



# New Hampshire Child Care Business Improvement Project Final Report 2023-2024

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***Mission Statement:*** *The mission of Child Care Accelerate is to partner with Child Care Providers to optimize their business model through strategic relationships and tools for sustainability.*

***Vision Statement:*** *The vision of Child Care Accelerate is of well-equipped Child Care Providers that offer accessible and affordable services to meet the demand in their communities, support future leaders, and fuel our economy.*

***Child Care Accelerate was made possible with support from the State of New Hampshire, Department of Health and Human Services.***

# Report Table of Contents

## Executive Summary

### Child Care Business Improvement Project Introduction

### Recruiting and Inviting Eligible Child Care Providers

#### Marketing Strategy & Outreach

#### Application and Screening Process

#### Participating Providers & Eligible Locations

#### Participating Child Care Center Location Map

### Data Profile of Interested Child Care Providers

#### Intake Data Summary

#### New Hampshire Child Care Program License Categories

#### New Hampshire Child Care Regions

#### Provider Reasons for Applying

### After Acceptance: Child Care Accelerate Program Journey

#### Onboarding and Ongoing Program Milestones

#### Coaching Session Outline

### Child Care Accelerate Assessments

#### Getting To Know Your Business Survey

#### Business Health Assessment

#### Site Visit - Facility Assessment

#### New Hampshire Contractor Database

### Coaching Focus Areas and Relationship

### Data Analysis of Coaching Relationship

#### Coaching Data Summary

### Reassessment: A Business Health Assessment After Coaching

#### Business Health Assessment Score 1 & Score 2 Chart

#### Exit Call Feedback

#### Reassessment Data Summary

### Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Program

#### Authorized Grant Expense Areas

#### New Hampshire Businesses Included in OTS Grant Applications

#### OTS Grant Fund Data Summary

### Ongoing Support

#### On-Demand Professional Development Series

#### Resource Guide

#### Shared Services Network

#### Business Resource & Lender Databases

#### Statewide Chambers of Commerce Map

#### Statewide Lender Database

### Systemic Recommendations and Opportunities for Ongoing Research

#### For Child Care Providers and Center Leadership

For Child Care Business Ecosystem and Industry Stakeholders

For Government Agencies and Elected Officials

SEED Staff Recommendations

Child Care Business Advisory Committee Feedback & Recommendations

Mentor Feedback & Recommendations

References

## Appendix File Directory

1. Intake Form- [Child Care Accelerate Intake Form.pdf](#)
2. Intake Form Provider Reasons for Applying-  
[Child Care Accelerate Participation Answers.pdf](#)
3. Getting to Know Your Business Survey (GTKYB)- [Getting to Know Your Business Survey.pdf](#)
4. Business Health Assessment (BHA) and Reassessment- [Business Health Assessment.pdf](#)
5. Site Visit Facility Assessment- [Business Health Assessment Site Visit Assessment.pdf](#)
6. Business Health Assessment Provider Goals and Accomplishments-  
[ST LT Goals Accomplishments.pdf](#)
7. Post Session Survey Provider Aggregate Responses-  
[Post Session Survey Aggregate Responses .pdf](#)
8. Reassessment Goals Combined- [Reassessment ST LT Goals.pdf](#)
9. OTS Grant Fund Overview- [Opportunities to Succeed Grant Overview.pdf](#)
10. OTS Grant Fund Proposed Vendor & Business List-  
[Child Care Accelerate OTS Vendor List.pdf](#)
11. Marketing Files- [Child Care Accelerate Program Marketing Appendix.pdf](#)
12. Program Staff & Mentor Bios- [Child Care Accelerate Program Staff & Mentor Bios.pdf](#)

# Executive Summary

High-quality child care programs provide children with safe, developmentally appropriate environments to support positive growth. Access to quality child care allows parents and caregivers to remain in the workforce, achieve economic stability, and contribute to the economy—making child care facilities an important component of our nation’s infrastructure. Child care is a burdensome expense for most families, and the industry struggles to recruit and retain employees due to low wages and high operational costs.<sup>1</sup>

Staffing shortages, high employee turnover, high operational costs and low profit margins are among the industry’s main concerns, resulting in a serious ripple effect that touches all facets of the sector. Despite the critical importance of the child care industry, which employs nearly 1.1 million workers and permits millions of parents and caregivers to earn a living, it remains severely underfunded and undervalued.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of Treasury describes the industry as a market failure that demands sustainable public investment to remain operational.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike public schools, which are primarily funded by state and local governments, privately-run Child Care Centers—Centers that are not run by government agencies—do not have access to this same funding. Rather, these Centers can apply for grants, of which they must be evaluated and accepted. Each state has its own pool of funds allocated to child care and competition for funding is high. Funding is not consistent and changes from year to year based on availability. As a result, Providers rely primarily on private resources, such as tuition and donations, to sustain operating costs. Many Centers are forced to steadily raise their rates, which continuously compromises access for many families. Families must designate an average of 13% of their household incomes to afford child care; a steep cost that is unmanageable for a great deal of them.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the annual cost of Center-based child care for toddlers in New Hampshire was estimated at \$12,496 in 2022. The cost totaled 31% of the annual income for single-mother households and 9% of the annual income for married-couple-with-children households in the state. Additionally, 14% of families experienced job changes that year due to issues with child care.<sup>5</sup>

Without reliable child care, it is difficult for parents or caregivers to participate in the workforce, especially women. In New Hampshire 75.8% of women ages 25-34 were active in the workforce in 2024; a 10% reduction from the start of the pandemic. As a result, businesses in New Hampshire suffered from a reduced pool of qualified workers and the ripple effects of decreased consumer spending and higher rates of employee turnover.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The State of Child Care in New Hampshire: End of One-Time Federal Investments May Reduce Industry Stability. (2024, February 2). New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://nhfpi.org/resource/the-state-of-child-care-in-new-hampshire-end-of-one-time-federal-investments-may-reduce-industry-stability/>

<sup>2</sup> Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE). (2024). Child Care Sector Jobs - Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/brief/child-care-sector-jobs-bls-analysis/>

<sup>3</sup> THE ECONOMICS OF CHILD CARE SUPPLY IN THE UNITED STATES. (2021, September). U.S. Department of the Treasury. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> D’Amico, J., Khairunnisa, N., Mijares, C., & VanOrman, A. (2024, June 10). 2024 KIDS COUNT Data Book. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/2024-kids-count-data-book>

<sup>6</sup> Id.

Despite the rising cost of child care, the average salary for a child care worker in New Hampshire remains less than \$12 per hour in 2024. Low wages combined with few pathways to education, training, and advancement force many child care professionals to seek work elsewhere. Since 2019, at least 42 licensed state facilities have closed due to staffing shortages and rising operational costs. Widespread closures left more than 21,000 children of working families without access to licensed child care facilities in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Lack of funding and focus became apparent in 2018, but significantly worsened during the pandemic and has yet to fully recover. In 2018, the sector suffered a \$57 billion loss in wages, income, and productivity; in 2020, this figure more than doubled to \$122 billion.<sup>7</sup> Seemingly overnight, a large portion of the country became a “child care desert,” defined as a small geographic area home to more than 50 children under five years old but without a licensed Child Care Center, or so few licensed centers that the population of children exceeds available spots by threefold.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the pandemic, 16,000 Child Care Centers across 37 states closed their doors, representing a 9% overall reduction to an already unstable industry.<sup>9</sup> From February to April 2020 alone, 370,000 jobs, more than one-third of all industry positions, were also lost.<sup>10</sup> Unable to afford a workable living, an additional 120,000 professionals left child care for better-paying jobs between January 2020 and January 2022.<sup>11</sup>

In New Hampshire, where the Child Care Accelerate business coaching program was initiated, a family’s income must be at or below 85% of the state median income to qualify for child care scholarships. For a family of two—a single parent and a child—this amount translates to less than \$72,193, and for a family of three, it is less than \$89,180.<sup>12</sup> Taking into account that roughly \$14,000 and \$20,000 of these respective salaries go toward taxes, and the average cost of living in New Hampshire was about \$4,727 per month in 2023, not much is left for child care—only \$1,469 for a family of two and \$10,396 for the family of three.<sup>13</sup> The average cost of child care in the state was estimated at \$17,250 for an infant and \$16,007 for a toddler in 2023.<sup>14</sup> Though indicative of one state, it reflects the obstacles faced by many families in need of child care nationwide.

The high cost of child care is majorly due to high labor costs. Child care is a labor-intensive industry. To provide high-quality care, Providers must employ educated staff. Nonetheless, Child Care Centers struggle to offer competitive salaries while still managing operational costs due to already slim-profit

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<sup>7</sup> Malik, R. (2018, December 6). America’s Child Care Deserts in 2018. Center for American Progress. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/americas-child-care-deserts-2018>

<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> Catalyzing Growth: Using Data to Change Child Care. (2022). Child Care Aware. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care-2022>

<sup>10</sup> Id.

<sup>11</sup> Mader, J. (2023, August 24). A wave of child care center closures is coming as funding dries up. The Hechinger Report. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <http://hechingerreport.org/a-wave-of-child-care-center-closures-is-coming-as-funding-dries-up>

<sup>12</sup> New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Eligibility to be Expanded in 2024, Provider Reimbursement Rates Increased - New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. (2024, January 19). NH Fiscal Policy Institute. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://nhfpi.org/blog/new-hampshire-child-care-scholarship-eligibility-to-be-expanded-in-2024-provider-reimbursement-rates-increased/>

<sup>13</sup> Personal Consumption Expenditures by State, 2021 | U.S. (2022, October 6). Bureau of Economic Analysis. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/personal-consumption-expenditures-state-2021>

<sup>14</sup> Annual Price of 2023 Child Care for Two Granite State Children Under Five Averaged Nearly \$32,000 - New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. (2024, May 15). NH Fiscal Policy Institute. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://nhfpi.org/blog/annual-price-of-2023-child-care-for-two-granite-state-children-under-five-averaged-nearly-32000/>

margins.<sup>15</sup> Depending on state regulations, Providers must maintain a certain staff-to-child ratio. For example, Bluff's Little Thinkers in Sioux City, Iowa, is required to have 25 people on staff to manage 72 children; a ratio much higher than in other industries, such as foodservice, retail, and customer service.<sup>16</sup> Slim profit margins discourage prospective workers, which influences the high rate of employee turnover and the decreased labor force entering child care. The average child care worker currently earns \$13/hr.<sup>17</sup> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average weekly industry earnings were 54% below the national average in third-quarter 2023—\$609 compared to \$1,328—and is the 12th lowest-ranking occupation in regards to annual salary.<sup>18</sup> In 2022, the child care industry had an employee turnover rate that was 65% higher than most other jobs.<sup>19</sup> Many Providers must choose between losing families and suffering decreased enrollment, or maintaining tuition rates while risking losing staff and cutting back costs even further. Aside from labor, operational costs include rent and/or mortgage, utilities, maintenance, internet and phone service, office supplies, educational materials, permits, food, and more.<sup>20</sup> Many Providers cannot afford to make drastic changes to their operational budgets or to implement upgrades to their facilities, even if these developments are much-needed.

While the rising costs of child care make these programs unfeasible for some families, and even cause some parents to leave the workforce, it can have detrimental effects on children. Mental, emotional, and social effects of exposure to high-quality care that is bolstered by an age-appropriate curriculum is major, particularly during a child's formative years; a period marked by rapid brain development. Early child care prepares children to enter elementary school, which is facilitated in a supportive, enriching, and nurturing environment. Children who participate in early child care are known to have superior cognitive and social developmental outcomes.<sup>21</sup> Benefits are particularly evident in regards to school readiness in reading, writing, and mathematics skills, as well as cognitive, social, and language development.<sup>22</sup> The impact of early child care in these aspects are especially notable for children from low-income families and/or who reside in low-income areas, dual language learners, and children with disabilities, who benefit from exposure to inclusive classrooms and learning experiences.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup> Melillo, G. (2023, February 12). What's behind the US's worsening child care crisis? The Hill. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from

<https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/education/3852987-whats-behind-the-uss-worsening-child-care-crisis/>

<sup>16</sup> Douglas, S., & Gonzalez, S. (2023, February 3). Why daycare is so expensive, but workers are paid too little : Planet Money. NPR. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1153931108>

<sup>17</sup> McLean, C., Austin, L. J.E., Whitebook, M., & Olson, K. (2021). Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/02/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2020.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Id.

<sup>19</sup> Fee, K. D. (2024, January 19). Using Worker Flows to Assess the Stability of the Early Childcare and Education Workforce, 2010-2022. Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.clevelandfed.org/publications/cd-reports/2024/20240119-childcare-and-education-workforce>

<sup>20</sup> Workman, S. (2018, February 14). Where Does Your Child Care Dollar Go? Center for American Progress. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-dollar-go/>

<sup>21</sup> Schoch, A. D., Gerson, C. S., Halle, T., & Bredeson, M. (2023, August). Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence. The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/%232023-226%20Benefits%20from%20ECE%20Highlight%20508.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Lowry, L. (2012). Does child care make a difference to children's development? The Hanen Centre. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Does-child-care-make-a-difference-to-childrens-de.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> Schoch, A. D., Gerson, C. S., Halle, T., & Bredeson, M. (2023, August). Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence. The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/%232023-226%20Benefits%20from%20ECE%20Highlight%20508.pdf>

long-term impact of high-quality child care extends into kindergarten and possibly to middle school, high school, and beyond.<sup>24</sup>

To help Providers recover after the pandemic, the government issued the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in March 2021, also known as the American Rescue Plan or the COVID-19 Stimulus Package. ARPA allocated \$39 billion for child care, of which \$24 billion was designated for Child Care Stabilization grants and \$15 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). More than 225,000 Child Care Centers relied on this funding to help with operational costs, including rent and utilities, wages, materials, and sanitation, and played a critical role in enabling parents to continue working.<sup>25</sup> The impact of these funds touched more than 10 million children. Nonetheless, problems rose immediately for Centers in states that did not allocate funds beyond the American Rescue Plan. Without this critical government funding, a total of 70,000 Child Care Centers are projected to close.<sup>26</sup> New Hampshire was one of 11 states nationwide that dedicated additional funds to Child Care Center stabilization projects; these states included Alaska, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Vermont, and Washington.<sup>27</sup>

Through this funding allocation, the state of New Hampshire designed the Child Care Strengthening Plan with the intent to build capacity, strengthen the workforce, create dependability for parents, match supply and demand, and improve quality<sup>28</sup>. Unfortunately, many of New Hampshire's child care programs face a wide range of facility and business challenges that impact their day-to-day operations.<sup>29</sup> With \$29 million funded through the American Rescue Plan Discretionary Funds, this plan was the third phase of the state's initiative to support the child care sector through long-term stabilization, sustainability, and capacity building.<sup>30</sup> The \$29 million in discretionary funds were committed on September 30, 2023 and intended to be spent by September 30, 2024.

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<sup>24</sup> Id.

<sup>25</sup> Sy, S., & Cuevas, K. (2023, October 2). Child care centers face funding gap as pandemic-era grants expire. PBS. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/child-care-centers-face-funding-gap-as-pandemic-era-grants-expire>

<sup>26</sup> Id.

<sup>27</sup> Kashen, J., & Valle-Gutierrez, L. (2024, January 17). With Arrival of Child Care Cliff, Some States Have Stepped in to Save the Sector. The Century Foundation. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from

<https://tcf.org/content/report/with-arrival-of-child-care-cliff-some-states-have-stepped-in-to-save-the-sector/>

<sup>28</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. (2023, June 28). *New Hampshire's Child Care Strengthening Plan Use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Discretionary Funds*. "Department Reports & Presentations," "Other Reports & Presentations". Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dhhs-child-strengthening-plan.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> The State of Child Care in New Hampshire: End of One-Time Federal Investments May Reduce Industry Stability. (2024, February 2). New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://nhfpi.org/resource/the-state-of-child-care-in-new-hampshire-end-of-one-time-federal-investments-may-reduce-industry-stability/>

<sup>30</sup> D'Amico, J., Khairunnisa, N., Mijares, C., & VanOrman, A. (2024, June 10). 2024 KIDS COUNT Data Book. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/2024-kids-count-data-book>

# Child Care Business Improvement Project Introduction

To expend the allocated ARPA-D funds for childcare and pilot long term solutions, the state of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Division of Economic Stability (DHHS or the Department) released a national Request for Proposal for the Child Care Business Improvement Project on March 17, 2023 with a response due by April 21, 2023. On May 1, 2023, SEED Collective, LLC was notified that the submitted Proposal Response was accepted. The scoring sheet published indicated that four vendors submitted a complete response and the SEED Collective Response earned a total score of 186/195 (*148/150 for the Technical Response and 38/45 for the Cost Proposal*) reviewed by the following published DHHS Representatives:

- Dianne Chase, Assistant Bureau Chief - Child Development
- Theresa Peck, Program Specialist IV
- Mike Bradley, Financial Manager
- Benjamin Hoffman, Business Systems Analyst

Following contract negotiations, SEED Collective, LLC was confirmed by the New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu and the five-member Executive Council as the facilitating organization to develop, implement, and manage the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Business Improvement Project (CCBIP or the Project) for licensed and license-exempt New Hampshire-based Child Care Providers and Head Start/Early Head Start Center-based programs beginning in July 2023. In September 2024, the contract was amended to add the facilitation and management of the Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Fund as well. Objectives of the Project as outlined in the New Hampshire Child Care Strengthening Plan<sup>31</sup> were to provide a stronger foundation and support system on which child care programs can:

- Build a solid and sustainable business model,
- Better meet the demand in their community, and
- Maximize income while balancing that with competitive wages and affordable cost for families in a professional and timely manner

The objective of the Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Fund<sup>32</sup> was to provide business grants for qualifying participants of Child Care Accelerate to address goals, opportunities for growth identified in the Business Health Assessment, and facility needs highlighted during the program site visit.

SEED Collective, LLC developed the proposed eight-week business support program to help qualifying Child Care Providers in the state of New Hampshire improve the health of their business. All prospective Providers were to submit assessments to identify business improvement opportunities, meet their support team, complete a site visit and participate in group mentoring meetings. Providers who successfully completed program metrics were eligible to receive an Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) grant to execute business optimization recommendations made by their support team.

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<sup>31</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. (2023, June 28). *New Hampshire's Child Care Strengthening Plan Use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Discretionary Funds*. "Department Reports & Presentations," "Other Reports & Presentations". Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dhhs-child-strengthening-plan.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Id.



The mission of Child Care Accelerate was to partner with Child Care Providers to optimize their business model through strategic relationships and tools for sustainability. The vision of Child Care Accelerate was of well-equipped Child Care Providers that offer accessible and affordable services to meet the demand in their community, support future leaders, and fuel our economy. The pilot program was launched to the public on February 5, 2024 and was in operation until August 30, 2024. The following report details the Program design, Centers supported, key program metrics, and systemic recommendations for Providers, the business community, and government agencies going forward.

## Recruiting and Inviting Eligible Child Care Providers

### Marketing Strategy & Outreach

In the initial Program recruiting, Child Care Accelerate engaged with Child Care Providers through phone calls, personalized emails, and a postcard sent to Center locations. The program team worked with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to communicate directly with New Hampshire license and license-exempt Providers through access to the Department's licensing database.

Child Care Accelerate was primarily shared through the following mediums:

- Phone calls and personalized emails to eligible Child Care Providers in the DHHS database
- Online and email marketing
- State, local, and industry-specific trade publications
- Marketing through child care-related business entities and organizations
- Presentations to local, state and national groups and other stakeholders

The integrated marketing campaign for Child Care Accelerate was launched across earned, owned, and paid channels beginning November 2023. The focus of the marketing campaign was three-fold and centered around supporting Providers through improving operational efficiency, building financial capacity and sustaining a competitive edge.

The following marketing materials developed for the Program are available for review in Appendix 11:

#### ■ Child Care Accelerate Program Marketing Appendix.pdf :

- DHHS Launch Press Release (*February 5, 2024*)
- Social Media Platforms: Facebook, Instagram and YouTube
- Eventbrite Page
- Program Mailer
- Program Brochure
- Website Image and Map of Website Pages
- Links to Blog Posts
- Links to Info Session, Site Visits, and Professional Development Series Videos
- Newsletters
- Provider Certificate of Completion

In addition, Child Care Accelerate developed and shared presentations to local, state and national groups and other stakeholders throughout the Project. Highlights of the community presentations shared during the Project include:

- State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services ARPA-D monthly meeting hosts, *January - June 2024*
- Child Care Accelerate Info Sessions, *February- July 2024*
- How to Develop an Effective Business Plan, *February 2024*
- Fostering a Culture of Learning in Child Care, *March 2024*
- Legal Considerations for Child Care Providers, *April 2024*
- NH Early Childhood Funders Collaborative ARPA-D Vendor Panel, *April 2024*
- NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions 6<sup>th</sup> Early Childhood Convening, Spring into Alignment, *May 2024*
- Best Practices for Effective Record Keeping, *May 2024*
- Child Care Accelerate Providers' Circle, *May 2024*
- Succession Planning and Strategic Growth: Insights from a Business Owner's Journey, *May 2024*
- Human Resources Strategies for Child Care Providers, *June 2024*
- NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions Lunch & Learn, *June 2024*  
(<https://www.nhaecc.org/lunch-and-learns.html>)
- Develop Financial Statements Like a Pro, *July 2024*
- Child Care Accelerate Providers' Circle, *August 2024*
- Navigating Real Estate Decisions in Child Care, *August 2024*

From the Intake form, the following chart includes answers to the question "How did you hear about Child Care Accelerate?":

<b>How did you hear about Child Care Accelerate?</b>	<b>Number of Providers Reporting</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Social Media	6	8.70%
Online and email marketing	15	21.74%
In state, local, and industry specific trade publications	4	5.80%
Direct referral from trusted partner	7	10.14%
Local Parent	0	0.00%
Program Participant	5	7.25%
Through Business Resources	13	18.84%
Personal Invite from Program Team	8	11.59%
Other	11	15.94%

## Application and Screening Process

To participate as a Child Care Provider, Providers completed an application and onboarding process. Eligible Child Care Providers were licensed and license-exempt New Hampshire-based Child Care Providers and Head Start/Early Head Start Center-based programs.

Providers who successfully completed the screening process were those that met the following eligibility criteria as outlined in the Program application:

- Are full time businesses
- Have been operating/working in their business for at least one year
- Are available to invest program time requirements, including continuing education and coaching sessions
- Are willing to invest time to work with paired professional service providers and mentors
- Have a management team that is willing to accept the project's assistance through mentoring, grant facilitation, and back office support
- Have an income statement (P&L) and balance sheet for the most recent one to three years, including the current year to date
- Are willing to share ongoing surveys and economic impact date reports as requested

## Participating Providers & Eligible Locations

The list of participating Child Care Centers and number of eligible locations for the Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Fund is detailed below:

<b>Participating Child Care Providers (alphabetical)</b>	<b>Number of OTS Eligible Locations</b>
A Place to Grow, LLC*	1
<i>Ages &amp; Stages Child Development Center</i>	1
<i>Appleseeds Day School, Inc.</i>	1
<i>Applewood Learning Center, Inc.</i>	1
Bright Village Early Education, LLC*	1
Children Unlimited, Inc.*	1
Children's Center of the Upper Valley, Inc.*	1
<i>Christ Episcopal Church dba Little Blessings Child Care Center</i>	1
Colebrook Community Child Care, Inc.*	1
Colorful Apples Learning Center, LLC*	2
Community Day Care Center, Inc. dba Seacoast Community School*	3
Country Club for Kids II, LLC*	1
Early Start Learning Academy and Child Care, LLC*	1
<i>Faith Tabernacle dba East Side Learning Center</i>	1
Footsteps Daycare and Learning Center, LLC*	1
Four Seasons Childcare, LLC*	1
Gale River Cooperative Preschool, Inc.*	1

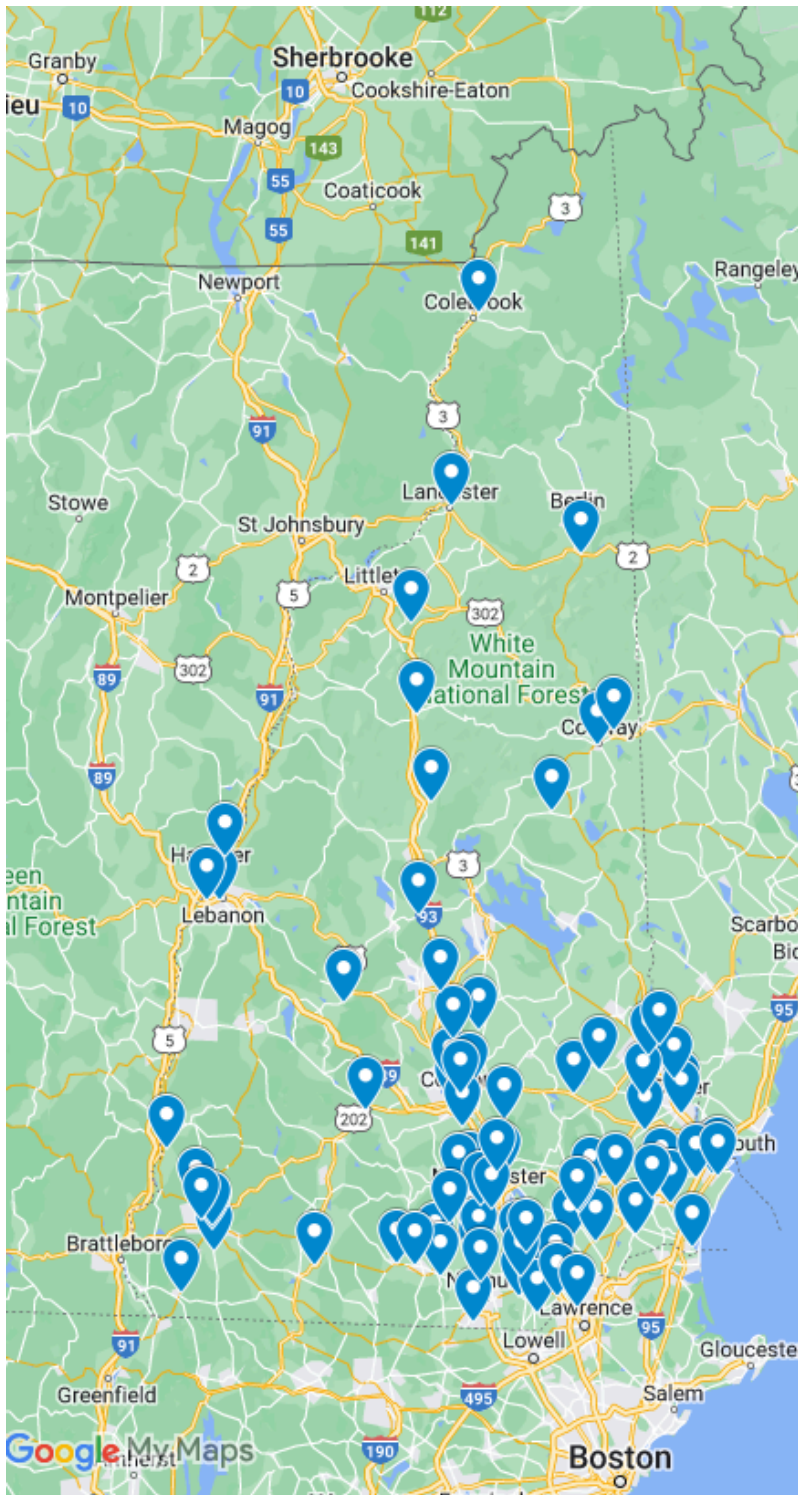
Goffstown Creative Kids Academy, LLC*	1
<i>Gorham Community Learning Center, Inc.</i>	1
Hampshire Cooperative Nursery School, Inc.*	1
Home Away From Home, LLC*	1
Honeybee Hollow Children's Center, Inc.*	1
<i>It Takes a Village Child Care, LLC</i>	1
JOSHI'S, LLC DBA Kiddie Academy of Windham*	1
Joyful Noise, Inc.*	1
<i>Keene Day Care Center, Inc.</i>	1
<i>Kid's Culture Childcare and Learning Center, LLC</i>	3
KidLogic Early Learning Center, LLC*	1
Kids by the Common Early Learning Center, Inc.*	1
Learn As We Play Child Care Center, LLC*	1
Lincoln Woodstock Community Child Care Center, Inc.*	1
Lisa's Tippy Toes DBA Nature's Way of Learning*	1
Little Blessings Learning Center (Strafford Kindercampus, LLC)*	2
<i>Little Scholars Day Care, Inc.</i>	1
Live and Learn Early Learning Center, LLC*	1
<i>Manchester Child Care Center, LLC</i>	1
Merrimack YMCA Early Education Center*	1
Monadnock Community Early Learning Center*	1
<i>Montessori Schoolhouse of Cheshire County, Inc.</i>	1
<i>Nellie's Treehouse, LLC</i>	1
Nurture and Nature Children's Center, Inc.*	1
<i>PB&amp;J's Childcare &amp; Learning Center, LLC</i>	1
<i>Playmates Learning Center, LLC</i>	2
<i>Primrose School of Exeter, LLC</i>	1
Ralph Waldo Emerson School for Preschoolers, Inc.*	1
Rochester Child Care Center, Inc.*	3
Rockwood Acres Daycare, Inc.*	1
Saco Valley Gymnastics Training Center, LLC dba Adventures In Learning*	1
Seabrook Adventure Zone (Friends of Seabrook Community)*	1
<i>Second Start dba First Start Children's Center</i>	1
Seeds to Trees Montessori, LLC*	1
<i>Spring Hill Children's Center</i>	1
Stay and Play Early Learning Center, LLC*	1

<i>Sunnybrook Montessori School</i>	1
<i>Tamworth Preschool, Inc. dba Bearcamp Valley School and Children's Center</i>	1
<i>The Amherst Preschool, LLC*</i>	2
<i>The Ark Learning Center</i>	3
<i>The Canterbury Whole Child Center</i>	1
<i>The Dewey School, Inc.*</i>	1
<i>The Early Learning Center of Milford, LLC</i>	1
<i>The Growing Years, Inc.*</i>	1
<i>The Perfect Place for Children (Sunny Side Up Development, LLC)</i>	1
<i>The Winchester Learning Center*</i>	1
<i>Tiny Town Daycare, Inc. DBA Twin River Children's Center*</i>	1
<i>Tollhouse Preschool, Inc.*</i>	1
<i>Tumbleweeds Child Care Center, LLC*</i>	1
<i>Wee Care Windham, LLC dba Wee Care Learning Center*</i>	1
<i>White Birch Center*</i>	1
<i>Wilmot Learning Place</i>	1
<i>Wise Owl Academy, LLC</i>	1
<i>With One Heart Early Learning Center*</i>	1

\* Processed Application for the OTS Grant Fund

*Complete OTS Grant Fund Application not received by Program Deadline*

### Participating Child Care Center Location Map



This report includes aggregated information submitted by Participating Providers and personally identifying information has been excluded or modified. For example, Center names were replaced with “the Center,” city or neighborhood names were replaced with “the region,” and individual names were removed.

# Data Profile of Interested Child Care Providers

Child Care Providers applied to the Program by responding to personal email outreach, calling the 24/7 dedicated phone line, or completing the application on the website. All eligible Providers who applied were invited to be hosted for an intake call. The intake call served as an introduction to the Program and Program Team, a discussion of the submitted application, and an opportunity to learn about where the Child Care Provider wanted to focus their strategic support. See Appendix 1:

■ [Child Care Accelerate Intake Form.pdf](#)

In total, the Program fielded 100 leads submitted from the website application, hosted 79 intake calls, and 74 Providers were converted into the active coaching program. There were 70 Program graduates as of Program completion (August 30, 2024).

## Intake Data Summary

- **Total leads added (applied online):** 100
- **Total Centers converted to accepted:** 74
- **Top five reasons For Providers who applied but did not move forward to an intake call or Program participation:**
  - **9** - Unresponsive/expired lead
  - **10** - Family Child Care Provider
  - **5** - Other
  - **4** - Not a good fit for the Program
  - **2** - Stakeholder only

From the Application, Child Care Accelerate was able to develop a data-driven picture of Providers across New Hampshire. From the aggregate data submitted, the Child Care Accelerate team found that:

- 100% of participating Providers operated full-time businesses
- 52.7% of participating Providers were organized as for-profit business entities
- 47.3% of participating Providers were organized as nonprofit entities, managed by an Executive Director and governed by a Board of Directors
- The majority of Centers (27) hosted at least three program types
- The average length of time in business was 14 years
- All seven (7) Child Care Licensing Regions were represented in the Program

From the Intake form, the following chart includes answers to the question “How long has the Center been in business?”:

Time in Business	Number of Providers Reporting	% of Responses
1-3 years	9	12.16%
10+ years	53	71.62%
4-7 years	7	9.46%

8-10 years	3	4.05%
Idea stage- not yet in business	2	2.70%

## New Hampshire Child Care Program License Categories

In New Hampshire, the different license or program types defined by the Child Care Licensing Unit<sup>33</sup> are as follows:

- **Family Child Care Home:** a child care program operated in a home where the Provider resides. In a family child care home, one Provider may care for a maximum of six preschool-aged children plus up to three children who are enrolled in a full-day school program. The number of children younger than 36 months of age and 24 months of age that are cared for is limited.
- **Family Group Child Care Home:** a child care program operated in a home where the Provider resides. In a family group child care home, one Provider and one family child care worker or assistant may care for seven to 12 preschool children plus up to five children enrolled in a full-day school program. The number of children younger than 36 months of age that may be cared for is limited.
- **Group Child Care Center:** a Center-based child care program that cares for one or more children ages 3 to 6 years of age, up to four of whom may be younger than 3 years of age, plus five children enrolled in a full-day school program.
- **Infant/Toddler Program (Child Care Nursery):** a Center-based child care program that cares for five or more infants and toddlers under 3 years of age.
- **Preschool Program:** a Center-based child care program that provides care and a structured program for children 3 years of age and older who are not attending a full-day school program. Preschool programs can care for children up to five hours per day.
- **School Age Program:** a family or family group child care program that elects to care for six or more school-age children who are enrolled in a full-day school program, or a Center-based child care program that cares for six or more children ages 4 years and 8 months of age or older who are enrolled in a kindergarten program or full-day school program. School-age programs can care for children up to five hours before or after school and all day during school vacations.
- **Night Care Program:** a Center-based, family, or family group child care program that provides care during the evening or nighttime hours between 7:00 PM and 6:00 AM. The type of Center-based family will determine the limits on ages and numbers of children or family group child care program license issued.
- **Residential Child Care Program:** a residential child care program that provides 24-hour care for one or more children unrelated to the operator of the program and apart from the parents. Residential child care programs are required to have a qualified program director and may be licensed as a Group Child Care Home, Child Care Institution, or Independent Living Home.
- **License-Exempt**

From Child Care Accelerate Program Participants, the data shows the following distribution of the 176 license types documented on the Application Form. The majority of Centers, 27, host at least three license or program types.

<sup>33</sup> Licensed Child Care Programs | New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/childcare-parenting-childbirth/child-care-licensing/licensed-child-care-programs>



<b>New Hampshire Child Care Programs</b>	<b>Number of Providers Reporting</b>
Group Child Care Center	60
Infant/Toddler Program (Child Care Nursery)	45
Preschool Program	49
School Age Program	21
Night Care Program	0
Residential Child Care Program	0
License-Exempt	1

Several Centers were in the process of adding additional types of programs and services to their existing curriculum to continue meeting the demands of their communities and families.

Child Care Accelerate was designed for Center-based programs. During the duration of the Project, 10 Family Child Care Providers applied. All such Providers were shared with the Department and the appropriate ARPA-D contractor, the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), for participation in the Family Child Care Pilot Program.

<b>New Hampshire Child Care Programs</b>	<b>Number of Providers Reporting</b>
Family Child Care Home	10
Family Group Child Care Home	0

## **New Hampshire Child Care Regions**

New Hampshire identified seven regions of its child care ecosystem.<sup>34</sup> Child Care Accelerate supported Providers across the state, as identified below.

<b>New Hampshire Child Care Region</b>	<b>Number of Reporting Providers</b>	<b>Percentage of Accepted Centers</b>
Region 1- Greater Monadnock, Greater Sullivan, and Upper Valley	13	17.57%
Region 2- Capitol Area	7	9.46%
Region 3- Greater Nashua	10	13.51%
Region 4- Greater Derry and Manchester	15	20.27%
Region 5- Central NH/Lakes Region	4	5.41%

<sup>34</sup> Bumgarner, E., Lloyd, C., Loya, K., Checkoway, A., Murphy, K., & Stein, J. (2021, October). New Hampshire's Early Childhood System in the Time of COVID-19: Child Care Access and Regional Systems Coordination. UNH's College of Health and Human Services. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from [https://chhs.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2022/02/mapping\\_new\\_hampshires\\_early\\_childhood\\_system.pdf](https://chhs.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2022/02/mapping_new_hampshires_early_childhood_system.pdf)

Region 6- Strafford County and Seacoast Region	12	16.22%
Region 7- North Country and Carroll County	8	10.81%
Unsure/Other	5	6.76%

### Provider Reasons for Applying

From the aggregate data submitted by Providers through the intake form in Appendix 2:

■ Child Care Accelerate Participation Answers.pdf , we found that the top five reasons mentioned for applying to the Program were:

- Business operations improvement (24)
- Center sustainability (12)
- Financial plan (12)
- Grant funding (10)
- Mentoring, working with business advisors (10)

The full list of reasons identified as to why Providers chose to apply is as follows:

- Board Of Directors Relationship
- Business Health Assessment (BHA)
- Business Operations Improvement
- Center Sustainability
- Change Management
- Community Recommendation
- Drinking Water Testing/Remediation
- Facility Improvements
- Financial Plan
- Grant Funding
- Grow As An ECE Leader
- Incorporate Best Practices
- Mentoring, Working With Business Advisors
- Networking
- Program Expansion
- Staff Development
- Staff Recruiting
- Staff Retention
- Strategic Plan
- Strengthen Quality Of Care
- Succession Planning

# After Acceptance: Child Care Accelerate Program Journey



## Onboarding and Ongoing Program Milestones

Once a Child Care Provider was accepted into the Program, the following workflow and expectations were offered to ensure the objectives and goals of both the Provider and Program were being pursued in the manner most likely to result in success.

- **Upon Acceptance**
  - Sign participation agreement.
  - Complete intake survey and submit any additional documentation requested.
  - Schedule initial coaching sessions with the Program Staff to prepare for the Business Health Assessment and outline the Program plan.
  - Schedule site visit.
- **Weekly**
  - Schedule and attend weekly coaching and mentoring meetings to review progress and assist in business development.
  - Complete client surveys as distributed.
- **On-Going**
  - Participate in networking and training sessions when appropriate and as needed to continue a successful effort of business development and strategic planning.
  - Provide up-to-date documentation of business profile, governing documents, and other requested Program files.
- **Post-Graduation**
  - Complete graduate economic impact data reports designed to track long-term success.

## Coaching Session Outline

The Program was offered to each Child Care Provider over a baseline eight-week program. The intended coaching journey was outlined in the Program Guide sent to Providers after Program acceptance:

### ***Session 1: Program Welcome, Resource Overview***

During this session, participants received their official welcome into Child Care Accelerate. Providers were introduced to the Program team and given time to discuss business and professional goals and expectations in a 1:1 format. Providers also received an overview about the Business Health Assessment and site visit.

### ***Session 2: Site Visit***

The focus of the second session was an on-site visit to see the business in operation and assess the facility's current condition. Recommendations from the site visit centered on Provider-identified priorities for facility improvements, and included a review of indoor and outdoor facilities, inspections, special education considerations, and any needed remediation services, such as mold, lead paint, asbestos, expansion or relocation. Before the site visit, all Providers completed their Business Health Assessments.

### ***Session 3: DISP & Plan of Action***

The focus of this session was to review the self-assessment, complete with detailed recommendations in each area based on score. Recommendations included mentor pairings, opportunities for professional development, and other resources as requested.

### ***Session 4-7: Mentoring & Back Office Support***

The focus of the next three coaching sessions were to support the Provider's work with their mentor support team. Each participant was paired with industry and subject matter experts to support the self-identified business goals and priority areas. At various points, the Provider was invited to highlight areas of need during the session and in post-session surveys. Mentors prepared in advance for each session by reviewing business goals, submitted assessments and surveys.

### ***Session 8: Mentoring & Back Office Support***

The focus of the final coaching session was to incorporate the tools gained from participating in Child Care Accelerate and articulating Center goals moving forward. Providers were then invited to complete a Reassessment. As the Program advanced, Exit Calls were also hosted with graduating Providers.

### ***Ongoing Support: Opportunities to Succeed Grant Sessions***

Eligible Child Care Providers continued to meet and speak with members of the Program team to review the documentation needed to participate in the grant fund, outline a requested budget, and prepare a use-of-funds plan.

# Child Care Accelerate Assessments

The Assessment and Research team developed a customized assessment plan based on the Project guidelines, industry research, and in collaboration with the Program's Mentors and Child Care Business Advisory Committee.




The following assessments were distributed for Child Care Accelerate Program participants:

- Getting To Know Your Business Survey (GTKYB)
- Business Health Assessment (BHA)
- Site-Visit Facility Assessment

The assessment tools were specifically designed for and customized with the child care business owner in mind. The assessment was administered in two parts: the Getting to Know Your Business survey, taken first, and the Business Health Assessment, shared after the first coaching session. From these assessments, all parties were able to gather a significant amount of information in a short time. The assessment served as a learning instrument where Providers reported having gained a deeper understanding of critical areas of business operation. Program Mentors were able to quickly gauge the gaps and resources needed. By the second session, Providers were able to select the top three focus areas for the remainder of their coaching journey.

This curated assessment and feedback model informed a qualitative and quantitative data-driven understanding of the Program's effectiveness and the impact to New Hampshire Child Care Providers.

The Business Health Assessment and the Reassessment are the same for consistency in comparison and growth tracking. Copies of the assessments are included as Appendix 3, 4, and 5:

-  Getting to Know Your Business Survey.pdf
-  Business Health Assessment.pdf
-  Business Health Assessment Site Visit Assessment.pdf

## Getting To Know Your Business Survey

The Getting To Know Your Business Survey was sent to Providers in advance of their first coaching session. Providers were invited to share a high-level view of their Center, including short-term and long-term goals, as well as perceived strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for growth.

Providers were also invited to share their self-assessed stage in business, which is not dependent on the number of years in operation. Child Care Accelerate Providers represented each stage of business, from Concept to Innovation or Decline. The business stage for most Providers who chose to participate in Child Care Accelerate was Mature at 44.29%. The data picture and description of each stage of business <sup>35</sup> was reported as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> Kauffman FastTrac – Your idea. Your business. Your way (n.d.). Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.fasttrac.org/>

Which stage of business most represents where the Center is today?	Number of Reporting Providers	% of Accepted Centers
<b>Concept</b> - Center is not yet formed	1	1.43%
<b>Startup</b> - Center is newly opened for business	2	2.86%
<b>Early stage</b> - Center has acquired customers but needs to expand enrollments and revenue streams	6	8.57%
<b>Growth</b> - Center is growing at the same rate as the industry and Center's past performance	9	12.86%
<b>Rapid growth</b> - Center's growth is outpacing the industry and Center's past performance	5	7.14%
<b>Mature</b> - Center has a stabilized market share	31	44.29%
<b>Innovation or Decline</b> – Center must add to capacity and service offerings or market share declines	8	11.43%
<b>Unsure</b> – Unsure which stage of business the Center is in today	8	11.43%

In this same short survey, Providers documented their short-term (0-6 months) and long-term (6-12 month) goals as stated at the beginning of their coaching journey. The full list of goals and accomplishments submitted can be found in Appendix 6: [ST LT Goals Accomplishments.pdf](#) . Personally identifying information has been removed for aggregate reporting.

Highlights of the short-term goals shared included:

- *Update required forms and get them online to streamline registration*
- *Evaluate the needs of the community and our families to meet their needs for the 2024/2025 school year*
- *Enrollments for new Center that we recently purchased*
- *Ensure all staff members receive continuous professional development to stay current with best practices in early childhood education*
- *Build stronger relationships with parents and the local community to foster a supportive and inclusive environment*
- *Set new tuition prices for my Center this week as they have not been increased since August of 2023*
- *Have someone to talk to to make sure I am going in the right direction to accomplish the goal of a new Center and relocating another Center*
- *Continued push for professional development with end result being credentialing of all staff*
- *Create systems for paperwork and organization with our materials and enrollment processes*
- *Learn how to keep track of the work I do for when I need to assess my own abilities or for promotional or raise purposes*
- *Completed Employee Policy Manual, Revised Parent Handbook/Policy Manual*
- *Develop a realistic budget for the 2024/2025 fiscal year*
- *Review our business to ensure we are using best business practices*
- *Develop a functioning fundraising committee for the organization that includes board and staff involvement*

- *Create a model to evaluate the cost-of-care-per-child in each classroom*
- *Maintain and develop the website and social media*

Highlights of the long-term goals, set for 6-12 months, included:

- *Delegate duties and train an administrative assistant*
- *Help our director grow and gain more business and human resources skills*
- *Start the beginning phases of expanding the Center*
- *Decrease our agency need for grant funding and assistance*
- *Continue our recruiting efforts and secure full enrollment for 2025*
- *Ensure financial sustainability and provide staff with living wage and benefits without placing undue tuition burden on families by identifying and securing additional external funding*
- *Bring payroll in line with industry standards*
- *Explore cost-saving measures for optimum savings*
- *Become an employer of choice, working on our plan for employee benefits and wage growth*
- *Build a framework for program evaluations*
- *Create a seamless curriculum from infants to Kindergarten*
- *Start the initial phase into Granite Steps quality rating system*
- *Develop an owner succession plan*
- *Review and create macro-level goals for the program expanding to a two-year, five-year, and 10-year plan*
- *Generate protocols and policy that uphold values and exceed state standards*
- *Produce a virtual tour of our school for social media sites*

The goals of each Center, coupled with the information collected from their Business Health Assessment scores, set the direction for the Centers' coaching journeys.

## Business Health Assessment

The Business Health Assessment was sent to Providers after their first coaching session and before their site visit. Providers were asked to set aside 45-60 minutes to complete the assessment, which covered eight areas of business.

The business areas highlighted in the Assessment were:

- Administration and Operations
- Business Foundations
- Center Sustainability
- Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies
- Finance
- Marketing and Business Development
- Management Team and Staff
- Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance

In the Business Foundations section, the support focus was on a Center's strategic planning process and any identified or measured key performance indicators.

In the Management Team and Staff section, the coaching focus was on a Center's workforce recruiting efforts, team roles and responsibilities, retention strategies, and ongoing professional development.

In the Administration and Operations section, the feedback focus was on a Center's use of systems, technology, and processes that added business efficiency in mission-critical areas such as tours, waitlist management, and enrollment.

In the Marketing and Business Development section, the strategic focus was on how a Center communicated its core competencies to families, staff, and the wider community. This included a review of a marketing plan, existing marketing channels used by the Center, and opportunities to expand the Center's reach.

In the Finance section, the discussion focus was on how a Center managed its financial health, including understanding accounting systems, setting tuition rates, customizing tools such as the Cost Per Child in Care per Classroom analysis, and identifying short- and long-term capital opportunities.

In the Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance section, the review was on how a Center managed its legal liability. This included an exploration of the written documentation and legal protections currently in place, as well as the legal steps and relationships needed for a Center to feel more confident in mitigating risk.

In the Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies section, the priority was on the built capital available and used by participating Centers. It often included a discussion of different real estate ownership models, documentation such as the Building Information Sheet, drinking water testing and remediation needs, and opportunities to incorporate green construction measures.

In the Center Sustainability section, the focus was on a Center's plan for the future. These sessions detailed options for both nonprofit and for-profit leadership or ownership succession, activating plans for growth and expansion, and using tools to build business value.

Based on the answers provided, Providers were given an overall and section-specific score. The assessment allowed for an objective review of a Center's business practices. Scores indicated areas of strength and sustainability poised to move forward, areas currently in development that would benefit from improvement through targeted mentor support and guidance, and areas that should be earmarked for growth and need development.

This Development, Improvement, and Sustainability Report (DISP) served as a guide during the direct coaching relationship, and a resource after Program graduation. Following the score in each area, personalized counsel and additional resources were included for further research. Each Provider was then connected with Mentors and professional service providers based on their area of interest and stated Center goals. In the coaching sessions, time was dedicated to working together to apply the counsel to Providers' needs and outlining action items, developing strategy, and identifying additional resources needed for growth.

## Site Visit - Facility Assessment

As a complement to the Business Health Assessment, Child Care Accelerate staff hosted a best-practices facility review of each participating Center. From the design research, Child Care Accelerate acknowledged the certain technical design criteria that child care facilities should meet.

Those guidelines are often articulated in licensing guidelines and local regulations. The Child Care Accelerate Site Visit Assessment focuses on the following metrics and standards:



- U.S General Services Administration Child Care Center Design Guide Public Buildings Service Office of Child Care Technical Criteria (Chapter 8, Section 8.3)
- U.S General Services Administration Child Care Center Design Guide Public Buildings Service Office of Child Care Technical Criteria (Chapter 10)
- Construction and Design Manual child care Facilities General Room Requirements (pg 45)
- Child Care Design Guide, Anita Rui Olds

The purpose of the site visit was to visit the Child Care Provider's business office, complete a tour, and conduct a technical review of potential facility, equipment, materials, and supply needs. The site visit was conducted by a local Child Care Accelerate Program associate.

The technical areas reviewed through the facility assessment included:

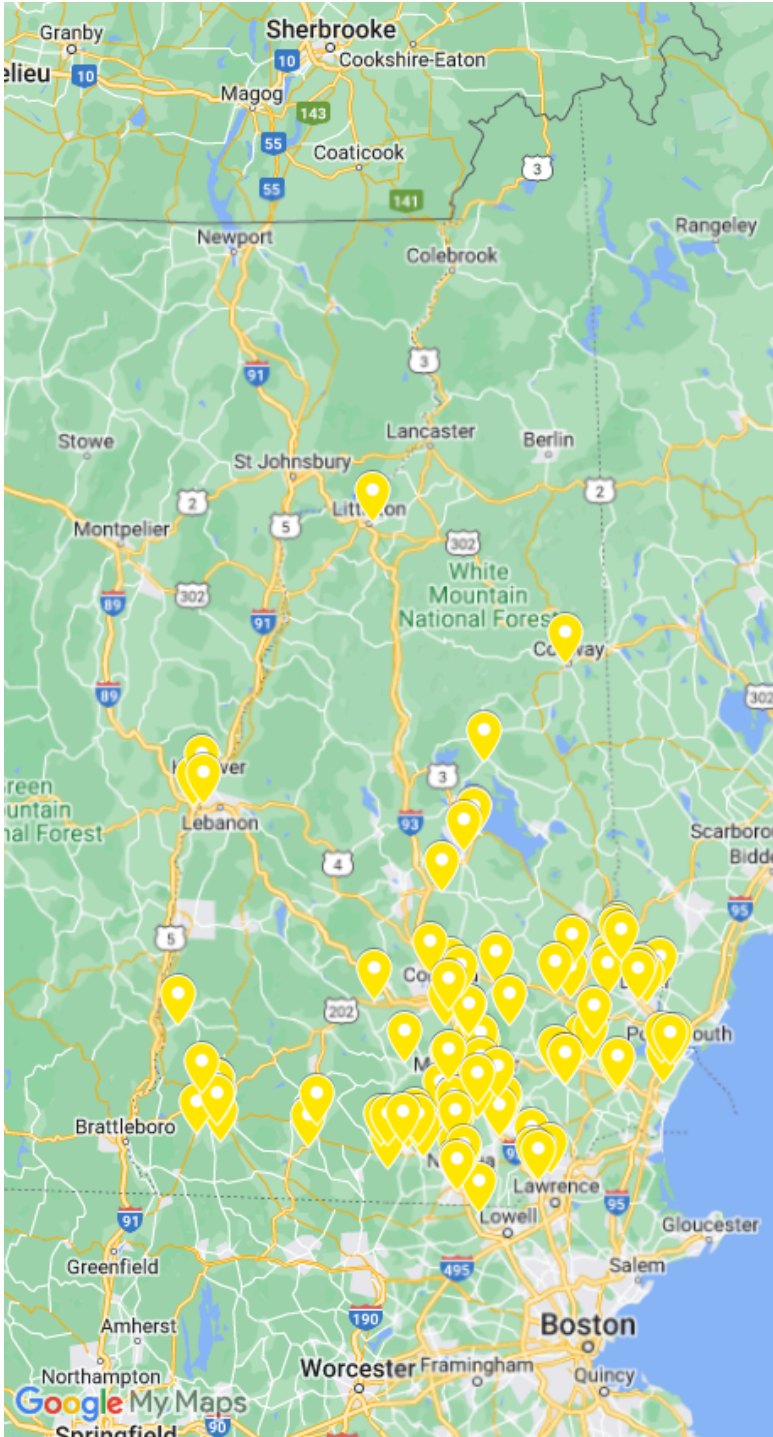
- Fire protection, environmental, and safety expertise
- Security
- Sustainable design, green construction
- Accessibility
- Historic preservation
- Acoustics
- Windows, doors, and hardware
- Plumbing
- HVAC
- Lighting
- Electrical
- Outdoor Areas

The Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant funds could be applied to facility improvements, code zoning, permit requirements, and construction management as they relate to indoor and outdoor facilities, inspections, special education considerations, and remediation services, such as mold, lead paint, asbestos, expansion or relocation.

For Providers who were interested in using OTS grant funds towards facility improvements, Child Care Accelerate developed a list of 98 New Hampshire-based businesses in construction and other trades to support this work. The businesses met the criteria of being registered with the state, with a business address, and an online presence. This list was shared with participating Providers after the site visit as needed or requested.

This database of contractors had 98 businesses as of Program completion. The map of recommended contractors is included below. More information on the businesses listed in OTS Grant applications can be found in the Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Program section of this Report.

# New Hampshire Contractor Database



## Coaching Focus Areas and Relationship

The intention of the 1:1 coaching sessions were to provide customized and Center-specific resources, relationships, and forward looking supports. From the available coaching topics in the Business Health Assessment, the three most commonly activated topics were:

- Business Foundations
- Finance
- Management Team and Staff

The full analysis of coaching areas selected is as follows:

<b>BHA Categories</b>	<b>% Of Providers Selecting</b>
Business Foundations	93%
Finance	66%
Management Team and Staff	50%
Administration and Operations	27%
Center Sustainability	27%
Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies	24%
Mental Health	16%
Marketing and Business Development	15%
Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance	15%

In the second week of the coaching journey, there was an in-person site visit. Child Care Accelerate staff logged 6,535 miles in travel across the state of New Hampshire visiting participating Providers. Child Care Provider video footage from the site visits can be found on the Child Care Accelerate youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@ChildCareAccelerate>.

During and after week three, sessions were focused on the key focus areas identified by the Provider. When applicable, Program Mentors were invited into these sessions to support the Center goals and strategies. Program Mentors were a curated group of licensed business professionals who helped to peer-review the Program's assessments and support the coaching journeys. The bios of Program Mentors can be found in Appendix 12: [Child Care Accelerate Program Staff & Mentor Bios.pdf](#). Post-Program Mentor feedback is detailed under the Recommendations section of this Report.

Overall, 507 coaching sessions were hosted, representing 1,348 hours of coaching. A total of 634 mentor hours and 714 back-office hours were dedicated to coaching sessions.

## Data Analysis of Coaching Relationship

To ensure that Child Care Providers were well supported in this expedited coaching Program, a survey was sent at the end of each coaching session. Information shared in the post-session survey impacted session agendas, priorities, and resources shared based on what the Provider or Center needed.

The following questions were included in each-post session survey:

- What are your action items following this session?
- What differences do you expect to see in your business by implementing these actions?
- What external support would be most helpful in the short term (1-6 months)?
- What, if anything, would have improved this session?
- Please provide any recommendations on Child Care Providers that you think would be a good fit for the Program
- Please provide any comments or suggestions to the Program team

From the post-session surveys, we found the following priorities and action item areas identified by Providers:

- Board Of Directors Relationship
- Business Expansion - Franchising
- Business Operations Improvement (Administration, Operations, Technology)
- Center Expansion/Relocation
- Classroom Strategies
- Construction Contractor Estimates and Engagement
- Continuing Education
- Elevator Pitch
- Enrollment Strategies
- Facilities Building Information Sheet
- Facility Improvement Planning
- Finance Cost-Per-Child-In-Care-Per-Classroom
- Financial Documentation and Planning
- Fundraising
- Goal Development
- Grant Planning
- Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance
- Marketing and Business Development
- Mental Health
- Professional Service Provider Estimates and Engagement
- Staff Development
- Staff Recruiting
- Staff Retention
- Strategic Planning
- Succession Planning

The aggregate Provider response to the question, **“What differences do you expect to see in your business by implementing these actions?”** is detailed in Appendix 7:

■ [Post Session Survey Aggregate Responses .pdf](#) .

A highlight of some of the responses included:

- *A strong recording of our business practices to be sure that business sustainability and a succession plan is a smoother process.*
- *Developing an onboarding coaching plan will help with staffing consistency and expectations as well as longevity.*

- *It was great to see the numbers from the Business Health Assessment—where the Center is doing well and where I can use additional support and resources. In reflecting, it was definitely a confidence-boost to see areas that I am doing well and what can I do to make things even better.*
- *The invoices and estimates will allow me to see the scope and cost of the repairs that need to be completed. I will then need to assess how to prioritize or make any changes to upcoming repairs. The strategic plan is helping me to visualize and prioritize items that need to be tackled, delegated, plated for another time, or outsourced to others (ask for more expert opinions). The Building Info Tool is a great tool that will be very helpful in sharing info with my staff when I am traveling or attending a meeting offsite. It is also a place to store all necessary info for day-to-day operations.*
- *A clearer vision on business foundations and sustainability plans. Would love to feel more confident on a game plan for securing a better method for the Center's waitlist and our plans for retirement in 20 years.*
- *I expect to see staffing to be more consistent in the classrooms and coverage for absenteeism and breaks will work more smoothly. Having a strategic plan will help define when the changes can actually be implemented more realistically. Empowering staff to use the tools allows time freed up for other tasks.*
- *Improved connection to vision and mission of the agency (business) as opposed to just firefighting. Improved alignment of agency (business) goals through engagement with all of the agency (business) leadership team (program directors, executive director, board members).*
- *I will have a better understanding of what the Board and I will need to work on to create a strategic plan we can follow. Both items should make a positive difference in our income, leading towards sustainability.*
- *I am hoping to streamline some of the things we do and add some polish to others. Maybe take some of the procedures out of my head and put them in writing to be able to better review and learn from what we did in the past.*
- *I have strong guidance from our mentor team and it's incredibly motivating and empowering to be able to talk these things out with a crew of individuals that GET IT and are AMAZING at offering insights and guidance! By implementing these actions above, we are able to get a more informative visual of the next steps and which goals we should focus on for our organization*
- *Less stress with time management of bookkeeping responsibilities. Easier and more accessibility with financial reports for stakeholders and funding sources. Clearer and more consistent picture of where our organization is with funding and cash flow.*
- *We are already seeing positive outcomes in the areas of staff connection and communication with our 15 minute check-ins. Following the road map we've created, we anticipate seeing more director time in programs, streamlined professional development for all staff, and more readily available and accurate financial documents for funding purposes.*
- *I think my business will be better managed in many ways. Financially, we will be stronger because we will be installing a software program to help manage child enrollment, staff requirements and billing. All staff will have a job description better outlining the position they hold and what availability there is for growth within the business, and we will have a financial advisor to help guide us on where we should be spending and what we need to throttle back on.*
- *Having my classrooms fully staffed as well as being able to enroll more children in the classrooms.*
- *A stronger team that knows what's expected of them and will be better able to give others a sense of what the job entails, which will help with recruitment in the future.*

- *Clarity and the ability to revisit the plan annually for tracking purposes and reflection.*
- *Outlining my goals and dreams for the Center is the first step to achieving them.*
- *Boost staff morale by showcasing their experience in ECE*
- *Clearer business focus; Quiet place for break time would hopefully lead to less stress for staff; Enhanced experiential learning for toddlers*
- *Completing the grant will allow the Center to purchase the tools and services needed to implement the processes and systems that will help meet our goals for finance, sustainability, and marketing. Utilizing the Budget template will start conversations with the board, families and potential donors about the actual cost per child, the amount of children needed to sustain our budget, and what direction we want to go in.*
- *A better understanding of areas for support and reminder to celebrate the strengths we do have. This will lead us from pioneering toward a more sustained and sustainable future. There was so much useful and easily digestible information in this session. The information was also very clear and well-organized.*
- *Having mentors in the areas I need support in. Having a safe space to feel heard and to be seen. To learn as much as possible so I can be a proactive and content business owner.*
- *Being prepared for a succession plan for my business*
- *I will be able to focus more on my specific game plan and where I want to be in the future.*

The aggregate Provider response to the question, “**What external support would be most helpful in the short term (1-6 months)?**” is highlighted below:

- *Maybe a check in from the coaches at the three and six month timeframe. Eight weeks is not a long time to learn something new or reframe your way of thinking. Having that time to try out whatever the goals might be then to have a check in to ask questions and/or receive additional support would be helpful.*
- *Looking to meet with current Directors to see what software they are currently using and balancing that with cost. We have a new Coach. I will be meeting with her once a month for at least the next year to plan staff training, observations, and individual coaching sessions in the classroom.*
- *Help with developing plans and gaining support from our team. Would love to look at safety issues that need to be addressed such as the fence at our second location and a better floor (snap and go over the wood floors) at the Center so we stop damaging the high traffic areas with all the mopping.*
- *Tools, templates, connections/resources and just support and encouragement*
- *Continued coaching, direction for finding resources, community/network for directors through SEED Collective*
- *Coaching/mentor circle with other directors, quarterly check ins*
- *I think that we need to look at our enrollment packet to ensure that our forms protect us legally. For example our field trip permissions for summer camp that is starting mid-June. Our enrollment packet is characteristic of our grassroots starts. I would love some help with our logo and making more professional looking forms/documents for welcoming new families and staff to the center. This is one of the first impressions we make and I would like to show our pride and care in this presentation while ensuring that we are protecting our interests.*
- *I think this process is making me look at my business and figuring out how I can best work on a business development plan and what support will be needed. I will be meeting with my accountant next month, this is the time of year where I look at next year and what changes need to be made.*

- *We feel very confident about where we are and the supports in place.*
- *Honestly? These meetings are more helpful than I initially thought they would be. In fact, just in the few meetings we've had, there is so much more clarity and our path forward looks FUN and EXCITING! Another area that would help us in the Finance area is locating Grants available to us. I'm a good google digger, and I enjoy the hunt, but having more of a foundation of where to look and what's available would be incredibly beneficial and save a lot of time!*
- *Full transparency, having a mentor group like this is something I didn't even realize we were missing! More time to bounce around ideas and discuss topics would always be a positive as well, and of course the grant funding to support areas of improvement and expansion is a huge program support. I'm loving the strategic methods utilized in our discussions and feedback has been incredible.*
- *Being able to still access the professional development portion of the program.*
- *I would love external support on how to identify what capital improvements to budget for and how to determine a long term maintenance schedule. I would also like some support on business valuation.*
- *Continuing dialogue on the future of child care in our Region and the State of NH*
- *I never thought the Center needed marketing before, but the session was like a light switch going on, for potential board members, donors , advisors and staff. Having support in building that platform will be very helpful*
- *Training in Quickbooks and meeting one on one with our accountant to get a deeper understanding of reports, and comparison between our actual numbers and projected numbers based on our budget. Updating our office computer and child care management software will also be helpful to paint a complete picture.*
- *I am really looking forward to working with our accountant and treasurer to create a better understanding of the Center's finances for the board and myself. The Quickbooks training will be a supplement to this partnership.*
- *Review our handbooks. This is the time that we review them annually, so they're ready to send out at the end of August, so support in that would be very helpful.*
- *External support that would be most helpful in the short term would be a continued connection to Kyle to help with any questions on the Cost Per Child in Care per Classroom spreadsheet, if needed.*
- *Market analysis for 4th location; detailed cost per child breakdown for each individual Center*

The aggregate Provider response to the question, **“What, if anything, would have improved this session?”** is highlighted below:

- *I think more time would be extremely helpful. It always feels like the meetings go by so quickly.*
- *I enjoyed this session. I found the information that was shared to be beneficial and reassuring that some of the practices with hiring contractors is correctly being done already.*
- *Great session, I like how we focused on ideas that could help with a training series.*
- *Nothing. As always, it was affirming, clarifying, informative and supportive.*
- *We were very appreciative of the overview of the process and what to expect. The conversation about marketing not just for waitlists but also potential employees was thought provoking.*
- *Nothing. I am always very excited to attend the sessions and gain so much from them. We are very thankful for the SEED team and their support!*
- *It was a good session. We appreciated the visuals pulling together the information from our BHA*
- *It was a wonderful session and I look forward to them weekly!*

- *I love all my sessions with our mentor team and hope these incredible individuals realize how important their work is to the field of child care in NH.*
- *These sessions are amazing and I was looking forward to this one especially!*
- *Our sessions are always the highlight of my week! The mentoring team with SEED Collective is incredible!*
- *I think the culture of this community in the North Country is hard to understand unless you are in it. Living in so many rural areas, including an island of 300 year-round residents only accessible by boat, this community is harder. A lot of resources that are available regularly in other communities are not accessible here. IEPs are unmet, referrals take 6+ months, and the systems are broken or simply not accessible. Our entire town loses cell service and internet when we hit tourist season due to the systems not being capable of handling the influx. The reason I am including this is because we have accounting services, business consultants, banks, but accessing anything outside of our town is nearly impossible long term. I am still going to try and find an accountant in this state that can handle some of the business things, however, I have to also consider the challenges prior to making any definitive decisions.*
- *Nothing, I feel as though this session gave me a greater understanding of this program and how I can best utilize the services and opportunities*
- *Everyone was absolutely incredible. I have so enjoyed my time with SEED/CCA and believe their mission and vision will improve Centers across the board.*
- *I like these sessions and feel very supported as an Owner/Director*
- *I need to take more time to prepare and maximize the time in our meetings*
- *I'm working on the strategic business plan but I think I maybe elaborated too much in certain areas; as I move through it I realize I expanded upon some sections in what should probably have been a brief summary instead. Time constraints are always an issue for me, but feedback on what I have so far would be great at this point in the program. I wish I had accurate financials in advance of the meeting to be able to share those and get some analysis.*
- *More time, haha! We always feel like there is so much more to say to each other, we value the feedback, and supportive coaching, so much! Thank you!*
- *I need to be mindful of the clock to maximize the value I derive from the experts*
- *I loved this session, I was very nervous before the session thinking that I should of had all of the things I want change all ready done, but you put me right at ease by saying this is a no judgment zone*
- *I love getting all of the feedback and suggestions that are given to me. I think you all have done a fantastic job, so at this point I do not have any suggestions for improvement.*
- *That we didn't have to say good-bye. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting with all of you and hearing all of your great advice.*
- *I thought it was great. I am very inspired to work on this project!*
- *These sessions have re-invigorated my skills and desire to be the best I can be- so that I can support others to gain the confidence they need to succeed in their roles at our Center*
- *The sessions are fast paced, but clear and to the point. At the beginning I couldn't imagine 35 minutes being enough time, but they are so helpful.*
- *I thought it was very informative and hit things that the Center needs help with right on the head.*
- *This session was again very informative for me. I am not a business person but am learning a lot from these sessions.*
- *Nothing! Always keeps me laughing and feeling supported*
- *More time:) Today gave me a boost of energy to keep pushing myself to create the business I have dreamed about. The energy felt was heartwarming and I enjoyed every moment.*



- *I look forward to our Friday meetings, the only thing I would change is: having more time:)*
- *Always, always, more time:) Nothing would change but having hours to listen and take in the advice.*
- *More time, gosh the meetings have been so uplifting. It was wonderful to meet Dan and see his love for his family and business.*
- *No improvements needed.*
- *I thought the session was great. I do not have any finance background. Some terms I was not familiar with so doing a quick "Finance for beginners" course before diving in deeper to this course.*
- *I wish we had more time to devote to specific topics with other owners or executives going through the same thing.*

The aggregate Provider response to the question, **“Please provide any comments or suggestions to the Program team?”** is highlighted below:

- *Everyone that I have met is so kind and thoughtful. The encouragement and supportive feedback to really think about the opportunities to grow not just the Center but personally as well.*
- *I really like that there are training and on-demand resources available to help with planning, record keeping, hiring, etc. I appreciate the resources as a seasoned director. I hope any new directors out there are taking advantage as well. Many child care directors do not have a business background, so this information is vital. I wish I had access to it sooner. Thank you.*
- *I know that we have to move pretty quickly, but new to my role, some things will take longer than a week to accomplish because of long standing policies that must be addressed.*
- *I love that I can voice out loud some of the inefficiencies that I see and hear some other advice from the outside. Specifically alternative ways to keep track of ordering supplies.*
- *I am SO grateful for this opportunity! I am gaining so much and feel very supported and seen. Thanks for this Program. It's uplifting and transformative.*
- *Tremendous experience that will continue to serve me and the organization well into the future!*
- *I love the energy of this team and can't wait to move forward. I know when we are done I will be that much stronger in my business practices.*
- *TY all for your expertise and enthusiasm. I love working with you all and truly do feel that our business will be stronger from this experience.*
- *Thank you all for everything. It is so nice to meet with professionals as passionate about the business of child care as I am. I am also so thrilled at the expertise everyone has and the practical suggestions.*
- *Thank you for your time and positive words about our program here! Business Health Assessment (haha)*
- *So far I have been able to go back weekly and work on implementing things discussed in our sessions. I am extremely happy with the Program.*
- *You're doing incredible work with your support of Child Care programs in NH through Project Accelerate! The energy, positive guidance, and real feedback is crucial and so helpful with encouraging our program growth and strengthening our foundations!*
- *Thank you all for your time this week! I truly enjoy our conversations, your knowledge, and the brainstorming!*
- *Thank you so much for your time, information, dedication, and passion*
- *I am so thankful for this opportunity and love the insight that is provided with each session.*

- *This session, like all others, has been informative and I love the positive support and feedback I receive from the coaches. I will miss the weekly sessions, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this Program. Thank You!*
- *I always come away from these sessions so encouraged!*
- *This is a great Program so far - I'm enjoying the meetings and discussions and suggestions! The grant will be amazing help for us, as well.*
- *Thank you for sharing your backgrounds/stories and taking the time to listen to mine and the Centers. I look forward to learning from you all.*
- *I continue to learn and grow in our sessions and take the information and ideas given to strengthen our operations. Thank you for all you have done!*
- *Everyone is loving, supportive, experienced, and very helpful. We are ready to see our hard work bring us across the finish line!*
- *Thank you so much for your time. I can't tell you how you have reinvigorated me and how much I am looking forward to learning and growing through this process!*
- *I am excited to continue this journey and am looking forward to my site visit next week.*
- *I was very sad to hear that your contract was not being renewed by NH DHHS. I feel that there are so many other programs that could benefit greatly by going through this Program.*
- *I look forward to working with all of you. I appreciate this Program and have heard that it has been very valuable to others who have completed the Program.*
- *Thank you for asking those questions that get me thinking in new directions and providing insight from the industry and business world in general. It is refreshing and motivating to think out of the everyday grind, and out into the big picture.*
- *At the start of each meeting, I always think it's only 35 minutes. "What can we possibly accomplish?" And then at the end I am like "I got so much out of that, and I am fired up and ready to tackle and use this info in ways that will benefit our program. So thank you!*
- *Thank you, as I have said before. I leave these meetings charged with excitement to learn, practice and put into play what we talk about, and this is after 8.5 hours of work. So Thank you.*
- *Thank you again for all of your support, suggestions, and guidance over the last 8 weeks. I am confident that these goals are attainable for myself and the Center in the next year, and will have a great impact on our Center's future. I also know that I have support in your team to help me reach these goals.*
- *I would love four more weeks :). I can't believe we are at the end!*
- *What a wonderful team, I would change nothing.*
- *Another great session! Kyle's form was great. I look forward to seeing our customized form for the Center. I really like hearing about the other Centers that were participating in this session. It is interesting to hear of the different styles, sizes and staffing options.*
- *I love how interactive the team is! Seeing everyone so upbeat and supportive of the programs go a long way.*
- *This session was helpful in many ways, and I look forward to getting my individualized financial assessment.*
- *The team, especially Adrienne, is so professional and knowledgeable. They don't judge us and are extremely positive and welcoming.*

The full report of the post-session survey feedback submitted can be found in Appendix 8:

■ [Post Session Survey Aggregate Responses .pdf](#) . Personally identifying information was removed for aggregate reporting.

## Coaching Data Summary

- **Number of Providers accepted in the Program: 74**
- **Number of Providers who completed the Business Health Assessment: 71**
  - *Note: one Provider hosted their introduction session and decided not to participate due to the time commitment; two other Providers were accepted and decided not to participate before the introduction session*
- **Number of Providers with a prepared Development, Improvement, and Sustainability Plan (DISP): 71**
- **Number of Providers who engaged with mentors: 70**
  - *Note: one Provider completed their BHA, reviewed their DISP, but did not engage with mentors. Upon SEED Collective review, the Center did not meet the Program eligibility requirements to engage with mentors. Instead of removing this Provider from the Program, the Center was moved directly to grant eligibility. This Center is not included in the graduate number.*
- **Mentor hours and back-office support expended: 1,348**
- **Number of Providers with access to the Shared Services program: 70**
- **Number of Providers who completed the BHA Reassessment: 55**
  - *Note: 15 Providers did not start or complete their reassessment*
- **Number of coaching Program graduates: 70**

# Reassessment: A Business Health Assessment After Coaching

The intention of Child Care Accelerate was to partner with Child Care Providers to optimize their business model through strategic relationships and tools for sustainability. To track the impact of the coaching and Provider learnings, each Provider was invited to take a Reassessment at the end of their eight-week Program. The Reassessment text mirrors the Business Health Assessment and can be found in Appendix 4: [Business Health Assessment.pdf](#).

Of the 70 Program participants that engaged with Mentors, 55 Providers submitted their reassessment and 24 Providers were hosted for the exit call.

As a Program team, from the submitted responses, we found that:

- Centers were better-equipped to articulate SMART goals
- Center leadership was better-equipped to build a team around business goals
- More Centers described plans for growth in staffing and enrollment
- The majority of Centers reported an increase in confidence, clarity, and strategy for the next step in their business or nonprofit

As in the initial Business Health Assessment, Providers submitted both short-term (0-6 months) and long-term (6-12 month) goals post-coaching.

Examples of short-term goals shared in the Reassessment included:

- *Continue to develop mentoring and coaching for staff by spending time in classrooms, creating training materials and meeting with staff monthly.*
- *Ensure my 2025 budget includes a safety net and a profit.*
- *Continue all the administrative goals I had from my coaching sessions, including the streamlined waitlist and marketing strategies.*
- *Increase effectiveness and support of the Board of Directors through onboarding trainings and clear financial systems.*
- *Run the Center at at least 80% capacity utilization as a percent of full potential.*
- *Finance: Grow Development Annual Fund and fundraising connections/relationships with larger donors and corporations.*
- *Increase technology opportunities that are easily accessible to students and staff without barriers (outdoors and indoors and off-campus).*
- *Have an accounting/bookkeeping/financial advisor that we can meet with on a regular basis to be sure our business maintains a healthy financial operating level.*
- *Incorporate a child care software program to help better manage billing, enrollment and staff requirements.*
- *Incorporate the staff as part of the enrollment process and encourage staff to be more interactive with families when they come in for tours. Having staff practice a teacher pitch.*
- *Create a working business plan that outlines operation processes and policies, 1, 3, and 5 year goals for the Center, and succession plan for the next generation of the Center.*
- *Continue to make sure all paperwork and classrooms are ready for when the licenser comes to do a permit to full license.*

- *Evaluate my operating costs so that I can determine the true cost of caring for one child that will enable me to make a more intelligent decision in regard to setting tuition rates.*
- *Work on recruitment and retention strategies, especially rewarding those that are vested in the Center.*
- *Advocate for some of the early childhood bills at the state level which will hopefully attract more people into the workforce.*
- *Improve our social media presence.*
- *Develop a long-term maintenance schedule for our facility.*
- *Improve compensation.*
- *Engage professional services (which we have been hesitant to do due to cost) so that we can build better business practices.*
- *Practice better internal business practices by creating one centralized operations manual, complete our business plan and documentation plan.*
- *Find a great team to help me through all of the ins and outs such as a lawyer, a banker, accountant, and other key leaders to help my business.*
- *Create program systems to better streamline administrative tasks, improve employee communication and enhance data management.*

Examples of long-term goals, set for 6-12 months, shared in the Reassessment included:

- *Succession planning—finding a lawyer and writing down where everything is, so I am not the sole person with that knowledge.*
- *Take a training on the true cost of child care to figure out what the actual cost is per child.*
- *Increase management salaries to compete in the nonprofit world.*
- *Get fully trained and staff trained with Bright Wheel.*
- *Retain qualified staff.*
- *Be more visible in the greater community. We have a strong reputation--back it up with community endeavors.*
- *Secure financing for commercial space.*
- *Grow our donor base.*
- *Continue to hire and retain enough staff that pressure/burn out decreases.*
- *Identify potential new markets that could sustain a second location.*
- *Putting together a business plan on paper is going to be essential in taking the next step for owner transition within the next 3-5 years.*
- *Internal structures and controls in place to explore a sliding fee scale aligned with Child Care Scholarship opportunities to families and students.*
- *Offer more benefits for employees such as paid time off, health benefits or money towards personal insurance, and 401k.*
- *Continue to provide opportunities for the teaching team to grow to better support my need to focus on directorship and not classroom management.*
- *If we build smart benefit and professional development packages and policies, succeed in creating a system of immersive, investigative curriculum, and assessment practices, and focus on efficiency in our building maintenance and financial well-being, we should be able to report on some success and positive growth.*
- *Work on getting all staff credentialed. Use Workforce Grant money as incentive to have staff complete more ECE credits.*
- *Re-open and grow the classroom that has been closed since the pandemic.*

- *Have a complete business plan that has been created and revised by both director and board that brings the Center enter into the next three years,*
- *To continue to work with and employ professional support to create a budget, succession plan, and future aspirations of the business.*
- *A goal for the next 12 months is to have all the floors complete and redone for a fresh new look and easier to clean for the toddler rooms. Another goal is to have my business plan really formed and a financial foundation for a yearly projection and to see how I did in one year.*
- *To review staff wages and ensure that I am offering competitive hourly wages and to evaluate if I can provide health insurance as an employee benefit,*
- *To create a succession plan so that my Center can continue to service families in child care.*
- *Fourth location started.*

The aggregate report of the goals submitted in the Reassessments can be found in Appendix 8:

■ [Reassessment ST LT Goals.pdf](#) . Personally identifying information was removed for aggregate reporting.

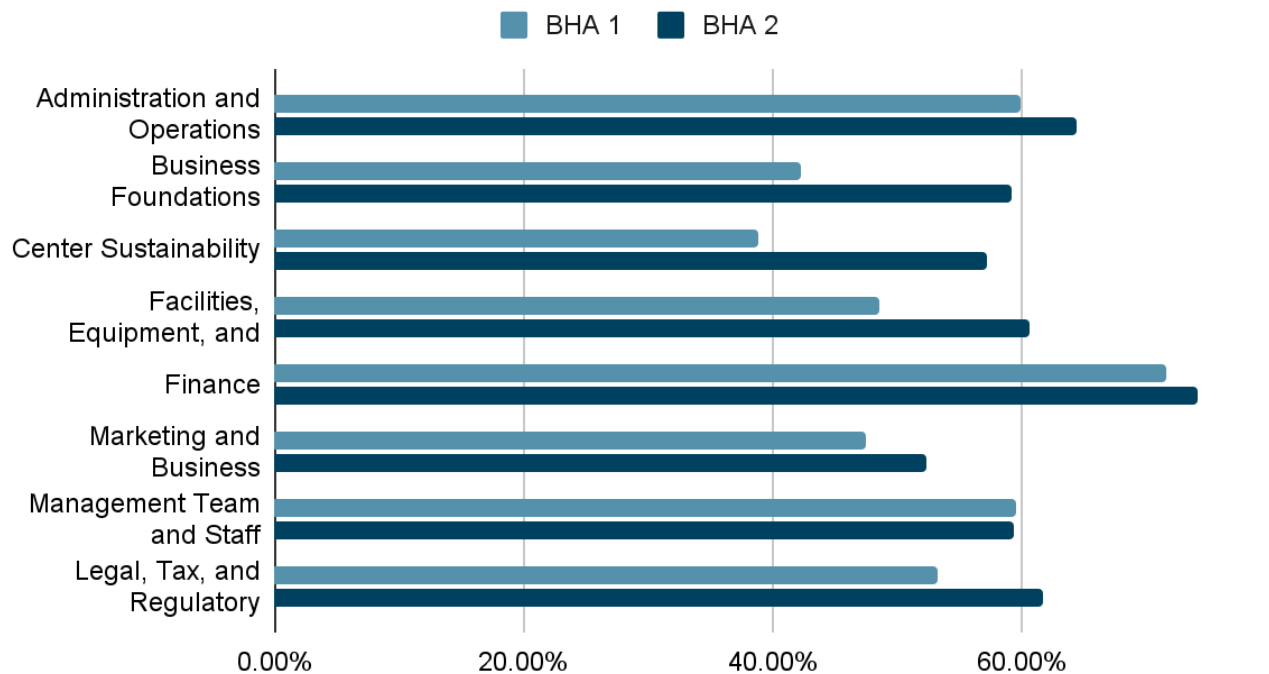
In addition to updated goals, Providers were invited to review again the eight areas of business highlighted through the Program:

- Administration and Operations
- Business Foundations
- Center Sustainability
- Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies
- Finance
- Marketing and Business Development
- Management Team and Staff
- Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance

For each Business Health Assessment section, the average scores of participating providers were calculated. The chart below indicates the changes in average scores from the first assessment, delivered before coaching, to the reassessment, distributed at the end of the eight-week coaching program.

## Business Health Assessment Score 1 & Score 2 Chart

### Average Child Care Center Score



In total, 71 Providers completed an initial Business Health Assessment. After the coaching Program, 70 Providers were sent a Reassessment and there was a 78% completion rate. Of the eight areas assessed, seven sections experienced growth and one section stayed the same.

<b>Business Health Assessment Areas</b>	<b>BHA 1</b>	<b>BHA 2</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Administration and Operations	59.96%	64.44%	+ 5.52%
Business Foundations	42.27%	59.16%	+16.88%
Center Sustainability	38.81%	57.31%	+18.50%
Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies	48.59%	60.62%	+12.03%
Finance	71.64%	74.22%	+2.58%
Marketing and Business Development	47.50%	52.31%	+4.81%
Management Team and Staff	59.59%	59.47%	-.08%
Legal, Tax, and Regulatory Compliance	53.35%	61.65%	+ 8.30%

For the Assessment sections that experienced a growth in average scores, this indicates that Providers may have obtained a better grasp on the area of business assessed, may have increased confidence in resulting strategies, or may have identified or completed short-term action items to advance their goals during their coaching Program.

For the one Assessment section that experienced average score consistency, Management Team and Staff, this indicates that Providers may have identified additional action steps necessary for growth,

may need more time to implement learned solutions, or may be consulting with external support for guidance needed.

The Reassessment data revealed that the Business Foundations and Center Sustainability sections saw the greatest increase between pre- and post-coaching assessment scores. This finding reiterates the Program mission and impact— **concentrated, organized business coaching effectively equips child care businesses with the tools, confidence, and relationships necessary to increase Center sustainability.**

## Exit Call Feedback

In closing, exit calls were hosted to memorialize the Center's forward-looking goals, key learnings, and reflections from the coaching journey. There were 24 Providers that participated in scheduled exit calls, their feedback distinctly reflective and substantive.

Feedback and Quotes from the Exit Calls with graduated Providers is highlighted below:

- *The process was overwhelming at first. But [from] the concept of breaking the coaching journey down on the business side and learning that I can break [the business review] down over pieces, I know now where I want to get to and I have the tools and resources [to do so].*
- *Throughout this process with the Child Care Accelerate Mentors, I discovered there are always people that are smarter, more supportive, and willing to lend a helping hand to support quality early learning—all it takes is asking. Thus far I feel most accomplished in the area of the budget and going through our budget to make adjustments that will allow for the business to make it for many more years.*
- *I did feel that I was able to better comprehend and articulate my goals.*
- *It's the art of having the coach that gives you that refocus.*
- *I think the biggest impact just [from] the short weeks is helping teachers to also see the bigger picture.*
- *I felt as though any resource is a great resource. You can always do things better.*
- *I needed that time to focus on the business side of things without the guilt everyone throws at you for stepping away from the teaching/classroom side! It was great validation and I agree with everything being said right now! And also to see just how much I've been doing, how many roles; validation and confidence building!*
- *My overall reflection is: people are there for you.*
- *What we were missing was the structure of the conversation about transitioning the business from mother to daughter.*
- *For me, the 'AHA' was the whole package...I'm worried about what you don't know, because if you don't know, you can't take care of it, and you can't factor it in. So, if we continue working on the things we need to improve on, we're going in the right direction. That, for me, is the aha...you're not missing when it comes to the financial, the mission statement, the strategy, the business plan...those are the details you can always work on if you're going in the right direction...I [also] think the aha was stepping back and seeing the full thing. Even if we didn't cover all the areas, we covered enough that it gives us confidence. That was very useful enough to give us pointers and keep us working on things.*
- *Seeing our whole business and better understanding what it needs. We focus our efforts on the children and the day-to-day and are generally reactive rather than proactive. We have learned how to step back and think forward.*



- *These sessions have made me so thankful and grateful for the team we have at [the Center] ...I knew that, but this affirmed it more for me.*
- *Thank you for your encouragement and knowledge of the child care operation and how it can be improved.*
- *Receiving the grant of \$25K for each of my three of my Centers will be a huge blessing. We are still trying to recoup mentally and financially since covid and are looking forward to focusing on helping the families in our communities by providing a high-quality child care service that they can believe in and trust.*

When asked what advice the Provider would give to other child care business owners considering coaching:

- *Do it!!! It's exactly what child care needs in New Hampshire and everywhere - to have coaching that is behind us is such a blessing so I would say go for it!*
- *I would say, 'Just do it.' It seems scary or, (from my personal perspective), it feels vulnerable to air the dirty laundry of what I'm struggling with and be willing to work through things with someone beside me, but do it.*

## Reassessment Data Summary

- **Number of Providers who completed the Business Health Assessment: 71**
- **Number of Providers with a prepared Development, Improvement, and Sustainability Plan (DISP): 71**
- **Number of Providers who engaged with Mentors: 70**
- **Number of Providers who completed the BHA Reassessment: 55**
  - *Note: 15 Providers did not start or complete their reassessment*

# Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) Grant Program

Program grants were available for qualifying participants of Child Care Accelerate to address business goals, opportunities for growth identified in the Business Health Assessment, and facility needs highlighted during the Program site visit. The amount of grant funds each Center was eligible for was based on Program participation, the number of licensed or license-exempt locations according to the Department of Health and Human Services, and submitted expenses. Initially, Providers were eligible for up to \$25,000 per location and an additional \$2,500 towards drinking water testing and remediation efforts.

To be eligible for OTS grants, Providers agreed to the grant terms and conditions as part of the participation agreement. Providers were eligible for grant funding if the following conditions were met:

- Agreement to Program terms and conditions
- Completion of Business Health Assessment
- Completion of facility site visit  
Attendance and active participation in scheduled coaching sessions
- Compliance with grant specific documentation and record-keeping

## Authorized Grant Expense Areas

Authorized expenses for OTS Grants were focused on support for specific business improvement activities, including but not limited to:

Approved Expense Categories	Examples
Materials	Expenses incurred for the purchase of Center materials for play and learning, safe sleeping, diapering or toileting
Equipment	Expenses for office equipment that will last and be used longer than a year in the operation of the Child Care Center, such as computers, printers, office furniture, and company vehicles
Supplies	Expenses for office supplies and other smaller items to be used within a year of purchase
Operational Enhancements	Expenses relating to business technology, software, business automation, training and support services, and facility updates such as touch-free faucets or light switches
Approved Professional Services	Expenses incurred by working with experts and licensed professionals, such as human resources, marketing, legal and compliance, tax, coaching, strategic planning and operational areas as approved
Acquire, Consolidate and Merge Grants	Expenses incurred relating to Center expansions, relocations, mergers, acquisitions or consolidations. Cannot be applied to purchase cost of new business
Certain Facility Improvements	Expenses relating to maintenance/repairs or minor improvements, construction and construction management, code zoning, inspections, permitting, and special education considerations for indoor facilities (classroom design, restroom configurations, storage areas, technology

	workstations) and outdoor facilities (entrance and exit locations, playground areas, pick up and drop off areas)
Drinking water testing and remediation	Expenses relating to drinking water testing, remediation planning, and completion of remediation services
Approved Professional Development	Expenses such as training recommended by the Business Health Assessment or approved Provider, training materials, CPR, memberships in certain industry specific professional organizations

Following the completion of the grant-funded activity(ies), Providers were required to submit a project completion report with appropriate supporting documentation. The full OTS grant program overview is available as Appendix 9: [■ Opportunities to Succeed Grant Overview.pdf](#) .

Once a Provider reached the halfway point of their coaching journey, they were deemed eligible for the grant fund. During a coaching session, the grant application was introduced, sent to the Provider, and reviewed on-screen. Once the Center submitted their complete application, it was processed by Child Care Accelerate. Complete applications were pre-approved and invoiced to the Department of Health and Human Services. For incomplete applications, calls and reminder emails were sent to support expeditious processing.

A complete OTS grant application included three parts:

- A fillable OTS grant request form, detailing Center license information and a use-of-funds plan
- An Expense record, which sorted the requests into approved expense areas and indicated the vendor and documentation submitted
- Copies of documentation for all requested expenses, including receipts, invoices, and quotes

Of the 71 Program participants, there were 45 OTS Grant applications pre-approved and invoiced to the Department of Health and Human Services. Of the 71 participating Providers, 83 child care facilities were eligible for grant funding. A total of \$1,551,972.30 was submitted to Child Care Accelerate in grant application requests, with \$1,22,1931.77 pre-approved and invoiced to the Department of Health and Human Services. As of Program completion (August 30, 2024), grant applications from 21 Centers were not submitted or were incomplete, and six Centers were eligible after SEED Collective, LLC OTS grant management. Together these 27 applications represent 31 eligible facility locations, or \$935,000 in potential grant funding. The OTS Grant fund applications processed during Child Care Accelerate are indicated with an asterisk in the Participating Provider List, and those applications not processed are noted in italics. For the Centers not processed by Child Care Accelerate, this was due to a variety of factors, including timing delays experienced by Providers in receiving quotes for facility improvements or professional services, unresponsive Centers after Program graduation, and process and deadline changes facilitated by the Department of Health and Human Services.

In July 2024, the Department facilitated a change to assume responsibility for OTS Grant payments to Child Care Providers. The information above is compiled based on data submitted to SEED Collective, LLC as of Program completion (August 30, 2024).

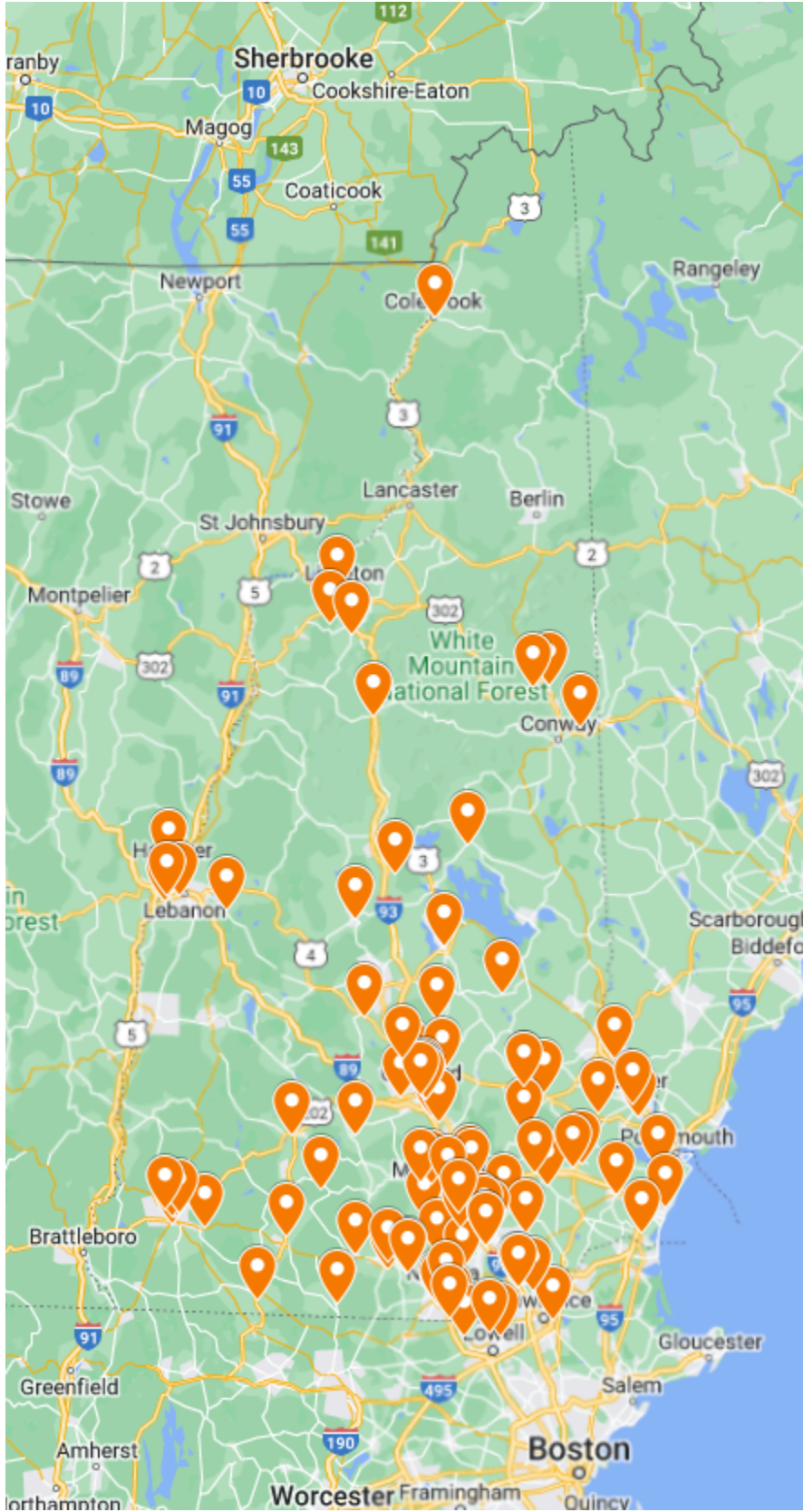
From the approved expense categories, below is the percentage each category was requested from the 45 applications received.

<b>Approved OTS Grant Expense Category</b>	<b>% of OTS Grant Category Requests</b>
Certain Facility Improvements	22.1%
Materials	20.4%
Equipment	16.8%
Supplies	9.9%
Approved Professional Services	9.9%
Operational Enhancements	9.8%
Drinking water testing and remediation	5.2%
Approved Professional Development	4.7%
Acquire, Consolidate and Merge Grants	0.7%

From the grant applications received, there were 255 unique brands and vendors engaged by participating Providers. The full list of businesses and vendors included in OTS grant applications is included in Appendix 10: [Child Care Accelerate OTS Vendor List.pdf](#).

The majority of the businesses included in OTS Grant Applications were based in New Hampshire. The map that includes the New Hampshire-based businesses is below. There are 38 New Hampshire businesses not included on the map because they did not have an online presence or a public-facing business address.

### New Hampshire Businesses Included in OTS Grant Applications



## OTS Grant Fund Data Summary

- **Number of complete grant applications received: 45**
- **Number of Child Care facilities eligible for grant funding: 83**
- **Number of Center pre-approvals submitted: 45**
- **Total amount of grant applications pre-approved and invoiced: \$1,221,931.77**
- **Number of incomplete applications: 21**
- **Number of Centers eligible for grant to be supported by DHHS post-Program: 6**

## Ongoing Support

The majority of the business resources developed through the Program will remain available to both participating and nonparticipating Child Care Providers when the pilot program sunsets in September 2024.

### On-Demand Professional Development Series

At Program completion, the Program website included several resources related to the areas highlighted throughout the Business Health Assessment. These business support resources are available as articles, professional development videos, and external resources.

The continuing education series provided during the Program is now available as on-demand webinars. Workshops were taught by SEED Business Network mentors and experts and focused on the following topics:

- How to Develop an Effective Business Plan
- Fostering a Culture of Learning in Child Care
- Legal Considerations for Child Care Providers
- Best Practices for Effective Record Keeping
- Succession Planning and Strategic Growth: Insights from a Business Owner's Journey
- Human Resources Strategies for Child Care Providers
- Develop Financial Statements Like a Pro
- Navigating Real Estate Decisions in Child Care

This online series is accessible through the Child Care Accelerate youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ChildCareAccelerate>.

The Youtube channel also includes two Providers' Circle videos, which was a panel series featuring conversations with Program graduates and current participants on their experience. The Providers' Circle was a two-part series launched during the Program to highlight the experiences of participating Child Care Providers. In the first series, the virtual session featured five Providers who recently graduated from the Program. For the second series, the in-person session featured two Providers who were still in the Program.

### Resource Guide

A Resource Guide for both participating and nonparticipating Child Care Providers will be available through [www.childcareaccelerate.com](http://www.childcareaccelerate.com) as an ebook. This guide will provide business resources, recommendations, and research to support Child Care Center sustainability.

### Shared Services Network

The Child Care Accelerate Shared Services Network is a collective of small, medium, and large companies that support the child care business and industry. Companies in the Shared Services Network have committed to providing discounts and reduced fees to participating Providers for

technology, supplies, materials, equipment, and other business services needed to effectively run their Centers. Please visit [www.childcareaccelerate.com](http://www.childcareaccelerate.com) for the most up-to-date list of members:

As of report publication, below are the member companies of the Child Care Accelerate Shared Services Network:

- **Brightwheel**, a child care software platform: [www.mybrightwheel.com](http://www.mybrightwheel.com)
  - *committed to providing a 20% discount to Child Care Providers*
- **Child Care Purchasing Alliance**, a network established to help Child Care Centers nationwide purchase products and services at competitive pricing: [www.childcarepurchasing.org](http://www.childcarepurchasing.org)
  - *committed to providing a 20% discount for online services and property operations*
- **Convergence Counseling Services, LLC**, a mental health counseling service a holistic approach that focuses on wellness of the mind: [www.convergencecounselingkc.com](http://www.convergencecounselingkc.com)
  - *committed to providing a free 15-minute virtual consultation and 15% off virtual therapy sessions*
- **Headwaters Capital Management, LLC**, a Provider of commercial property stewardship solutions: [www.headwaterscap.com](http://www.headwaterscap.com)
  - *committed to providing free consultations and a reduced hourly rate*
- **Illumine**, a child care software platform: [www.illumine.com](http://www.illumine.com)
  - *committed to providing 20% discount to Child Care Providers*
- **Intuit QuickBooks Online**, an accounting software platform: <https://www.bqignite.com/brandme/signaturemetadataview/5bb4a709-7b18-4600-a69e-a1bb12f26431>
  - *committed to providing discounts up to 20% for QuickBooks Online support to Child Care Providers*
- **Lillio**, a child care software platform: [www.get.lillio.com](http://www.get.lillio.com)
  - *committed to providing 20% discount to Child Care Providers*
- **Paylocity**, a cloud-based software suite that offers human resources and payroll solutions for businesses: [www.paylocity.com](http://www.paylocity.com)
  - *committed to providing minimum 20% for online support and product discounts to Child Care Providers*
- **ProCare**, a Provider of child care management software solutions: <https://info.procaresoftware.com/CCASSN>
  - *committed to providing 20% discount to Child Care Providers*
- **SEED Law, LLC**, a business law firm: [www.seed.legal](http://www.seed.legal)
  - *committed to providing free consultation and reduced hourly rate by 20% up to five (5) hours*
- **SEED Collective, LLC**, a consulting firm: [www.seedconsults.com](http://www.seedconsults.com)
  - *committed to providing free consultations and reduced program rates*

To access this resource, please visit [www.childcareaccelerate.com](http://www.childcareaccelerate.com) or email [network@seedconsults.com](mailto:network@seedconsults.com). Providers can access these discounts using the company-provided links above or the Program's Promo Code, CCASCSSN24.



## Business Resource & Lender Databases

SEED Collective developed several databases for resources and partners in small- and medium-sized business support. One of the databases previously mentioned is the list of New Hampshire-based construction contractors that was shared with Providers interested in facility improvements. Two additional databases include a New Hampshire statewide chambers of commerce listing as well as banks and financial institutions that marketed support for business owners.

In addition to business chambers, lenders, and ecosystem leaders, SEED Collective worked with other ARPA-D contractors to complete the work outlined in the New Hampshire Child Care Strengthening Plan. In 2024, this group met monthly, sharing program updates and resources. The list of programs and vendors who may continue providing resources is available at <https://nh-connections.org/>.

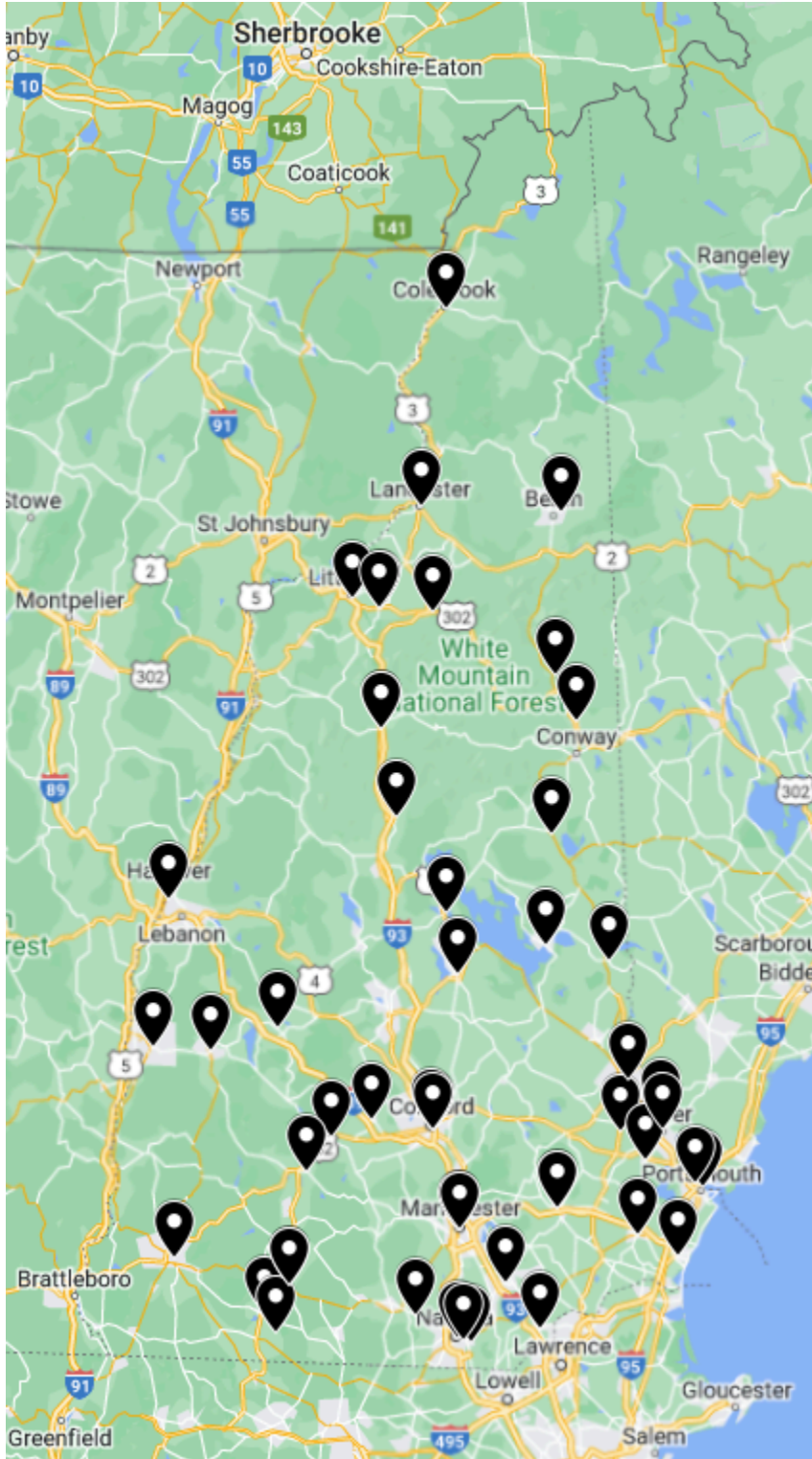
The chamber of commerce listing includes 54 resource partners and the lender database includes 29 financial institutions and their 66 locations. The listing is included below and maps are also included for reference.

### Chambers of Commerce included:

- Region 1
  - Upper Valley Business Alliance
  - Jaffrey Chamber of Commerce
  - Rindge Chamber of Commerce
  - The Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship
- Region 2
  - Greater Claremont Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Merrimack - Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce
  - Small Business Administration (SBA) New Hampshire District Office
  - International Technology Transfer Institute (ITTI) Clinic
  - New Hampshire Community Loan Fund
- Region 3
  - Greater Hudson Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce
  - Arlington Street Community Center
- Region 4
  - Greater Derry Londonderry Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
  - New Hampshire Center for Women & Enterprise
  - The New Hampshire Tech Alliance
  - Regional Economic Development Center (REDC)
- Region 5
  - Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Lake Sunapee Region Chamber of Commerce
  - Newport Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Central NH Chamber of Commerce

- Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce
- Meredith Area Chamber of Commerce
- Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce
- Henniker Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Hillsborough Area Chamber of Commerce
- Region 6
  - Barrington Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Raymond Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce
  - Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce
  - The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
  - Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
  - The Falls Chamber of Commerce (Somersworth)
  - Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce
  - New Hampshire Small Business Development Center
- Region 7
  - Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce
  - North Country Chamber of Commerce
  - Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce
  - Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce
  - Franconia Notch Chamber of Commerce
  - Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Mt. Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau
  - Twin Mountain - Bretton Woods Chamber of Commerce
  - Western White Mountains Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Ossipee Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Wakefield Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center
  - Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network
- Statewide Support:
  - New Hampshire SCORE
  - Business Alliance for People of Color

## Statewide Chambers of Commerce Map

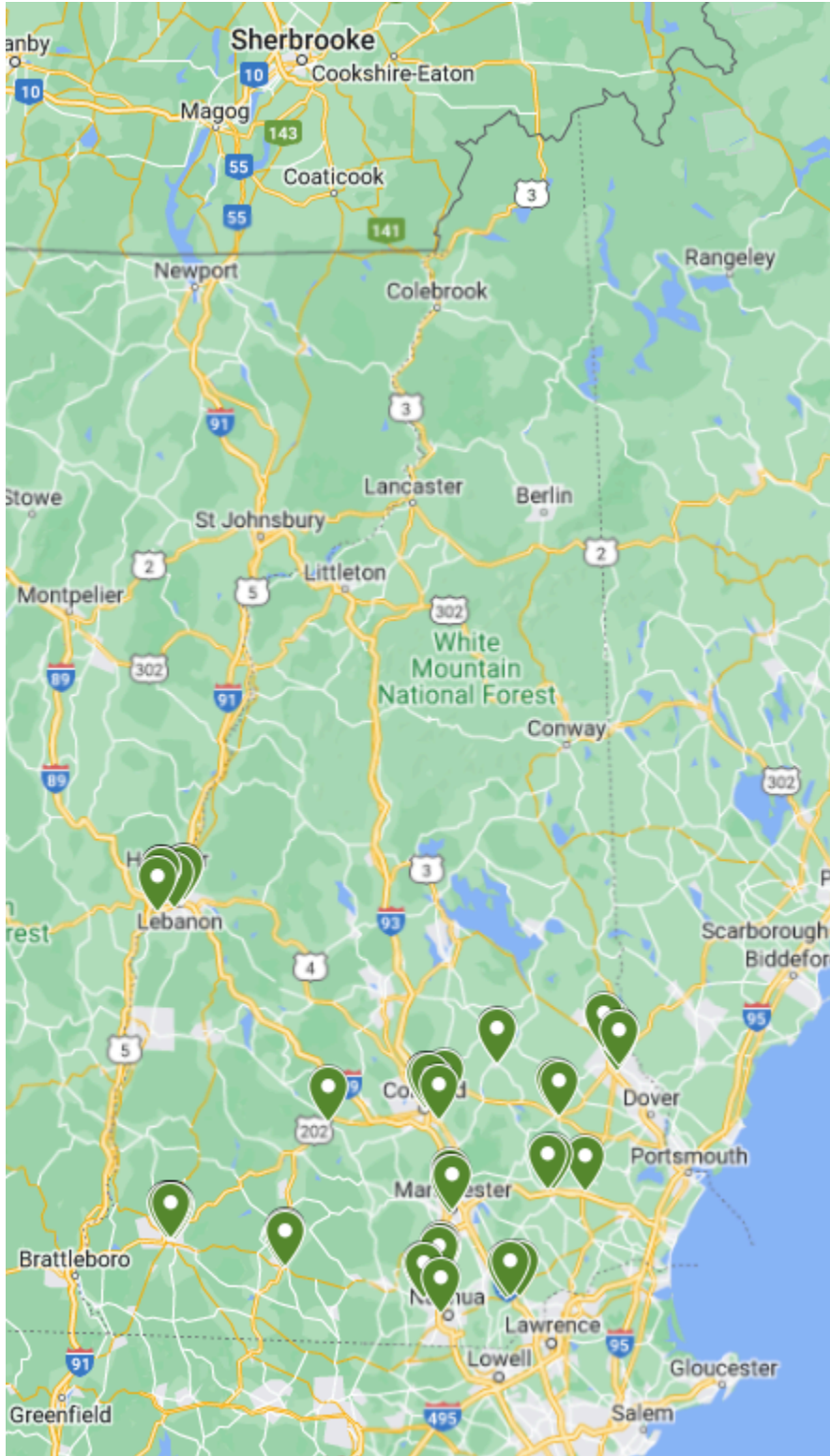


The Lender Database included:

- Bangor Savings Bank
- Bank of New England
- Bank of New Hampshire
- Bar Harbour Bank & Trust

- Citizens
- Claremont Savings Bank
- Digital Federal Credit Union
- Eastern Bank
- Enterprise Bank
- First Seacoast Bank
- Franklin Savings Bank
- GFA Federal Credit Union
- Granite State Credit Union
- Ledyard National Bank
- M&T Bank
- Mascoma Bank
- Members First Credit Union of NH
- Meredith Village Savings Bank
- Merrimack County Savings Bank
- Nashua Bank
- NBT Bank
- Northeast Credit Union
- Northway Bank
- Santander Bank Branch
- Savings Bank of Walpole
- Service Credit Union
- St. Mary's Bank
- TD Bank
- Triangle Credit Union

### Statewide Lender Database



# Systemic Recommendations and Opportunities for Ongoing Research

The child care industry needs systemic support to continue providing high-quality, sustainable care for children. Systemic support requires that all communities and community members aid in developing solutions by contributing their time, talents, and treasures in some way. It also means that a variety of solutions, enacted and working in tandem, are needed for success to be sustainable.

In designing and delivering the Child Care Business Improvement Project, SEED Collective staff, Mentors, and Advisors were granted a unique perspective of the child care industry, including the communities of support, the various business models used to operate child care facilities, the dedication of the professionals that give life to the work, and working with a government agency. From this perspective, we offer the following recommendations for Child Care Providers, the business ecosystem, and government agencies.

By considering and incorporating these suggestions and others, we can support both formal and informal early childhood educators, leaders, and partners in developing the three core competencies necessary to make systemic change:

1. The ability to see the larger system;
2. The capacity to foster reflection and more generative conversations; and
3. The ability to shift focus from reactive problem solving to co-creation of the future.

## For Child Care Providers and Center Leadership

From February 2024 to August 2024, Child Care Accelerate hosted 70 child care businesses across the state of New Hampshire through an eight-week coaching program. While each individual Center was unique, business trends emerged through Provider feedback, assessments, and reflections. From the research produced by the Program, the following systemic recommendations for are proposed for Child Care Providers, Executive Directors, and Boards of Directors:

**Track and share key performance indicators.** Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the primary factors that can be measured to keep the business side of the Center running smoothly. Industry standard metrics can be used, such as enrollment, student and staff retention, and financial ratios, and this data contributes to assessing the health of a program at any given time. To take this strategy further, customize the KPIs that matter most to the Center; this can include more strategic financial data, such as hourly rate per role per region, tuition rates, marketing and business development efforts, as well as fundraising and profitability measures. A true cost-per-child-in-care-per-classroom analysis, such as the tool shared by Program Mentor Kyle Johnson, can help a Center collect specific information about capacity, pricing, profits, and factoring in subsidies and scholarships.

When Child Care Centers are equipped to set and track critical business information, they are less prone to surprises and are better able to forecast needs. This is helpful for both for-profit entities and nonprofits governed by a board of directors. Incorporating customized KPIs can help boards of directors to better connect with mission-critical data and help day-to-day leadership prioritize their time. Together,

individual and collective business data can be used to understand the market landscape, as well as unique solutions and ongoing needs.

**Engage professional service providers to ensure the business is compliant, well documented, and that policies and procedures are in place.** Ideally, a business' professional team<sup>36</sup> should include:

- A lawyer to formalize the business, develop documentation of policies and procedures, and be aware of liability and opportunities for mitigation;
- An accountant to set up the company financials, help develop a system for tracking and forecasting revenue, and offer ongoing financial oversight or support;
- A banker to decide on the best banking products for the business, including accounts, tools, and financing opportunities;
- An insurance agent to obtain a general liability policy and explore other insurance lines such as workmans' compensation, auto, key person, event, cyber, flood, or others; and
- Various consultants as needed, including for human resources, nonprofit board development or ongoing support, marketing, facility improvements, licensing compliance, classroom management, special education, health and wellness, and/or professional development

The intention of a business's professional team is to participate actively in navigating the Center's blind spots so a formal relationship may be more beneficial long term. Some professional service providers offer free or low-cost services, or unique ways to retain them "on call." For nonprofit organization Board of Directors or for-profit advisory committees, professionals may also be willing to volunteer in a limited capacity. Research and meet with several of each type of professional before deciding, and establish a recurring meeting schedule at the onset of the relationship. Bringing this group of advisors together during an annual strategic planning design process may also be helpful in developing a comprehensive strategic plan.

**Incorporate technology to automate administrative processes such as waitlists, enrollment, and student retention and advancement, and produce key business data.** Effective use of technology, automation, and process development allows a Center to do more with less. Each time you repeat a business task, take one step towards automating it. Technology may consist of internally-designed systems to track matriculation of students, staff scheduling, and the assignment of qualified teachers. It may also consist of externally purchased child care software management platforms to help track tours, classrooms, automate payroll processes, business trends over time, and reduce the administrative time required for routine tasks. Several technology service partners have committed to participating in the Child Care Accelerate Shared Services Network in an effort to reduce financial burdens associated with technology implementation.

Intentional use of technology and process documentation empowers Center leadership to reduce mental fatigue by documenting their expertise, better train board members, staff and successors, and ultimately provide a more consistent child care experience for families and children.

**Incorporate built capital sustainability by investing in the child care facility.** Built capital is "the existing stock of constructed infrastructure—for example, buildings, sewer systems, broadband,

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<sup>36</sup> SEED Collective, LLC. (2020, April 22). *Building Your Pro Team*. SEED Collective Medium. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://medium.com/the-seed-collective-column/building-your-pro-team-7f3c68e0638b>

roads—in a region’s places.”<sup>37</sup> Center facility investments in built capital may involve preventive maintenance measures and green construction techniques, such as drinking water testing and remediation, solar panels and energy-efficient windows and doors. By setting an ongoing maintenance schedule, a Child Care Center can counteract the natural wear-and-tear on the facility and reduce unplanned expenses due to equipment failure. Simple tools such as a Building Information Sheet, shared by Program Mentor Chris Binkley, can convey important building details to Center leaders and track work done and contractors hired over time.

Providers in Child Care Accelerate made investments in their facilities through the OTS Grant Fund. The most impactful requests included testing and remediation efforts to support clean drinking water, construction to expand or split up space to create new classrooms, energy-efficient window installation, and engaging professional organizers, cleaning companies, and building inspectors to support facility improvements. To support these investments, especially those that are costly, Providers may consider individual or community-based fundraising efforts, such as a capital campaign or a fundraising gala. A forward looking five or ten year plan can allow for the gradual allocation of funds needed to replace certain hardware or complete larger projects.

**Create a shared insurance pool for the child care industry to reduce costs and provide staff benefits.** The majority of participating Centers indicated that providing a competitive employment package, complete with benefits, was a business priority. However, many were not able to afford the cost of participating in insurance plans. While traditional benefits like health insurance and retirement plans are important, there are several cost-effective or even free options that can be incorporated as well.

Healthcare.gov details several options for small business insurance, including group health insurance coverage, health reimbursement arrangements, Savings Accounts (HSAs), Health Flexible Spending Arrangements (FSAs), and Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs).<sup>38</sup> Some states and industries work together through health insurance purchasing cooperatives (HIPC). For example, in Montana, efforts are being explored to implement an insurance pool solution for child care. Zero to Five Montana, a Helena-based early childhood policy and advocacy organization, conducted a survey in April 2024 that asked Providers various questions about their coverage. Research shows that “[a]bout 85% of the 228 Child Care Providers that responded to the survey said they were interested in joining an insurance pool; most of them said their main desire would be to access more affordable insurance options or better coverage. The survey included group Providers, Child Care Centers and family, friend and neighbor Providers, covering all types of child care settings. Of the 228 facilities that responded in the survey, 57% said their annual liability insurance premium rate increased in the last year, and about one in three said costs rose at least \$1,000.<sup>39</sup> This is an opportunity area for Child Care Providers to collaborate, strategize, and advocate for systemic solutions.

**Work with local and national community members to build and diversify the expertise on for-profit advisory committees and nonprofit board of directors.** The next chapter in child care will

<sup>37</sup> *Wealth: the eight capitals*. (n.d.). WealthWorks. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.wealthworks.org/basics/explore-regional-wealth-building/wealth-the-eight-capitals/>

<sup>38</sup> *Health insurance for businesses*. (n.d.). HealthCare.gov. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.healthcare.gov/smallbusinesses/learn-more/explore-coverage/>

<sup>39</sup> Miller, B., Ehrlick, D., & Szpaller, K. (2024, May 8). *Lawmakers agree to draft legislation on insurance solutions for childcare providers*. • *Daily Montanan*. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://dailymontan.com/2024/05/08/lawmakers-agree-to-draft-legislation-on-insurance-solutions-for-childcare-providers/>



require innovative solutions, tried and true approaches, and ongoing research about what is working across the country. Seeking out qualified, diverse feedback from mentors, advisors, parents, and professional service providers to contribute can ensure that a Center is serving its mission and incorporating collaborative solutions.

For-profit centers can develop advisory committees to help with community engagement, staff and student recruiting, fundraising, and general business strategy. This non-voting group is usually volunteer-based and includes a participation term. Nonprofit Centers can use this strategy to develop both a formal board of directors as well as a non-voting advisory committee. To activate these advisors, be clear about onboarding training, the Center's business needs, and the KPIs and trends that the Center is already tracking. To support the development and effectiveness of working boards, consider professional development training for Center leadership and external advisors. External perspective from a board of directors or advisory committee encourages wholesome strategies, best practices, and lessons learned from other regions and industries.

## For Child Care Business Ecosystem and Industry Stakeholders

Businesses in all industries require external support to develop and thrive. No industry can survive with strictly internal-facing research and support. Benefits of external support include a broader perspective comprising the whole picture—i.e. how the success of a business can benefit from, relate to, and contribute to the larger ecosystem—rather than considering success as a concentrated entity or small group. Systemic solutions will require the strategy and participation of other industry professionals and the full “entrepreneurial stack.” This stack consists of the stakeholders necessary to make ecosystem change: the entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, professional service providers, large companies, government and policymakers, and educational institutions.<sup>40</sup> Those in external positions can also offer specialized insights, such as strategies for success that support other industries, continuing education, and introductions that support Center goals.

The following systemic recommendations are proposed for child care industry resource partners and stakeholders:

**Establish ongoing business resource networks for Child Care Providers.** Business resource networks serving the child care industry can be activated on local and national levels. These networks can provide information about the business side of child care, local trends, and ongoing needs as well as helpful aggregate information, such as through a website or online directories. In many communities, there are ecosystem leaders and resource organizations who may provide free or low-cost services for business owners, such as Small Business Technology Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, SCORE, local U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) offices, and other local nonprofit agencies. Child Care Providers and professionals must be intentionally sought out and invited to the existing conversation, and considered as valuable members of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It may be prudent to consider adjusting community events and meeting times to support the schedules of Child Care Owners and Executive Directors to encourage their participation.

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<sup>40</sup> Feld, B. (n.d.). *The Boulder Thesis*. Ecosystem Entrepreneur. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://newsletter.ecosystementrepreneur.com/p/the-boulder-thesis-by-brad-feld>

Support could also be formalized through public-private partnerships (PPPs).<sup>41</sup> PPPs involve collaboration between government entities, private organizations, businesses, and individuals to support the needs of Child Care Providers. These partnerships draw in professionals with expertise from different fields, specialties, and levels of experience to collectively develop solution-focused strategies concerning resources, education, training, and more. Decision-making is shared by all partners, who are required to contribute time, finances, knowledge, or other resources to the Partnership. Examples of these models at work in child care include the Michigan Tri-Share Pilot Program,<sup>42</sup> a coalition of businesses, state leaders, legislators, research, and children advocacy groups established in 2019 to address accessibility, affordability, and quality for child care. Another community using this tool is the Toyota Child Development Center in Georgetown, Kentucky, which provides child care services for employees of local businesses, including Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky (TMMK), TEMA ISENMANN, Kelly Services, Bright Horizon employees, and more.<sup>43</sup>

**Help support a pipeline of talent into a crucial field.** Many Child Care Providers face difficulties recruiting, retaining, and advancing qualified staff, and are looking for creative ways to build the workforce talent pool. As a stakeholder community, there are opportunities to mitigate this challenge through intentional internship programs for high school, college, and graduate students. Many Providers in Child Care Accelerate employed high school students during the summer, and some of the junior team members were students in the Center when they were younger. By providing school or college credit instead of direct monetary compensation, Child Care Centers can engage new talent without having an immediate impact on operating expenses. Incorporating these employment models for school or college credit provides the students with an interactive experience, space for contribution, and the introduction to a career field.

An example of best practices across the country include:

- For high school students, Casa Grande Union High School District in Casa Grande, Arizona has a robust early childhood education program designed as a Career & Technical Education (CTE) program. There is a set syllabus and internship program with the intention of supporting high school seniors to explore careers in early childhood education during the school year. Experiential learning is impactful because the students earn their grade through The Cougar Cubs Preschool, a preschool program with a capacity of 20 students, assisting in the daily routines and operations under staff supervision.<sup>44</sup> Virginia and Colorado spearheaded this initiative by creating programs to support high schoolers interested in teaching.<sup>45</sup> Educators Rising, based out of Virginia, and Pathways2 Teaching, based out of Colorado, work nationally with schools to offer college-level courses that count toward the first year of a Bachelors in Education. This working relationship helps high school students identify early on if teaching is

<sup>41</sup> Gratz, R. (2024, June 6). *Early Childhood Strategy: Public-Private Partnerships*. Prichard Committee. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.prichardcommittee.org/resources/curated-early-childhood-strategy-public-private-partnerships>

<sup>42</sup> Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential. (2024). M-Tri-Share, *Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential*. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from: <https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/early-childhood-education/mi-tri-share-child-care>

<sup>43</sup> Toyota Child Development Center. (2024). "Toyota Child Development Center," *Bright Horizons*. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from: <https://child-care-preschool.brighthorizons.com/~media/BH/Centers/0807/Documents/FactSheet.ashx>

<sup>44</sup> *Cougar Cubs Preschool*. (n.d.). Casa Grande Union High School District. Retrieved from <https://www.cguhsd.org/cgPreschool.aspx>

<sup>45</sup> Rix, K. (2023, February 16). *Preparing High School Students to Become Teachers | K-12 Schools | U.S. News*. USNews.com. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/preparing-high-school-students-to-become-teachers>

the correct future for them and to get a head start on completing their Bachelors degree in Education.

- For community college students, White Mountains Community College offers an associates degree that, by graduation, qualifies teachers to work as a State of New Hampshire Early Childhood Teacher Credential Level 5.<sup>46</sup> The Kansas City Kansas Community College Early Childhood Education program offers an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree that includes a “90-hour internship with a partner program and [the completion of] a NAEYC Standards-based interview portfolio.”<sup>47</sup>
- For college students, the National Head Start Association (NHSA)<sup>48</sup> offers full-time and part-time internship opportunities for students interested in learning about critical business support areas for early childhood education. Internship roles are available in administration, accounting, alumni affairs, communications, conferences and events, data and equality improvement, and effective practice.

Apprenticeship programs can also help support a pipeline of talent into early childhood education. The state of Iowa developed a Teacher & Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship Program (TPRA) that supports the credentialing of students and out-of-school professionals who are interested in the industry. In this program, “current high school students [...] earn a paraeducator certificate and associate's degree, while paraeducators [...] earn their bachelor's degree.”<sup>49</sup> Formalized in 2022, the purpose of the program was to bring an additional 1,000 new paraeducators and teachers into the field across the state.<sup>50</sup> For state by state examples of staff recruitment and retention and national strategies for data collection on staff turnover,<sup>51</sup> The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families maintains the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center as an up-to-date resource.

Child care as a career can also be a viable option for those in the workforce who are interested in limited or reduced hours, a flexible schedule, and making a deep impact. Many Providers in Child Care Accelerate found reliable staffing through recent graduates, local stay-at-home parents, retirees, and grandparents.

**Provide cost savings, discounts, and donations to early childhood educators and Child Care Centers.** Through Child Care Accelerate, all Providers were asked about their participation in a shared savings, purchasing, or industry discount program. The majority of the 71 Providers who completed a Business Health Assessment indicated that they did not have access to or engage in such a program. This is an opportunity area for stakeholders, professional service providers, construction contractors, and other interested companies who work with Child Care Centers to offer support by committing to participating in a shared program for early childhood education.

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<sup>46</sup>White Mountain Community College. (n.d.). *Programs - Early Childhood Education*. White Mountains Community College. Retrieved from <https://www.wmcc.edu/program/early-childhood-education/>

<sup>47</sup> KCKCC | *Early Childhood Education*. (n.d.). Kansas City Kansas Community College. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.kckcc.edu/academics/programs-and-departments/early-childhood-education/index.html>

<sup>48</sup> *Internship Program - NHSA*. (n.d.). National Head Start Association. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://nhsa.org/work-with-us/nhsa-internship-program/>

<sup>49</sup> *Teacher and Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship Program (TPRA) | Iowa Workforce Development*. (n.d.). Iowa Workforce Development. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://workforce.iowa.gov/apprenticeship/funding/tpra>

<sup>50</sup> Id.

<sup>51</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. (2024, June 26). *Staff Recruitment and Retention | ECLKC*. ECLKC. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/staff-recruitment-retention>

Participation in these programs shows a social responsibility to the community and helps to offset the true costs of operating a Child Care Center. Child Care Accelerate developed a shared services program through direct invitations and Child Care Provider use or recommendation. Companies in the Shared Services Network have committed to providing discounts and reduced fees to participating Providers for technology, supplies, materials, equipment, and other business services needed to effectively run their Centers. These programs can be operated locally with national benefits, and there are great examples of such programs across the country:

- SEIU Local 500, the legally recognized collective bargaining representative in the State of Maryland for Child Care Providers who participate in the Child Care Scholarship program, represents more than 4,000 early learning professionals in Maryland and Washington, DC. This organization offers many resources, including benefits and discounts for Child Care Providers.<sup>52</sup>
- Early Learning Ventures (ELV) is a shared services nonprofit for Child Care Providers in Colorado that focuses on providing administrative and technological support. Established by the David and Laura Merage Foundation and powered by CCA for Social Good, ELV maintains a license for the Colorado Shared ECE Resource Platform, which functions as a central hub of information and resources for all Child Care Providers, workers, and professionals in the state. This resource includes savings for products and services provided for commonly used vendors, human resources, and telehealth.
- The Family Child Care Alliance of Texas provides several timely supports to its members, including business support services, pedagogical services, and coaching and technology support. The business support services includes the Shared Services Alliance which offers “bulk purchasing, program marketing, and tax support.”<sup>53</sup>

As a stakeholder community, contributing to and developing programs that lower operating costs and encourage sustainable business practices for Child Care Providers directly impacts their longevity.

**Employers can provide a culture of family and flexibility for parents of young children.** For employers that are not directly in child care, an impactful contribution can still be made to a culture more conducive to families. Creating a work culture that supports parents and families with young children can support staff recruiting and retention. Traviros, a Kansas City-based firm that focuses on raising capital for housing and economic development in Indigenous communities, prioritizes this support. The company offers generous paid parental leave and operates “a licensed on-site daycare facility” for staff. Supporting staff can include equitable parental leave policies, child care credits, and paid floating holidays throughout the year. From small businesses to larger corporations, all businesses can help contribute to a culture that supports both Providers and parents.

**Cultivate Child Care Provider-specific business research.** Systemic solutions necessitate a continuation of years of research and development. The intention for the Child Care Business Improvement Project was to be a pilot that continued, incorporating feedback from Providers and furthering research and business support. Child Care business ecosystem and industry stakeholders can use the research in this Report and appendices to deep dive into Provider business insights, ongoing needs, and creative solutions to impact the whole. The Reassessment data revealed that the Business Foundations and Center Sustainability sections experienced the greatest increases between

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<sup>52</sup> SEIU Member Benefits: Benefits and Discounts for SEIU Members (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.seiumb.com/>

<sup>53</sup> *What is the AVANCE Shared Services Alliance?* (n.d.). AVANCE. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.avance.org/programs/ssa/>

pre and post coaching. This reiterates the Program mission and impact- concentrated, organized business coaching effectively equips child care businesses with the tools, confidence, and relationships necessary to increase Center Sustainability.

**Contribute your voice and perspective.** The child care industry is the “workforce behind the workforce.” We all play a role as employees, employers, parents, and community members. Early childhood education can be isolating for those working in the industry. Inherent to the age groups served, community members phase away from early childhood education as their children matriculate into the school system. In the midst of ongoing turnover, there are Centers and leaders who dedicate entire careers to this work and who are in need of long-term strategy and support. For progress gained to continue, the full “entrepreneurial stack”<sup>54</sup> must be engaged. There is space for entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, professional service providers, large companies, government and policy makers, and educational institutions to contribute.

## For Government Agencies and Elected Officials

The White House released a written brief on June 27, 2024, entitled “Impacts of the Expiration of Federal Child Care Stabilization Funding and the Mitigating Effects of State-Level Stopgap Funding.”<sup>55</sup> This report concluded that while the stopgap funding was initially effective, evidence shows that the expiration of these funds “is leading to higher prices and depressed access to child care for families who need it most.”<sup>56</sup> Government agencies and elected officials are uniquely poised to help implement systemic solutions and ensure that Child Care Providers and families are connected to resources.

The systemic recommendations proposed for government agencies and elected officials who work with or represent those in the child care industry, individually and collectively, are to:

**Work with Providers to review any perceived or actual barriers to their work that could be alleviated or reduced with government intervention.** Because of the American Rescue Plan support for Child Care Providers, many Providers are interacting with government agencies and representatives more than they would in the usual course of providing care, in order to take full advantage of the programs and support offered. Government agencies and departments can use their position to work intentionally to reduce barriers faced by this business community. For example, many Providers in New Hampshire face barriers in staff recruitment because of the timing delays in confirming staff background checks and the hurdles in supporting staff to become qualified lead teachers. New Hampshire Providers also shared difficulties with the process to obtain state-provided grant funding. Some Providers shared that they waited upwards of fourteen months between notice of grant approval to check distribution for the Child Care Workforce Grant, which was an allocation of \$15,000,000 to finance workforce recruitment and retention bonus and benefit grants in New Hampshire. These challenges are not unique to New Hampshire and are impacting Providers across the country. These delays, whether weeks or months, contribute to Provider stress and reduce their ability to attract and retain staff to provide quality care.

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<sup>54</sup> Feld, B. (n.d.). *The Boulder Thesis*. Ecosystem Entrepreneur. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://newsletter.ecosystementrepreneur.com/p/the-boulder-thesis-by-brad-feld>

<sup>55</sup> White House. (2024, June 27). Impacts of the Expiration of Federal Child Care Stabilization Funding and the Mitigating Effects of State-Level Stopgap Funding | CEA. The White House. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2024/06/27/impacts-of-the-expiration-of-federal-child-care-stabilization-funding-and-the-mitigating-effects-of-state-level-stopgap-funding/>

<sup>56</sup> Id.

The state of New Mexico is the first state to pass a bill solidifying permanent grants for early child care. These permanent grants reduced the confusion regarding grant availability and Providers are better supported access to early childhood programs and support measures. Permanent child care grants lessen the financial burden on child care leaders and makes early childhood care more accessible to all.<sup>57</sup>

To encourage communication, government agencies can activate community advisory groups or reactivate State Advisory Councils to ensure that the current and future needs of the child care community are being considered. State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs) were formalized through the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 to encourage “statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services [for children ages birth to five] in the State, including child care, Head Start, IDEA preschool and infants and families programs, and pre-kindergarten programs and services.”<sup>58</sup> Comprised of informal and formal leaders, these entities were “charged with developing recommendations to increase access to high quality early childhood care and education programs; conducting a periodic needs assessment of the quality and availability of programs; and advising state policymakers on the development of a comprehensive early childhood data system, a statewide professional development system, and research-based early learning standards.” State Advisory Councils are still in effect, although many councils have expired websites, no upcoming events, and minimal information on how to engage today. The Act “requires states to maintain SAC membership and operations regardless of Federal appropriations.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Engage and support external vendors in developing research and testing long term-solutions.**

External vendors can be engaged through requests for proposal (RFPs), public-private partnerships, and other procurement methods. For meaningful research, government agencies can share existing state-wide research efforts, partners, and data with engaged vendors to help operationalize and advance the work. For development of solutions, engagement with a dedicated, volunteer community working group can be used to create a framework for objective review, testing, and community feedback. These efforts can help create a clear and reasonable outline of short-term success metrics for external vendors and long-term success metrics for the constituents. To create the New Hampshire Child Care Strengthening Plan, “DHHS explored evidence-based and promising practices, approaches, and strategies by reviewing national and state research and reports, participating in ACF Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start webinars and technical assistance opportunities, considering NH stakeholders’ recommendations, and identifying opportunities to leverage existing resources and efforts.”<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Dunlap, S. (2024, May 29). *Stansbury outlines funding secured for early childhood and youth services programs*. NM Political Report. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://nmpoliticalreport.com/featured/stansbury-outlines-funding-secured-for-early-childhood-and-youth-services-programs/>

<sup>58</sup> The Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.). *State Advisory Councils | The Administration for Children and Families*. The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/early-learning/state-advisory-councils>

<sup>59</sup> Departments of Health & Human Services and Education. (2016, September 21). *Advancing Work Beyond Federal Financing*. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/eecd/sac\\_joint\\_statement\\_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/eecd/sac_joint_statement_final.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. (2023, June 28). *New Hampshire’s Child Care Strengthening Plan Use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Discretionary Funds*. “Department Reports & Presentations,” “Other Reports & Presentations”. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dhhs-child-strengthening-plan.pdf>

Once programs are launched, government agencies can employ best practices in procurement and contract management to ensure that solutions implemented for Child Care Providers are poised for success. This includes ensuring that the following widely used standards are in place:

- Dedicated, well-informed, and adequately staffed internal contract support teams;
- Adherence to contract terms and clear reporting for performance metrics;
- Standardized template forms, files, and folders for consistency in vendor relations and reporting;
- Interdepartmental collaboration as necessary, including for marketing, IT, finance, and other Departments;
- Capacity to send and receive files, folders, and data developed from the research;
- Timely payments;
- A regular communication and meeting standard; and
- Ongoing technical assistance opportunities for vendors

The absence of these procurement policies can undermine the effectiveness of the research or pilot programs and hinder the ability for long-term constituent advocacy. This was evident for both Providers and SEED Collective, LLC during the New Hampshire Child Care Business Improvement Project, where these support measures were not present. The state of Kansas produced a report on American Rescue Plan Grant Implementation: Procurement Best Practices that details these recommendations and others, that other government agencies can use during pre-award, procurement and contracting, post-award management, and close out and interim reporting<sup>61</sup>.

Even so, challenges may arise. In 2024, the state of Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was responsible for administering \$215 million allocated for child care subsidies<sup>62</sup>, and only \$24 million had been deployed as of August 2024. In response, DESE outlined a clear plan to navigate the delays and take action towards processing family applications, Provider contracts, and Provider payments by working *with* external vendors and staffing agencies, instead of shifting blame<sup>63</sup>.

**Provide critical ongoing gap funding through grants, tax breaks, and other innovative models.**

Government funding to support the child care industry is critical. This support can be administered through grants, tax breaks, subsidies, and other measures to provide financial stability to businesses, employees, and parents. There are best practices that are being tested across the country:

- In December of 2024, Virginia proposed expanding their subsidies program to include child care funding. Now families that already benefit from Medicaid and WIC programs are automatically eligible for child care funding.<sup>64</sup> This will be a permanent addition and will benefit families and Child Care programs long term.

<sup>61</sup> *Public Assistance Child Care Grant Program*. (n.d.). Alaska Department of Health. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from [https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/ccare\\_grant.aspx](https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/ccare_grant.aspx)

<sup>62</sup> Child Care Subsidy | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://dese.mo.gov/childhood/child-care-subsidy>

<sup>63</sup> Jackson, M. (2024, August 28). *DESE Under Investigation as Childcare Facilities Continue to Struggle*. Fox News. <https://fox4kc.com/news/dese-under-investigation-as-childcare-facilities-continue-to-struggle/amp>

<sup>64</sup> Cline, N., Woods, C. R., Paullin, C., Schmidt, M., & Miranda, S. (2024, January 29). *With child care increasingly unaffordable, Virginia lawmakers propose long-term fixes* • *Virginia Mercury*. Virginia Mercury. Retrieved September 10, 2024, from <https://virginiamercury.com/2024/01/29/with-child-care-increasingly-unaffordable-virginia-legislation-seeks-to-make-long-term-changes/>

- For child care businesses, in 2023, Alabama allocated \$30 million to their Quality Stars: Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care programs. This program will support Child Care Providers through coaching and business incentives to support their classrooms, technology, teacher education and business.<sup>65</sup>
- For child care businesses, the state of Alaska maintains the Child Care Grant Program<sup>66</sup>, which provides licensed Child Care Providers with monthly cash grants to improve the quality of child care programs. These grants are to be used for education training and training related to child development, as well as health and safety-related items; supplies, equipment, activities for children in care; staff salaries, wages, and benefits; and costs to support substitute care Providers.
- For child care businesses, the state of New York allocated \$50 million to the Child Care Capital Program to cover Center expenses related to design, construction, restoration, upgrading, furnishing, or supplying for new or existing Centers. Additionally, \$15.6 million was set aside to establish Child Care Centers in every SUNY (State University of New York) and CUNY (City University of New York) campus, to be available for students, faculty members, and the larger community.
- For employers, tax credits can be activated to incentivize support. At a federal level, the “Employer-Provided Childcare Credit offers employers a tax credit up to \$150,000 per year to offset 25% of qualified child care facility expenditures and 10% of qualified child care resource and referral expenditures.” As of the date of Report Publication, there are 24 states offering some type of Employer Child Care Tax Credit<sup>67</sup>.
- For employees, the state of New York maintains the Educational Incentive Program (EIP); a scholarship that helps child care workers pay for approved training and education to enhance the quality of child care.<sup>68</sup> Eligible applicants can access up to \$756 per year for non-college credit courses, non-credit distance learning classes, workshops, and conferences. To be eligible, workers must be employed by a Center that is licensed or registered by the New York State Office of Child and Family Services (NYC OCFS) or the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH), and is based on income, employment, and selected training or course. Likewise, the state of Colorado maintains the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS), a web-based platform that provides early childhood workers with free access to professional development courses. In addition to online courses, PDIS offers information about scholarships, opportunities to connect with other child care workers, and other resources.<sup>69</sup>

Long-term support for Centers is more than solving or funding immediate expenses. A solution regularly proposed by early childhood educators is to fund the child care industry with a funding model similar to the public school system. Public school systems are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local tax dollars derived from income, corporate, property, and sales taxes. While a potentially advantageous course of action would be for the federal government to allocate a permanent funding

<sup>65</sup> Lovejoy, A. (2024). *States Are Taking Action To Address the Child Care Crisis*. AmericanProgress.org. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/states-are-taking-action-to-address-the-child-care-crisis/>

<sup>66</sup> Public Assistance Child Care Grant Program. (n.d.). Alaska Department of Health. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from [https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/ccare\\_grant.aspx](https://health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/ccare_grant.aspx)

<sup>67</sup> *State Tax Credits for Child Care*. (n.d.). Committee for Economic Development. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://education.ced.org/child-care-state-tax-credits>

<sup>68</sup> University at Albany. (2024). *PDP - EIP, Educational Incentive Program*. The Professional Development Program. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/eip.aspx>

<sup>69</sup> Child Care Licensing Incentive. (n.d.). Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://cdec.colorado.gov/child-care-licensing-initiative>



source for Child Care Providers, the reality of such may be years into the future, if at all.<sup>70</sup> Based on research, the child care industry demands support that begins primarily with funding, but extends beyond that to include other resources to underpin long-term sustenance and growth.

**Participate in a national conversation about what’s working for Child Care Providers across the country and opportunities for collaboration, partnership, policy, and advocacy.**

There were 11 states across the country that allocated \$24 billion dollars in American Rescue Plan Act-Discretionary Funds towards Child Care Center stabilization projects. As this round of investments nears an end, it is an opportunity for a national conversation on lessons learned and ongoing needs. To ensure that this feedback and research supports Child Care Center sustainability, government agencies and elected officials can directly engage owners and executive directors of Centers in the state by:

- Engaging or supporting any existing Directors’ Networks, community groups, or State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs);
- Inviting Child Care Providers to contribute to local, county, state and federal level conversations on the industry and applicable policies;
- Visiting facilities and attending community events, meeting child care workers and families with children attending the facility to hear directly from the constituents; and
- Hosting a Child Care Provider business forum or day at the Capitol.

In 2015, the Raising California Together Coalition worked with local Providers to produce a Child Care Center charette at the Capitol.<sup>71</sup> This kind of experiential learning contributes to the overall well being of the early childhood education field and enables elected officials with data, relationships, and community designed strategies to support long-term development and solutions.

**Incorporate virtual and technology solutions to help Providers easily access government programs and compliance requirements such as business registrations and renewals, licensing, tax, grants, labor and employment departments.**

Owning and operating Child Care Centers requires diligence in compliance with state, local, and federal regulations. To encourage compliance in business operations and communication, government agencies and departments can implement websites, databases, and technologies to help streamline processes.

Some examples of states and communities that have incorporated this support well include:

- The state of New Hampshire maintains [nh-connections.org](https://nh-connections.org), a one stop shop for Child Care Centers to access state resources, such as licensing, resources on quality care and child development, professional development, jobs and apprenticeships, and more.<sup>72</sup>
- The City of Kansas City, Missouri operates KCBizCare, an office in City Hall designed to be the “front door” to the City’s entrepreneurs. This office provides online and in-person resources, classes, grants and research opportunities.<sup>73</sup>
- The state of Arkansas maintains Arkansas Resource Connections, developed by the Early Care and Education Projects at the University of Arkansas, that serves as a one-stop shop for Child

<sup>70</sup> Lovejoy, A. (2024). *States Are Taking Action To Address the Child Care Crisis*. AmericanProgress.org. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/states-are-taking-action-to-address-the-child-care-crisis/>

<sup>71</sup> *Raising California Together Brings Childcare to Capitol*. (2015, August 20). SEIU Local 521. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.seiu521.org/521-news/raisingcatocapitol/>

<sup>72</sup> Child Care Aware of New Hampshire. (n.d.). *Providers*. NH Connections. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://www.nh-connections.org/providers/>

<sup>73</sup> *Welcome to KC BizCare*. (n.d.). KC BizCare. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://bizcare.kcmo.gov/>

Care Providers, including owners, directors, and educators, to access policies, handbooks, more than 2,000 practical tips, and guidance on areas including best practices, health and safety, child development, emergency preparedness, small-business management, and more.<sup>74</sup>

- New York State’s Division of Child Care Services maintains an up-to-date website that communicates key resources for Providers.<sup>75</sup> Information is readily accessible on starting a child care program, accessing professional development training and attending a monthly virtual Community Conversation hosted “for providers, to address current initiatives, provide important updates and share valuable information.”<sup>76</sup>

These support measures and others enacted by government agencies and elected officials can help Providers to maintain compliance, manage their business liabilities, and continue to provide high quality child care services to the community.

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<sup>74</sup> Arkansas Office of Early Childhood. (n.d.). *Arkansas Resource Connections*. Save Time, Save Money and Raise Quality. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from <https://www.areceresources.org/>

<sup>75</sup> *Information for Providers | Division of Child Care Services | Office of Children and Family Services*. (n.d.). Office of Children and Family Services. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/info-for-providers.php>

<sup>76</sup> *Information for Providers | Division of Child Care Services | Office of Children and Family Services*. (n.d.). Office of Children and Family Services. Retrieved September 13, 2024, from <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/info-for-providers.php>

## SEED Staff Recommendations

Child Care Accelerate Program staff were responsible for the development and delivery of the Program. In closing, staff members were asked to submit a final reflection about their key takeaways given their role in the work.

- **Dr. Denice Ross Haynes, Research & Assessment Manager**

Coaching for Child Care Center leaders is essential to the Center's operational efficiency and effectiveness, and its profitability and sustainability. Due to the costs to parents for child care, states would do well to find ways to subsidize and support their Centers in the area of staffing stipends, and other such statewide benefits and discounts in a way that ensures manageable costs for parents while capping operational cost per child expenses that fall back on the Child Care Center owner. Above all, making business coaching readily available if not required would strengthen the foundation of the Center's back office and increase confidence and self efficacy for directors, board members, and owners. The social emotional impact of the organized participatory coaching process was clearly beneficial to the child care leaders. They spoke of the importance of having thought partners, feeling more confident and equipped to tackle staff issues and build effective teams, and taking time to work *on* the business versus responding from a place of often just putting out fires. Coaching partners who not only understand SWOT and KPI's in the broad sense of business operations but know how to make the connection to and respect the business side of operating a child care enterprise will no doubt strengthen the infrastructure of the Centers and increase capacity for increased profit, staffing stability, and learning outcomes.

- **Danielle Ceppetelli, Program Associate**

Based on what I have learned from Child Care Accelerate, I recommend that Child Care Providers continue to advocate for themselves and their community. Ongoing funding and support from the government is needed to keep the child care industry afloat. For child care business owners, it is important to determine appropriate funding allocations by using a cost-per-child-in-care analysis versus relying on regional market rate surveys to remain profitable while maintaining a high quality of care.

- **Tamara Boykin Brown, Client Experience Manager**

The child care industry and the needs of the community it serves are diverse and constantly evolving. Witnessing business owners adapt to current challenges has been eye-opening. It's rewarding to see their relief in knowing they aren't navigating this alone and their renewed confidence in moving their businesses forward. I recommend recognizing that the back-office needs of Child Care Providers are as important as their programmatic needs. Implementing a long-term plan to support these unique businesses in a way that addresses this is crucial for their continued success.

- **Heather Taylor, Child Care Center Education Resource Manager**

As early child care business owners, it's important to prioritize the health and growth of our programs just as we do with the children we care for. Investing in continuous professional development for ourselves and our staff ensures we stay ahead in providing high-quality education and care. Maintaining a well-organized, clean and safe environment not only supports the children's development but also enhances the overall reputation of our business. Regularly

evaluating our practices and financial health by enlisting a strong financial team will help us adapt to changes and address challenges effectively. By committing to these practices, we ensure that our passion for nurturing young minds translates into a thriving and successful business.

- **Danielle Santiago, Marketing & Events Manager**

In marketing their facilities, programs, and services, it's important for Child Care Providers to harness the power of their marketing streams. Static websites offer an opportunity to demonstrate a working example of your elevator pitch and show what separates your program from others. It's also an opportunity to showcase staff profiles and list education and qualifications, communicating the notion of quality care. Social media allows Providers to connect directly with community members, including parents and caregivers, and share timely events, i.e. fundraisers, anniversary celebrations, etc. Also important, marketing is not only geared toward enrollment, but it can attract staff to your facility. When you're devising a marketing strategy, be sure to take advantage of free and low-cost resources.

- **Ivory Haynes, B.S., SEED Business Network Manager**

As the SEED Business Network Manager, my observations come from two divisions- managing the Mentor Program & organizing the Shared Services program. For the Child Care Accelerate mentors, they were outstanding partners to Child Care Providers and were consistent in their willingness to share the lessons learned in growing successful business, some managing up to \$250M in assets. Child Care Providers were open to their mentoring in all the sessions, all with a desire to learn more to make their Centers more successful. In terms of managing Shared Services, being in the DISP sessions, I was able to see and hear first-hand how Child Care Center owners, board members and directors identify and share their Center's needs. The Shared Services program benefits support the gaps that Center leaders identified in staffing, technology and automation, and finance.

- **Jeremiah I. Haynes, MBA, Financial Stability & Accounting Manager**

The child care industry is strategically placed in the infrastructure of the US. It essentially fuels the country for those with children. As the Financial Stability & Accounting Manager here at SEED Collective, I worked with all of the Child Care Providers in my role as one of the Finance mentors and with OTS grant applications. I recommend that all Providers invest in a CPA and/or a finance business professional to make sure they are financially sound and have a forward looking plan. My second recommendation is that all owners and executive directors pay close attention to the costs associated with building a strong workforce, from salaries, wages, insurance, and benefits. Lastly, I urge Child Care Providers to always be mindful of building a family and student pipeline. Some Providers have waiting lists; but those who do not have waiting lists must proactively market in order to build a waiting list. In conclusion, I was impressed at the passion I saw from the owners. It is okay to ask for help!

- **Ofelia Rumbo, SHRM-SCP, Human Capital & Professional Development Manager**

Child Care Providers in New Hampshire frequently grapple with challenges in recruiting, retaining, and developing their staff. The dual responsibilities of managing child care operations and administrative tasks can be particularly taxing for businesses without dedicated HR personnel. To succeed, Providers must prioritize fostering a strong company culture that emphasizes employee well-being, professional growth, and flexibility. Offering competitive

benefits, advancement opportunities, and ongoing training is crucial for attracting and retaining top talent. Establishing clear guidelines, expectations, and open communication channels creates a positive environment for both children and staff. By investing in their team, Child Care Providers can build sustainable, high-quality programs that differentiate themselves in the community.

## Child Care Business Advisory Committee Feedback & Recommendations

Child Care Accelerate worked with existing and former Child Care Center directors and consultants through the Child Care Business Advisory Committee. (See Appendix 12:

■ [Child Care Accelerate Program Staff & Mentor Bios.pdf](#) ). Committee members reviewed coaching Program materials, session format, and resources. Program advisory committee members were asked to answer three questions in their final reflection:

- *What was your biggest takeaway from participating as a child care business advisory committee member?*
  - *What would you say to others (Providers, business experts, etc) in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*
  - *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as an early childhood education leader?*
- **Davora Sides, Children's Lighthouse Center, Chicago IL**
    - *What was your biggest takeaway from participating as a child care business advisory committee member? We work in an industry that is extremely dynamic and there's always things changing. But also, we have a lot in common and the struggles we face overlap considerably from location to location. This puzzle is an ever changing one and it's important to make time to step back, look at the big picture and see what we can make time to address. It's amazing to think what a library of common resources can do for so many Providers.*
    - *What would you say to others (Providers, business experts, etc) in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers? Help is needed. If you have the time, resources, or knowledge to share it's worth it. It's an investment in our future because Child Care Providers are raising our future generations.*
    - *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as an early childhood education leader? This is a difficult industry! Stick with it. It takes patience, kindness and understanding but we can do a whole lot of good. Don't be afraid to be flexible! Try new things, adjust as the times and needs of your community change. All Child Care Centers would benefit from more funding. This is a service based industry, the product we sell comes down to the people we hire. If the industry were working with higher budgets, we might be able to attract better quality employees who would bring more joy, education, consistency and passion to their roles providing an all around better experience for our families.*

- **Enam Haddad, formerly with FlexPlay, Kansas City, MO**
  - *What was your biggest takeaway from participating as a child care business advisory committee member?* The importance of collaboration and cross sharing knowledge. The wealth of knowledge and perspective shared.
  - *What would you say to others (Providers, business experts, etc) in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?* Consulting with peers and experts in the field is invaluable to your success.
  - *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as an early childhood education leader?* In addition to the daily operations and running daycares, it is important to continue to look at the systemic drivers that are affecting funding and access to quality child care
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- **Sarah McKee, Village Church Weekday Preschool, Prairie Village, KS**
  - *What was your biggest takeaway from participating as a child care business advisory committee member?*  
Having the opportunity to go through the Program and think about my own program in ways that I hadn't for a long time. Appreciated being able to see what programs are being advised for best practice.
  - *What would you say to others (Providers, business experts, etc) in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*  
Most of us are not business people, that is the side of running an early childhood Center that we can use the most guidance in. Most of us get into this profession for our love of educating and most need support and guidance in the business aspects of our Centers.
  - *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as an early childhood education leader?*  
I feel really strongly about hiring quality staff and Providers but yet we have such a shortage in this field that it is hard to stick to. If we want safe, healthy environments then we need to make hiring quality staff members our first priority. Easier said than done especially in this work environment.
  
- **Rachel Samoff, formerly with Children's Preschool Center of Palo Alto, Palo Alto, CA**
  - *What was your biggest takeaway from participating as a child care business advisory committee member?*  
Getting connected with CCA, even in my minimal involvement, reinforced my sense that most small Providers really need education in business development but there aren't many manageable ways for them to get those. A key thing for Child Care Providers is that they dedicate the time to promote their business knowledge and to focus on their program as a business.

- *What would you say to others (Providers, business experts, etc) in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*  
There are so many things at so many different levels that would be helpful. Having a mentor is a key thing, and having a mentor that is good at mentoring would be most helpful. For most of us our education is not in running a business, none of the people I know that run successful child care programs are business people. We need an accessible route to learn business.
- *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as an early childhood education leader?*  
There's a very interesting dynamic in California right now. The public schools are being told they need to offer high quality education. That is something that I thought always needed to happen, now that it's starting to happen it is severely impacting privately run childhood programs. This is the second year that public schools have been offering care for Preschoolers, it's only going to get more difficult to incorporate high quality care in the early childhood public sector. Devoting more public resources to child care, we will have to go through a very disruptive stage while we make the transition to public early childhood care. The public money has got to support early education and households where both parents are working. We've got to coordinate college education around supporting early childhood education.

## Mentor Feedback & Recommendations

Participating Program Mentors were asked to answer three questions in their final reflection:

- *What was your biggest takeaway from the coaching and mentoring experience?*
- *What would you say to other business experts in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*
- *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as a Program mentor?*
- **Kyle Johnson, Gnome di Plume Consulting, LLC, Minneapolis, MN**
  - *What was your biggest takeaway from the coaching and mentoring experience?*  
There is a market failure manifesting in the child care industry. Rising costs are driving tuition increases to levels difficult for working families to manage. Most Child Care Providers, who are caregivers at heart, feel the squeeze between these rising costs and the pressure these increases are putting on family budgets. Many Providers are doing the impossible task of trying to keep care affordable in these conditions, leading to burnout, financial instability and closure. Like many other sectors in the care economy, significant investments must be made in child care to keep it a sustainable enterprise; livable wages with benefits for care workers, ongoing professional development, along with physical infrastructure improvements must be made to maintain and ultimately improve quality of care. Historically, these costs have been borne by women as primary Child Care Providers in the home. The child care industry has inherited this burden, where a legacy stigma around paying the true cost for the crucial work of raising our children remains undervalued. We must grapple with this historical inequity and

disinvestment, and make it right through substantial public investment in the critical infrastructure needed to cultivate the next generation.

- *What would you say to other business experts in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*

Working with Child Care Providers is rewarding work. Their passion and selflessness is contagious. While they are experts in their craft, many Child Care Providers are eager to enlist allies who can assist them with the “back-office” functions of running a business. Child care is an industry with strong demand and insufficient supply of Providers; therefore, Implementation of best practices can quickly yield great impact. With your assistance, struggling Centers can transform into stable operations primed for growth. Helping Child Care Centers improve their financial health reinforces a healthy environment for children, where staff can focus on excellence of care.

- *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as a Program mentor?*

Providers, parents and allies must unite to advocate for public policy reforms to truly address the wider market failure happening in this sector. The rising costs of necessities—food, housing, child care, health care and education—are a dangerous combination that threaten the stability of working families, which have ripple effects on the wider economy. Child care must stop being viewed as an optional market enterprise: it fulfills a vital social need parallel with health care, education and housing. These social prerequisites must be prioritized for investment, valued for their foundational role in establishing quality of life and prosperity for all.

- **Chris Binkley, Headwaters Capital, LLC, Kansas City, MO**

- *What was your biggest takeaway from the coaching and mentoring experience?*

I was grateful to meet so many people helping care for the next generation of our society. I was encouraged by how many of the Child Care Providers were integrating outdoor spaces as a key differentiator in their programs.

- *What would you say to other business experts in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*

Child Care Providers are hungry for practical resources and tips on how to better steward their operation and facility.

- *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as a Program mentor?*

Child care businesses could do a better job of establishing and following basic preventative maintenance schedules for major building systems to reduce their long-term overall facility expenses.

- **Jhonnasia Johnson, LCSW, Convergence Counseling, LLC, Kansas City, MO**

- *What was your biggest takeaway from the coaching and mentoring experience?*

That there is major stress related to recruiting and retaining quality employees. Secondly there is disconnect between the Board of Directors and the needs of the child care facilities.



- *What would you say to other business experts in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*  
Child Care Providers value access to mental health professionals and need quality professional support.
- *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as a Program mentor?*  
People in the child care industry need access to mental health support. Would recommend mental health as a part of professional development for all staff.
- **Matthew Shiebler, Interactive Accountants, LLC, Miami, FL**
  - The SEED Team was always proactive and put the goals of the Child Care Providers first and foremost. Their dedication to helping the Child Care Providers that joined the Program was amazing. It was an honor to share what I could with the Child Care Providers and it was wonderful to serve under Dr. Adrienne's leadership.
- **Dan Axtell, Fulcrum Business Advising, LLC, Kansas City, MO**
  - *What was your biggest takeaway from the coaching and mentoring experience?*  
The owners of the child care facilities are so dedicated to the children, parents, and the industry as a whole. Each one wanted to improve their business and make the Center a better place for the children. The better the business, the better the product. Most owners came from an educational background, and they know the value of a safe place for the children.
  - *What would you say to other business experts in your industry who want to help Child Care Providers?*  
As a business owner who hires I know how valuable the early years are for everyone. The early years set the tone for life. If we want good employees, they need that safe and stable environment to grow up in.
  - *What is your recommendation for the child care industry (as a whole) given your role and perspective as a Program mentor?*  
Do not forget that you are running a business. Price your services to maintain good employees, pay your bills and turn a profit.

I only wish I could spend more time with each owner. I have enjoyed each session, and I hope I made their business life less stressful.

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