

Meeting the Training Needs of Early Care and Learning Professionals

In February 2013, the Child Care Network mailed need surveys to 188 child care providers in our service delivery area of Warren, Washington, Hamilton and Upper Saratoga Counties. 53 child care professionals responded for a total return rate of 28%. Most respondents (85%) represented family or group family child care; the remaining 15% or responses were from centers, school- age programs and Head Start.

The feedback we receive from the child care community is an essential component of our yearly planning process. For example, in determining what trainings to offer, where they are offered and at what time of day, we look to the responses and suggestions of child care providers to guide and inform these decisions. This is why participation in the annual need survey is so important.

What, if any, impact has the economy had on child care programs in our area? This is a question we have asked in annual surveys for the last few years. Providers were asked an open-ended question on the subject in order to learn their observations and experiences. Only 4 providers did not respond to the question. 7 providers or 13% reported that the economy was not negatively impacting their programs. 42 providers (or 79%), however, commented on specific negative consequences of the economic downturn. For the purpose of this analysis comments were grouped as follows:

Economic Impacts	Count
Enrollment numbers are way down due to job losses and cuts in subsidy	33
Providers have more part-time slots than they want	9
Providers express a concern about struggles their families and (staff) are experiencing.	3
More parents relying on relative and non-licensed care	8
Concerns about costs of program supplies and food	4
No impact	7

47% indicated that enrollments levels were lower than expected. 2 respondents reported that they were closing due to the economy. It is perhaps reassuring to note that even with these significant impacts, 53 % of providers indicated that their enrollments are currently at expected levels, with 20% of these stating that their enrollment exceeded what they had expected. Based on anecdotal reporting, an increase in the number of parents calling for child care referrals and an increase in the number of prospective providers attending health and safety training, we may be seeing a gradual trend toward a more stable workforce.

Training methods preferred: For this question providers were asked to rank their preferences. Workshops continue to be the preferred method for professional development with conferences and online trainings following close behind.

Preferred method	1 st preference	2 nd preference	5 th and 6 th preference
Workshops	22	14	1
Conferences	15	12	4
On-line	12	10	7
On-site TA	3		19

Interest and participation in on-line trainings has been increasing during the past few years, Recognizing that convenience and cost are significant reasons for this trend, SACCN will continue to provide

information about on-line trainings offered by other organizations such as The Office of Family and Children’s Services; we will also continue to encourage provider participation in live trainings for the opportunities to communicate and network with other child care professionals.

Strategies that would be helpful to providers in achieving their professional development

goals: *(Multiple responses possible)*

- #1 response--financial support. 30 respondents or 57%.
- #2 response- On-line classes. 26 respondents or 49%
- #3 response- Opportunities at times that work with my schedule 25 respondents or 47%

Training locations and times

Numbers reflect “yes” responses to questions regarding convenience

Location of trainings	Day and Time
47 (89%)	43 (81%)

The primary reason cited for the location of trainings **not** being convenient was that the centralized locations in Glens Falls and Ft. Edward were too far from where they lived. In regard to the scheduling of days and times for trainings, a few providers suggested that they did not prefer evening hours and would like some training to be held on Saturdays.

Training Topics of Interest: (For this question, multiple responses were possible) the most preferred topics are listed below in order of interest- from most interested to least)

Training topics	Count- # of responses
Social and Emotional Development	33
Regulations	25
Health and Safety	24
Business and bookkeeping	22
Nutrition and Meals	22
Child Assessment	23
Infants and Toddlers	21

Topics which were checked least often were MAT (4) Staff management (8) and Brain Development (9).

Literacy and numeracy, inclusion, creativity, partnerships, school age topics and Eco-Healthy each received at least 11 checks. It is noteworthy that with most respondents to the survey being either family or group family providers, 16 checks were for school age topics. This seemingly indicates a growing need for, and interest in, topics to help care for the school age crowd.

Although space does not allow specifics to be shown her, it is also noteworthy that a majority of providers shared ideas for specific topics within the broader categories such as those depicted above for a total of 94 suggested workshop titles. The highest number of suggestions was for topics under the social/emotional development category (20), followed next by nutrition and food preparation topic ideas. **Many specific suggestions for curriculum ideas and school age care crossed over several topic areas.**

SACCN Membership

Of the 53 respondents, 19 (or 36%) are SACCN members. A discount on trainings is benefit of membership

Newsletter

52 of the 53 respondents indicated that they read the newsletter-or just about 100%. Providers listed many areas of interest.

Topics of interest	All	Trainings	Regulations	Food Recipes	Current news	Web links	Eco healthy	Financial Info.	H&S Updates
Counts	14	18	3	10	3	1	2	1	1

The most common reason cited for reading the newsletter was to find out about training offerings.

Website Usage

Since 2011 survey results, SACCN website usage has increase by 30 percentage points from 28% of respondents in 2011 to 58% of respondents in 2013.

Providers were asked when the last time they used our website was.

Yesterday	Last week	Last month	More than 2 months ago.
2	6	8	15

As with the newsletter, training was also the most common reason indicated for using the website (19%).

Level of Attendance at SACCN Trainings.

All	Most	Some	None
4	17	28	4

Other Trainings Attended

AppleBau m On-line	C.A.R. E On- line	On-line	Red Cross	CDCCCC	Other conference s	Misc.
13	6	16	9	4	6	5

The following SACCN services were listed by providers as being most helpful:

37 Providers (70% of total respondents) answered the question about which SACCN services were most helpful to them. This was an open ended question (no list of choices provided). Providers listed one service, two services or said "all".

Resources/TA	Training	Referrals	CACFP	newsletter	networking	all
8	16	5	10	2	1	5

SACCN has listened

Changes to be implemented for the 2013-2014 provider service plan as a result of provider feedback.

- Responding to provider's financial concerns, SACCN is planning to again offer several workshops at no cost.
- In order to better meet the needs of those providers who live in outlying areas, each season at least one training will be held in either Southern Washington County or Northern Warren County. We are seeking training locations in these areas, so please let us know if you have a location in mind.
- In order to meet the needs of providers who prefer day time and Saturday trainings, 4 workshops this year (in addition to the early childhood conference) will be held on Saturdays.
- Additional school age workshops will be offered this year as a result of the increasing interest in this topic and other workshops, not specifically school age focused will integrate school –age issues whenever possible.
- Several workshops this year are being developed to address the large number of requests for curriculum ideas and social/emotional strategies.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK—And HOW WE CAN BETTER SERVE YOU.

The 2013/2014 annual provider survey will be distributed a bit earlier this year. For those of you who will be attending the Early Child Conference in November. Please be on the lookout for the provider survey/interview table—where child care provider input will be rewarded with raffle tickets, but more importantly, with an improvement in the quality of services that The Child Care Network offers to the child care provider community. And for those who are not able to attend the early childhood conference this year, the survey will be mailed in early winter.