



Child Care Provider Training

Helping Early Childhood Educators
Provide Quality Care for Today's Children
<http://childcare.tamu.edu>

Helping Texans
Better Their Lives

Relevance

Sixty-seven percent of children under age 5 receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is one of the fastest growing industries in the state, generating approximately 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans.

Researchers have found that quality matters when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care develop better language, math, and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school (Vandell et al., 2010).

Having a well-trained child care workforce is essential to providing the high quality child care that children need to reach their developmental potential. Evidence indicates that professional preparation (i.e., more formal education and content-specific training in child development) is linked to higher quality care environments for children (Zaslow, Tout, Maxwell, & Clifford, 2004).



Response

Child care providers and directors can enhance their knowledge and skills, and meet state-mandated training requirements by attending child care conferences and completing online courses developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Child Care Provider Conferences. Extension agents organize single- and multi-county training conferences to meet the training needs of child care providers across the state. Extension specialists, county agents, and content experts from the local community conduct general and concurrent session workshops at these conferences on a variety of topics related to child care.

Online Training. Extension's *Early Childhood Educator Online Training Program* provides child care professionals with a convenient, flexible, and affordable way to obtain contact hour credits required by the state of Texas. All courses are based on the latest research in each subject matter area and can be completed anytime — day or night — via the Internet. The program can be accessed at: <http://childcare.tamu.edu>.

Results

In 2016, county Extension agents and their community partners conducted 46 child care provider training conferences throughout the state of Texas for 3,767 child care providers and directors. Over 22,000 clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals.

Results from a 2016 evaluation study with a sample of over 2,100 participants indicate that child care providers found the trainings to be very beneficial.

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Over 90% of participants acquired new information (97%), plan to utilize the information to improve their programs (98%), consider themselves better equipped to work with children (98%), and consider the trainings to be relevant to the work that they do (97%). Moreover, 66% of child care providers rated the quality of the trainings “Better” or “Much Better” compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

In addition to the face-to-face conferences, early childhood educators in the U.S. completed 325,940 online courses in 2016 (601,302 clock hours). Evaluation data collected from over 46,000 online participants indicate that they are very satisfied with the quality of the courses. Over 98% rated the online courses as “Good,” “Very good,” or “Excellent.” Ninety-seven percent of respondents stated that they learned new information from the courses, and 99% would recommend the online courses to others. In addition, when asked to rate the quality of the online courses compared to online courses taken from other organizations, over 81% indicated that Extension’s courses were “Better” or “Much Better.”

Child care providers’ positive perceptions of the online and face-to-face trainings are further illustrated by the quotes below:

- “I really enjoyed taking this course online. It saves time and money since I do not have to travel to another location to take a class. Also, I can fit these classes in when I have time rather than having to rearrange my schedule to try and get my hours. Thank you so very much.” – *Online Course Participant*
- “I wish to emphasize my appreciation for this type of training to be available to all of us. It helps us to stay informed with new ideas, provides refreshers for things we have already learned ... I have been taking care of children for 22 years. This was the best training I’ve been to since I started in 1987. Thanks again.” – *Child Care Conference Participant*



Child Care Professional Development Training (2016)		
	Child Care Conferences	Online Courses
# of Events Conducted	46	NA
# of Educational Contacts	3,767	325,940
# Clock (Contact) Hours Awarded	22,046	601,302

- “Loved this training material! I learned so much from the information given and found it the most informational video I have studied yet!” – *Online Course Participant*
- “I thought this course was very informative. I liked the video clips, and the handouts are great. I will use all of this information and look back at [the] script and handouts for future reference. Thank you, thank you.” – *Online Course Participant*
- “These classes are just amazing ... please keep up the good work of [providing] quality training classes. Thank you.” – *Online Course Participant*

References for this brief are available upon request.

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