



REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.

Your Connection to Workforce Development

Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE)

Business Impacts Report

March 2010

Introduction

Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) project has provided the opportunity for multiple employers in the region with the same needs to come together and participate in a workforce development intervention funded by Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) via Commonwealth Corporation.

Sector Partners	Training Provider	Community Colleges	Institutions of Higher Education
Springfield Early Childhood & Education Partnership	Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc.	Holyoke Community College	American International College
Square One		Springfield Technical Community College	Bay Path College
Valley Opportunity Council			Cambridge College
			Our Lady of Elms College
			Springfield College – School of Human Services
			Westfield State College

The DECE education project has four goals:

- I. Reduce staff turnover,
- II. Increase the numbers of teachers engaging in credentialing and/or higher education opportunities,
- III. Increase the ability to train more staff in clusters, and
- IV. Increase the ability to meet staff qualifications for funding opportunities, and other opportunities that increase quality and teacher compensation

This Report focuses on the impact of the workforce intervention DECE staff have created a Measuring Business Impact tool (MBI) specifically for the DECE project to measure the project impact and record outcomes of the intended goals for incumbent workers and their companies engaged in training/education opportunities during the time period of August 2008-December-2009. The information provided will be utilized to provide initial baseline data and information for statistical purposes will be shared with funders, stake holders, and other interested parties.

The REB is documenting the findings on incumbent workers to provide critical data that will allow for creative workforce development interventions based on the needs of the employers and will benefit the incumbent employees to create sector innovation resulting in a strong workforce for the sector, the families, and the children serviced in the Commonwealth.

Additional surveys will be conducted in the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011 and will cover the time period of year two of the project.

Overview

The Report on Business Impacts for incumbent workers of the Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) project presents findings from a workforce development intervention from Early Childhood Education companies who referred their incumbent employees to attend industry aligned skills enhancement training and courses that were conducted based on flexible scheduling after work hours from August 2008 – December 2009.

The training opportunities and educational opportunities that prepared the incumbent employees were intentional to provide skill enhancement for present employment and future opportunities to climb the early childhood education career ladder.

Twenty companies (attachment A), represent one hundred and thirty one unduplicated incumbent employees. These companies responded to a survey (attachment B) which was conducted in the winter of 2009. The company participation rate was 80%.

The report will be available on the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. website www.rebhc.org, under the industry initiatives section on Early Childhood Education.

The Developing Early Childhood Educators is funded by the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund managed by Commonwealth Corporation. Matching in-kind funds are provided by Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation and other project partners.

Contact Information

For additional information on the Business Impacts Report or the Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) project, you may contact Rosemary Hernandez at 413-755-1377 or rhernandez@rebhc.org

For information on Commonwealth Corporation, please visit their web site at: www.commcorp.org

Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE)

Business Impacts Report

Description of the Early Childhood Education Cluster

Early Childhood Education has become increasingly more important to the economic development of Western Massachusetts and across the nation. As parents engage in employment and children grow to become productive citizens more and more we rely on Early Childhood Education programs to educate the children in the region, our state, and across the nation.

There is an absolute correlation between the educational levels of the Pre-K workforce and the quality of instruction provided to Pre-K students. Presently only (40) percent of the Massachusetts early childhood work force have attained a bachelor's degrees statewide, and only twenty-one (21) percent have attained an associate's degrees, in the state. New employment requirements are being proposed by the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) that require all educators have the appropriate skill set and education levels in early childhood education including work experience. DEEC has initiated the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) standards to promote a qualified workforce which signifies one aspect of High Quality Early Childhood Education.

The regional ECE companies struggle with training and educating their incumbent workers and hiring qualified staff to meet the department standards of quality. DECE employers are in partnership to train more staff in clusters and therefore find opportunities to build a market for the early childhood workforce to continue with their education.

The Workforce Development Intervention

The workforce development intervention that is described in this Report involved incumbent employees from Early Childhood Education companies voluntarily attended industry aligned skill enhancement courses conducted on a after work flexible schedule. There are various trainings and educational opportunities to obtain industry credentialing and to obtaining a higher education degree. The courses that were conducted fall into two categories to increase competencies and to provide opportunities for wage enhancement:

1. Training or college courses that lead to an industry recognized credential.
2. College credit courses that lead to the completion of a higher education degree.

The decision to conduct the training and courses was intentional based on employer and industry needs to acquire skills competencies for their present employment positions as well as future employment opportunities. In order to respond to the demands of the sector they need to maintain a flexible workforce that has the skills sets to move seamlessly to more advanced

education. In analyzing the impact of this workforce intervention, it is important to review the findings including the understandings of the employer's perspective that resulted in the Business Impact Ratings. The business impact reflects the evaluation of current skills competencies acquired by the employees from the employer perspective.

Baseline Data of Employer Cluster

Surveys were mailed out to all employers who had incumbent employees in a training or college courses and twenty employers responded. Baseline data is captured from the self reported Measuring Business Impact Incumbent Survey (see attachment B) by the cluster of employers who completed the survey. The intent is to have a shared understanding of the profile of the employers and the supply / demand needs. Center based employers are those who service preschool children, and they serve infant/toddler aged children between 3 months – 5 years old. The school age children are considered those who service children during out of school time. These children are between the ages of 5 -13 years old. Family Child Care provider's service mix aged children between the ages of 3 months and 13 years old. Family Child Care providers are considered business owners in their own homes. Family Child Care providers have anywhere from 1- 10 children with an approved assistant.

Licensed Enrollment Capacity

Center Based:	School Age:	Family Child Care:
3607	1043	97
Total Children Serviced 4747		

Staff:

FTE	PT	Per Diem
746	89	84
82%	9%	9%
Total self reported employer workforce: 919		

Staff Qualifications:

Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
153	198	3
16%	21%	1%
Department of Early Education & Care (DEEC) Credentialed:		496 (53%)
Adult Basic Education / English as a Second Language needs:		56 (6%)

38% of the total workforce cluster has a higher education degree. 53% of the total workforce cluster has a DEEC credential issued by the State of Massachusetts. 6% of the total workforce cluster needs ABE or ESL assistance that is preventing such employees from getting a State credentialing as reported by the employers. This number varies dependent on who is responding. The WCTF Participant Registration Form has a field that asks each participant if they had Limited English skills. 21 % of respondents indicated they have limited English skills. The REB will continue to monitor the ABE and ESL needs of the participants. It has been our experience with this intervention that many participants needed some form of ABE or ESL work prior to credentialing or course credit work. In fact, we provided limited remedial work as permitted by the structure of the funds available since we did not anticipate the large volume of need. We offered 5 participants a reading course and conducted a bilingual fast track that offers participants the opportunity to transition their learning from Spanish to English.

Employment in the Field:

Openings in the past 12 months:	40
Plan to hire in the next 6 months:	36
% of staff vacancies due to unqualified applicants:	25-50%: 9 51-75%: 7 75% or more: 0

The 20 employers surveyed indicated they had 40 openings in various job categories during 2009, however due to lower enrollment and unqualified applicants, were not able to fill all the positions. 16 employers reported that up to 75% of those who apply to employment vacancies are unqualified, particularly at the entry level Teacher category. Once project participants complete their training and receive State credentialing, they will have the opportunity to apply for vacant positions depending on the title and education required for such openings.

Business Impacts Levels

This Report is using the business impact levels derived from the work of Donald Kirkpatrick¹ to provide basic information relative to the impact of a workforce development intervention on the worker efficiency. This analysis is also guided by the measuring business impacts requirements of the Commonwealth Corporation². The following is a summary of the levels measured.

Level of Impact	Description
I	Employers and participants satisfaction with workforce development intervention.
II	Attainment, in concrete terms, of specific skills or knowledge of participants, or changes in participants' attitudes.
III	Changes in employees behaviors as a result of the programmatic interventions.
IV	Change in business practices and outcomes.

Business Impact Findings

Key definitions:

Business Impact Rating:	<i>1= Significant Impact - 4=Minimum Impact</i>
Sources:	<i>SR = Supervisors/Home Visitor Report SC= Supervisor's / Home Visitor Comments PE= Performance Evaluation</i>
Degree of Impact:	<i>% Increase</i>
No. of Companies: 20	No. Incumbent Employees: 131

Below is a combination of the levels of impact as indicated by the works of Kirkpatrick and the responses of the employers to the Business Impact Survey issued in the fall of 2009 (attachment B).

Business Impact Objective	Business Impact Rating 1 Sig. ↔ 4 Min.	Sources SR SC PE	Degree of Impact			
			% of Increase			
			1-5	6-10	11-19	20+
Level I						
1. Increase Employee Stability (Retention, Turnover)	2.40	7 4 8	1			6
Level II						
2. Increase Communication with team members	2.45	5 5 9	1	1	1	7
a. communicates effectively with Supervisors	2.40	5 5 9	1	1		8
b. strong working relationship with team members	2.10	4 5 8	1	1	1	6
3. Improve Employee Attitude, Motivation and Work Habits	2.21	4 6 8	1			8
4. Increase understanding of child development principles to include physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and aesthetic development in teaching practices	2.15	5 3 9	1	2		7
a. develops comprehensive lesson plans	2.20	5 3 9	1	1		7
b. interacts with children more frequently	1.90	5 3 9	1			9
c. demonstrates cultural competence	2.25	5 3 9	1	2		8
Level III						
5. Improved performance on establishing and maintaining positive collaborative relationships with families	2.35	4 4 8	1	1		8
6. Incremental increase in the quality of instruction being presented to children	2.00	4 4 8	1	1		8
7. Increase communication effectively with other professionals and agencies that support children's development, learning and well-being	2.30	6 3 7	1	1		6
Level IV						
8. Increase in student enrollment	3.00	4 3 6	1	1		7
9. Increase wages of selected participants	2.27	4 4 5	1	2		5
10. Increase probability for meeting the Accreditation and/or State Funding requirements i.e. UPK/ QRIS	1.78					

Analysis of Business Impact Findings

The rating for Objective # 1 in *Level I* is significant at this point in the project. The supervisor's comments appear to suggest that employee stability, although not a persistent issue in the responding companies is being positively impacted by the intervention. The initial degree of impact is favorable as it relates to staff turnover. It will be important to continue to monitor this objective in the intended future evaluations.

The sources used to determine the Report objectives are the supervisor or home visitor reports, comments, and the employer performance evaluations. *Level II* responses indicate a significant increase in the participant's competencies and record changes in the employee's attitudes. The two most significant changes are the levels of interaction with the children and the strong working relationships with team members. Most employers report in Level II the degrees of impact have been greater than 20% in correlation with skills, knowledge, and directly changing the participants work attitude.

Objective #4 in Level II measures the participant's transference of skills into the classroom. The impact reported by the supervisors clearly indicates the impact the intervention is having on the educators. The correlation in objective #4 and # 6 coincide with the importance of measuring the skills competency of educators.

Level III, responses to Objectives 5, 6, 7, speaks to the changes in behaviors as a result of the programmatic intervention. The data indicates significant changes in the quality of instruction to the children. This objective clearly speaks to the project goal IV to increase the quality of programming. The significant changes clearly outline the impact of the intervention directly on the quality of the programs offered to the children serviced.

At this point, Objective 10 in *Level IV* has the most significant increase which directly correlates with the project goal IV indicating the intervention is aligned with employers to provide opportunities to increase the quality of their businesses and opportunities to enhance teacher compensation. The correlation of objective 9 and 10 will be significant as we continue to measure the impact of this workforce development intervention.

Objective 8 in *Level IV* at this point of the project has the least significance. It will take time to measure the impact teacher education has on student enrollment. At this time we are satisfied with the impact.

The Business Impacts are on target with the project goals the ratings through out the business objectives indicate there is a strong relationship with teacher skill set and programmatic increase on quality.

Observations and Challenges Going Forward

- The REB believes in the importance to continue to measure the impact businesses acquire through this workforce intervention. The voices of the employer will continue to shape and measure the level of this workforce intervention.
- The workforce development is aligned with the needs of the industry and the State requirements on the education of the ECE workforce. The initial data indicates there have been significant impacts to the employers and the skill set of the employees.
- The REB will continue to carefully monitor the anticipated changes to determine the depth and breadth of change created by the workforce intervention.
- The REB will continue to engage businesses in data collection on the business impacts by providing two additional opportunities to report on the significance of this workforce intervention.

Conclusion

The March 2010 Business Impact Report of the Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) project has provided some important baseline data on the impact of this workforce development intervention. The analysis of the findings is intended to provide guidance that will inform our decision making to insure that the project attains its goals.

The REB will continue to use the project as an opportunity to develop strategies informed by the employers to create interventions that will position the Early Childhood Education sector in Hampden County to strengthen their businesses, expand their current workforce, retain the existing workforce, and be a significant contributor to the economic development of the Region and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The data recorded in this Report will be communicated to Commonwealth Corporation and other interested stakeholders.

***Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE)
Business Impacts Report 1***

Participating Companies

- A Brighter Future
- Arbors Kids LLC.
- Armory Square Child Care Inc.
- Chicopee Child Development Center
- Child Development FCC System
- Children's Corner Day Care
- Clarendon FCC System
- Early Childhood Centers of Greater Springfield, Inc.
- Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start
- Jewish Community Center Springfield
- New North Citizens Council
- Springfield Partners for Community Action New Beginnings
- Make Way for Ducklings
- Mass Mutual Children' House
- Miss Diane's Family Child Care
- New Creation Child Care
- Square One
- Trinity Nursery & Kindergarten
- Valley Opportunity Council
- YMCA of Greater Springfield

**Developing Early Childhood Educators
Measuring Business Impact: Developing A Plan
Incumbent Survey #1**

Business Name: _____ **Contact Person:** _____

Employees: _____, _____, _____, _____

Baseline information:

What is your license /enrolled capacity?

Center Based: _____

School Age: _____

Family Child Care: _____

How many staff do you have? FTE _____, PT _____, Per diem _____.

What are the staff qualifications?

- How many staff have a Bachelors degree? _____
- How many staff have an Associates degree? _____
- How many staff have Department of Early Education & Care State Credential? _____
- How many staff that you are aware of have Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language needs that impede them from achieving a State Credential or Higher Education? _____

How many staff vacancies have you had over the past 12 months? _____

How many staff do you anticipate hiring in the next 6 months? _____

When you have staff vacancies, what percent of people that apply are not qualified?

25%-50% _____ 51%-75% _____ Over 75% _____

Business Impacts:

Using the Business Impact Rating from 1-4 (1=Significant Impact to 4= Minimum Impact), please rate the impact on your employees overall job performance as a result of their voluntary participation in the fall 2008 and/or spring 2009 and/or summer 2009 credentialing/higher education courses funded by the WCTF, and sponsored by the REB-DECE, and the value added to your overall business operations of this workforce development initiative.

Please select one or more of the following sources that serve as a basis for rating for each Business Impact Objective. **1= Supervisors/ Home visitor Report (SR), 2= Supervisors/ Home visitor Comments (SC), 3= Performance Evaluation (PE)**. Please use a separate sheet to add comments.

Business Impact Objective	Business Impact Rating				Sources			Degree of Impact
	Sig.	-----	Min.		SR	SC	PE	
1. Increase Employee Stability (Retention, Turnover)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
2. Increase Communication with team members	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
a. communicates effectively with Supervisors	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
b. strong working relationship with team members	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
3. Improve Employee Attitude, Motivation and Work Habits	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
4. Increase understanding of child development principles to include physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and aesthetic development in teaching practices	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
a. develops comprehensive lesson plans	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
b. interacts with children more frequently	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
c. demonstrates cultural competence	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
5. Improved performance on establishing and maintaining positive collaborative relationships with families	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
6. Incremental increase in the quality of instruction being presented to children	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
7. Increase communication effectively with other professionals and agencies that support children’s development, learning and well-being	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase

8. Increase in student enrollment	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
9. Increase wages of selected participants	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	___ % Increase
10. Increase probability for meeting the Accreditation and/or State Funding requirements i.e. UPK/ QRIS	1	2	3	4	Comment		Comment	

As a result of your employees' participation in this workforce development initiative please describe, what are the most important changes that have occurred in your early childhood program that has increased the quality of the services you provide?_____

What should we consider when developing future skills enhancement courses for your employees, please identify any specific areas that would positively impact your early childhood operations?

This survey has been developed using the business impact levels and research on high quality education derived from:

¹ Evaluating Training Programs, Kirkpatrick, D., American Society for Training and Development, 1975.

² Business Impact Premier: Speaking the Language of Employers, Commonwealth Corporation, 2007.

National Association for the Education of Young Children NAEYC: <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/pursuing/candreq>

Report on the Cost of High Quality Early Education in Massachusetts Fall 2006:

http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/1publications/0610_RAWG_Report.pdf