

San Diego County Shared Services Alliance Evaluation (Year 1)

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Presented by:



Sarah Garrity, Ed.D
*Senior Associate Dean;
CEED Co-Director*

Saralyn Miller, Ph.D
Research Scientist



Alison LaRocca
President & CEO

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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

In September of 2023, the San Diego YMCA, in partnership with a group of local organizations that serve child care providers was awarded the San Diego County Shared Services Alliance (SSA) contract. These organizations included: Chicano Federation, Child Development Associates, Horn of Africa, and International Rescue Committee.

The program was established to support child care providers by helping them strengthen the sustainability of their businesses and promote growth. The program aimed to accomplish this by helping providers improve their business practices and operation infrastructure. The San Diego SSA model combined business coaching, professional development, and technology to support childcare providers in meeting the program's goals and objectives for Year 1.

Luminary Evaluation and the San Diego State University Center for Excellence in Early Development conducted a Year 1 program evaluation. At baseline, child care providers needed assistance and were motivated to improve business practices. By the end of the first year, providers made considerable gains in these areas of need. The San Diego SSA team of organizational leaders, business coaches and cultural navigators were instrumental in ensuring all goals and objectives were met or exceeded. Supporting data for each of the goals and objectives are outlined in the following report.

Evaluation Finding: 105 child care providers served during Year 1 of the San Diego County SSA demonstrated progress toward the following goals established at the program's outset:



Executive Summary: Goal Progress

SSA Goal: Increase Enrollment Capacity

Business Growth

Enrollment	Improved	73% of providers increased or sustained enrollment. Overall enrollment increased by 9%.
Funding	Improved	36 providers reported that they applied for \$73,200 in grants or loans between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.
Weekly Rates	Maintained	Weekly tuition rates remained relatively constant across age groups between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.
Waitlist	Maintained	30% of providers actively manage a waitlist.

SSA Goal: Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation

Financial Management

Bad Debt	Maintained	91% of providers report that they have no bad debt.
Budget	Improved	51% of providers report they have a budget or cashflow system in place (14% increase).
Business Debt	Improved	15% of providers have debt related to their child care business (8% decrease).
Savings	Improved	63% of providers have savings or financial reserves (19% increase).

Executive Summary: Goal Progress

SSA Goal: Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation (continued)

Networks and Provider Programs

CACFP	Improved	59% of providers participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), (11% increase).
Union	Improved	69% of providers are members of the Child Care Provider Union (8% increase).
SDQPI	Improved	31% of providers participate in the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI) (5% increase).
Workforce Registry	Improved	63% of providers are members of the Workforce Registry (14% increase).
Subsidy	Improved	96% of providers accept at least one type of subsidy (12% increase), and 48% accept private pay tuition (7% increase).

SSA Goal: Increase business efficiencies, infrastructure, and access to a technology platform

Licensing and Operations

Wages	Improved/ Maintained	\$1.67 (average full-time hourly wage increase) and \$0.06 (average part-time hourly wage increase).
Benefits	Improved	60% of providers offer paid time off (16% increase).

Continuing Education

Training	Baseline Measure	98% of providers participated in at least 1 training through their SSA participation.
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Recordkeeping

Organization and Policies	Improved	27% of providers implemented an expense tracking system, and 25% implemented new client contracts.
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Communication

CCMS	Improved	51% of providers report using a Child Care Management System (CCMS), and 14 providers completed a goal to start using CareConnect.
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Executive Summary: Program Objectives

Program objectives were also created to establish activities and services that would achieve SSA goals.

Program Objective	Description	Evidence of Achievement
1. SSA Enrollment	Minimum of 240 hours of service to a minimum of 105 providers to be enrolled into the SSA during the initial term to support their business resiliency and efficiency.	105 providers enrolled and served during SSA Year 1.
2. Business Assessment Tool	Support 100% of participating providers with completion of either a BAS or PAS.	100% of providers in the San Diego County SSA completed the BAS, PAS, or Business Practices Checklist.
3. Provider Engagement Plans	Support 100% of providers with completion of an engagement plan.	100% of providers in the San Diego County SSA completed an engagement plan.
4. Provider Goals	Provide a minimum of 1,260 hours of service to a minimum of 105 providers enrolled during the initial term to support goal completion in the areas of full enrollment, full fee collection, and revenue covers per-child cost.	Providers in the San Diego County SSA participated in 1,683 hours of coaching between November 2023 and May 2024. 100% of providers completed at least 1 goal from their business plan during Year 1. 205 goals were completed during the program period (November 2023-May 2024).

Introduction



Introduction – SSA Team

The San Diego County SSA brings together seven organizations that work in concert to provide data-driven business coaching and development support to child care providers.



Project Lead: The YMCA's Childcare Resource Service (CRS), the contract holder and project lead, is a state-funded Child Care Resource & Referral agency that serves all of San Diego County. The YMCA CRS has worked extensively with family child care providers for 43 years, supporting programs in getting licensed and opening their doors, supporting them with referrals from families looking for child care, and providing training and coaching on a variety of topics. YMCA CRS is also one of two Alternative Payment Programs providing child care subsidies to San Diego County families and payments to the child care programs they wish to use.



Partner Organization: Child Development Associates (CDA) is a multi-service nonprofit with 50 years of experience in providing subsidized child care reimbursements. CDA offers comprehensive support to family child care providers in San Diego and five other counties through nutrition education, personalized in-home coaching, and financial assistance. Committed to enhancing the stability and growth of child care businesses, CDA has distributed millions of dollars in stipends, grants, and supplemental payments. Through these initiatives and strategic partnerships, CDA remains steadfast in its mission to support the success and well-being of thousands of children, families, and child care providers with a whole-person and multi-generational approach.



Partner Organization and ECBO: Chicano Federation's (CF) mission is to cultivate opportunities and advocate for families and individuals for a more equitable comunidad. Chicano Federation serves a diverse population with programs that help low-income children and families access vital and often life-changing services. Chicano Federation programs and services include subsidized care for infants and toddlers, early childhood education at a preschool in Barrio Logan, nutritious meals for children in family child care homes and affordable housing. For the past five years, Chicano Federation has partnered with the IRC, Horn of Africa and CEED to design and implement the STEPS program.



Partner Organization and ECBO: Horn of Africa (HOA) is the leading community-based organization representing and advocating for African refugees and immigrants in San Diego, with a particular emphasis on refugees from Somalia. Horn of Africa began training and licensing child care providers 14 years ago and initiated the Mid-City Microenterprise Program to provide training to refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia and other East African countries, leading to state certification as home child care providers. For the past five years, Horn of Africa has partnered with the IRC, Chicano Federation and CEED to design and implement the STEPS program.



Partner Organization and ECBO: The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has 24 years of experience in refugee and immigrant microenterprise development, and over the last five years, has successfully assisted over 500 refugees and immigrants in establishing, sustaining, or growing their FCC businesses throughout San Diego County. The IRC has built strong and longstanding partnerships with key stakeholders in the FCC licensing realm, including the State of California's Division of Community Care Licensing and the YMCA of San Diego County's Childcare Resource Service. For the past five years, IRC has partnered with Chicano Federation, Horn of Africa and CEED to design and implement the STEPS program.

Introduction – SSA Team

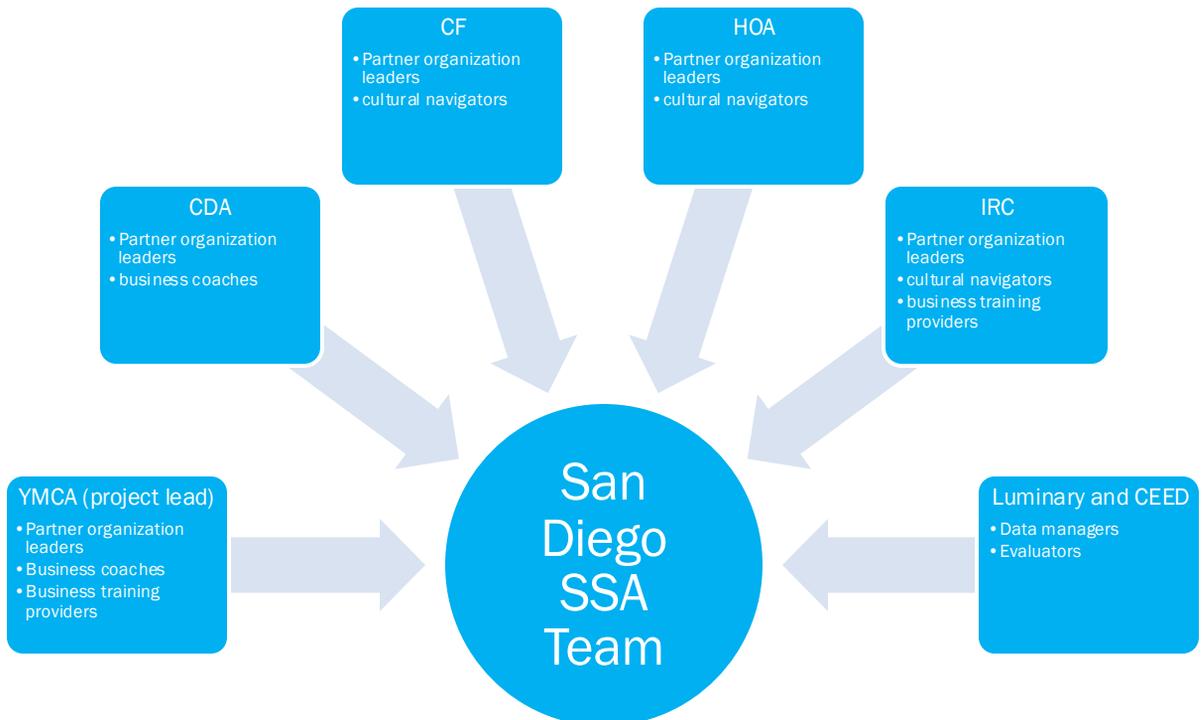


Evaluator: Luminary Evaluation is a full-scale program evaluation firm that helps nonprofits, state agencies, and funders develop and implement effective data collection and practices. Luminary co-designs tailored data collection approaches with clients, collecting holistic data from primary sources and the people who know them the best, independent analysis, and identifying opportunities for scaling and impact by leveraging field expertise. Luminary has conducted dozens of evaluations for early childhood education programs and education systems to measure effectiveness, recommend opportunities to increase impact, and help guide investments.



Evaluator: Situated within SDSU, CEED is a transdisciplinary, research-based training facility with a holistic approach to supporting early childhood development, mental health, and early childhood education. CEED faculty conduct applied research and engage in evaluation efforts aimed at the identification of promising practices that can be scaled up and shared with the broader research and educational community. For the past five years, CEED has helped design, implement, and evaluate the STEPS program, while also conducting research on the impact of the cultural navigators (Garrity et al., 2024).

Roles were established among the project partners to facilitate the coordination and implementation of services. Team members offering direct services to child care providers were called business coaches by CDA and YMCA and cultural navigators by HOA, IRC, and CF.



San Diego Shared Services Alliance Program Design



SSA Development and Purpose

Program Development

The San Diego SSA Program Team modeled Year 1 after similar programs both nationally and locally.

- **National Programs:** The YMCA leadership team adopted successful components of SSA programs across the country before finalizing a model that would work best for child care providers in San Diego County. One industry-standard sustainability model critical to the program's development is the Iron Triangle of Early Childhood Finance. This model contends that business success is based on three tenants, full fee collection, full enrollment, and revenues that cover the cost per child.
- **San Diego SSA Pilot:** In 2022, in partnership with CDA, First 5 California awarded the YMCA funding to design and pilot a two-year SSA pilot serving 15 child care providers. The pilot program established a foundational model for the County-funded SSA expansion, which began during the pilot program's second year of implementation. Luminary Evaluation, in concert with YMCA and CDA developed a series of data collection tools and conducted an evaluation of the program. The evaluation identified the foundational success and future promise of the SSA approach. The data collection tools developed during the pilot were collaboratively refined and adapted to serve the expanded SSA. This allowed for seamless integration as the pilot and Year 1 merged.
- **STEPS Program:** The ECBOs, Chicano Federation, Horn of Africa, and IRC, and CEED brought expertise from their participation in a family child care provider workforce development program titled Steps to Family Child Care Success (STEPS). The STEPS program uses cultural navigators to help deliver program services, by training and coaching FCC providers on their business efforts (Garrity et al., 2021; Garrity et al., 2024). Over the last four years, CEED and the three ECBOs, participated in STEPS program development and implementation. CEED also conducted yearly evaluations that have demonstrated the efficacy of a cohort-based professional development program embedded in ECBOs. CEED's research efforts have also illuminated the value of a professional development model that is culturally and linguistically responsive (Garrity, et al., 2024).

Program Purpose

The San Diego County Shared Service Alliance (SSA) has two overarching goals for supporting both center-based and family child care providers:

- Support targeted providers countywide to increase and strengthen provider capacity by bolstering the sustainability of their child care business and enhancing business resilience.
- Connect and provide access to participating providers with a network of business supports to ensure the efficiency, resiliency, and viability of their business.

SSA Program Features

Program Features

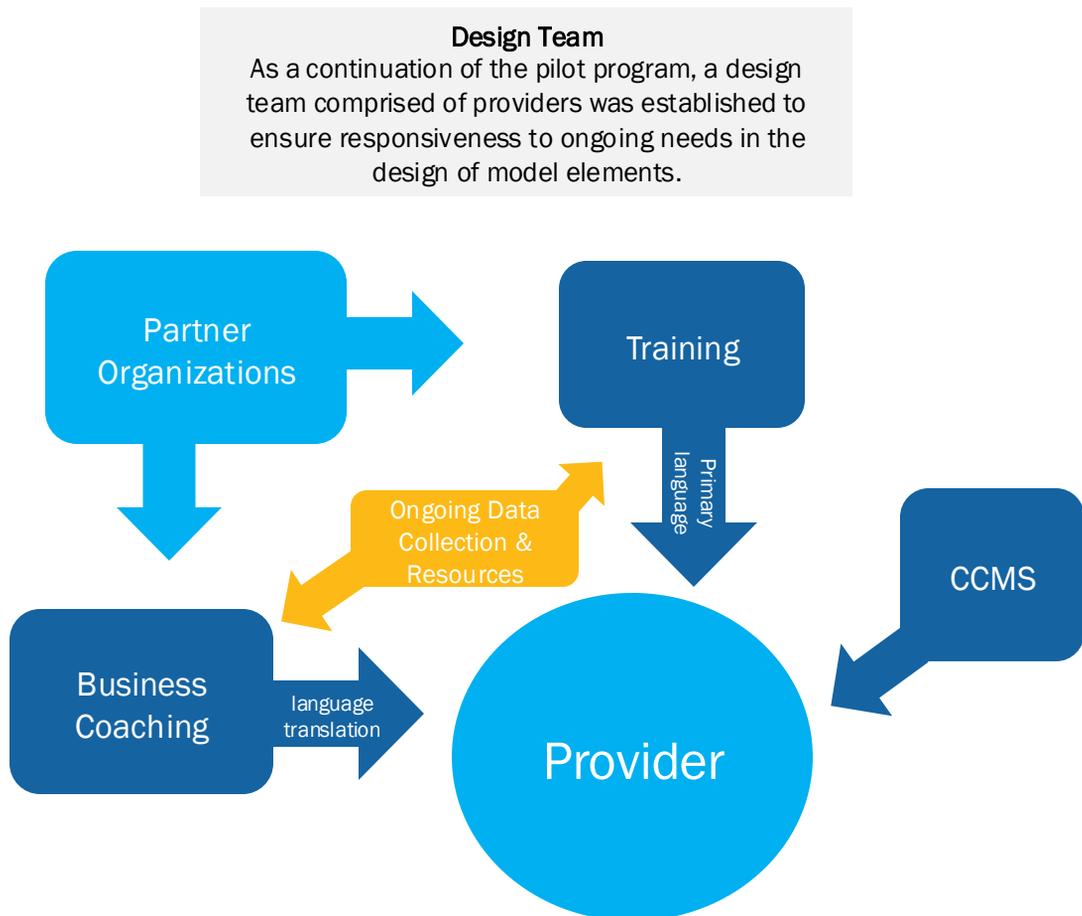
Year 1 of San Diego's SSA focused on three main supports for center-based care providers and family child care providers.

- **Business coaching:** One of the unique characteristics of San Diego's SSA is the use of business coaches and cultural navigators to support providers throughout their time in the program. Both the business coaches and cultural navigators support the providers with tools and resources to help improve the growth and sustainability of the providers' businesses. Their coaching is focused on helping providers achieve full enrollment, full fee collection, and revenues cover per-child costs as described in the [Iron Triangle formula for ECE programs](#). They schedule 1:1 sessions with each provider to set goals and work on plans to achieve the goals. Cultural navigators are an added key component to the business coaching feature because they support providers, served by the ECBOs, from diverse cultural communities. Cultural navigators provide language translation and culturally and linguistically responsive services to support provider business success. During Year 1, SSA business coaching is:
 - Goal-based
 - Highly individualized
 - Provider driven
 - Data informed
 - Supported with resources (i.e., ECE shared resources website, YMCA website, BAS/PAS/Checklist, monthly meetings)
 - Based on the Iron Triangle
 - Culturally and linguistically relevant
- **Provider Training:** The YMCA and IRC were contracted to offer trainings based on the needs of the providers from each organization in the primary language of the providers. The need for training was assessed based on the analysis of intake data conducted as part of the mid-program report and by collaborating with organizational partners to individualize training and ensure that training was culturally and linguistically responsive.
- **Child Care Management System (CCMS) – CareConnect:** YMCA developed a partnership with MCT Technology to offer a free subscription to the CareConnect platform, a child care management system to the members of SSA. CareConnect Provider is a software available for providers via the web or mobile app that includes features such as automated billing, attendance recording, and has an embedded social media application to deliver updates to families about their child's activities and progress. CareConnect Subsidy is a cloud system geared toward agencies that helps systems manage and scale Child Care Subsidy programs. Features include electronic document management, attendance tracking, invoicing, automated billing, API integration, workflow automation, and data analytics.

SSA Program Features

Program Design:

The partner organizations have strong reputations as child care advocates and have established relationships, as system leaders with child care providers in their community. Partner organizations, the YMCA and CDA hired business coaches and Chicano Federation, Horn of Africa and IRC hired cultural navigators to recruit providers and offer 1:1 support with their business goals. The YMCA and IRC also employed experts to conduct training sessions. The training instructors were both internal employees within the organization or outsourced externally. Resources such as California Association for the Education of Young Children shared resources site, BAS/PAS training guide, Business Practices Checklist, and mid-program data shared at monthly team meetings informed both the coaching and training features of the program. A free subscription to the child care management system, CareConnect, was offered to providers to help them automate business practices.



SSA Goal-based Coaching Approach

A goal-based coaching approach was developed during the SSA Pilot program. The elements of the coaching model were also applicable to the SSA Year 1 program. The original elements are described below with updates from findings from Year 1.

Elements of the San Diego Shared Services Alliance Pilot Coaching Model		Year 1 Updates (from focus group and interviews)
Establish Trust	Providers and SSA staff report that a positive, trusting relationship is foundational to successful coaching and continued engagement.	Findings from the end of year interviews confirmed the importance of establishing trust and called for additional training to help business coaches develop these relationships.
Connect to Trainings	The YMCA offered targeted trainings on various business practices throughout the pilot. Business coaches reminded providers of these trainings and encouraged them to attend.	Trainings were offered in the provider's primary language so that understanding of the concepts is comprehensive.
Navigate and Share Resources	One of the most frequently discussed values of coaching was the curation of resources. Providers can get overwhelmed by the amount of content available to them. Business coaches identified which resources would be most helpful and supported providers as they applied these tools to their goals.	The project lead, YMCA, held monthly meetings with the team members to facilitate the sharing of data and resources. Additional business coach trainings were requested during interviews and focus groups.
Utilize Preferred Modes of Communication	Business coaches were flexible in the settings in which they met with providers. They found providers responded best when individual communication preferences were identified and used. These preferences included a mix of emails, texts, phone calls, zoom meetings, and in-person visits.	Business coaches and cultural navigators used communication methods that were preferred by each provider. Providers also often visited the organization's offices to gain assistance with their business practices.
Accommodate Provider Schedule	The demands on provider time are substantial and can become more intense (e.g. staff turnover can result in a director spending more time in a classroom.) Business coaches were responsive to these changing demands and adjusted meeting frequency as needed.	Trainings were offered during the evenings after most children have been picked up. However, for those that care for children during non-traditional hours, trainings over zoom allowed providers to still care for children while attending.
Identify Individualized Goals	Business coaches selected achievable and realistic initial goals, which was important for building provider trust and maintaining engagement in the program.	Some organizations also found many of their providers needed assistance with certain business practices and focused on this one area to making coaching more efficient.

Evaluation Methodology



Evaluation Methodology

The project period spanned from September 2023 to May 30, 2024. Program implementation occurred in 4 phases, with some phases overlapping.

Phase	Timeline	Activities
Phase 1 Planning	Sept 2023 - Oct 2023	Evaluation plan was developed. Includes measurement and data collection tools and a quality assurance plan. Training was conducted on how to use measurement tools.
Phase 2 Data Collection	Sept 2023 – Feb 2024	Intake data, BAS/PAS/Business Practices Checklist, budget and taxes survey completed.
	Oct 2023 – May 2024	Contact logs, monthly quick checks, engagement plans, coach satisfaction survey, post training surveys are all ongoing.
	May 2024	Post-survey data, coach and provider satisfaction surveys, contact logs, quick checks and engagement plans are finalized, focus group/interviews conducted.
Phase 3 Mid-project Analysis	January 2024	Coach’s satisfaction survey analysis and presentation of results.
	March 2024	Intake data analysis and presentation of results for data-informed decision-making.
Phase 4 Reporting	April– July 2024	Full data analysis completed, and report generated.

Phase 1 Planning:

The evaluation team, SDSU’s CEED and Luminary Evaluation along with the project lead, The YMCA, met to develop and refine an evaluation plan which included the development of all measurement and data collection tools and a quality assurance plan. The purpose of the evaluation plan is to customize uniquely responsive data collection metrics, to set timelines for feedback on program implementation, and to train business coaches and cultural navigators on the use of the measurement tools to ensure data accuracy and continuous improvement of the program.

The evaluation team integrated tools from previously successful data collection systems utilized in the SSA pilot and STEPS program. Together, a fully customized data collection process was created to capture the unique aspects of the SSA Year 1 program. Training on how and when to use the data collection tools was conducted prior to the start of the program and evaluators were available for continued assistance and made improvements to the tools throughout the program period based on coach or cultural navigator feedback.

Evaluation Methodology

Phase 2 Data Collection:

The measurement tools designed by the evaluation team were used to collect 3 types of data: baseline and needs assessment, program implementation, and end of program data. Cultural navigators and business coaches collected all data directly from the providers in their primary language. The data was translated (if needed) and input into online questionnaire forms or uploaded into a secure cloud system provided by The YMCA. The measurement tools were used to collect provider data and feedback on program implementation from the business coaches, cultural navigators and partner organizations.

Tool	Timing	Purpose
Baseline & Need Assessment Measures		
Intake Survey	Beginning of each program year	Captures provider demographic data, baseline of provider business characteristics, ongoing provider needs.
Business Administration Scale (BAS) (Talan & Bloom, 2009) Program Administration Scale (PAS) (Talan & Bloom, 2011)	Once per program year	Used to measure and improve overall quality of business and professional practices in child care settings. BAS is used for FCC providers and the PAS is used for center-based care.
Business Practices Checklist	Once per program year	Records utilization of best business practices for FCC providers.
Budget & Taxes Survey	Once per program year	Captures budget and tax data for each provider.
Program Implementation Measures		
Contact Log	Throughout program year	Captures coaching hours and tasks completed.
Quick Check	Monthly	Captures provider enrollment data.
Engagement Plans	Throughout program year	Working document used by the business coaches to track goals and the steps completed to achieve the goals.
End of Program Data Measures		
Coach & Cultural Navigator Satisfaction Survey	December and April of each program year	Used to gain feedback from the business coaches or cultural navigators on program effectiveness.
Provider Satisfaction Survey	End of each program year	Used to gain feedback from the providers on program effectiveness.
Post Training Survey	After each training session	Used to gain feedback from the training sessions.
Focus Groups & Interviews	End of each program year	A focus group with coaches and cultural navigators and individual interviews with partner organization leaders from each organization were conducted to gain open-ended feedback.
Post Survey	End of each program year	Captures any changes in provider business characteristics.

Evaluation Methodology

Phase 3 Mid-Program Data Analysis for Continuous Improvement:

Evaluators analyzed and prepared multiple mid-program reports and corresponding presentations as part of continuous program improvement efforts.

- **Monthly Progress Reports:** A data system was designed to track the information required to complete the monthly progress reports (MPR) submitted regularly as required by the contract. The MPRs gave a snapshot of the number of providers enrolled, basic demographic data, number of BAS/PAS/Business Practices Checklists completed, coaching hours, and trainings attended. This data system was updated in real-time to allow accurate reporting to the project lead.
- **Intake Data Presentation:** Intake data was analyzed by the evaluators, and the results were presented to all members of the SSA team, including partner organization leaders, business coaches, and cultural navigators. The results gave an overview of the demographics of providers, their business characteristics, and their needs. The data analysis helped the SSA team understand the overall business health of the providers and to help them make data-informed decisions about the type of support their providers may need. Based on the data analysis, the project lead then presented coaching opportunities to the SSA team that highlighted how business coaches and cultural navigators could support their providers. Coaching opportunities included how to help providers leverage existing programs to support their business, maximize revenue and reduce expenses, and mitigate risk. Reports analyzing the data for the providers served by each organization were emailed separately.
- **Business Coach and Cultural Navigator Surveys:** Surveys were analyzed and presented to inform the partner organizations about the challenges and successes of the business coaches and cultural navigators. Partner organization leaders worked to support business coaches and cultural navigators with resources and trainings to make changes to the program in an effort toward continuous improvement.

Phase 4 Reporting:

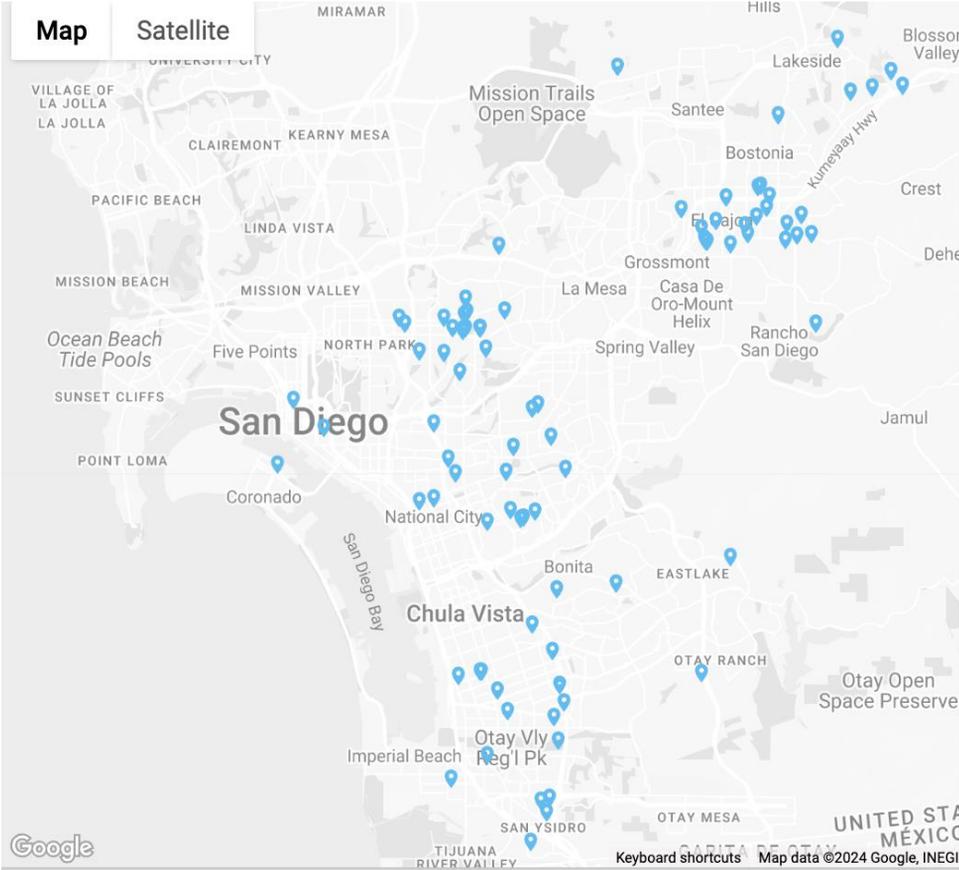
The evaluation team ensured business coaches and cultural navigators collected and finalized all year-end data. A focus group with the business coaches and cultural navigators from each organization was conducted to learn in greater detail the successes and challenges they faced during the first year of the SSA program. For example, they were asked to describe the services they provided and tools that they used to provide those services. Interviews were conducted with leaders from each partner organization. The interview was designed to learn more about the successes and challenges from an organizational perspective and inform how the program can be improved in Year 2. For example, leaders were asked about their expectations of the SSA program and if those expectations were met, and why or why not they thought the first year was successful. All quantitative data was cleaned, analyzed, and prepared for the final report. All qualitative data was recorded and reviewed for analysis purposes and is embedded throughout the final report.

Achievement of Program Objectives



Program Objective 1: SSA Enrollment

Objective: Minimum of 240 hours of service to a minimum of 105 providers to be enrolled into the SSA during the initial term to support their business resiliency and efficiency

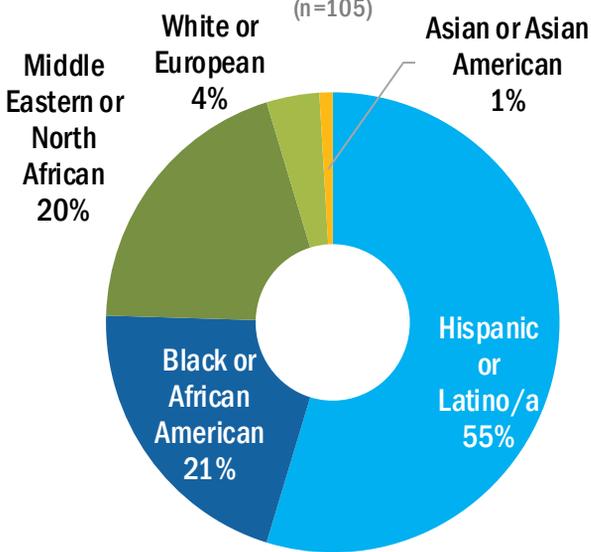


105 Child Care Providers participated in the SSA across San Diego County

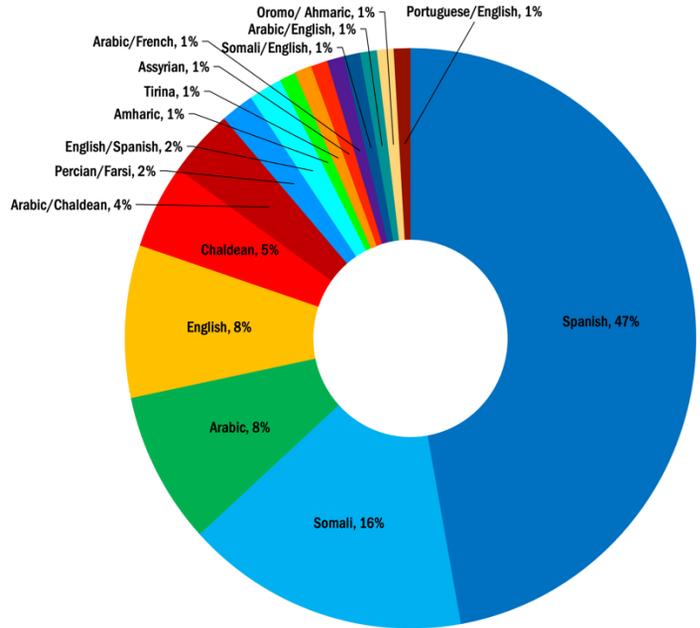
- 1 Center
- 62 Small FCCs
- 42 Large FCCS

SSA Enrollment: Provider Demographics

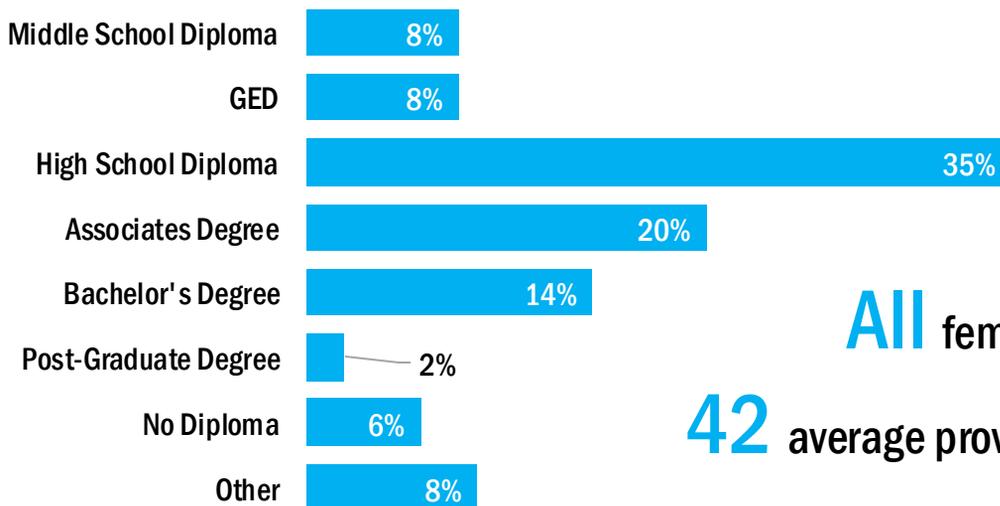
Participating Provider Race/Ethnicity (n=105)



Primary Language Spoken by Providers (n=105)



Highest Level of Education (n=105)



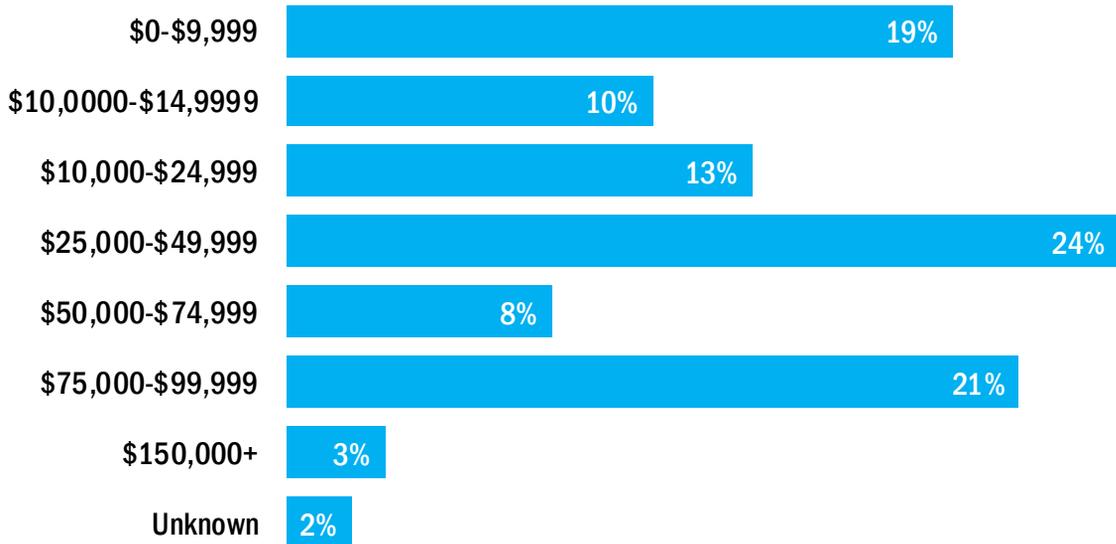
All female

42 average provider age

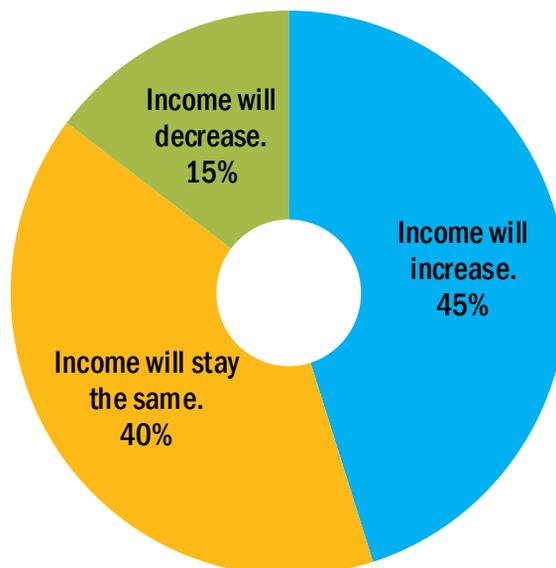
SSA Enrollment: Provider Demographics

Provider Income Levels

(n=105)

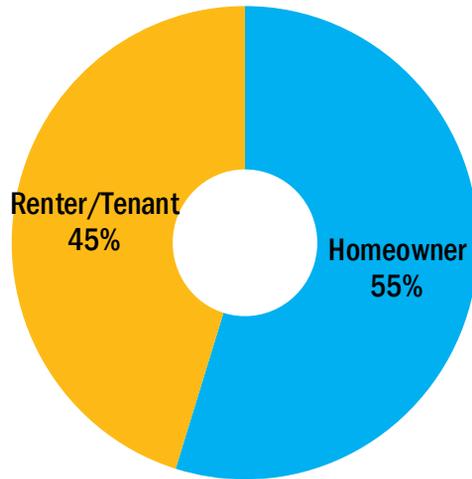


85% of San Diego SSA members estimate that their 2024 personal income will either increase or stay the same as compared to 2023. (n=105)

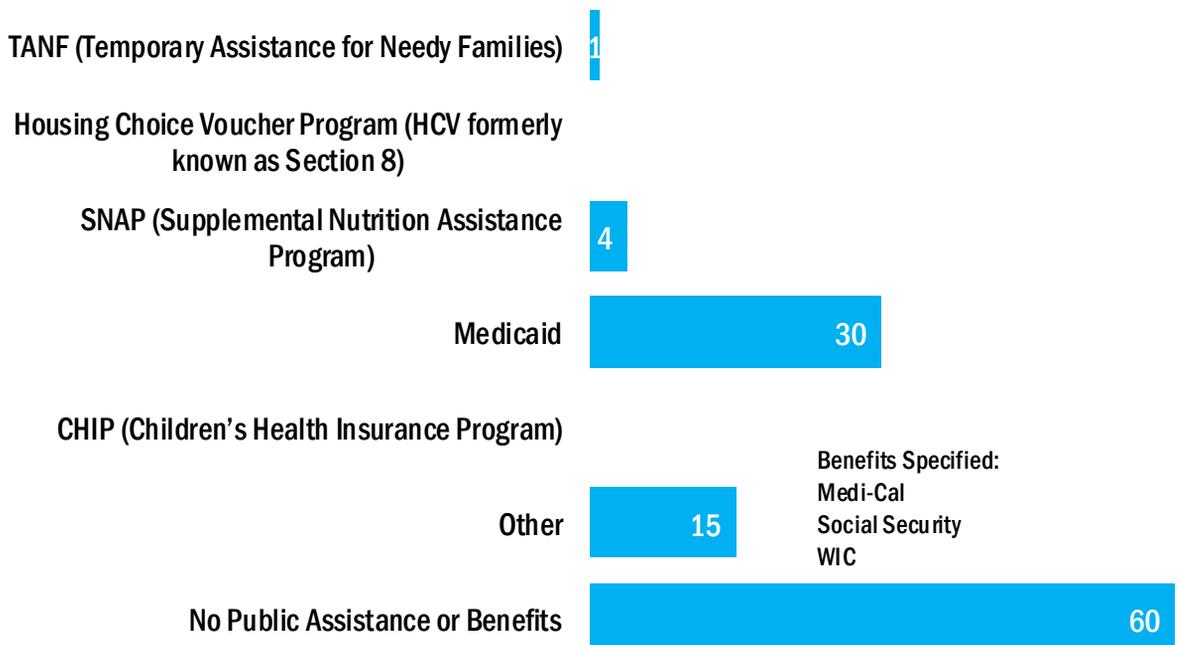


SSA Enrollment: Provider Demographics

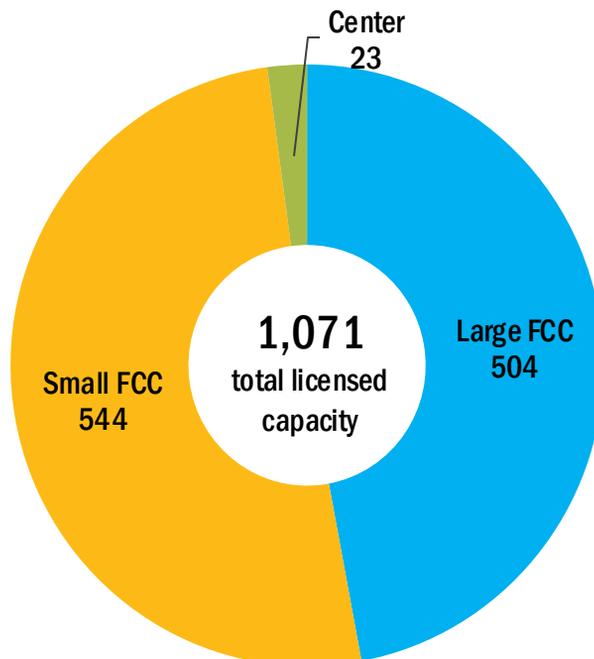
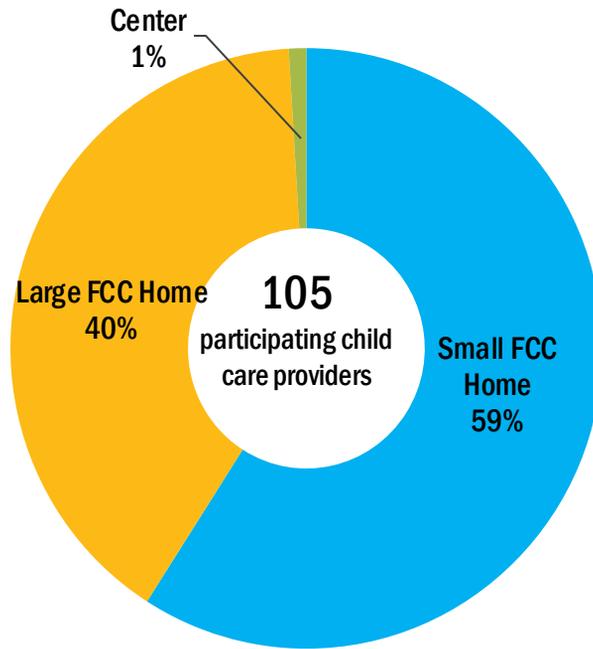
Just over **half** of participating providers **own** their home and just under **half rent**. (n=105)



Almost half of providers served participate in public assistance or benefits programs. (n=105)



SSA Enrollment: Provider Demographics



Program Objective 2: Business Assessment Tool

Objective: Support 100% of participating providers with completion of either a BAS or PAS.

The BAS, Business Practices Checklist and Goal Formation

The business coaches and cultural navigators utilized a goal-based approach to coaching that was used in the SSA Pilot program.

To measure the efficacy of this approach, the evaluation team developed a robust system of metrics designed to demonstrate how business coaches and cultural navigators assisted providers to make progress toward business resilience and sustainability. The data collected offers a detailed understanding of the providers' business practices at intake, the goals set by the providers, the action steps implemented to achieve provider goals, and a final data snapshot of the providers' goal completion and business practices at the end of the program.

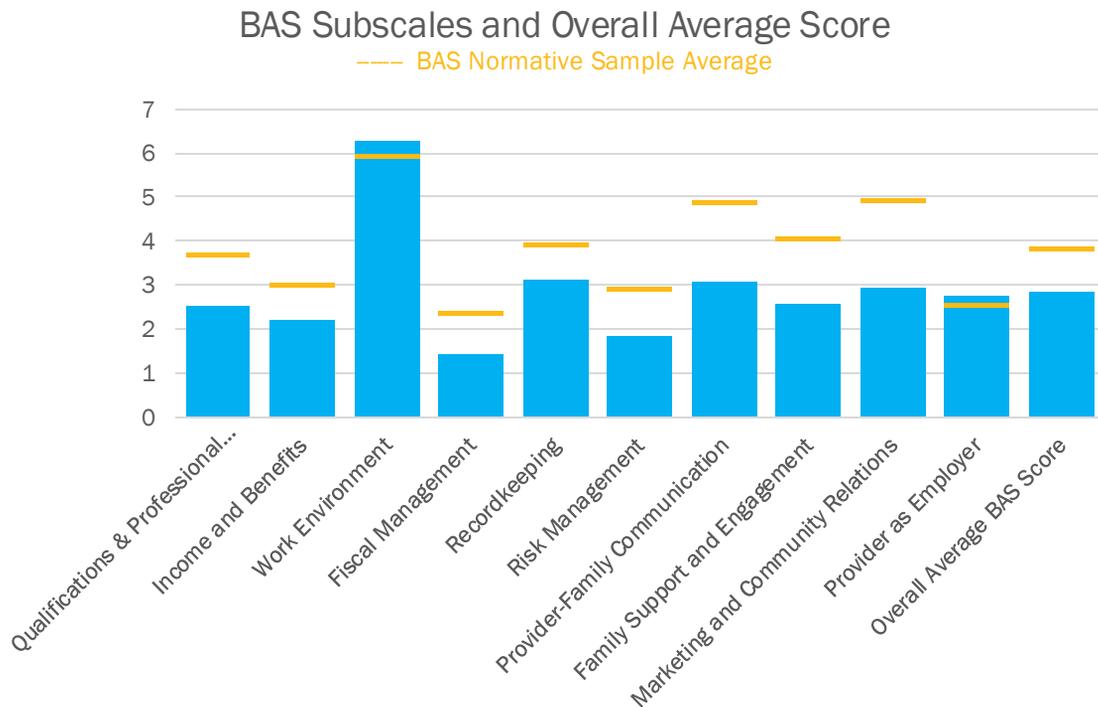
The findings in the following section will first describe the process for determining progress toward business resilience and sustainability. We present the overall results of the BAS, the benefits and challenges of using the BAS, and describe a mid-program pivot where we introduced the Business Practices Checklist as an alternative to the BAS. The Business Practices Checklist results will also be presented.

In the next section, we provide an overview of the goals completed by the providers. These goals were documented and tracked in the engagement plans. An engagement plan is a working document used by business coaches and cultural navigators to track goals and the steps completed to achieve the goals

This overview categorizes the goals according to the constructs used in the Business Practices Checklist, and each goal is described in detail to highlight the quality of business practices that the providers completed with the assistance of the business coaches and cultural navigators.

Business Assessment Tool: BAS Results

Below is a summary of the overall BAS Subscales and overall average score. Eighty-four BAS's were completed and one PAS. (Twenty providers completed the Business Practices Checklist). Only one PAS was conducted and those results will be included in the Year 2 evaluation as more child care centers are added to the program. The provider average BAS scores were below the normative sample average for each subscale except for Work Environment and Provider as Employer.



BAS Subscales and Total Average Score

Item #	Item	N=84	
		M	SD
1	Qualifications & Professional Development	2.51	1.80
2	Income and Benefits	2.19	1.56
3	Work Environment	6.29	1.49
4	Fiscal Management	1.42	1.31
5	Recordkeeping	3.12	2.31
6	Risk Management	1.83	1.69
7	Provider-Family Communication	3.08	2.42
8	Family Support and Engagement	2.56	2.24
9	Marketing and Community Relations	2.95	1.81
10	Provider as Employer	2.77	1.89
Overall Average BAS Score		2.87	1.05

Business Assessment Tool: Reflections on BAS

Business Administration Scale

The BAS is a valid and reliable instrument used to measure the business and professional practices of FCC providers (Talan & Bloom, 2009). The cultural navigators and business coaches were trained over three days by the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership on how to administer the BAS and were required to meet reliability standards by the end of the training. Feedback revealed that the training was very informative for some of the cultural navigators and business coaches. The training not only helped them to become reliable users of the assessment, but it also provided them with ideas to guide their business coaching.

“The BAS was an eye-opener for them (providers) and they really want to make those changes into their program.”

–Business Coach/Cultural Navigator

“BAS booklet was very informative”
“From the BAS assessment we identified the clients needs and we came with a training schedule.”

–Business Coach/Cultural Navigator

Challenge:

For some business coaches and cultural navigators, the BAS training was too fast-paced and difficult to follow, especially for those whose first language is not English. As a result, not all cultural navigators met BAS reliability standards. Additionally, cultural navigators noted that because the BAS was not available in Arabic and Somali it could take 4-5 hours to administer due to the need to translate and explain the items to providers. An additional concern with the BAS identified during program meetings and focus groups was that cultural navigators and business coaches were uncomfortable with providing BAS scores to providers as the scores were often low. It was also noted that some items on the BAS are not applicable and do not reflect the lived experience of providers. For example, providers are scored based on their education level, and for many of the Somali providers that grew up and escaped the Civil War, an education was not available to them.

"It (BAS) wasn't a strengths-based assessment tool. I think that is what I didn't like about it. And it wasn't inclusive of everybody either."

–Partner Organization Leader

“The BAS was not 100% representative of what they had, just in the way it was scored. If they didn't have one area then they didn't get credit for most of it. So I don't know if it is 100% accurate. I don't know if it was 100% fair. Our scores were pretty low, in general.”

–Business Coach/Cultural Navigator

Business Assessment Tool: Reflections on Assessment Approach

Solution: Researcher-Designed Tool

In response to the need for an alternative tool for the BAS, the Business Practices Checklist was introduced. The Business Practices Checklist is a tool that was developed during the STEPS program, via collaboration between CEED, ECBO leadership, and the cultural navigators, to capture the work of cultural navigators by recording the best business practices achieved by FCC providers through coaching sessions. The Business Practices Checklist was designed to engage providers in conversations to determine if they were using a particular business practice, and if not, determine which items on the list would be beneficial to their business. Cultural navigators help each FCC provider accomplish the relevant items on the list, and these accomplishments are recorded and analyzed to demonstrate the efficacy of the program.

The Business Practices Checklist was designed to be a strengths-based guide to assist business coaches and cultural navigators to suggest best business practices for the FCC providers they serve in the SSA program. It continues to be improved and updated as business coaches and cultural navigators assist with the individual coaching needs of their providers.

Business Assessment Tool: Business Practices Checklist Results

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity % of providers that may need assistance
	Yes	No	
1. Licensing and Operations			
1.1 Is the provider's FCC license current and up to date?	20	0	0%
1.2 Are the provider's CPR and First Aid certifications current and up to date?	20	0	0%
1.3 Does the provider have a business plan? (within the last 5 years)	17	3	15%
1.4 Does the provider maintain all necessary business insurance policies (liability, home/renters, auto)?	20	0	0%
1.5 Does the provider have a business license or business tax certificate?	0	20	100%
1.6 Does the provider have policies for hiring?	1	19	95%
1.6.1 Does the provider offer an orientation for any new employees?	0	20	100%
1.6.2 Are assistants or employees paid at least minimum wage?	0	20	100%
1.6.3 Does the provider hold quarterly or monthly meetings with their assistant for planning purposes?	0	20	100%
2. Continuing Education & Resources			
2.1 Have you attended any trainings in the last year?	12	8	40%
2.1.1 Trainings offered through YMCA?	1	19	95%
2.1.2 Trainings offered through the Union?	5	15	75%
2.1.3 Trainings offered through California Department of Education?	1	19	95%
2.2 Do you have a CDA credential?	0	20	100%
3. Recordkeeping			
3.1 Does the provider use a contract and written policies with enrolled families?	20	0	0%
3.1.1 Do the contracts outline clear policies for collecting fees and a policy for delinquent fees?	20	0	0%
3.1.2 Do the contracts outline clear policies for contract termination?	20	0	0%
3.2 Does the provider maintain records for each child required for licensing? (i.e. immunizations, physical)	20	0	0%
3.3 Does the provider have a system for tracking and storing receipts for business expenses?	13	7	35%
3.4 Does the provider utilize technology and automation to operate their business?	6	14	70%
3.5 Does the provider supply receipts for payment of tuition/fees to each family?	1	19	95%
3.6 Does the provider supply an end of year statement of tuition and fees to each family?	1	19	95%
4. Financial Management			
4.1 Does the provider have a business bank account exclusively for their FCC business?	7	13	65%
4.2 Did the provider file income taxes for their business last year?	17	3	15%
4.2.1 Did the provider report business use of home as an expense?	18	2	10%
4.3 Does the provider have an operating budget for tracking revenue and expenses?	12	8	40%
4.3.1 Do the provider's prices reflect the cost of care per child?	18	2	10%
4.4 Does the provider have outstanding payments owed for child care that are 3 months or more past due?	1	19	5%
4.5 Does the provider need to improve their credit score?	7	13	35%
4.6 Does the provider have a business credit card exclusively for their FCC business?	1	19	95%
5. Networks and Provider Programs			
5.1 Is the provider enrolled in CACFP?	0	20	100%
5.2 Is the provider enrolled in SDQPI?	1	19	95%
5.3 Is the provider a member in any FCC networks?	13	7	35%
5.4 Is the provider a member of the local FCC union?	15	5	25%
6. Marketing			
6.1 Does the provider utilize marketing tools for advertising? (i.e. business cards, car magnets, etc.)?	9	11	55%
6.2 Does the provider have a website for their FCC business?	1	19	95%
6.3 Does the provider have social media accounts for their FCC business?	0	20	100%
6.4 Does the provider track inquiries for care? (i.e. what families need)	16	4	20%
6.5 Does the provider update their child care program file with referral programs? If yes, how often?	20	0	0%
6.6 Does the provider use digital placement services?	1	19	95%
7. Business Growth			
7.1 Does the provider want to increase their licensing capacity?	9	11	45%
7.2 Does the provider want to maximize their capacity (i.e. maximum # of infants, toddlers, etc.)?	19	1	95%
7.3 Has the provider increased fees within the last 3 years? Or increased the family co-payment?	0	20	100%
7.4 Is the provider interested in obtaining a business loan to grow their business?	1	19	5%
7.5 Is the provider interested in applying for available grants?	20	0	100%
7.6 Is the provider interested in hiring an assistant or employee?	1	19	5%
8.0 Communication			
8.1 Does the provider use communication tools to disperse information to families? (i.e. newsletters, emails)	14	6	30%
8.2 Does the provider use a business software program for their FCC business to communicate with families? (i.e. CareConnect)	1	19	95%
8.3 Does the provider maintain a community resource binder for families to access?	3	17	85%

Business Assessment Tool: Business Practices Checklist Results

Business Practices Checklist and SSA:

Results are from 20 providers that were administered the Business Practices Checklist.

The Yes/No columns were used to calculate the frequency count of the answer to each question posed to the provider. Business coaches and cultural navigators assess the business practices that providers have not implemented and help them set goals based on their needs. Although the group frequency counts may give the business coaches and cultural navigators an idea of areas providers as a group may need assistance the tool is meant to be an individual recording system that can be used to track the implementation of the practices over time. For example, in the STEPS program, cultural navigators maintained a Business Practices Checklist for each provider, tracking goals completed each month of the program.

The coaching opportunity column highlights the business practices where over 50% of the providers may need assistance.

The Business Practices Checklist results show that the following areas are possible coaching opportunities or areas where providers may need assistance.

- Acquiring business license or business tax certificate
- Creating policies for hiring
- Attending continuing education trainings
- Acquiring a CDA credential
- Utilizing technology to operate their business
- Creating a system for sending tuition/fees receipts and statements to families
- Opening a business bank account
- Opening a business credit card
- Enrolling in CACFP and SDQPI
- Utilizing marketing tools
- Maximizing enrollment capacity
- Maximize revenue generation by adjusting fees and applying for grants
- Utilize business software to communicate with families
- Maintain a community resource binder for families

Opportunity: In Year 2, business coaches and cultural navigators that use the Business Practices Checklist should also use the tool to accompany the engagement plans in tracking individual provider goal completion. Although the engagement plans showcased in detail the effort involved in completing the goals, it was at times difficult to discern if a goal was completed. There were often smaller goals completed as action steps to a larger goal and these were not always clearly marked in the engagement plans. Tracking goals completed for each provider on the Business Practices Checklist would streamline the process.

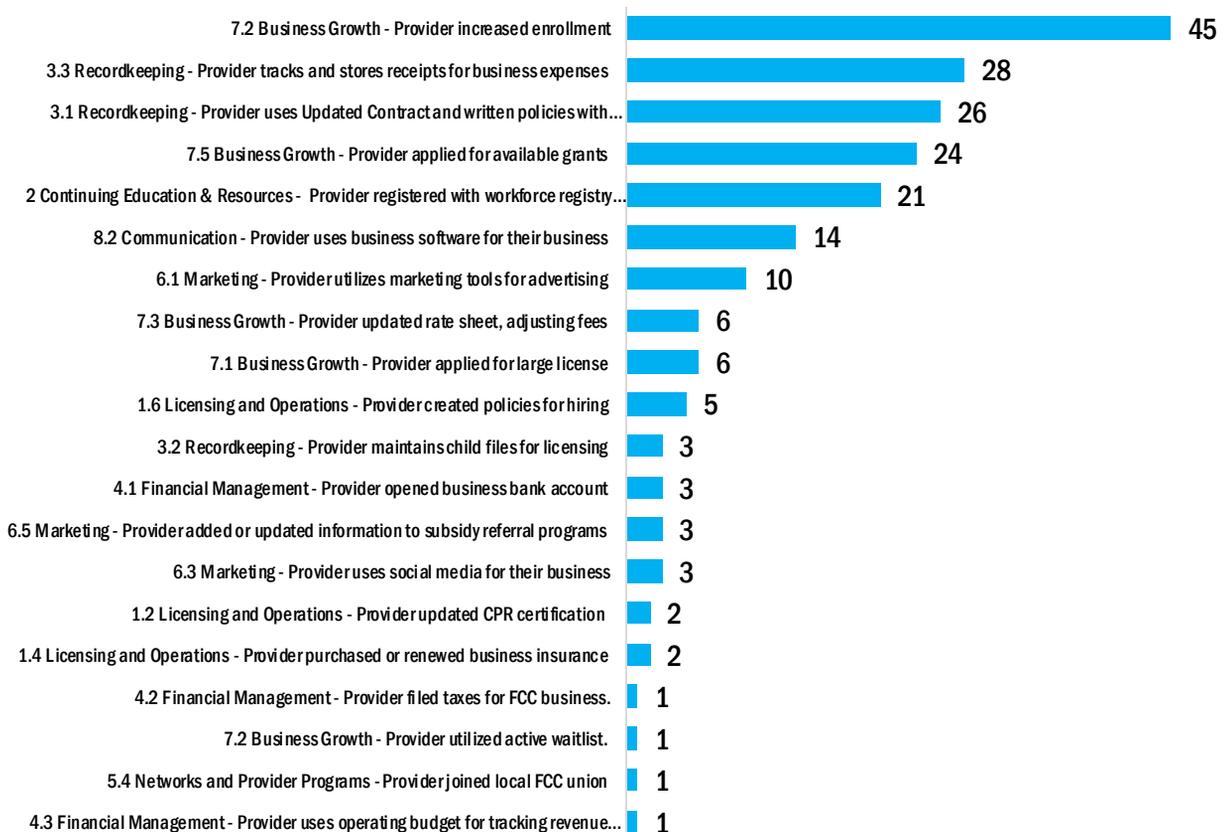
Program Objectives 3 & 4: Provider Engagement Plans and Goals

Objectives:

- Support 100% of providers with completion of an engagement plan.
- Provide a minimum of 1,260 hours of service to a minimum of 105 providers enrolled during the initial term to support goal completion in the areas of full enrollment, full fee collection, and revenue covers per-child cost

Goals were set during coaching sessions and detailed progress updates were recorded in engagement plans. During analysis, the completed goals were coded according to the constructs and items in the Business Practices Checklist. The following charts provide frequency counts of the completed goals, first as a program overall and then showing how each organization focused their coaching in Year 1.

Number of Goals Completed - 205 Total



Other than increasing enrollment, providers were most interested in improving their recordkeeping. **27%** of providers implemented an expense tracking system and **25%** implemented new client contracts (n=105).

Provider Engagement Plans and Goals: Goals Completed by Agency



Provider Engagement Plans and Goals: Goals Completed

Business coaches and cultural navigators from each organization approached coaching for each provider individually. This typically led to a more expansive and diverse list of goals that were completed. However, sometimes coaches learned that many of their providers needed help in one area. Focusing on one area of improvement allowed business coaches and cultural navigators to provide trainings centered on these business practices and helped them to gain expertise in this area and then provide more in-depth assistance.

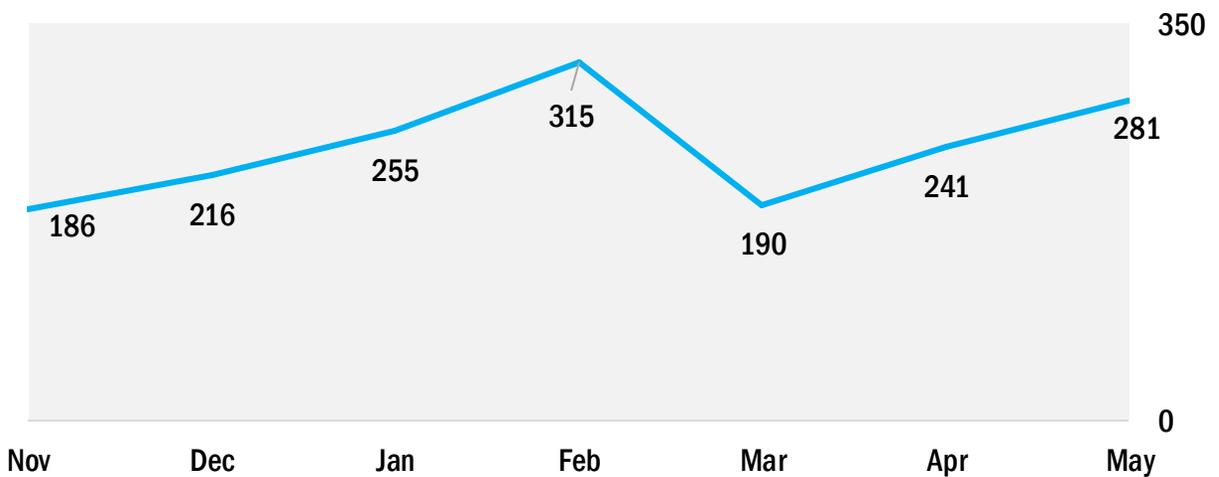
Summary of goals completed by agency:

- YMCA (n=33): **47** goals were completed. **32%** of goals completed helped providers with their recordkeeping. Assistance was provided with helping providers update their client contracts and with creating a system to record their monthly expenses. Some providers upgraded to digital tools for recording expenses, such as Excel and others used non-digital notebooks designed for FCC providers (i.e. Calendar Keeper).
- IRC (n=20): **35** goals were completed. **70%** of providers received support creating client contracts and **45%** received support using CareConnect. IRC supported their providers in both areas with trainings in their primary language, Arabic, in addition to 1:1 business coaching.
- HOA (n=20): **33** goals were completed. **24%** of goals completed helped providers with their recordkeeping. The HOA cultural navigator made home-visits to set up systems to help provider track expenses and organize files necessary for licensing. **35%** of goals completed were directed towards business growth.
- CF (n=20): **70** goals were completed. **95%** of providers applied for a local stipend for FCC providers. As part of this application, the providers were required to register for The Workforce Registry. These two goals accounted for 56% of their total goals completed. It was noted in the engagement plan that the application process was tedious and long and required multiple coaching sessions to complete.
- CDA (n=12): **20** goals were completed. **55%** of goals completed helped providers with recordkeeping. Assistance was provided by helping providers update their client contracts and by helping to create a system to record their monthly expenses.

Provider Engagement Plans and Goals: Hours and Completion Rates

As an initial benchmark, a minimum level of service was required of the project team during Year 1. These measures provide an overview of the work completed by business coaches and cultural navigators and are an indication of program implementation.

Providers in the San Diego County SSA participated in 1,683 hours of coaching between November 2023 and May 2024. (This total reflects all coaching interactions, including the time it took to complete intakes, post surveys, and business assessments.)



Providers who completed SSA Year 1 program deliverables through June 30, 2024. (n=105)



Provider Engagement Plans and Goals: Observations & Feedback

There was a steady increase in coaching hours from November to February as business coaches and cultural navigators worked to complete all intake data and the BAS/PAS assessments or Business Practices Checklist by the end of February. The enrollment period was intensive, but informative for setting provider goals and determining training sessions needed.

Business goals were set and agreed on during 1:1 coaching sessions with the providers. Although at the onset of the program business goals were not operationalized, by the end of the program evaluators determined that all business goals completed could be categorized using the eight constructs of the Business Practices Checklist. The providers were not restricted to the business goals that align with these constructs, however. Any goals that did not align with the Business Practices Checklist could be added, as the intent of the tool is to be flexible and represent provider experience.

Trainings sessions were determined based on the needs of the providers. Mid-program data and feedback from the business coaches on their findings after enrollment data and BAS/PAS/Business Practices Checklist data was completed helped inform the topics that needed to be covered. Offering continuing education courses for providers, even those with many years of experience is important. One SSA partner organization team leader reflected, “It doesn't matter how long they have been in the business, once they go through some of these classes, for example naming your childcare, knowing how important this is...many say they had never kept a budget and didn't know how to do that.”

During the interviews and focus group, the SSA partner organization team member confirmed the level of service providers received from the business coaches and cultural navigators. They also discussed some of the challenges of meeting the service level expectations of Year 1.

- Business coaches and cultural navigators thought the BAS/PAS was a useful tool but took many hours to complete. Language translation during the assessment for the Arabic-speaking providers was intensive and time intensive since the BAS was only available in English and Spanish.
- Due to a later than expected start for recruitment and enrollment of providers, the BAS/PAS timeline for having all assessments completed was shortened. It was difficult for business coaches and cultural navigators to complete the assessments on time. An SSA partner organization leader speculated that due to the hours it took to complete the BAS assessment and the shortened timeframe could have been a detriment to early enrollment numbers.

Progress Toward Program Goals



Progress Toward Program Goals: Overview

In this section, data is organized by the SSA program goals. Because some data points inform more than one goal, some program goals have been combined for the purpose of efficient data presentation. The SSA program goals seek to increase the following elements among participating child care providers:

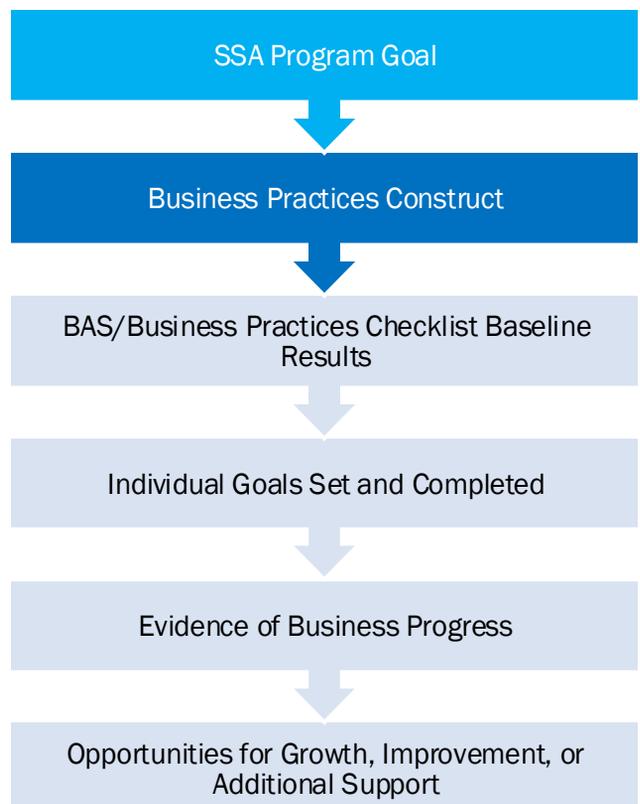
- Enrollment capacity
- Fee collection and revenue generation
- Efficiency, infrastructure, and access to technology

For the program goals, data is presented illustrating provider baseline measures collected through the Business Practices Checklist and the BAS. The data is then categorized according to the Business Practices Checklist constructs to provide a more in-depth view of provider progress toward business resilience and sustainability. The Business Practices Checklist constructs were used because it is a strengths-based approach to evaluation and there is overlap with the constructs of the BAS.

- Licensing and Operations
- Continuing Education & Resources
- Recordkeeping
- Financial Management
- Networks and Provider Programs
- Marketing
- Business Growth
- Communication

Data is then presented demonstrating the goals set and completed in response to provider needs within each construct, supported by evidence of changed provider business practices and characteristics from the beginning to the end of year 1 implementation. Finally, each section includes opportunities for growth, improvement, or additional support in year 2.

Progress Toward Program Goals: Data Structure



SSA Program Goal: The SSA will increase fee enrollment capacity.



Business Growth



Business Practices Checklist** Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress



Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

**The BAS does not have corresponding constructs for Business Growth

Increase Enrollment Capacity: Business Growth

Baseline Results: The Business Practices Checklist results demonstrated coaching opportunities in maximizing capacity, increasing tuition rates, and seeking available grants.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
7. Business Growth			
7.1 Does the provider want to increase their licensing capacity?	9	11	45%
7.2 Does the provider want to maximize their capacity (i.e. maximum # of infants, toddlers, etc.)?	19	1	95%
7.3 Has the provider increased fees within the last 3 years? Or increased the family co-payment?	0	20	100%
7.4 Is the provider interested in obtaining a business loan to grow their business?	1	19	5%
7.5 Is the provider interested in applying for available grants?	20	0	100%
7.6 Is the provider interested in hiring an assistant or employee?	1	19	5%

Goals Set and Completed: Business growth was an area of focus for coaches and providers. **Approximately 40% of all goals were related to business growth.**

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
7.2 Business Growth - Provider increased enrollment	45
7.5 Business Growth - Provider applied for available grants	24
7.3 Business Growth - Provider updated rate sheet, adjusting fees	6
7.1 Business Growth - Provider applied for large license	6
7.2 Business Growth - Provider utilized active waitlist.	1

Increase Enrollment Capacity: Business Growth

Evidence of Business Progress: Providers demonstrated stability and growth in enrollment. They also pursued grant funding or business loans. Weekly tuition rates remained relatively unchanged and we did not see large differences in the number of providers actively managing waitlists.

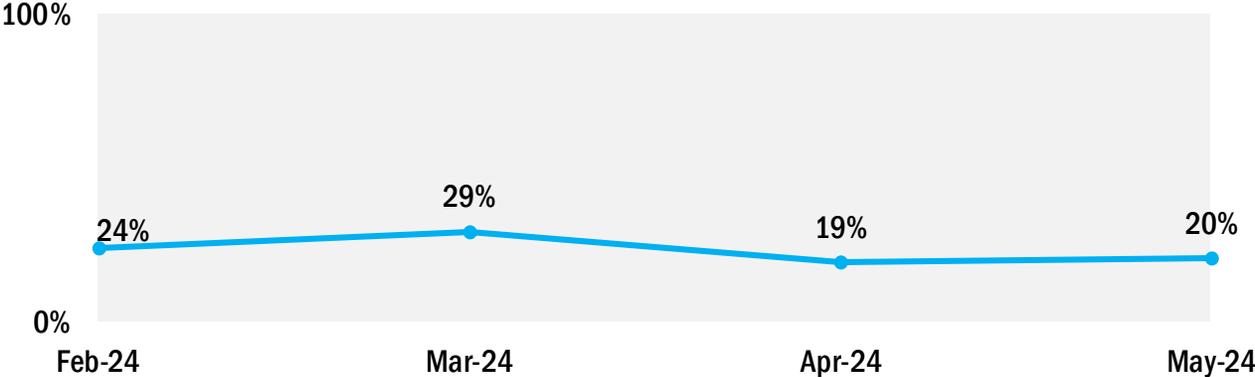
SSA Goal: Increase Enrollment Capacity		
Business Growth		
Enrollment	Improved	73% of providers increased or sustained enrollment. Overall enrollment increased by 9%.
Funding	Improved	36 providers reported that they applied for \$73,200 in grants or loans between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.
Weekly Rates	Maintained	Weekly tuition rates remained relatively constant across age groups between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.
Waitlist	Maintained	30% of providers actively manage a waitlist.

Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Business growth is based a provider’s desired capacity. Future data collection methods should better understand if the provider is maximizing the number of children within age groups and children that are part time versus full time status.

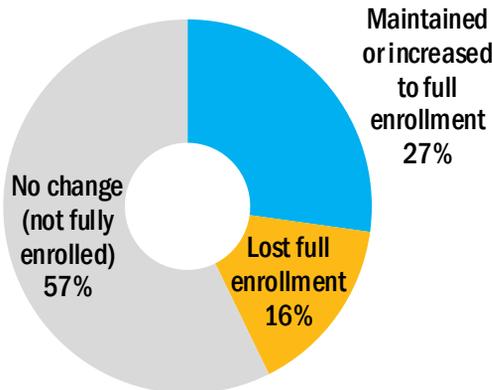
Evaluators and the project lead should collaborate with CareConnect and potentially other CCMS vendors on how SSA providers are using the CCMS platforms. They should also learn which providers are subscribing to ECE Resources site and how the subscription is being used in their business.

Business Growth: Enrollment Data

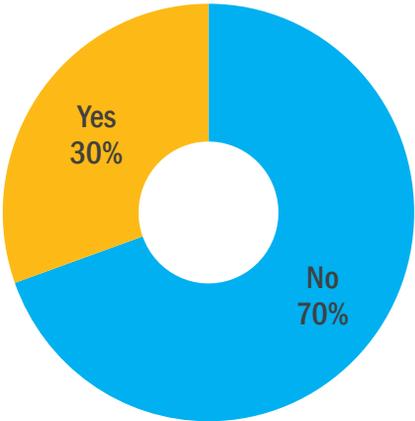
The percentage of SSA providers with **full enrollment** ranged between 19% and 29% between the months of February through May 2024. (n=103)



Between February and May 2024, 27% of providers **maintained or increased their full enrollment**, 16% **lost their full enrollment**, and 57% remained under full enrollment. (n=103)

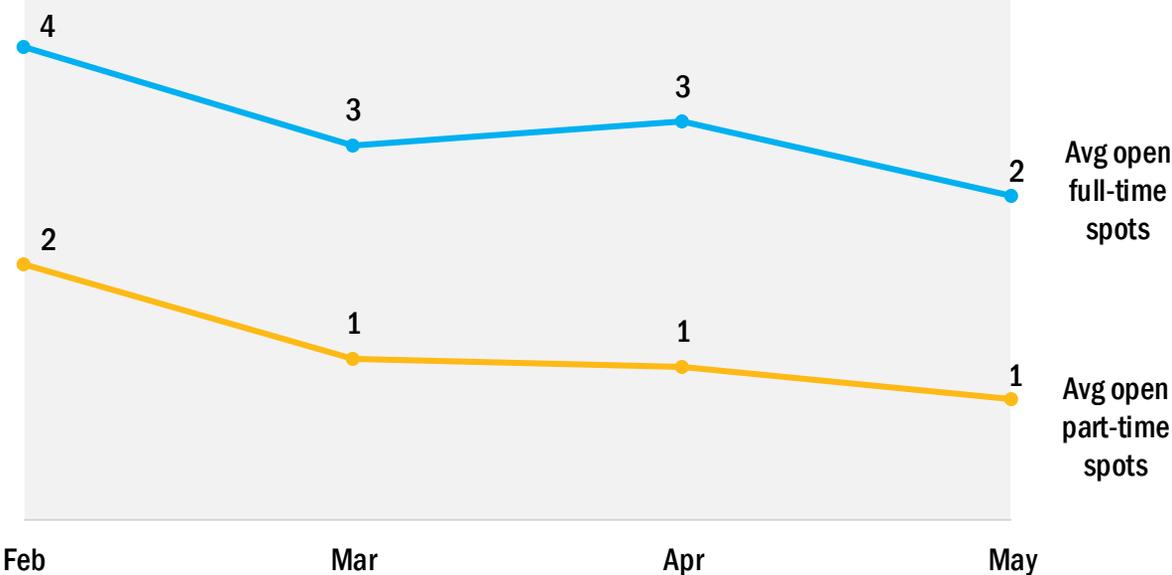


The **majority (70%)** of providers **do not actively manage a waitlist**. (n=105)

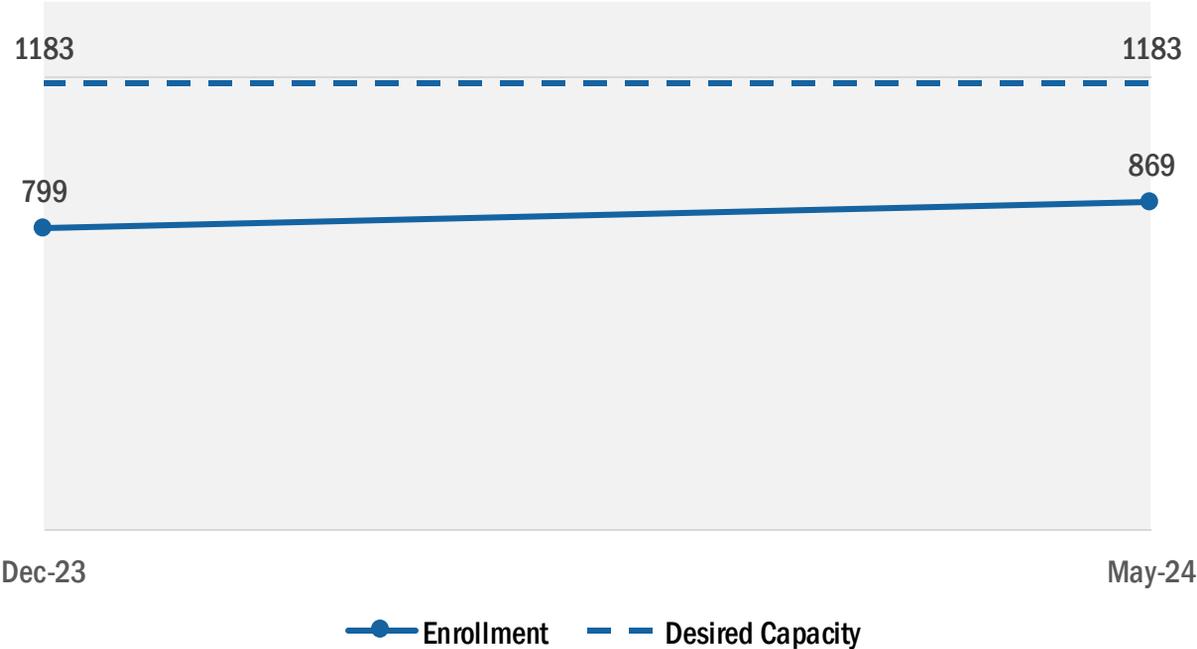


Business Growth: Enrollment Data

The average number of open full and part-time spots has **decreased** between February and May 2024.
(n=106)

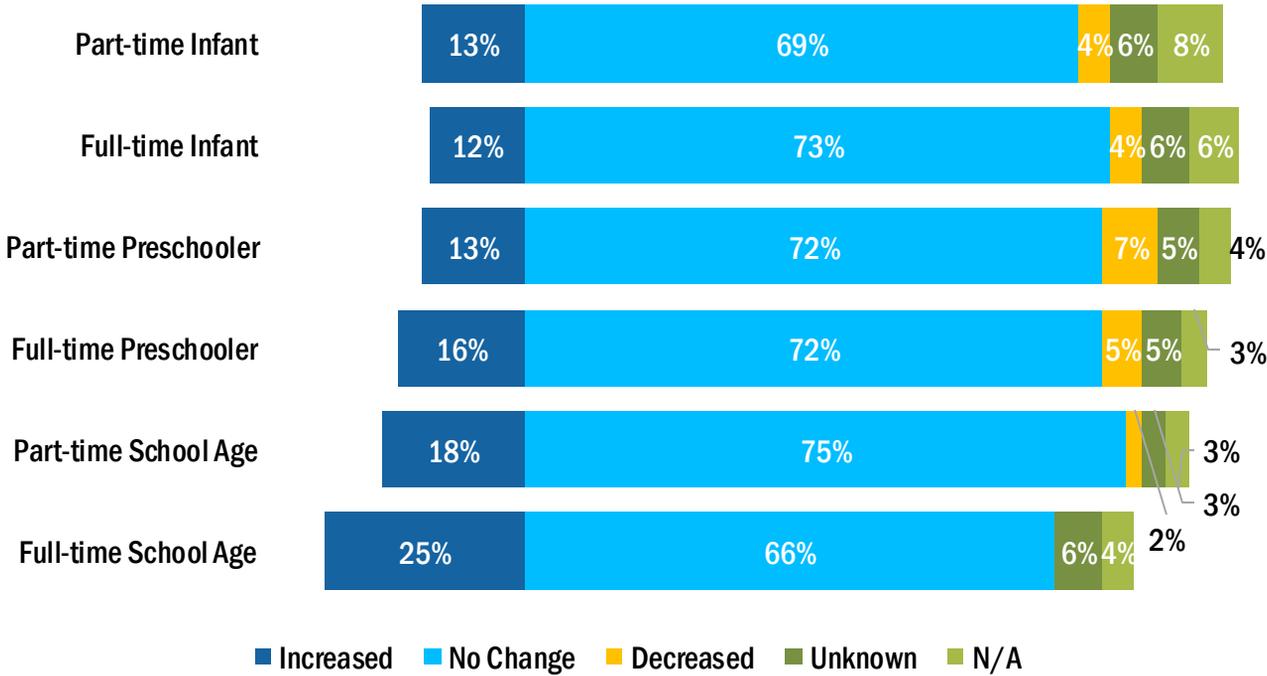


73% of providers increased or sustained enrollment
Providers **increased** enrollment by **9%**



Business Growth: Weekly Rates

Most providers report that they **did not change** their weekly part-time or full-time rates for any age group. (n=105)



The average weekly rate for infants **decreased** slightly, while the average weekly rate for part-time and full-time preschoolers and school-age children **increased** slightly between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.

	Avg Rate (Fall)	Avg Rate (Spring)
Infant Part-time/Full-time	\$370/wk	\$366/wk
Preschooler Part-time	\$264/wk	\$269/wk
Preschooler Full-time	\$312/wk	\$318/wk
School Age Part-time	\$218/wk	\$229/wk
School Age Full-time	\$261/wk	\$273/wk

Business Growth: Grants and Loans

A total of **36 providers** reported that they applied for **\$73,200** in grants or loans between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.



The SSA will increase fee collection and revenue generation.



Financial Management



Business Practices Checklist** Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress

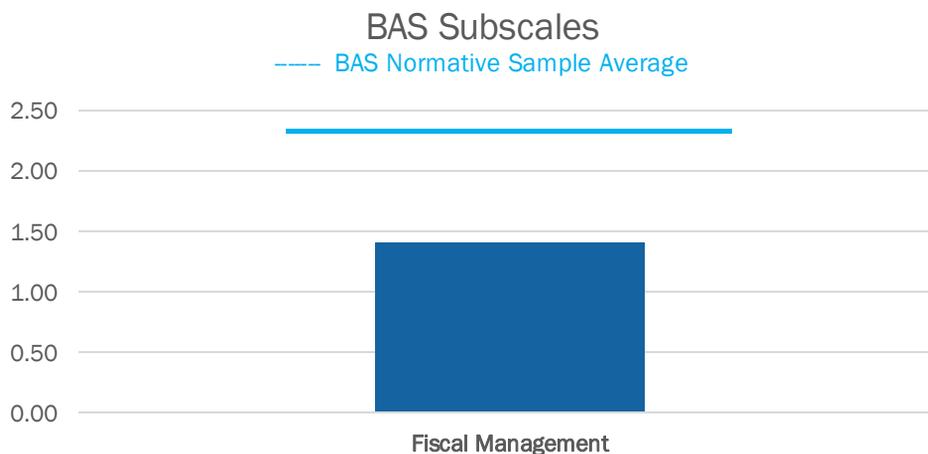


Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Financial Management

Baseline Results: The Business Practices Checklist results demonstrated coaching opportunities to ensure providers have dedicated business bank accounts and credit cards. The BAS results demonstrated that SSA providers were below the normative sample average.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
4. Financial Management			
4.1 Does the provider have a business bank account exclusively for their FCC business?	7	13	65%
4.2 Did the provider file income taxes for their business last year?	17	3	15%
4.2.1 Did the provider report business use of home as an expense?	18	2	10%
4.3 Does the provider have an operating budget for tracking revenue and expenses?	12	8	40%
4.3.1 Do the provider's prices reflect the cost of care per child?	18	2	10%
4.4 Does the provider have outstanding payments owed for child care that are 3 months or more past due?	1	19	5%
4.5 Does the provider need to improve their credit score?	7	13	35%
4.6 Does the provider have a business credit card exclusively for their FCC business?	1	19	95%



Goals Set and Completed: While improved financial management practices were demonstrated needs, only five goals were set in this area during year 1. This indicates an opportunity to enhance support in this area.

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
4.1 Financial Management - Provider opened business bank account	3
4.2 Financial Management – Provider filed taxes for FCC business	1
4.3 Financial Management – Provider uses operating budget for tracking revenue and expenses	1

Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Financial Management

Evidence of Business Progress: As was seen in the intake, very few providers report carrying any bad debt (debt that is owed to the provider after it was due). Additional providers reported that they have a budget, do not carry business debt, and have savings.

SSA Goal: Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation

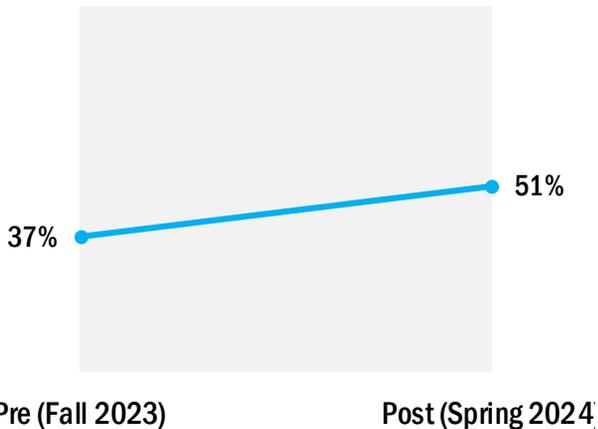
Financial Management

Bad Debt	Maintained	91% of providers report that they have no bad debt.
Budget	Improved	51% of providers report they have a budget or cashflow system in place (14% increase).
Business Debt	Improved	15% of providers have debt related to their child care business (8% decrease).
Savings	Improved	63% of providers have savings or financial reserves (19% increase).

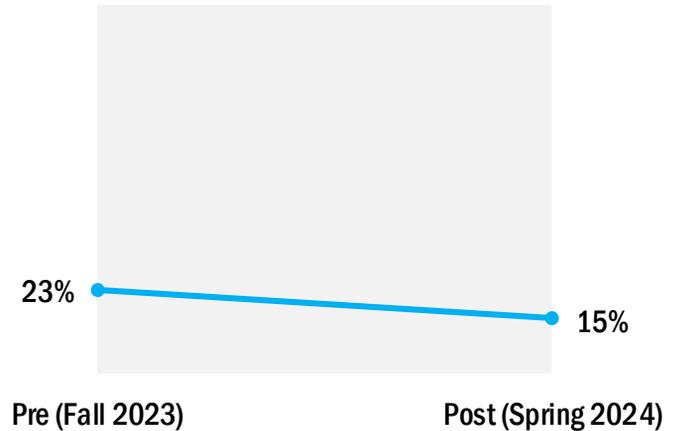
Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Continued training in budgeting, tax filing, mitigating risk, and decreasing debt is needed. In order for business coaches and cultural navigators to feel comfortable developing budgets with their providers, they would first need specific training in this area. It may also be helpful for the SSA to create or identify a budgeting tool or template that can consistently be applied during coaching sessions with providers.

Financial Management: Budgeting, Debt, and Savings

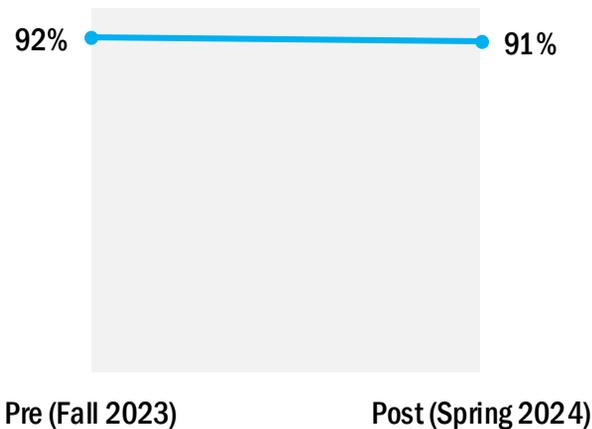
The number of providers reporting that they have a **system for budgeting and cashflow** increased **14%** from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024. (n=105)



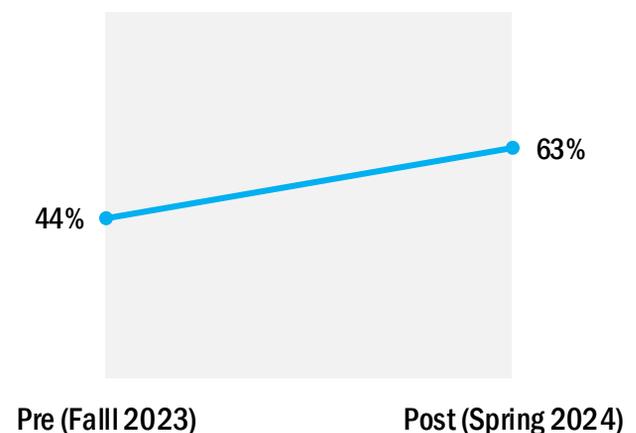
The providers reporting carrying **debt related to the child care business** decreased by **8%** between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



At both intake and post survey, over **90%** of providers report that they have no **bad debt**. (Defined as money - tuition, fees, and copayments owed to the provider after it was due.) (n=105)

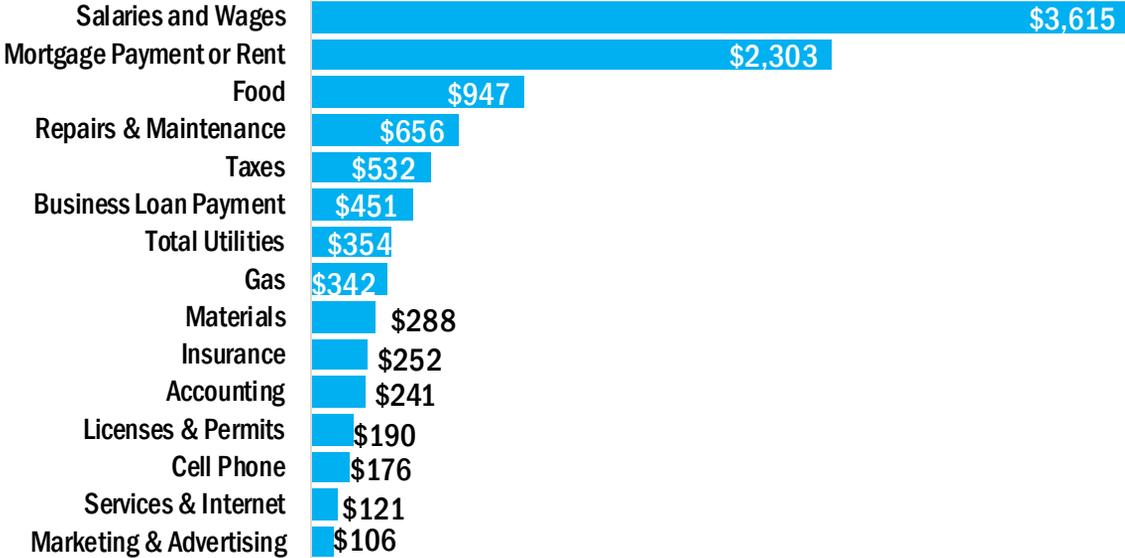


Providers reporting that they have **financial reserves or a saving account** for the business increased **19%** from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024. (n=105)

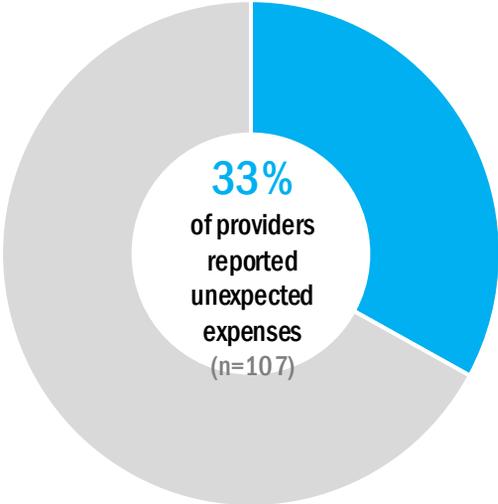
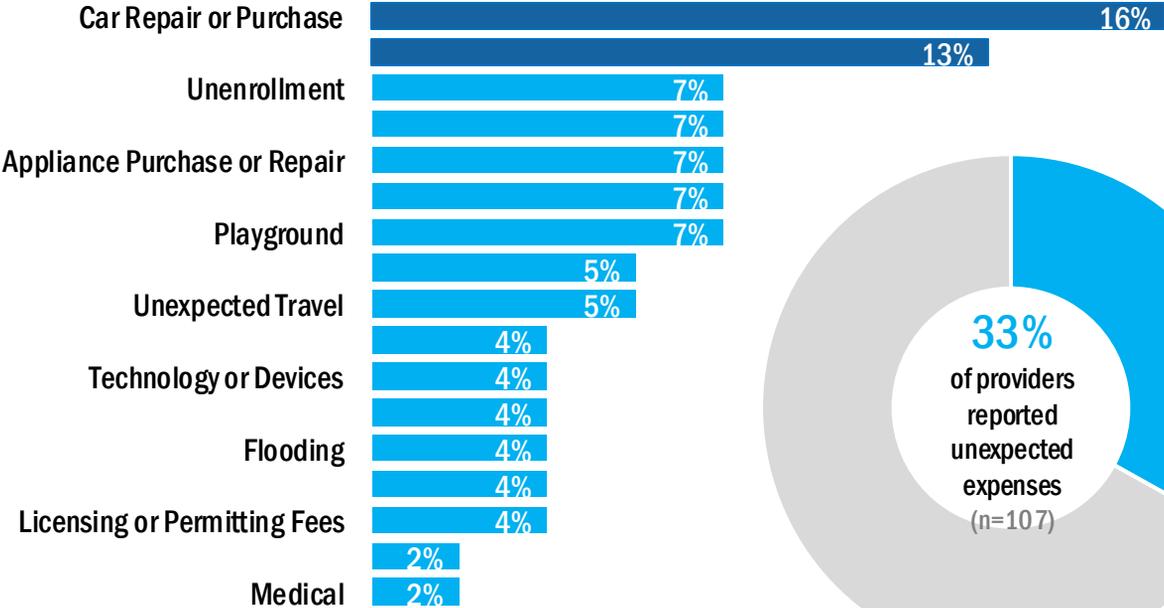


Financial Management: Expenses

Salary and wages, followed by mortgage payment or rent, and food were providers' top three highest average expense categories. (n=105)

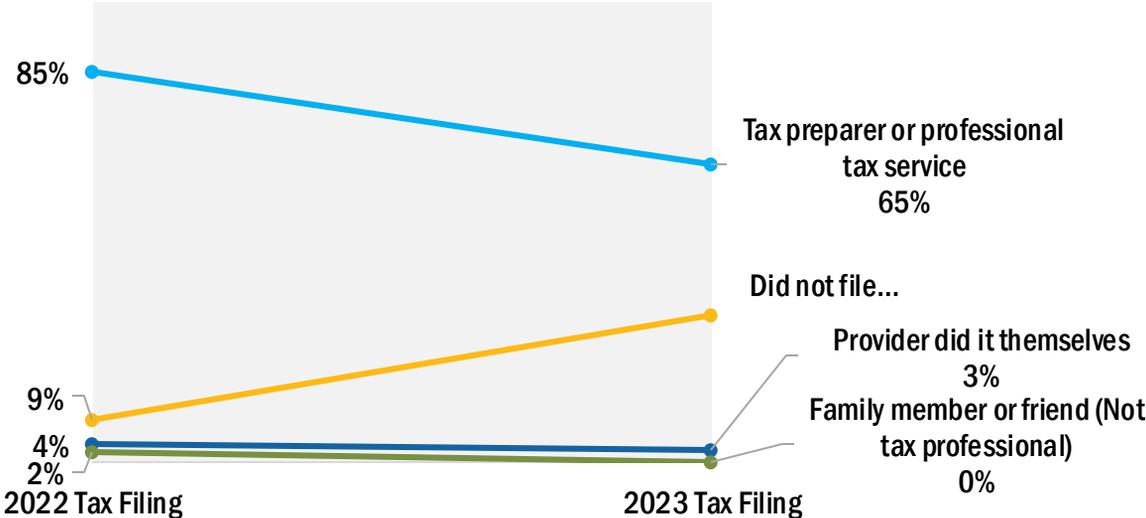


Car repair or purchase and building repairs were the most common unexpected expenses experienced by providers. (n=56)

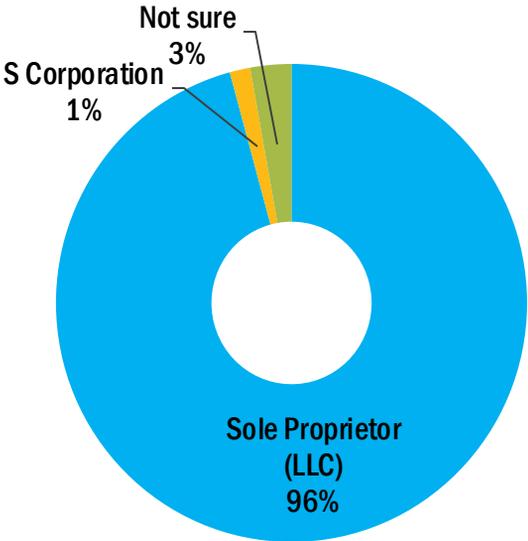


Financial Management: Taxes

There was a decrease in the number of providers who used a **tax preparer** from 2022 to 2023 and an increase in the number who **did not file**. This difference could be because providers may not have filed their 2023 tax returns at the time of post-survey. (n=1)



Of the providers who report filing their 2023 taxes, 96% filed as **sole proprietors**. (n=71)



The SSA will increase fee collection and revenue generation.



Networks and Provider Programs



Business Practices Checklist** Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress



Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

**The BAS does not have corresponding constructs for Networks and Provider Programs.

Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Networks and Provider Programs

Baseline Results: The Business Practices Checklist results demonstrated coaching opportunities to help providers connect with CACFP and SDQPI for the twenty providers who utilized this assessment. The SSA intake form also indicated other opportunities to connect providers with various support programs.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
5. Networks and Provider Programs			
5.1 Is the provider enrolled in CACFP?	0	20	100%
5.2 Is the provider enrolled in SDQPI?	1	19	95%
5.3 Is the provider a member in any FCC networks?	13	7	35%
5.4 Is the provider a member of the local FCC union?	15	5	25%

Goals Set and Completed: Coaches and cultural navigators worked with 21 providers to join the workforce registry. **20% of providers registered with the Workforce Registry.**

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
2 Continuing Education & Resources – Provider registered with workforce registry for ongoing trainings	21
5.4 Networks and Provider Programs – Provider joined local FCC union	1

Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Networks and Provider Programs

Evidence of Business Progress: Increased provider participation in support programs was seen across the SSA during year 1.

SSA Goal: Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation (continued)

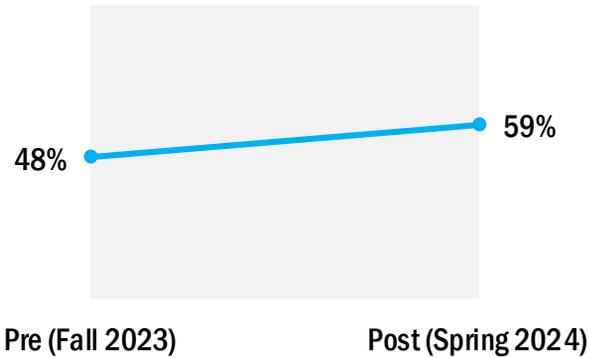
Networks and Provider Programs

CACFP	Improved	59% of providers participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), (11% increase).
Union	Improved	69% of providers are members of the Child Care Provider Union (8% increase).
SDQPI	Improved	31% of providers participate in the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI) (5% increase).
Workforce Registry	Improved	63% of providers are members of the Workforce Registry (14% increase).
Subsidy	Improved	96% of providers accept at least one type of subsidy (12% increase), and 48% accept private pay tuition (7% increase).

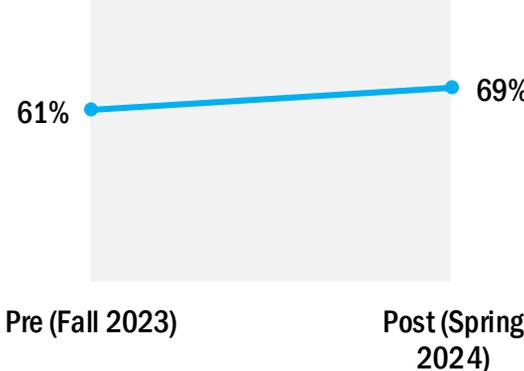
Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Support for agencies that sponsor the CACFP program, including staff and resources that can assist providers that speak languages other than English and Spanish. SSA program leaders should collaborate with service providers to help SSA members gain access and to navigate to systems-level support programs.

Networks and Provider Programs

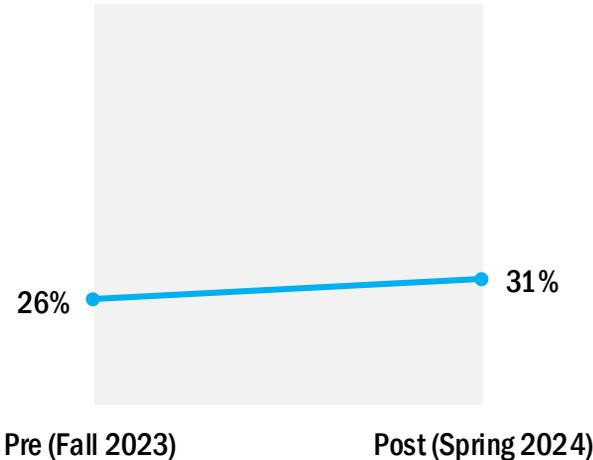
The number of providers participating in **CACFP** increased by **11%** between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=106)



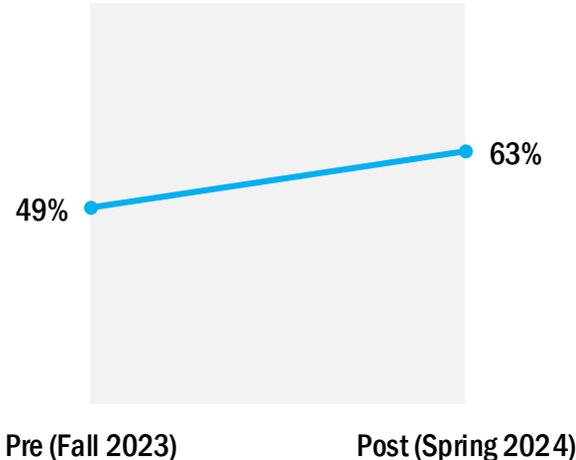
The number of FCC providers reporting that they are members of the **child care provider union** increased **8%** between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



The number of providers participating in **SDQPI** increased **5%** between Fall 2024 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



Providers enrolled in the **Workforce Registry** increased **14%** between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



Networks and Provider Programs: CACFP, SDQPI, Union Participation By Agency

5% of Horn of Africa providers participate in CACFP.

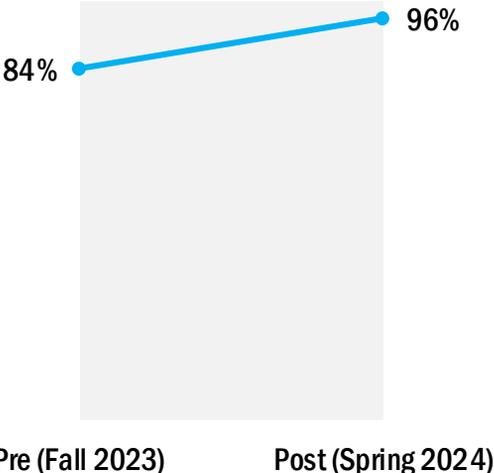
5% of Horn of Africa and IRC providers participate in SDQPI

% Enrolled	YMCA	Child Development Associates	Chicano Federation	Horn of Africa	International Rescue Committee
CACFP	70%	75%	85%	5%	60%
SDQPI	33%	92%	40%	5%	5%
FCC Union	58%	83%	70%	75%	70%

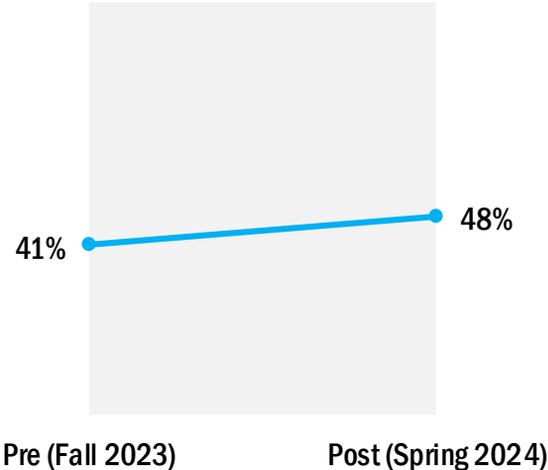
The CEED evaluation team reports that Horn of Africa has served 54 providers in the STEPS program since 2020, the majority of whom are Somali-speaking or from nearby East African countries. Over the last four years only one provider has participated in CACFP. Data from focus groups reports that providers experience difficulty navigating the CACFP program due to its complexity and the language barriers that exist during compliance checks.

Networks and Provider Programs: Subsidy and Private Pay

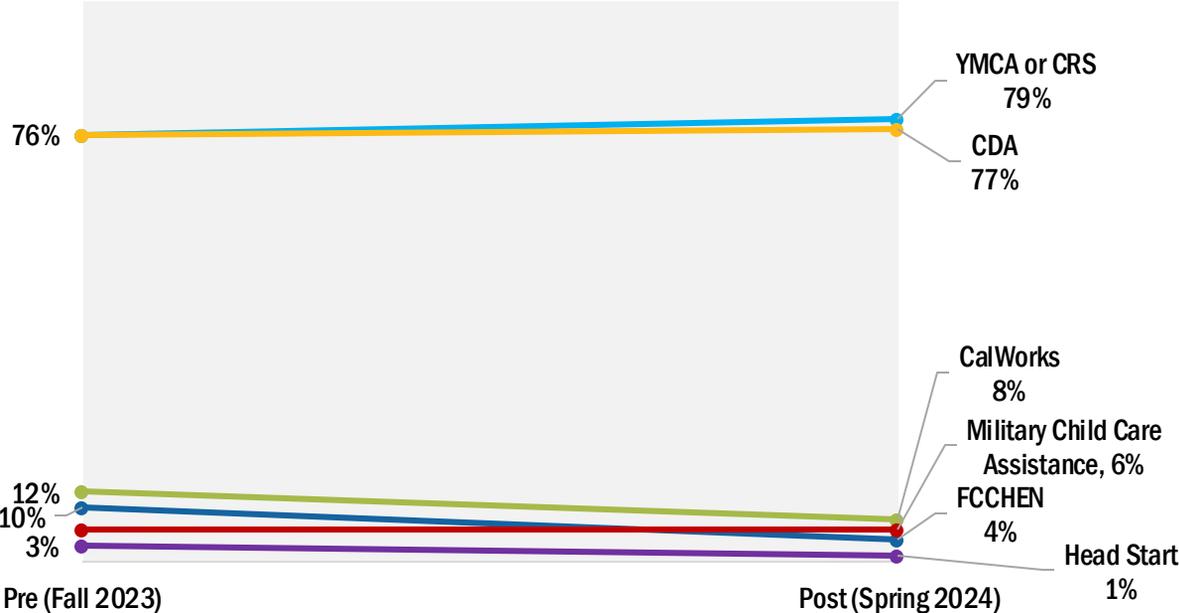
The number of providers participating in at least one subsidy program increased 12% between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



The number of providers who accept private pay tuition increased by 7% from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024. (n=105)



Provider participation in various subsidy programs remained relatively consistent between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. (n=105)



The SSA will increase fee collection and revenue generation.



Marketing



Business Practices Checklist Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress

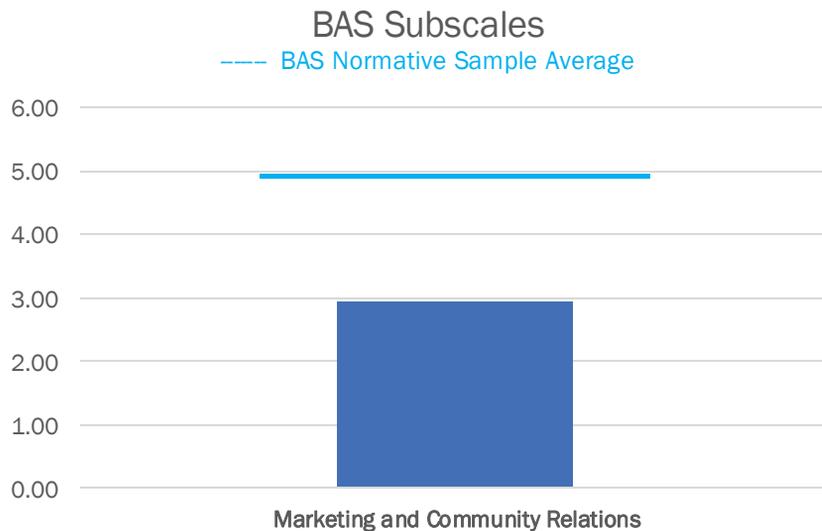


Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Marketing

Baseline Results: The Business Practices Checklist results demonstrated coaching opportunities in several marketing areas, including advertising, building a website, and utilizing social media and digital placement services. The BAS results demonstrated that SSA providers were below the normative sample average in marketing and community relations.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
6. Marketing			
6.1 Does the provider utilize marketing tools for advertising? (i.e. business cards, car magnets, etc.)?	9	11	55%
6.2 Does the provider have a website for their FCC business?	1	19	95%
6.3 Does the provider have social media accounts for their FCC business?	0	20	100%
6.4 Does the provider track inquiries for care? (i.e. what families need)	16	4	20%
6.5 Does the provider update their child care program file with referral programs? If yes, how often?	20	0	0%
6.6 Does the provider use digital placement services?	1	19	95%



Increase Fee Collection and Revenue Generation: Marketing

Evidence of Business Progress: Providers received assistance with how to create and utilize marketing tools for their business.

Goals Set and Completed: Business coaches and cultural navigators pursued 16 marketing related goals with providers. **8% of all goals were related to marketing.**

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
6.1 Marketing - Provider utilizes marketing tools for advertising	10
6.3 Marketing - Provider uses social media for their business	3
6.5 Marketing - Provider added or updated information to subsidy referral programs	3

Opportunity: Providing low-cost incentives to providers for participating in marketing efforts would be an easy way to encourage engagement in SSA. For example, Horn of Africa found organizational funding to print business cards for providers that needed them. During the focus group, business coaches and cultural navigators agreed more trainings should be in-person, especially those where providers can gain computer skills to develop marketing tools.

The SSA will increase business efficiency, infrastructure, and access to technology.



Licensing and Operations



Business Practices Checklist and BAS Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress

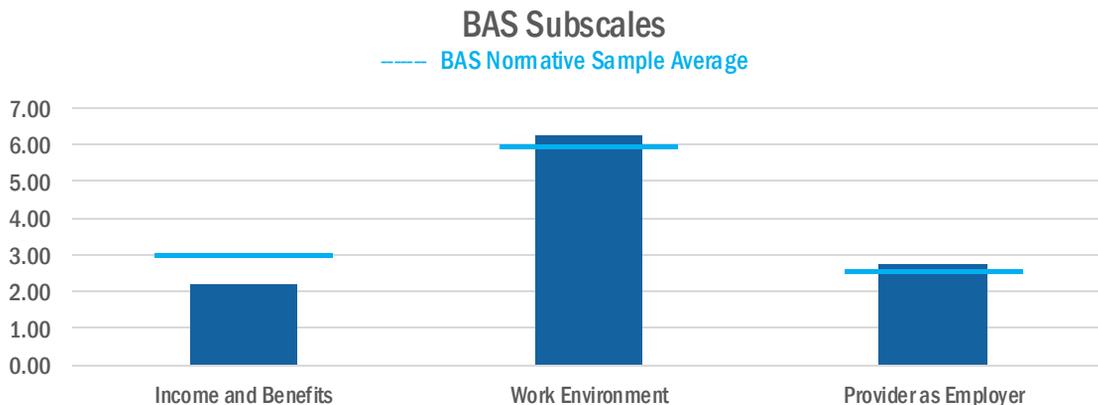


Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Licensing and Operations

BAS/Business Checklist Results: Baseline assessment results indicate that most SSA providers benefit from work environments that are rated slightly higher than the BAS's normative sample average. Providers completing both the BAS and Business Checklist have opportunities to improve their income, benefits, and hiring policies.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	% of providers that may need assistance
1. Licensing and Operations			
1.1 Is the provider's FCC license current and up to date?	20	0	0%
1.2 Are the provider's CPR and First Aid certifications current and up to date?	20	0	0%
1.3 Does the provider have a business plan? (within the last 5 years)	17	3	15%
1.4 Does the provider maintain all necessary business insurance policies (liability, home/renters, auto)?	20	0	0%
1.5 Does the provider have a business license or business tax certificate?	0	20	100%
1.6 Does the provider have policies for hiring?	1	19	95%
1.6.1 Does the provider offer an orientation for any new employees?	0	20	100%
1.6.2 Are assistants or employees paid at least minimum wage?	0	20	100%
1.6.3 Does the provider hold quarterly or monthly meetings with their assistant for planning purposes?	0	20	100%



Goals Set and Completed: A total of 9 goals were set and completed in the area of licensing and operation.

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
1.6 Licensing & Operations - Provider created policies for hiring.	5
1.2 Licensing & Operations – Provider updated CPR certification.	2
1.4 Licensing & Operations – Provider purchased or renewed business insurance.	2

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Licensing and Operations

Evidence of Business Progress: The average full-time hourly wage increased for providers' employees, while the part-time wage was relatively constant. There was also an increase in provider with staff offering paid time off as a benefit.

SSA Goal: Increase business efficiencies, infrastructure, and access to a technology platform

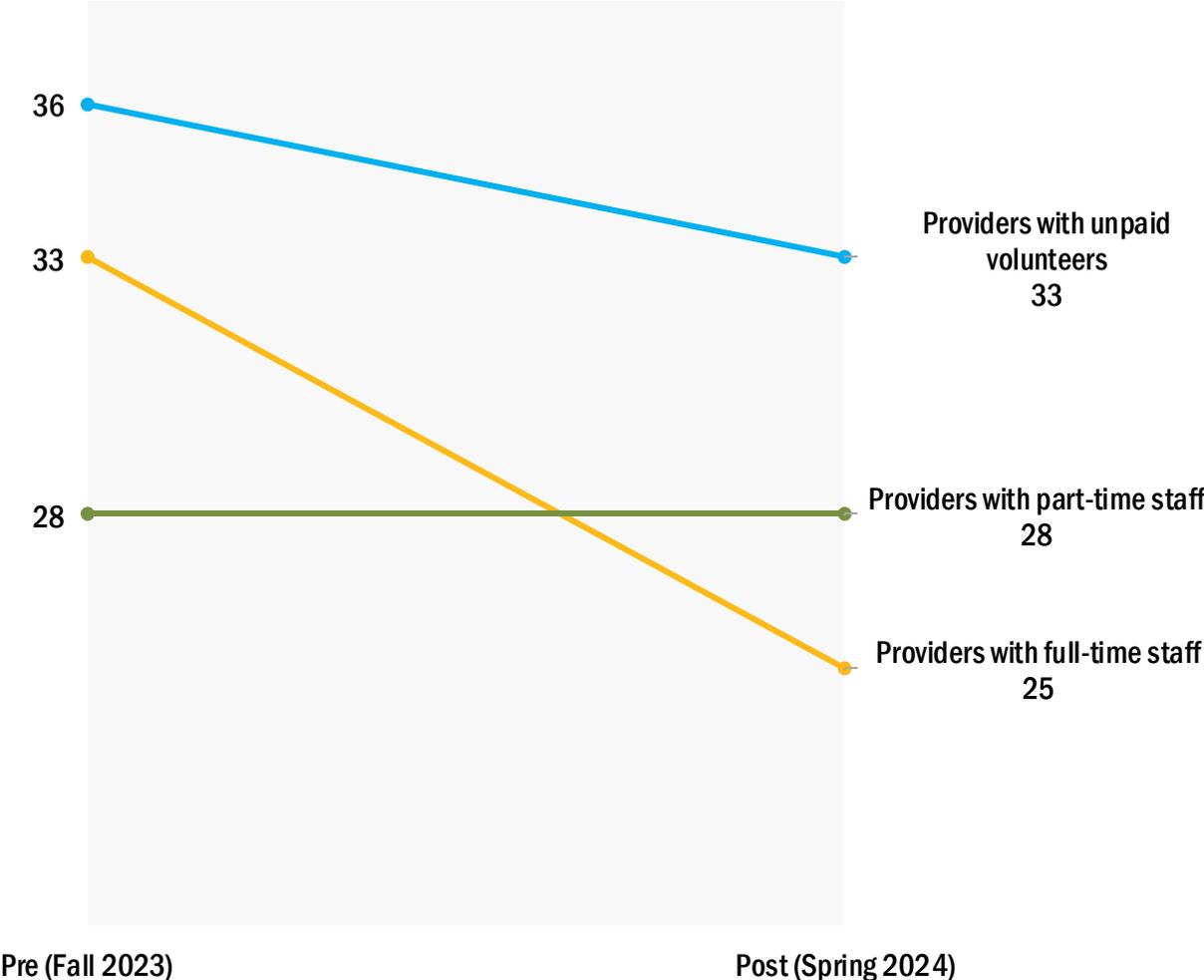
Licensing and Operations

Wages	Improved/ Maintained	\$1.67 (average full-time hourly wage increase) and \$0.06 (average part-time hourly wage increase)
Benefits	Improved	60% of providers offer paid time off (16% increase).

Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Child care regulations are complex and can be especially difficult for providers to navigate whose first language is not English. Regulatory agencies need more resources to reach providers in San Diego County that speak languages other than English and Spanish. Also, employee regulations are complex and additional trainings on hiring policies, are needed.

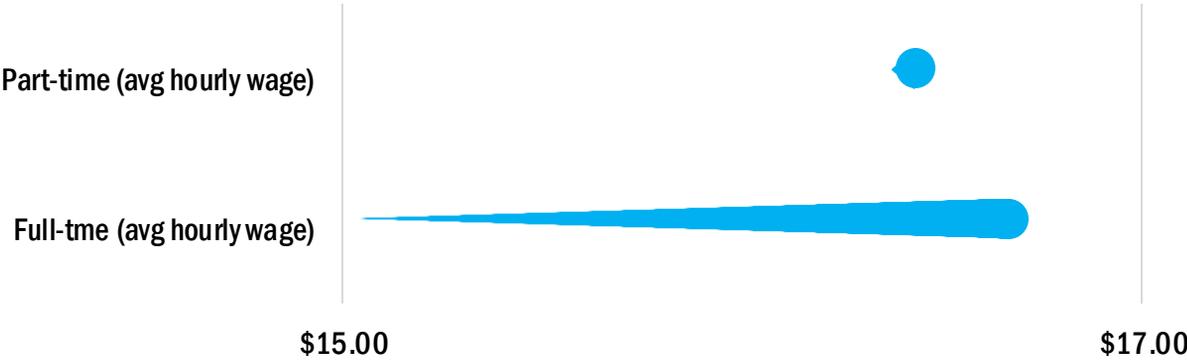
Licensing and Operations: Staff Levels

The number of providers with **unpaid volunteers** and **full-time staff** decreased, while the number of providers with **part-time staff** remained constant.

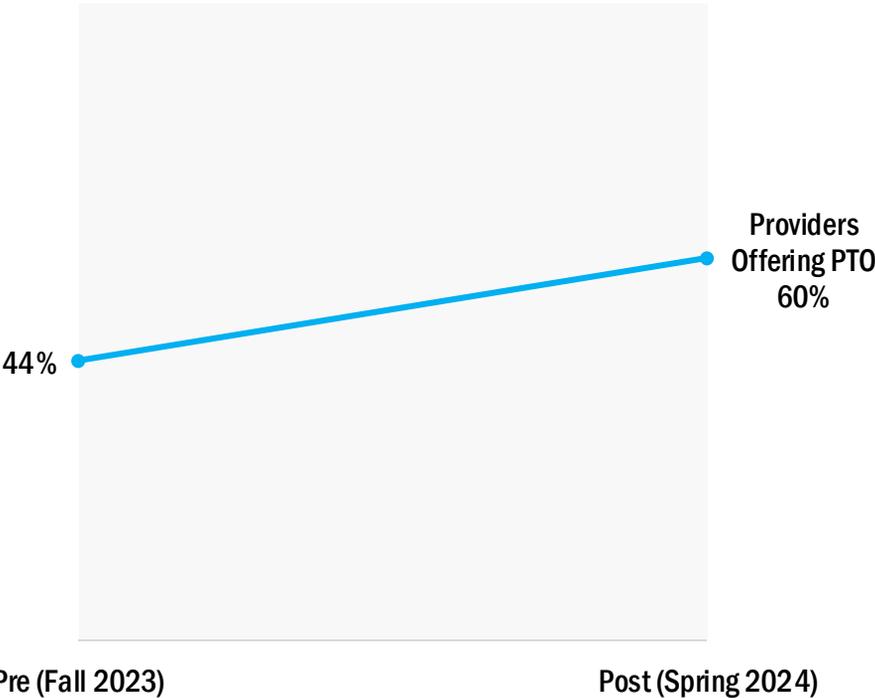


Licensing and Operations: Employee Wages and Benefits

The average full-time hourly wage for provider employees increased **\$1.67** from \$14.99 to \$16.66, and the average part-time hourly wage increased \$0.06 to \$16.43.



The percentage of providers (with full-time staff and offering PTO) increased **16%**. (n=25)



The SSA will increase business efficiency, infrastructure, and access to technology.

Continuing Education and Resources

Business Practices Checklist and BAS Baseline Results

Individual Goals Set and Completed

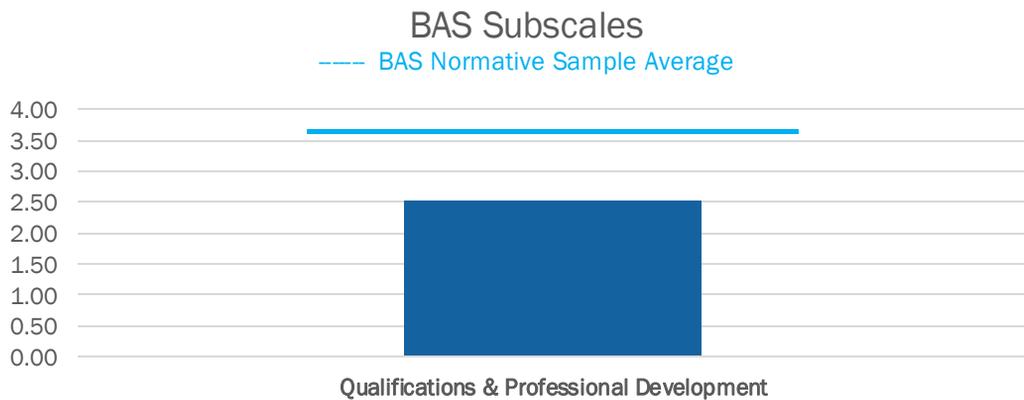
Evidence of Business Progress

Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Continuing Education and Resources

BAS/Business Checklist Results: Providers who completed the Business Practices Checklist demonstrated an opportunity to participate in more trainings and continuing education. The BAS results indicated that SSA providers were below the normative sample average for qualifications and professional development.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
	2. Continuing Education & Resources		
2.1 Have you attended any trainings in the last year?	12	8	40%
2.1.1 Trainings offered through YMCA?	1	19	95%
2.1.2 Trainings offered through the Union?	5	15	75%
2.1.3 Trainings offered through California Department of Education?	1	19	95%
2.2 Do you have a CDA credential?	0	20	100%



Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Continuing Education and Resources

Evidence of Business Progress: Providers participating in the SSA connected with free trainings throughout the year. As of May 30, 2024, 87% of providers had participated in at least one business training.

SSA Goal: Increase business efficiencies, infrastructure, and access to a technology platform

Continuing Education

Training	Baseline Measure	98% of providers participated in at least 1 training through their SSA participation
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Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Training was a core feature of the program. Business coaches and cultural navigators need additional time to determine the training needs of the providers and to help meet the goal of 100% participation.

Surveys were not made available after all trainings. We recommend creating an SSA network wide slide with survey QR codes for each language that can be sent to training instructors prior to the training dates.

Feedback from team leaders that have also participated in STEPS discussed the importance of offering a core set of courses as sometimes providers do not know what type of training they need.

Opportunities could be made available for each organization to outsource or conduct in-house trainings if needed. Refugee communities learn to trust one organization and are often not open to building trust with another organization.

Business coaches noted that more in-person trainings with hands-on activities are important, especially in helping providers with their digital literacy skills. For example, IRC and Horn of Africa hosted in-person trainings to help providers with CareConnect.

Continuing Education & Resources: Training Sessions

The YMCA and IRC were contracted to offer trainings on a variety of topics that support best business practices. Format was either in-person or over Zoom, depending on provider schedules and availability. Horn of Africa (HOA) had staff on hand to conduct trainings in Somali to help fulfill the need. The CareConnect trainings were only available in English and Spanish, however the Horn of Africa and IRC cultural navigators attended the English trainings and conducted separate trainings in Somali and Arabic for their providers who were not proficient in English or Spanish.

SSA Training Sessions Offered

Month	Topic	Training Sponsor	Language
Nov-23	SSA Orientation	IRC	Arabic
Jan-Mar-24	CareConnect	YMCA	English & Spanish
Jan-24	Tax and Recordkeeping	YMCA	English & Spanish
Feb-24	Fundamentals for FCC-Marketing	YMCA	English & Spanish
Feb-24	Fundamentals for FCC-Contracts & Policies	YMCA	English & Spanish
Feb-24	Fundamentals for FCC-Family Communication	YMCA	English & Spanish
Feb-24	Digital Literacy	IRC	Arabic
Mar-24	Digital Marketing	YMCA	English & Spanish
Mar-24	Fundamentals for FCC-Business Finance	YMCA	English & Spanish
Mar-24	Fundamentals for FCC-Prepare for Business Taxes	YMCA	English & Spanish
Mar-24	CareConnect	HOA	Somali
Mar-24	Tax Preparation	IRC	Arabic
Apr-24	Budgeting	YMCA	English & Spanish
Apr-24	Marketing	YMCA	Spanish
Apr-24	Financial Literacy 102 (Credit)	IRC	Arabic
Apr-24	Contract & Policy	IRC	Arabic
May-24	Applying for Stipends	YMCA	Spanish
May-24	Insurance	YMCA	English & Spanish
May-24	When Concerns Arise: Supporting Children	CDA	Spanish
May-24	Business Management	HOA	Somali
Mar-24	Financial Literacy 101 (Budgeting and Banking)	IRC	Arabic
May-24	CareConnect	IRC	Arabic

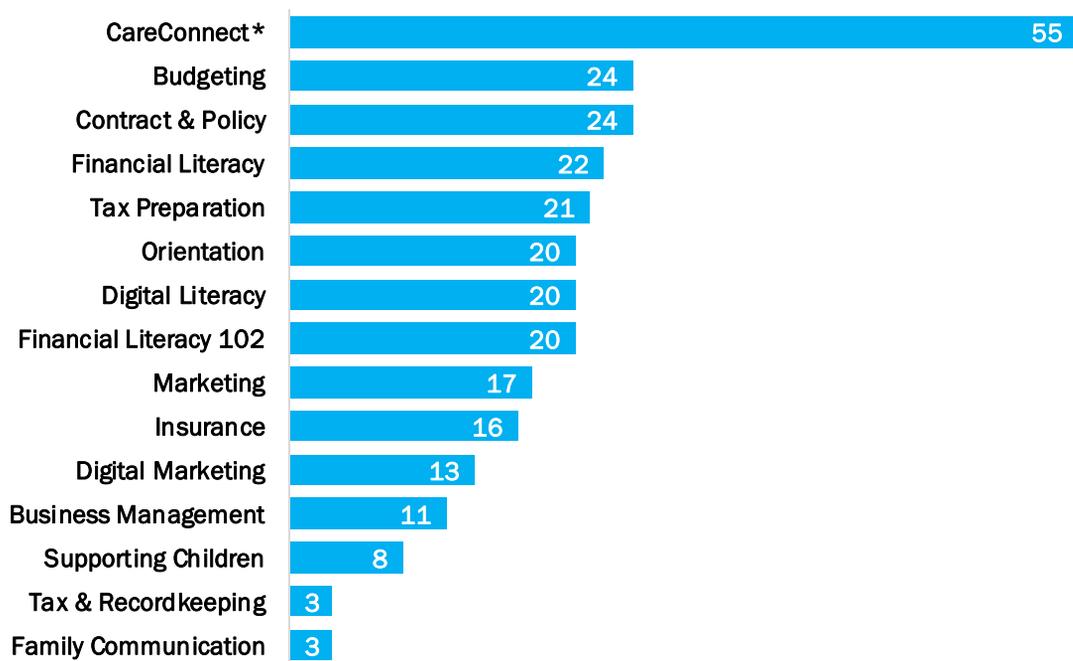
Continuing Education & Resources: Training Attendance

Continuing education is one of the tenants built into the SSA model. Completing training in Year 1, gives providers a knowledge base for best practices that will help them think about goals to complete in Year 2.

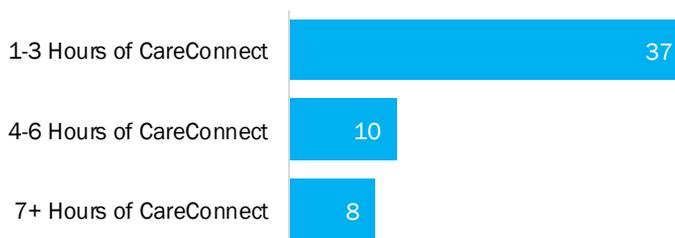
CareConnect training was a series of courses offered multiple times a week from January to March. Budgeting and Contract & Policy courses were the more popular topics.

Total Training Attendance

*Number of providers that attended at least one CareConnect training



Number of Providers that Attended the CareConnect Training Series

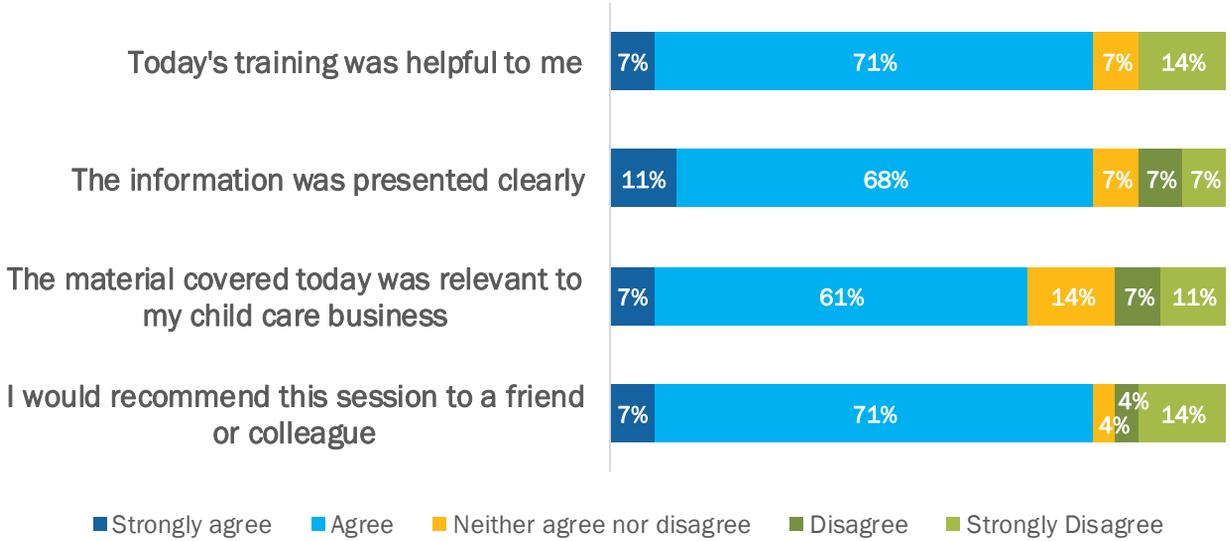


Continuing Education & Resources

Training: Survey Results

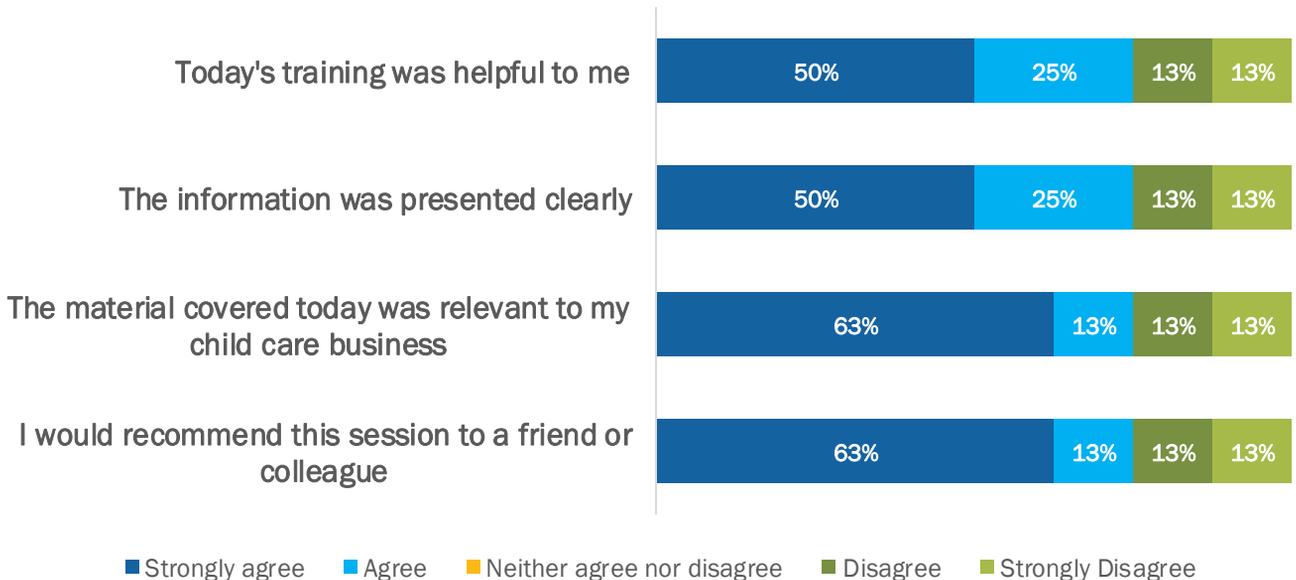
YMCA Digital Marketing (English)

n=28



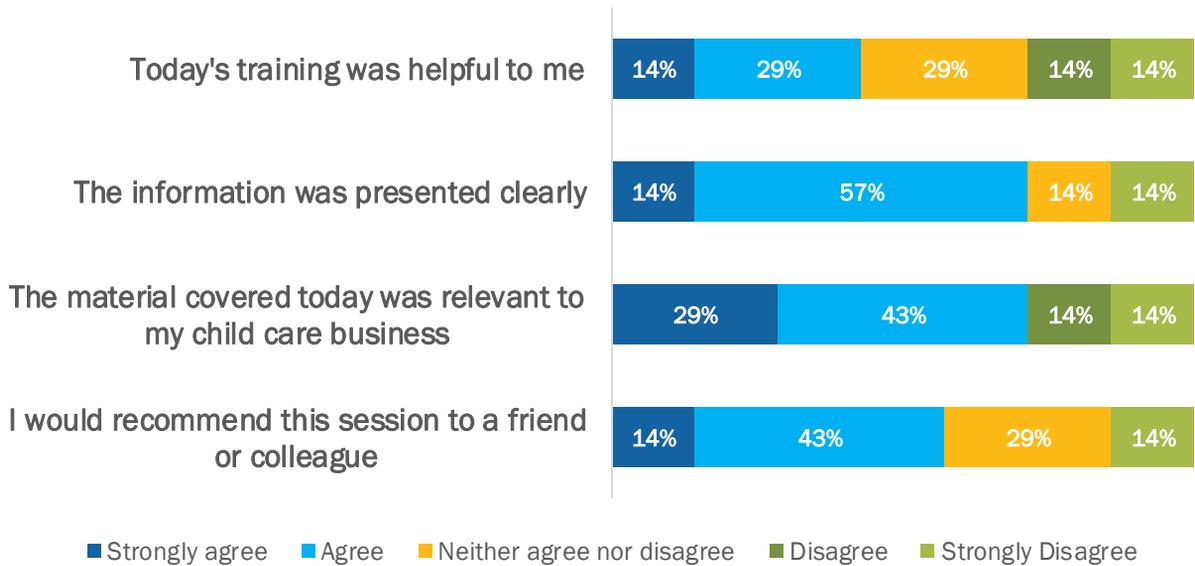
YMCA Digital Marketing (Spanish)

n=16

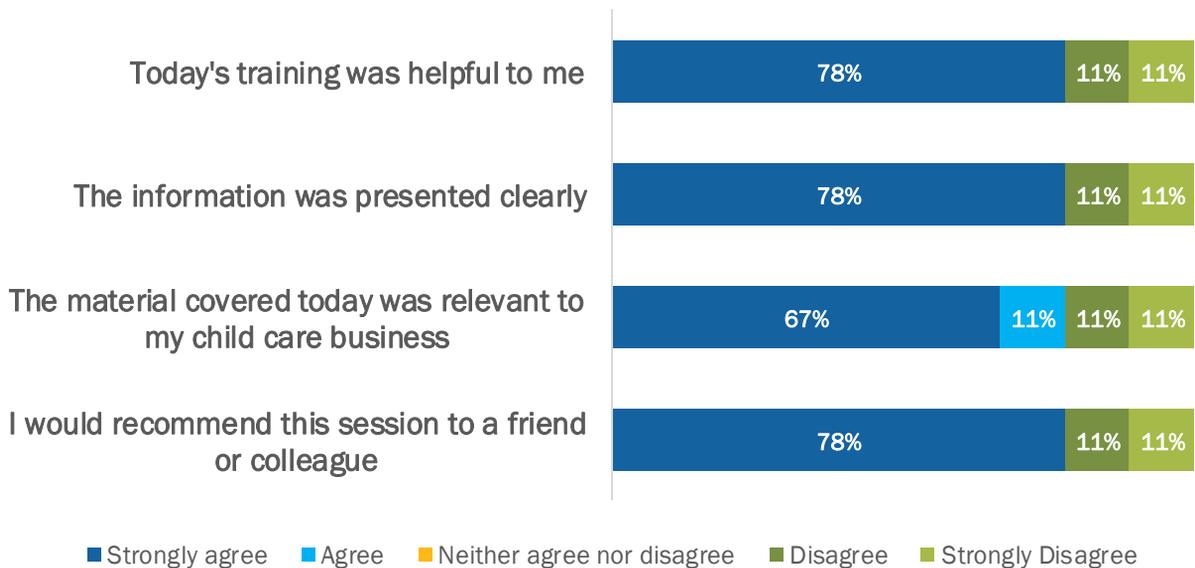


Continuing Education & Resources Training: Survey Results

YMCA Budgeting (English)
n=7



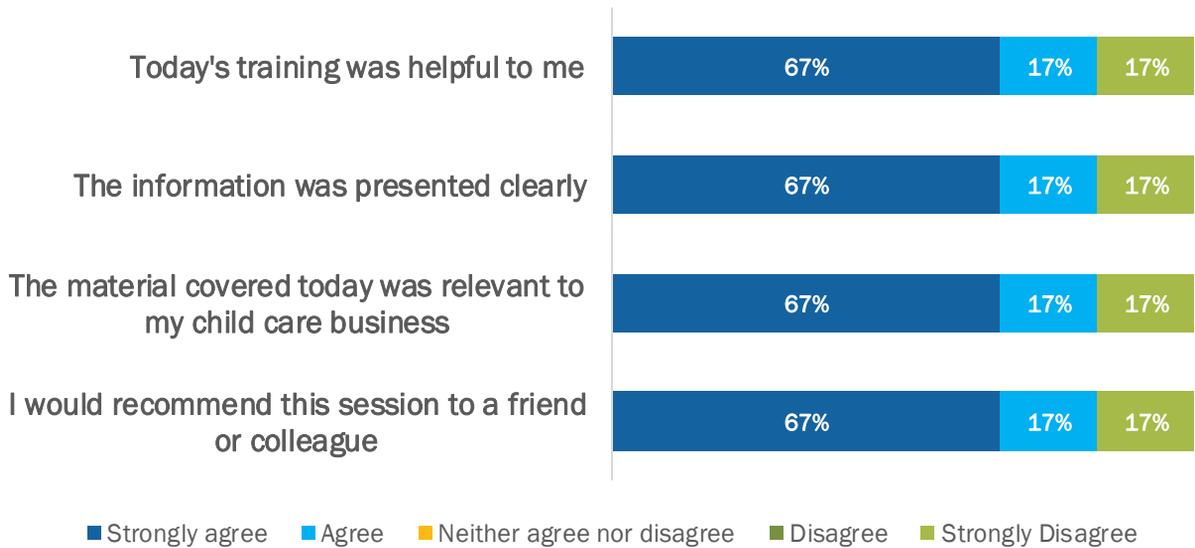
YMCA Budgeting (Spanish)
n=9



Continuing Education & Resources Training: Survey Results

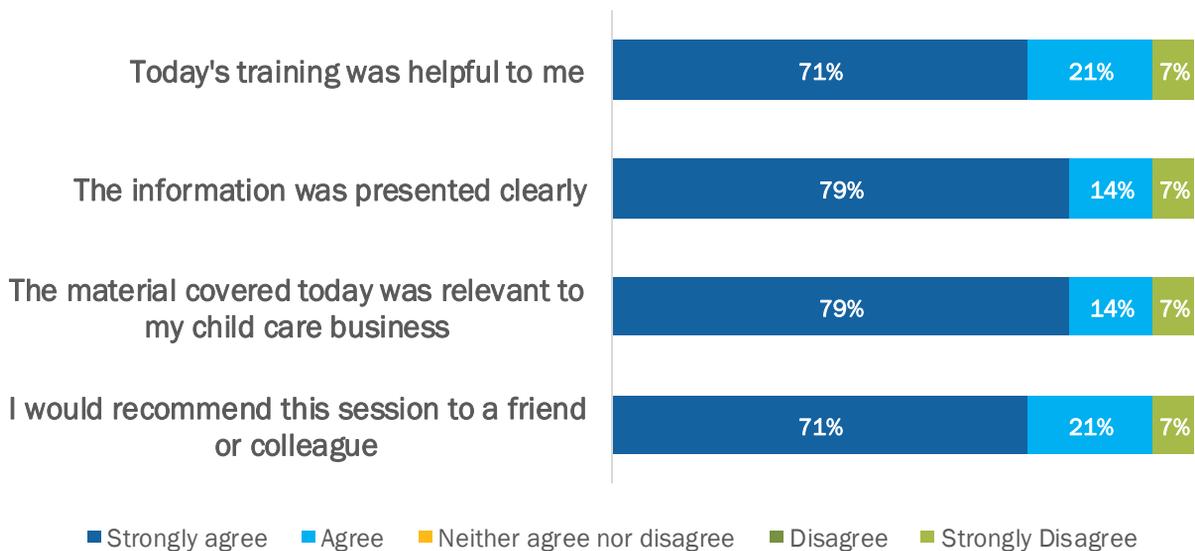
IRC SSA Orientation (Arabic)

n=12



IRC Digital Literacy(Arabic)

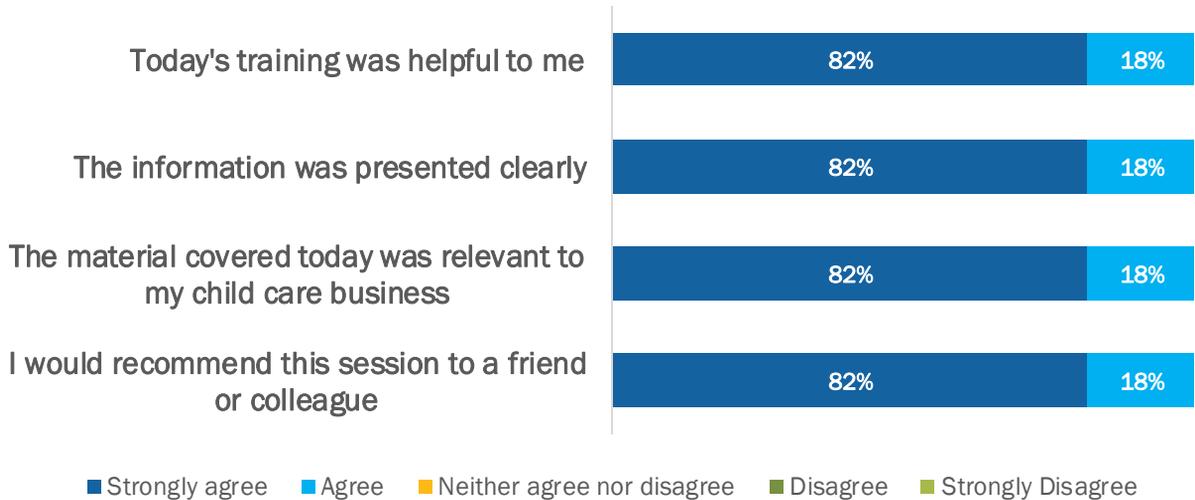
n=14



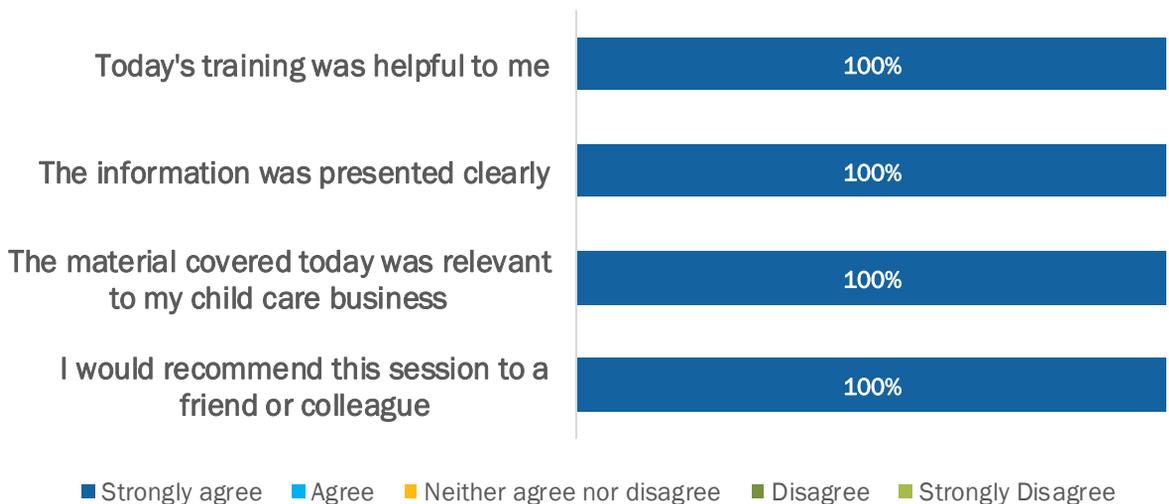
Continuing Education & Resources

Training: Survey Results

IRC Tax Preparation (Arabic)
n=11



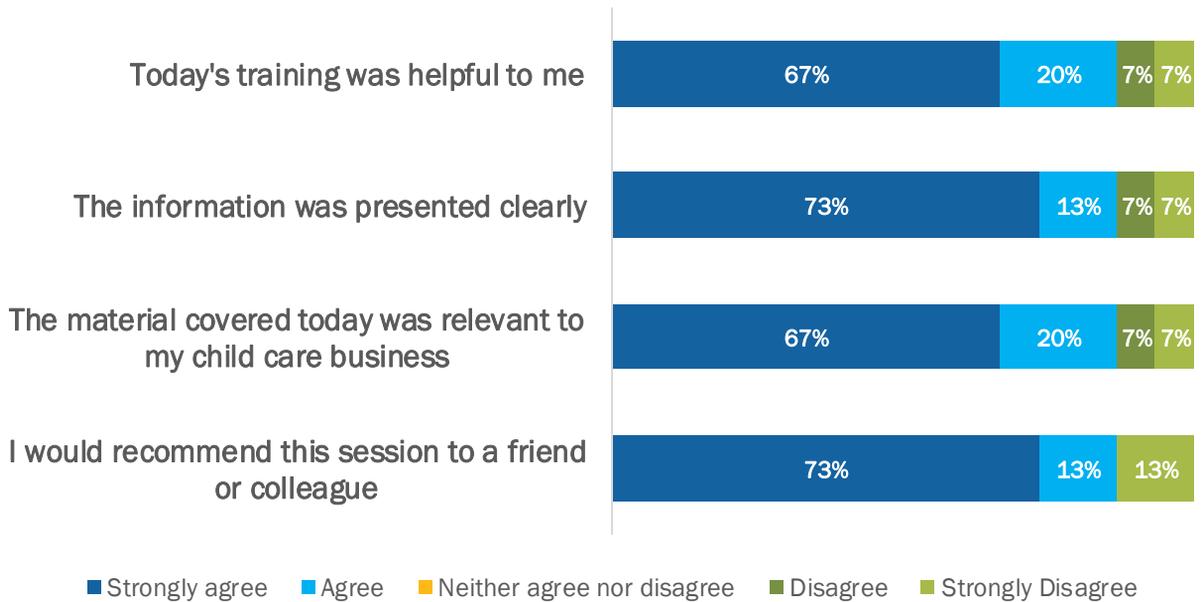
IRC Financial Literacy 101 Budgeting & Banking (Arabic)
n=7



Continuing Education & Resources Training: Survey Results

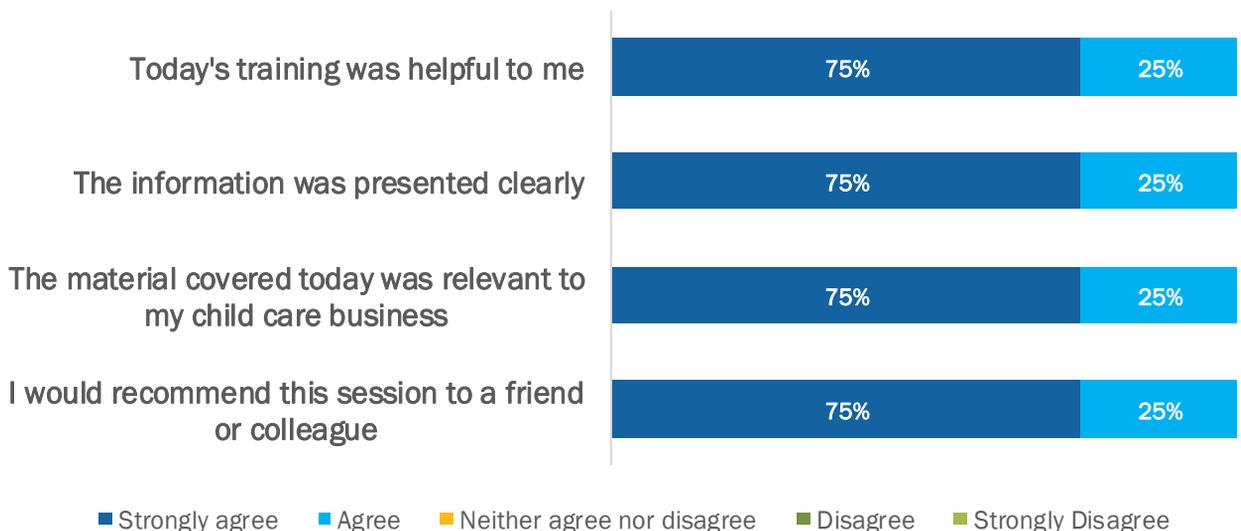
IRC Financial Literacy 102 Credit (Arabic)

n=15



IRC Contract & Policy(Arabic)

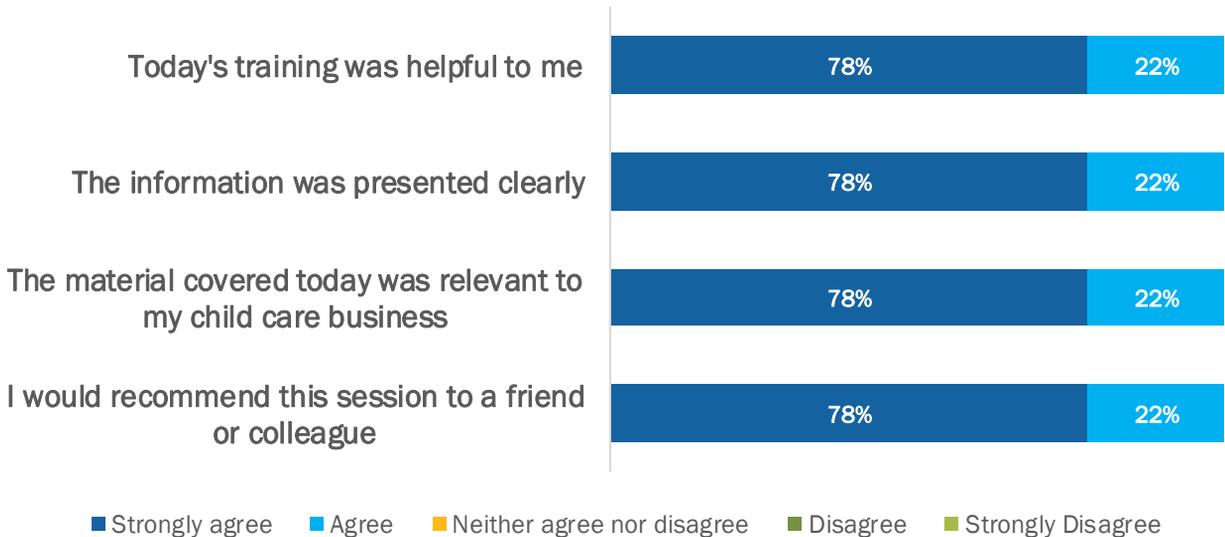
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Continuing Education & Resources Training: Survey Results

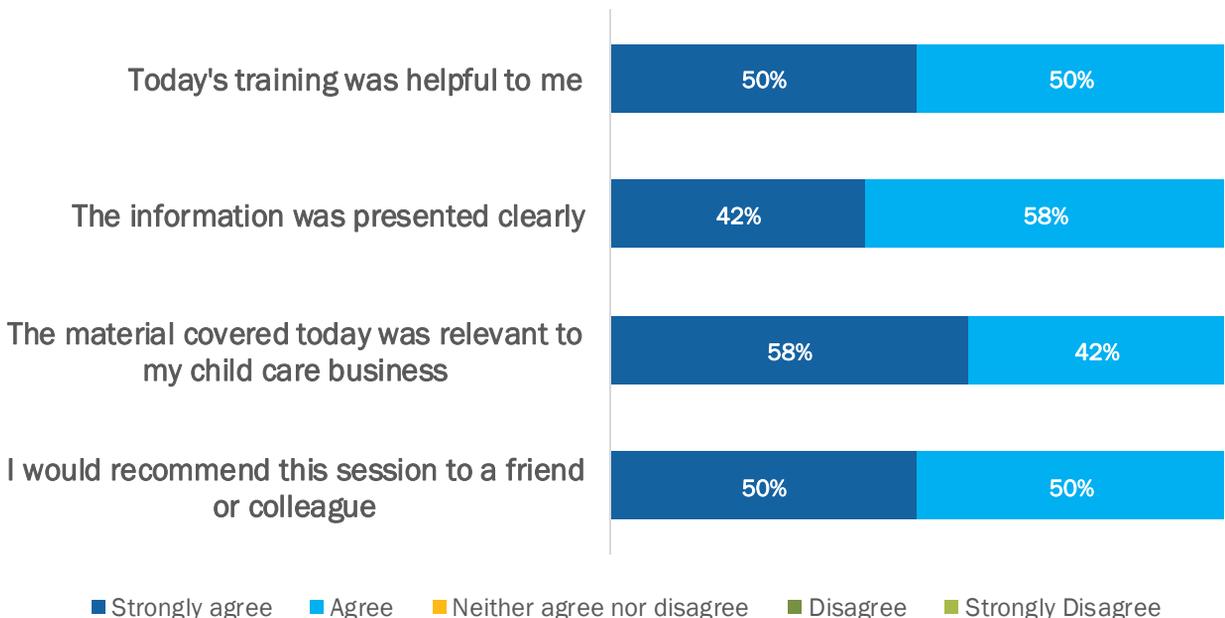
IRC CareConnect (Arabic)

n=9



Horn of Africa CareConnect (Somali)

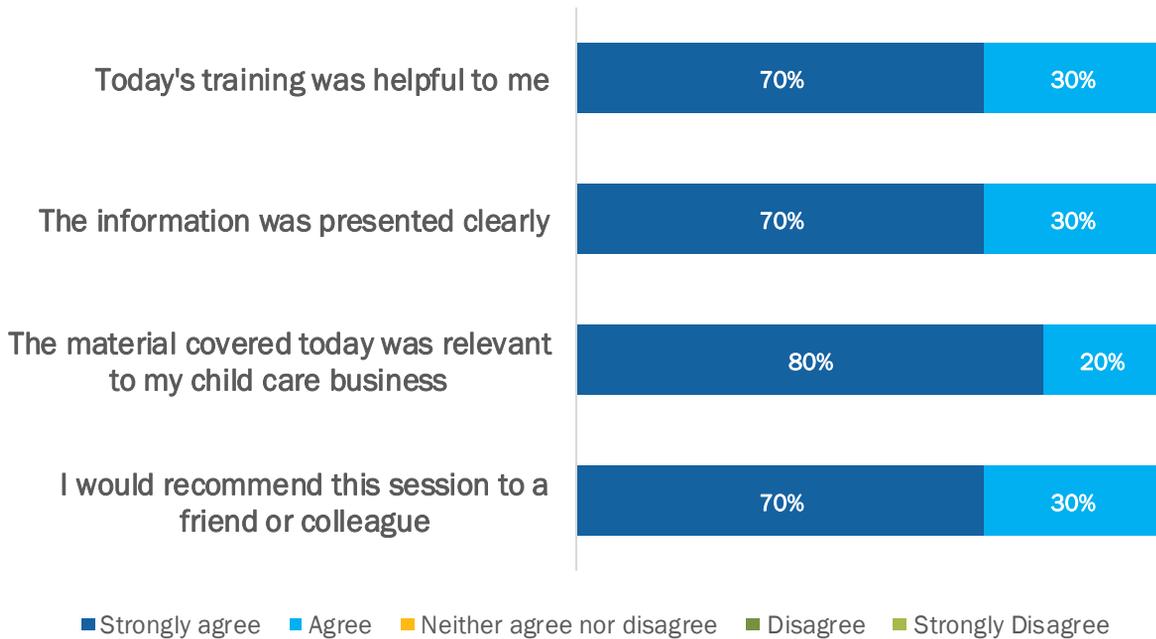
n=12



Continuing Education & Resources Training: Survey Results

Horn of Africa Business Management (Somali)

n=10



The SSA will increase business efficiency, infrastructure, and access to technology.

Recordkeeping

Business Practices Checklist and BAS Baseline Results

Individual Goals Set and Completed

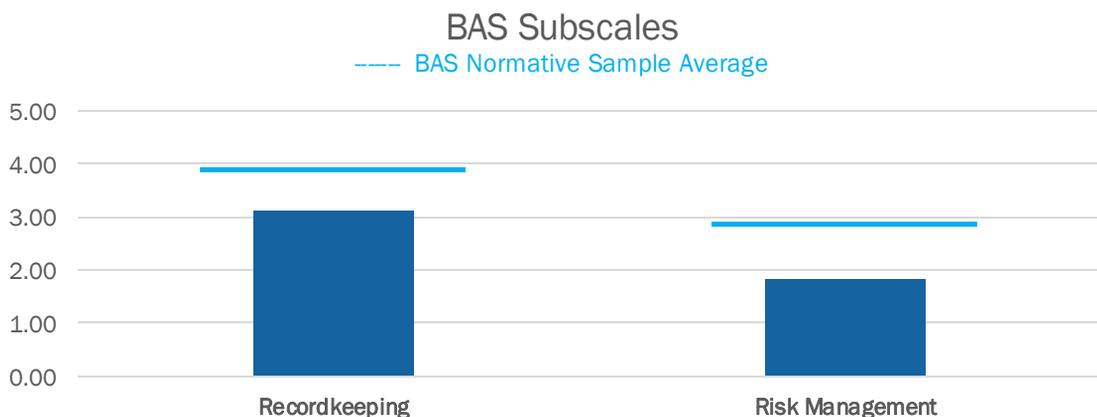
Evidence of Business Progress

Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Recordkeeping

BAS/Business Checklist Results: Providers who completed the Business Practices Checklist demonstrated the need to utilize technology and supply families with payment receipts and year-end tuition statements. The BAS results indicated that SSA providers were below the normative sample average for recordkeeping and risk management.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
3. Recordkeeping			
3.1 Does the provider use a contract and written policies with enrolled families?	20	0	0%
3.1.1 Do the contracts outline clear policies for collecting fees and a policy for delinquent fees?	20	0	0%
3.1.2 Do the contracts outline clear policies for contract termination?	20	0	0%
3.2 Does the provider maintain records for each child required for licensing? (i.e. immunizations, physical)	20	0	0%
3.3 Does the provider have a system for tracking and storing receipts for business expenses?	13	7	35%
3.4 Does the provider utilize technology and automation to operate their business?	6	14	70%
3.5 Does the provider supply receipts for payment of tuition/fees to each family?	1	19	95%
3.6 Does the provider supply an end of year statement of tuition and fees to each family?	1	19	95%



Goals Set and Completed: A total of 57 goals were set and completed in the area of recordkeeping comprising 28% of all goals.

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
3.1 Recordkeeping - Provider uses updated contract and written policies with enrolled families	26
3.3 Recordkeeping - Provider tracks and stores receipts for business expenses	28
3.2 Recordkeeping - Provider maintains child files for licensing	3

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Recordkeeping

Evidence of Business Progress: SSA providers focused on recordkeeping by implementing new expense tracking systems and new client contracts.

SSA Goal: Increase business efficiencies, infrastructure, and access to a technology platform

Recordkeeping

Organization and Policies

Improved

27% of providers implemented an expense tracking system, and **25%** implemented new client contracts.

Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Recordkeeping was a high need area for providers. Business coaches and cultural navigators need additional training on Excel or Google Sheet templates and methods for tracking income and expenses. Some providers prefer non-digital methods for recordkeeping. Support for partner organizations to secure both digital and non-digital resources for providers should be considered (i.e. filing folder/cabinets, Calendar Keeper for FCC providers, FCC bookkeeping software).

The SSA will increase business efficiency, infrastructure, and access to technology.



Communication



Business Practices Checklist and BAS Baseline Results



Individual Goals Set and Completed



Evidence of Business Progress

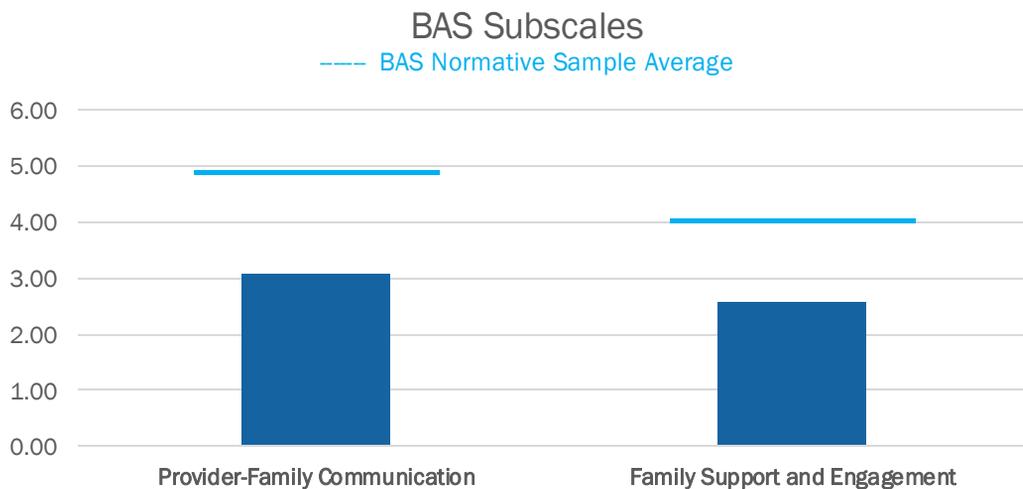


Opportunities for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Communication

BAS/Business Checklist Results: Providers who completed the Business Practices Checklist demonstrated the need to use a software program to communicate with families and maintain a binder of community resources. The BAS results indicated that SSA providers were below the normative sample average for provider-family communication and family support and engagement.

FCC Business Practices Checklist	Frequency of Yes and No		Coaching Opportunity
	Yes	No	
8.0 Communication			
8.1 Does the provider use communication tools to disperse information to families? (i.e. newsletters, emails)	14	6	30%
8.2 Does the provider use a business software program for their FCC business to communicate with families? (i.e. CareConnect)	1	19	95%
8.3 Does the provider maintain a community resource binder for families to access?	3	17	85%



Goals Set and Completed: A total of 14 providers completed a goal to start using CareConnect for their business operations.

Goal	# of providers that completed goal
8.2 Communication - Provider uses business software for their business	14

Increase Business Efficiency, Infrastructure, and Access to Technology: Communication

Evidence of Business Progress: Providers were asked to report if they use a CCMS on the post-survey and 51% indicated that they do, and 14 have begun using CareConnect as part of their goal completion work.

SSA Goal: Increase business efficiencies, infrastructure, and access to a technology platform

Communication

CCMS

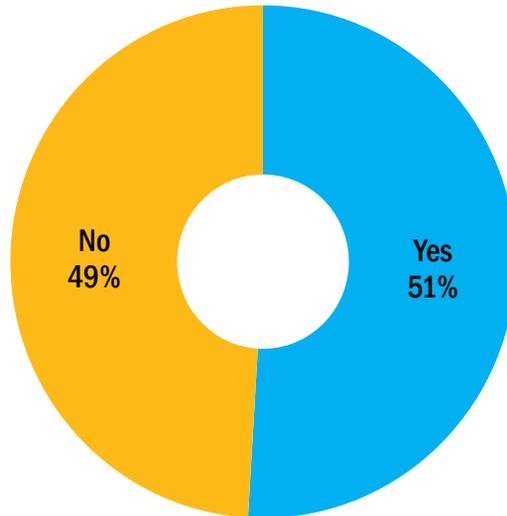
Improved

51% of providers report using a Child Care Management System (CCMS), and 14 providers completed a goal to start using CareConnect.

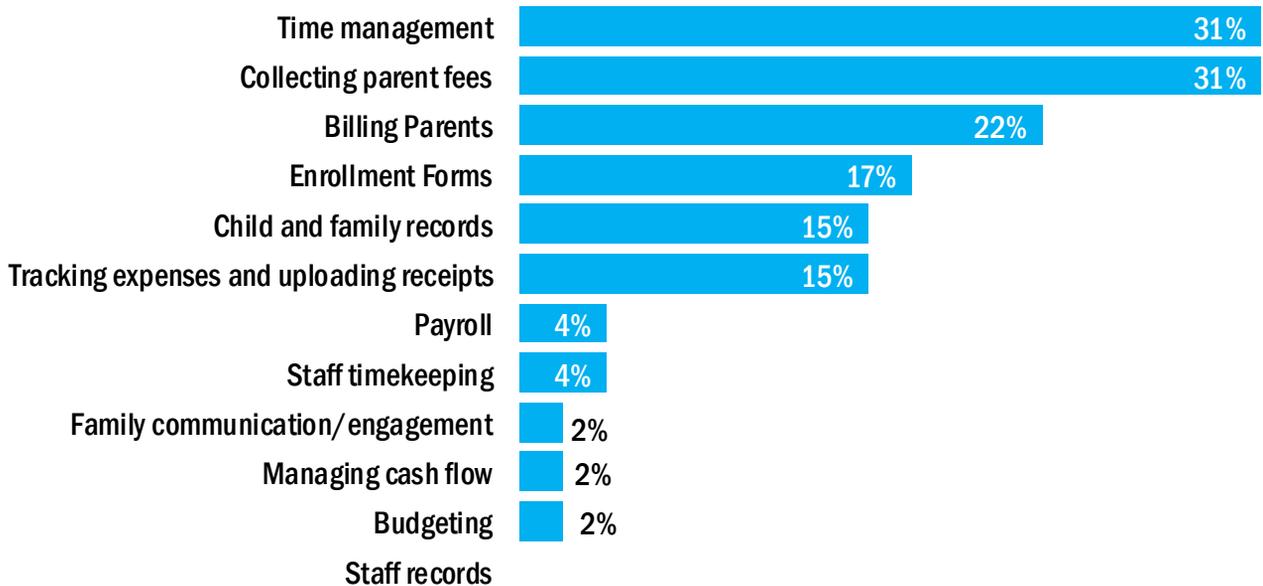
Opportunity for Growth, Improvement, or Additional Support: Resources are needed to offer CareConnect in additional languages, such as Somali and Arabic. Providers also need in-person CareConnect training as coaches and cultural navigators have found that many providers struggle with computer skills and learning CareConnect virtually was difficult. In-person, hands-on trainings would give providers the opportunity to practice using the platform.

Communications: CCMS

As of Spring 2024, **51%** of providers report using child care management software. (n=105)



Most providers using CCMS, use it to bill parents, collect parent fees, and manage their time. (n=54)



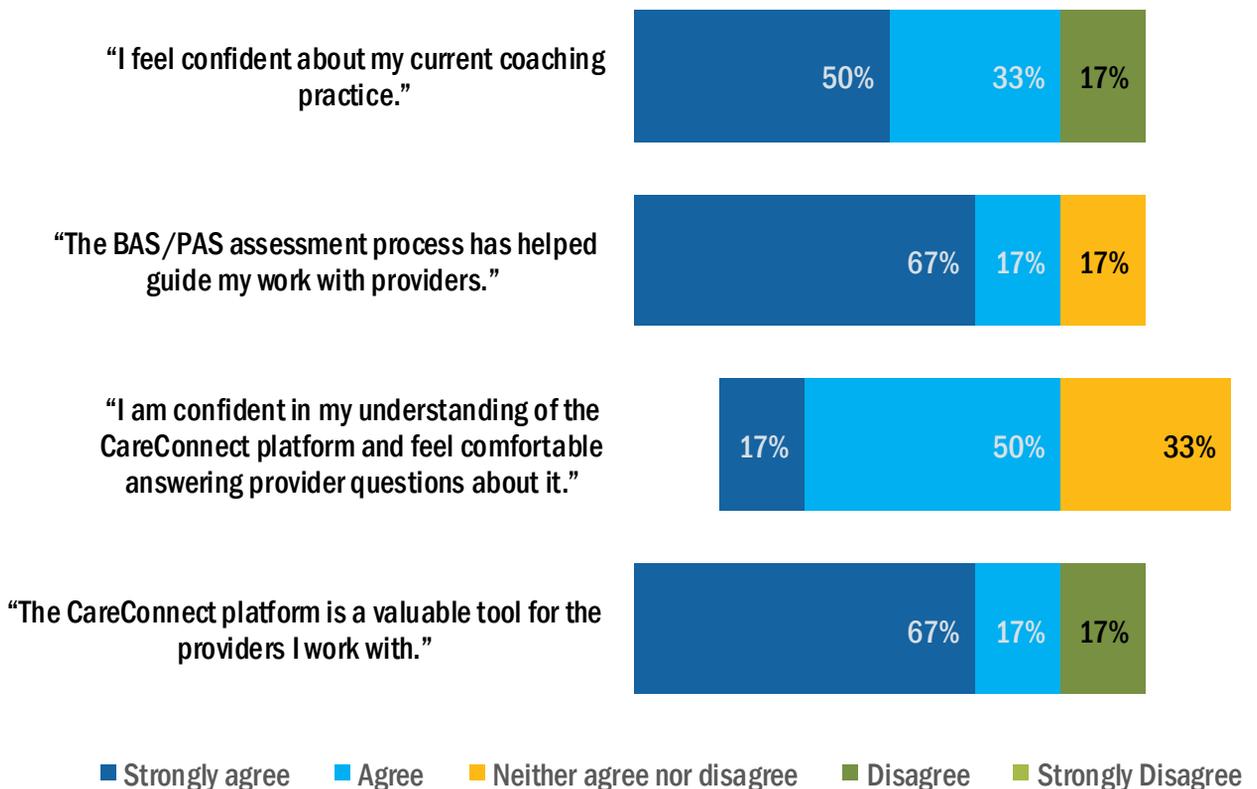
Stakeholders' Program Satisfaction



Coach and Cultural Navigator Reflections on the SSA Program and their Practice

Project team members consistently asked for additional training for the business coaches and cultural navigators. Further discussions noted that business coaching for child care providers is unique, and it is important for them to have a background in child care or early childhood development, but also to have an expertise in small business development. This combination poses some challenges to finding experts to train the business coaches and cultural navigators.

Over 80% of business coaches and cultural navigators report that they are confident in their practice. Offering additional training on the CareConnect platform is an area of opportunity. (n=6)



Coach, Cultural Navigator, and Partner Organization Reflections on the Program

The importance of individualizing the program for each provider was identified across program team members, as evidenced in these quotes from the interviews with SSA partner organization leaders and a focus group with business coaches and cultural navigators.

“Our experience has been that the people that rely on us continually is a small number of people and others will come in periodically and you help them for 10 minutes and you may not see them again for a while. We want them to be less dependent on us, but right now we are working with a group of 20 FCC providers that do want that continuous help and they do come to us the most.”
–Partner Organizational Leader

One business coach/cultural navigator explained how she describes SSA to a potential provider: “We start where you are at, from your level and your needs.?”

“I would tell the providers, ‘all of the SSA staff speaks Arabic and we will guide you with all of your needs and any obstacles you face and we will provide coaching sessions and technical assistance with applications.’ Because most of them do not speak English very well.” – Business Coach/Cultural Navigator

One partner organization leader explained her expectations for next year: “We are doing the things that we wanted to which is to support them in the way that they want to be supported and giving the amount of support that they want.”

Coach and Cultural Navigator Reflections: Success Stories

The following reflections were gathered through the business coach and cultural navigator surveys conducted in December and April of Year 1.

Coach and Cultural Navigator Success Stories

After supporting a provider with her marketing of her program. This provider was able to create a flyer then she posted on her social media and by doing so she got two children enrolled in the program.

I helped (name of) family childcare center to calculate the space in the house used as a business area, which helped her to claim and get tax credit.

I assisted a client in applying for a small business grant. The client was uncertain about the necessary documents, which sections to fill out, and what information to leave blank. I arranged a personalized coaching session where I guided the client through the application process, clarifying what documents were needed and which sections required completion. Additionally, I provided insights on what to expect in grant applications and offered tips for future applications.

I assisted a provider in applying for a large license, which helped expand her business and enroll more children.

I helped a provider with applying for a financial stipend. I sat with the provider and went through each step and insured everything was completed correctly.

I helped one of my providers with setting up policies in their handbook regarding receiving payment in advance and also a clear policy on what payment is required for subsidy families.

I really enjoyed the experience, especially the BAS assessment. It was thorough and gave me a clear understanding of our providers' businesses' strengths and areas for improvement. I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on the providers' business practices and learn new strategies to enhance their success.

Coach and Cultural Navigator Reflections: Challenges Faced

Challenges Faced by Business Coaches and Cultural Navigators

One of the challenges I face is that the majority of the resources I use are in English, which means that I have to spend extra time and effort translating them. Additionally, most of my conversations are in Spanish, so I need to translate all my notes to ensure that I don't miss anything important.

One of the providers I work with depends on her husband to oversee her childcare business. While arranging her BAS assessment, she expressed difficulty in answering most questions alone and requested her husband's presence during the meeting. After discussing with him separately, we found a suitable date and time for all of us. During the meeting, her husband supplied all necessary documents since the provider wasn't fully knowledgeable about the paperwork required to run the business.

Technology barriers or lack of access can slow down counseling sessions for providers, as they may struggle with online forms or digital communication. Providing training and access to technology can help them navigate these challenges more efficiently.

Providers have provided feedback that we coaches are asking too much of personal information, specifically in the tax survey. Most providers have shared and responded to the questions, but others have questioned the need for those questions.

Almost all the service providers do not know the culture and the norm of the community they are trying to serve. I have come across lots of inappropriate actions or language from a service provider.

A provider wanted to get a \$30,000 loan to fix her front and backyard. I gave her a list of options where she could get loans but was upset that the interest rates were so high. I am currently looking for other options of loans or financial assistance.

Coach and Cultural Navigator: Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for Improvement

Providers should get a stipend with this program since they are working extra towards their business, giving us time for meeting with them.

I've had a fantastic experience so far. Both the individualized and group coaching sessions have significantly enriched my knowledge. However, I believe there's room for improvement in our coaching team. More training sessions and webinars would help us stay abreast of the latest requirements and policies, ensuring we provide the best possible support to our clients.

Marketing such as Facebook, Instagram, Canva and creating a website should be broken down and offered separately.

Courses that describe the benefits of having an LLC, Corporation, and the differences between them.

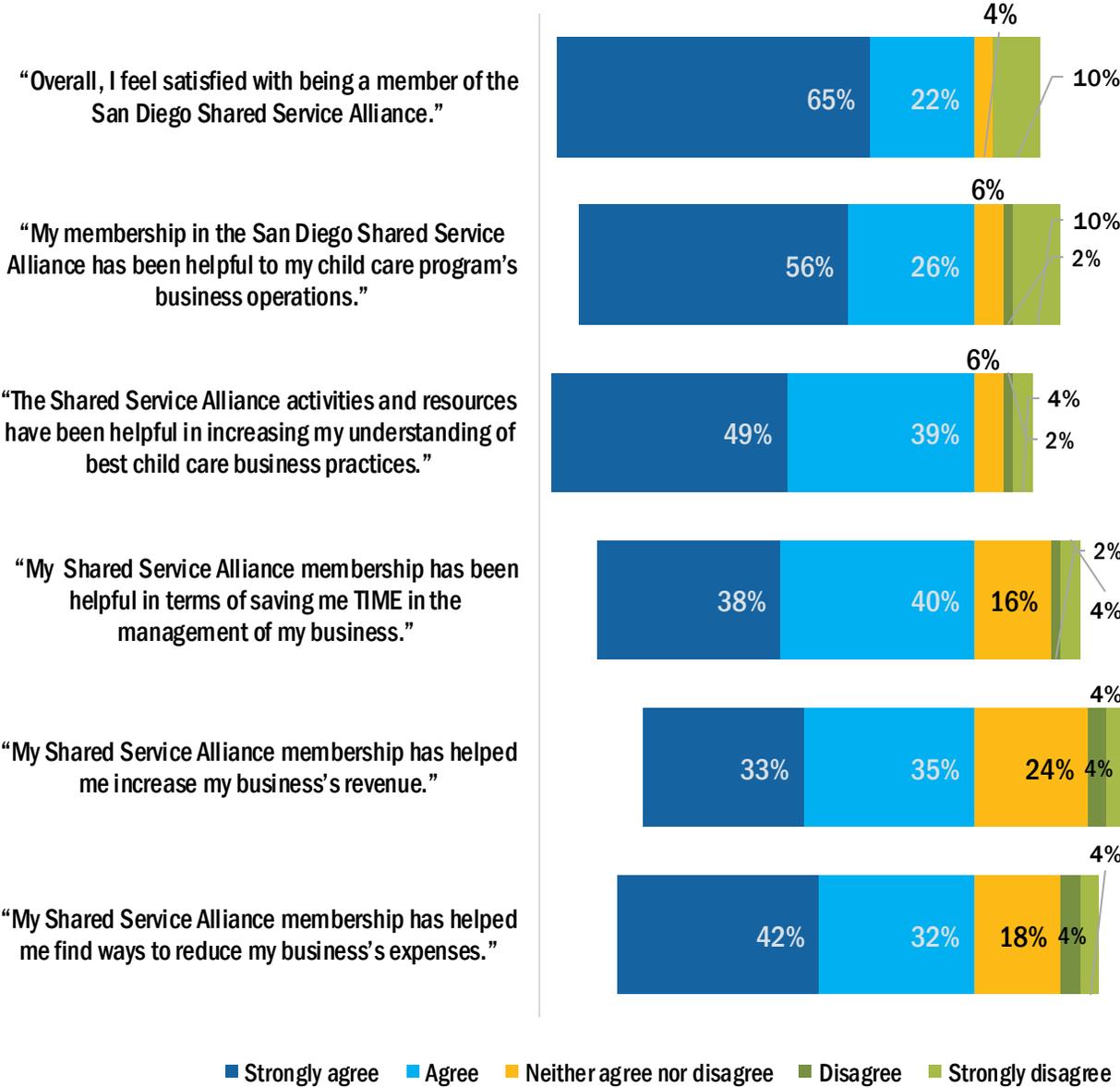
Courses on technology, such as Microsoft office, Google docs, slides, calendar, etc.

I would recommend changing the engagement plan a bit in addition to changing a few items on the "Quick Check" form.

I think it would be helpful to have a hub/platform for coaches from different organizations to add/find resources.

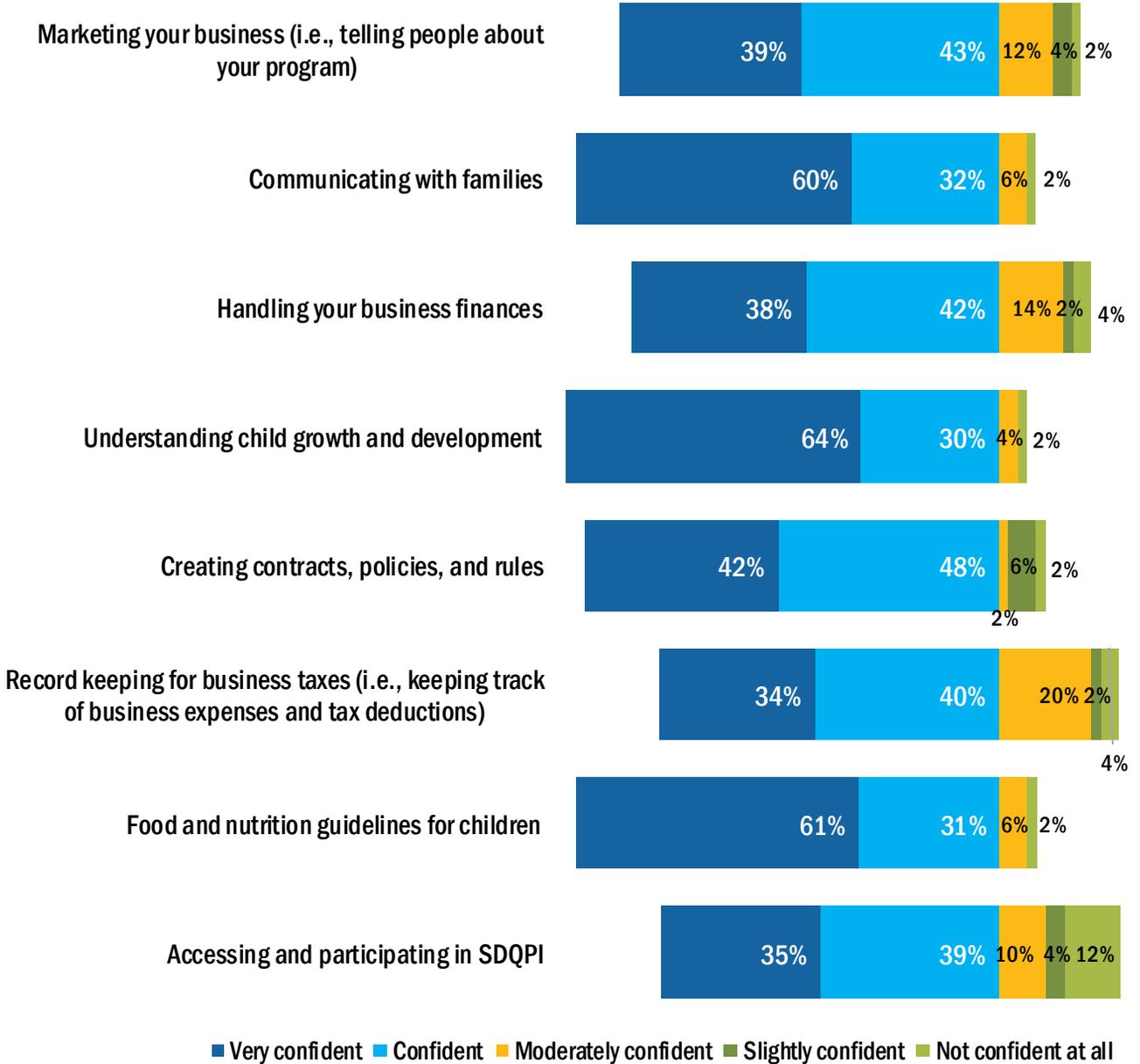
Provider Reflections: Program Satisfaction

The majority of SSA members responding to the satisfaction survey agree that their participation has resulted in positive impacts on their business and that they are satisfied with their experience. (n=51)



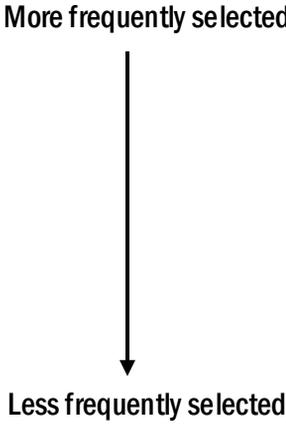
Provider Reflections: Confidence

SSA members responding to the satisfaction survey are most confident in the areas of communicating with families, understanding child growth and development, and food and nutrition guidelines. They are least confident in the areas of business finances, record keeping, and SDQPI. (n=51)



Provider Reflections: Ongoing Needs

During the intake and post-survey, providers were asked to select the most significant needs they face when operating their business. Budgeting and finance continue, and enrollment and access to income or business supports continue to be frequently selected needs.



	Pre (Fall 2023)	Post (Spring 2024)
	Budgeting and finances (93)	Access to income or business supports (70)
	Enrollment (76)	Budgeting and finances (61)
	Marketing (73)	Enrollment (55)
	Access to income or business supports (65)	Business structure (48)
	Business structure (46)	Marketing (45)
	Staffing (26)	Staffing (20)
	Debt repayment (28)	Debt repayment (19)
	Other (17)	Other (11)

Recommendations



Recommendations

In addition to the opportunities shared throughout the report, there are additional recommendations based on the data.

Consider offering a tiered level of services where intensity of service is aligned with individual provider needs. Not all providers need regular ongoing coaching. Some are looking for answers and guidance to specific business questions, while others are interested in more comprehensive, long-term support. Structuring the SSA to accommodate varying levels of need would likely enhance engagement as well as allow for additional scaling and service to greater numbers of participants. Comments from partner organization leaders support this concept:

- “Would like to be able to serve more providers, but the way the model is now, it is really expensive. (We need) some flexibility on what is offered. We have some providers that are very experienced and they don't need the same kind of coaching or the amount of hours as to those that are brand new. How can every provider that wanted it, be part of it? Barriers to that though is having the personnel to be able to coach to that”
- “I do feel like there needs to be two pieces to this program to be complete. Like the STEPS one, having the 15 weeks of classes and setting that good foundation for them and then moving into continuing to support the provider through setting goals and now that you have all of this knowledge, what do you want to work on.”
- When asked if the experienced providers need the training? “Definitely, I think that a lot of them. It doesn't matter how long they have been in the business, once they go through some of these classes, for example naming your childcare, knowing how important this is, she had many say they had never kept a budget and didn't know how to do that.”
- “Our experience has been that the people that rely on us continually is a small number of people and others will come in periodically and you help them for 10 minutes and you may not see them again for a while. We want them to be less dependent on us, but right now we are working with a group of 20 FCC providers that do want that continuous help and they do come to us the most.”

Support business coaches and cultural navigators with resources and training on the technical aspects of owning a small business, but also on how to coach and connect with providers. Comments from partner organization leaders support these training ideas:

- “(Coaches need) greater support and training. In terms of coaching, so training, reflective practice, group support around coaching practices and then the technical side of all the things that they are supporting providers with. (For example), helping coaches feel comfortable and confident with the business elements they are providing support on.”
- “It is hard to know if we should hire a provider or someone with a small business background. There needs to be support so there is consistency across coaches.”
- “I think that connection, how to be, and I think they are doing it, the Y, they have separate meetings with the coaches, I think that connection with the coaches and building relationships with the other coaches. I think in general the coaches need training on how to be a coach.”
- Training on building relationships: “She finds the in person pieces is really important in the relationship building and helping her with those pieces. What else would help her build a relationship with this provider? So that they trust her and continue to grow with her.”

Recommendations

Identify service agencies that do not have resources to support providers in languages other than English and Spanish and ensure more resources are available in all languages. Data shows that many providers that speak languages other than English and Spanish do not participate in programs such as CACFP and SDQPI.

Identify frequently used resources and ensure they are available in all languages. Some business coaches and cultural navigators report that they are spending significant amounts of time translating resources before, during, and after coaching sessions.

Offer in-person digital literacy development and CareConnect support for providers. Providers have varying levels of skill and experience with basic computing. Business coaches reflected that in-person CareConnect training may have been more effective in helping providers work through technical challenges. Two organizations reported offering in-person CareConnect training after the initial ones because of the language barrier. Moving to a train-the-trainer model for CareConnect training may also be helpful since providers may experience language barriers if the training is not offered in their home language.

Develop or identify a budgeting tool coaches can utilize with providers during coaching sessions to help them better understand and anticipate revenue and expenses. A network-wide budgeting tool would offer a consistent approach to financial management. It could also serve a double purpose because in addition to guiding provider progress, it could also be used during data collection and replace the annual taxes and budget survey.

Coaches identified a need for providers to understand their business entity and structure type better. A number of providers were unclear about the differences and benefits of sole proprietorship, LLC, and S-Corps.

Consider tracking and promoting the usage of ECE Shared Resources. Some business coaches and cultural navigators report utilizing the tools and templates available through the platform. It may be helpful to offer additional guidance and training about available resources. Providers may also like to learn more about the vetted vendor discounts available through the platform, including health services.

Expand the SSA to serve additional providers. As the SSA's positive impact continues, more providers are becoming interested in joining. A total of 59 providers are currently on the SSA waitlist, including seven from CDA, 28 from CF, four from YMCA, and 20 from IRC. As the SSA expands, ensure that providers are clear about the value proposition of their membership. Clear expectations about the benefits of membership will support engagement and buy-in.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Data collected during the first year of SSA implementation demonstrates the efficacy of this approach and the value of community agencies coming together to form a Shared Service Alliance. A unique aspect of the San Diego SSA acknowledges the cultural and linguistic needs of the immigrant and refugee providers in San Diego County. The entire SSA team works to support the business coaches and cultural navigators in their efforts to ensure services are supportive of this diverse population. Overall, the data supports an SSA team that was highly engaged, collaborative and eager to continue this work into next year.

This engagement is best supported by highlighting the 205 goals completed in Year 1 and further detailed throughout this report. The goals set in the engagement plans provide a more comprehensive assessment of the type of work and the commitment that was required by providers and their business coaches and cultural navigators. Obtaining long-term business sustainability and growth requires careful planning and multiple action steps that seemingly is perceived as incremental progress. However, the goals that were achieved in this first year of the San Diego SSA have set the foundation for providers to continue their path toward business success in Year 2.

During Year 2, the SSA team will continue to build on the success achieved during Year 1. Business coaches and cultural navigators will continue to engage providers as they make progress toward individual and program goals.

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