



**The Chicano
Federation**



**WOMEN'S
BUSINESS
CENTER**
San Diego & Imperial

Steps to Family Child Care Success Year 6

**Chicano Federation Cohort
Evaluation Report | February 2026**

SDSU | San Diego State
University



**Center for Excellence in Early
Development (CEED)**

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Partners



**The Chicano
Federation**

Chicano Federation’s mission is to cultivate opportunities and advocate for families and individuals for a more equitable community. 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.



The San Diego & Imperial Women’s Business Center (WBC) works to secure economic and entrepreneurial opportunities for small businesses by providing training, mentoring, business development, and financial opportunities to entrepreneurs throughout San Diego and Imperial counties. For the past three years, Women’s Business Center has partnered with Chicano Federation to help deliver the STEPS training series.



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 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 continues alongside the SSA and additional efforts are made to matriculate STEPS providers to the SSA for continued support.

In March 2025, Chicano Federation received funding to implement the STEPS program to a cohort of primarily Spanish-speaking FCC providers located in San Diego County. Chicano Federation, along with the Women's Business Center 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. The following report follows the cohort of Spanish-speaking providers through the STEPS program preparing them with foundational courses before potentially becoming a member of 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 Chicano Federation 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 (14 sessions, 2-3 hours each) comprehensive training series provided in a virtual format. Eleven sessions were delivered by WBC and three sessions were outsourced to the YMCA Childcare Resource Service (YMCA-CRS). A list of training topics is provided 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 understanding challenging behavior and children with autism spectrum disorder. All courses were offered in Spanish, the providers' primary language.

Business Coaching

Following the completion of the training series, providers continued to receive support from the cultural navigator on all aspects of their business. The cultural navigator 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. The cultural navigator worked with each provider to complete three business goals. The providers also received financial coaching from WBC which included the development of a business plan and the completion of a financial projection worksheet.

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. The STEPS program builds a foundational knowledge base that lends itself to the highly individualized coaching that SSA coaches provide. As a partner in the SSA, Chicano Federation incorporated the use of the SSA engagement plan to document the goals that were set and the business coaching that occurred during STEPS.

STEPS Training Topics

Course Name	Description
Orientation – Gmail and Google Drive	<p>Overview of the STEPS program expectations and available resources.</p> <p>Introduction to Gmail and how to use Google Drive for their child care business.</p>
Business Plans	<p>Introduction to the purpose and importance of creating a business plan.</p> <p>Develop parts of the business plan, including: executive resume, description of product and potential clients, future of the company and description of the business.</p>
Finance 101: Budgeting and Banking	<p>Overview of business bank accounts and the different features offered.</p> <p>Budgeting process is introduced including how to calculate monthly income and expenses for monitoring purposes.</p>
Finance 102: Credit	<p>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.</p>
Business: Believe, Practice & Grow	<p>Best business practices for FCC providers are introduced, including business structure, child care license and regulation requirements, and parental contracts. The importance of business goals, financial projections, creating a marketing plan, and proper accounting are reviewed. Providers are taught how to utilize community and small business resources.</p>
Accounting Principles and Financial Statements	<p>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.</p>
Marketing 101	<p>Introduction to essential marketing strategies, tools and the creation of a marketing plan.</p>
Marketing 102	<p>Digital marketing and how to promote your business using social media including Instagram and Facebook. Understanding branding basics: choosing consistent colors, logos, and messaging that reflect the values of your program. Tips for creating engaging content such as photos and videos. Tips on how to use hashtags and stories to expand reach and increase engagement.</p>

STEPS Training Topics

Course Name	Description
Taxes and Deductions	Introduction of tax practices specific to child care providers. An 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.
Legal Matters	Review of labor law specific to child care businesses, including types of business entities, how to protect your business and belongings, advantages of having the right commercial entity for tax purposes and how partnerships might impact capital funding.
Contracts and Policies	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.
Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder	Introductory overview on autism spectrum disorder and the challenges providers may face as a child care provider. The course will discuss recommendations to best handle these challenges. The overall goal of the course is to help providers better understand children on the spectrum to better support the child and their needs (delivered by YMCA-CRS).
Understanding Challenging Behavior	Introduction of brain anatomy and how different parts influence young children's behavior. Strategies to identify the root cause of behaviors are presented so that effective strategies can be implemented (delivered by YMCA-CRS).
Brain Gain	Brain Gain is a training program for home child care providers that focuses on early childhood brain development. It helps caregivers understand how young children learn, grow, and develop, and provides practical strategies to support cognitive, social, and emotional development in a safe and nurturing environment (delivered by YMCA-CRS).

Program Objectives

STEPS objectives include training participation, completion of the Family Child Care Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI), completion of business plans, financial projections and achievement of business practices that support the provider’s child care. The cultural navigator also helps providers complete an engagement plan, a tool originating in SSA to record business goals .

The project period for Chicano Federation’s STEPS cohort was March 2025 to February 2026.

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 enrolled and 11 providers completed the 14-week STEPS training series. 9 providers participated in 1:1 business coaching.
FCC-SASI	Complete the FCC-SASI with providers participating in 1:1 business coaching.	45% (n=9) of providers completed the FCC-SASI.
Business Plans & Financial Projections	WBC completes a business plan and financial projection worksheet with each provider.	50% (n=10) of providers completed business plans. 50% (n=10) of providers completed financial projection worksheets.
Engagement Plans	Support providers with completion of an engagement plan.	45% (n=9) of providers completed an engagement plan.
Goals	Support providers with completion of 3 goals to improve their child care business.	9 providers completed a total of 33 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, business operational and financial characteristics).
Mid-program Data Analysis	April 2025	Provider demographic data was summarized in a mid-program report.
Progress Monitoring & FCC-SASI	July 2025 - Dec 2025	Post-Training Survey is sent to providers after the training series. FCC-SASI is completed after the training series. Business plans, financial projections and engagement plans, are ongoing.
Post Program Data Collection	Dec 2025	Post-program data is collected at the end of the program: Post-Program Survey, Provider Satisfaction Survey and engagement plans.
Reporting	Feb 2026	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.
Family Child Care Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI)	Once per program year	Measures utilization of best business practices for FCC providers.
Program Implementation Measures		
Business Plans	Once per program year	Summarizes a provider's vision for their business, their goals, and business strategies to achieve business success.
Financial Projections	Once per program year	Records monthly income and expense projections for each provider.
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 Survey	End of 14-week training series	Measures provider satisfaction of the 14-week training series. Also 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.
Open-ended Questions at Graduation	Once at the end of 14-week training series	Providers are encouraged to share stories, successes and how the program can be improved.
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 project period.

A total of 20 providers were enrolled in the STEPS Year 6 program. Four providers stopped attending the training classes and left the program because of scheduling conflicts and personal family matters. Four providers stopped attending and could not be reached by phone or email and were dropped from the program. The remaining 12 providers participated in the training series. One provider stopped attending after nine classes and the remaining 11 providers completed the full 14-week training series.

Two of the remaining 11 providers did not want to participate in the business coaching sessions. One provider had to place their FCC license on pause for a year and another provider had a loss in their family. Nine providers set a minimum of three goals in their engagement plan. All nine providers completed their goals and worked on these goals with support from the cultural navigator and WBC.



Provider Demographics

12 child care providers participated the 14-week STEPS training series and are included in the following demographic data.

Ethnicity and Primary Language

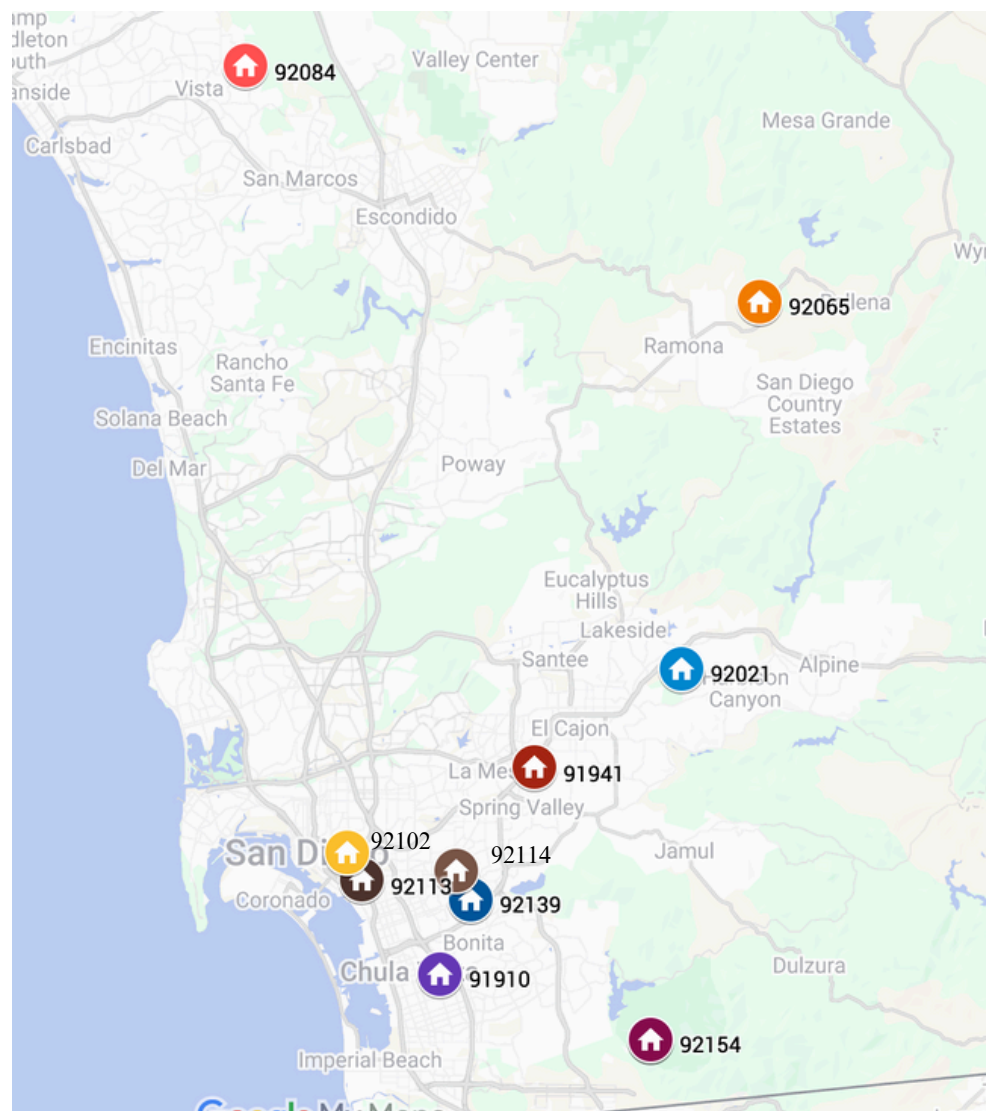
- 12 providers identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and their primary language in Spanish.

Service Capacity.

- 6 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 132 child care slots.

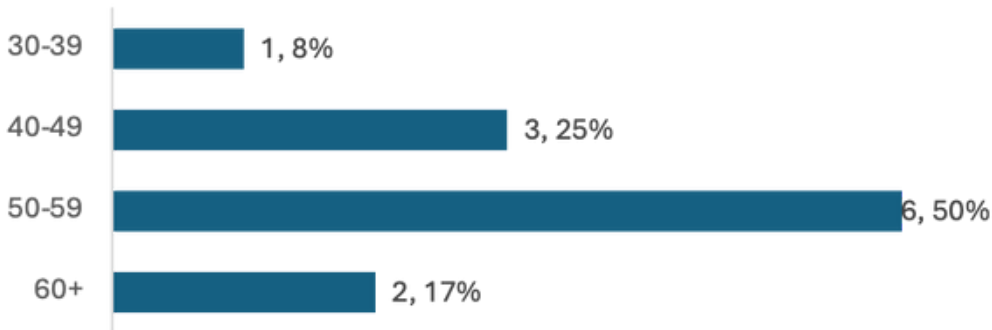
Service Region.

- 2 providers reside in 92102.
- 2 providers reside in 92139.
- 1 provider resides in 91910, 91941, 92021, 92065, 92084, 92113, 92114 and 92154.

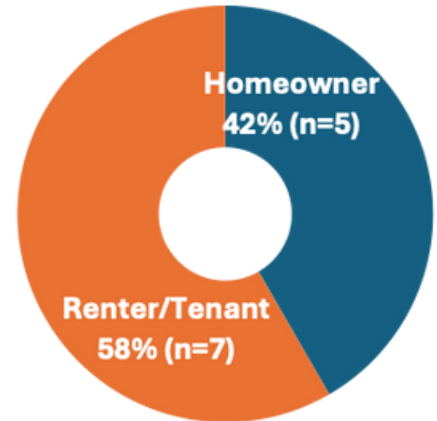


Provider Demographics

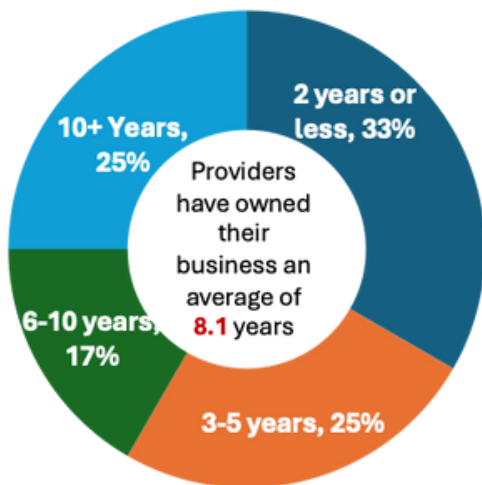
Provider Age Range



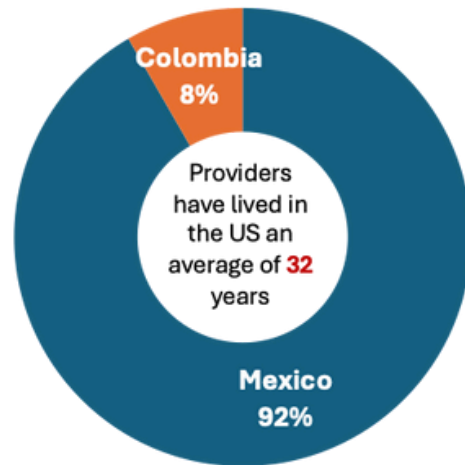
Homeowner Status



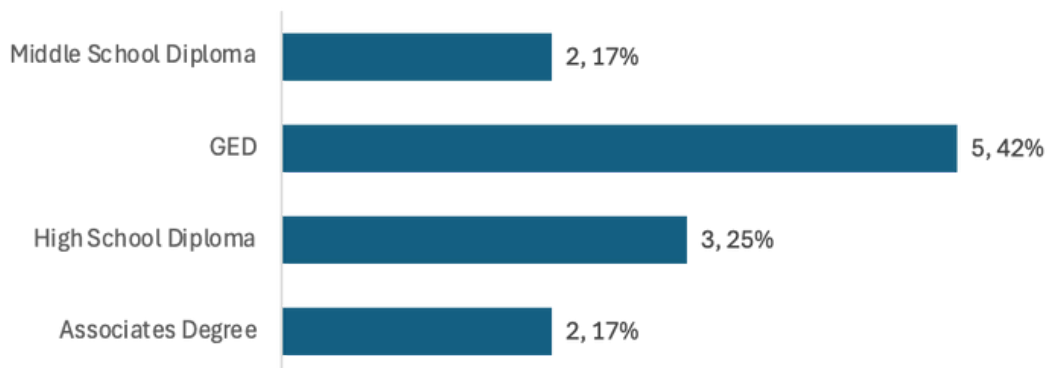
Years of Experience as a Provider



Provider's Country of Birth



Highest Level of Education



Provider Business Characteristics

Providers report working an average of 58 hours per week caring for children and another 16 hours per week managing their business. Examples of this work 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 families. Seventy-five percent (n=9) of STEPS providers offer care during non-traditional hours. 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.

With the long hours caring for children and operating a business, providers employ full-time and part-time staff. Forty-two percent (n=5) of providers employ staff to help with their child care business. Three providers employ one full time staff member, one provider employs two full-time staff members and one provider employs one full-time and one part-time staff member. The average wage for part-time staff is \$17 and the average wage of full-time staff is \$20. As the providers grow their child care business, 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. The California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry is a platform that tracks and promotes professional development training of early childhood educators. In October 2025, the Workforce Registry experienced significant federal funding cuts and the statewide system is no longer operating. Providers were encouraged to download all professional development documentation for their own personal recordkeeping. Provider participation percentages are reported in the following table.

Participation in Provider Programs and Networks	
CACFP	17%
SDQPI	25%
Union	33%
Workforce Registry	75%

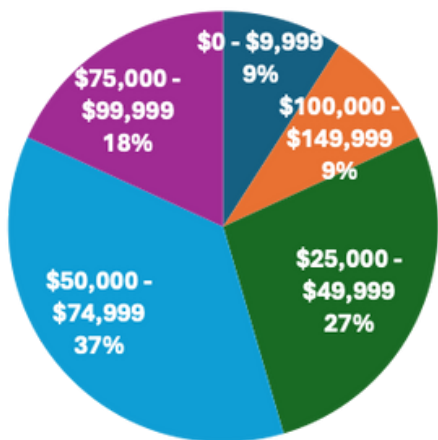
Provider Business Characteristics

Providers reported their personal income level in the previous tax year. Thirty-six percent (n=4) of providers reported that their personal income level was less than \$25,000 per year.

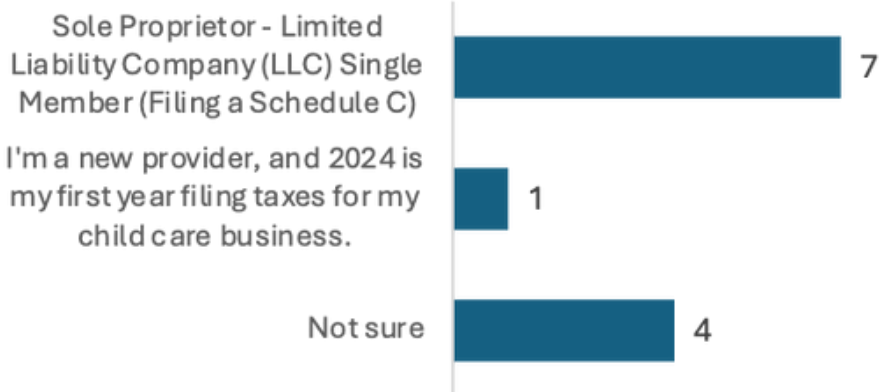
Provider tax filing status was also reported and is an indicator of strong business practices. Most providers begin their business filing as a sole proprietor and may later move towards filing as an S Corporation if there are advantages to protecting their personal liability and assets as their business grows. Fifty-eight percent (n=7) of providers filed as a sole proprietor in 2024.

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. Thirty-three percent (n=4) of providers only have families that qualify for subsidies, 33% (n=4) of providers only have families that pay privately (no subsidies), and 33% (n=4) of providers have families that qualify for subsidies and families that pay privately.

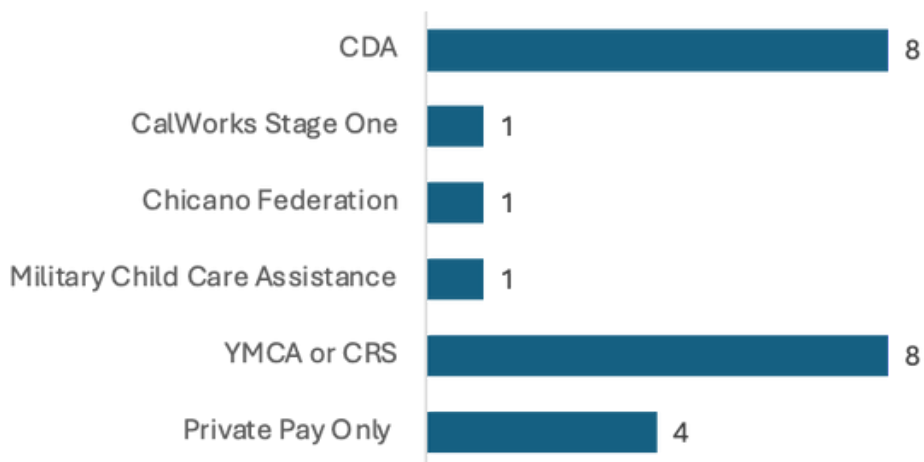
2024 Personal Income Level



2024 Tax Filing Status



Provider Participation in Subsidy Programs



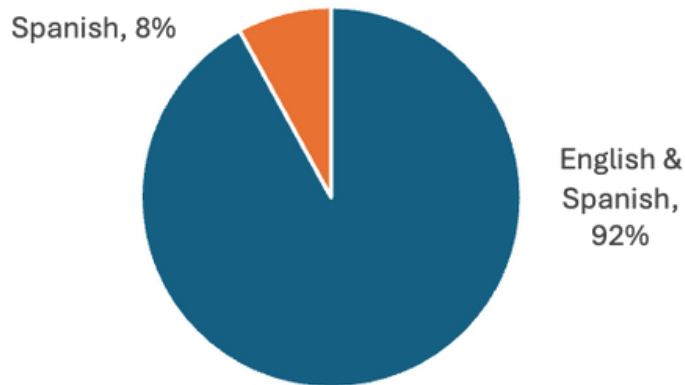
Provider Business Characteristics

All 12 providers had children enrolled in their FCC home at intake and throughout the project period. 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. All 12 providers offered care in Spanish or Spanish and English.

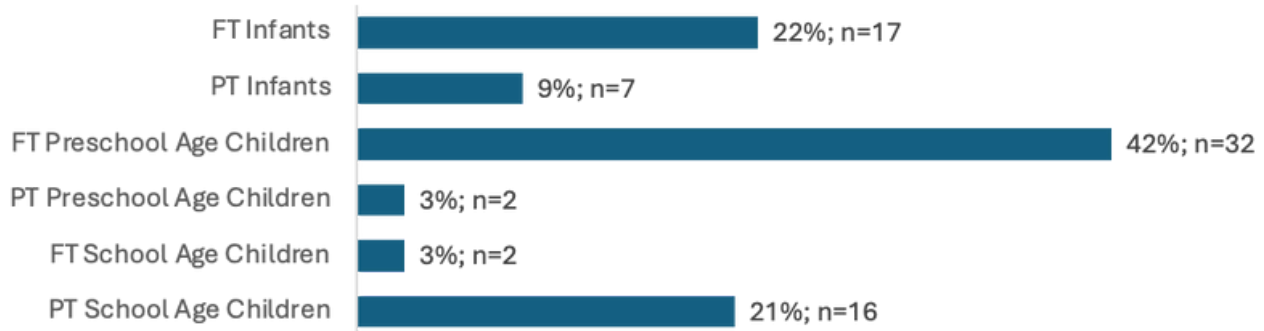
Providers reported child enrollment by age category and part-time and full-time status. They also reported the number of children that share their same ethnicity and primary language. Below is a snapshot of child demographic data at intake.

- On average, 62% of children enrolled share the same primary language as their provider.
- On average, 68% of children enrolled share the same ethnicity as their provider.
- 67% of children enrolled attend full time, a minimum of 25 hours per week.
- 45% of children enrolled are preschool-age, 2-5 years.

Language Program Operates In



Enrollment by Age Group at Intake



Provider Business Characteristics

Provider financial characteristics were measured using the financial projection worksheets the providers completed with the help of WBC. The template provided by WBC helps providers forecast their future financial performance based on expected enrollment, their previous expense data and future cost trends. The tool gives providers a better understanding and projection of their cash flow over the coming year.

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, salaries and wages, and food.

Estimated Annual Income (Average)	
CACFP	\$ 4,307.60
Tuition	\$ 103,260.00
Total	\$ 107,567.60

Estimated Annual Expenses (Average)	
Insurance	\$ 411.80
Salaries and Wages	\$ 12,864.00
Accounting	\$ 941.00
Mortgage Payment or Rent	\$ 14,436.00
Services & Internet	\$ 2,876.40
Marketing & Advertising	\$ 232.00
Food	\$ 8,715.00
Materials	\$ 3,124.00
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 4,442.00
Taxes	\$ 6,645.00
Licenses & Permits	\$ 97.50
Other Expenses	\$ 2,045.00
Total	\$ 56,829.70



Impact Data

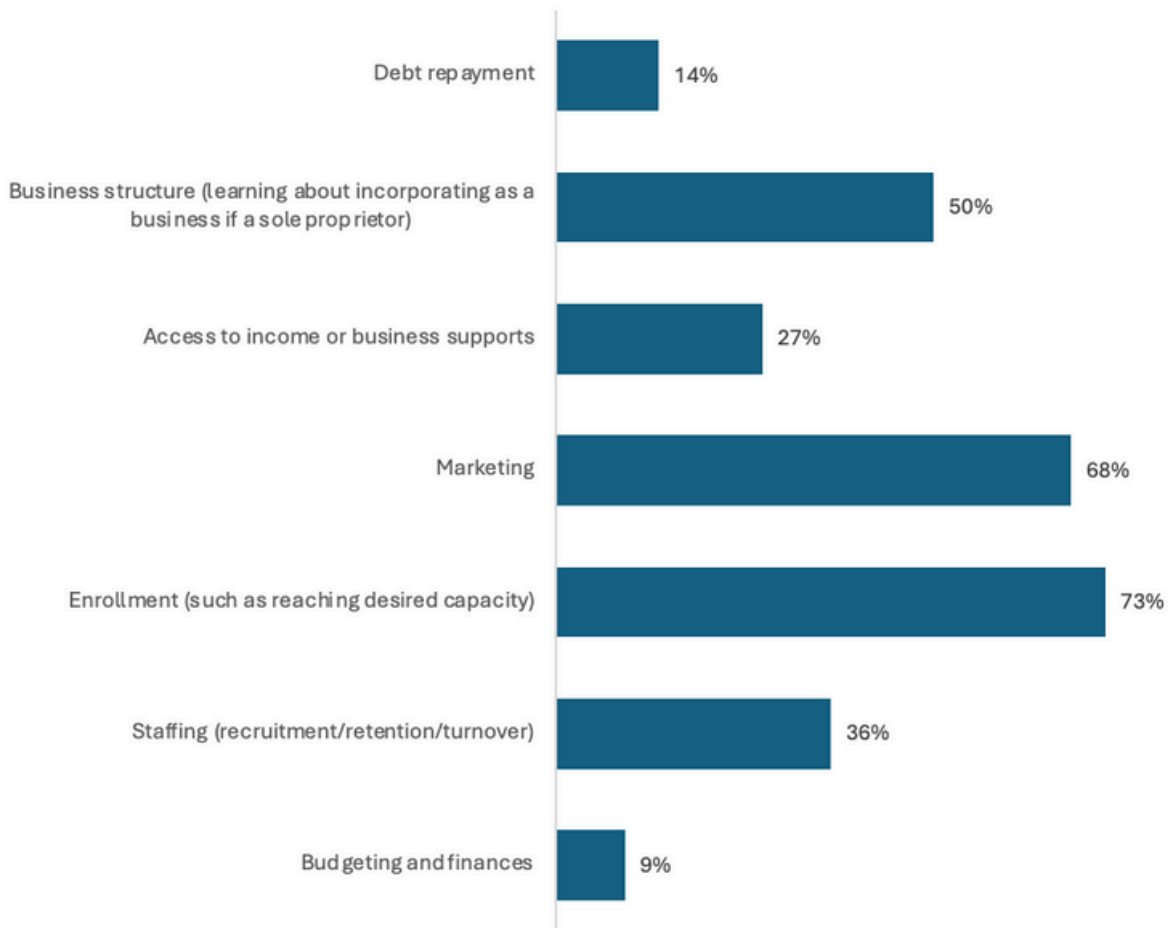
The impact of the training series was measured using a post-training survey and provider satisfaction survey. The impact of the business coaching was measured using the FCC-SASI and qualitative data in the engagement plans. The overall impact of the program was measured using a post-training survey,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



Needs Assessment: Provider Intake

At intake, providers were asked to select the top three challenges they face as child care providers that could be supported during coaching. Most providers identified marketing and enrollment as their primary challenges, creating an opportunity for the cultural navigator to focus support on these two areas to help providers achieve their goals.

Provider Reported Biggest Challenges



Training Series: Post-Training Survey

At the end of the 14-week training series, providers were asked to complete a short survey rating their satisfaction with the STEPS training series and the relevance of the course content. The Likert-style questions are presented in the chart below. All eight providers strongly agree with each statement.

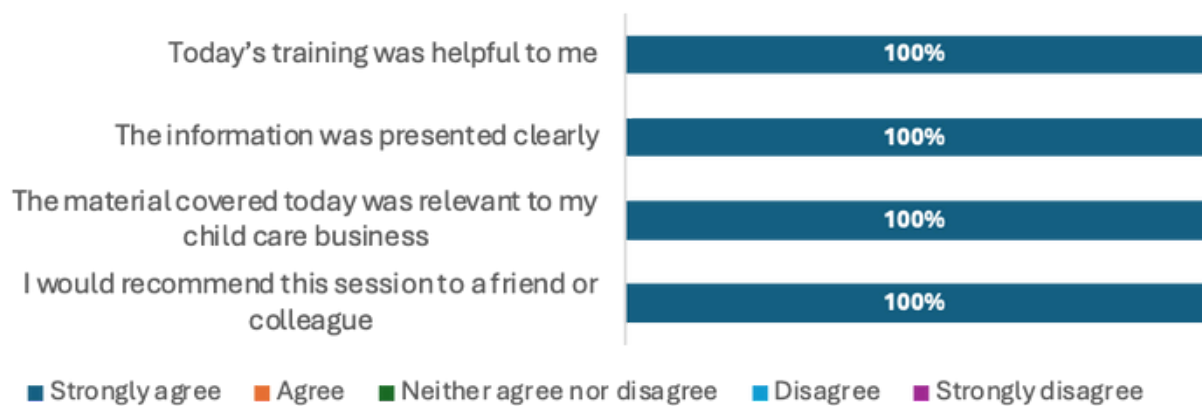
Providers were also given the opportunity to give open-ended feedback. Many comments praised the curriculum for being comprehensive and all providers said they would recommend the training series to other providers. Providers discussed one thing they learned from the STEPS training series:

- “I really enjoyed all the training sessions and the talks with the presenters because they always answered questions.”
- “The way to promote my business in a more assertive and motivating way.”
- “I learned about child development, real estate, and marketing. I also learned to be more confident in my performance at daycare.”

Providers also shared recommendations for additional training or support they would like for Chicano Federation to offer:

- 3 providers wanted additional child development classes.
- 1 provider wanted information about how to buy a house.
- 1 provider wanted more information on financial aid and how to file taxes.

Provider Satisfaction with STEPS Training (n=8)



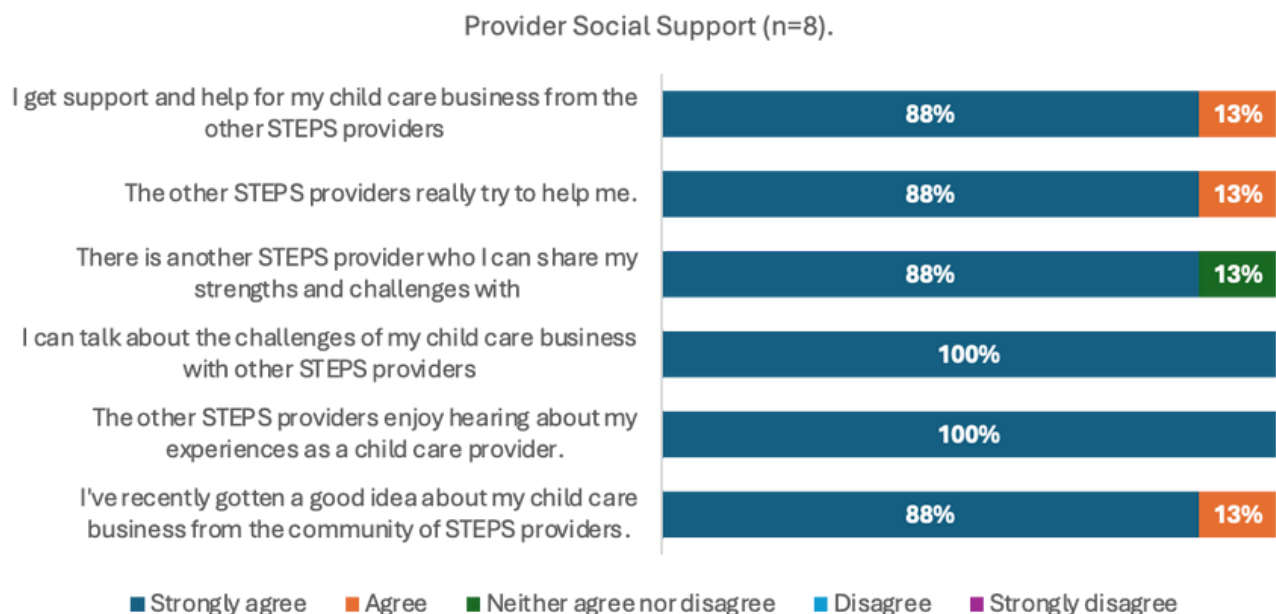
Training Series: Post-Training Survey

Prior STEPS reports have highlighted the importance of training and professional development in a provider’s primary language, demonstrating the importance of the language supports. Central to the STEPS approach is a cohort-based model in which providers participate in courses with peers who share their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic background. The cohort-based model is important because it frames instruction in ways that reflect community values and providers’ lived experiences, while also fostering meaningful relationships and a sense of community among participants. When providers feel socially supported by their peers, they are more likely to share openly, recognize that their challenges are shared by others, and engage more deeply in learning.

To measure the importance of how social support contributes to learning within distinct cultural communities, providers were asked to rate social support statements and give feedback on if it is helpful to attend class with other FCC providers. Providers reflected positively on the impact of support from the other providers in their cohort. Overall, 100% of providers strongly agree that they can talk about the challenges of their child care business with other STEPS providers and they believe STEPS providers enjoy hearing about their experiences as a provider.

Providers also discussed if it was helpful to attend class with other family child care providers:

- “Yes, because I learned a lot from my other classmates.”
- “It was helpful because we exchanged ideas and got to know each other.”
- “Yes! Because I learned from their experiences and knowledge.”
- “I loved that. I met some providers who are very good at what they do and very friendly, who like to share and support.”

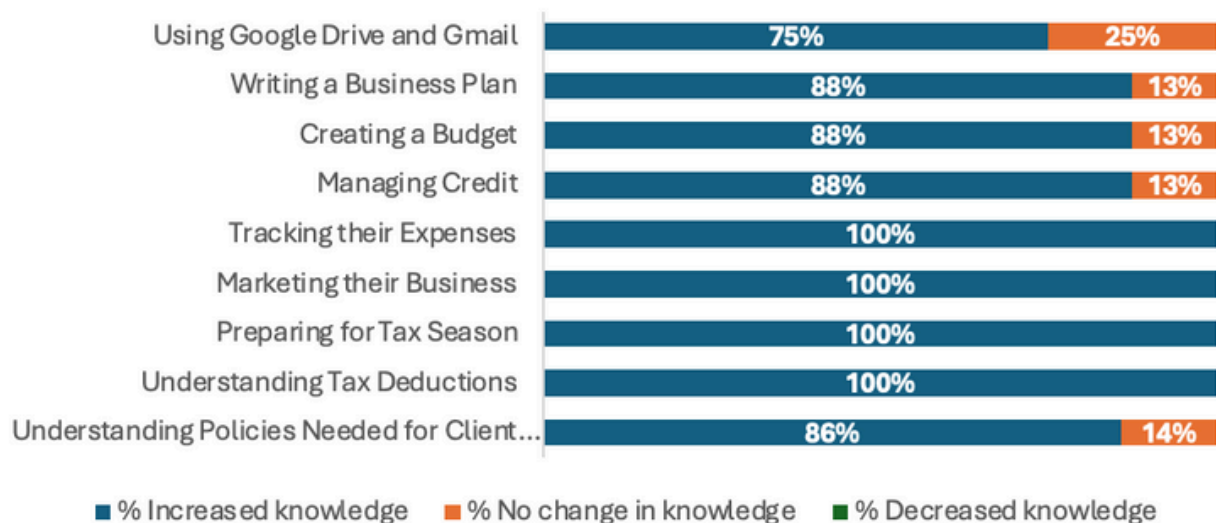


Training Series: Post-Training Survey

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. All eight respondents felt that their knowledge increased after the training sessions on the following constructions: Tracking their Expenses, Marketing their Business, Preparing for Tax Season, and Understanding Tax Deductions.

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 1.67 points.

Provider Perception of Knowledge Before and After STEPS training (n=8).



Increase in Perceived Knowledge: 5-Point Scale (n=8).



Training Series: Open-Ended Feedback

Prior to the 1:1 business coaching, Chicano Federation held a special zoom session to celebrate the providers that completed the 14 weeks of training. Providers were asked to share more about their experience in the program and their ideas for future trainings and support.

- "Participating in this program has been a transformative experience. While some classes covered topics I had heard before, I learned many new things that truly broadened my perspective especially regarding homeownership and the various forms of support available to small business owners, which are often unknown to us. The classes on finance, taxes, and deductions were my favorite. I felt like I was back in school enjoying my favorite subject. The instructors sparked a genuine interest in me to keep learning and growing. Thanks to the information shared by WBC and Chicano Federation, I now know that there are real resources and opportunities to move forward. This program motivated me not to stay stuck because of past mistakes and gave me the confidence to believe that progress is possible. One of my dreams is to open my own center, and with the encouragement of Sandra and Esther (from WBC), I now truly believe it's within reach. Beyond the knowledge I gained, I was also able to build friendships and support networks with other providers. I am deeply grateful to Chicano Federation for offering these courses to our community. As part of the ITP program, I've received invaluable support that continues to help me grow. I would absolutely recommend this program to others."
- "Thank you so much for everything this program helped me personally in many ways. I realized I wasn't well-informed about many of the topics we covered. Thanks to the variety of subjects presented, I've grown as a provider. The knowledge I gained is something I can now share with other providers I know. The child development trainings were especially interesting to me, and I truly hope YMCA continues offering more trainings like these. I sincerely appreciate the time and dedication taken to provide us with this valuable information. At first, it was hard for me to attend. After a long day of caring for children, I was exhausted I just wanted to have a coffee and relax. But once I was there, listening to the information, I told myself: "I need to stay focused and be present in this training." So now, any future training you offer I definitely want to be part of it."
- "We are not in competition, there is enough sunshine for everyone. I want to share that I started my daycare with many insecurities, but I can honestly say that Chicano Federation and WBC have helped me tremendously. They are always willing to support me and have encouraged me every step of the way. Whenever I have questions, they are always there to guide me. I want to express my deepest respect and gratitude, especially to Carolina, who has shown me so much patience. Thanks to the support from all of you at Chicano Federation and WBC. I now feel more confident, motivated, and equipped to keep growing as a provider."

Business Coaching: Engagement Plans

After the training series, the 11 providers that remained in the program were given the opportunity to participate in 1:1 business coaching. WBC worked with the providers to complete a business plan and a financial projection worksheet. The cultural navigator administered the Family Child Care-Strength and Sustainability Index (FCC-SASI) to help the providers identify business practices that would strengthen their position as a strong and sustainable provider. The business practices identified are written as goals in an individualized engagement plan and then completed with the help of the cultural navigator.

Ten of the remaining 11 providers completed a business plan and a financial projection worksheet with WBC. Nine providers completed the FCC-SASI and an engagement plan. A total of 33 goals were completed from the engagement plans. With the reduction in the number of providers in the program, the cultural navigator was able to help providers complete time-intensive business practices that require 1:1 support. Six providers created a spreadsheet to help them track business expenses regularly, either weekly or monthly. Six providers were also coached on how to market their business using social media (i.e., FaceBook), with some learning how to use Canva, an online graphic design platform, to design posts. Additionally, five providers created employee policies and another five registered their child care program with Google for proper online exposure.

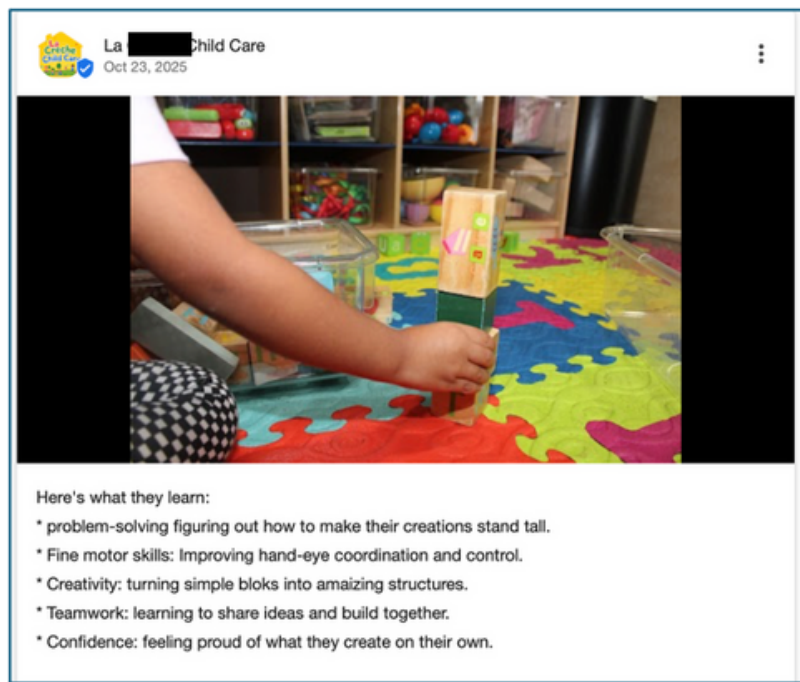
The chart below displays the number of providers that implemented each goal. The goals are categorized by the business practices listed in the FCC-SASI.



Business Coaching: Engagement Plans

Fourteen of the completed goals addressed providers' need for support in marketing their businesses. To highlight these achievements, two examples of provider Google profiles are included below, along with information from the engagement plans that further describe the efforts involved in completing these goals.

The following images represent a provider who has owned her child care business for three years. With the support of a cultural navigator, she established four aspirational goals, with her progress and outcomes documented in the engagement plan. She first created a family feedback form to collect client input about her program. Using the positive feedback received, the provider developed a marketing plan and shared testimonials on her business social media page, resulting in increased online engagement. She also created a Google profile, shown in the images below, featuring information and photos of her child care program. Additionally, the provider developed new hiring policies that include benefit options as well as attendance and training requirements.



Business Coaching: Engagement Plans

The following two images represent a provider who has owned her business for five years. With the support of a cultural navigator, she completed four goals, and her progress and accomplishments were documented in her engagement plan. She developed a marketing plan and began posting on her business social media page, which led to the enrollment of two new children. The provider also created a Google profile, shown in the images below, that includes information and photos of her child care program. Before the program period ended, she created a spreadsheet to track business expenses, which she continues to update weekly.



Reviews ⓘ [Write a review](#) [Add a photo](#)

V "All the **children** are happy, engaged, and well-cared for."
★★★★☆

C "She's reliable, very patient and truly loves what she does."
★★★★★

[View all Google reviews](#)

From **[Redacted] Daycare**

"At **[Redacted]**'s Daycare, we offer a safe, educational, and family-centered environment where children learn, play, and grow with joy. Our goal is to support families with personalized care, nutritious meals, and fun activities that promote learning and emotional growth. Located in San Diego, we welcome children ages 4 months to 10 years with flexible schedules for working parents - En **[Redacted]**'s Daycare brindamos un ambiente seguro y educativo donde los niños aprenden, juegan y crecen felices. Cuidado personalizado, comidas nutritivas y actividades divertidas que promueven el desarrollo social, emocional y cognitivo. Recibimos niños de 4 meses a 10 años ofrecemos horarios flexibles para padres que trabajan Reserva un tour hoy mismo!"

Overall Impact: Pre and Post-Program Data

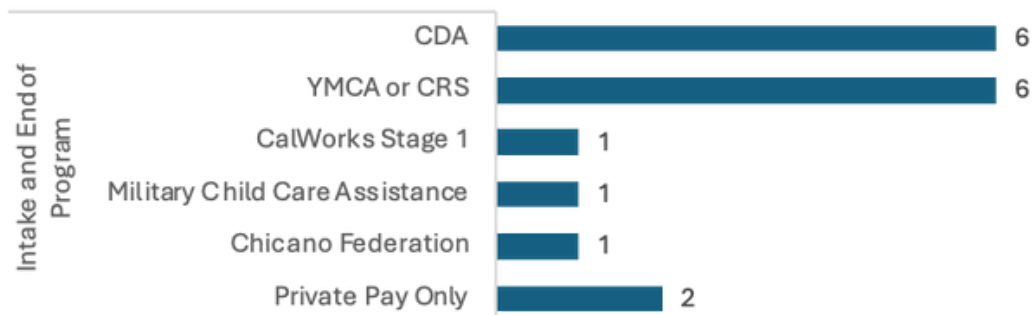
Provider business characteristics were collected at the end of the program. Pre and post-program data was compared to show changes to provider business practices. Only those providers that remained in the program for 1:1 business coaching completed the post program data collection survey. To align the pre and post program data, the intake data reported in the following analysis only includes the providers that submitted post program data (n=9).

Providers were asked about their financial management systems at intake and at the end of the program. There was no change in the number of providers that filed taxes for their business, had a system for budgeting and cashflow and had financial reserves or a savings account for their business. There was also no change in the number of subsidy programs providers were participating in by the end of the program.

Provider participation in CACFP, SDQPI and the local union did not change during the program period. The number of providers that use a Child Care Management System (CCMS) also did not change during the program period. (55%; n=5).

Financial Management	
	Intake and End of Program
# of providers that filed taxes for their business	9
# of providers that have a system for budgeting and cashflow	2
# of providers that have financial reserves or a savings account for their business	5
Provider Programs and Networks	
Union	4
CACFP	2
SDQPI	2
CCMS	5

Provider Participation in Subsidy Programs
(most providers participate in more than one subsidy program)



Overall Impact: Pre and Post-Program Data

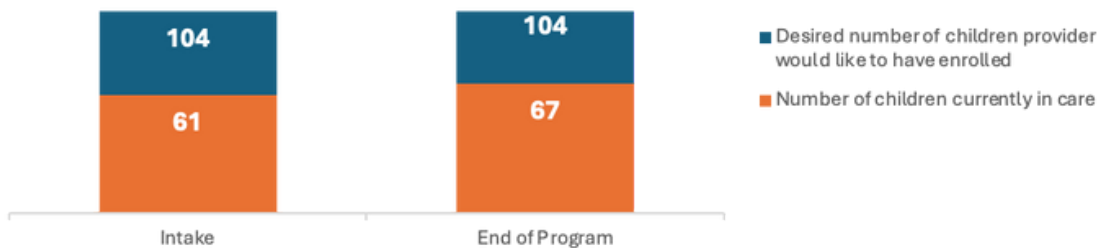
Provider enrollment was measured at intake and at the end of the program. Providers reported their current enrollment and the desired number of children they would like to have enrolled.

From March 2025 through January 2026, enrollment increased by 10%. Sixty-four percent of child care slots were filled by the end of the program, a 5% increase. Four providers (44%) increased their enrollment and another four (44%) sustained their enrollment.

Overall, enrollment remained steady, however, by the end of the program, providers gained four full-time preschoolers and five part-time preschoolers. As transitional kindergarten in California became an option for all families at the start of the 2025 school year, FCC providers are expecting to see a drop in enrollment during the school year.

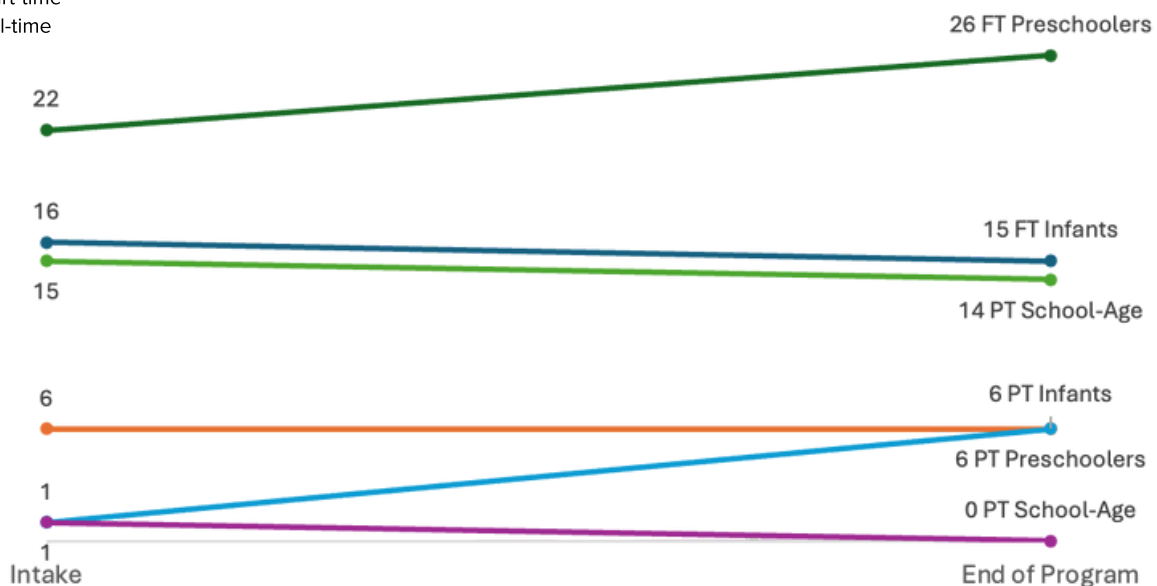
To understand the impact of enrollment on provider income, the average monthly tuition income was calculated at intake and at the end of the program. Providers submitted their rates for each enrollment category. The increase in enrollment from intake to the end of program equated to an estimated increase in average monthly tuition income of \$1,908, or an average increase in yearly tuition income of \$22,891 per provider.

Enrollment and Provider Capacity (n=9).



Total Enrollment Over Time

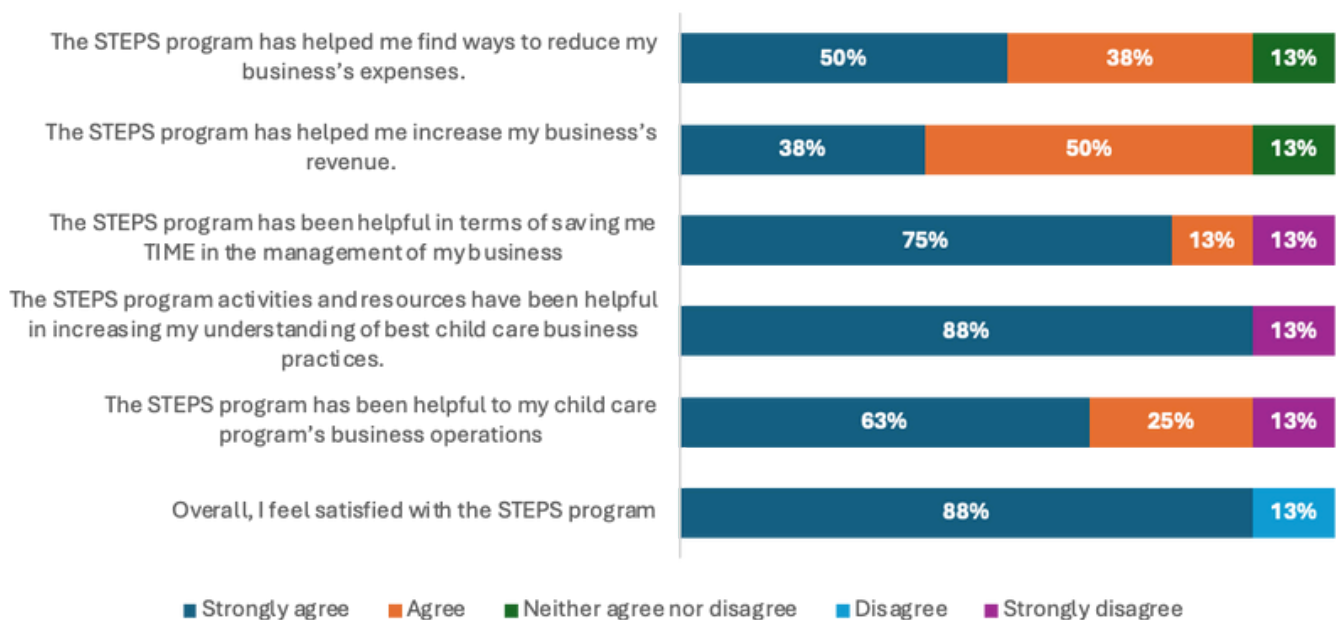
PT = part-time
FT = full-time
(n=9)



Overall Impact: Post-Satisfaction Survey

At the end of the program, the post-satisfaction survey asked providers to rate their satisfaction with STEPS and provide open-ended feedback (see table on the following page) about their experience in the program. Overall, providers were satisfied with the help they received. Eighty-eight percent of providers "strongly agree" or "agree" with the program satisfaction statements. Additionally, 88% of providers "strongly agree" that the STEPS program increased their understanding of child care business practices.

Provider Satisfaction with STEPS (n=8)



Overall Impact: Post-Satisfaction Survey

If you feel that the STEPS program has had an impact on your business, please share an example

- Significant growth in various areas of development, both personal and in managing our business more professionally.
- Having more organization in my daycare center.
- I understood many things about marketing.
- I keep the records up to date.
- Security in each of the areas mentioned above.

It helped me realize how well I was running my business and also to recognize my mistakes.

Do you have any suggestions about ways to improve the STEPS program? If yes, please share them.

- Let them continue giving us these capabilities so we can keep improving.
 - None for the moment.
 - For me, everything was great, the course was fantastic.
 - Excellent, I liked everything.
 - I liked everything.
-

Are there any future coaching needs that you have or topics that you would like to see incorporated?

- Well, we learn something from everything that happens in Texas and we move forward.
 - Loss and Trauma.
 - It's always a good idea to provide different training opportunities to help in the child's development and to improve the business.
 - I would like to prepare myself further and obtain a pre-kindergarten certificate.
 - I don't know how to participate in the SDQPI courses; I'm very interested but I haven't been able to figure it out.
-

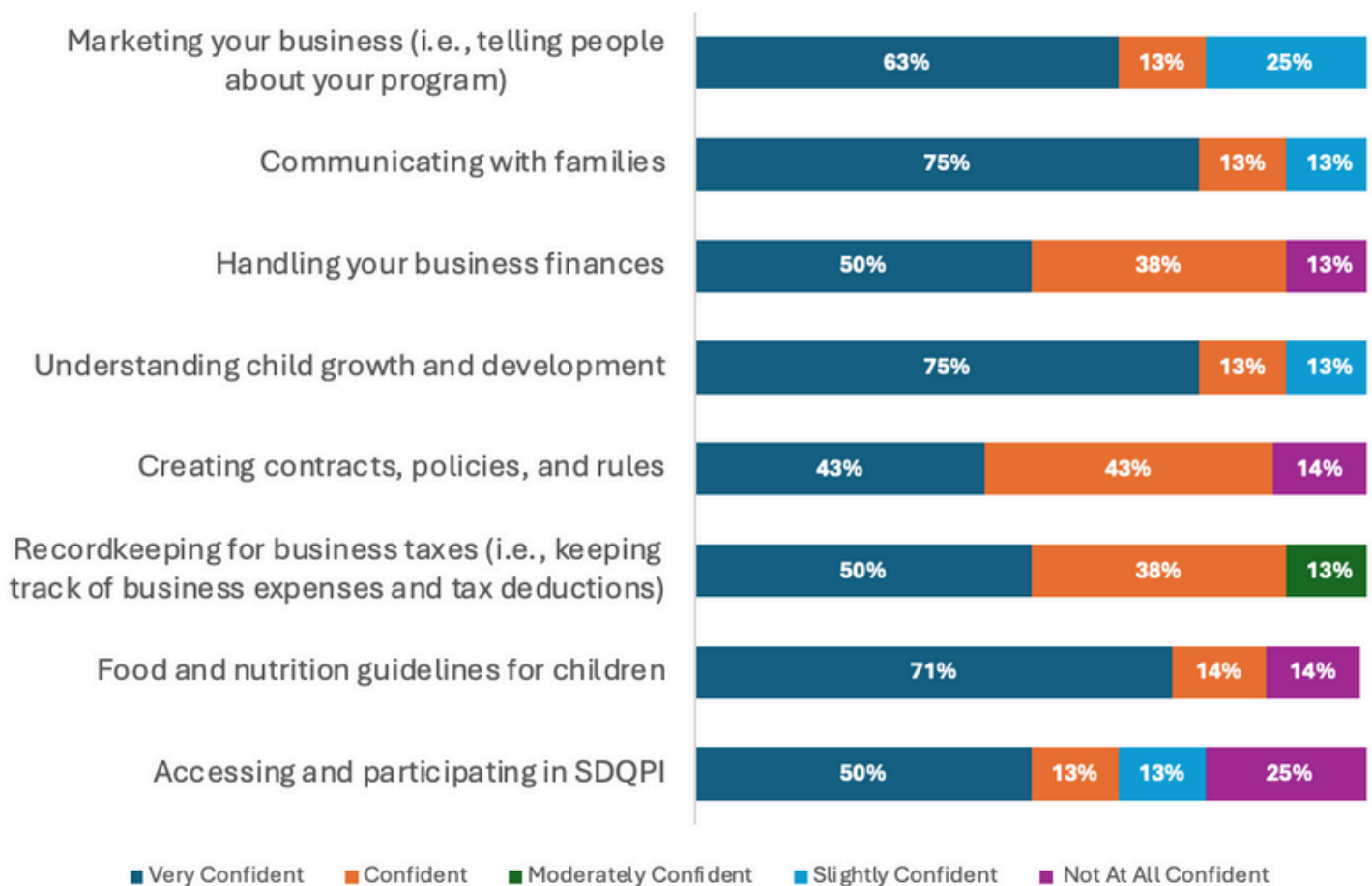
Is there anything that you would like to share about your experience?

- Very grateful
- Thank you for sharing these training sessions. They will help us improve our businesses.
- I really appreciated the friendliness and interaction with the people who conducted the training; they were always very willing to help us.
- Better organization and a good understanding of all the topics covered, thank you very much!!
- I really like it, the classes are explained very clearly, and they make sure that we don't have any doubts. Thank you very much.

Overall Impact: Post Satisfaction Survey

Providers were asked to rate their confidence in implementing business practices at the end of the program. Overall 83% of providers were "very confident" or "confident" in each of the measured business practices. Seventy-five percent of providers were "very confident" with communicating with families and 71% were "very confident" with food and nutrition guidelines for children. Providers felt least confident in accessing and participating in SDQPI. Thirty-eight percent of providers were "slightly confident" or "not at all confident" in accessing and participating in SDQPI.

How confident do you currently feel about the following (n=10)?





Key Findings

Reflections & Recommendations



Key Findings

- 100% of providers strongly agree that the training was “helpful, information was presented clearly, and material was relevant”.
- “A cohort-based model encouraged social support between providers. 100% of providers strongly agree” that they can talk about the challenges of their child care business with other STEPS providers and they believe STEPS providers enjoy hearing about their experiences as a provider. Overall, 98% of providers “strongly agree” or “agree” that social support is beneficial to them as child care providers.
- 92% of providers indicated their knowledge of course objectives increased.
- 33 total goals were completed.
- Enrollment increased by 10%. 64% of child care slots were filled by the end of the program.
- 89% (n=8) of providers increased or sustained their enrollment.
- The change in enrollment from intake to the end of program equated to an estimated increase in average monthly tuition income of \$1,908, or an average increase in yearly tuition income of \$22,891 per provider.

Reflections & Recommendations

Data Collection

- The provider's rates for each age category were reported at intake and at the end of the program. This was the first time a cultural navigator was able to collect accurate and complete rate data, allowing evaluators to calculate a tuition estimate with the provider's reported rates rather than using the San Diego County subsidy reimbursement rates. It is recommended that rates and enrollment are entered within a table together at intake to ensure alignment and accuracy.
- The cultural navigator prefers to submit enrollment data less frequently. Enrollment data can be collected at additional intervals if the cultural navigator and providers are not inconvenienced with the additional task. However, the evaluators concur that collecting enrollment data at intake and at the end of the program is sufficient.
- SDSU provides faculty and staff with access to Qualtrics, an online survey platform with advanced tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting. Qualtrics was used to collect and manage intake, survey, 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.
- The FCC-SASI measures all of the goals completed in the engagement plan and also captures any additional business practices completed during the program period. It is recommended that the FCC-SASI replace the use of engagement plans because it tracks all new business practices implemented rather than only the goals set in the engagement plan.
- Engagement plans or workflow platforms such as Neoserra have been used to help cultural navigators track progress with case notes for each provider. It is recommended that the FCC-SASI replace the use of engagement plans because all goals and case notes can be recorded directly in the FCC-SASI.
- A comparison of pre and post-program data showed no changes in the business or financial characteristics of the providers' child care programs. The business and financial characteristics data that was chosen to be collected did not align with the types of goals providers selected for their engagement plans. The FCC-SASI is a comprehensive list of business practices that can be used to show pre and post-program changes to business or financial characteristics. It is recommended that future evaluation tools collect limited demographic data, data from the FCC-SASI, provider enrollment and rate data to effectively evaluate program implementation.

Reflections & Recommendations

- Evaluators should confirm with the cultural navigators if providers are hesitant to provide any of the demographic data collected given the current political climate.
- The post-training and provider satisfaction surveys have continuously revealed a positive response from providers. Given STEPS has been ongoing for six years, the surveys could be optional for the organizations implementing the program.

Program Implementation

- Chicano Federation noted that they had difficulty sustaining enrollment in STEPS. They had 20 providers who were interested, eight providers dropped after five or fewer classes nothing family emergencies, scheduling conflicts or others failed to respond after multiple attempts to contact the provider. One provider stopped attending after nine classes and the remaining 11 providers completed the training series. Nine providers completed the goals on their engagement plan. Some attrition has occurred in prior STEPS cohorts, however during informal conversations with Chicano Federation’s cultural navigator and senior director of programs, it was mentioned that providers may need an incentive to encourage engagement.
- The partnership between Chicano Federation and WBC is important. WBC provides additional business coaching and resources (i.e., business plan and financial projection worksheet) beyond the training to support the cultural navigator and providers.
- The STEPS program is a cohort-based model in which providers participate in courses with peers who share their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic background. Providers reflected positively on the impact of social support from the other providers in their cohort. This learning approach is valuable because it frames instruction in ways that reflect community values and providers’ lived experiences, while also fostering meaningful relationships and a sense of community among participants. It is recommended that STEPS continue to offer trainings using this cohort-based learning approach.
- Child Care Management Systems (CCMS) help providers streamline their business practices. Fifty-five percent of providers use CCMS, but only use a limited number of features. 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.