



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

Steps to Family Child Care Success

International Rescue Committee
Year 6: Arabic-Speaking Providers
Evaluation Report | December 2025

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University



Center for Excellence in Early
Development (CEED)

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Partners



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.



Situated within San Diego State University, the Center for Excellence in Early Education (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).

Introduction

The Steps to Family Child Care Success (STEPS) program was founded on the premise that Family Child Care (FCC) providers should be valued as entrepreneurs and small business owners and that supporting them not only improves their economic security, but can also increase the economic security of the families and communities they serve by providing high-quality, affordable child care to working families. The goals of the STEPS program include helping FCC providers improve their financial literacy, knowledge of banking and credit systems in the United States, digital literacy, and increase their skills related to running a successful business.

Originally funded in January 2020, the STEPS project is led by a partnership of three ethnic community-based organizations, Chicano Federation, Horn of Africa, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), multiple community-led philanthropic organizations and a team of researchers at The Center for Excellence in Early Development (CEED) at San Diego State University (SDSU). Over the last five years of the program, STEPS is primarily funded by Price Philanthropies and the San Diego Foundation. The funding partners are strong advocates, leaders and thought partners for the program. Together these organizations have served over 300 providers throughout San Diego County focusing on neighborhoods in City Heights, Barrio Logan, East County, and South Bay.

In 2023, the County of San Diego funded the Shared Service Alliance (SSA), joining together the STEPS partners and the YMCA Child Care Resource Service and Child Development Associates. The SSA and STEPS program share similar goals and desired outcomes including supporting child care providers by helping them strengthen the sustainability of their businesses. In cooperation, the STEPS program continued alongside the SSA and additional efforts were made to matriculate STEPS providers to the SSA for continued support.

In March 2025, IRC received funding to implement the STEPS program to a cohort of primarily Arabic-speaking FCC providers located in San Diego County. IRC developed and delivered the training series and assisted providers with 1:1 business coaching. CEED created the evaluation plan, data collection process and compiled the final report. While STEPS was ongoing, the SSA leaders were able to secure bridge funding and resources from the STEPS funders for IRC to increase their SSA enrollment from 20 to 50 providers. IRC encouraged providers that completed STEPS to continue to improve their business practices by joining the SSA. The following report follows the cohort of Arabic-speaking providers through the STEPS program up until they became eligible to join the SSA.



STEPS Program Features

Cultural Navigator

A key feature of the STEPS program is the use of cultural navigators hired by ethnic community-based organizations (ECBO). A cultural navigator was hired by IRC to lead the FCC providers through the program. The cultural navigator represents the communities served in the program and is responsible for recruiting and enrolling providers, serving as a resource in child enrollment and parent relations, and acting as liaisons between providers and agencies responsible for subsidized care and licensing. Importantly, the cultural navigator also provides translation as needed and provides culturally and linguistically responsive services to support FCC provider success. The cultural navigator acts as an advocate for the providers by ensuring they complete the STEPS training and take advantage of the personalized business coaching component of the program.

Training Series

As part of the STEPS program, providers attend a 14-week comprehensive training series (14 sessions, 2-3 hours each) provided in a virtual format. A list of training topics are listed in the table on the following page. Each training series covers core topics to support best business practices such as financial literacy, marketing, and tax preparation. Supplemental courses are additional training topics that are selected based on an assessment of the provider needs, such as child development and AI tools. All courses were offered in Arabic, or English with Arabic translation, the providers' primary language.

Business Coaching

Following the completion of the training series, providers continued to receive support from the cultural navigator to complete personalized business goals. The cultural navigator also completed the Family Child Care Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI) with each provider and the results were used to learn more about the business needs of each provider's program.

SSA Partnership

At the conclusion of the STEPS program, providers could enroll in the SSA if space was available. The STEPS program is a cohort-based training and coaching model that STEPS leaders have identified as a supportive precursor to the SSA. STEPS, as a proven concept, builds a foundational knowledge base that lends itself to the highly individualized coaching that SSA coaches provide. As a partner in the SSA, IRC incorporated the use of the SSA engagement plan to document the goals that were set and the business coaching that occurred during STEPS. This allowed providers to move directly into the SSA at the conclusion of the STEPS program.

STEPS Program Features

Course Name	Description
Orientation – Introduction to Program	Introduction to the STEPS program. Expectations and documents required for participation are reviewed.
Child Development 101 & 102	Review of the importance of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices and an overview of how early childhood experiences affect lifelong health and learning (material covered over two sessions).
Digital Literacy	Introduction to Gmail and how to use Google Drive for their child care business. Computer use including how to use the touchpad, keyboard, shortcuts, locating and using settings, locating apps, email set up, and sending and replying to emails.
Finance 101: Budgeting and Banking & 102: Credit	Overview of business bank accounts and the different features offered. Budgeting process is introduced including how to calculate monthly income and expenses for monitoring purposes. Overview of the US credit system, including what is credit, why it is important, how to access a credit report and the dos and don'ts of the credit system.
Business 101 & 102 (Believe, Practice & Growth)	Review of strong business practices such as SWOT analysis, use of a business plan, SMART goals, Unique Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch – Ascent Speech.
Child Care Provider-Parent Contract/In-Home Child Care Policy	Introduction to components of contracts and policies for child care providers and why both are crucial for protecting the provider and their clients. Providers learn key elements of a strong contract, including hours of operation, payment terms, holidays, and termination clauses. Recommended policies included sick child policies, late pick-up procedures, behavior guidance and emergency protocols.
Child Enrollment	Overview of the child enrollment process in a child care facility, including a review of required documentation for each child's folder. Providers were also introduced to optional forms such as field trip permission slips and other helpful tools to support enrollment and recordkeeping.
Bookkeeping & Effective Practice for Child Care Providers	Introduction to accounting practices specific to FCC providers, including how to categorize financial transactions, the importance of having a financial system, identifying business deductions, claiming expenses and calculating the time-space percentage for tax purposes.

STEPS Program Features

Course Name	Description
CareConnect	Introduction to CareConnect, a software program and digital app designed to help providers track child attendance, manage payments, and maintain accurate records. Providers learned how to navigate the platform and integrate it into their daily operations for more efficient business management.
Marketing	Introduction to essential marketing strategies, marketing tools and the creation of a marketing plan. Introduction to digital marketing including how to promote provider’s business using social media. An understanding of branding basics is reviewed such as choosing consistent colors, logos and messaging. Tips for creating engaging content, use of hashtags and stories to expand reach and increase engagement.
AI Tools – ChatGPT	Introduction to artificial intelligence (AI) with a focus on ChatGPT. Providers explored practical ways to use AI to enhance their business operations, including writing parent communication, creating lesson plans, marketing content, and streamlining administrative tasks.
Tax Ready Business	Introduction of tax practices specific to child care providers, further explanation of the use of an EIN number, accounting methods for tax purposes, forms needed for businesses, and how to select a paid tax preparer.

Program Objectives

Program objectives were created to establish activities and services completed by IRC. Prior STEPS objectives included training participation, completion of the Family Child Care Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI), completion of business plans and achievement of business practices that support the provider’s child care. To support the collaboration between the STEPS and SSA programs, the cultural navigator also helped providers complete an engagement plan, a tool originating in SSA to record business goals .

The project period for IRC’s STEPS cohort was March 2025 to November 2025.

Program Objective	Description	Evidence of Achievement
STEPS Participation	Enroll 20 providers to complete the 14-week STEPS training series and follow-up business coaching.	20 providers completed the 14-week STEPS training series. 18 providers participated in 1:1 business coaching (2 providers closed their child care business after training).
FCC-SASI	Complete the FCC-SASI with providers participating in 1:1 business coaching.	18 providers completed the FCC-SASI.
Business Plans	Complete a business plan with each provider.	15 providers completed business plans.
Engagement Plans	Support providers with completion of an engagement plan.	18 providers completed engagement plans.
Goals	Support providers with personalized business goals to improve their child care business.	18 providers completed a total of 36 goals.

Evaluation Methodology

CEED created an evaluation plan that included tools for data collection, such as intake forms and surveys to assess provider expectations and satisfaction. Program implementation tools, such as the FCC-SASI and engagement plans assisted the cultural navigator in documenting goals completed during 1:1 business coaching.

Phase	Timeline	Activities
Intake & Pre Program Data Collection	March - April 2025	Pre-program data is collected at the beginning of the program: Intake Survey (demographics), Budget & Taxes Survey, Provider Pre-survey.
Mid-program Data Analysis	April - June 2025	Provider demographic data and pre-survey was summarized in a mid-program report. Post-training surveys were analyzed weekly for immediate feedback.
Progress Monitoring & FCC-SASI	June - Nov 2025	FCC-SASI is completed after training. Enrollment quick checks and engagement plans, are ongoing.
Post Program Data Collection	Oct 2025	Post program data is collected at the end of the program: Post Program Survey and Provider Satisfaction Survey.
Reporting	Nov – Dec 2025	Full data analysis is completed, and report is generated.

Evaluation Methodology

Tool	Timing	Purpose
Baseline & Need Assessment Measures		
Intake Survey (pre-program data)	Beginning of program year	Surveys provider demographics and business characteristics.
Budget & Taxes Survey	Once per program year	Surveys provider estimated annual income and expenses and business practices for filing taxes.
Provider Pre-Survey (Needs Assessment)	Once per program year	Measures the needs, expectations and confidence of the providers prior to program implementation.
Program Implementation Measures		
Quick Check	3 times over project period	Records provider enrollment, capital funding received and unexpected expenses.
Family Child Care Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI)	Before business coaching begins	Measures utilization of best business practices for FCC providers.
Engagement Plans	Throughout program year	Working document used by the cultural navigator to track goals and the steps completed to achieve the goals.
End of Training & End of Business Coaching Measures		
Post-Training Surveys	End of each training session	Measures provider satisfaction of each training session. Final survey measures provider's perception of social support, includes reflective questions on their business practices knowledge, and offers an opportunity through open-ended questions to share their success.
Provider Satisfaction Survey	End of program year	Measures provider's perception of program effectiveness and provider confidence in using business practices.
Post Program Survey (post-program data)	End of program year	Measures any changes in provider business characteristics.

Program Demographics

This section presents and summarizes self-reported demographic data on the FCC providers, their business, and the children served during the projection period.

A total of 20 providers were enrolled in the STEPS Year 6 training program and completed the 14-week training series. Two providers did not participate in the business coaching sessions. One provider's license was canceled because she failed to alert the licensing agency about her move to a new address. The other provider closed her license and transferred her enrolled children to her son's FCC license. The remaining 18 providers set personalized goals in their engagement plan. At the end of the program, 10 providers were matriculated into the SSA program.



Provider Demographics

20 child care providers completed the 14-week STEPS training series (2 male and 18 female).

Ethnicity and Primary Language

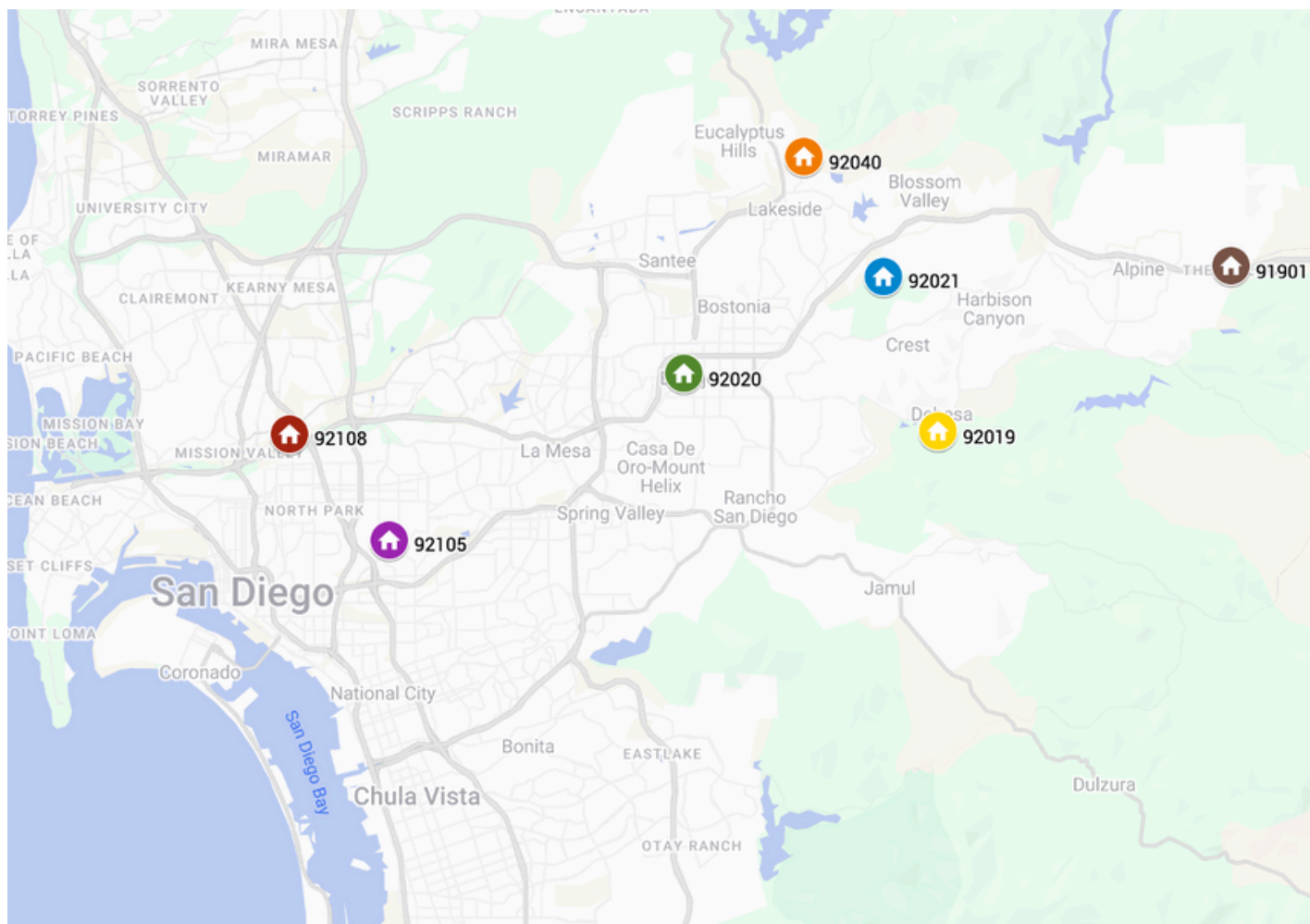
- 20 providers identify as Middle Eastern or North African.
- 15 providers reported Arabic as their primary language and 5 providers reported Arabic and Chaldean as their primary language.

Service Capacity.

- 14 providers have a small license, with a service capacity of 8.
- 6 providers have a large license, with a service capacity of 14.
- Total service capacity is 196 child care slots.

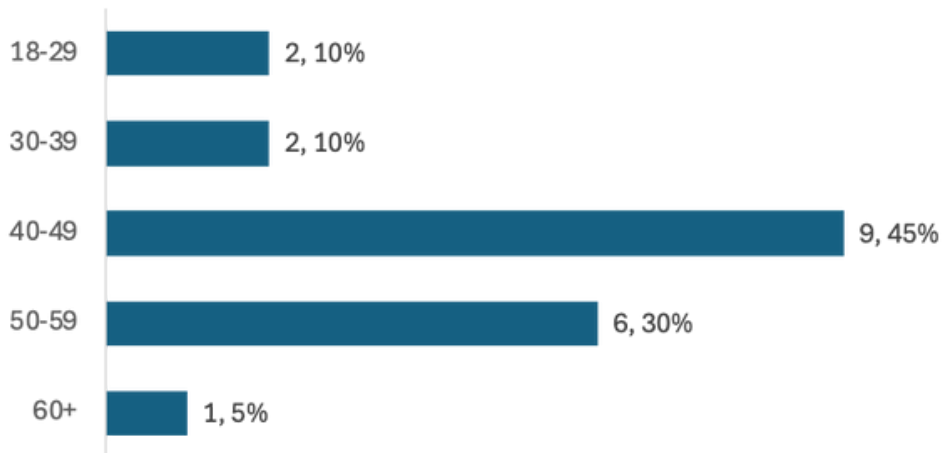
Service Region.

- 9 providers reside in 92019.
- 4 providers reside in 92020.
- 3 providers reside in 92040.
- 1 provider resides in 92021, 92108, 92105, and 91901.

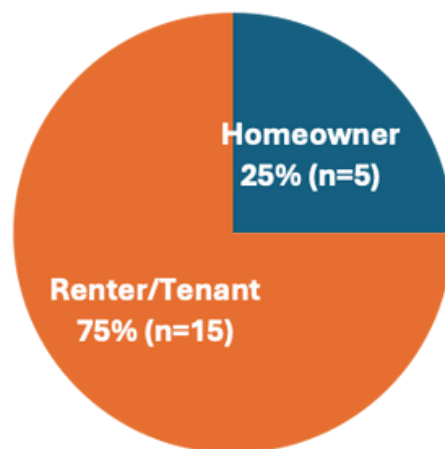


Provider Demographics

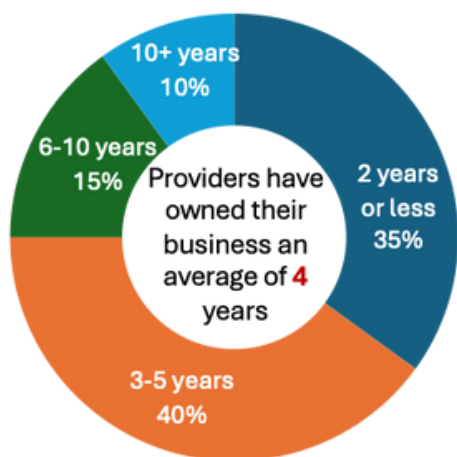
Provider Age Range



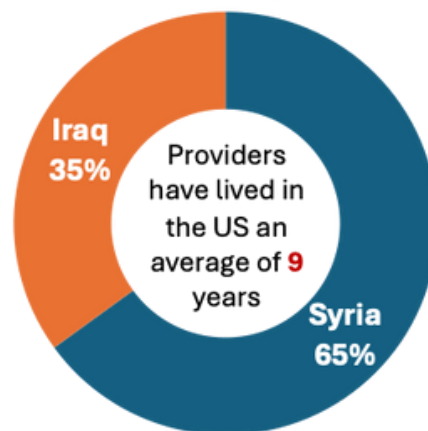
Homeowner Status



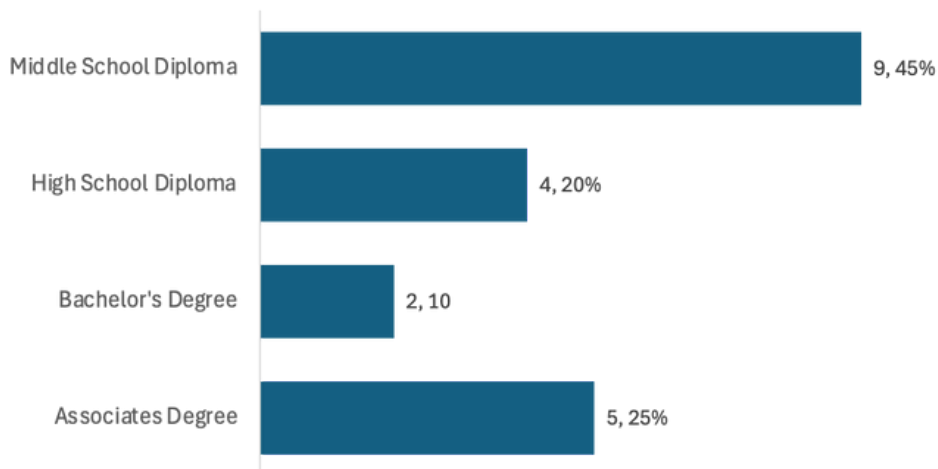
Years of Experience as a Provider



Provider's Country of Birth



Highest Level of Education



Provider Business Characteristics

Providers report working an average of 44.5 hours per week caring for children and another 12 hours per week on their business beyond caring for children. Examples of the work that they do beyond caring for children includes cleaning, preparing learning activities and meals, managing finances, grocery shopping, and sending invoices.

FCC providers often offer care during non-traditional hours to meet the needs of the families they serve. Sixty percent (n=12) of STEPS providers offer care during non-traditional hours. Six providers did not report hours of care because they did not have any children enrolled at intake. For this report, non-traditional hours were defined as 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. weekdays and any hours on the weekend.

Providers reported that they did not currently employ any part-time or full-time staff. One provider reported that a volunteer family member assists with their business. As the providers grow their child care business by increasing their license capacity and enrollment, more providers will need to hire employees to support their growing business.

Provider participation in programs and networks for FCC providers offer support, resources and can be important for income generation. The California Adult Child Food Program (CACFP) is a reimbursement program for the cost of food served to children. The San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI) is the local Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) that helps providers develop their programs to meet early childhood education standards. The local union provides resources to keep providers informed of policy initiatives and child care provider advocacy efforts. Provider participation percentages are reported in the following table.

Participation in Provider Programs and Networks	
CACFP	40%
SDQPI	0%
Union – Child Care Providers United	40%

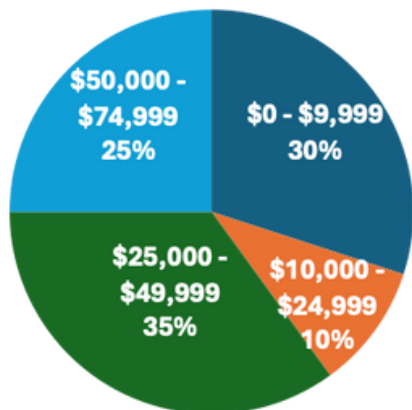
Provider Business Characteristics

Providers reported their personal income level in the previous tax year. Forty percent of providers reported that their personal income level was less than \$25,000 per year.

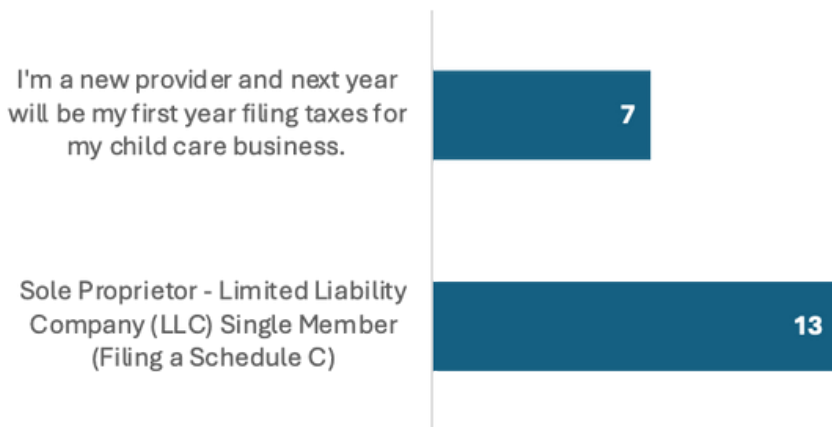
Provider filing status was also reported and is an indicator of strong business practices. Most providers begin their business filing as a sole proprietor and may later move towards filing as an S Corporation if there are advantages to protecting their personal liability and assets as their business grows. Sixty-five percent (n=13) of providers filed as a sole proprietor in 2023.

FCC providers are either paid privately by the family receiving care, or they are paid by agencies that disperse government funded subsidies for families that meet income qualifications. The chart below shows the number of providers that participate in the listed subsidy programs. Providers reported that 100% (n=14; six providers did not have children enrolled at intake) of their families qualify for subsidies. The providers did not have any families enrolled that pay privately.

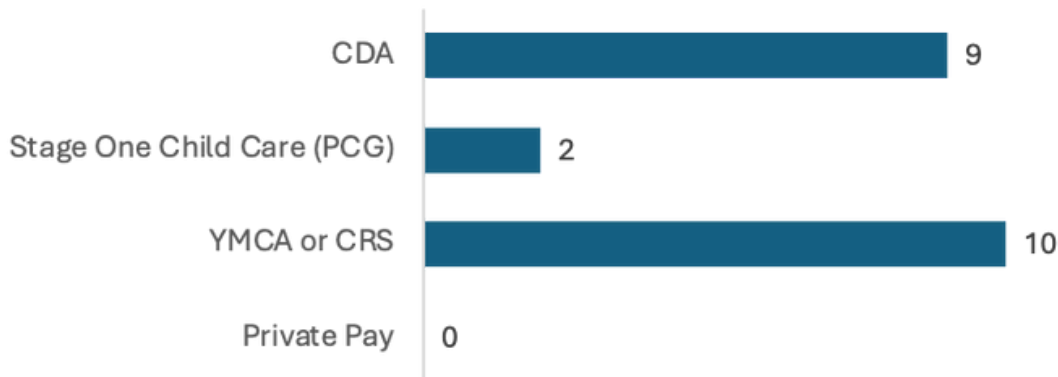
2023 Personal Income Level



Tax Filing Status



Provider Participation in Subsidy Programs

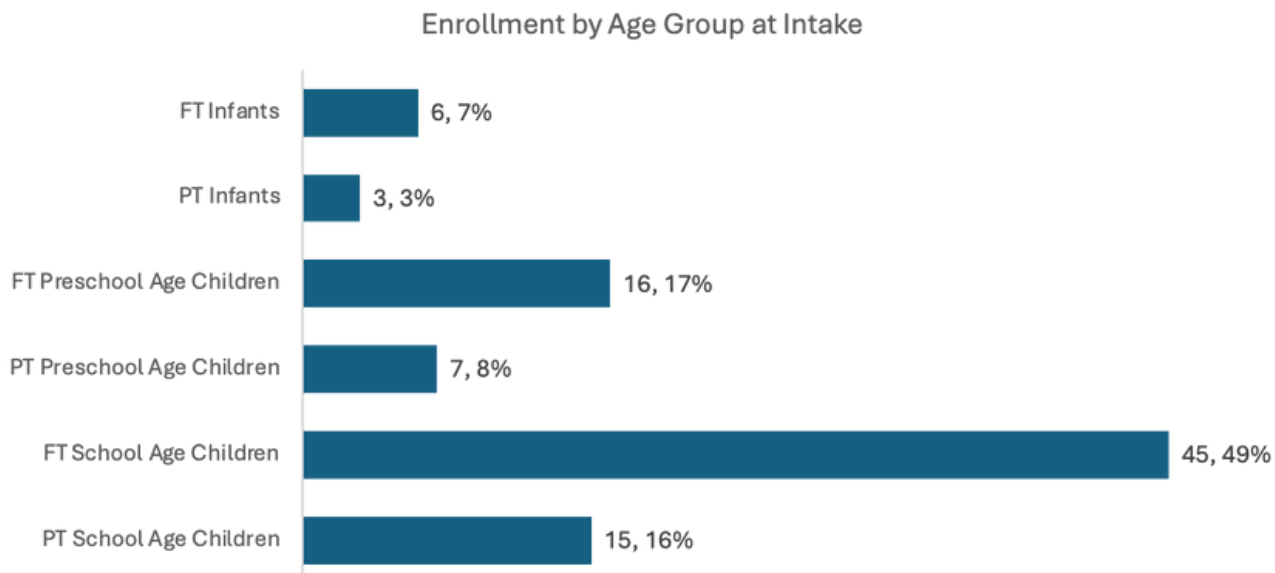
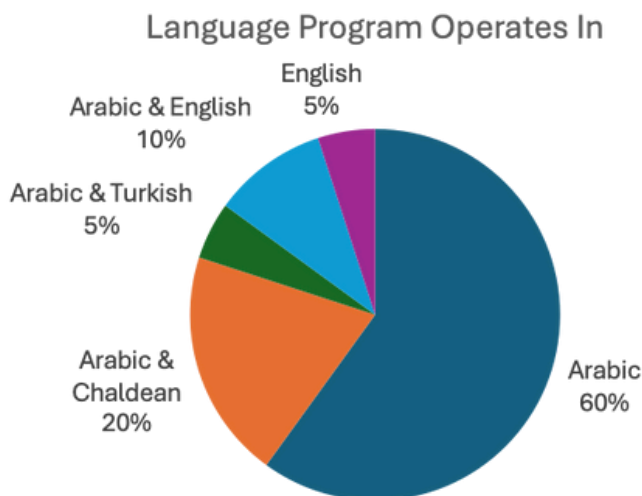


Provider Business Characteristics

Families often choose FCCs because of their flexibility in their hours of care, however, families also might choose FCCs because the provider shares a language and culture that is similar to their clients. Nineteen providers (95%) offered care in Arabic or Arabic and an additional language other than English.

Seventy percent (n=14) of providers had children enrolled in their FCC home at intake. Providers reported child enrollment by age category and part-time and full-time status. They also reported the number of children that share their same ethnicity and primary language. Below is a snapshot of child demographic data at intake.

- Of the 14 providers that had children enrolled at intake, 13 (93%) providers reported that all of their children enrolled share an ethnicity and primary language with their provider.
- 73% of children enrolled attend full time, a minimum of 25 hours per week.
- 65% of children enrolled are school-age, 6-13 years.



Provider Business Characteristics

Provider financial characteristics were also measured using the Taxes and Budget Survey. Providers were asked to estimate their annual income and expenses. Providers that did not currently have children enrolled were not included in the summary of income and expenses.

The table below displays the estimated annual average income and expenses reported by the providers. The three largest expenses for providers are mortgage payment or rent, repairs and maintenance and food. Provider expenses were estimated on average to be well beyond the total income. To understand this disparity, more information from the providers is needed to draw further conclusions. For example, it is possible that the mortgage or rent payment is a shared expense with another household member.

Estimated Annual Income (Average)	
Subsidy Tuition	\$ 38,125
Private Pay Tuition	\$ -
CACFP	\$ 3,129
Total	\$ 41,253

Estimated Annual Expenses (Average)	
Insurance	\$ 3,802
Salaries & Wages	\$ -
Accounting	\$ -
Mortgage Payment or Rent	\$ 41,554
Services & Internet	\$ 2,389
Marketing & Advertising	\$ -
Food	\$ 13,523
Materials	\$ 4,754
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 14,066
Utilities	\$ 8,363
Taxes	\$ 7,292
Business Loan Payment	\$ -
Licenses & Permits	\$ -
Gasoline	\$ 4,917
Total	\$ 100,660



Impact Data

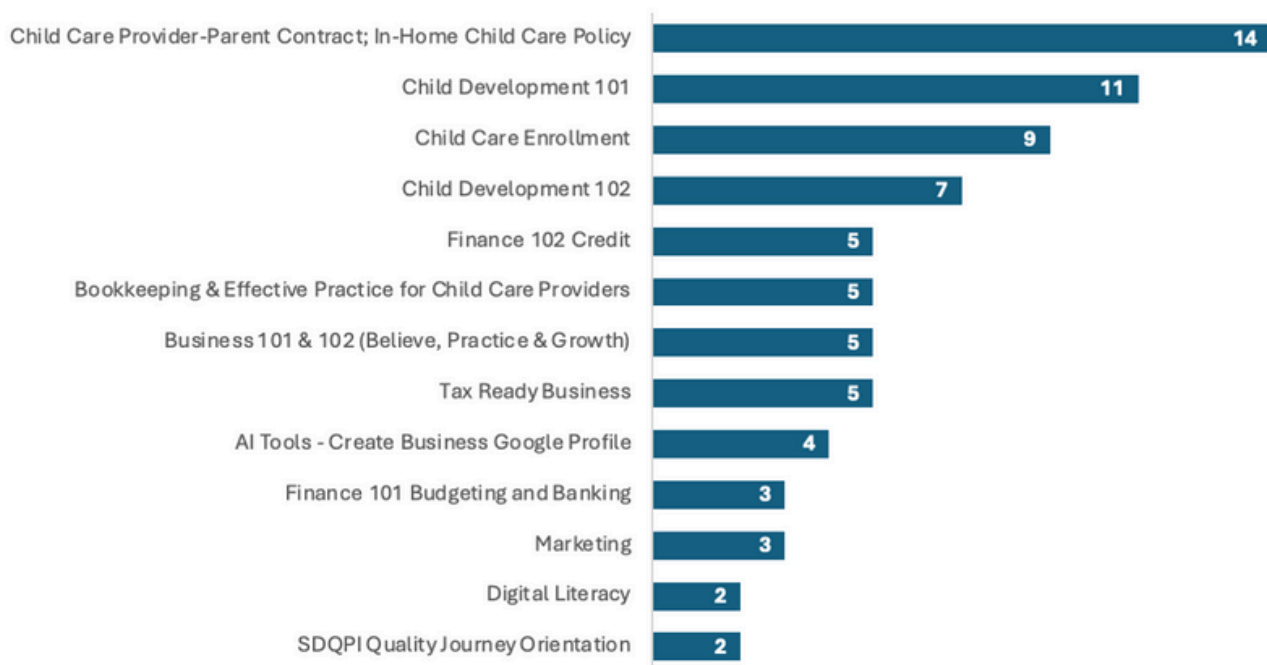
The impact of the training series was measured using post-training surveys and provider satisfaction surveys. The impact of the business coaching was measured using the qualitative data in the engagement plans and the FCC-SASI. The overall impact of the program was measured using a needs assessment survey, post-training surveys, provider satisfaction surveys and by comparing pre-program and post-program data.



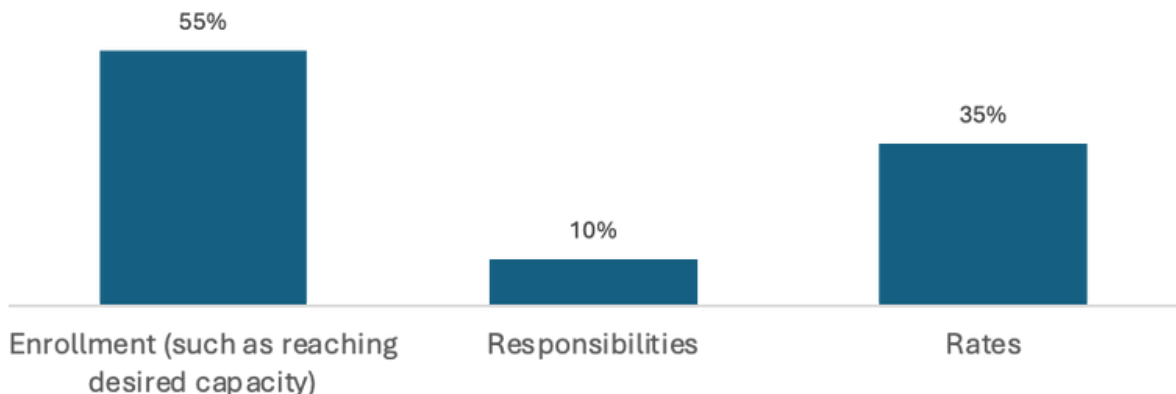
Needs Assessment: Provider Pre-Survey

Providers completed a pre-survey to understand their expectations of the STEPS program and topics that are of interest to them. Providers were asked to indicate which scheduled courses they were most looking forward to. The top three answers were Child Care Provider-Parent Contract; In-Home Child Care Policy, Child Development 101, and Child Care Enrollment. Providers were also asked to select the top three challenges they face as child care providers that could be supported during coaching. Enrollment was selected by 55% of providers as their top concern. Providers also noted that the subsidy rates for child care and the rates they can charge are a challenge and the overall responsibilities of owning a child care business was challenging.

Number of Providers Most Looking Forward to a Course (n=19)



Provider Reported Biggest Challenges



Training Series: Post-Training Surveys

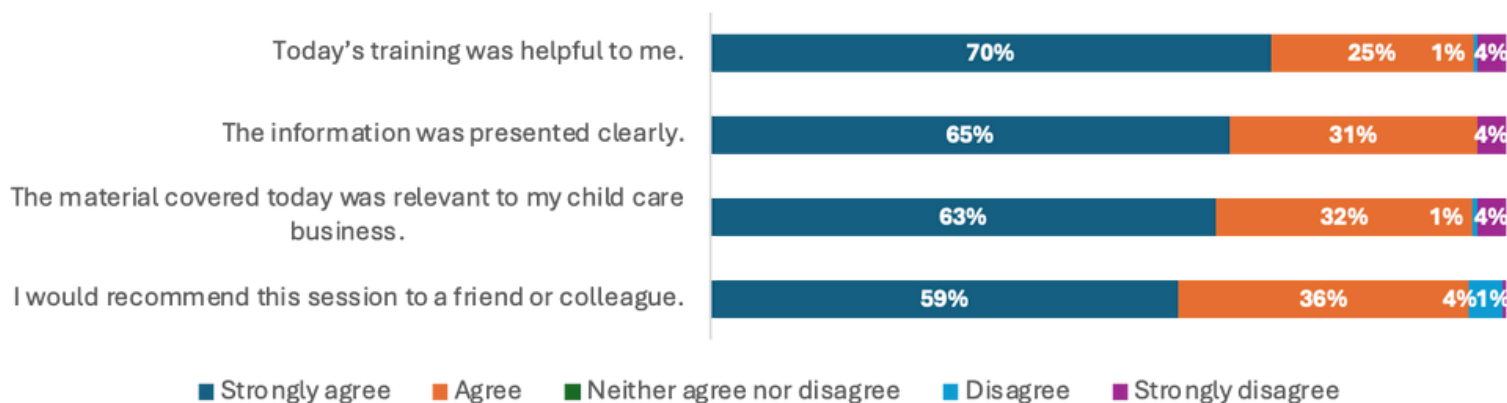
Providers were asked to complete a short survey after each training session rating their satisfaction and the relevance of the course content. An analysis of the survey was completed weekly so that the cultural navigator and course instructors could make changes or improvements based on feedback data.

The Likert-style questions were asked after each course and the combined results of all 14 course surveys are presented in the chart below. Overall, 95% of providers strongly agree or agree with the measured statements reflecting their satisfaction with the program.

The weekly survey also included open-ended questions. Many comments, especially those after the two child development courses, highlighted the need for more classes on caring for children with challenging behaviors and children with special needs.

- “I learned the importance of continuous reflection and adapting best practices based on children’s individual needs. I will apply more structured observation and documentation methods in my daycare to better understand and support each child’s development.”
- Yes, I learned how to improve communication with parents and document children’s development more effectively.”
- We hope to explain how to work on Excel so that we can organize our financial affairs later.”
- “We wish there was an explanation of the growth and development of people with special needs so that we could know the effective ways to deal with them and take them to the best possible level.”

Provider Satisfaction with STEPS Training (n=193)



Training Series: Post-Training Surveys

The post training survey on the last day of class included new open-ended questions that allowed providers to share more about their experience in the STEPS program. Respondents thought the trainings were very useful and they are interested in any other coursework that would benefit their business and the children in their child care. Additionally, all nine providers that replied to the question thought it was helpful to attend class with other FCC providers with one provider saying, “Yes, we learned from each other’s experiences.”

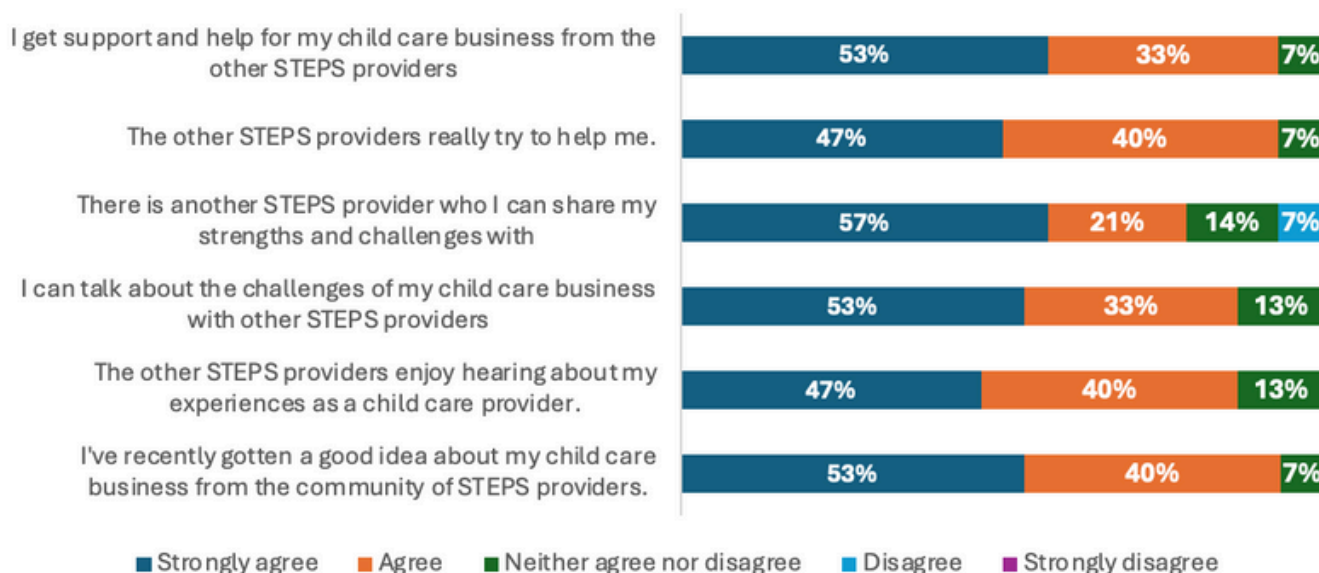
Providers also discussed what they learned from the training series that they now use in their business:

- “How I can protect my business and program and how I can expand my program to larger areas.”
- “How to use a website to search for things and how to make a schedule for children.”
- “Writing a contract with the children’s parents.”

Providers were then asked to rate six social support statements. Prior STEPS reports have highlighted the need for training and professional development in a provider’s primary language, reinforcing the language supports STEPS provides. However, the STEPS program follows a cohort-based learning approach in which providers participate in courses alongside peers who share their cultural and ethnic backgrounds in addition to linguistic backgrounds. To measure the importance of how social support contributes to learning within cultural communities, the questions in the chart below were added to the survey on the last day of class.

Overall, 86% of providers strongly agree or agree that social support is beneficial to them as a child care provider and 93% of providers strongly agree or agree they have “gotten a good idea about their child care business from the community of STEPS providers.”

Provider Social Support (n=15)



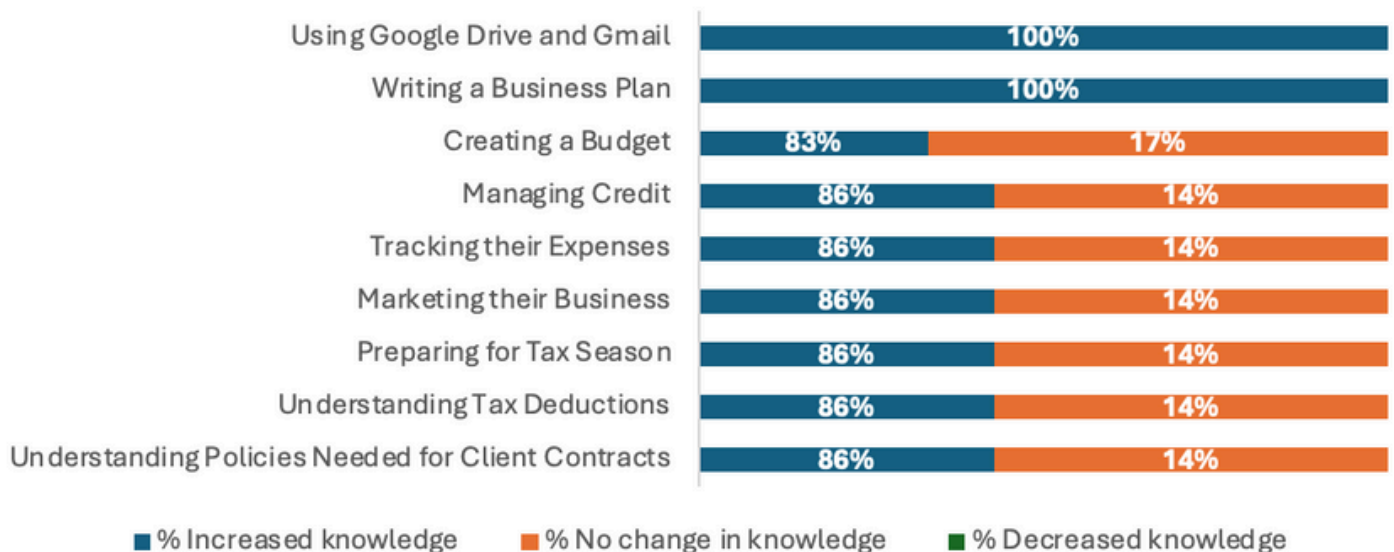
Training Series: Post Training Surveys

Providers were asked to reflect on their knowledge of training constructs and rate their perceived knowledge before and after the training series on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. Unfortunately, the response rate for these questions was low. Fifteen providers submitted a post training survey, but only seven providers completed the perceived knowledge questions.

On average, the majority of providers, 89% (n=7), indicated that their knowledge increased and 11% of providers indicated that their knowledge did not change. All seven respondents felt that their knowledge increased after the training sessions on Google Drive and Gmail and how to write a business plan.

The average change in the provider's rating of their perceived knowledge before versus after the training series was averaged for the training constructs. Based on a 5-point scale, provider perceived knowledge increased by an average of 1.84 points.

Provider Perception of Knowledge Before and After STEPS Training (n=7)



Increase in Perceived Knowledge (n=7)



Business Coaching: Engagement Plans

After the training series, 18 providers had the opportunity to participate in 1:1 business coaching. The IRC cultural navigator worked with the providers to complete personalized business goals. These were recorded in an individual engagement plan. The goals were also recorded in the FCC-SASI along with any additional best business practices providers began using during the program period.

All 18 providers wrote and completed goals on their engagement plan. A total of 36 goals were recorded as completed in the engagement plans. Seventeen providers rewrote their provider/client contract. One provider updated their child care license, one applied for a business loan and another provider wanted to complete training on taxes and bookkeeping (these trainings occurred during the STEPS training series).

Fifteen providers qualified and applied for a grant funded by the San Diego Foundation (SDF). The SDF grant is an agreement with IRC to empower female FCC providers through technical and financial support to help them grow their business. SDF has funded prior STEPS programs and has been a member of the STEPS leadership team. Providers were eligible to apply for up to \$3500 for their child care business, and the intended use of the funds was detailed in their business plans. At reporting time, grant approval was still pending. The cultural navigator also advocated to the funders to extend the grant opportunity to the two male providers that completed the STEPS program. At the end of the STEPS program, the request was granted and the cultural navigator planned to assist the male providers with completing the grant process.

All 18 providers completed the FCC-SASI which also recorded the goals achieved in the engagement plans as well as any other business practices implemented during the program. In addition to the engagement plan goals, 11 providers wanted to learn to use technology for operating their business (i.e., Child Care Management System) and were able to implement this business practice with support from the STEPS CareConnect training. All 18 providers wanted to learn about marketing tools and after attending the STEPS Marketing course, all 18 are using the resources provided during the training.

Another SASI business practice that providers implemented is development of a business plan. Fifteen providers completed or were in the process of completing a business plan. The cultural navigator also planned to complete business plans with the two male providers that were later approved for the SDF grant. At the time of reporting, the business plans were in the final stages of completion and not available for analysis and review.

The chart below displays the number of providers that implemented FCC-SASI business practices during the program period.



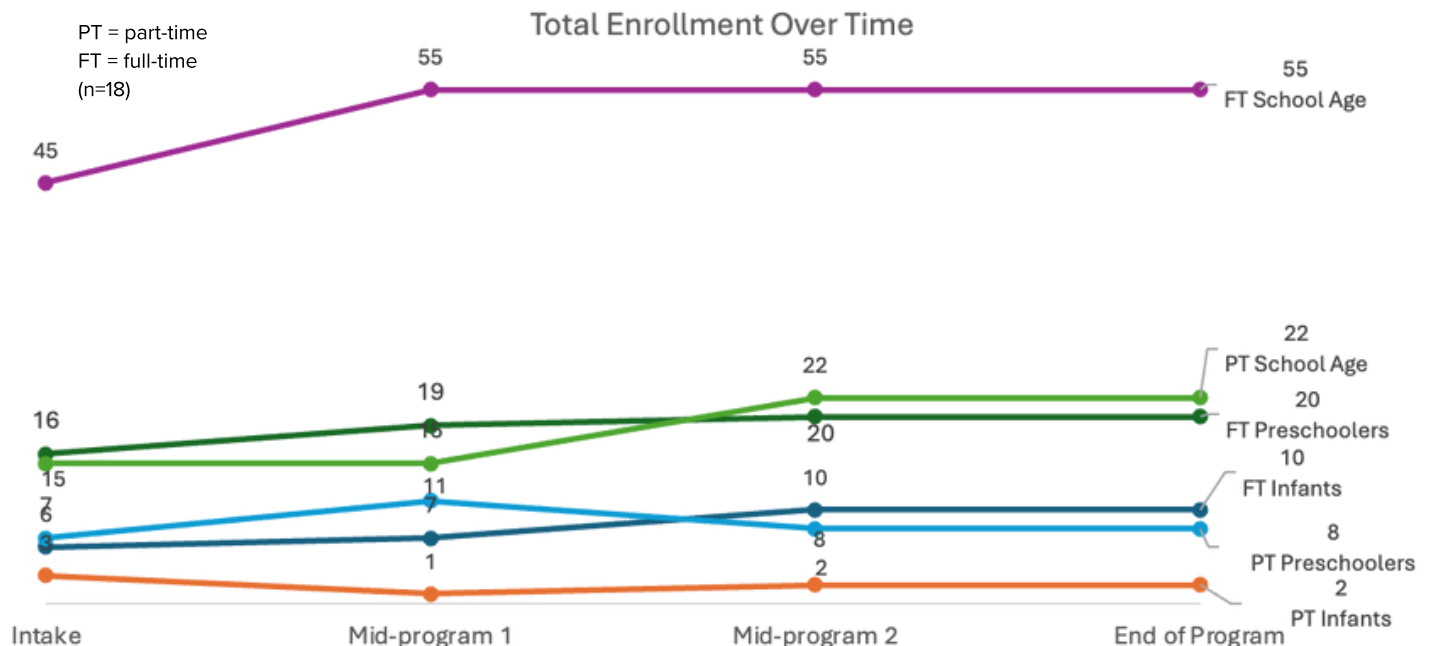
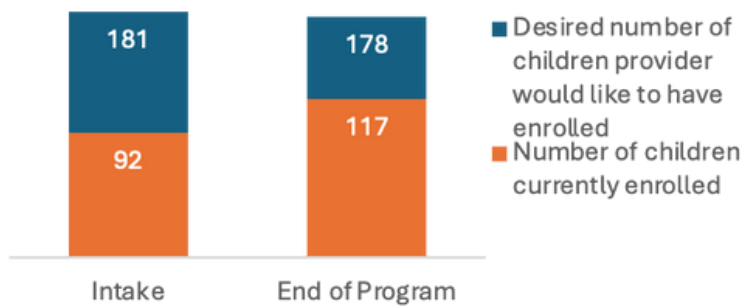
Overall Impact: Pre and Post-Program Data

Provider enrollment was measured periodically throughout the program. Providers reported their current enrollment and the desired number of children they would like to have enrolled.

From March through October 2025, enrollment increased by 27%. Sixty-six percent of child care slots were filled by the end of the program, a 15% increase. Eight providers (44%) increased their enrollment and another eight (44%) sustained their enrollment. Six providers did not have children when they started the STEPS program. By the end of the program, two of these providers had successfully enrolled children into their program and two dropped from STEPS after they completed the training series.

Providers increased the number of children across almost all age groups and part-time and full-time status. The only exception was part-time infants and the total number enrolled only decreased by one. Notably, the number of full-time infants increased by 67% and part-time school age children increased by 47%.

To understand the impact of enrollment on provider income, the average monthly tuition income was calculated at intake and at the end of the program. Providers submitted their rates for each enrollment category, but the rate did not always match the provider's enrollment numbers, therefore we used the maximum subsidy reimbursement rate for FCCs in San Diego County. The change in enrollment from intake to the end of program equated to an estimated increase in average monthly tuition income of \$1,093.20, or an average increase in yearly tuition income of \$13,118 per provider.



Overall Impact: Pre and Post-Program Data

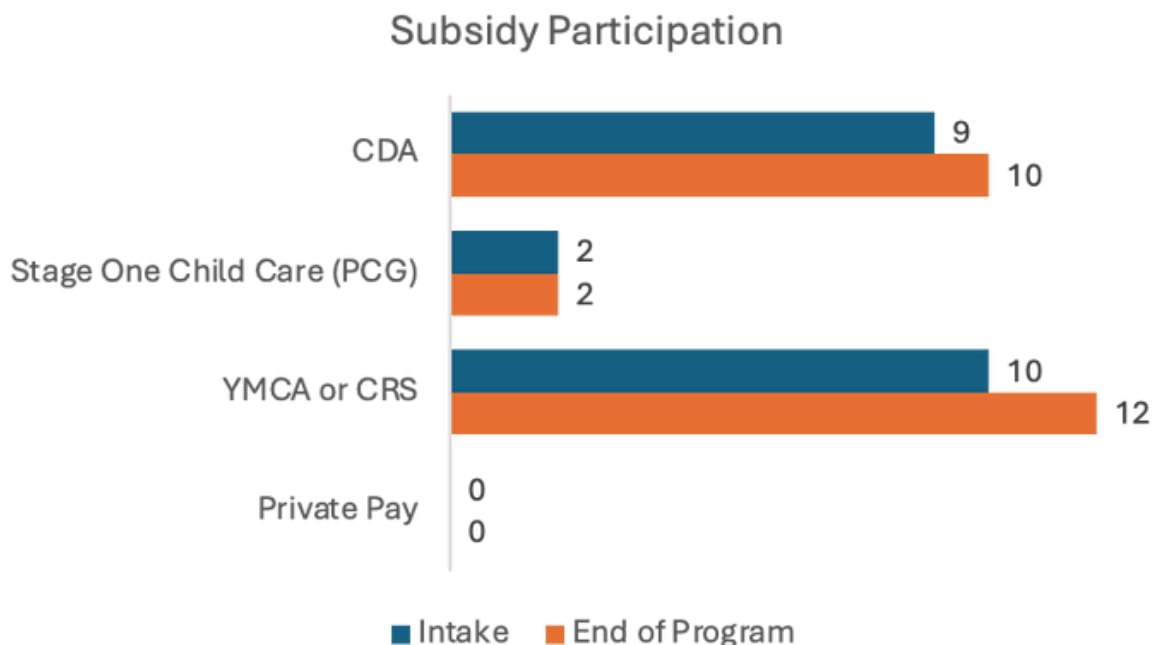
Provider business characteristics were again collected at the end of the program. Pre and post program data was compared to show changes to provider business practices.

Provider participation in CACFP, SDQPI and the local union did not change during the program period. The number of providers that use of Child Care Management System (CCMS) did not change during the program period (35%; n=7).

At intake, all providers that had children enrolled in their child care participated in the local subsidy programs. By the end of the program, two providers that did not have children enrolled at intake, but enrolled children during the course of the program began their participation in CDA and YMCA or CRS. Providers did not gain any families that pay privately and do not use subsidies.

Providers were asked to report their income range, whether their income will increase, decrease or stay the same and information about their use of an operating budget and whether they have financial reserves or a savings account. At the end of the program providers income range, income projection and use of financial systems did not change during the program period.

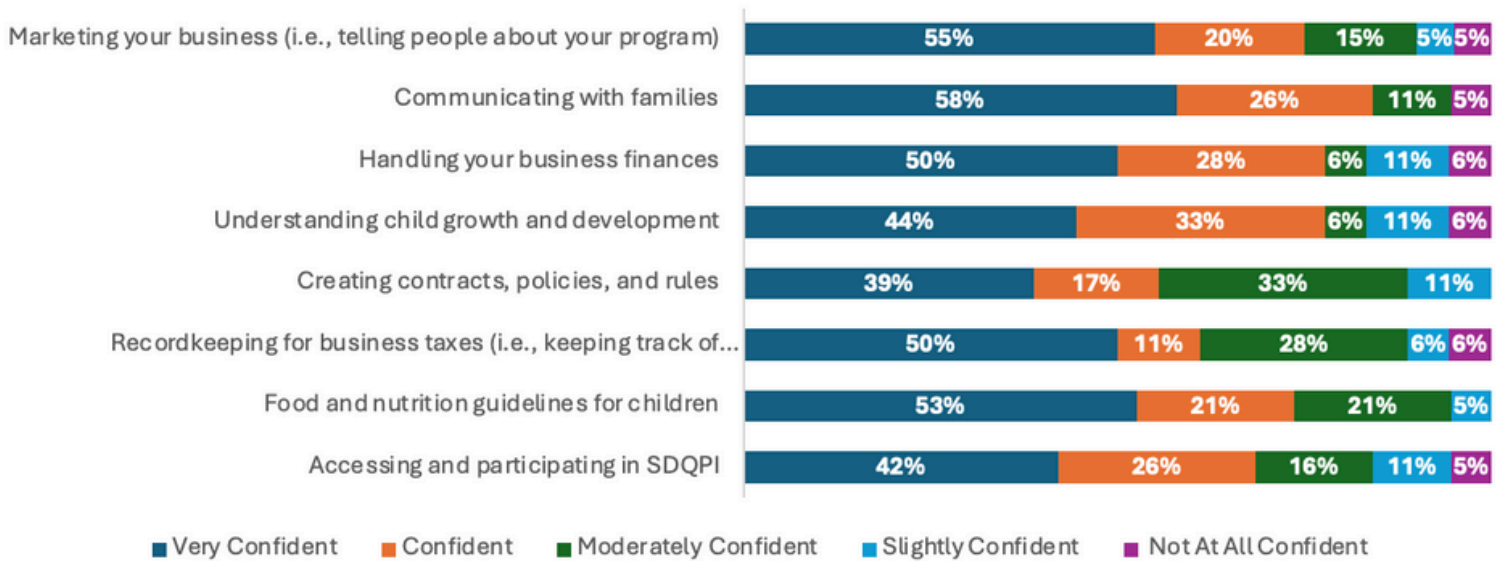
During a post-program follow-up meeting, IRC’s cultural navigator explained that the providers were not comfortable with any questions that enquire about their level of income. Providers wanted to know “why” they were being asked these questions and the cultural navigator noted that some providers that have had their child care business for years with substantiated success with high enrollment numbers reported their income in the lowest income category.



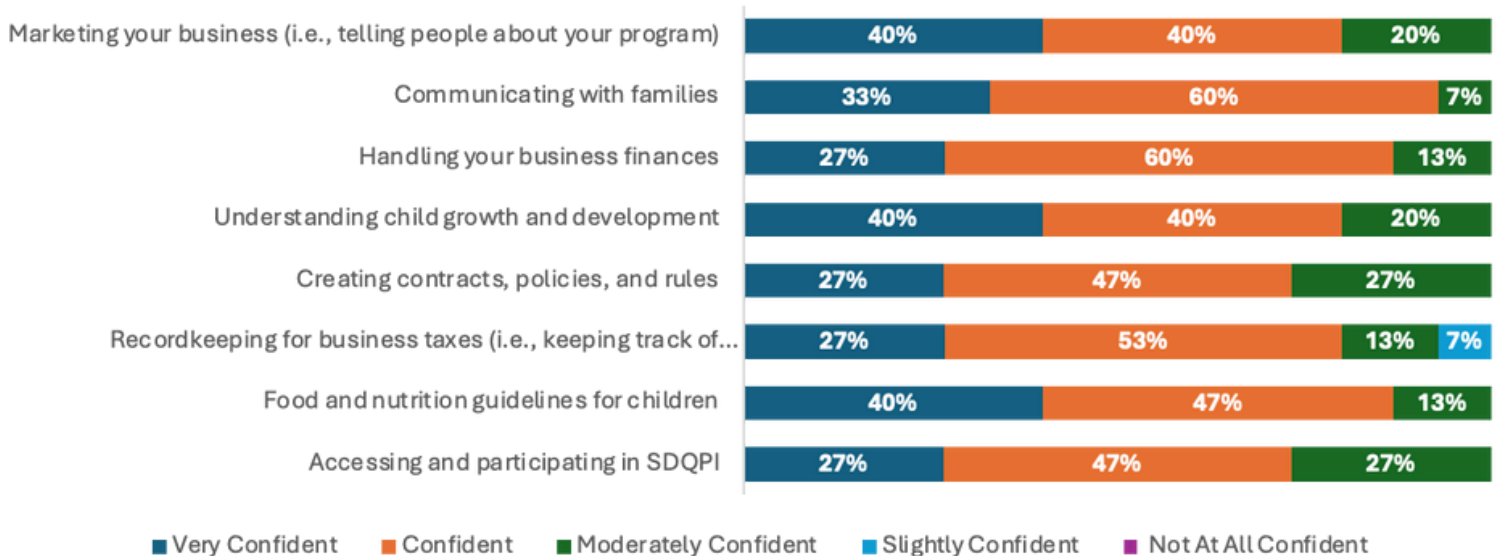
Overall Impact: Pre and Post-Survey Results

Providers were asked to rate their confidence in implementing business practices prior to the start of the program in the needs assessment survey and at the end of the program in a post satisfaction survey. Overall, the percentage of providers that were “very confident” or “confident” in each of the measured business practices increased. Nineteen percent more providers were “very confident” or “confident” in recordkeeping for business practices and 18% more providers were “very confident” or “confident” in creating contracts, policies and rules. At post program, no providers indicated that they were not confident in the business practices and only 7% of providers were slightly confident in recordkeeping for business taxes, a very difficult concept to learn.

Pre Program: How confident do you currently feel about the following? (n=20)



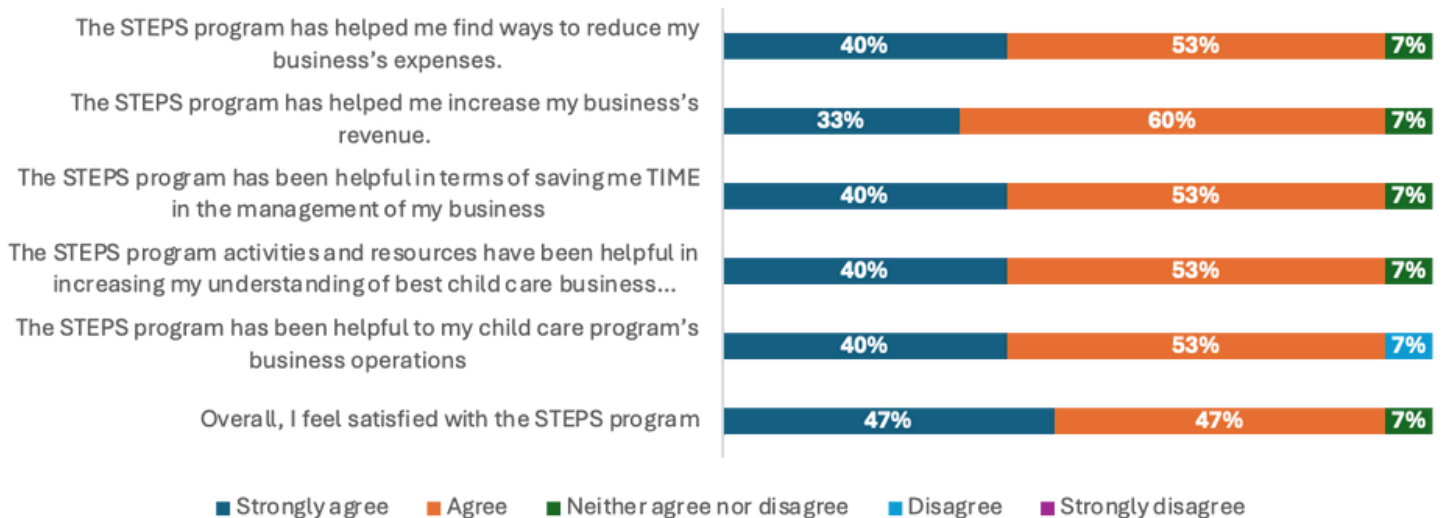
Post Program: How confident do you currently feel about the following (n=15)?



Overall Impact: Post-Satisfaction Survey

The post satisfaction survey also asked providers to rate their satisfaction with STEPS and provide open-ended feedback (see table below) about their experience in the program. Overall, the providers were satisfied with the help they received. On average, 93% of providers "strongly agree" or "agree" with the measured statements indicating their satisfaction with the STEPS program.

Provider Satisfaction with STEPS (n=15)



If you feel that the STEPS program has had an impact on your business, please share an example	Do you have any suggestions about ways to improve the STEPS program? If yes, please share them.	Are there any future coaching needs that you have or topics that you would like to see incorporated?	Is there anything that you would like to share about your experience?
Honestly, I missed out on a lot at work because this information was very useful, important, and directly related to my job.	I don't have anything at the moment, but if you have any resources or information that could be useful for childcare providers, please share.	Please, anything related to child care.	I benefited from the program.
Yes, by developing my understanding of child behavior.	Create new topics about dealing with children and using different methods.	Discuss how to deal with children who have different health problems.	I really liked this program and thank you very much for your effort in sharing these interesting and useful topics with us.
I have benefited from this program.	The whole program was very helpful.	No, everything was clear and complete.	Everything was useful, and we appreciate the efforts of everyone who provided us with training sessions as they were very beneficial.
	Extending the training period would make it more beneficial.	The continuity and sustainability of these courses in every field where support and development are provided.	God willing, when I reach the stage of satisfaction and achieve the desired results.



Key Findings

Reflections & Recommendations



Key Findings

- Enrollment increased by 27%. 66% of child care slots were filled by the end of the program, a 15% increase.
- The 27% increase in enrollment equates to an average estimated yearly tuition increase of \$13,118 (the San Diego County maximum subsidy reimbursement rates were used for the calculation).
- 89% of providers increased or sustained their enrollment (2 providers are still working towards enrolling their first child).
- 15 providers completed or were in the process of completing a business plan and applied for funding up to \$3500 to support their child care business. At reporting time, grant approval was still pending.
- 95% of providers strongly agree or agree that the training was helpful, information was presented clearly, and material was relevant.
- Overall, 86% of providers “strongly agree” that social support is beneficial to them as child care providers.
- 93% of providers “strongly agree” or “agree” that they were satisfied with the STEPS program.
- 82% of providers were “very confident” or “confident” in measured business practices.

Reflections & Recommendations

Data Collection

- After the program was completed, the cultural navigator and evaluator met for a post-program debrief. The cultural navigator noted that the providers did not want to answer any questions about their income category or their income projection. She noticed that many providers that were successful in their business would select a low-income category because they were not comfortable sharing their income level. It is recommended that these questions are removed from the intake and end of program data collection and that any changes in income are reflected through an increase in enrollment and an increase in provider rates. It is also possible that the income and expense data collected in the Budget and Taxes Survey is also inaccurate. It is recommended that the income and expense data is collected by using a budget template.
- The provider's rates for each age category collected at intake did not match the children enrolled and could not be used to estimate tuition. It is recommended that rates and enrollment are entered within a table together at intake to ensure alignment.
- The cultural navigator prefers to submit enrollment data less frequently. It was burdensome to ask for enrollment data monthly and therefore the number of enrollment data check-ins was reduced to four over the course of the project. It is recommended that enrollment is collected at intake and at the end of the program. Enrollment data can be collected at additional intervals if the cultural navigator and providers are not inconvenienced with the additional task.
- Qualtrics was used for the first time to collect and manage intake data, survey data and end of program data. The evaluator and cultural navigator worked together to ensure the new system was more efficient than past data collection procedures. Individual provider links generated by Qualtrics were used to streamline data collected at the end of the program. The individual provider links prevented the cultural navigator from having to input the data manually. Instead, the cultural navigator only made changes to the data if changes occurred. It is recommended that the evaluators continue to use Qualtrics and utilize the platform for data entry and analysis.
- An Excel version of the FCC-SASI was used to track business practices and goals completed. The SASI measures all of the goals completed in the engagement plan and additional goals or business practices completed. For future cohorts, the engagement plan is not necessary since all goals and business practices completed can be measured with the SASI. Engagement plans or workflow platforms such as Neoserra can be used to help cultural navigators track progress with each provider. However, the data would only be referenced if more descriptive data is necessary to explain the business practices that are completed.
- Evaluators should confirm with the cultural navigators if providers are hesitant to provide any of the demographic data collected given the current political climate.
- Only seven out of 15 providers took the time to complete the perceived knowledge questions on the post-training survey presented on the last day of classes. The low response rate indicates that the providers did not want to take the time to complete this portion of the survey. It is recommended that these questions are removed from future surveys.

Reflections & Recommendations

Program Implementation

- The cultural navigator focused on helping the providers write client contracts, complete business plans and the application for capital funding. If providers enter the SSA, business coaching could include helping providers strengthen their financial health by encouraging the use of an operating budget and encouraging the provider to open savings and retirement accounts.
- It was determined that the provider-reported income category and provider-reported yearly income and expenses was not reliable data after learning about the inconsistencies from the cultural navigator. To better understand how the STEPS program impacts provider income and expenses, it is recommended that cultural navigators help providers complete an operating budget template. By creating a budget, providers would be able to see how a change in enrollment, provider's rates, or a reduction in expenses impacts income. Instead of using a data collection tool to assess provider income and expenses, the budgeting process would serve as both a data collection process and a program implementation feature of STEPS. Providers would complete an FCC-SASI business practice by learning how to create and use an operating budget, and more accurate income and expense data would be collected. The provider would have a vested interest in completing the spreadsheet accurately as it will then become a tool that they can use to better manage their finances.
- Child Care Management Systems help providers streamline their business practices. Thirty-five percent of providers use CCMS, but only use the feature for subsidy reimbursement and child and family records. Future STEPS programs should consider requesting funding for CCMS subscriptions that allow the provider to use all of the features of the software. More advanced training on how to use the CCMS would also benefit the providers.