Certified Family Child Care Management Training

Report of Evaluation
Executive Summary
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Anna M. Figueira, Ph.D.
Beverly A. Briggs, Ph.D.

Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education
Graduate School of Education
In 2010 a new management training series curriculum was developed for owners and operators of certified family child care facilities. To ensure positive outcomes the training was designed to be intensive, continuous, focused and relationship based. These characteristics reflect research based best practices in the professional development of childhood care and education providers (Weber & Trauten, 2008). A comprehensive formative evaluation was designed as an integral component of the training. This report presents an overview of the Building a Business training, and a description of the evaluation plan. Recommendations and considerations informed by the findings are presented in the final section.

**OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING SERIES**

**Curriculum**

The Building a Business curriculum is approved for 60 clock hours in the core knowledge category of Program Management and is designed to be offered to cohorts. The curriculum consists of 23 individual sessions organized into five modules with the following goals:

1. Developing plans for a certified family child care home that is based on sound business practices and developmentally appropriate practices
2. Building the structure for a certified family child care home that is financially stable and reflects best practices for children, families, staff, the provider and her/his family
3. Designing the physical environments of a certified family child care home that reflect the family culture and program mission statement and philosophy and meets standards of regulation and quality
4. Planning a human environment in a certified family child care home that is productive, respectful and supportive of staff, families, own family and provider’s interests and needs
5. Developing effective ways to communicate and collaborate with families, prospective clients, professional colleagues, neighbors, and community partners

A total of 29 business documents and plans, recognized in the research as indicators of best business practices, were identified and selected to be the “outcomes” of the training program. The outcomes would suggest a sustainable family child care business that follows best practices for children, families, and staff and are congruent with Oregon Programs of Quality (OPQ) standards.
Delivery of Training and Technical Assistance

The first cohort of 23 providers from certified family child care programs began in September of 2010 and concluded in August of 2011. The second cohort of 18 providers was completed between April, 2011, and February, 2012. Both cohorts were offered through a collaborative effort between Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children and Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD).

Trainers were certified Oregon Registry Master Trainers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in the field and experience with family child care. Seven trainers participated in the delivery of the curriculum.

Participants in both cohorts were given an option to enroll for six graduate or undergraduate credits from Portland State University through Continuing Education in the Graduate School of Education. In addition to attending the 60 hours of training, participants who enrolled in the credit option completed six assignments, which were evaluated by an instructor of record at Portland State.

A relationship-based coaching component (Boller, Blair, Del Grosso & Paulsell, 2010; Morrisey & Banghart, 2007; National Association for the Education of Young Children & National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, 2011; Tout, Isner & Zaslow, 2011; Weber & Trauten, 2008) was built into the curriculum to lend individual technical assistance to the participants as they worked to achieve the outcomes. Coaches were required to have at least a bachelor’s degree in the field and experience with family child care. In order to develop individual relationships between coaches and participants the ratio of participants to coaches was no more than 12 or fewer participants per coach (Bromer, Van Haitsma, Daley, & Modigliani, 2008). The coaches also attended alternating training sessions to assist the trainers and to give continuity to the participants.

Logistics and arrangements for the training and coaching for both cohorts were coordinated by Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children. Development of curriculum, orientation and ongoing support of the trainers, coach training, and program evaluation were completed by Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education at Portland State University. The development of the curriculum, coaching model, and delivery model was guided by an advisory committee that included child care resource and referral staff, Child Care Division licensing specialists, and family child care providers. A focus group of family child care providers, convened before the beginning of curriculum development, helped conceptualize the curriculum topics and delivery model.

Preparation and Technical Assistance for Trainers and Coaches

The Building a Business curriculum includes guides for the trainers for each session that include the session description, relevant standard from the Core Body of Knowledge for Oregon’s Childhood Care and Education Profession (Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, 2008), session objectives, outcomes, major topics, suggested activities, suggested topical outlines, references, and resources (Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, 2010). Using these guides, the Building a Business trainers were asked to develop their individual sessions.
Trainers and coaches attended an orientation to the curriculum in a one-day session, held a month before the beginning of the training series. The training day included a workshop session for trainers to work independently on the development of their sessions with one-on-one technical assistance from OCCD staff.

A separate training session was conducted for the coaches that included the research base and coaching model for Building a Business. The session included opportunities for coaches to practice using the coaching tools reliably with technical assistance from OCCD staff. Trainers were invited to attend the coach training, but their attendance was not mandatory.

**Costs and Funding**

The total cost per participant for the 40 participants who remained enrolled in the two cohorts was $2,265. The cohort funders included the Oregon Child Care Division with funds from the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Oregon Community Foundation funded Betty Gray scholarships in the amount of $675 per participant. Building a Business participants, themselves, were asked to pay $120 toward the cost of the training. The five participants who enrolled for six credits from Portland State University paid an additional $330 to PSU.

Participants were given a total of 7 books, selected from a variety written especially for family child care providers to support quality and best practices. They also received a CD-Rom with sample forms, handbooks, and records that were developed for use in family child care home businesses.

**Building a Business Outcomes**

Desired outcomes of the training were selected, based upon a review of research and best practices (Copeland, 2009; Copeland, 2006; Copeland, 2009; Copeland, 1999; Copeland, T. & Millard, 2004; Morrisey & Banghart, 2007; Teaching Research Institute at Western Oregon University, 2011).

The 29 outcomes consist of business documents that indicated business quality and stability and financial sustainability. Eleven of the 29 outcomes were determined by the advisory committee to be most essential to the successful operation of a family childcare business. They are described as “key outcomes” and appear in bold in the list below. These 11 key outcomes are congruent with Oregon Programs of Quality (OPQ) standards (Teaching Research Institute at Western Oregon University, 2011) and were developed and measured to align with the indicators and performance criteria for those standards.

The 29 outcomes of Building a Business are*:

- Resume or professional autobiography
- **Mission statement**
- **Philosophy statement**
- Risk management plan
- **Written description of curriculum**
- Child assessment plan
- Worksheet analyzing costs of personnel
• Budget  
• Record keeping system  
• Quality improvement plan  
• Written description of physical environments  
  • Health & safety improvement plan  
  • Emergency preparedness plan  
  • Environment improvement plan reflecting Oregon Program of Quality standards & accreditation standards for environments  
• Written staffing plan  
• Interview protocol (if applicable)  
• Staff orientation plan (if applicable)  
• Job descriptions (if applicable)  
• Staff policy handbook (if applicable)  
• Staff evaluation plan (if applicable)  
• Professional development plans for self and staff (if applicable)  
• Family intake plan  
• Contracts with families  
• Ground rules for family & business boundaries  
• Family policy handbook  
• Community outreach plan  
• Professional involvement plan  
• Marketing materials  
• Business plan  
*Bolded outcomes are the key outcomes of the training program

EVALUATION DESIGN

Ongoing formative evaluation was integrated throughout the duration of the training series for Cohorts 1 and 2. The multiple perspectives of participants, trainers, and coaches were sought to develop a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the training. The evaluation was designed with the assistance of the advisory committee and was intended to measure the effectiveness of the training and to provide continuous feedback for the improvement of all aspects of the training. This iterative process resulted in several adjustments to the delivery model while the cohorts were in process. The evaluation methods and analysis were designed to answer the following questions.

• How do the participant self-ratings on the outcomes change from pre-training to post-training assessment?  
• How do participant self-ratings on outcomes as post-training assessment compare to coaches’ ratings at the end of the cohort?  
• What were the participant satisfaction ratings of the individual training sessions?  
• Do the evaluation results indicate need for changes to the Building a Business curriculum and coaching model, trainer preparation and support, coach preparation and support, delivery model, and/or logistics and facilitation?
A mix of quantitative and qualitative data were collected before, during, and after each cohort. Sources of data included: self report surveys of outcomes by the participants; key outcomes ratings by coaches; training session evaluations by the participants; focus groups for participants, and focus groups with trainers and coaches.

**SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS**

From the voices of the participants, coaches and trainers who have taken part in the evaluation process, we have learned many positive things about Building a Business. Looking first at the content of the training, we have learned that the objectives are appropriate and are successfully achieved. The curriculum is seen as strong and relevant with two exceptions. The participants speak of a need for more information around the subjects of budget and finance, BOLI and workman’s comp, and curriculum models. Many of the materials and resources were found to be useful and were well-received by most of the participants. Some indicated that two of the books were of minor importance to the learning experience and could be dispensed with if budget issues suggested it. The major problem with materials was the binder provided to them at the beginning of their training. Participants found it unwieldy and generally not user-friendly. Many had developed alternative methods for organizing training materials so they would not have to struggle with the binder.

A review of the data related to the processes involved in the delivery of Building a Business reveals that the trainers were highly valued by the participants, and the participants appreciated having multiple trainers. Participants were very discerning in identifying trainers’ strengths and weaknesses and the attributes, skills, and abilities that contributed to the trainers’ effectiveness.

A review of the outcomes data at post-training suggests that participants in both cohorts made positive steps toward meeting outcomes. Overall average change, as self-reported by participants, was over one point for Cohort 1 and a bit under one point for Cohort 2. The scores were based on a 0- to 2-point scale, with 0 coded for the response, “I don’t have one,” 1 for the response “I have one but would like to improve it”; and 2 for the response “I have one that I like.”

The outcomes with the greatest percentage of change for Cohort 1 from the self-assessment data were:

- Family intake plan
- Quality improvement plan
- Professional development plan
- Professional involvement plan
- Risk management plan

The outcomes with greatest changes for Cohort 2 were:

- Written description of physical environments
- Health & safety improvement plan
- Mission statement
- Risk management plan
Self-ratings of Cohort 1 at post-training indicated that 100 percent of the participants had completed four of the outcomes, meaning that they rated them “I have one that I like.” The three bolded outcomes are key outcomes.

- **Mission statement** (changing an average of 0.750 point)
- **Philosophy statement** (changing an average of 0.733 point)
- Family intake plan (changing an average of 1.750 points)
- **Family policy handbook** (changing an average of 1.000 point)

Cohort 2 on average rated themselves a bit lower at post-training than Cohort 1. The outcomes with the highest average ratings for Cohort 2 were:

- **Mission statement**, with an average rating of 1.923, changing an average of 1.352
- **Written description of physical environment**, average rating 1.867, changing an average of 1.533
- **Family policy handbook**, average rating 1.857, changing an average of 0.990
- **Philosophy statement**, average rating 1.846, changing an average of 0.918

All four are key outcomes.

Coaches in both cohorts used a similar rating system at the end of the cohort with “no work” coded as 0; “partially accomplished” coded as 1; and “completed,” indicating that the criteria for the outcome had been fully accomplished, coded as 2. Coach data from the 11 key outcomes were compared to the participants’ self-ratings on the key outcomes. At post-training, the coaches’ ratings were in close agreement with participants’ post-rating averages, verifying the accuracy of participants’ self-perceptions about achievement of the key outcomes.

The data suggest that the training and coaching model is effective. Trainers were emphasizing the importance of the outcomes and helping participants explore the concepts and ways to accomplish the outcomes in the training. Coaches were working with the participants on a one-to-one basis giving technical assistance and feedback as participants were working to improve their own business documents and practices. The high degree of agreement between the coaches’ ratings and participants’ ratings in the key outcomes at post-training indicates clear communication between the coaches and the participants regarding the criteria for achieving these outcomes.

From the perspective of the participants’ satisfaction with the coaching process, some modifications are indicated. Although many liked their coaches personally and some felt they had benefitted from their support, they cited instances of miscommunication, unresponsiveness, or ineffective activities and interactions. Coaches also reported difficulties with the coaching component and suggested several possible actions to improve coordination, communication, and general effectiveness of the coaching process. It should be noted that modifications were made mid-way through the second cohort in response to feedback from Cohort 1 participant focus groups and the coach focus group.

Relationship development was another significant strength of the training from the perspectives of participants, trainers, and to some extent, coaches also. Participant suggested several alterations to schedules and activities to further enhance the relationship process.

Participants and trainers alike were generally positive in their assessment of the effectiveness of the logistical processes related to delivery of the training—the time, location, length of sessions, lodging, etc. This was true for both cohorts held in two separate locations.
Looking to the statistical data related to outcomes, the training was highly successful. However, the narrative data tells the story of difficulties encountered in the process of achieving the outcomes. These again relate to the roles of trainers vs. coaches and the communication around those roles. The participants’ accounts of the positive changes they have experienced, both personally and professionally stand as testament laudable to the success of Building a Business. The data also indicate the need for some modifications to further enhance the effectiveness of the training.

1. Trainers can make slight modification of content in a few sessions to respond to participants’ suggestions. More content on BOLI requirements, for example, should be included.

2. Coaching is a vital component of relationship-based professional development, which provided the conceptual framework for the delivery of Building a Business. However, it was not utilized to the fullest extent. The coaching and training processes need to be more closely aligned with the two roles re-imagined as a “training team.” Coaches attended the trainer orientation to the curriculum, for example, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content of the training. But trainers were not required to attend the coach training component. Perhaps if they did, trainers would have a clearer understanding of the coaches’ role, could more frequently emphasize the coaching process in the training sessions, and gain a more cohesive understanding of the collective emphasis on achieving outcomes. This will require sessions scheduled before the beginning of each training cohort for the organization and preparation of the trainers and coaches and will necessitate periodic gatherings and debriefings of the “training team” to confer on content and progress of the participants.

3. Coaching was effective in helping participants further define the outcomes and encouraging participants on a one-to-one basis to work toward reaching the outcomes. The high degree of agreement between coach ratings and participant post-training self-ratings suggest an alignment of opinions that likely arose from the one-on-one conferences and site visits. The coaching model appears to be viable; however, indications are that coaches need more opportunities to receive support and technical assistance throughout the process. The stronger linkages of the “training team” as envisioned above would help to accomplish this.

4. The 29 outcomes, while relevant to the development of a sound and sustainable family child care business, seem to be overwhelming in number to both participants and coaches. Paring them down to those most connected to the former Oregon Program of Quality (OPQ) standards and Oregon’s evolving Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) standards would help facilitate an increased focus for trainers, coaches, and participants.

5. Expectations around the production of outcomes must be more effectively communicated before any training or coaching commences. This might include description of the expectation in the application packets as well as a thorough orientation for participants, devoted to presenting the outcomes and answering questions about the outcomes, the coaching logs and the participant tracking journals and co-facilitated by the coaches and trainers for the cohort.
6. As standards for coaching and other technical assistance strategies are developed, they can be incorporated into the coaching model for this training curriculum. Participants will benefit from earning additional training hours for the time spent one-on-one with their coaches.

7. Trainers and coaches can be watchful for the need to refer participants for further training to gain more depth in other core knowledge categories, such as Learning Environments & Curriculum, where they could explore such topics as curriculum models. Trainers and coaches can end each training day with a moment for participants to reflect, plan, and share ideas about next steps for training that will further their professional knowledge.

8. The final recommendation is less extensive, but deserves consideration—modification of the binder. The participants offered some creative alternatives which deserve consideration.

This evaluation has found that Building a Business: Certified Family Child Care Management Training has been highly successful in meeting the needs of Oregon’s family child care community. As two focus group participants stated,

I just feel I am proud of myself for what I have accomplished. I didn’t realize what a big deal it was until I started thinking about it. (It) helps me view myself as a business owner and a professional early childhood business owner. (I have) pride in what I do and how I run my business. Being able to sit down and officially planning where I want to be in 2 years and 5 years—having an actual plan and not just “someday.”

Now I am seeing myself as a business owner. I have always thought of my professional development as how I spend my time in the classroom—now thinking of how I spend my time in my office. I like it. It’s opened my horizons. I am looking forward to getting a Director Credential (and) professional development plan. I’m surprised at what I’m looking at. But I see the value of all this now.

The program evaluation has been formative throughout its operation and has resulted in continuous improvement and fine-tuning of the curriculum and processes for delivery. Time and effort spent in addressing the modifications and improvements indicated by the findings will enhance further the effectiveness of “Building a Business.”

**REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**


Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education. (2008). Core Body of Knowledge for Oregon’s Childhood Care and Education Profession. Portland, Oregon: OCCD at Portland State University.

Teaching Research Institute at Western Oregon University. (2011). Oregon Program of Quality Portfolio.
