



www.familychildcareexperts.com

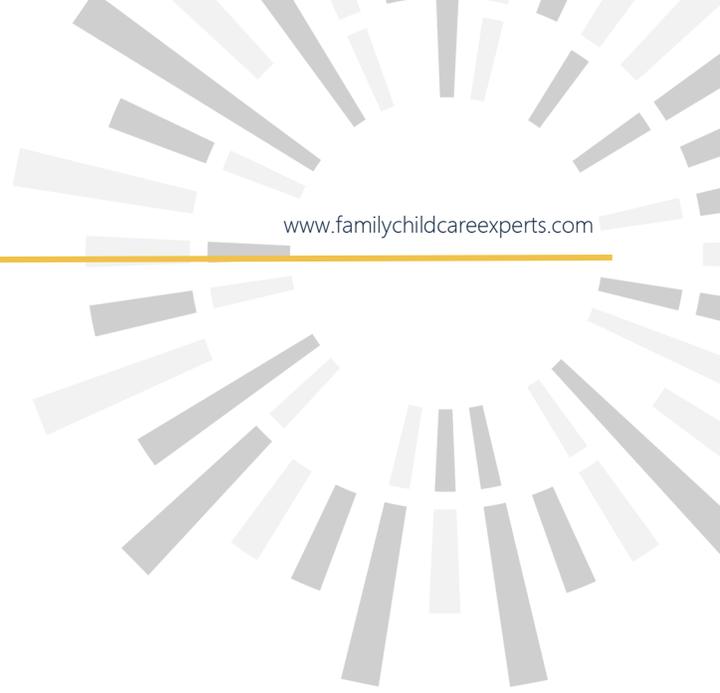
FAMILY CHILD CARE
EXPERTS

ohioaeyc

Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children Presents:

FAMILY CHILD CARE INSIGHTS REPORT[©] - OHIO





Overview



FAMILY CHILD CARE
EXPERTS



This report was commissioned by the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children to gain insights directly from family child care business owners that will inform and strengthen the association's family child care initiatives and advocacy efforts.

The report was compiled utilizing background information from the work of the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC), as well as publicly accessible research at both the Ohio and national levels pertaining to family child care practices, and analyzations of the Balance Survey[®] results conducted with Ohio regulated family child care (FCC) business owners by Family Child Care Experts, LLC[®].



Contents



FAMILY CHILD CARE
EXPERTS

04 Background

- 05 Family Child Care Experts, LLC
- 06 Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children
- 07 National Landscape
- 10 Ohio Landscape

13 Results

- 14 Who Participated
- 15 Balance Report[©] — Ohio
- 16 Results Overview
- 20 Analyzing Individual Wheels
- 30 Diving Deeper
- 42 Family Child Care Voices

45 Pandemic Initiatives

50 Recommendations

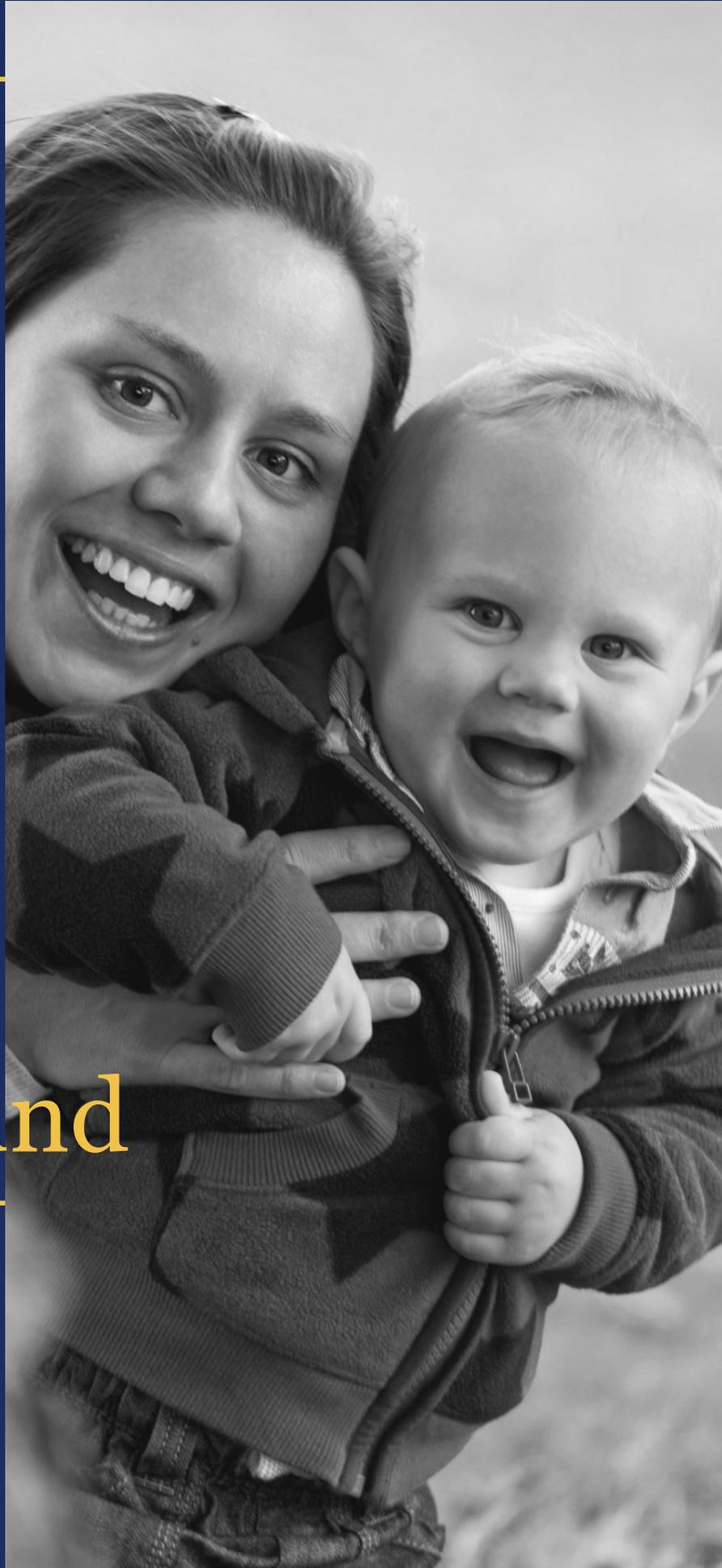
56 FCC Insights Report[©] Supplement — Southwest Ohio

64 References



Background

In November 2024, Family Child Care Experts LLC® (FCCE), on behalf of the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC), collected data from regulated FCC educators in the state of Ohio for the purpose of gaining insights to improve OAEYC advocacy efforts and contribute to the national view of the state of family child care.





Family Child Care Experts, LLC®

Family Child Care Experts LLC® is dedicated to gathering detailed family child care data in order to inform the systems that support this important sector of the early childhood education field (ECE). In order to truly see how systems affect FCC, the proprietary FCCE Balance Survey® asks the experts—the FCC business owners. The survey includes questions no one else is asking, diving deeper into the wide spectrum of elements impacting their work, including motivations, strengths, challenges and the relationships between them that affect retention and quality of care in family child care. We assist systems and organizations that support family child care to going beyond the one-size-fits-all approach to reaching their goals, collecting data and analyzing results to identify the combination of initiatives where targeted funding and support will have the largest impact on outcomes.



The survey results are illustrated in a “3 Wheels” visual model: the Business Wheel, Educator Wheel and Personal Wheel. Each wheel consists of a set of spokes that represent different aspects of the work and life of a family child care educator and business owner. The survey questions explore not only actual practices, but also the perceptions about many aspects of their work.

The proprietary FCCE algorithm assesses the responses to determine the strength of each spoke—whether they will remain full length (strong) or are shortened (weak). The “3 Wheels” model functions similarly to a tricycle: when all three wheels have strong spokes, they achieve balance allowing for smooth and efficient movement. Conversely, the presence of missing or broken spokes (shortened) creates weak and flat areas within the wheels, subsequently impacting overall forward movement.

When FCC educators encounter challenges in their business or teaching practices, or struggle with personal well-being issues, each encounter can have a cascading effect on the others, leading to instability. The primary objective of the 3 Wheels visual is to quickly identify areas of strength and challenge, providing insight to the systems and organizations that support family child care regarding where to concentrate their efforts and goals in order to facilitate successful progression.

By strategically directing support and associated funding towards achieving balance, not only are challenges overcome but the associated stress is alleviated. This expands the mental bandwidth for growth in all areas and empowers educators to thrive in their careers as early childhood education professionals which in turn expands their impact on the children in their program.

The Balance Report® data serves not only to provide insights to the individual FCC educators, but also to identify trends within the systems that support them. This data sheds light on underlying issues contributing to retention and recruitment when analyzed at the organizational level, as the following report demonstrates.

Note: FCCE uses the terms “FCC business owner” and “FCC educator” to reference the dual roles of a person running a family child care program throughout this report.



About the Authors

Patricia Dischler and Donna Fowler are both former nationally accredited family child care providers and Past-Presidents of the National Association for Family Child Care. Each moved from family child care into the broader field of early childhood education and have made significant contributions to the ECE field in their careers.



Patricia Dischler has worked over 35 years to elevate the field of family child care, from her 17 years as a nationally accredited family child care business owner, moving into her work as an

author and speaker on a wide range of ECE topics and organizational strategy. She served as President of the National Association for Family Child Care, represented the Wisconsin Family Child Care Association on the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition and has been the recipient of many awards for her service in ECE, including the Wisconsin Governor's Award. She holds a bachelors degree in Early Childhood Development and has published a multitude of articles along with seven books, including *From Babysitter to Business Owner* (2005, Redleaf Press), which continues to be a leading source for FCC Improvement Projects and business courses. She has facilitated strategic planning and board development sessions for many state and local family child care associations, as well as direct coaching for their executive directors and board presidents. She provides coaching for family child care providers, school district ECE teachers, and the administrators and technical support coaches who work with them. She has presented numerous keynotes and trainings based on her books and as a consultant for Teaching Strategies on Creative Curriculum™ and GOLD™, both nationally and internationally for over 15 years. She works diligently to bring the voice of family child care to the systems who support them, using data informed strategies, and to shine a light on the uniqueness and value of this important sector of the ECE field that will guide strategic planning and create a pathway for success.



Donna Fowler is a dedicated early childhood education professional with over 25 years of experience. She has worked extensively with teachers, coaches, and administrators across various educational set-

tings, including Departments and Ministries of Education, International Schools, Head Start programs, private childcare, and family childcare around the world. For 14 years, Donna served as a nationally accredited family child care business owner and educator in Maryland, where she became a prominent advocate, serving as chair for the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of Child Care Advisory Council, Director of Public Policy and Lobbyist for the Maryland Family Child Care Association and President of the National Association for Family Child Care. As an expert in Implementation Science, Donna has played a crucial role in transforming early childhood practices, redesigning methods across 8,000 classrooms in New York City and implementing changes in Bermuda and the Philippines. Donna earned her masters degree in Early Childhood Education Curriculum and Instruction and holds a bachelor's degree in Organizational Management. Donna co-authored a ground-breaking report on family child care participation in state-funded mixed delivery preschool initiatives and successfully wrote a grant and implementation plan to support these efforts. This project, the largest of its kind, serves as a national model for FCC participation in school district PreK. Currently, she serves as the Senior Director of Implementation and Solutions Implementation at Teaching Strategies, LLC, where she continues to advocate for high-quality early childhood education.



Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children

Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC) is the official State Affiliate in Ohio for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Working in partnership with NAEYC and local leadership, Ohio AEYC is committed to:

- ◇ Ensuring a guaranteed seat at the table in state and local policy, advocacy, and early childhood systems building.
- ◇ Representing professional members with integrity and relevance.
- ◇ Providing meaningful, rich, and practice-changing professional development opportunities.
- ◇ Attracting and retaining diverse early childhood professionals.

With over 2,200 members, Ohio AEYC is dedicated to advocating on behalf of this vital profession and is committed to empowering all individuals who care for, educate, and advocate on behalf of children.

In 1999, Ohio AEYC established an Early Childhood Educator Coalition to unite professionals in the field and foster a coordinated voice for their advocacy efforts, inclusive of family child care. Additionally, the organization created the Ohio AEYC Family Child Care Advisory Council, recognizing the uniqueness of this sector of the ECE landscape. This council ensures that FCC educators are equitably included in initiatives aimed at improving the quality of care and increasing access to high-quality programs for families.

Ohio AEYC is a strategic partner with Groundwork Ohio, a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization committed to championing high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five that lay a strong foundation for Ohio children, families, and communities.

The FCCE-Ohio Insights Report[®] aims to further inform this collaborative effort by providing insights to how family child care educators perceive their work and the obstacles creating imbalance, in order to identify areas for improvement within the supporting systems.

“Family child care providers are experts on what they and the families that rely on them need and must have meaningful opportunities to shape plans to rebuild the child care system.”

*—Kim Tice, Ohio AEYC
Past Executive Director*



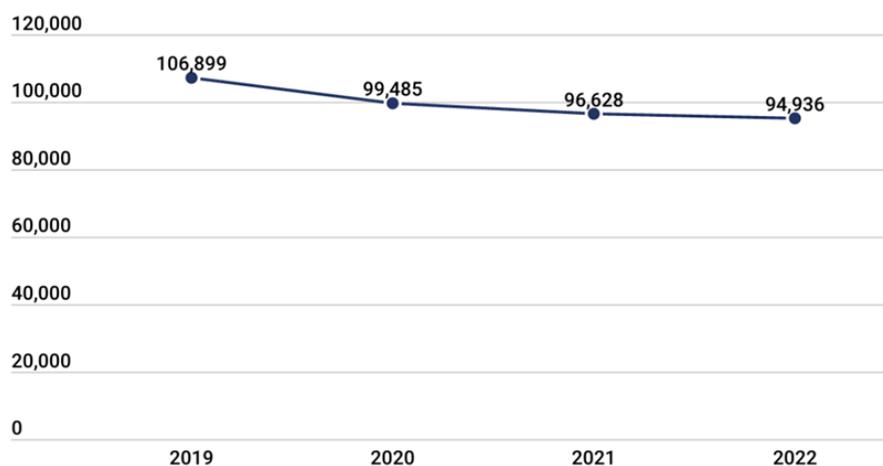
National Landscape

Family Child Care (FCC) refers to professional care provided in the family child care business owner's home for one or more children, typically of mixed ages. Depending on the state regulations, these small businesses may be designated as small or large FCC homes based on the total number of children in care, and may or may not need to be regulated or licensed to provide services.

Family child care represents the most prevalent form of child care in the United States. Families select FCC for a variety of reasons, as a national survey indicates that FCC educators primarily serve low-income families and provide care for infants and toddlers at higher rates than center-based programs (Barnett & Li, 2021; Data et al., 2021; National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team [NSECE], 2015). Other considerations for families include: family child care is generally more affordable than center-based care, offering smaller group sizes that often include siblings, and FCC provides a home-like environment that may align with cultural and linguistic preferences. Moreover, FCC locations are often more accessible for families, particularly in rural areas, and can accommodate the flexible schedules required by shift and weekend workers.

A multi-state study (Bromer et al., 2021) underscores the diversity of FCC educators, emphasizing that a single set of data cannot adequately represent the complexities within this field. FCC business owners enter the profession for various reasons, including the ability to care for their own children while earning an income, supporting family and friends, exercising control over their business and educational practices, and fulfillment in working with children. Notably, approximately half of these business owners have no prior experience in early care and education. Despite the varied reasons for opening a FCC business, and the high demand for FCC programming, the availability of this crucial option for families has suffered a serious decline.

Figure 2: Number of Regulated Family Child Care Homes Open by Year*



*Source: Calculations based on CCAoA annual survey of states, 2019-2022



In 2019, there were 106,889 licensed FCC homes operating across 39 states with available data. By 2022, this number decreased to 94,936, reflecting an overall decline of 11% since 2019 (Child Care Aware, 2022). While the rate of decline slowed moderately between 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, the overall trend remains downward.

The decline in FCC results from various factors, and no single solution exists. A recent study (Bromer, et al, 2021) identified key reasons for FCC educators leaving the field:

- ◇ 80% cited challenges within the early care and education system, including monitoring, licensing, subsidy pay, and quality rating and improvement systems.
- ◇ 63% faced economic difficulties in operating their businesses.
- ◇ 53% reported adverse working conditions, such as isolation, long hours, minimal benefits, and balancing family dynamics.

Conversely, FCC educators were more likely to remain in the field due to strong relationships with families and connections to other FCC educators. This report examines these risk factors to identify the most significant threats to the continued decline of family child care in Ohio and explores potential opportunities for support and systemic change to reverse this trend.

Without efforts to reverse these trends, a decrease in FCC businesses may lead to several challenges within the broader early childhood education system, including:

- ◇ Reduced parental choice that aligns with families' cultural, linguistic, and value systems.
- ◇ Increased difficulties for families seeking non-traditional care options, such as night or weekend services.
- ◇ Growth of child care deserts, particularly in rural areas where FCC may be the only available option.
- ◇ Significant decline in the availability of infant care, as fewer centers offer these services, leaving FCC as the primary choice for families with infants and toddlers.
- ◇ Challenges for states in meeting Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) requirements, which enable parents to choose from a diverse range of child care options, including FCC.





Ohio Landscape



In Ohio, family child care businesses are regulated by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). There are two licensing types for family child care businesses: Type A FCC, which may enroll up to 12 children; and Type B FCC, which may enroll up to 6 children and represents the minimum required licensing requirement for programs serving children receiving state subsidies. Each licensing type has limitations regarding age groupings and various licensing rules governing supervision and safety (Child Care Aware, 2022). License compliance is regulated by the county within which the FCC business resides.

As of January 2025, the ODJFS licensing search engine indicates there are a total of 2,185 regulated family child care businesses operating in Ohio:



However, it's important to note that FCC businesses serving six or fewer children are not required to be regulated in Ohio unless they care for state subsidy children. Consequently, there are likely many unregulated caregivers serving six or fewer children who do not accept subsidy payments and are not included in the state's reported availability to the public.

Additionally, many businesses who hold a Type B FCC license may be family, friends, or neighbors who are providing subsidy care to a single family receiving subsidies, without aspirations for an established career or growing business in ECE. This results in limited transformative changes for career growth initiatives for this sector of FCC, particularly for higher education or business practices training. The challenge for any system building for retention or quality improvement projects occurs when all types of FCC are lumped together in the data tracking without differentiating for those most likely to benefit from such efforts.

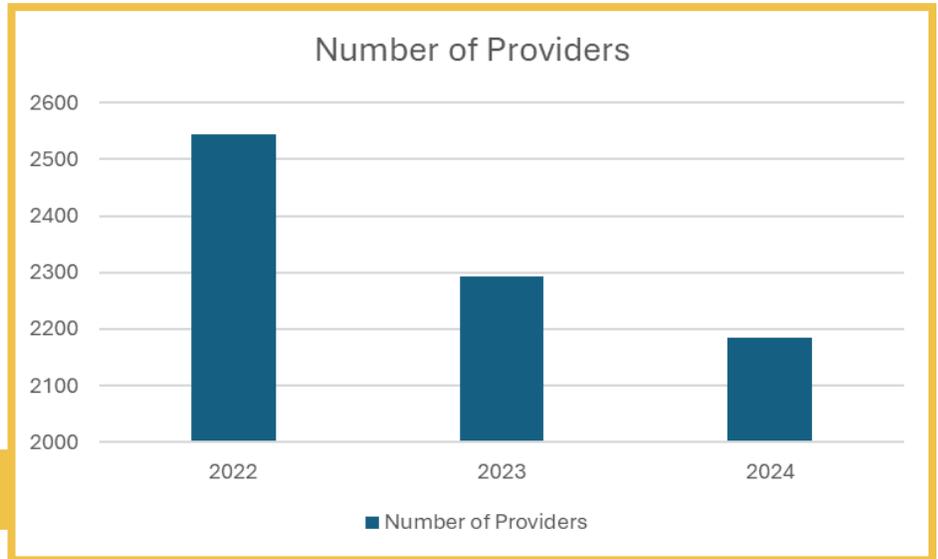
The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) following Covid, provided grant funding to 2,260 family child care business owners in Ohio. Funding was primarily used for personnel costs to keep programs staffed. Grants were awarded by the end of 2024 and programs have until the end of 2025 to utilize this funding.

Despite this financial support, many programs continue to face fiscal challenges. In November 2023, Action for Children reported 20% of family child care business owners surveyed reported a lack of confidence in staying open 3 months, and 59% of providers reported their revenue does not cover expenses.

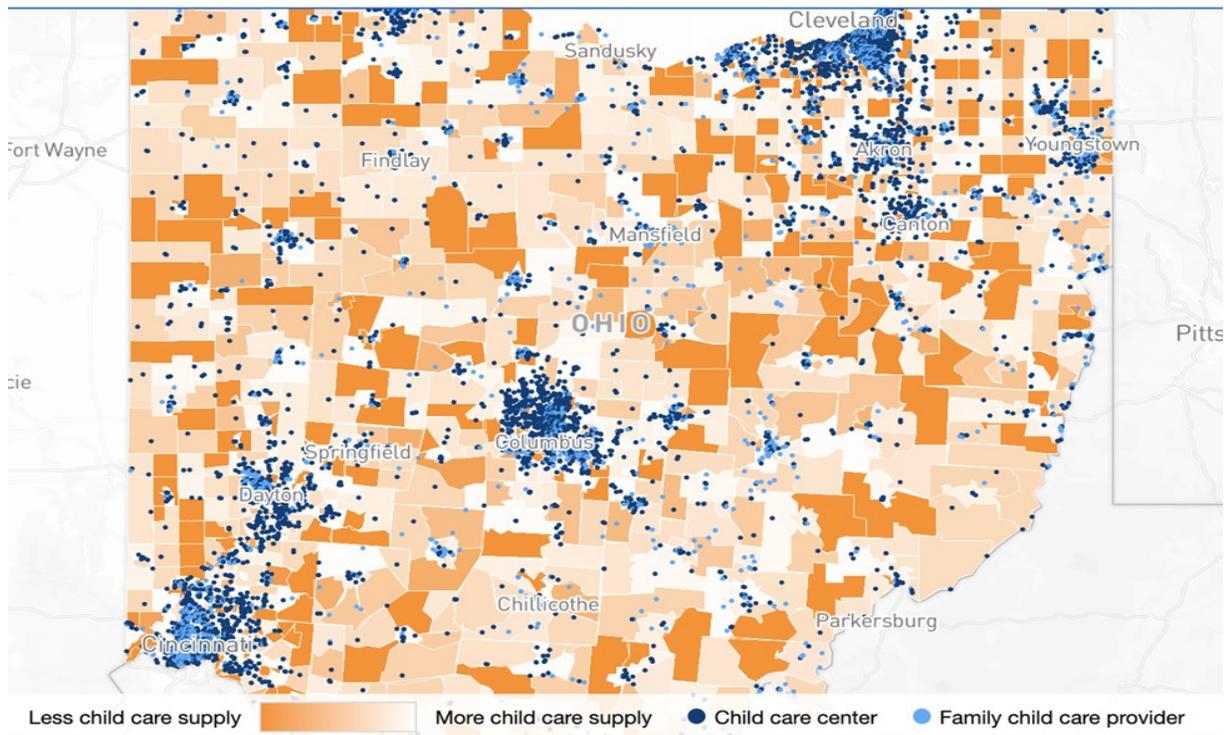
Data from Child Care Aware shows that Ohio saw a 14% decrease in family child care businesses from 2019 to 2022, exceeding the national average decrease by 3%. Although there was a modest 1% increase in FCC from 2021 to 2022, the decline escalated significantly afterward, resulting in an additional 14% decrease in FCC from 2022 to 2025.



The high cost of operations has significantly contributed to the ongoing decline of availability of family child care for families. According to family child care businesses in Ohio has declined 14% since 2022.



The *First Five Years Fund 2024 State Fact Sheet - Child Care & Early Learning in Ohio* reported, "39% of Ohio residents live in a 'child care desert' and "Rural families are disproportionately represented among those who live in a 'child care desert'".



Center for American Progress, <https://childcaredeserts.org>

Desert score measures how many children there are relative to licensed child care slots



Current Participation in State Funded Opportunities for Growth

Many states are actively working to create opportunities for FCC businesses to thrive. These initiatives may include: NAFCC National Accreditation Projects, FCC participation in Universal Pre-K (UPK), FCC participation in Head Start or Early Head Start, Recruitment & Expansion Grants, or Education Grants and Scholarships.

In Ohio, the Early Care and Education Access Grant, which encompasses the Family Child Care Type B to Type A Grant, is designed to assist family child care businesses in transitioning from Type B to Type A, thereby expanding their capacity and thus the potential income of the business. However, as discussed later in this report, many counties impose limitations on this expansion, creating a barrier for financial growth for the family child care business.

Currently, Ohio does not have Universal Pre-K (UPK). However, there are efforts to expand preschool access in Ohio, including legislation and programs in some counties. In 2022, State Senator Teresa Fedor introduced Senate Bill 318 which aimed to mandate UPK in Ohio, and while unsuccessful, in 2024, legislators and education advocates called for a new UPK bill to revitalize this work.

Cuyahoga County offers a UPK program for children ages 3–5. UPK sites meet high standards and offer award-winning programs. Cuyahoga UPK is a mixed-delivery system that includes family child care homes, public preschools, Head Start programs, and community child care centers. FCC business owners must meet certain educational requirements, such as completing a Family Child Care Child Development Associate (CDA) program or an associate's or bachelor's degree program in child development or early childhood education.

There are currently no active NAFCC Accreditation Projects in Ohio and only six NAFCC Accredited FCC Educators. NAFCC Accreditation is not recognized in the state's QRIS system, Step Up To Quality, which diminishes the incentive for participation in the national accreditation system. NAFCC Accredited businesses on average are able to establish higher fees due to the higher quality.

The Ohio State University Head Start Child Care Partnership Program is inclusive of family child care, with 15 child care centers and 11 family child care homes participating.

Despite the establishment of such programs, the limited opportunities and participation leave most FCC businesses reliant on a single source of income: enrollment fees. Exploring efforts to clear the pathway for becoming a UPK site, Head Start or Early Head Start, or NAFCC Accredited will create alternative options for FCC businesses to financial stability.



Results

Using data collected from the Balance Survey[®], FCCE analyzed results for trends, challenges and opportunities looking closely at the business practices, educator practices and personal well-being for survey respondents.



Who Participated

The Balance Survey© was distributed to 2,185 licensed providers across Ohio, including both Type A and Type B FCC Homes, and achieved an 8% response rate. Outreach efforts included emails, text messages, and communications through Ohio AEYC during the data collection period from November 2024 to January 2025.

Demographics:

- ◇ Gender: 99% of participants identified as women.
- ◇ Marital Status: 49% were single, 45% were married, and 6% preferred not to disclose.
- ◇ First Language: 98% spoke English, while 2% spoke Spanish.
- ◇ Ethnicity: 52% identified as African-American, 38% Caucasian, 6% Latino, and 4% identified as other.
- ◇ Years in Business: 27% reported having over 20 years experience, 26% between 10-20 years, 15% less than 1 year, 12% between 1-3 years, 10% between 3-5 years, and 10% between 5-10 years.
- ◇ Education Level: 30% had some college experience, 26% held an associate degree, 20% had a bachelor's degree, and 5% possessed a master's degree.
- ◇ Provider Type: 81% were Type B FCC providers and 19% were Type A FCC providers.

51% of FCC Educators hold some type of degree

Participants reported three primary reasons for opening their family child care business:

- ◇ To care for children of family, friends or neighbors that need it (37%)
- ◇ To stay home with own children and earn an income (36%)
- ◇ To have control over my program and business (18%)

67% of participants had previous experience in early childhood education before opening their business.





FCCE Ohio Balance Report[©]

FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPERTS

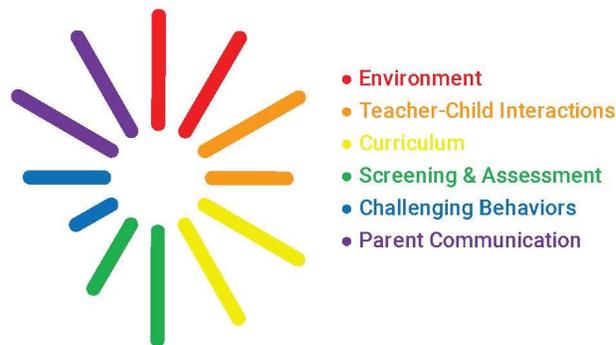
Business



Personal



Educator



READING THE BALANCE REPORT[©]

Each wheel contains “spokes” that reflect responses from the Balance Survey[©], organized into six topic areas.

Each topic area is represented by two spokes. The representation of the spokes is as follows:

- Full Spoke = Strength in this Area
- Partial Spoke = Partial Challenge in this Area (the shorter the Spoke, the greater the challenge)
- No Spoke (dot) = An Area of Extreme Challenge

This report analyzes the results along with inconsistencies with responses, correlations between answers, and trends seen in the group. For example, when the two spokes in any area do not match, it can signify a difference between perception and practice. Additionally, a wheel with missing or partial spokes will create imbalance for the respondent and have a negative impact on the other two wheels.



Results: Overview

Overall, the analysis revealed notable strengths across all three wheels, with the Educator Wheel exhibiting the strongest spokes with only a few areas of challenge. Participants also self-reported their highest sense of strength was in educator practices with 80% reported feeling that their practices as educators are strong to very strong.

The clear positive indicator identified within the Educator Wheel was the ability to building close relationships with children and families, which has been identified as a key component for future student success. Among participants, 88% report a deep, close connection with every child and family in their care and 87% report it being easy to find quality time for interactions with each child.

Additionally, strengths in teaching practices was evident, with 83% feeling confident in providing individualized lesson plans based on a child's development, culture and interests. Teaching strategies were also robust, with 77% using a balance of teacher-led and child-led activities and 74% conducting developmental screenings.

The Business Wheel had many strong spokes as well, however there were inconsistencies were observed between perception and practices in every area signaling specific weaknesses that would benefit from additional support. These are explored in detail in the Business section of this report. Self-reported confidence in business practices received a mid-range rating, with 68% of responses indicating a moderate to high level of strength.

Within business there were many strong practices such as 71% reporting they had not had any record keeping violations in the past two years. Record keeping confidence continued as 68% reported that they felt some level of comfort in their abilities to complete all paperwork and recordkeeping. Looking at all the fiscal responsibilities of being a business owner (tax prep, budgeting, payroll, etc), 85% expressed confidence about their work.

The Personal Wheel showed the most partial spokes as well as inconsistencies, indicating a strong need for additional support. In self-reporting, 38% identified feeling weaknesses in Personal Well-being and only 18% reported feeling very strong. The Personal Wheel is often influenced by the other two wheels. When challenges seen in the spokes from the other two wheels are addressed, it often will improve the Personal Wheel scores.

While there are challenges within the Personal Wheel, the strengths that clearly shine through the data are commitment and professionalism. Notably, 69% of respondents

“I have done this job for over 17 years and I feel a sense of relief that I can provide a curriculum where children learn, feel safe, laugh and grow in a positive way.”



indicated they would not change their career, even if offered higher compensation. As noted earlier in the report, FCC business owners are dedicated to their work and the quality of their work, with 69% creating a professional development plan each year. As educators they also excel, with 81% having at least some college and 51% holding a higher education degree. Additionally, 86% exceed the number of hours required for continuing education by the state.

Generally, participants have a strong personal support system in their families and neighbors, 77% report that they have a good balance in their home for space for their own family and space for their business as well as 74% feeling connected to their local community.

When considering challenges, connections between data points provide a picture of possible causes and opportunities for solutions and support. Of the participants that reported low levels of personal well-being, 75% also reported having a high level of challenging behaviors in children and were more likely to consider expulsion. A significant contributing factor to the lower personal well-being results were the employee benefits - 62% of participants reported that they do not have any benefits (options listed were health insurance, paid vacation time, sick pay and retirement contributions).

Additional factors influencing the individual spokes include a lack of a strong colleague support system, with 60% reporting a moderate to low feeling of connection to other providers; 76% expressing dissatisfaction with their current income; and 51% noting difficulties in filling openings. Moreover, 61% of participants admitted to not





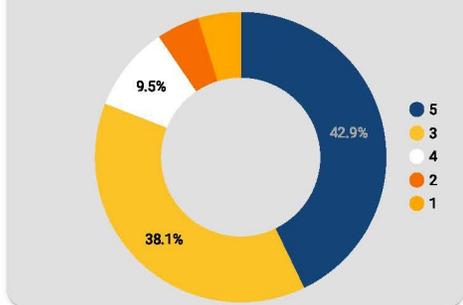
consistently upholding their policies, allowing parents to disregard breaches, which may lead to increased stress over time as parents continue to take advantage of this leniency.

In terms of business practices, responses for participants ability to fill openings quickly were mixed. While 51% stated it was not difficult, this might be attributed to a limited marketing range, as participants were primarily relying only on word-of-mouth marketing, with only 7% depending solely on the Resource & Referral services from their local SDA office. Established business owners are more likely to have success with word-of-mouth marketing as they have a reputation in their community, unlike newer businesses seeking to grow enrollment. The graphics below show a relatively fast move towards word-of-mouth marketing from use of CCR&R referrals as businesses gain experience over the years. A deeper dive into this found that of those who reported using only word-of-mouth marketing, only 17% reported that filling openings was a top priority, compared to those who only rely primarily on referral services, where 47% reported filling openings was a top priority. This, coupled with the numerous written comments from respondents regarding the difficulty in filling openings—which will be further explored in Retention section of report— suggests a need to strengthen the referral services or provide FCC business owners with technical assistance in developing alternative marketing strategies.

“I spent a lot of time to get prepared for my FCC and I’m not sure it was worth it. So far no kids and no money being made.”

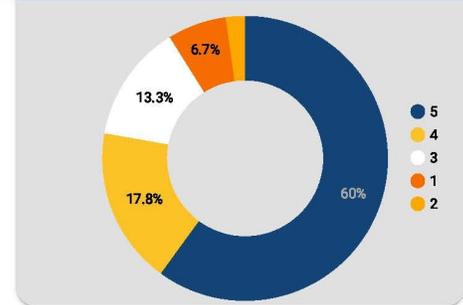
1-3 Years in Business

What methods do you use most often to fill openings?



5-10 Years in Business

What methods do you use most often to fill openings?



KEY Range: Only CCR&R Referrals = 1 2 3 4 5 = Word of Mouth Only



Licensing has emerged as a significant stress factor, contributing to both Business Wheel and Personal Wheel challenges. Nearly half of the participants, 47%, indicated they make changes to their program in anticipation of a licensing monitoring visit, suggesting not all rulings are being embraced and integrated on a daily basis. In addition, 76% of participants report licensing monitoring visits as moderately to highly stressful.

In the realm of educator practices, one of the notable challenges for participants relates to set up and materials in their environments, with 88% expressing moderate to high levels of dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction persists, despite of 92% acknowledging having ample space to accommodate the needs of the children in their care.

Despite these challenges, there is much to celebrate in family child care practices. These programs demonstrate a strong commitment to educating and caring for children. The responses also reflect a deep connected to families and their communities. They take pride in their work and the service they provide in their community. They accept the dual roles of business owner and educator and are eager to learn and evolve as a professional within the early care and education field.

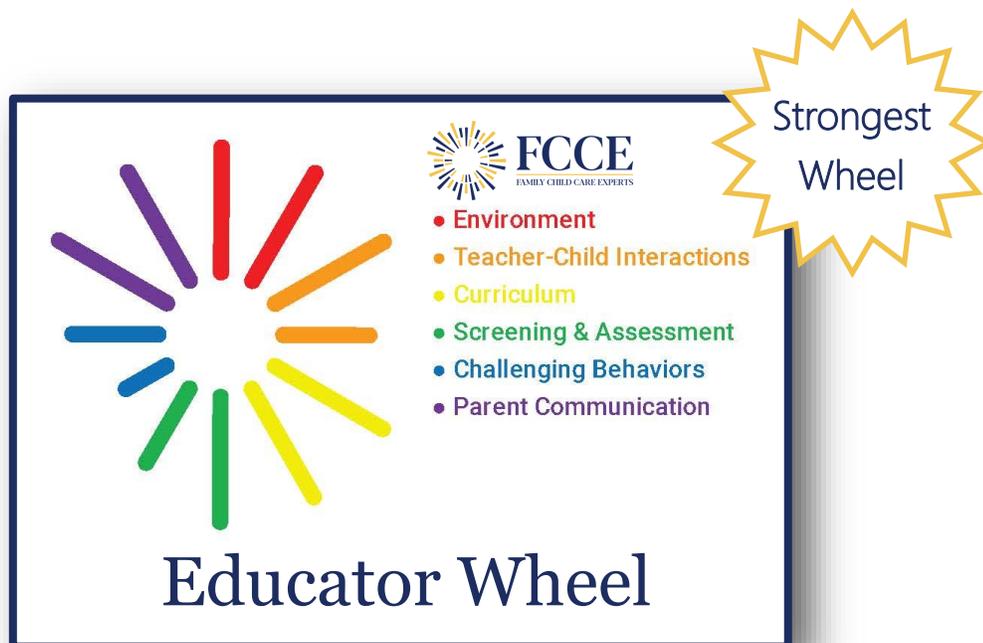
Comments participants shared about their work:

"I feel working with children is one of the finer positions in life. I enjoy watching them learn from each other and learn from me. Sharing new experiences and ideas helps me to relate to the children and their families to build a positive and supportive relationship."

"I truly love what I do and plan on doing my best for the families I serve. Appreciate this opportunity to be heard, thank you!"



Analyzing Individual Wheels



Strengths:

- ◆ **Curriculum** - An impressive 82% of educators expressed confidence in individualizing lesson plans and the majority, 77%, report employing a balanced approach of teacher-led and child-led activities.
- ◆ **Environment** - A notable 91% of participants believe they have sufficient space to effectively conduct their program.
- ◆ **Parent Communication** - Given that many families remain with the same program for extended periods due to the diverse age range of enrolled children, it is evident that building strong relationships with families and children is a key strength of these educators. In Ohio, 84% of respondents feel they have a deep understanding of the families they serve and 92% are comfortable communicating with families, even in regards to challenging topics such as behavioral concerns, service referrals or a child's developmental progress.

*82% of Ohio FCC Educators are confident
in individualizing lesson plans*



A significant variation in the use of developmental screening tools is evident, with only 38% of educators operating 1-3 years using a screener and 82% of those operating 3-5 years using a screening tool. This disparity is likely attributed to support from local or state agencies, which provide screen tools and the necessary training for their effective implementation.

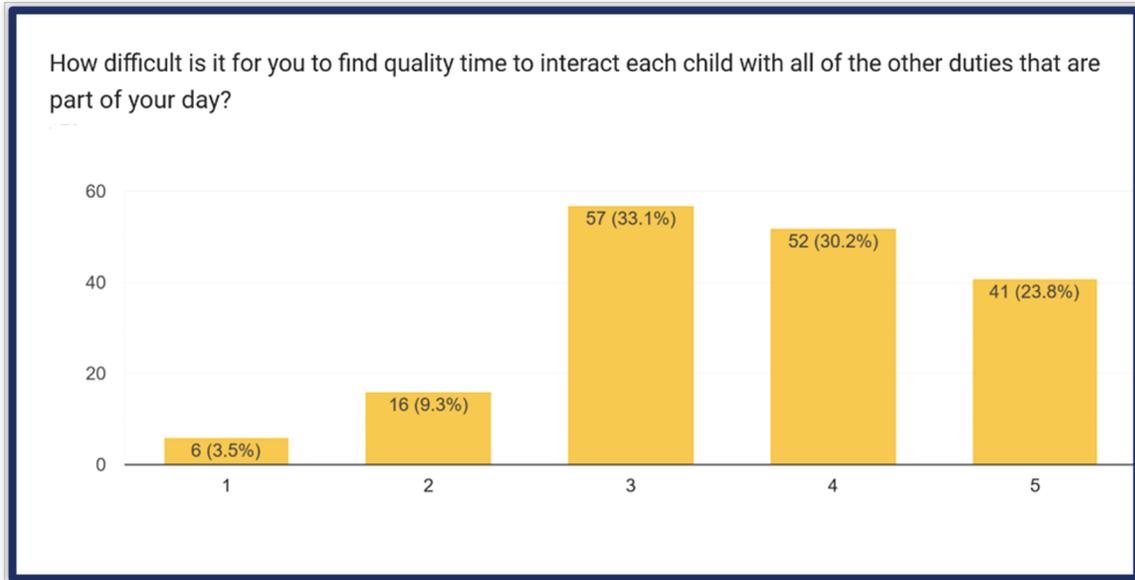
Additionally, growth in educator practices is reflected in child observations. Among the 1-3 year group, 62% of educators regularly collect child observations of development, a figure that markedly increases to 95% for the 3-5 year group. This trend demonstrates an encouraging shift toward more consistent observational practices over time.

Challenges:

◆ **Challenging behaviors** - According to the survey, 60% of participants frequently contend with challenging behaviors, while 71% of educators consider terminating care for children exhibiting these behaviors.

Nationwide there has been a notable increase in challenging behaviors in classrooms, attributed in part to the pandemic years, which limited opportunities for social/emotional development and elicited a shift in family behaviors and practices. FCC educators often lack support services and may not be aware of the resources that available to them in their communities. This situation can lead to increased stress for educators, who may feel that the only solution is to remove a child from the program.





Short Spokes of Note:

As FCC business owners, the numerous responsibilities of this aspect of their career contributes to their overall workload as FCC educators. Many FCC educators struggle to find sufficient time to manage all their daily tasks. Despite these challenges, 54% of Ohio FCC educators successfully connect with each child every day. However, it is noteworthy that 46% of educators reported experiencing moderate difficulty in allocating time for individual interactions with children.





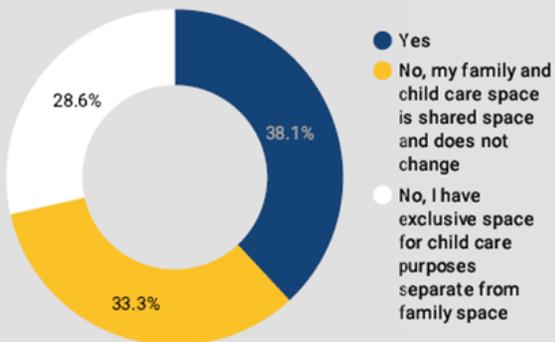
Additionally, educators are responsible for conducting child observations to inform lesson planning. Among the respondents, only 44% reported conducting daily child observations of development and learning, while 92% indicated that they perform some type of observation at least once a year. It is likely some educators incorporate these observations as part of an annual developmental assessment shared with families during annual conferences.

The way FCC educators set up program space in their home undergoes a significant transformation within the first few years of operation. In the 3-5 year operations range, many educators transition from utilizing shared family space to designating areas exclusively for child care purposes.

Several factors may contribute to this shift: professional development that emphasize center-like environments, pressure from evaluators seeking "learning centers", or the educator themselves discovering that separating work and family spaces enhances their work-life balance. Those supporting FCC educators in optimizing their environments should consider strategies that maintain a balance between a sense of "home" and "school," avoiding approaches that take the "home" out of home child care altogether. (Armstrong, 2011) (Dischler, 2005).

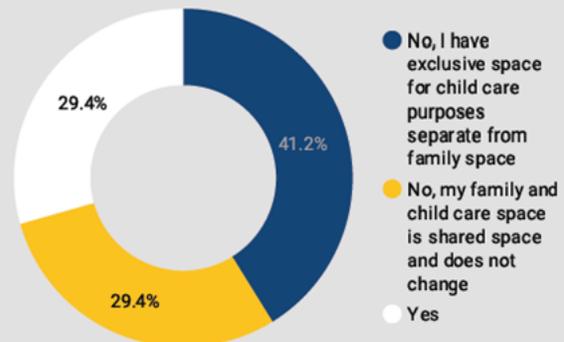
1-3 Years in Business

Do you "convert" areas of your home during the day for child care use then back again for family use?



5-10 Years in Business

Do you "convert" areas of your home during the day for child care use then back again for family use?





Strengths:

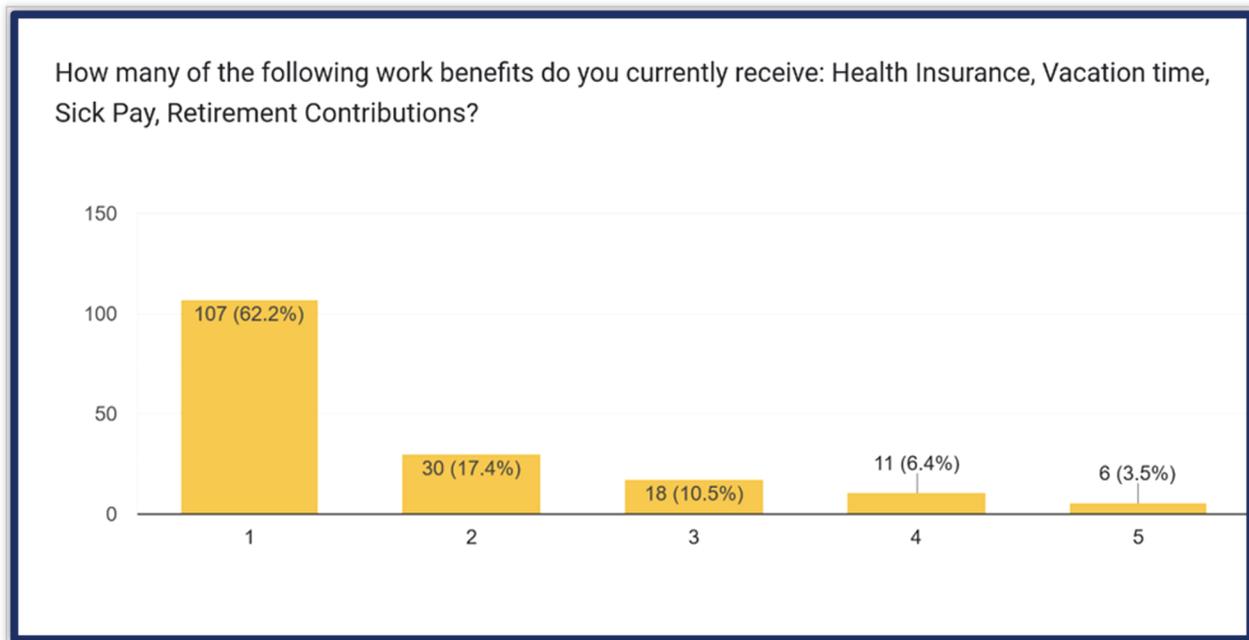
- ◆ **Commitment** - Most participants expressed a strong commitment to their work, with 69% indicating they would not pursue another job solely higher income. However, this leaves 31% of the workforce who would consider leaving, which would contribute to the ongoing decline in FCC businesses. This trend is further explored in the Retention section of this report.
- ◆ **Professional Development** - Participants actively engage in planning for annual professional development and pursue a variety of content areas in their training and education, often exceeding the required number of continuing education hours. Notably, 87% of respondents reported exceeding these requirements each year.
- ◆ **Family Support** - For 67% of respondents, operating a business in their home does not lead to conflicts with other household members. Likely a contributing factor, is that 70% either maintain separate spaces for their business or convert their spaces during business hours, returning to family areas after hours. This arrangement can significantly enhance household privacy, which plays a crucial role in reducing potential conflicts.

87% of FCC Educators exceed the number of required continued education hours each year.



Challenges:

- ◆ **Working Conditions** - The primary stress factor identified among participants was the lack of employee benefits, with 62% of respondents reporting they receive no benefits at all. Only 28% of participants indicated having 1-2 benefits, and a mere 4% reported having all four benefits: paid vacation and sick days, health insurance and retirement contributions.
- ◆ **Connections** - While participants exhibited a strong connection to their communities, their connections with other FCC business owners notably weak, with 60% expressing a feeling of disconnect from peers, limiting their access to emotional support. Typically, individuals who feel connected to peers demonstrate higher levels of confidence across all three domains: business, educator and personal well-being. However, this connection was not as evident in the Ohio data compared to findings from other states where the Balance Report[®] has been conducted.



Short spokes of note:

While it is a positive indication of commitment that income is not always the driving factor for leaving FCC, it is concerning that 61% of participants frequently consider careers outside of ECE. This trend points to deeper issues that are further explored in the Retention section of this report.

Balancing personal and family time is a challenge for all working individuals, and the extended hours of operation for FCC businesses exacerbate this difficulty. Among Ohio respondents, 63% reported that they can allocate sufficient time for themselves and their families. However, this leaves 37% of participants grappling with the stress of balancing work and life, which may contribute to retention decline in the absence of robust support networks. Enhancing connections with peers could be a key factor in fostering a greater sense of work-life balance among FCC business owners, where improving connections with peers can correlate to higher feelings of work/life balance.

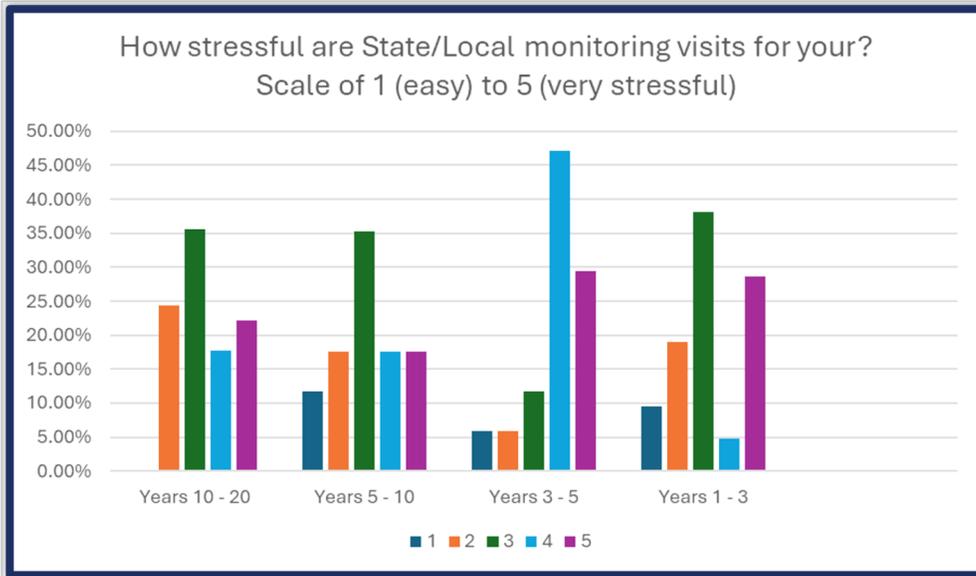


Strengths:

- ◆ **Record Keeping** - The incidence of record-keeping violations was relatively low, with 71% reporting they had no violations in the past year. However, 63% expressed feeling difficulty in managing the paperwork.
- ◆ **Compliance** - While participants generally felt prepared for licensing visits, 76% indicated that these visits were highly stressful.
- ◆ **Technology** - While 68% of respondents are already utilizing technology in their business, 50% experience significant stress when tasked with implementing new technology solutions.

The survey results regarding business practices revealed numerous inconsistencies between provider perception and actual practice. Notably, this wheel was the only one lacking an indicator area (two spokes) in which all responses were classified as strengths. FCC business owners reported a lack of confidence in their business practices despite often having established practices that support strength and longevity. This inconsistency in practices, paired with reduced confidence, signals that while substantial work has been made in supporting, further improvement is necessary in this area.





Learning and implementing effective business practices can often push FCC business owners outside of their comfort zones. Even when knowledge is gained, it may take time for their confidence to develop. Among those who have been in business over 20 years, only 28% reported license monitoring visits were highly stressful. Facilitating connections between newer business owners and their more experienced peers can serve as a valuable source of support, helping to alleviate stress associated with these visits.

Challenges:

- ◆ **Fiscal Management** - There is a low level of satisfaction regarding income among FCC business owners, with only half expressing confidence in management of their fiscal responsibilities
- ◆ **Contract/Policies** - A notable discrepancy exists in the responses regarding contracts and policies. Participants express feeling confident in upholding policies yet are also reporting they do not enforce these policies consistently.

The data brings to light challenges that may contribute to the closure of FCC businesses—additional factors are explored in the Retention section later in this report. This issue requires serious consideration from the state in order to ensure family child care remains a viable option for families. Alarmingly, the survey revealed that 80% of FCC business owners are dissatisfied with their income, and among these, over 50% are considering leaving the field of ECE. Low satisfaction regarding income is a common issue across various roles in early childhood education. While FCC business owners who do not serve children receiving subsidies maintain the power to set program rates based on their local market, this is not the case for subsidy funded programs. The combination

The survey found an alarming 80% of FCC Business Owners are not satisfied with their income, and of these, over 50% are considering leaving the field of ECE altogether.



of what the market will bear for enrollment fees, along with low subsidy rates set by the counties, limit their ability to increase income, leading to frustration and diminished confidence in managing fiscal responsibilities.

In Ohio, for instance, the subsidy system is structured as such that it prevents programs from charging families any additional fees exceeding the county determined co-pay. This presents a difficult business decision for FCC business owners - should they prioritize control over their rates, or is it more important to serve families in need? Advocating for increased subsidy rates that align with market levels and establishing a livable wage, as well as considering the removal of restrictions on charging additional fees, are two recommended strategies for creating systemic solutions that can pave the way for financial stability in FCC businesses as well as increased FCC options for subsidized children.

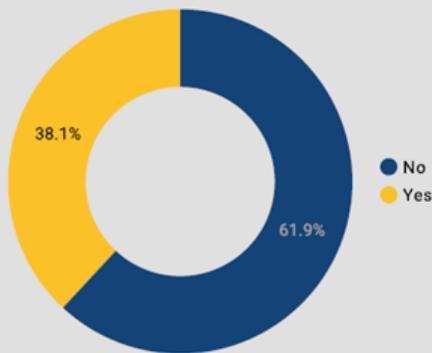
Ohio is home to many agencies who provide FCC business support and training, however most programs focus on general business practices without delving into best practices for developing and enforcing strong policies. Survey results indicate that 67% of FCC business owners have a low to moderate confidence level in their ability to uphold policies with parents. This area poses a challenge for many, as it often creates a conflict between their dual roles of an educator and a business owner. The educator instinct prompts them to accommodate family needs, which can lead them to agree to arrangements that compromise business. Over time, these compromises can lead frustration toward families who push the boundaries of established policies. Once deviations from policy are permitted, it becomes increasingly difficult to enforce policies consistently. The increasing frustration, and feelings of being taken advantage of may ultimately lead some FCC business owners to consider terminating care for families or even closing their businesses.

Policy enforcement is an area where distinct changes in practice emerge over time. In the 1-3 year group, only 38% reported granting parents exceptions to specific policies; however, this figure rises to 65% among the 3-5 year group. Unfortunately, this still leaves a significant portion of FCC business owners who do not consistently uphold their policies.



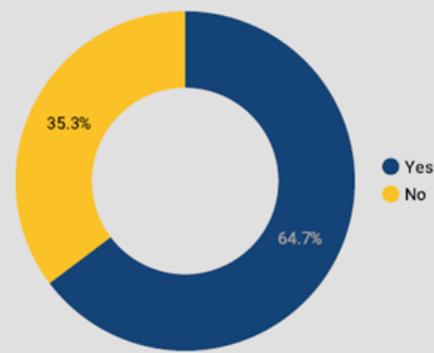
1-3 Years in Business

Have you ever given a parent a "pass" on a policy?



5-10 Years in Business

Have you ever given a parent a "pass" on a policy?



Short Spokes of Note:

Overall, only 33% of respondents expressed confidence in their ability to fill openings. However, a significant increase in confidence is observed when comparing newer FCC business owners to those in operation over three years. Among newer business owners, 52% reported a lack of confidence in filling openings, while this figure decreased to only 35% for those in business for three to five years. Keeping in mind that the number of programs drop at 3-5 years, this trend may indicate a retention issue - as those who successfully navigate their marketing and effectively fill openings are more likely to remain in business, whereas those who struggle often close their operations.

A similar trend is evident in the marketing techniques employed. The ability to fill openings through word-of-mouth marketing increases from 43% in the 1-3 year group to 59% in the 3-5 year group. Providing support for marketing strategies and addressing challenges in filling openings may be a key factor for the retention of FCC businesses, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in the Retention section of this report.

*Only 33%
reported
feeling
confident
they could
fill
openings.*

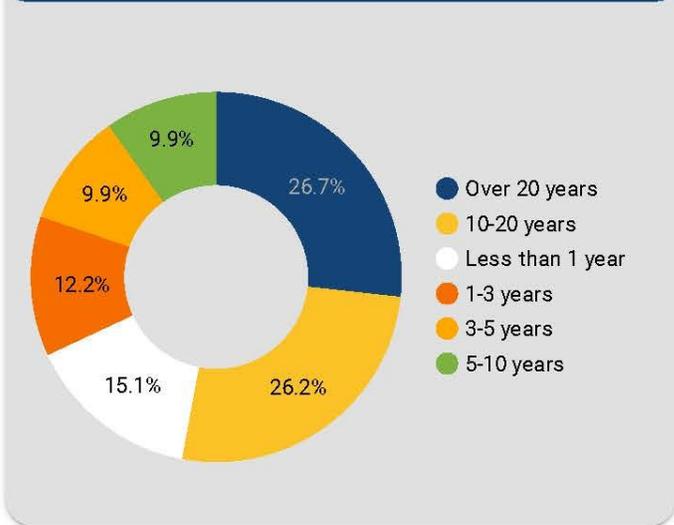


Diving Deeper...

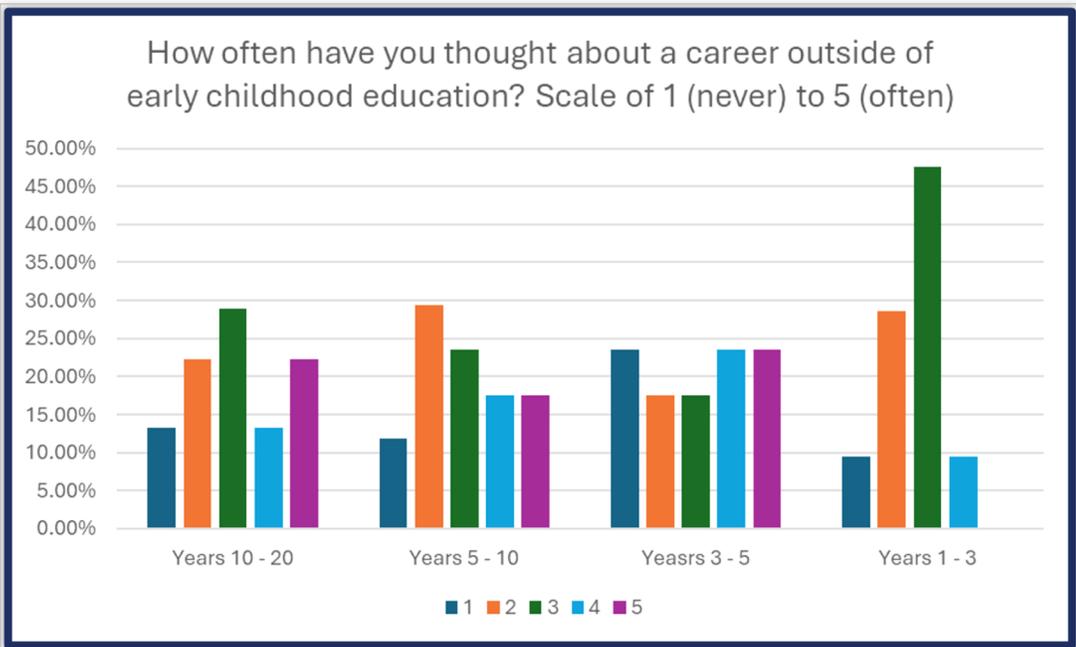
Retention Issues

As discussed in the background section, the national trend indicates a steady decline in the number of family child care businesses, and Ohio is no exception, experiencing a 14% decrease since 2022. Analyzing the respondents years in business, reveals that this decline is likely to continue. Currently, 15% of respondents have opened their business in the past year. However, this number begins to drop almost immediately, to 12% for 1-3 years, then another decline to approximately 10% past the 3 year mark, through 10 years. Among the participants, nearly 27% have been in the field over 20 years, many likely within retirement age, highlighting a growing gap between those entering the field and those exiting the profession.

How many years have you had your FCC business?



Data shows that FCC business owners are frequently choosing to close their operations during the 3-5 year period. Retention issues can be identified more clearly by monitoring changes within the groups based on their tenure in the business. Consistently, a notable shift is observed within the 3-5 year group in Ohio, signaling a critical phase for retention and sustainability in the FCC sector.



For example, when responding to how often they consider a career outside of ECE, the newest business owners did not select level 5 (indicating they frequently consider leaving) at all. However, within the 3-5 year range, there is a significant increase at this level, revealing a polarization. Subsequently, the responses begin to stabilize. This trend indicates a critical period in the 3-5 year range regarding their career pathway.



As previously noted, among those dissatisfied with their current incomes, 50% are contemplating leaving the ECE field. However, it should be noted that for the other 50%, dissatisfaction with income may be a contributing factor, but it is not the sole reason for their decision to stay. In fact, dissatisfaction with income tends to increase the longer the business exists, rising from 51% among new businesses to 74% for those in operation 10-20 years.

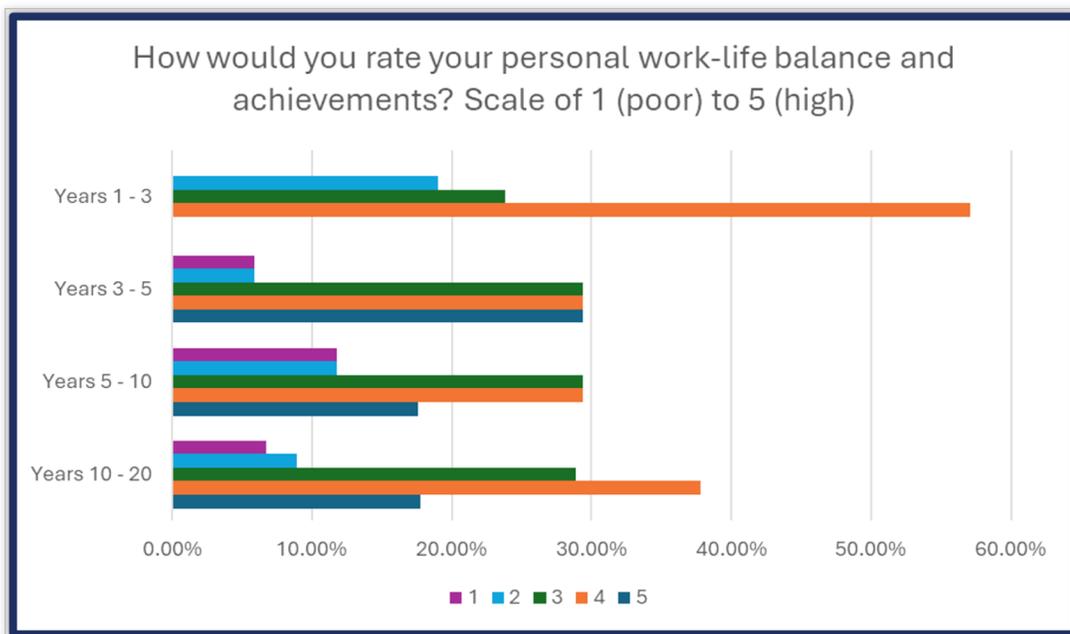
When business owners realize that their rates have hit a ceiling, it prompts them to reassess their priorities— whether to focus on income generation or on providing valuable services. Unlike other industries, where mechanisms for increasing income are readily available, FCC business owners often face the stark reality of limited options for financial growth. While a small percentage of FCC businesses find ways to enhance profitability through programs such as Early Head Start or other funding sources, it is a testament to their passion for supporting children and their dedication to their communities that a significant number of FCC business owners continue their work despite the ongoing income challenges.





Changing Perspectives Over Time

Work/Life balance is essential in any career, and with dual roles of FCC business owner and educator, it becomes especially critical in FCC. Analyzing how respondents rate their work-life balance in relation to their years in business, again reveals a distinct polarization that begins at the 3-5 year range.



A closer examination of those who considering leaving the ECE field reveals significant concerns:

- ◆ 66% reported experiencing a poor work-life balance.
- ◆ 46% find it challenging to allocate time for family, work and personal activities.
- ◆ 50% express high levels of feeling overwhelmed on a daily basis.

Given these factors, it is not surprising that 64% of these individuals are contemplating leaving the field of ECE altogether.

New business owners do not report any of the far ends of the spectrum, but as time passes, their sentiments become more varied with each contributing factor taking its toll.

Overall, newer FCC Business Owners enter the field with enthusiasm and confidence. Among this group, 71% reported utilizing technology in their business, 91% are confident in creating individualized lesson plans, 67% feel they successfully build close relationships with each child. Furthermore, 91% believe they have adequate space for their programs, 76% are satisfied with the arrangement and supplies of their environments, 86% have a deep understanding of the families they serve, and 67% do not wish to pursue a different career, even if it offered greater financial rewards.



Over time, significant changes— both positive and negative—are evident among FCC business owners, interacting and impacting areas in related areas.

On the positive side, confidence in upholding policies with families grow from 29% reporting high confidence to 49% by the ten-year mark. The use of technology continues to increase, with 89% now actively utilizing tech tools in their work. Record keeping practices improve, with fewer violations and greater confidence in managing all related responsibilities. Additionally, confidence in overall fiscal management has risen from 29% to 49%, and the ability to fill openings has become easier, with confidence levels increasing from 57% to 78%.

However, as FCC business owners gain experience, they may encounter challenges that can impact their work. Taken individually, they may seem small, such as confidence in individualizing lesson plans dropping slightly to 71%, along with a slight drop to 89% feeling a close relationship with every child. However, it is often the cumulative effect of these issues that becomes overwhelming, rather than any single concern. Additionally, these small challenges may reflect a symptom of a larger concern yet to be identified.

Interestingly, a notable trend observed between newer and more established groups was the increasing polarization in their responses. Newer business owners rarely selected a “1” or “5” when given a range of 1-5, whereas the more experienced groups consistently showed 10-20% who selected answers at both ends of the spectrum. This polarization illustrates the interrelatedness of the three wheels, as those who rated extreme responses for one area were more likely to do so for other questions as well. Over time, the challenges faced can accumulate and disrupt what was previously a stable wheel. For instance, a respondent who rated their frequency of encountering challenging behaviors at the extreme end, would also be more likely to report significant stress concerning communicating with families, adherence to policies and maintaining work-life balance.

“I work so hard to make sure these children are ready for the real world and as a home provider we get stepped on versus a center.”



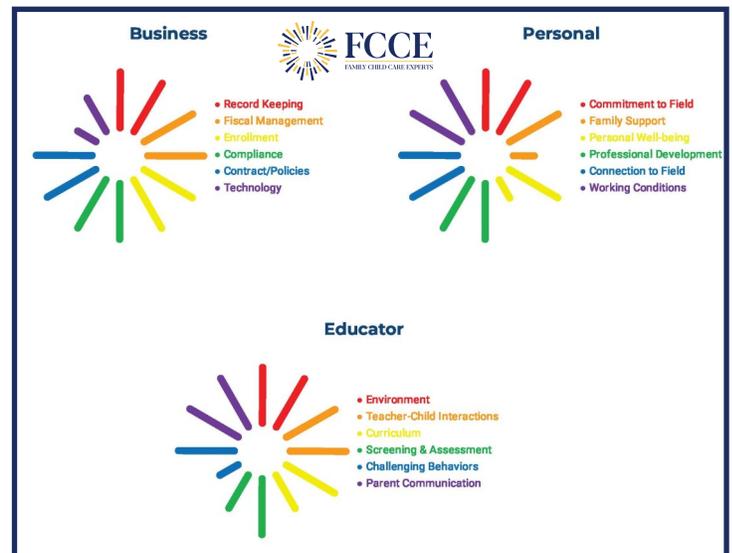
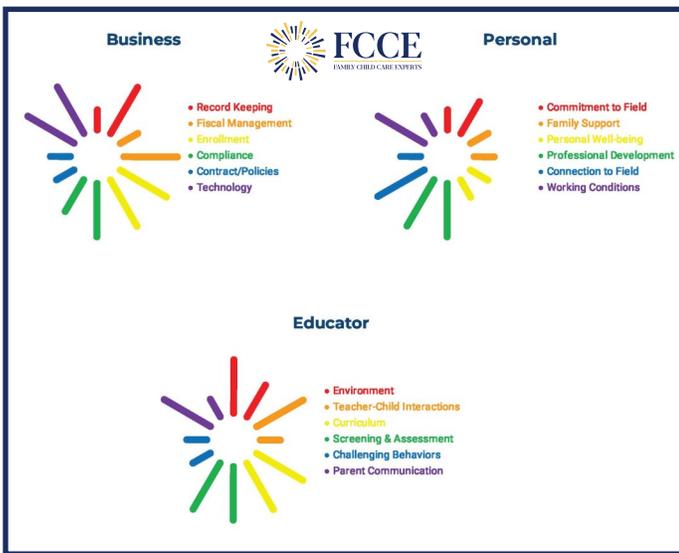


Likewise, a respondent rating their work/life balance on the extreme positive end is likely to also indicate strong connections to others, effective communication with parents, and report fewer challenging behaviors among children. While these types of results may be difficult to discern in aggregated organizational-level findings, they are clearly evident in the Individual Balance Report[®] results. This information can prove invaluable for individual FCC business owners and the coaches that support them.

Below are two individual examples derived from the Ohio data that illustrate the significant differences between the Balance Report[®] of two individual FCC business owners, highlighting the connection between these wheels:

1-3 Years in Business

10-20 Years in Business



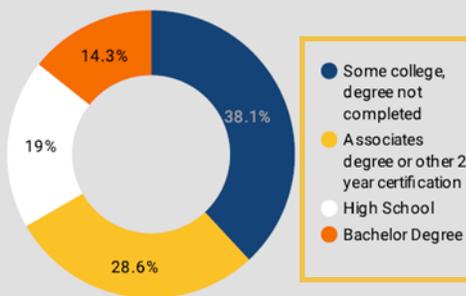
The Balance Report[®] on the left illustrates these connections, highlighting how challenges related to contracts and policies correlate with difficulties in managing behaviors in children, as well as with commitment to the field and overall personal well-being. The spokes in this report exhibit a range of lengths, indicating varying degrees of strength and challenges. In contrast, the report on the right demonstrates increased polarization over time, with spokes that are either very long or very short. For this respondent, there is a predominance of positive indicators, reflecting connections between effective business practices, commitment to the profession, and robust educator practices. Early access to support or training can empower FCC business owners to address any areas of challenge, thereby reducing the likelihood that these issues will escalate into more polarized negative outcomes.



Retention Over Time By The Wheels...

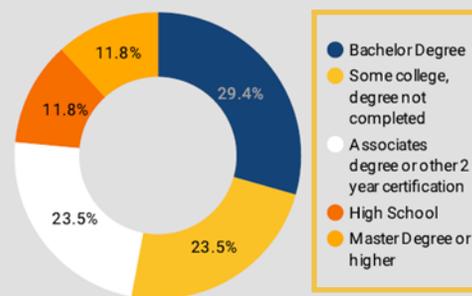
1-3 Years in Business

What is highest level of education?



3-5 Years in Business

What is highest level of education?



Retention & Educator Practices

In the three years following the establishment of their FCC businesses, the percentage of those who have attained higher education increases significantly, shifting from a majority holding some college credit to a majority holding a bachelors degree. While only 14% of newer FCC educators possess a bachelor's degree upon starting their journey, this figure rises to 29% by the 3-5 year mark. This trend indicates that many individuals entering the FCC sector are likely already enrolled in college and working towards their degree, completing it within a few years.

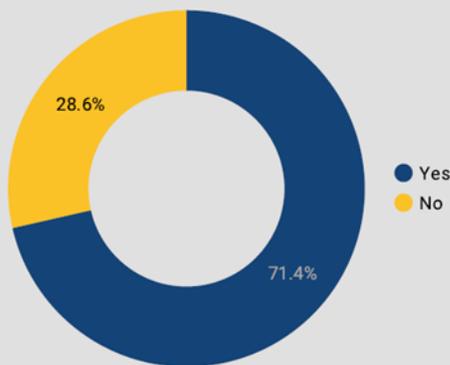
However, it is crucial to note that while the percentages remain relatively stable, the number of FCC businesses decreases significantly after the 3-5 year period, suggesting that a significant number of those with bachelor's degrees are closing their





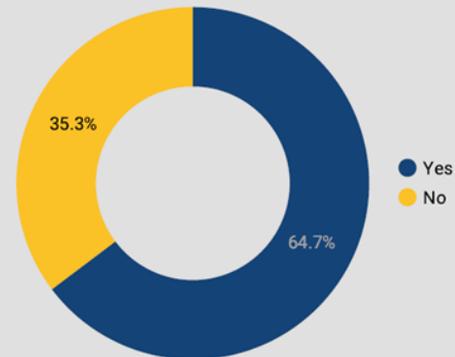
1-3 Years in Business

Did you work in the early childhood education field before opening your FCC business?



3-5 Years in Business

Did you work in the early childhood education field before opening your FCC business?



businesses. Hence, earning a degree does not appear to contribute positively to retention within FCC businesses, and may be a factor in the declining retention rates, as these individuals pursue other career opportunities in the ECE field.

It is common for educators in the ECE field to transition into new positions throughout their career journeys, and FCC educators are no exception. While some may choose to leave FCC to pursue opportunities in the broader field, there has also been a notable increase in the number of ECE educators opting to establish their own businesses. Over the past three years, the percentage of those with previous experience in the field has risen from 65% to 71%. This is significant change over just a few years. Notably, among FCC business owners with over 20 years experience, only 38% had prior experience in the field.

FCC Business Owners have long been advocating for recognition and respect as professionals in the broader ECE landscape. Statistics such as these bolster the assertion that they are much more than mere business owners, they are educators dedicated to their profession. As such, they view their careers as encompassing more than just the facilities in which they work.

“I truly love what I do and plan on doing my best for the families I serve. I appreciate this opportunity to be heard. Thank you!”



NAFCC Past-President Patricia Dischler has emphasized this perspective for decades, stating “It shouldn’t matter who owns the walls, an educator is an educator regardless of who owns the walls.” When considering recruitment and retention, the conversation should extend beyond strategies for attracting and retaining FCC businesses, to encompass how to retain educators throughout the ECE field as a whole. This approach should include multiple career pathways, recognizing FCC as a legitimate and valuable trajectory within the profession.

Retention & Business Practices

Several key areas of business practices correlate with those considering leaving family child care. Fiscal responsibilities— including budgeting, taxes, payroll and overall profitability— present significant challenges in the absence of adequate business support and training. Confidence in managing these responsibilities is notably low, with only 29% of respondents reporting a high level of confidence in this area. Similarly, enrollment and filling openings is also lacking, with only 36% expressing confidence in their capacity.

Over time, it becomes evident how the ability to fill openings impacts FCC, particularly in relation to their priorities...

The newest FCC Business Owners have the following priorities:

1. Fill openings
2. Find Balance
3. Strengthen Quality

At the 3-5 year mark, we see a significant change in priorities to:

1. Strengthen Quality
2. Increase Annual Income
3. Fill Openings

The decline of FCC business owners at the 3-5 year mark underscores the critical importance of filling openings in the first years. Those who remain in the field generally no longer view this as their primary challenge. It is likely that those who faced difficulties with enrollment felt unable to sustain their businesses, as evidenced by comments shared by respondents:

- ◇ *“Help us get a way to help find kid in need of care. A lot don’t even know there are such programs out there to help.”*
- ◇ *“I have been struggling with enrollment, and because of the struggle, my income has decreased drastically, and if I cannot increase my enrollment, I will have to find a job to meet the financial needs of my home.”*
- ◇ *“I had to accept a teaching position in a public pre-k due to very low enrollment for over a year.”*



◇ *"I might have to stop doing daycare if my enrollment doesn't increase."*

◇ *"Since the pandemic, I have been struggling with enrollment, if I cannot increase my enrollment, I will have to find a job to meet the financial needs of my home."*

On a more positive note, the data indicates a significant shift towards strengthening quality at the 3-5 year mark. This reflects a commitment to their business despite current challenges and a determination to focus on sustainability through quality improvements.

Retention & Personal Well-Being

Over time, there has been a positive trend in the sense of connection among FCC educators, with the percentage of those feeling highly connected increasing from 15% in the 1-3 year group to 30% in the 3-5 year group. However, even at 30%, this is a relatively small proportion of educators who feel connected. Given connection to others is an indicator for longevity, it is concerning to see such low levels during these pivotal years.

Among those who reported feeling strongly connected to other FCC business owners, significant metrics emerge: 82% express a sense of strong business practices, 71% feel confident in upholding policies, and 91% feel comfortable discussing their children's progress with parents. Furthermore, only 19% experience regular stress due to challenging child behaviors.

Personal well-being is also influenced by the availability of work-related benefits. In the 1-3 year group, 76% reported having only 1 out of 4 available benefits, while this figure decreased to 64% for the 3-5 year group, still 92% reported only having 1-2 benefits.

"We are paid the lowest wages, no health benefits, retirement benefits, not able to pay staff, low or no income for myself and not able to cover the necessary operational daily costs."

"I feel there is ample support for training and professional development. Providers need health and retirement benefits. We also need an increase in wages."

"There should be a pay rate in place for when enrollment declines due to parents negligence to comply with timely recertification requirements. Also benefits for holiday seasons, sick leave for professional workers."



Licensing Challenges

A notable jump was observed regarding whether respondents made changes in preparation for a licensing visit, rising from 38% for the 1-3 years group to 59% of the 3-5 years group. Licensing challenges were further illustrated in the responses to questions about the stress experienced during monitoring visits. Only 28% of the 1-3 year group reported the highest level of stress, in contrast to 47% of the 3-5 year group.

The heightened need to make adjustments when anticipating an evaluation visit, or the stress from a monitoring visit, may arise from a variety of factors: inconsistency in daily practices, disagreements with the validity of certain rules, or a lack of knowledge and understanding of those rules. When faced with these circumstances, business owners may attempt to address any lapses compliance, become frustrated or even argumentative with regulators during the visit, or they may internalize their stress. Such reactions can significantly impact their work and interactions with children and families.

Comments from respondents illustrated the diverse challenges posed by licensing, encompassing limitations imposed by local regulations, as well as inconsistencies between counties regarding allowances of Type A homes. In some counties, Type A FCC Homes have additional burdens from zoning departments of fire and/or building inspections. These often create challenges that prevent a FCC business owner from expanding their enrollment and increasing their income. It should also be noted that the subsidy rates for Type A FCC match the rates provided to center based programs, while Type B FCC subsidy rates are significantly lower. Putting limits on achieving Type A status results in financial limits for FCC business owners.

“One of the rules is we cannot take trainings while kiddos are in attendance but many trainings or meetings go one during business hours. I have several autistic children in care and find zero trainings to cover the need at a time I am able to attend.”

“In my area I would love to become a Type A provider but the city won’t allow for Type A in the city limits.”

“We need more help after licensing. I don’t even know how to get my portal from ODJFS. Still lots of questions after getting started.”

“The county workers are not always friendly and the classifications of the rules are interpreted differently either by the county, state or provider. We rarely feel our input is even considered on any of these aspects.”



Misconceptions Debunked

A common misconception regarding family child care is that FCC educators lack higher education. This misconception often leads to another erroneous belief that FCC business owners lack the skill to be educators. FCCE has long addressed this issue, presenting our model for the “Family Child Care Spectrum[®]” in Exchange[™] magazine (Dischler, Fowler, 2021).

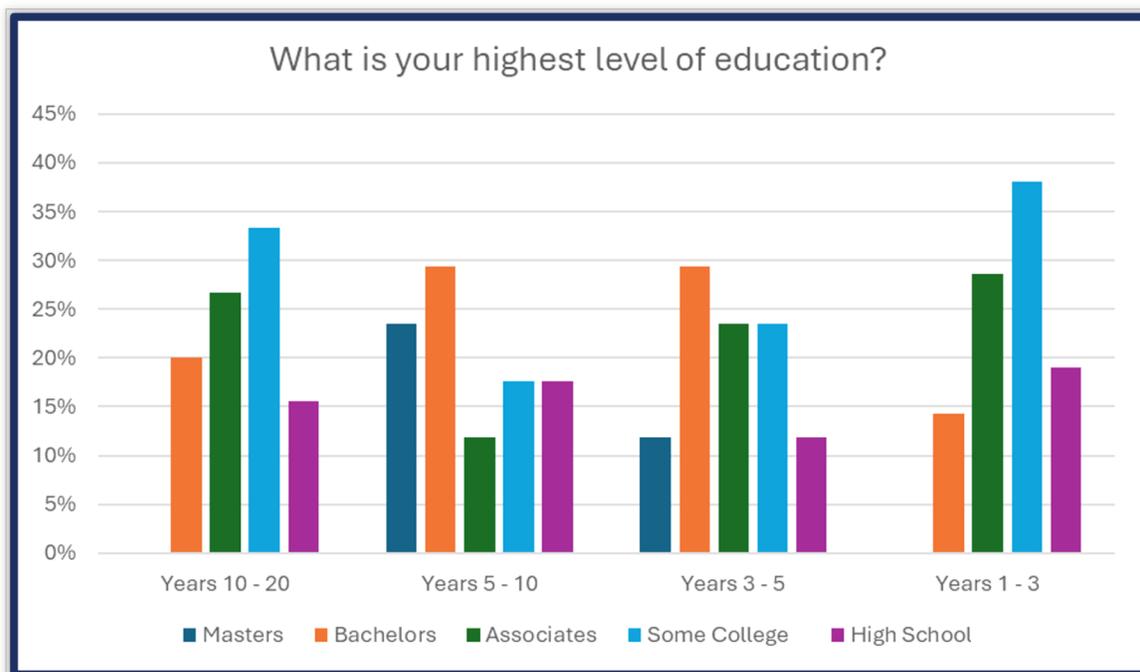
Individuals who choose to open a FCC business range in educational background, motivation, age, family circumstances, and experience. This spectrum includes everyone from stay-at-home mothers who wish to care for their neighbors’ children alongside their own for a few years—regardless of whether or not they hold a degree in another field—to a highly educated ECE professionals who develop their own comprehensive ECE programs. Current research and data on FCC rarely differentiates between these various backgrounds and motivations, making it challenging to fully understand this sector of the ECE field. (Bromer, et al, 2021).

Even without the differentiation for motivation, the Ohio results show an overall high level of education among all FCC business owners. As noted earlier, 51% of all respondents held some form of degree. By analyzing the results through the lens of how FCC business owners see their business, we can gain a clearer understanding of this sector:

Of those who see themselves as “Administrators”, 70% hold degrees.

Of those who use the title “Provider”, 47% hold degrees.

Moreover, there is a notable trend indicating that the longer FCC business owners remain in the field, the higher the percentage of those who have obtained degrees. As in most of the data discussed, a significant change occurs within the 3-5 year range with a shift towards having earned bachelor and masters degrees. The lack of master’s in the 10-20 year group may be attributed to two factors: educators transitioning to the broader field or a lack of support for obtaining higher education in the early stages of their

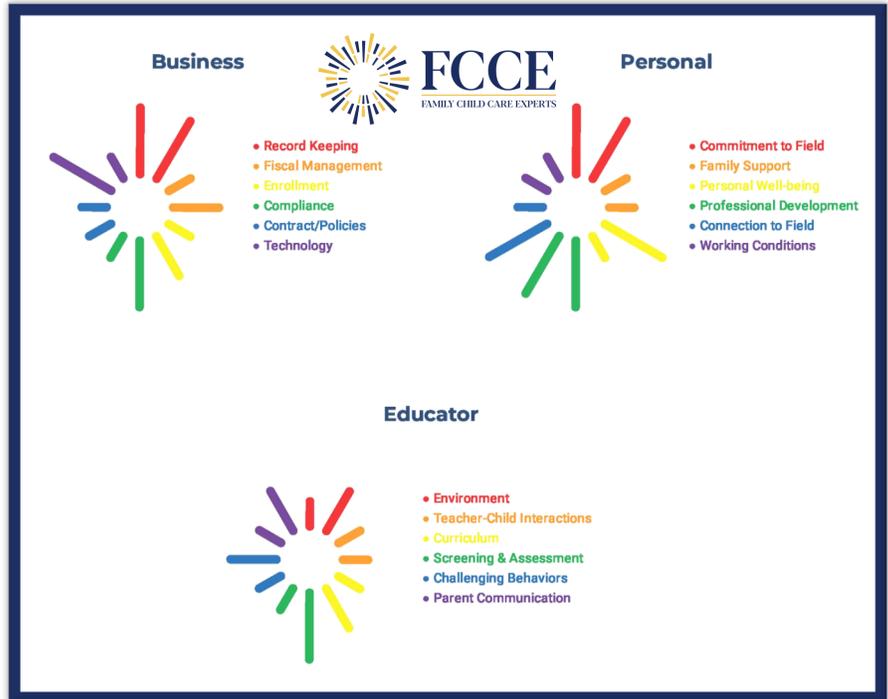




careers (especially 10-20 years ago when resources and support were limited). Given that this trend continues into the 5-10 year group, it is our conclusion that it is likely to continue expanding across all groups in the future.

Another prevalent misconception is that introducing the use of new technology for FCC business owners would pose significant challenges and lead to undue stress due to a perceived low skill levels in technology. However, participant data indicates 86% of FCC business owners are already currently utilizing technology in their operations, with 77% reporting that being asked to implement new technology is either not stressful at all or only mildly stressful.

The final assumption debunked by current data is that professional development alone is the key to quality and retention. While professional development can indeed increase quality and retention in various areas, it is no guarantee of success and should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all solution. The ECE field has long recognized the importance of coaching or other forms of ongoing support in conjunction with professional development to achieve significant impact on practices. This principle applies equally to FCC settings. The example here is of an individual Ohio respondent, who exhibited very strong professional development yet struggles in several other areas within educator practices. This example also highlights a weakness in connections with peers and the broader field, which may be hinder the effectiveness of the professional development they received.



Establishing learning cohorts as part of professional development, or providing the support of a coach, can have an profound impact on the successful implementation of training and educator strategies that may be new for the FCC educator.





Family Child Care Voices

In the open comments section of the survey, respondents expressed gratitude for being asked questions that had previously gone unaddressed and appreciated the opportunity to articulate feelings about their work. They conveyed their concerns regarding the challenges they encounter while also emphasizing their deep love and commitment to their profession.

Respect for their Work:

- ◇ *"We home providers put in a lot of work and time and energy to serve our families and we get very little recognition for what we do. We are not paid our due, we are looked at as if we are not worthy to receive financial support when without us there are MANY that could not work or support their families."*
- ◇ *"We are struggling and it's seems no one cares unless we are a center and that's VERY INSULTING. Thank you for asking these questions and I hope something is done to help us."*
- ◇ *"To be 'essential workers' we don't make enough money nor do we receive the respect that our profession rightly deserves."*

Financial Challenges:

- ◇ *"I loved providing child care, but it is just not sustainable anymore, even though I am fully rated, UPK and doing child care subsidies."*
- ◇ *"Things are so expensive we can barely afford food."*





Subsidy Program:

While participation in the state child care subsidy program was not explicitly addressed in the survey questions, it emerged as a significant issue warranting further investigation based on the numerous comments by respondents in the open-ended section of the survey:

- ◇ *“Let it be based on enrollment not attendance. We should still be paid if parents don’t bring their children. We are accessible daily, lights, water, rent or mortgage still needs to be paid. It’s not the provider’s fault and parents aren’t being held accountable.”*
- ◇ *“We are ESSENTIAL Professionals, pay us what we are worth.”*
- ◇ *“It would help if we were paid on time. I have 11 weekly invoices that have not been paid for one child. Everything is a constant fight to get paid or applications done. It is VERY frustrating.”*
- ◇ *“The amount of people who get denied for childcare subsidy is a lot. But families are struggling with increases in taxes, groceries, utilities and other things, so the extra money isn’t there.”*
- ◇ *“Increase income eligibility poverty level to align with the rising costs in the economy. Most families do not qualify for childcare because 145% is too low and the choice voucher of 200% still makes it unaffordable for families to sustain.”*
- ◇ *“I think all counties should get paid the same for Ohio’s children.”*
- ◇ *“An increase in pay rate is needed, separate policies, rules and guidelines should be implemented to accommodate only Type B programs. There should be a pay rate in place when enrollment declines, due to parents negligence to comply with timely recertification requirements, benefits for holiday seasons, and sick leave for professional workers.”*

“The bottom line is, Type B child care provider’s need to be able to be able to make a livable wage. We are living paycheck to paycheck. When we don’t get our pay from the state on time our own family suffers and we stress because our bills are still due to keep our businesses running smoothly.”



Enrollment Challenges:

- ◇ "I have struggled with getting children since the pandemic. If I can't get children I will have to find a job."
- ◇ "I have been open since August and still don't have any kids enrolled. I'm getting discouraged and thinking of doing something else."
- ◇ "Our numbers went up (since the pandemic) and have been full with a waiting list ever since."

Gratitude:

Additionally, there were numerous respondents who expressed gratitude for being asked how they feel about their work:

- ◇ "Thank you for taking the time to listen to our needs and I hope it doesn't go on deaf ears."
- ◇ "Thank you for considering my thoughts and my welfare."
- ◇ "Thank you for your help and support."
- ◇ "Thank you for this opportunity. I hope my answer helps whatever your wanting to accomplish."



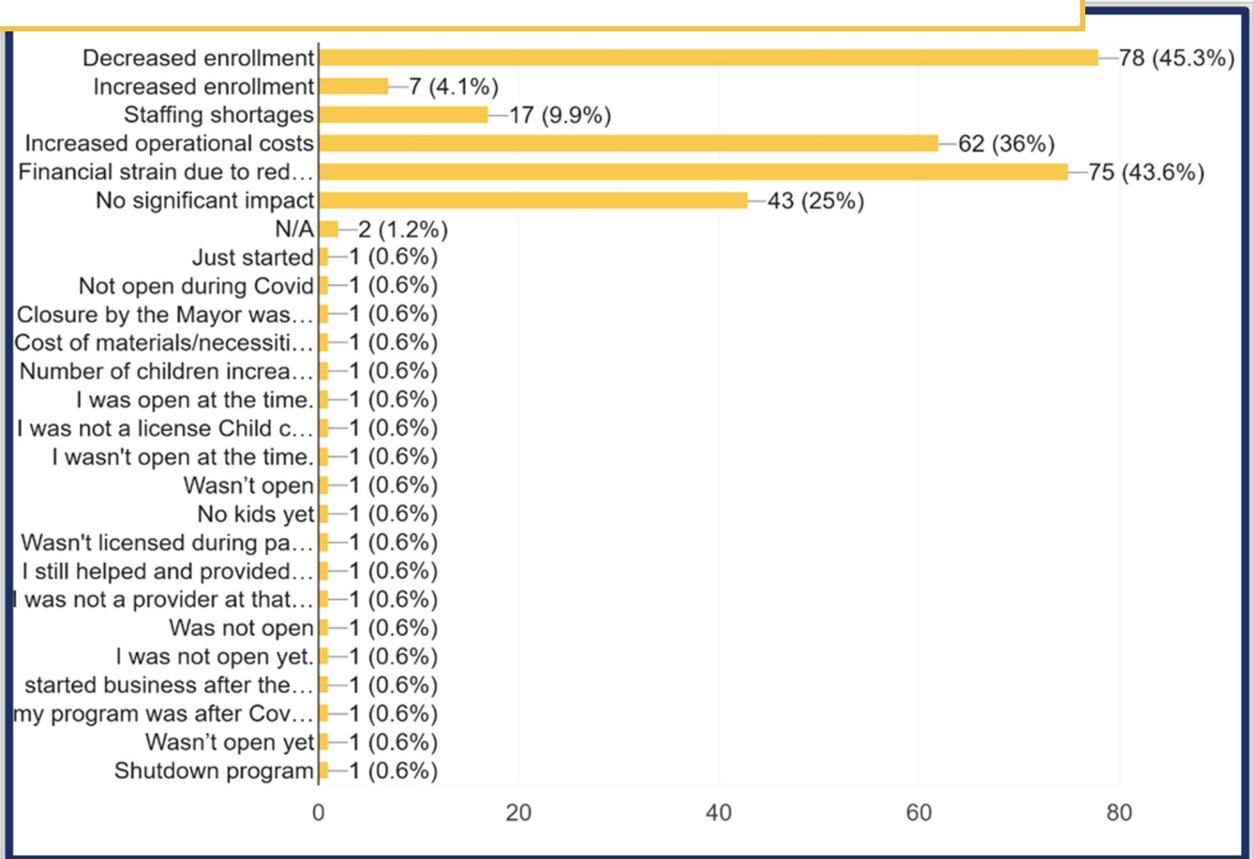


Pandemic Initiatives

In addition to the Balance Survey[®] questions, Ohio AEYC posed questions targeting the effects of the pandemic on FCC business owners. Additionally, respondents were provided an opportunity to provide feedback as to the effectiveness of the resources and support available during this time through various initiatives.



How did the COVID-19 Pandemic affect your family child care business in terms of enrollment, staffing, and financial stability?



The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on FCC businesses, including:

- ◆ Decreased enrollment
- ◆ Increased operational costs
- ◆ Financial strains resulting from reduction of in the number of enrolled children

Despite the overall negative effects reported by most respondents, there were notable exceptions. One FCC business owner remarked: "We were in the unique position of both having a program strongly integrated with funding sources at the local, state and federal level AND having a client base comprised mostly of essential workers, mostly employed in the medical fields."

"Many parents stayed home so they needed less childcare, so income decreased and the costs of cleaning, keeping records, food, etc superseded our pay often."



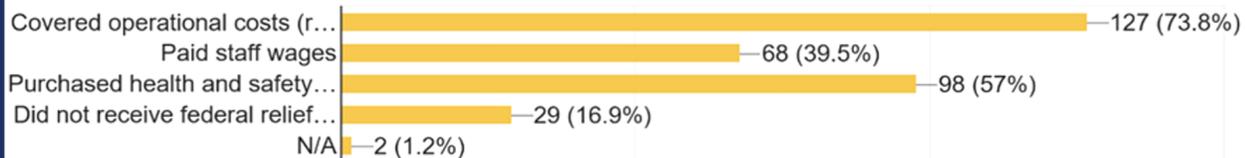
The availability of grant support during the challenges of the pandemic was essential in enabling many programs remain open. Federal relief funding had the most significant impact on:

- ◆ Covering operational costs
- ◆ Purchasing health and safety materials
- ◆ Paying staff wages

Despite this vital support, many respondents expressed feelings of being treated unfairly. Their comments highlighted difficulties in accessing grants, and obtaining assistance for the grant application process, as well as frustrations regarding discrepancies in the funding amounts available for centers compared to those allocated to FCC businesses.

“Everyone was home so there weren’t many kids but I had to buy all the extras that were required. I was so grateful for the pandemic grant. I would not have survived otherwise.”

In what ways did the federal relief funds, such as stabilization grants, help sustain your family child care program during the pandemic?



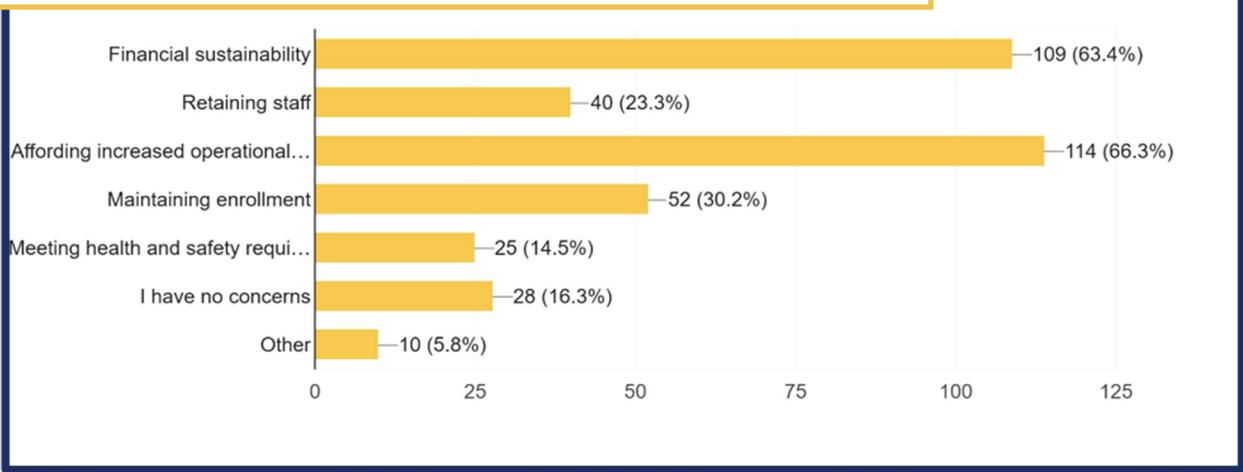
The Pandemic brought various necessary operational adjustments, but at a significant cost for ECE programs. The grants received enabled FCC business owners to purchase essential equipment and make necessary changes to remain open for essential workers. Many comments reflected the importance of these funds in facilitating the payment of both their own wages and those of their employees. Even prior to the pandemic, FCC business owners faced challenges in earning a living wage; for some, the additional financial support represented the first opportunity to adequately sustain themselves through their businesses.

However, an ongoing challenge that grant funding did not always alleviate was that of home repairs. The wear and tear on a home child care program can be considerable, as most residences are not constructed using industrial-grade materials. While some grants permitted for this type of expense, others did not. FCC business owners often find it difficult obtaining grant funding for repairs, as it is challenging to make improvements that are only attributed to the business and have no benefit to the personal home.

“Certain centers were given grants while others were not. We are all struggling and it was unfair that some got 150k-200k and home providers only got 5k.”



Federal relief funding is ending soon. Which aspects of your program will be impacted by the loss of funding?



“Other” Answers Explained:

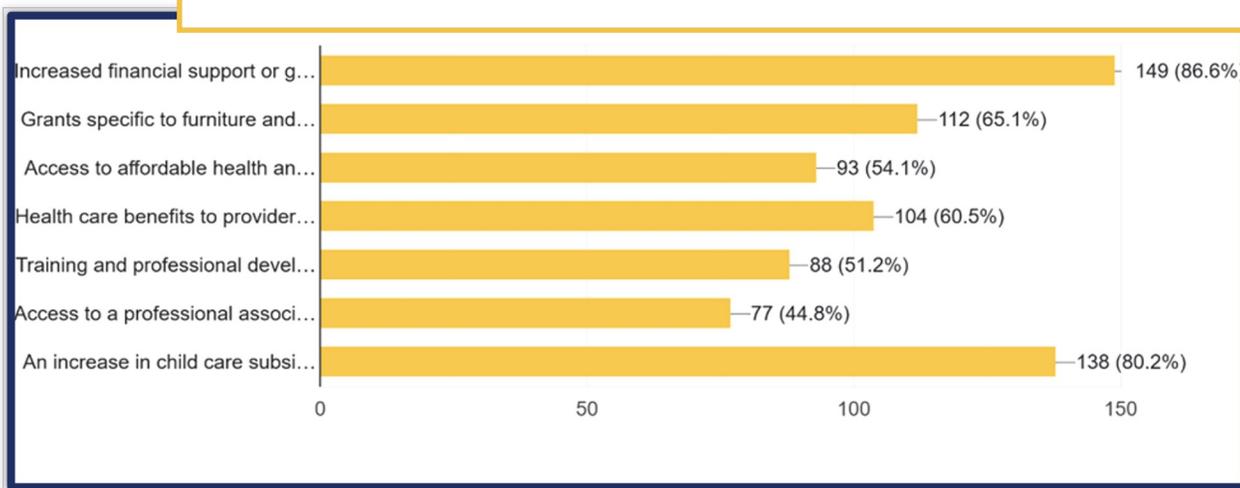
- ◆ *“Combined financial stability at risk due to increased operational costs from higher costs of living, and higher personal family costs with low/lower wages.”*
- ◆ *“Staff pay was raised during grant period but now it will be a struggle to continue to pay this.”*
- ◆ *“Any reduction in funding would hurt any business.”*
- ◆ *“The grant funding did not just cover NEW costs, but helped to finally stabilize EXISTING costs of operation.”*
- ◆ *“My program hopefully won’t suffer but my pay will decrease.”*

“It will be a serious
blow to my business
to lose funding.”

“Things are so
expensive we can
barely afford food.”



What additional support or resources would be most helpful to ensure the long-term sustainability of your family child care program?



When asked about their needs, the clear response was that any effort to help increase business income was appreciated. This support could take the form of grants, subsidy payments, or other financial assistance. Respondents highlighted the challenges of maintaining operational expenses and, more critically, the difficulty of achieving profitability sufficient to establish a living wage or strong work benefits, for themselves and their employees.

While continued operation during the pandemic imposed costly burdens to every program, FCC businesses were facing financial struggles prior to the additional challenges. For many, the funding received during the pandemic was much more than a lifeboat to weather the storm, it was a guiding light, illuminating a path forward not seen before. However, with this funding depleted, many are left back where they started. For numerous FCC business owners, this is no longer feasible, as the continued rise in the cost of living over the past few years has created a new threshold for sustainable income generation.

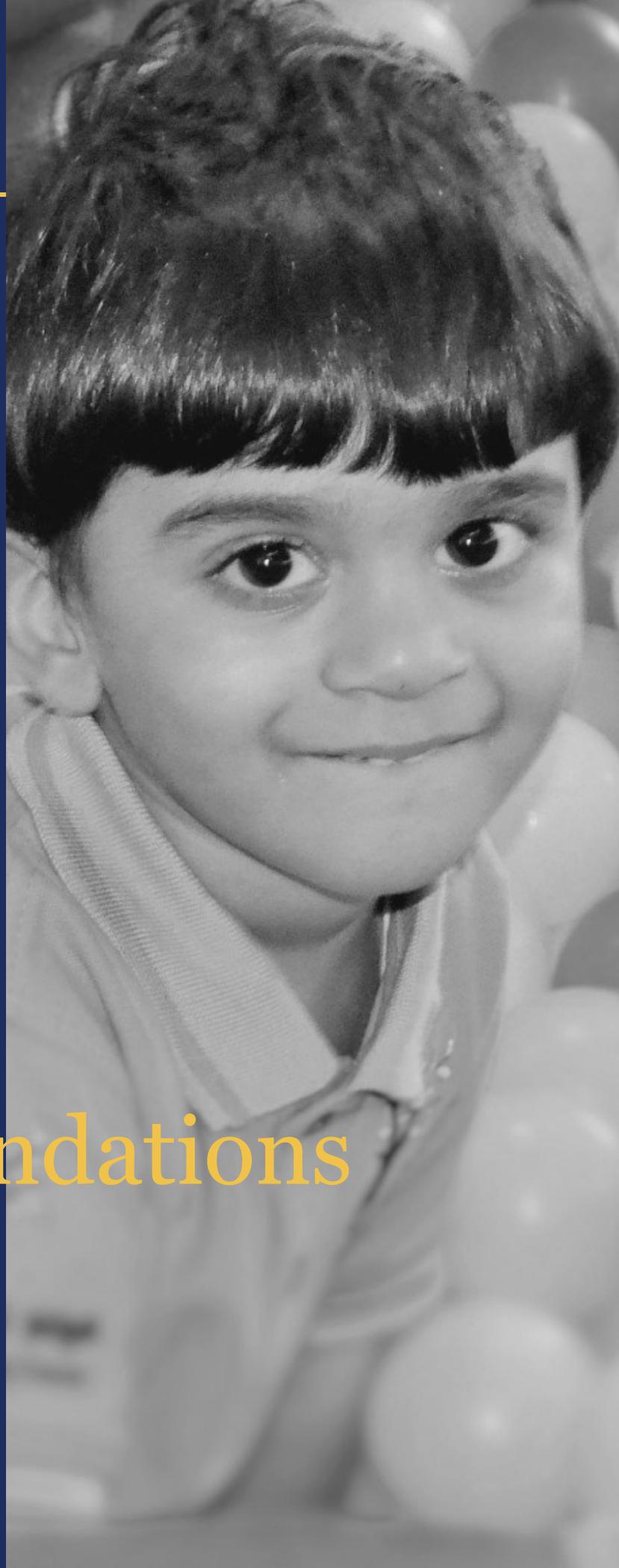
“I truly love what I do and plan on doing my best for the families I serve. I appreciate this opportunity to be heard. Thank you!”





Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered based on results from the Balance Survey[®] to be considered for informing system changes and advocacy efforts on behalf of FCC business owners.





The Balance Report[®] serves a critical function in illuminating the diverse elements that contribute to the success of a FCC business. When making decisions concerning the support and needs of FCC within a community—whether at the local, state, or national level—it is essential to factor in all three wheels of our framework. Business practices and educational methodologies are interconnected and significantly impact the overall well-being of the FCC business owner. Challenges arising in one area can often reverberate across others. Consequently, it is clear that there is no universal solution that fits all scenarios; however, this complexity should not deter us from pursuing a multifaceted approach to address these intricacies.

In essence, the proposed solutions frequently involve a menu of options tailored to address specific challenges faced by FCC business owners. This empowers them to select the resources most relevant to their success. By adopting this approach, we establish a system that enables FCC business owners to chart their own course, allowing them the autonomy to advance their businesses on their terms rather than adhering to a predefined path.

The following recommendations are based on the findings from the Ohio Balance Survey[®] and present a range of pathways to success tailored to meet the needs of Family Child Care (FCC) business owners in Ohio.



FCCE
FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPERTS

Business Support Recommendations

Licensing:

The unique nature of operating a child care business from a private home presents specific challenges, particularly in relation to interactions with licensing monitors. Establishing a strong and constructive relationship with both state and local licensing departments is crucial for ensuring compliance with regulations and creating a supportive environment for both FCC business owners and the children they serve.

FCC business owners often face challenges with licensing that stem from two primary concerns: a perceived lack of control over regulatory requirements and limited guidance on addressing instances of non-compliance. It is vital for any regulated group to have a voice in the process, as those who contribute to policy development are more likely to adhere to the established guidelines.

To empower FCC business owners in navigating the regulations that govern their operations, a clear pathway for communication is essential, both with their direct monitor and the department responsible for establishing protocols. Several actionable steps can be proposed by the department or advocated for by organizations representing FCC business owners, including:



- ◆ Improve communications from the department to FCC business owners regarding proposed regulations or new interpretations of existing policies. This can be achieved by collaborating with agencies that have successfully established information dissemination channels with FCC business owners.
- ◆ Create opportunities for FCC business owners to provide input and feedback on both existing and proposed regulations to the licensing department.
- ◆ Introduce new state legislation giving state licensing rule priority over county and zoning regulations, preventing the extra burden of zoning directed inspections or rules occurring sporadically at this time.
- ◆ Train license monitoring staff to develop a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics of FCC operations. This training should focus on fostering respectful relationships and effective communication during licensing visits, building trust, and providing constructive feedback that positions staff as valuable resources for business owners.
- ◆ Provide targeted training to clarify regulations and to establish the shared goal of ensuring health and safety for all children. This initiative should illustrate how regulations achieve this purpose and outline proactive steps owners can take to address any non-compliances. Additionally, it is important to cultivate an understanding that non-compliances can occur in any licensed business, even with the best intentions.

Establishing a positive relationship with licensing staff requires mutual respect and understanding. While it is very common in many other regulated businesses to receive non-compliances, accept these as a routine part of the business without extreme emotions attached, in FCC it is an entirely different story. This is the one aspect that truly shines a light on the difference between a center and a home child care program. Simply stated: it is their HOME. It is personal. FCC business owners take immense pride in their work, their homes, and what their commitment to serving their communities. They care so much they are willing to allow numerous strangers into their home as part of conducting this business. This in itself, even without non-compliances involved, can be a source of stress.

It is imperative for monitoring staff to recognize this unique context and approach discussions about violations with sensitivity, framing them within the shared objective of ensuring the health and safety of children rather than presenting them as personal criticisms. This perspective will foster more constructive conversations and strengthen the overall relationship. Similarly, FCC business owners should acknowledge the important role of licensing staff and appreciate their efforts to uphold high standards of care.

Income Sources:

Frustration among FCC business owners often stems from the overall low income generated by their operations, compounded by the limited ability to improve their financial situation. The primary source of income—enrollment fees (whether private or subsidized)—reached a ceiling for what the market can bear over a decade ago. It is no longer a viable strategy to simply increase fees in order to boost income. Alternative funding is crucial for sustainability. The issue is being recognized and tackled in almost every state, with a wide variety of potential solutions.

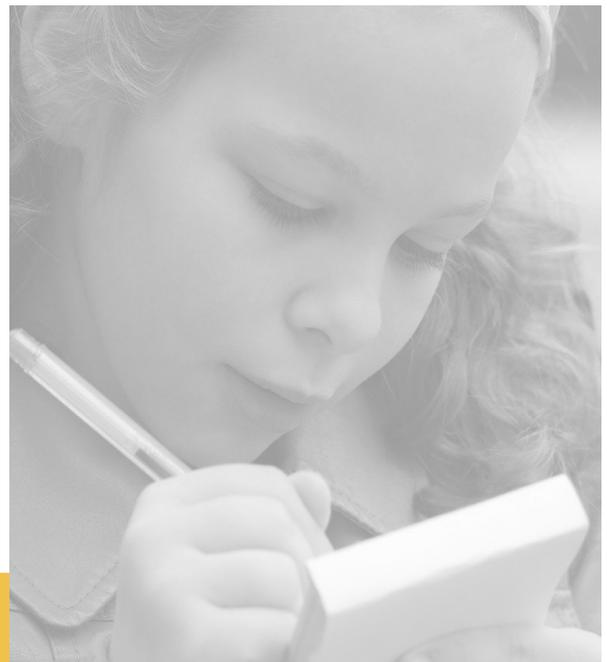


The following are recommendations for enhancing profitability for FCC businesses in Ohio:

- ◆ Increase opportunities for FCC businesses to participate in Early Head Start and Head Start programs. This could be achieved through the expansion of current grantees, incorporating FCCs as “satellite” classrooms, or by designating an agency as a grantee to represent all participating FCC businesses.
- ◆ Expand school district universal preschool to be inclusive of community partners such as family child care homes. This can be achieved through direct contract with school districts or through a governing agency representing all FCC businesses.
- ◆ Adjust state subsidy rates to align with the true cost of delivering high quality care, providing matching rates for both Type A and B FCC homes. Additionally, consider transitioning to an enrollment-based funding model, as FCC businesses incur various costs regardless of children’s actual attendance.
- ◆ Empower FCC businesses to establish their own rates and require parents to be responsible for any differences between the subsidy rate and the rates set by the FCC business.
 - ◇ It is important to note that many parents are unable to absorb additional costs. Consequently, many programs, even when permitted, refrain from charging the differential to subsidy families, personally taking on the burden of subsidizing the cost of care.
- ◆ Raise the income thresholds for families to qualify for subsidy support, enabling more families to access affordable child care services.
- ◆ Establish multiple funding streams, such as integrating Head Start programs with wrap-around care funded by the subsidy system to cover the full enrollment period.
- ◆ Invest in workforce compensation grants at local or state levels to support this essential facet of community workforce development.
- ◆ Offer scholarships for continued education, as well as grants for equipment, materials and necessary home improvements and repairs.

Contracts & Policies:

- ◆ Offer training and business coaching on writing effective policies and procedures and effectively communicating these policies and contracts to families, as well as planning for appropriate strategies to enforce policies and contracts when breeches occur.





Enrollment:

- ◆ Strengthen communications with FCC business to ensure effective utilization of the referral system available in their area.
- ◆ Strengthen communications and marketing efforts to raise awareness and encourage families to make use of the referral system.
- ◆ Provide training and coaching focused on effectively marketing FCC programs within their communities.

Fiscal Responsibilities:

- ◆ Provide training and coaching on budgeting, tax planning and retirement planning, addressing the challenges with the limited availability of benefits. By equipping FCC business owners with sound budgeting practices and strategies to enhance their overall income, they will be better positioned to plan for essential benefits such as retirement savings, insurance coverage and paid holidays.

Environment:

- ◆ Continue and enhance the provision of grants for materials and equipment, while also expanding funding to include home repairs.



FCCE
FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPERTS

Educator Support Recommendations

Child Development:

- ◆ Offer training and coaching support focused on the collection of high quality observations of children's development and learning. Additionally, equip educators with the skills to effectively utilize this data to inform lesson planning.

Challenging Behaviors:

- ◆ Offer training and coaching support to address challenging behaviors. Additionally, fostering connections among FCC educators can create a platform for discussion and group support, assisting those facing specific challenges in their practice. .



While support systems for FCC business owners may not have the ability to address every aspect of an individual's personal life that contributes to stress or challenges, there is much that can be done to create a system of support around them that builds their capacity to manage various challenges independently. Ohio FCC business owners exhibited many strengths in the Personal Wheel. They demonstrate robust support from family and community networks; therefore, providing additional support in critical areas of need has the potential to achieve and sustain balance that will keep them moving forward for years to come.



FCCE
FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPERTS

Personal Support Recommendations

Connection to Peers

- ◆ Establish professional learning communities among FCC peers to foster collaboration and shared learning.
- ◆ Develop local and state support groups and associations that bring FCC business owners together to share challenges and successes, facilitating mutual learning.
- ◆ Create peer mentoring programs to provide guidance and support.
- ◆ Organize FCC Appreciation events to celebrate the efforts of those engaged in this challenging yet vital work.

Work-related Benefits

- ◆ Provide training and coaching focused on budgeting for work-related benefits, including paid vacations/holidays, sick leave, retirement and insurance.
- ◆ Advocate for modifications to the subsidy program that reflects the true costs of care, enabling FCC business owners the opportunity to be profitable and plan for essential work benefits.



Family Child Care Insights Report[®] Supplement — Southwest Ohio

The following Balance Report[®] data and insights present results from the counties served by the Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children which deviated from the presented state level data results.





Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children

The Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (SWOAEYC) is a state-level affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, serving Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and 16 surrounding counties. In an effort to better understand and address the needs of family child care business owners within this service area, the results of the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC) Balance Survey[®] were filtered to focus on the counties served by SWOAEYC.

This supplemental report aims to identify differences in demographic and operational characteristics compared to the statewide data found in the OAEYC Insights Report[®]. Such insights are crucial for tailoring support and resources to the distinct needs of local communities. The counties served by SWOAEYC include: Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Darke, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, and Warren. Although responses were not received from every county, we received valuable data from 66 respondents across Butler, Champaign, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Shelby counties, encompassing the metropolitan areas of Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton.

Following is an in-depth analysis of the SWOAEYC region respondents, highlighting key areas of distinction from the statewide report.



The biggest priorities for SWOAEYC family child care business owners were:

- 1. Filling openings**
- 2. Increasing income**



Demographics:

The demographic characteristics of respondents from the SWOAEYC service area closely mirrored those found in the statewide report:

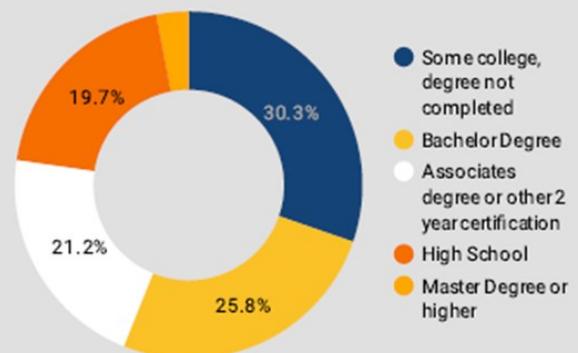
- ◆ Gender: 100% Female
- ◆ Race/Ethnicity: 65% African-American, 24.2% Caucasian, 8% Latino or Hispanic, 2.8 Prefer not to say
- ◆ Marital Status: 53% married, 41% not married, 6% Prefer not to say
- ◆ Household Provider Status: 53% Sole Household Provider
- ◆ Language: 92% First Language English, 8% First Language Spanish

Education Levels:

- ◆ Masters Degree: 0%
- ◆ Bachelors Degree: 26%
- ◆ Associates Degree: 21%
- ◆ Some College: 30%
- ◆ High School: 18%

There was a slightly higher percentage of FCC educators holding a bachelor's degree in the SWOAEYC group compared to statewide data, as well as a marginally higher percentage with associate degrees.

What is highest level of education?





READING THE BALANCE REPORT[©]

Each wheel contains “spokes” that reflect responses from the Balance Survey[©], organized into six topic areas.

Each topic area is represented by two spokes. The representation of the spokes is as follows:

- Full Spoke = Strength in this Area
- Partial Spoke = Partial Challenge in this Area (the shorter the Spoke, the greater the challenge)
- No Spoke (dot) = An Area of Challenge

This report analyzes the results along with inconsistencies with responses, correlations between answers, and trends seen in the group. For example, when the two spokes in any area do not match, it can signify a difference between perception and practice. Additionally, a wheel with missing or partial spokes will create imbalance for the respondent and have a negative impact on the other two wheels.

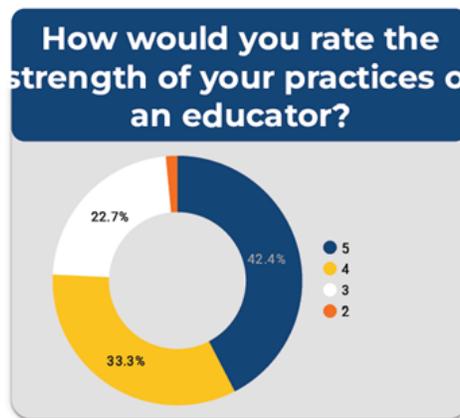


Results:

Overall, the results for the SWOAEYC area were largely consistent with the statewide Balance Report[®] from the primary analysis, though there were specific areas where SWOAEYC exhibited moderate to strong variations from the state data. The Educator wheel was the strongest for the SWOAEYC region, similar to the state results. This correlates with the respondents' self-assessment of their teaching practices, which were higher for the SWOAEYC group than the state data, with 42% awarding themselves the highest score of 5, compared to 36% from the state data.

While respondents generally perceived their business practices favorably, their self-evaluation showed a moderate shift compared to their evaluation of educator practices. The highest response rate was for level 4 out of 5, with 32% at this level.

Self-reflection on personal work/life balance showed the largest variation from state data. The highest percentage of responses were for level 3 out of 5 with 35% at this level, whereas the state's highest level was 4. Overall, results in the personal wheel were slightly lower than the state data.



Educator Practices

One of the significant outcomes stemming from the robust teaching strategies observed within the FCC educator practices was the notably lower incidence of challenging behaviors in their programs. When surveyed, the majority of respondents reported infrequent occurrences of behavior challenges, with top responses clustering at the lower end of the spectrum (1 being never and 5 being daily). This is in stark contrast to the state data, where the top responses indicated a higher frequency of such challenges.

The correlation between advanced educational qualifications and effective teaching practices is evident here, as FCC educators with higher qualifications possess a deeper understanding of child development and behavioral management techniques. This expertise enables them to create environments conducive to positive behaviors, thus minimizing disruptions and fostering a harmonious learning atmosphere.



Furthermore, the higher educational levels among SWOAEYC educators likely contribute to their confidence and competence in implementing comprehensive and consistent practices across various aspects such as environment, curriculum, and parent communication. These practices not only enhance the quality of education but also contribute to the overall well-being and development of the children under their care.

Overall, the strong FCC educator practices within the SWOAEYC group underscore the importance of continued investment in professional development and higher education for FCC educators. Such investments yield tangible benefits in terms of improved teaching practices, better managed programs, and ultimately, more positive child outcomes.

Business Practices

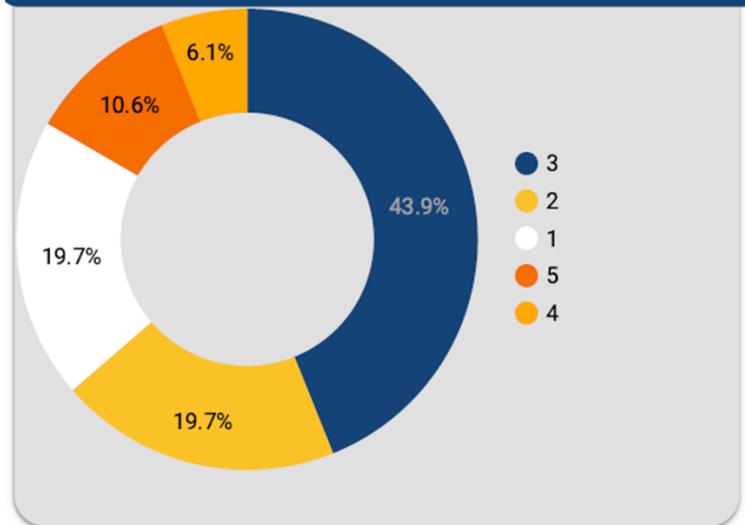
Similar to the state data, the SWOAEYC business wheel reveals inconsistencies between spokes in each area of the wheel. While certain aspects of FCC business practices display strength, these are often mitigated by related actions or emotions that uncover underlying weaknesses.

A significant challenge faced by the SWOAEYC group is the struggle to generate income, with 83% reporting dissatisfaction in this area. The priorities for the FCC business owners reflect this challenge, with the top two priorities tied to financial stability: filling openings and increasing enrollment.

While 58% of respondents feel confident in their ability to fill openings, this remains a struggle for many. This difficulty may be attributed to the limited range of marketing strategies employed. Unlike the statewide group, which utilizes a wide range of marketing strategies including Resource & Referral agency support and word-of-mouth methods, 76% of the SWOAEYC FCC business owners rely primarily on word-of-mouth strategies.

Additionally, record keeping responsibilities present a notable challenge, with 53% of respondents reporting the lowest levels of confidence in maintaining these responsibilities. This may contribute to the stress experienced during state and local monitoring visits, with 74% reporting moderate to high levels of stress during such visits.

How frequently do you feel stressed by challenging behaviors with the children in your program?

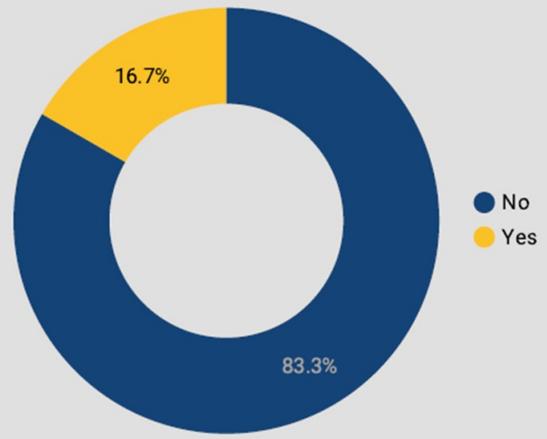




Interestingly, 89% of respondents are utilizing technology in their business practices. Typically, the use of technology alleviates the burden of fiscal record keeping and can assist with enrollment efforts. While the survey did not specify the exact types of technology used, business technology remains the most widely used type in early childhood education environments.

Overall, the SWOAEYC group's business practices exhibit both strengths and challenges, with financial stability and effective record keeping emerging as key areas for improvement. As presented in the recommendations for the state data, addressing these issues through expanded revenue sources, diversified marketing strategies and enhanced technological integration could significantly bolster their operational efficiency and success.

Are you satisfied with the current income from your business?



Personal Wheel

Overall, there was a moderate level of strength observed in the personal wheel for FCC business owners. In the SWOAEYC region, respondents demonstrated robust professional development practices, which were reflected in their educator practices. Working conditions and familial support mirrored the state data.

Where distinct differences emerged in the regional data was in the FCC business owners' commitment to the field and their peer connections, both of which are indicators of retention. Correlated to the financial challenges previously presented, 58% of SWOAEYC business owners reported a willingness to leave the profession for higher income opportunities in other fields, compared to 69% in the state data. Although reduced, this still represents a significant portion of the workforce.

A positive aspect is found in the FCC business owners' expressions of their connectedness to their peers. With 60% reporting a sense of connection to other FCC business owners, this contrasts with the state data, which only saw 40% feeling connected. Continued opportunities for peer relations, along with expansions through professional networks and collaborative opportunities could build upon this foundation, potentially improving retention rates and job satisfaction.



Recommendations:

A cohesive approach which includes implementation of the recommendations outlined in the OAEYC Insights Report[®] with an additional focus on the distinct priorities and strengths of the FCC business owners they serve, will position SWOAEYC for significant impact potential on advocacy efforts and facilitating sustainable system improvements tailored to the needs of FCC business owners in the southwest region of Ohio.

Achieving financial stability, in particular, will necessitate a comprehensive and robust approach, which is pivotal for inducing positive change and enhancing retention rates. Moreover, by promoting diversified marketing strategies, expanding revenue sources, and integrating advanced technological solutions, SWOAEYC can empower FCC business owners to not only overcome current challenges but also optimize their operational efficiency and overall success.

Leveraging the existing connections among FCC business owners in the region, along with the identified strengths in this report, SWOAEYC can act as a catalyst for change. Continued efforts in this direction can further enhance job satisfaction and retention rates, ultimately supporting a resilient and thriving FCC business community within the SWOAEYC region.



References:

Armstrong, L. (2011). *Family Child Care Homes: Creative Spaces for Children to Learn*, Redleaf Press, MN.

Barnett, W. S., & Li, Z. (2021). Data et al. (2021). National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (NSECE). (2015).



Bromer, J., Porter, T., Melvin, S., & Ragonese-Barnes, M. (2021). *Family Child Care Educators' Perspectives on Leaving, Staying, and Entering the Field: Findings from the Multi-State Study of Family Child Care Decline and Supply*. Herr Research Center, Erikson Institute.

Bromer, J., Porter, T., Melvin, S., & Ragonese-Barnes, M. (2021). Multi-state study on family child care.

Center for American Progress. (2020). Child Care Deserts. center-for-american-progress.vipdev.indo.site. <https://childcaredeserts.org/>

Child Care Aware (2022). Catalyzing Growth Using Data to Change Child Care. <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care-2022/%23LandscapeAnalysis&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1741017048851203&usg=AOvVaw0376tKtiEht-kKslQe4A5r>

Dischler, P. (2005). *From Babysitter to Business Owner: Getting the Most Out Of Your Home Child Care Business*. Redleaf Press, MN.

Dischler, P.; Fowler, D. (2021). *Coaching Family Child Care: A New Approach*. Exchange Magazine, Lincoln, NE.

First Five Years Fund. (2024). Ohio. <https://www.ffyf.org/states/ohio/>

Ohio Department of Children & Youth. (2025). Programs, Standards, Rules and Forms. <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-providers/step-up-to-quality/program-standards-rules-forms>

Ohio Department of Job & Family Services. (2025). What Can A Provider Charge? [https://jfs.ohio.gov/child-care/publicly-funded-child-care/for-providers/what-can-a-provider-charge#:~:text=Publicly%20funded%20child%20care%20\(PFCC\)%20programs%20are,services%20and%20requirements%20outlined%20in%20the%20agr](https://jfs.ohio.gov/child-care/publicly-funded-child-care/for-providers/what-can-a-provider-charge#:~:text=Publicly%20funded%20child%20care%20(PFCC)%20programs%20are,services%20and%20requirements%20outlined%20in%20the%20agr)

The Ohio State University. (2025). Head Start Child Care Partnership. <https://sfc.osu.edu/community-programs/early-head-start-partnership-program/#:~:text=Learning%20begins%20at%20birth%20and,first%20six%20weeks%20after%20birth>



*Copyright 2025 Family Child Care Experts
& Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children*



FCCE
FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPERTS

ohioaeyc