



REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.

Your Connection to Workforce Development

Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE)

Business Impacts Report II

Second Edition

June 2011

Introduction

The 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. This is the second edition of the Business Impacts Survey. The first edition is available on the REB website address:

http://www.rebhc.org/uploadedfiles/dece_business_report_1_march_2010.pdf

| 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 | Community Education Project | 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 is a follow up to the impact of the workforce intervention. DECE used the same Measuring Business Impact (MBI) survey as the first one expect for one added question “*is your program a NAEYC accredited program*” (See Attachment A, Pg.11, first question under the heading Baseline information). The information provided is used for data and information for statistical purposes to be shared with funders, stakeholders, 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 their incumbent employees, resulting in a more technically competent incumbent workforce that will directly impact the quality of the education being provided to young children.

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 – June 2011.

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.

Eighteen companies (attachment B), represent one hundred and thirty one unduplicated incumbent employees serviced through this project. These companies responded to survey (attachment A) which was conducted in the spring of 2011. The company participation rate was 75%.

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 Second Edition

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, we rely more on Early Childhood Education programs to educate the children.

Since our last survey report in March 2010, our employer partners have specified the need to hire employees that meet the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) certification and/or have attained college degrees. The Department of Early Education and Care has launched its Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) which starts to plan how to increase the number competent workers in the field. Massachusetts QRIS states “Research indicates that the workforce engaged in early childhood education must have formalized training in early childhood education and content knowledge in order to support program quality and impact child outcomes. Ongoing professional development that links to the classroom activities is related to program improvement and child outcomes are directly affected by the quality of their experiences in the classroom.” For more information on the Massachusetts QRIS system please visit the EEC web page: www.eec.state.ma.us.

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 and to encourage their 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 providers who voluntarily attended industry aligned skill enhancement courses conducted on an after work time schedule. There are a variety of training and educational opportunities available to assist employees to obtain industry credentialing and to obtain a higher education degree. The courses that were conducted fall into two categories:

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.

The trainings specifically offered were:

Child Development Associate National Certificate (79) that lead to State Credentialing as indicated by the State of Massachusetts

Courses that lead to Teacher (75) - Lead Teacher (22) – Director (31) Certification as indicated by the State of Massachusetts

Courses that lead to either an Associates or Bachelors Degree (20)

Baseline Data of Employer Cluster

Surveys were mailed out to all employers who had incumbent employees in training or college courses. Eighteen employers responded to the survey. . The following is a breakdown of the provider agencies that received the business impacts survey:

1. Center based employers are those who service preschool children, and they serve infant/toddler aged children between 3 months – 5 years old.
2. The school age programs are considered those who service children during out of school time. These children are between the ages of 5 -13 years old.
3. 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 any where from 1- 10 children with an approved assistant.

Baseline data is captured from the self reported Measuring Business Impact Incumbent Survey (see attachment A) by the employers who completed the survey. The intent is to have a shared understanding of the profile of the employers and the supply / demand needs

Licensed Enrollment Capacity

| Center Based: | School Age: | Family Child Care: |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| 1943 | 1051 | 16 |
| Total Children Serviced 3010 | | |
| Is your program NAEYC accredited? Yes 40% No 60% | | |

The number of children serviced indicates these are mostly from center based pre-school programs. We notice from the last survey the number of children has folded at least by half. Even the total number of program respondents is different from out last survey. Some employers have expressed the need to serve fewer children due to the economy and the lack of qualified staff.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation practice requires employers to self evaluate the quality of their programs. One strong indicator noted by NAEYC is the workforce qualifications. It specifically requires employers to have at least one bachelor degreed teacher in each classroom. The NAEYC accreditation is also part of the QRIS system to increase the quality of the ECE programs.

Staff:

| FTE | PT | Per Diem |
|--|------------|-----------------|
| 249 | 57 | 15 |
| 76% | 18% | 6% |
| Total self reported employer workforce: 321 | | |

The total number of employer workforce is one third compared to our last year survey. The twenty companies that completed the survey in March of 2010 reported 919 staff.

Staff Qualifications:

| Associate's Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Master's Degree |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 78 | 127 | 2 |
| 24% | 40% | 1% |
| Department of Early Education & Care (DEEC) Credentialed: | | 258 (80%) |
| Adult Basic Education / English as a Second Language needs: | | 48 (15%) |

Since the last survey, we noticed a significant increase in the staff qualifications. We notice that in the Associates and Bachelors degrees reported there is an increase in staff with higher education degrees. We also see an increase in the number of staff with state credentials. Some employers have mentioned the need to change their hiring practices to increase the quality of their programs they must look for candidates with credentialing and/or higher education degrees. Employers have indicated going through the process of Business Impacts has increased their awareness of the composition of their workforce. Please do keep in mind the workforce sampled in this round is smaller compared to the first survey sample.

We do see a 9% increase in the ABE/ESL needs reported in this survey compared to the last BI report of 6%. 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 has responded as we can to this need by adding a training partner Community Education Project in Holyoke that specifically offers training in English remedial work. It has been our experience with this intervention that participants needed some form of ABE or ESL work prior to credentialing or course credit work.

We provided limited remedial work as permitted by the structure of the funds available. 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. An additional 8 participants started their remedial program with the Community Education Project.

Employment in the Field:

| | |
|--|---|
| Openings in the past 12 months: | 107 |
| Plan to hire in the next 6 months: | 71 |
| % of staff vacancies due to unqualified applicants: | 25-50%: 5 51-75%: 8 75% or more: 5 |

The 18 employers surveyed indicated they had 107 openings in various job categories during 2010; this number is greater than last survey. Employers report they have projected 71 openings in the next six months. Employers report staff vacancies are due to unqualified applicants that apply for open vacancies. Many employers have changed their hiring practices to expect candidates that have a higher education degree or are close to completing a higher education degree to meet the QRIS and NAEYC accreditation requirements.

Overall, the baseline data indicates the quality of staff has increased compared to the first sampling. Employers are more aware of their workforce qualifications. There is an increase in higher education degrees and EEC credentialing. The survey indicates there still is work to be done with the incumbent workforce and the next round of candidates to be hired. Increased demands from QRIS and NAEYC accreditation are changing the landscape of the early childhood workforce to increase a skilled workforce to achieve high quality early childhood education programs.

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: 18 | 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 winter of 2010 (attachment A).

| Business Impact Objective | Business Impact Rating 1 Sig. ↔ 4 Min. | Sources SR SC PE | Degree of Impact | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|------------------|------|-------|-----|
| | | | % of Increase | | | |
| | | | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-20 | 21+ |
| Level I | | | | | | |
| 1. Increase Employee Stability (Retention, Turnover) | 2.4 | 3 9 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | |
| Level II | | | | | | |
| 2. Increase Communication with team members | 2.5 | 2 8 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | |
| a. communicates effectively with Supervisors | 2.1 | 7 11 | 1 | 3 | 6 | |
| b. strong working relationship with team members | 2.0 | 7 11 | 2 | 1 | 5 | |
| 3. Improve Employee Attitude, Motivation and Work Habits | 1.6 | 11 7 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |
| 4. Increase understanding of child development principles to include physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and aesthetic development in teaching practices | 1.9 | 7 11 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |
| a. develops comprehensive lesson plans | 1.6 | 2 7 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| b. interacts with children more frequently | 1.9 | 2 7 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| c. demonstrates cultural competence | 2.1 | 2 7 9 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Level III | | | | | | |
| 5. Improved performance on establishing and maintaining positive collaborative relationships with families | 2.2 | 1 8 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 6. Incremental increase in the quality of instruction being presented to children | 1.9 | 3 7 8 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| 7. Increase communication effectively with other professionals and agencies that support children’s development, learning and well-being | 2.4 | 1 8 9 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Level IV | | | | | | |
| 8. Increase in student enrollment | 2.9 | 6 7 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 9. Increase wages of selected participants | 2.25 | 4 5 9 | 3 | 2 | | 5 |
| 10. Increase probability for meeting the Accreditation and/or State Funding requirements i.e. UPK/ QRIS | 1.79 | | | | | |

Analysis of Business Impact Findings

The rating for Objective # 1 in *Level I* indicates employment stability is at a consistent level. 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 degree of impact is favorable as it relates to staff turnover. The current rating is consistent with the first survey.

Level II responses continue to indicate a significant increase in the participant's competencies and record changes in the employee's attitudes. In level II every response had a greater impact than in the first survey results. Overall the data stays consistent with the previous survey there is an impact on employee performance in the classroom.

Objective #4 A in Level II had the most impact. The question relates to the participants understanding of developing comprehensive lesson plans. Next follows the question regarding interacting with children more frequently. The set of questions and responses indicate the workforce intervention had a significant impact on the transference of skills and knowledge to the classroom and in the instruction with children. Employers reported the changes in their workforce attitude and motivation correlating to their work habits.

Level III, responses to Objectives 5, 6, 7, speaks to the changes in behaviors as a result of the programmatic intervention. The data stays consistent with the last report on the impact of 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* continues to show significant impact 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. Some employers have shared the difficulties of increased wages in these tough economic times however the data shows there is consistency in the increase wages from the employer perspective.

The REB is satisfied with the impact at this point, and will be interested in continuing to provide reports disseminating business intelligence that can promote the early childhood workforce strengths and challenges.

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 data indicates there have been significant impacts to the employers programs and the skill set of the employees.
- The REB will continue to work with early childhood education employers to determine the depth and breadth of change created by the workforce intervention.

Conclusion

The Business Impact Report Second Edition of the Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) project has provided some important data on the impact of this workforce development intervention and the intended project goals accomplishment. We will continue to use this component of the project as an opportunity to develop strategies, interventions, and programs that will position the early childhood industry to strengthen the businesses of Hampden County.

The REB continues 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.

Attachment A

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

Employee: _____

Baseline information:

Is your program a NAEYC accredited? ___ yes _____ no

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 |

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| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---------|----------------|
| 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:

- Evaluating Training Programs, Kirkpatrick, D., American Society for Training and Development, 1975.
- Business Impact Primer: 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

Attachment B

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Participating Companies

- *Acorn Learning Center*
- *Armory Square Child Care Inc.*
- *A Brighter Future*
- *Chicopee Child Development Center*
- *Child Development FCC System*
- *Early Childhood Centers of Greater Springfield, Inc.*
- *Jewish Community Center Springfield*
- *Make Way for Ducklings*
- *Mass Mutual Children' House*
- *Miss Diane's Family Child Care*
- *MSPCC*
- *New North Citizens Council*
- *New Creation Child Care*
- *Square One*
- *The Kids Place – Springfield, West Springfield, & Holyoke sites*
- *Trinity Nursery & Kindergarten*
- *Valley Opportunity Council*
- *YMCA of Greater Springfield*