. Armed Forces Europe. Supervised 40+ early childhood teachers serving ~250 children. Oversaw daily operations including supervision, training, budget management, quality control and adherence to regulatory requirements. Partnered on the development and implementation of developmentally appropriate practices and programming for birth-5 years and school-age services. Provided training to community leaders, family support professionals, and staff on issues affecting children and families. Established a robust parent involvement program, developed welcoming spaces for parents, implemented policies and procedures honoring parent-child connections, and fostered positive parent-teacher relationships throughout the center-based setting. Stood-up one of the first pilot School Age Services programs in Germany; developed policies, protocols and guidelines to support successful implementation.

EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZED TRAINING

Ph.D. Family Studies
Kansas State University

MA, Human Relations
University of Oklahoma

**Early Childhood Education
Graduate Coursework**
Cameron University

BS, Special Education
University of Arizona

**Non Profit Management Executive
Certificate**
Georgetown University (pending)

Certificate in Mediation
Lincoln, Nebraska